Team Effectiveness and Six Essential Servant Leadership Themes:

A Regression Model Based on items in the Organizational Leadership Assessment

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As evidenced by LaFasto and Larson's (2001) work with over 6,000 team members and leaders, interest in teams continues to capture the attention of both leadership scholars and practitioners. Because of this, research into what leadership behaviors contribute to team effectiveness becomes relevant for those at the crossroads of theory and practice. Utilizing the Organizational Leadership Assessment as a measure of servant leadership and the Team Effectiveness Questionnaire as a measure of team effectiveness, this paper presents a multiple regression model that is able to explain 39% of the variance in the effectiveness of teams and has a significance level of .000000. This study was conducted in an international nonprofit organization and included over 700 participants.

Interest in the theory and practice of teams has grown dramatically in recent years as evidenced by LaFasto and Larson's (2001) research with over 6,000 team members and leaders. This emergence of teams may be traced, in part, back to societal shifts that occurred in the 1960's and 1970's. One student of the impact of these shifts on organizational life was Robert K. Greenleaf. Writing in the 1970's, Greenleaf (1977) noted that in light of the revolution of expectation among young people, one who presides over a successful business "will need to evolve from being the *chief* into the *builder of the team*" (p. 85). It is arguable that such societal and organizational observations are even more relevant today as leaders seek to engage the question of how to lead organizations in the increasingly decentralized and team-based structures that are a growing mark of systems in the 21st century.

Some have argued that these shifts toward team-based structures are consistent with the shifts from Newtonian to Quantum paradigms. Addressing this point, Margaret Wheatley (1999) argues that "*relationship* is the key determiner of everything" (p. 11), and roots this argument in physical realities at the subatomic level. For instance, Wheatley notes that "subatomic particles come into form and are observed only as they are in

relationship to something else. They do not exist as independent 'things'" (p. 11). From this, Wheatley argues that relationships, and not lone individuals, are the basic organizing unit of life. Therefore, participation and cooperation are essential for survival in this world of interconnected and networked organizations. These shifts toward the quantum world of thinking and organizing not only place an emphasis on relationships as the basic organizing unit, but also emphasize (a) the whole over the part, (b) dynamic processes over static processes, (c) organizational networks over organizational hierarchies, and (d) systemic interconnectedness over linear progression and thought. The holistic focus on interconnectedness, relationship, and dynamic process in networked organizations naturally lends itself to the use of relational type organizational structures such as teams.

Organizations reflect these macro shifts in our societies and lead to a critical leadership question for those at the crossroads of leadership research and practice: "What form of leadership will be most effective in our emerging world of team-based and networked systems?" This question provided the impetus for this study. The study was designed primarily to examine the effect of servant leadership on team effectiveness by examine which items in the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) will have the most significant impact on team effectiveness. Because the OLA as a single measure of servant leadership was the single greatest predictor of team effectiveness in a previous analysis (Irving & Longbotham, 2006), the authors concluded that a closer examination of the OLA was in order. Based on this examination, the authors present a multiple regression model that explores this effect and identify six essential servant leadership themes that are especially predictive of team effectiveness. Toward this end, the authors now review the essential literature surrounding servant leadership and teams, present an overview of the methods and results, and then discuss at length the findings and implications of this study.

Literature Review

Servant Leadership

Through his initial work on servant leadership, Greenleaf (1977) provided a foundation for the contemporary study and emerging discipline of servant leadership. The key to Greenleaf's conceptualization of servant leadership is his understanding of what characterizes the servant leader. In response to the question, "Who is the servant-leader?" Greenleaf (1977) provided his now frequently quoted response:

> The servant-leader *is* servant first…. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first…. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived (p. 27)?

While persons in the "leader-first" model may utilize service at times for the purpose of realizing the visions and goals of the leader and/or the organization, the "servant-first" model is focused on making "sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served" (p. 27), and as such is a follower-oriented theory of leadership.

Building on this servant-first notion of leadership, Laub (1999), Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004), and Matteson and Irving (2005, 2006) all argue that the focus of the servant leader is on that which is best for their followers. On this point, Laub (2005) writes, "servant leadership is an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader" (p. 160). Stone, Russell, and Patterson identify this point as a key to understanding what differentiates servant leadership from transformational leadership. They argue that while transformational leadership tends to be focused on an organizational vision—what is best for the organization—servant leadership is focused foremost on that which is best for the followers. Matteson and Irving (2005) take this a step further by contrasting the focus, motivation, context, and outcomes of transformational, servant, and self-sacrificial approaches to leadership.

