Spirituality and Servant Leadership: A Conceptual Model and Research Proposal

GT Freeman
Regent University

With confidence shaken in contemporary business leadership, there has been an increased interest in Greenleaf's (1977) servant leadership theory, which promotes setting aside self-interest of leaders for the betterment of their followers (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008). However, while there has been increased research in the development of conceptual models and questionnaires, there is still little known about the conditions that facilitate servant leadership (Yukl, 2010). This paper explores the concept of spirituality, and its effect on the formation and effectiveness of servant leadership. A proposed conceptual model postulates spiritual beliefs (e.g., hope and faith in God) as a causal factor in the formation of a servant leader's values and behaviors. Furthermore, the model posits that spiritual practices (e.g., praying, meditating, and reading scripture) are a moderating variable of servant leadership behavior and the outcome variable, leadership effectiveness, as perceived by followers. The paper reveals hypothesized relationships between four variables and proposes methods for measuring and testing the propositions.

Greenleaf (1977) proposed the concept of *servant leadership,* in which service to followers, the essence of leadership, is the primary responsibility of leaders. Although developments of servant leadership models (Parolini, 2004; Patterson, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002; Winston, 2003; Wong & Page, 2003) and questionnaires (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Dennis & Winston, 2003; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008) have encouraged recent research, little is known about the conditions that facilitate servant leadership (Yukl, 2010). While conceptual models posit that certain values (e.g., integrity, humility, servanthood, and agapao love) are causal factors that lead to servant leadership, these models do not postulate the source of those values. Reflecting on the facilitating conditions of servant leadership, Yukl (2010) asked, "Is it related to personality and more likely to occur for some types of leaders than for others?" (p. 421). *Spirituality* (i.e., spiritual beliefs and practices) is one potential factor in the forming and fostering of servant leaders. Historically, spirituality and leadership theories have "been worlds apart"; however, a recent and increasing body of evidence has revealed these fields are related (Reave, 2005, p. 655). Both academic theory (Fry, 2003; Kriger & Seng, 2005) and research (Dent, Higgins, & Wharff, 2005; Reave, 2005) provide support for the relationship between spirituality and leadership.

This paper addresses the following research question: How does a leader's spiritual beliefs (hope and faith) and spiritual practices (works) affect servant leadership behaviors and leadership effectiveness, as perceived by the follower? To answer this question, the paper examines the academic literature on spirituality and servant leadership. A proposed conceptual model, adapted from the literature, presents *spiritual beliefs* (e.g., hope and faith in God) as a causal factor in the formation of the values and behaviors of servant leaders. Moreover, the model suggests that *spiritual practices* (e.g., praying, meditating, and reading scripture) moderate the relationship between servant leadership behaviors and leadership effectiveness as perceived by followers. Associated with the model are testable propositions, hypothesizing a positive relationship between spiritual beliefs, servant leadership behaviors, spiritual practices, and leadership effectiveness. The proposed spirituality-servant leadership construct contains four measurable variables: (a) spiritual beliefs, an independent variable measured by a subset of Fetzer's (1999) *Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality* (BMMRS); (b) servant leadership behavior, a mediating variable measured by Liden et al.'s (2008) *Servant Leadership Scale*; (c) leadership effectiveness, an outcome variable measured by a modified version of Denison, Hooijberg, and Quinn's (1995) *Leadership Effectiveness Survey*; and (d) spiritual practices, a moderating variable measured by items in the BMMRS instrument related to the *Spiritual Practices* domain. Finally, this paper discusses methods for testing the hypothesized positive relationships between these variables.

Spirituality Literature Review

In an introduction to a special issue on spirituality in *The Leadership Quarterly*, Fry (2005) noted that "issues regarding workplace spirituality have been receiving increased attention… and the implications…for leadership theory, research, and practice make this a fast growing area of new research and inquiry" (p. 619). An examination of the academic research reveals three areas of focus for scholars: (a) identifying spiritual values and behaviors, (b) examining conceptual frameworks and models pertaining to spirituality, and (c) developing instruments for measuring spirituality.

Spiritual Values and Behaviors

According to Fry (2003), spirituality includes two essential elements in a person's life: (a) transcendence of self, manifesting in a sense of calling or destiny, and (b) belief that one's activities have meaning and value beyond economic benefits or self-gratification. A sense of calling and higher meaning fosters the development of certain values, including vision (i.e., defining the destination, reflecting high ideals, and encouraging hope/faith), altruistic love (i.e., forgiveness, kindness, integrity, empathy, honesty, patience, courage, trust, and humility), and hope/faith (i.e., endurance, perseverance, and expectation of reward/victory). Kriger and Hanson (1999) proposed a similar set of spiritual values—honesty/truthfulness, trust, humility, forgiveness, compassion,

thankfulness, service, and stillness/peace—that are essential for enabling spiritual ideals to thrive and to grow in modern organizations. However, neither Fry nor Kriger and Hanson proposed potential sources of these spiritual values.

Reave (2005) conducted an exhaustive review of the literature and noted that spirituality expresses itself in the embodiment of spiritual values (i.e., integrity, trust, ethical influence, honest communication, and humility) and spiritual behaviors (i.e., demonstrating respect, treating others fairly, expressing care and concern, listening responsively, appreciating the contributions of others, and engaging in spiritual practice). Reave noted that none of the authors examined in the literature review proposed potential sources of spirituality, other than commenting that "spiritual faith" is not required for practicing spirituality (p. 657). Perhaps, this is due to a fear that clearly defining spirituality could lead to dogmatic rigidity (Markow & Klenke, 2005), and the belief that spirituality should not be constrained by the doctrine of any one particular faith or religion (Yukl, 2010).