From the early 1990s through 2003 the work surrounding servant leadership focused on identifying themes to help to operationalize the concept of servant leadership. Graham (1991) stressed the inspirational and moral dimensions. Buchen (1998) argued that self-identity, capacity for reciprocity, relationship building, and

preoccupation with the future were essential themes. Spears (1998) emphasized the dimensions of listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment, and community building. Farling et al. (1999) argued for the importance of vision, influence credibility, trust, and service. Laub (1999) put forward valuing people, developing people, building community, displaying authenticity, providing leadership, and sharing leadership. Russell (2001) argued for vision, credibility, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciating others, and empowerment. Patterson (2003) presented the dimensions of *agapáo* love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service as the essential dimensions of servant leadership. This study focuses on Laub's servant leadership themes.

While these operational themes have been helpful for the study of servant leadership, recent developments of empirical measures for servant leadership have provided a platform for quantitative studies of servant leadership. Of the instruments that have been developed to date—measures such as Laub (1999), Sendjaya (2003), Page and Wong (2000), Dennis (2004)—Laub's (1999) Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) has been the predominate instrument for measuring servant leadership at the organizational level. This is evidenced by works such as Drury (2004), Hebert (2004), Irving (2004, 2005), Laub (1999, 2003), and Ledbetter (2003). The OLA is the instrument used to measure servant leadership in this study.

Team Effectiveness
Team effectiveness has been in evidence since the construction of the planet's oldest monoliths in Malta c. 4000 B. C. Unfortunately, factors contributing to team effectiveness were not documented until the beginning of the 20th century when Elton Mayo first 'uncovered the importance of teams' (Parker, 1990, p. 16). Mayo noted the importance of leadership and the fostering of conditions in the organization conducive to developing effective teams. In the 1930's, Kurt Lewin's work narrowed this perspective and focused on group dynamics as the means of developing effective teams. McGregor (1960) in his *The Human Side of Enterprise* further narrowed the focus to that of individual employees, seeing them as more than just "cog[s] in the system." It was the work of Blake and Mouton (1964), though, that first linked team effectiveness to leadership style.

In the 1980's and 1990's the number of teams exploded as teams became an integral part of organizational life in the United States (Longbotham, 2000). With this explosion came the need to understand how to have effective teams. Most "how to" literature focused "on team-building, team dynamics, conflict resolution, decision-making, and other team technologies" (Hacker, 1999, p. 61). There were, however, other voices. W. E. Deming's (1986) book, *Out of the Crisis*, recognized the importance of *leadership* in the effectiveness of teams. This view was reiterated by Scholtes (1988) who viewed leadership's importance so strongly that he attributed *any* team failure to indifferent or uninvolved leadership (Longbotham, 2000). The literature identifies many factors that may contribute to team effectiveness. As key as some of these factors may be to team effectiveness, it is the:

> role of the leader [that] is the toughest, most-important role for the team's eventual success or failure . . . . It has been said that the role of the leader is "like giving a brain to the scarecrow, a heart to the tin man, and courage to the cowardly lion." Teams with good leaders can accomplish results even when it appears that the deck is stacked against them. (Furman, 1995, p. 25)

In addition to these contentions from Deming, Scholtes, and Furman that *leadership* of teams is important, Harrington (1991) claimed that the focus on team-building, team dynamics, conflict resolution, and other *team* technologies was on "the wrong part of the business" (p. x).

Ideas continue to be bandied about with respect to team effectiveness. A recent Amazon.com search of popular press materials yielded 128 books on team effectiveness, indicating that the use of teams is alive and well, and there is considerable interest in an easy "how to" have an effective team. A search for team effectiveness in academic literature, however, yielded few empirical studies. Most of articles propose conceptual models or have a very narrow focus. Recently though, there has been an increasing focus on research with respect to teams. Natalie, Sora & Kayalipurapu (2004) identified mission, vision, and leadership as common themes in a qualitative study of 60 leaders of teams. Brenegan (2003) contended that knowing one's team was a crucial factor in effective team leadership. Kuo (2004) studied transactional, transformational, and paternalistic leadership and found all three to be highly correlated with team effectiveness. This investigation of servant leadership and team effectiveness confirms and augments the findings linking leadership and team effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem and Associated Research Questions