Models of Spirituality

While there are numerous conceptions of spirituality in leadership, there has been a lack of clarity in construct definitions (Markow & Klenke, 2005). One construct, proposed by Fry (2003), explains spirituality in leadership within an intrinsic motivation model that incorporates vision, altruistic love, and hope/faith; theories of workplace spirituality and spiritual survival; and the organizational outcomes of commitment and productivity. In this model, spirituality encompasses the values, attitudes, and behaviors necessary for intrinsically motivating self and followers to have a sense of spiritual survival through calling and membership (Fry). However, Fry did not comment on the source of the leader's spirituality, probably to avoid any controversy about implied support for a particular faith or religion, one potential source of spirituality (Yukl, 2010).

Another construct of spirituality in leadership is Kriger and Seng's (2005) extension of Yukl's (2002) *Multiple Linkage Model*. Kriger and Seng argued that spirituality affects leader values; which moderates the effect of leader vision on leader behavior; which in turn affects the level of subordinate commitment to the leader's vision and goals; which ultimately affects leadership effectiveness as measured by a firm's profit, realization of values and vision, and collective organizational good to society and key stakeholders. Unlike Fry (2003), Kriger and Seng attempted to define religious faith as a legitimate source of spiritual values and behaviors. They defined a variable, identified as "?," which refers to Yahweh, God, Allah, Shiva, or Buddha, respectively within the religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. However, since the concept of God is for some religions "beyond all names," Kriger and Seng used "?" to refer to that which is ontologically beyond names and, hence, uncreated (p. 790). This "?" possibly is: (a) a "socially constructed reality" which is created by those with

religious beliefs, (b) an "emerging reality" which is co-created between human beings and "God," or (c) a "Being" which is real unto itself (Kriger & Seng, p. 790).

For the purposes of this paper, the causal or independent variable of spiritual beliefs is adapted from Kriger and Seng's (2005) concept of God. Spiritual beliefs include having faith and hope in a personal and loving God, desiring to be close to God, and having a higher calling to serve God. Spiritual practices, similar to Kriger and Seng's concept of *inner leadings*, include praying, meditating, and reading scripture. However, the model presented in this paper, unlike Kriger and Seng's construct, also proposes an instrument for measuring spirituality.

Instrument for Measuring Spirituality

One instrument for measuring spirituality is Fetzer's (1999) *Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality* (MMRS). Given its comprehensive nature, the MMRS has become the standard measure of religiousness and spirituality (Koenig, 2008). The long form of the MMRS consists of 128 questions. The *Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality* (BMMRS), a shorter form of the comprehensive instrument, consists of 38 items. Descriptive statistics and reliability coefficients are available for each question on the BMMRS. In a study of 1445 participants, the Cronbach alpha coefficients were calculated, ranging from 0.64 to 0.91 (Rippentrop, Altmaier, Chen, Found, & Keffala, 2005). A subset of the BMMRS (see Appendix A) contains 23 statements pertaining to spiritual beliefs (Spiritual Beliefs, Spiritual Experiences, and Spiritual Coping domains) and spiritual practices (Spiritual Practices domain).

Servant Leadership Literature Review

Greenleaf's (1977) concept of *servant leadership* describes service to followers, the essence of leadership, as the primary responsibility of leaders. Greenleaf emphasized that the servant leader is a servant first with the primary imperative to ensure the other's highest priority needs are being served, which enables followers, while being served, to "become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants" (Greenleaf, p. 27). The core of the servant leadership model is based on four tenets of moral authority: Conscience, the essence of moral authority, (a) is sacrifice, (b) inspires commitment to a worthy cause, (c) teaches that ends and means are inseparable, and (d) introduces the world of relationships (Greenleaf, pp. 6-9).

A majority of the reviews of the literature on servant leadership begin with Greenleaf's (1977) seminal work (Irving, 2004). In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the study of servant leadership. This research, which includes a wide range of concepts, has focused on identifying the values and behaviors of servant leadership, examining conceptual frameworks and models, and developing instruments for measuring servant leadership (Northouse, 2010).

Servant Leadership Values and Behaviors

There is significant discussion in the academic literature regarding a servant leader's values and behaviors, and their influence on leader effectiveness (Irving, 2004). According to Rinehart (1998), leadership models are rooted in values. The values of a servant leader include having a guiding vision and purpose (Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999), loving others (Banutu-Gomez, 2004; Whetstone, 2002; Wilson, 1998), trusting and empowering others (Marquardt, 2000; Russell, 2001), and submitting to others (Ndoria, 2004; Sendjaya, 2003). These values can be summed up in the concept of *caring* (for others, institutions, and society), which according to Greenleaf (1977) is the "essential motive" of servant leadership (p. 255) and "the rock upon which a good society is built" (p. 62). While there is significant commentary on servant leadership values (e.g., caring, loving, and submitting) in the literature, there is little discussion on the potential sources for these values, for example spiritual beliefs.

A servant leader's behaviors emanate from their personal values (Errol & Winston, 2005; Irving, 2004; Maciariello, 2003; Russell, 2001), resulting in certain observed attributes such as establishing vision (Banutu-Gomez, 2004), being authentic (Sendjaya, 2003), focusing on relationships (Sendjaya), and influencing by modeling service to others (Banutu-Gomez; Whetstone, 2002). However, similar to discussions on spiritual values, there is little discussion in the academic literature on the reasons (i.e., causal factors) for why servant leaders practice certain behaviors.

Servant leadership literature also reveals a diverse set of outcomes (Irving, 2004), including increased trust between leader and follower (Errol & Winston, 2005), growth in followers (Rowe, 2003; Whetstone, 2002), empowerment of followers (Bowie, 2000; Lloyd, 1996; Wilson, 1998), reproduction of service by followers (Choi & Mai-Dalton, 1998; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003), and enhanced individual, team, and organizational performance (Bennett, 2001). While these discussions about the values, behaviors, and outcomes further the conceptual understanding of servant leadership, they do not propose clear causal relationships between these variables (Irving). However, the literature also contains servant leader-organization and leader-follower models that attempt to describe the causal relationships of servant leadership variables.

Models of Servant Leadership

A review of the literature reveals at least three conceptual *leader-organization* models (Russell & Stone, 2002; Wong & Page, 2003; Parolini, 2004) and two *leader-follower* models (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) of servant leadership. While each model proposes certain values (e.g., core principles, character-orientation, and agapao love) as the independent variable driving servant leadership behaviors and ultimately leadership effectiveness, none of the models proposed a source for the model's independent variable.

Russell and Stone (2002) evaluated the attributes of servant leaders and assimilated the servant leadership attributes into a rational model. They consolidated a list of 20 distinguishable characteristics found in servant leadership literature, and divided the list into a set of nine *functional* attributes (vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment) and 11 *accompanying* attributes (communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching, and delegation). In the Russell and Stone model, values (i.e., independent variable representing core principles) affect servant leadership (i.e., dependent variable measured by the nine functional attributes), and is moderated by the 11 accompanying attributes (i.e., moderating variables). Moreover, servant leadership affects organizational performance, mediated by organizational culture and employee attitudes (i.e., intervening variables). Russell and Stone's model is limited in that it neither defines the independent variable (i.e., values) nor hypothesizes a source of those values.

Wong and Page (2003) also developed a values-based conceptual framework and model for describing servant leadership. Their model recognizes 12 servant leadership attributes conceptually classified into four orientations: character-orientation (i.e., integrity, humility, and servanthood), people-orientation (i.e., caring for others, empowering others, and developing others), task-orientation (i.e., visioning, goal setting, and leading), and process-orientation (i.e., modeling, team building, and shared decision-making). Wong and Page used expanding concentric circles, with character-orientation as the innermost circle, followed by people-orientation, task-orientation, and process-orientation to visually represent the sequence in the development, practice, and influence of servant leadership. Additionally, Wong and Page developed an opponent-process model of servant leadership that takes into account the two opposing motivation forces of serving others and self-serving. Power and pride characterize self-seeking leadership, while humility and self-denial characterize servant leadership (Wong, 2003). Wong and Page's model is limited in that it does not offer a causation or source of character-orientation, or desire to serve others, in the concentric circle and opponent-process model, respectively.

Parolini (2004) expanded Wong and Page's (2003; Page & Wong, 2000) model and clarified the outcomes of servant leadership as increased organizational effectiveness, business performance, and financial performance. Parolini modeled Page and Wong's (2000) conceptual framework for measuring servant leadership and expanded it using Quinn and Rohrbaugh's (1981, 1983) and Hart and Quinn's (1993) *Competing Values Framework*. Parolini posited that servant leaders are defined by their ability to bring integrity, humility, and servanthood into caring for, empowering, and developing others in carrying out the tasks and processes of visioning, goal setting, leading, modeling, team building, and shared-decision making. Moreover, servant leaders prioritize human resources, then open systems and internal processes, and finally,

rational goals in delivering optimized business performance, financial performance, and organizational effectiveness (Parolini, p. 9). However, since Parolini's model is an extension of Wong and Page's model, it too lacks a source or causation for the model's independent variable, character-orientation.

A second conceptual model type focuses on the leader-follower relationship. According to Patterson (2003), servant leadership is a virtuous theory, based on a leader's character—something within a person that is internal, almost spiritual. Patterson developed a model of servant leadership that encompasses seven virtuous constructs, which work in processional pattern: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Patterson's model begins with an agapao love construct (i.e., independent variable), by which the leader considers the needs, wants, and desires of each person. Five specific leader attributes (humility, altruism, vision, trust, and empowerment) are all mediating variables that lead to the dependent variable, service. Agapao love, the model's independent variable, is the foundational cause of service. Winston (2003) remarked that Patterson's (2003) leader-follower model improves on the leader-organization models by showing "the causal relationships between the variables in order to build a process model of servant leadership" (p. 602). Winston proposed a circular extension of Patterson's model that considered the importance and effects of the follower's agapao love, in addition to the leader's love. While Patterson and Winston noted that the leader's character is spiritual in nature, their models do not explicitly give a causation or potential source (e.g., hope and faith in God) for the independent variable, agapao love.

Instruments for Measuring Servant Leadership

A literature review reveals instruments for measuring servant leadership in *organizations* (Laub, 2003; Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008) and in *individuals* (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Dennis & Winston, 2003; Liden et al., 2008).