Impact of Servant Leadership on Team Effectiveness

As noted in the introduction, the use of team approaches by leaders in the organizational context continues to grow substantially. While it may be assumed that leadership that works well in one organizational level will likewise be effective in teams, it is vital that those at the crossroads of leadership scholarship and practice address the important questions facing leaders of team-based organizations. While the question may be framed broadly as, "What form of leadership will be most effective in our emerging world of team-based and networked systems?" it has been the interest of the authors to examine in particular the effect of servant leadership on team effectiveness by means of examining which of the individual items in the Organizational Leadership Assessment will have the greatest impact on team effectiveness. In light of this, the primary research question driving this study is, "Which servant leadership themes will have the greatest impact team effectiveness and to what degree?" Based upon this question and the associated results, the authors propose a model for understanding significant predictors of team effectiveness.

Method

Sample Characteristics

The research sample for this study is drawn from a US division of an international nonprofit organization. The sample frame included around 1,800 members. Because the organization and the US division in particular utilize team-based structures, this was an appropriate sample frame for the study. The research sample was collected from these 1,800 members in an open invitation by means of e-mail to each of the divisional members in order to provide equal opportunity for member participation, helping to insure a random sample, and to be consistent with the method of communication frequently utilized in the normal flow of information within the organization. The number of participants in the study was 740. Of the 740 participants, 719 participants provided complete data that could be included in the analyses; this number represented a response rate of 40.5%. The participants: (a) were 47% female and 52.2% male, with .8% not reporting their gender; (b) were 6.9% top leadership, 23% management, and 69.2% workforce, with .9% not reporting their position; and (c) 1.2% had completed high school, 86.1% had completed bachelors studies, 11.6% had completed masters studies, and .7% had completed doctoral studies, with .4% not reporting the highest level of education completed. Participation in the study was both voluntary and anonymous for these participants.

Once participants received an e-mail invitation to participate in the study, they were invited to a URL containing a web-based format of the instruments identified above—the OLA, and the Team Effectiveness Questionnaire (TEQ). In addition to these instruments, basic demographic questions related to participant position level, gender, and educational level were included. Utilizing this web-based format allowed for an electronically-mediated collection of the research data. Due to the geographically dispersed nature of the organizational division throughout the US, members of the sample frame were accustomed to using web-based resources. The instrument was available to the sample frame for a period of 2 weeks. Within this 2-week period, the minimum sample size was obtained.

For the purpose of this study, the operational definition of "team" was adopted from Larson and LaFasto's (1989) work. In distinguishing teams from groups, Larson and LaFasto note that a team has (a) two or more people, (b) a specific performance objective or recognizable goal to be attained, and (c) a coordination of activity among the members of the team that is requisite for the attainment of the team goal or objective. While some groups may share the first two characteristics of this definition, it is the coordination of activity that is a distinguishing mark of teams. In this study, team leaders and team participants share all three characteristics.

Instrumentation

Participants in this study completed two instruments: The OLA, which is a measure of servant leadership at the organizational level, and the TEQ, which provides a collective measure of team effectiveness. In this study the alpha coefficients for each of these scales are: (a) .9744 for the OLA, and (b) .8224 for the TEQ.

Results

Impact of Servant Leadership on Team Effectiveness

The ideal way to study the impact of servant leadership on team effectiveness would have been a designed experiment that controlled everything except the servant leadership behaviors being tested (Box & Draper, 1987, p. 15). The reality of the organizational world is that gaining permission to experiment with teams would be unlikely. The next best option is to bring empirical tools to a specific organizational setting as was done in this study.

The goal in the data analysis was to develop a model for team effectiveness using individual components of the OLA to see which aspects of servant leadership at the organizational level most influenced team effectiveness in this setting. The model was developed using all-possible regressions from one to ten independent variables. Determining the best subset of independent variables entails two opposing objectives: simplicity and fit. The goal "is to achieve a balance between simplicity (as few variables as possible) and fit (as many as are needed)" (Longbotham, 2000, p. 25). With this goal in mind, the best model has six OLA items. The increase from a model with six variables to one of seven had an increase in R-squared of only .0027. R-squared will always increase with the addition of variables. The criterion used to determine the best six-factor model was lowest mean-squared error (MSE) or the "tightest" fit. The specifics for the possible six-item models are displayed in Table 1 with the chosen model first.