Laub's (2003) 66-item *Organizational Leadership Assessment* (OLA) measures three perspectives: the organization as a whole, its top leadership, and each participant's personal experience. The instrument covers six areas of servant leadership characteristics: valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership, and sharing leadership (as cited in Wong & Page, 2003). The OLA has shown itself to be highly reliable (Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.98) with strong construct and face validity, and consequently has been used in multiple research projects as well as for organizational diagnosis and consulting (Laub,).

Sendjaya et al. (2008) developed the *Servant Leadership Behavior Scale*, a multidimensional measure of servant leadership behavior. Sendjaya et al. reported both qualitative and quantitative studies to establish preliminary psychometric properties for

a 35-item instrument, measuring six-dimensions: voluntary subordination, authentic self, covenantal relationship, responsible morality, transcendental spirituality, and transforming influence. Lawshe's (1975) content validity ratio was calculated and used to demonstrate the instrument's content validity (as cited in Sendjaya et al.). Moreover, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to model the factor structures of the instrument, allowing independent analyses of both the measurement and structural components of the construct. The internal consistency reliabilities ranged from 0.72 to 0.93, exceeding the recommended level of 0.70 for Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Nunnally, 1978, as cited in Sendjaya et al.).

To measure Page and Wong's (2000) conceptual model of servant leadership, Dennis and Winston (2003) developed a 99-item scale and conducted a factor analysis that produced three factors: empowerment, service, and vision. The reliability or internal consistency values, measured by the Cronbach coefficient alpha, ranged from 0.89 to 0.97. There was no mention of any methods used for ensuring content, criterion, or construct validity.

Dennis and Bocarnea (2005) presented an instrument to measure Patterson's (2003) construct of servant leadership. The researchers used three separate data collections to reduce a 71-item scale to 42 items yielding five factors: empowerment, love, humility, trust, and vision. They used De Vellis' (1991) test development processes and scale development guidelines to ensure face and content validity (as cited in Dennis & Bocarnea). Empirical results of the study established both criterion-related and construct-related validity. Finally, Cronbach coefficient alphas ranged from 0.92 to 0.94, thereby validating the reliability of the study.

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) reviewed the literature on servant leadership and developed 56 subscale items to measure 11 potential dimensions of servant leadership: calling, listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, growth, and community building. They confirmed the factor structure and assessed convergent, divergent, and predictive validity. The results of the factor analysis derived five conceptually and empirically distinct servant leadership factors: altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organizational stewardship. They also conducted data analysis on the five-factor construct and confirmed the revised 23-item instrument's internal consistency (i.e., Cronbach's coefficient alpha ranged from 0.82 to 0.92).

Liden et al. (2008) identified a servant leadership measure created by identifying nine dimensions. The researchers developed and subjected relevant items to factor analysis, resulting in a 7-factor solution. Liden et al. verified the 7-factor model with exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, and further validated a 28-item servant leadership scale by regressing outcomes on the servant leadership dimensions, controlling for transformational leadership and leader-member exchange (LMX) in a multi-level

hierarchical linear modeling analysis. Their results suggested that servant leadership is a multidimensional construct and at the individual level makes a unique contribution beyond transformational leadership and LMX in explaining community citizenship behaviors, in-role performance, and organizational commitment.

Defining and Measuring Leadership Effectiveness

While conceptions of leadership effectiveness differ from one writer to another, most researchers evaluate effectiveness in terms of the consequences of the leader's influence on an individual, team, or organization (Yukl, 2010). According to Reave (2005), leadership effectiveness can be measured in two ways: (a) by achievement of organizational goals such as productivity and profit; or (b) by subjective evaluations from subordinates, peers, and superiors.

Both servant leadership and spirituality, separately, can increase leadership effectiveness and inspire higher individual and organizational performance since they increase mutual appreciation, affection, and trust among members of the organization (Yukl, 2010). Wong and Page's (2003) servant leadership model conceptualizes effective leadership as an outcome variable. However, most evidence about the positive effects of servant leadership is from anecdotal accounts and case studies (Yukl). According to Fry (2003), spirituality can create vision and value congruence, fostering higher levels of individual commitment and performance. In an examination of the scholarly literature, Dent et al. (2005) noted an increased interest in linking spirituality and leadership effectiveness, and concluded that most researchers hypothesized a correlation between spirituality and leadership effectiveness, measured through organizational productivity. Reave's (2005) exhaustive review of the literature showed a clear consistency between the constructs of spirituality and effective leadership. The review also included empirical studies that showed a positive relationship of spiritual beliefs (e.g., viewing work as a higher calling from God) and spiritual practices (e.g., meditating, reading scripture, and journaling) to individual leader effectiveness (Anderson, Levinson, Barker, & Kiewra, 1999; Alexander, Swanson, Rainforth, & Carlisle, 1993; Delbecq, 1999) and organizational performance (Paloutzian, Emmons, & Keortge, 2003; Wresniewski, McCauley, Rozin, & Schwartz, 1997).

One instrument for measuring leadership effectiveness is Denison et al.'s (1995) subjective evaluation model, an instrument consisting of questions related to leadership roles as perceived by a leader's subordinates, as well as questions related to effectiveness as perceived by a leader's superior. Denison et al.'s 21-item questionnaire empirically tested Quinn's (1984) spatial model that described the leadership domain in terms of eight leadership roles. The first 16 questions relate to the eight leadership roles and had Cronbach coefficient alphas ranging from 0.61 to 0.87 (Denison et al.). The last five questions measure overall assessment of leadership effectiveness and are combined

into a single index measure. The coefficient alpha for the 5-item index was 0.83 (Denison et al.).