Table 1
Model Summaries

Model Size	R-Squared	Root MSE	Variables in Model
6	0.3867	0.3518	OLA 14, 30, 43, 47, 49, 55
6	0.3862	0.3520	OLA 7, 14, 30, 47, 49, 55
6	0.3856	0.3521	OLA 14, 30, 38, 47, 49, 55
6	0.3847	0.3524	OLA 14, 30, 47, 49, 55, 59

Variables in Best Model
OLA_14, OLA_30, OLA_43, OLA_47, OLA_49, OLA_55

All six of the OLA items have statistically significant coefficients as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2
Regression Coefficients

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	T – value (Ho: $\beta=0$)	Significance	Decision
Intercept	1.4768	0.095	15.491	0.00000	Reject Ho
OLA_14	0.0969	0.0147	6.598	0.00000	Reject Ho
OLA_30	*0.078*	*0.0179*	*4.348*	*0.00002*	*Reject H_o*
OLA_43	*0.0480*	*0.0191*	*2.134*	*0.03314*	*Reject H_o*
OLA_47	*0.0593*	*0.0219*	*2.700*	*0.00710*	*Reject H_o*
OLA_49	*0.0673*	*0.0169*	*3.968*	*0.00008*	*Reject H_o*
OLA_55	*0.1300*	*0.0165*	*7.878*	*0.00000*	*Reject H_o*

Table 3 shows the analysis of variance for the six-item model. It displays the strength of the model as a whole and provides the probability (p =.000000) that the relationship evidenced by the sample occurred "by chance" if there were no relationship between team effectiveness and the independent variables.

Table 3
Analysis of Variance for Six-Item Multiple Regression

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Significance
Intercept	1	7488.743	7488.743		
Model	6	54.798	9.133	74.23	0.000000
Residual	708	87.108	0.213		

Discussion

Six Essential Servant Leadership Themes
In view of the regression model identified in the analysis, the authors suggest that leaders should attend to six primary servant leadership themes when seeking to effectively lead in team-based environments. These themes, rooted in the six associated OLA items (see Table 4), are (a) Providing Accountability, (b) Supporting and Resourcing, (c) Engaging in Honest Self-Evaluation, (d) Fostering Collaboration, (e) Communicating with Clarity, and (f) Valuing and Appreciating.

Table 4
Regression Model Themes and Associated OLA Items

Servant Leadership Theme	OLA Item #	Associated OLA Item
Providing Accountability	OLA_14	"In general, people within this organization are held accountable for reaching work goals
Supporting and Resourcing	OLA_30	"Managers/Supervisors and top leadership in this organization provide the support and resources needed to help workers meet their goals."
Engaging in Honest Self-Evaluation	OLA_43	"Managers/Supervisors and top leadership in this organization honestly evaluate themselves before seeking to evaluate others."
Fostering Collaboration	OLA_47	"Managers/Supervisors and top leadership in this organization encourage workers to work together rather than competing against each other."
Communicating with Clarity	OLA_49	"Managers/Supervisors and top leadership in this organization communicate clear plans & goals for the organization."
Valuing and Appreciating	OLA_55	"In viewing my own role I feel appreciated by my supervisor for what I contribute."

A discussion surrounding each of these themes is provided here.

Providing Accountability. In the regression model, the first item raises the importance of accountability in the effective accomplishment of team goals. Based on the associated OLA item, it may be argued that leadership that "[holds people] accountable for reaching work goals" (OLA_14) is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. While servant leadership may be inaccurately criticized as a directionless form of leadership, it is

important to note that servant leadership does include accountability and initiative on the part of leaders. In fact, one of Laub's (1999) essential characteristics of servant leadership is Providing Leadership. For Laub, providing leadership involves (a) envisioning the future, (b) taking initiative, and (c) clarifying goals. Rather than servant leadership wandering aimless without initiative, servant leaders care about taking initiative toward goal clarification and attainment. The distinctive of servant leadership is not that goals are not accomplished, but rather that the leader's focus on serving the best interest of followers becomes the essential pathway for reaching goals.