Servant Leadership-Spirituality Construct and Propositions

Given the similarities in the spirituality and servant leadership constructs, one could posit that servant leadership is contained within the construct of spirituality, in that servant leadership is a manifestation of altruistic love in the action of pursuing transcendent vision (Sendjaya et al., 2008). However, one could argue the contrary, whereby spirituality is the motivational basis for servant leaders to engage others in authentic and profound ways that transform them to be what they are capable of becoming. This view is more compelling, according to Sendjaya et al., since there are areas of divergence in the spiritual and servant leadership models.

There are areas of convergence and divergence between servant leadership and spirituality. Both the servant leadership and spirituality constructs appeal to virtuous leadership practices and intrinsic motivating factors to cultivate a sense of meaning and purpose. Both constructs attempt to facilitate an integrated workplace where individuals engage in meaningful and intrinsically motivating work (Sendjaya et al., 2008). This leadership orientation finds its expression through service, which becomes a source from which leaders derive meaning and purpose (Fry, 2003; Sendjaya et al.). Two of Fry's three spiritual attributes (vision, altruistic love, and hope/faith) are contained in the servant leadership construct: vision (Russell & Stone, 2002; Wong & Page, 2003) and love (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003). Hope/faith is not conceptualized in current servant leadership models, but should be since servant leaders may be driven by hope/faith, an outflow of spirituality, resulting in a sense of calling and meaning (Sendjaya et al.). Therefore, the combined spirituality-servant leadership construct proposes a positive relationship between the leader's spiritual beliefs (i.e., independent variable), a leader's servant leadership behaviors (i.e., mediating variable), a leader's spiritual practices (i.e., moderating variable), and a leader's effectiveness as perceived by their followers (i.e., dependent variable; see Figure 1).

The construct is a combination of a generalized adaptation of the literature's servant leadership frameworks (e.g., Patterson, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002; Wong & Page, 2003) and spirituality constructs (e.g., Fry, 2003; Kriger & Seng, 2005), and includes spiritual beliefs and practices (hope/faith and works) as variables. In this adaptation, spiritual beliefs (hope and faith in God) are causal factors in the formation of values (integrity, character-orientation, and agapao love), which leads to servant leadership behaviors (e.g., respecting, treating fairly, listening to, appreciating, caring for, loving, and submitting to others). The importance of spiritual beliefs to the formation of values and behaviors in the spirituality-servant leadership construct is supported conceptually by Fry's sense of calling to serve a higher purpose, Kriger and Seng's (2005) "?" or God variable, and Patterson's assertion that servant leadership is spiritual in nature.
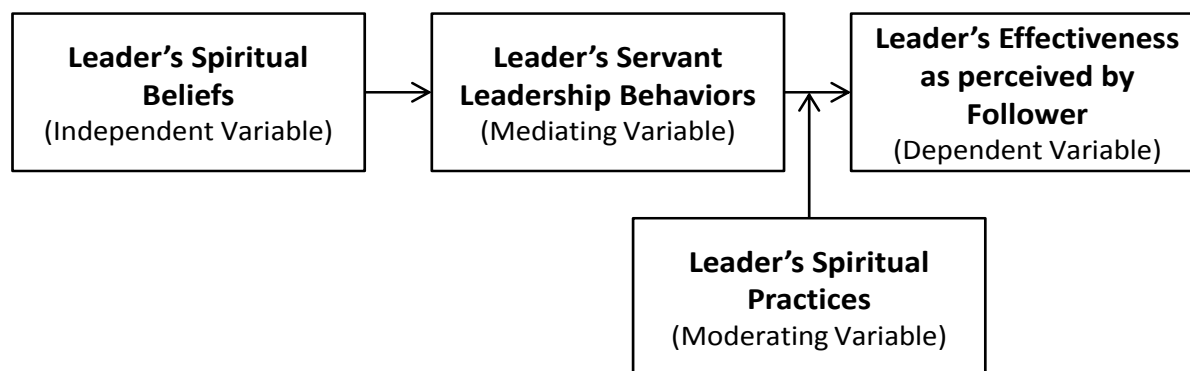
```
┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│ Leader's Spiritual │      │ Leader's Servant  │      │ Leader's Effectiveness │
│ Beliefs         │ ───> │ Leadership Behaviors│ ──> │ as perceived by    │
│ (Independent Variable) │  │ (Mediating Variable) │     │ Follower         │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      │ (Dependent Variable) │
                                                   └─────────────────┘
                                  ┌─────────────────┐
                                  │ Leader's Spiritual │
                                  │ Practices       │
                                  │ (Moderating Variable) │
                                  └─────────────────┘
```

Figure 1: A combined spirituality-servant leadership construct

Moreover, the spiritual practices of the servant leader (e.g., praying, meditating, and reading scripture) moderate the leader's effectiveness, as perceived by followers. According to Neal (2000), practicing spirituality is taking time for individual self-examination and communicating with God through prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, and journaling. Reave (2005) conducted an exhaustive literature review on the effects of spirituality, particularly spiritual practices, on leadership effectiveness. According to Reave, higher levels of spiritual practice activity result in higher leader motivation, strengthen leader-follower relationships, increase leader resilience, and improve group performance.

Research shows that a leader's increased engagement in specific spiritual practices, such as prayer and meditation, leads to greater leader motivation (Alexander, Rainforth, & Gelderloos, 1991), strengthens leader relationships (Anderson et al., 1999), improves leader resilience (Quick, Gavin, Cooper, Quick, & Gilbert, 2000), and increases leadership effectiveness (McCollum, 1999). In empirical studies, spiritual practices have created quantifiable improvements in the leader's performance measures (Alexander et al., 1991; Anderson et al., 1999) and organizational productivity (Alexander et al., 1993).

According to Sendjaya and Pekerti (2010), spirituality is a major construct of servant leadership and consists of four elements: clarity of purpose, sense of wholeness, interconnectedness, and religiousness. The last element, religiousness, is "a system of organized beliefs and worship which a person practices" (Enblem, 1992, as cited in Reave, 2005, p. 45) and includes spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation. These practices can engender followers' trust in their leader as followers perceive that the leader is concerned for their well-being (Sendjaya & Pekerti). Outward focused prayer and meditation can result in a follower's conscious awareness that their leader is concerned about their needs and desires, which in turn leads to the followers' increased faith and trust in their leader. According to Joseph and Winston (2005), a leader's concern for others that places the followers' self-interests as priorities is a central element of servant leadership and elicits trust from the followers for the leaders. Higher levels of concern for others can result from leaders' prayers for others and are

encouraged by scripture's commands to love and serve others. Higher levels of concern for others result in higher levels of trust, a universally positively endorsed leadership attribute (Den Hartog et al., 1999), which in turn leads to increased followers' perceptions of the leader's effectiveness.

A review and analysis of the literature suggests three propositions related to the spirituality-servant leadership construct: (a) a leader's spiritual beliefs foster the development of certain behaviors associated with servant leadership; (b) servant leaders are effective, as perceived by their followers; and (c) a leader's spiritual practices moderate the perceived effectiveness of servant leaders.

Measurements and Testing

Three instruments will be used to measure the hypothesized relationships between spirituality, servant leadership, and leadership effectiveness. Two subsets of Fetzer's (1999) BMMRS (see Appendix A), Liden et al.'s (2008) 28-item instrument (see Appendix B), and Denison et al.'s (1995) 21-item questionnaire (see Appendix C) will be used to measure spiritual beliefs, spiritual practices, servant leadership, and leadership effectiveness, respectively.

To test the propositions, data obtained from the survey instruments will be summarized and analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics for all variables will be calculated. Furthermore, to test the relationship between each of the variables, separate Pearson's product moment coefficients of correlation, a dimensionless index and estimation of the ratio of the covariance of two variables to the product of their standard deviations (Rodgers & Nicewander, 1988), will be calculated. The Pearson coefficient is a measure of relation, has a range between +1 and −1, and is used to measure the strength of linear dependence between two variables. If a positive and statistically significant relationship is found (i.e., r-value is positive and p-value is less than 0.05), then the hypotheses will be supported.

Conclusion

In creating a model of effective leadership, this paper proposes the dimensions of spiritual beliefs (i.e., hope and faith in God) and spiritual practices (i.e., praying, meditating, and reading scripture), which could be studied as mediating and moderating variables, respectively, in a combined spirituality-servant leadership construct. Examining the empirical relationships between spirituality and servant leadership can give scholars valuable insight into leadership issues relevant to today's business leaders.

About the Author

GT Freeman earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering at North Carolina State University, an MBA at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership at Regent University's School of Global Leadership & Entrepreneurship. GT is an adjunct professor at Montreat College and a financial services executive responsible for organizational and operational effectiveness at a Fortune 500 insurance and retirement services firm.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to GT Freeman [Email: glenfre@regent.edu].

References

Alexander, C. N., Rainforth, M. V., & Gelderloos, P. (1991). Transcendental meditation, self-actualization, and psychological health: A conceptual overview and statistical meta-analysis. *Journal of Behavior & Personality, 6*(5), 189-248.

Alexander, C. N., Swanson, G. C., Rainforth, M. V., & Carlisle, T. W. (1993). Effects of the Transcendental Meditation program on stress reduction, health, and employee development: A prospective study in two occupational settings. *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping: An International Journal, 6*, 245-262.

Anderson, V. L., Levinson, E. M., Barker, W., & Kiewra, K. R. (1999). The effects of meditation on teacher-perceived occupational stress, state and trait anxiety, and burnout. *School Psychology Quarterly, 14*(1), 3-18.

Banutu-Gomez, M. B. (2004). Great leaders teach exemplary followership and serve as servant leaders. *The Journal of the American Academy of Business, 4*(1), 143-152.

Bennett, J. L. (2001). Trainers as leaders of learning. *Training & Development, 55*(3), 43-45.

Bowie, N. (2000). A Kantian theory of leadership. *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 21*(4), 185-193.

Choi, Y., & Mai-Dalton, R. R. (1998). On the leadership function of self-sacrifice. *The Leadership Quarterly, 9*(4), 475-501.

Delbecq, A. L. (1999). Christian spirituality and contemporary business leadership. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12*(4), 349.

Den Hartog, D. N., House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Ruiz-Quintanilla, S. A., Dorfman, P. W., et al. (1999). Culture specific and cross-culturally generalizable implicit leadership

theories: Are attributes of charismatic/transformational leadership universally endorsed? *The Leadership Quarterly, 10*(2), 219–256.