Arguing a similar point, Patterson (2003) notes that pursuing, "a mission does not mean…that organizations with servant leaders are unsuccessful; quite the contrary is true" (p. 4). As Branch (1999) points out, successful organizations such as Synovus, TD Industries, SAS Institute, and Southwest Airlines have been effectively led by servant leaders. One of the explanations for such success is the servant leadership focus on stewardship—a theme that Spears (1998), Nix (1997), and Russell and Stone (2002) all argue is an essential part of servant leadership. Because stewardship implies that both, "leaders and their followers are…stewards or agents of the organizations they lead" (Russell and Stone, p. 149), being accountable for reaching goals is not foreign to servant leadership. In fact, this type of stewardship necessarily involves honesty and accountability (Stone and Russell; Block, 1993; DePree, 1997), since a commitment the development of others—another central feature of servant leadership—is related to fostering ownership and responsibility, and insuring that leaders and followers are accountable for the matters they are responsible for. Such observations from the servant leadership literature help explain the finding in this study related to providing accountability.

Supporting and Resourcing. The second item in the regression model is the importance of leaders supporting workers and providing necessary resources for the accomplishment of their goals. Based on the associated OLA item, the authors argue that leadership which "provid[es] the support and resources needed to help workers meet their goals" (OLA_30) is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. Patterson (2003) argues that the servant leadership dimension of empowerment is one of the primary pathways used by servant leaders in supporting followers in goal clarification and obtainment. On this point, Patterson writes, "by empowering followers, servant leaders are allowing them freedom to proceed toward their goals, helping them make dreams reality" (p. 24).

As with the first theme of providing accountability, this second theme in the regression model supports that servant leadership is not uninterested in goals, but rather is providing creative and supportive pathways toward fostering goal attainment. In light of this ongoing interest in goals, emphasis on the servant leader's role of supporting becomes essential. Rather than servant leaders taking over responsibilities from followers for the purpose of insuring that things are done right and that goals are accomplished, servant leaders focus their energies on providing the necessary support and resources to help followers see their goals become reality. On this point, Blanchard (1996) addresses the concept of responsibility in light of the upside down pyramid, stating that "when you turn the pyramid upside down…the people become responsible, and the job of management is to be responsive to them" (p. 85). Rather than locating responsibility with the leader, it is located primarily with followers. This organizational shift makes the servant leadership dimensions of supporting and resourcing all the more important since the shift in mindset toward working "for your people," means that your purpose as a leader becomes primarily about helping your people "accomplish their goals" (Blanchard, p. 85).

The supporting role of the servant leader helps to insure that followers have the relational and structural support needed to carry out their responsibilities. The resourcing role of the servant leader helps to insure that followers have the human, fiscal, environmental, and material resources necessary to help followers accomplish their goals. This shift in focus toward leader supporting and resourcing is consistent with leadership transitions toward the influence and empowerment of people, which Russell (2001), Miles (1997), and Pollard (1996) see as being accomplished through structuring work environments in such a way that workers feel more effective and motivated.

Engaging in Honest Self-Evaluation. The third item in the regression model is the importance of leader self-evaluation over—or at least prior to—an evaluating of others. Based on the associated OLA item, the authors argue that leadership that is "honestly evaluate[ing] themselves before seeking to evaluate others" (OLA_43) is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. Though counterintuitive for some leaders, self-evaluation plays a central role in the type of servant leadership that is effective in the team-based context. One of the reasons for

this is due the fact that values are often instilled more through actions than words (Malphurs (1996); Peters and Waterman, 1982). Russell (2001) builds on this by explicitly engaging the importance of modeling in servant leadership. On this point, Page and Wong (2006) argue that servant leaders in high-involvement and high-impact teams model for others by setting a personal example in meeting high standards, and investing considerable energy to champion the common goals of the organization. Actions often speak louder than words. Because of this, modeling humility in the form of self-evaluation is an important step in fostering an environment of personal growth and goal accomplishment for leaders and followers alike.

Seeing humility as a foundation dimension of servant leadership, Patterson (2003) describes humility in leadership by describing it as a leader's ability to grasp the idea of not knowing, understanding, or having all the answers. It may be argued that such a conceptualization of humility is foundational to leader self-evaluation. Furthermore, Ferch (2005) argues that, "one of the defining characteristics of human nature is the ability to discern one's own faults, to be broken as the result of such faults, and in response to seek a meaningful change" (p. 97). While leadership in traditional or hierarchal organizational structures often is shaped around a downward flow of evaluation toward workers and followers, the present research demonstrates the importance of evaluation beginning at the level of self-leadership. In light of this, Ferch's observation about human nature holds particular value for those seeking to lead as servants in the team-based environment.