Denison, D. R., Hooijberg, R., & Quinn, R. E. (1995). Paradox and performance: Toward a theory of behavior complexity in managerial leadership. *Organization Science, 6*(5), 524-540.

Dennis, R. S., & Bocarnea, M. (2005). Development of a servant leadership assessment instrument. *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 26*(8), 600-615.

Dennis, R. S., & Winston, B. E. (2003). A factor analysis of Page and Wong's servant leadership instrument. *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 24*(8), 455-459.

Dent, E. B., Higgins, M. E., & Wharff, D. M. (2005). Spirituality and leadership: An empirical review of definitions, distinctions, and embedded assumptions. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(5), 625-653.

Errol, E. J., & Winston, B. E. (2005). A correlation of servant leadership, leader trust, and organizational trust. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 26*(1), 6-22.

Farling, M. L., Stone, A. G., & Winston, B. E. (1999). Servant leadership: Setting the stage for empirical research. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 6*(1/2), 49-72.

Fetzer Institute (1999). *Multidimensional measurement of religiousness/spirituality*. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://www.fetzer.org/images/stories/pdf/MultidimensionalBooklet.pdf

Fry, L. W. (2003). Toward a theory of spiritual leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 14*(6), 693-727.

Fry, L. W. (2005). Introduction to The Leadership Quarterly special issue: Toward a paradigm of spiritual leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(5), 619-622.

Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power & greatness* (25th Anniversary Ed.). Mahway, NJ: Paulist Press.

Hart, S. L., & Quinn, R. E. (1993). Roles executives play: CEO's, behavioral complexity, and firm performance. *Human Relations, 46*(5), 543-574.

Irving, J. A. (August, 2004). Servant leadership and the effectiveness of teams: Findings and implications. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable Proceedings*. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/home.shtml

Joseph, E. E., & Winston, B. E. (2005). A correlation of servant leadership, leader trust, and organizational trust. *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 26*(1/2), 6-22.

Koenig, H. G. (2008). Concerns about measuring spirituality in research. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 196*(5), 349-355.

Kriger, M. P., & Hanson, B. J. (1999). A value-based paradigm for creating truly healthy organizations. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 12*(4), 302-317.

Kriger, M. P., & Seng, Y. (2005). Leadership with inner meaning: A contingency theory of leadership based on the worldviews of five religions. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(5), 771-806.

Laub, J. (2003, August). From paternalism to the servant organization: Expanding the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) model. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable Proceedings*. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/home.shtml

Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Zhao, H., & Henderson, D. (2008). Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment. *The Leadership Quarterly, 19*(2), 161-177.

Lloyd, B. (1996). A new approach to leadership. *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal, 17*(7), 29-31

Maciariello, J. (2003). Lessons in leadership and management from Nehemiah. *Theology Today, 60*(3), 397-407.

Markow, F., & Klenke, K. (2005). The effects of personal meaning and calling on organization commitment: An empirical investigation of spiritual leadership. *The International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 13*(1), 8-27.

Marquardt, M. J. (2000). Action learning and leadership. *The Learning Organization, 7*(5), 233-240.

McCollum, B. (1999). Leadership development and self-development: An empirical study. *Career Development International, 4*(3), 149-157.

Ndoria, J. (August, 2004). Servant leadership: Academic jargon or lifestyle? *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable Proceedings*. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/home.shtml

Neal, J. A. (2000). Work as service to the divine: Giving our gifts selflessly and with joy. *American Behavioral Scientist, 43*(8), 1316-1333.

Northouse, P. G. (2010). *Leadership: theory and practice* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Page, D., & Wong, P. T. P. (2000). A conceptual framework for measuring servant leadership. In S. Adjibolosoo (Ed.), *The human factor in shaping the course of history and development*. Boston, MA: University Press of America.

Paloutzian, R. F., Emmons, R. A., & Keortge, S. G. (2003). Spiritual well-being, spiritual intelligence, and healthy workplace policy. In R. A. Giacolone, & C. L. Jurkiewicz (Eds.), *Handbook of workplace spirituality and organizational performance* (pp. 123-137). New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Parolini, J. L. (August, 2004). Effective servant leadership: A model incorporating servant leadership and the competing values framework. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable Proceedings*. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/home.shtml

Patterson, K. (2003, August). Servant leadership: A theoretical model. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable Proceedings*. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/home.shtml

Quick, J. C., Gavin, J. H., Cooper, C. L., Quick, J. D., & Gilbert, R. E. (2000). Executive health: Building strength, managing risks. *The Academy of Management Executive, 14*(2), 34-46.

Quinn, R. E., & Rohrbaugh, J. (1981). A competing values approach to organizational effectiveness. *Public Productivity Review, 5*(2), 122-140.

Quinn, R. E., & Rohrbaugh, J. (1983). A spatial model of effectiveness criteria: Towards a competing values approach to organizational analysis. *Management Science, 29*(3), 363-367.

Reave, L. (2005). Spiritual values and practices related to leadership effectiveness. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(5), 655-687.

Rippentrop, A. E., Altmaier, E. M., Chen, J. J., Found, E. M., & Keffala, V. J. (2005). The relationship between religion/spirituality and physical health, mental health, and pain in a chronic pain population. *Pain, 116*(3), 311-321.

Rodgers, J. L., & Nicewander, W. A. (1988). Thirteen ways to look at the correlation coefficient. *The American Statistician, 42*(1), 59-66.

Rowe, R. (2003). Leaders as servants. *New Zealand Management, 50*(1), 24-26.