In contrast to humility—which contributes to the leader's self-evaluation—the leader's ego can significantly damage one's capacity for self-evaluation. Noting that the issue of identity was the first and most often recurrent characteristic of the servant leadership, Buchen (1998) associated self-identity with the curtailment and redirection of ego and image. Based on Greenleaf's thinking, Buchen notes that ego holds the capacity to clog reception in leaders. This observation is based on the argument that leaders who are full of themselves are regularly screening what and who is important to their ego, and therefore insure that nothing else gets through. Such unhealthy filtering of information through ego works against the positive effect of servant leadership on team effectiveness. In contrast to this, leaders who have the capacity to humbly engage in self-evaluation will be able demonstrate a level of leadership authenticity through maintaining integrity and trust (Laub, 1999) that will positively contribute to the effectiveness of teams.

Fostering Collaboration. The fourth item in the regression model is the importance of the leader's fostering of an environment of collaboration over competition. Based on the associated OLA item, the authors argue that leadership which "encourage[s] workers to work *together* rather than competing against each other" (OLA_47) is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. The emphasis on collaboration in teams is found at several points in the servant leadership literature. First, it is a concept that was drawn out of Greenleaf's reflections by Spears (2005). Spears labels this emphasis as "Building Community." In community building, the theme is not limited to collaboration in work, but goes further in an attempt to foster community. As Spears notes, this has become especially important in light of what "has been lost in recent human history as a result of the shift from local communities to large institutions as the primary shaper of human lives" (p. 36).

Building on Spears (2005) comments about building community, Laub (1999) argues that working collaboratively with others is one of the primary means by which servant leaders build community. Such collaboration fostered by servant leaders is seen as the foundation for effective teams at a theoretical level in the literature. For instance, Page and Wong (2005) argued that in effective teams, leaders empower others and foster collaborative efforts. Additionally, Laub (2003) argued that higher OLA scores are indicative of higher levels of team functioning. For example, teams with low OLA scores are characterized by (a) members being out for themselves, (b) members being manipulated and pitted against each other, and (c) members being punished for nonperformance. Conversely, teams with high OLA scores are characterized by (a) an extremely high level of community, (b) members working together well, and (c) members choosing collaboration over competition against one another. Such observations are consistent Buchen's (1998) argument that servant leaders have a primary function of building human infrastructure on which relationships and community may be built. In light of these theoretical connections between servant leadership and teams, the findings of this study are grounded in the servant leadership literature. The servant leader's role of fostering community and a collaborative work environment is essential in effective team leadership.

Communicating with Clarity. The fifth item in the regression model suggests the importance of leaders communicating plans and objectives clearly. Based on the associated OLA item, the authors argue that leadership which "communicate[s] clear plans and goals for the organization" (OLA_49) is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. In light of the emphasis on goals in several of the previous themes it should not be a surprise that clarity of communication around organizational plans and goals would also be a significant leadership behavior for those leading in team-based organizations. Clarity of communication begins with clarity of ideas and concepts. In pursuing clear communication around organizational plans and goals, leaders must have the capacity to lead out of a clear vision.

Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999) argue that vision is an essential part of servant leadership. Leaders who possess vision are better suited to communicate plans and goals clearly since they speak out of a clear mental picture of where the organization is going. Srivastva (1983) describes this concept of a clear mental picture in the following manner: "by envisioning we mean creating in one's mind an image of a desired future organizational state that can serve as a guide to interim strategies, decisions, and behavior" (p. 2). Because these interim strategies, decisions, and behavior facilitate goal accomplishment, servant leaders who lead out of vision will be better suited for communicating organizational plans and goals with clarity. In light of this it is not surprising to see that Laub (1999) argues for clarifying goals as one of the primary means by which servant leaders provide leadership. The leader's focus on helping people understand the goals of the organization and insuring that they are committed to these goals is therefore one of the essential tasks of leadership (Handy, 1996, p. 5). For servant leaders that do this well, clearly communicated goals facilitate greater effectiveness in the accomplishment of team and goals.