Russell, R. F. (2001). The role of values in servant leadership. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 22*(2), 76-85.

Russell, R. F., & Stone, A. G. (2002). A review of servant leadership attributes: Developing a practical model. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 23*(3), 145-157.

Sendjaya, S. (2003, August). Development and validation of servant leadership behavior scale. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable Proceedings*. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/home.shtml

Sendjaya, S., & Pekerti, A. (2010). Servant leadership as antecedent of trust in organizations. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 31*(7), 643-663.

Sendjaya, S., Sarros, J. C., & Santora, J. C. (2008). Defining and measuring servant leadership behavior in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies, 45*(2), 402-424.

Stone, A. G., Russell, R. F., & Patterson, K. (2003, August). Transformational versus servant leadership: A difference in leader focus. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable Proceedings*. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/home.shtml

Whetstone, J. T. (2002). Personalism and moral leadership: the servant leader with a transforming vision. *Business Ethics: A European Review, 11*(4), 385-392.

Wilson, R. T. (1998). Servant leadership. *The Physician Executive, 24*(5), 6-13.

Winston, B. E. (2003, August). Extending Patterson's servant leadership model: Explaining how leaders and followers interact in a circular model. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable Proceedings*. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/home.shtml

Wong, P. T. P. (2003). An opponent-process model of servant leadership and a typology of leadership styles. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://twu.ca/academics/graduate/leadership/servant-leadership/servant-leadership-roundtable-typology.pdf

Wong, P. T. P., & Page, D. (2003, August). Servant leadership: An opponent-process model and the revised servant leadership profile. *Servant Leadership Research*

Roundtable Proceedings. Retrieved November 26, 2010 from http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/home.shtml

Wresniewski, A., McCauley, C., Rozin, P., & Schwartz, B. (1997). Jobs, careers, and callings: People's relations to their work. *Journal of Research in Personality, 31*(1), 21–33.

Yukl, G. (2010). *Leadership in organizations* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Appendix A

Subset of Fetzer's (1999) *Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiousness/Spirituality*

Spiritual Beliefs

1. I believe in a God who watches over me.
2. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world.

Spiritual Experiences

3. I feel God's presence
4. I find strength and comfort in my religion.
5. I feel deep inner peace or harmony.
6. I desire to be closer to or in union with God.
7. I feel God's love for me, directly or through others.
8. I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.

Spiritual Coping

9. I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force.
10. I work together with God as partners.
11. I look to God for strength, support, and guidance.
12. I feel God is punishing me for my sins or lack of spirituality.
13. I wonder whether God has abandoned me.
14. I try to make sense of the situation and decide what to do without relying on God.
15. To what extent is your religion involved in dealing with stressful situations in any way.

Spiritual Practices

16. How often do you pray privately in places other than at a church or synagogue?
17. Within your religious or spiritual tradition, how often do you meditate?
18. How often do you watch or listen to religious programs on TV or radio?
19. How often do you read the Bible or other religious literature?
20. How often are prayers or grace said before or after meals in your home?

Overall Self-Ranking

21. To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?
22. To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?

Appendix B

Liden et al.'s (2008) Servant Leadership Scale

1. I would seek help from my manager if I had a personal problem.
2. My manager cares about my personal well-being.
3. My manager takes time to talk to me on a personal level.
4. My manager can recognize when I'm down without asking me.
5. My manager emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.
6. My manager is always interested in helping people in our community.
7. My manager is involved in community activities.
8. I am encouraged by my manager to volunteer in the community.
9. My manager can tell if something is going wrong.
10. My manager is able to effectively think through complex problems.
11. My manager has a thorough understanding of our organization and its goals.
12. My manager can solve work problems with new or creative ideas.
13. My manager gives me the responsibility to make important decisions about my job.
14. My manager encourages me to handle important work decisions on my own.
15. My manager gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.
16. When I have to make an important decision at work, I do not have to consult my manager first.
17. My manager makes my career development a priority.
18. My manager is interested in making sure that I achieve my career goals.
19. My manager provides me with work experiences that enable me to develop new skills.
20. My manager wants to know about my career goals.
21. My manager seems to care more about my success than his/her own.
22. My manager puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.
23. My manager sacrifices his/her own interests to meet my needs.
24. My manager does what she/he can do to make my job easier.
25. My manager holds high ethical standards.
26. My manager is always honest.
27. My manager would not compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success.
28. My manager values honest more than profits.

Appendix C

Modified Denison et al.'s (1995) Leadership Effectiveness Survey

To what extent does the leader…

1. Come up with inventive ideas
2. Experiment with new concepts and ideas
3. Exert influence in the industry
4. Develop and maintain a network of external contacts
5. See that the company delivers on stated goals
6. Get the company to meet expected goals
7. Make the company's role very clear
8. Clarify the company's priorities and directions
9. Anticipate workflow problems, avoids crisis
10. Bring a sense of order into the company
11. Maintain tight logistical control
12. Compare records, reports, and so on to detect discrepancies
13. Surface key differences among team members, then works collaboratively to resolve them
14. Encourage participative decision making in the team
15. Show empathy and concern in dealing with direct reports
16. Treat each individual in a sensitive, caring way

For Questions 17-18: To what extent does the leader…
For Questions 19-21: To what extent is the leader…

17. Meet performance standards
18. Compare favorably to peers in the industry
19. A role model
20. Successful overall
21. Effective overall