Valuing and Appreciating. The sixth and final item in the regression model suggests the importance of leaders valuing their employees and expressing appreciation for the contributions them make. Based on the associated OLA item, the authors argue that leadership that makes their employees "feel appreciated by [their] supervisor for what [they] contribute" (OLA_55) is a significant predictor of team effectiveness. This observation is consistent with what others have argued in the servant leadership literature. For instance, Russell (2001) emphasized the importance of appreciating others in servant leadership, noting that, "servant leaders visibly appreciate, value, encourage, and care for there constituents" (p. 79). Russell's observation is built upon Winston's (1999; 2002) argument for the importance of leaders exhibiting love for those they work with. Dennis (2004) further describes this by noting that the love of servant leaders includes truly caring about team members as people, making them feel important and being genuinely interested in their lives.

Further affirming the importance of leaders valuing and affirming followers, Laub (1999) argued that building up others through encouragement and affirmation is one of the primary means by which servant leaders develop people. Part of developing people involves truly empowering them in the context of team work. On this connection between empowerment and valuing others Russell and Stone (2002) make the case that "empowerment is entrusting power to others, and for the servant leader it involves effective listening, making people feel significant, putting an emphasis on teamwork, and the valuing of love and equality (Russell & Stone, 2002)" (p. 7). With such empowerment, servant leaders are able to demonstrate their words of affirmation with actions that speak clearly. This emphasis on truly valuing and appreciating followers for their contribution to the team and the organization is a significant factor that, based on the findings in the present study, is predictive of greater leadership effectiveness.

Recommendations for the Crossroads of Scholarship and Practice

At the crossroads of scholarship and practice is empirical research. In the present study the individual items of the OLA have been examined in light of team effectiveness in order to determine which servant leadership themes are most significant in predicting the effectiveness of teams. These findings provide the basis for recommendations to both leadership researchers and leadership practitioners.

Recommendations for Leadership Researchers. While the present study contributes to the study of leadership predictors of team effectiveness, additional work is needed to advance this line of inquiry. First, because the present study was limited to the nonprofit sector similar investigations and analyses should be extended to other sectors such as business, education, military, and government. Second, since servant leadership, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership have all been linked to team effectiveness, these

constructs, in addition to servant leadership, should be measured concurrently to explore which specific leadership themes in these constructs have the strongest impact on team effectiveness.

Third, leadership predictors of team effectiveness should be measured utilizing complementary instrumentation. While the OLA provides a well-established measure of servant leadership, the inclusion of additional servant leadership measures would help to corroborate the present findings. Additionally, future studies should use other measures of team effectiveness in order to evaluate leadership predictors of this dependent variable from alternative or complementary perspectives. Finally, while this study provides a model for the effect of servant leadership on team effectiveness, it did not explicitly explore the qualitatively-oriented question of why this effect exists, though the six themes identified could provide a basis for such work. In light of this, qualitatively-oriented research could advance the field by better addressing the dynamics that make a servant leadership approach within organizations especially effective in team-based contexts. While not exhaustive, these recommendations provide a basis future research in servant leadership studies.

Recommendations for Leadership Practice. While there are many opportunities for future research, the present research provides the basis for informed recommendations at the level of leadership practice as well. First, because servant leadership is a significant predictor of team effectiveness, it therefore is vital for organizations to incorporate these themes into leadership for team contexts. Beyond this broad recommendation, a second recommendation is derived from the regression model in this study. Specifically, the following servant leadership themes are recommended for those leading in the team-based context: (a) Providing Accountability, (b) Supporting and Resourcing, (c) Engaging in Honest Self-Evaluation, (d) Fostering Collaboration, (e) Communicating with Clarity, and (f) Valuing and Appreciating. For those seeking to lead at the crossroads of contemporary research and practice, these findings reinforce the vital importance of servant leadership in organizations that are structured around decentralized and team-based communities. While more autocratic or paternalistic forms of leadership may have their place in hierarchically governed organizations, the present research emphasizes the priority of servant leadership in the emerging networked communities that are commonplace in today's organizations.

Summary

In light of the emerging trends toward decentralized and networked structures, the theory and practice of teams continues to be an important issue for those at the crossroads of scholarship and practice. This study provides significant data for researchers and practitioners alike. Because servant leadership has been identified in this study as a significant predictor of team effectiveness, those who use team structures in organizations are advised to better understand both servant leadership in general and the six essential servant leadership themes in particular if they desire to increase their effectiveness. The multiple regression model of team effectiveness explains 39% of its variance. The .000000 significance level confirms that it is a model in which students and practitioners of servant leadership and teams can have a high level of confidence. We trust that these findings will encourage increased exploration into the positive effects of servant leadership on team effectiveness, as well as a robust application of servant leadership in contemporary organizational settings.

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