Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment

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Abstract

Servant leadership stresses personal integrity and serving others, including employees, customers, and communities. This article focuses on a servant leadership measure that was created by identifying 9 dimensions. Relevant items were then developed and subjected to factor analysis with a sample of 298 students, resulting in a 7-factor solution. Using an organizational sample of 182 individuals, we verified this 7-factor model with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). We further validated our 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 (HLM) analysis. The results suggest 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. No between-leader (group-level) differences were found in the outcomes variables.

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1. Introduction

With confidence shaken in business leadership, interest has been increasing in the development of leaders who set aside self-interest for the betterment of their followers and organizations (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; George, 2003). Paralleling this trend in business organizations has been the academic transition toward the scientific study of positive human qualities. Although dysfunctional behaviors of individuals are still of research interest, much remains to be learned about humans’ capacity to engage in positive behaviors (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). In the current investigation we explored leader behaviors that are based on serving the needs of followers and larger communities both within and outside of organizations.

For an organization to achieve effectiveness, it is imperative that the unique talents of its employees be recognized, utilized, and developed. Leaders can play a critical role in helping employees to realize their potential (Liden, Wayne, &
An approach to leadership called servant leadership focuses on developing employees to their fullest potential in the areas of task effectiveness, community stewardship, self-motivation, and future leadership capabilities (Greenleaf, 1977).

Servant leadership is based on the premise that to bring out the best in their followers, leaders rely on one-on-one communication to understand the abilities, needs, desires, goals, and potential of those individuals. With knowledge of each follower’s unique characteristics and interests, leaders then assist followers in achieving their potential. This encouragement is done through building self-confidence (Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999), serving as a role model, inspiring trust, and providing information, feedback, and resources. Servant leadership differs from traditional approaches to leadership in that it stresses personal integrity and focuses on forming strong long-term relationships with employees. It also is unique in that it extends outside the organization—servant leaders serve multiple stakeholders, including their communities and society as a whole (Graham, 1991). Servant leadership shows promise as a way to build trust with employees, customers, and communities.

Servant leaders build trust by selflessly serving others first (Greenleaf, 1977). The theme of serving others before oneself extends from the workplace to home and community. In all aspects of life, servant leaders practice this “service” orientation. Perhaps most importantly, they instill in followers the self-confidence and desire to become servant leaders themselves. Through this transformation of followers into servant leaders, a culture of servant leadership can be created. Although Greenleaf (1977) eloquently articulated the potential of servant leadership to fulfill individuals and energize organizations and communities, conspicuously lacking is formal theory and research designed to test the claimed strengths of servant leadership. One purpose of the current study is to develop and test a multidimensional measure of servant leadership. A second purpose is to examine the validity of the new scale within a multi-level framework. Because followers are nested within leaders, servant leadership may exhibit both between-leader and within-leader variation with respect to outcomes.

We contend that the relationships that form between leaders and followers are central to servant leadership. Leadership research over the past few decades has suggested that the relationships employees develop with their leaders are critical for understanding the way in which employees can fulfill their potential and become self-motivated (Manz & Sims, 1987). When leaders nurture self-efficacy and self-motivation and stress community involvement, employees in turn become more committed to organizational values (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993), are more willing to maintain high performance levels (Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997), and are more likely to model their leaders’ concern for the community in which the organization operates.

2. Servant leadership dimensions

The servant leadership literature offers an inconsistent set of dimensions that define this construct. As a consequence, our research was designed to define and validate the dimensions that constitute servant leadership as a construct. Based on our interpretation of servant leadership as well as existing taxonomies of servant leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Page & Wong, 2000; Spears & Lawrence, 2002), we identified nine dimensions:

1. Emotional healing—the act of showing sensitivity to others’ personal concerns
2. Creating value for the community—a conscious, genuine concern for helping the community
3. Conceptual skills—possessing the knowledge of the organization and tasks at hand so as to be in a position to effectively support and assist others, especially immediate followers
4. Empowering—encouraging and facilitating others, especially immediate followers, in identifying and solving problems, as well as determining when and how to complete work tasks
5. Helping subordinates grow and succeed—demonstrating genuine concern for others’ career growth and development by providing support and mentoring
6. Putting subordinates first—using actions and words to make it clear to others (especially immediate followers) that satisfying their work needs is a priority (Supervisors who practice this principle will often break from their own work to assist subordinates with problems they are facing with their assigned duties.)
7. Behaving ethically—interacting openly, fairly, and honestly with others
8. Relationships—the act of making a genuine effort to know, understand, and support others in the organization, with an emphasis on building long-term relationships with immediate followers
9. Servanthood—a way of being marked by one’s self-categorization and desire to be characterized by others as someone who serves others first, even when self-sacrifice is required
3. Servant leadership, transformational leadership, and leader–member exchange: individual level

At first view, it appears that the servant leadership construct overlaps with other leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership consists of four distinct components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. A recent meta-analysis revealed this construct to be related to many organizationally relevant outcomes (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Servant leadership resembles idealized influence and intellectual stimulation in transformational leadership. That is, servant leaders set an example for followers to emulate, inspire followers with enthusiasm and inspiration, and actively encourage followers to challenge the status quo and express divergent views. In fact, the concept of servant leadership resembles, in part, the notion of the “socially oriented transformational leader” who engages in “moral uplifting of followers” (Bass, 1997, p. 131). Yet, as noted by Graham (1991), servant leadership remains distinct from transformational leadership in two ways: Servant leaders are sensitive to the needs of numerous stakeholders, including the larger society, and servant leadership encourages followers to engage in moral reasoning. One might therefore anticipate a moderate correlation between the servant leadership dimensions and transformational leadership. In contrast, the focus on serving followers first, contributing to the community, and cultivating servant leadership behaviors among followers all represent features of servant leadership that are not captured by transformational leadership.

Servant leadership behaviors contribute to the development and maintenance of strong interpersonal relationships between leaders and followers and are instrumental in helping employees attain their fullest potential and become self-motivated (Manz & Sims, 1987). Leaders foster these important behaviors by forming social exchange relationships with their followers, rather than relying solely on the economic incentives in the employment agreement or the authority vested in their positions.

The leadership approach most closely tied to social exchange theory is leader–member exchange (LMX) theory. The LMX perspective is unique among leadership theories in that it focuses on dyadic relationships between leaders and followers (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975) and contends that leaders form different types of exchange relationships with their respective followers (Liden & Maslyn, 1998). Despite the overlap between servant leadership and LMX, LMX theory is silent with respect to the provision of personal healing, the development of followers into servant leaders, and the encouragement of service to the community.

Because of these conceptual differences between servant leadership, transformational leadership, and LMX, we expect that individual-level servant leadership (followers’ perceptions of superiors’ servant leadership behaviors) can explain the variance in outcomes beyond that which is explained by transformational leadership and LMX. We examined three important outcomes: (1) employees’ community citizenship behaviors, (2) employees’ in-role performance, and (3) employees’ commitment to the organization. The following hypothesis was developed to test the external and discriminant validity for our servant leadership scale. Consistent with the view that parsimony best serves scientific inquiry, a new construct in the literature must make a unique contribution to understanding the phenomenon of interest.

Hypothesis 1. Servant leadership, as a construct, consists of distinguishable dimensions that define its domain.
Hypothesis 2. At the individual level, servant leadership is positively related to employees’ community citizenship behaviors, in-role performance, and organizational commitment, when controlling for transformational leadership and LMX.

4. Servant leadership: group-level

Examining servant leadership at the group-level as well as at the individual level is consistent with the argument that scientific benefits may be reaped from exploring different levels in theory development and research design (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). Although the benefits of multi-level theorizing and empirical testing have been known for more than two decades, as evidenced by seminal work by Dansereau, Alutto, & Yammarino (1984) and Rousseau (1985), the field was slow to respond to such calls for multi-level research. Indeed, such research designs did not become common until recently (Yammarino, Dionne, Chun, & Dansereau, 2005). In the past, the majority of leadership theorizing and empirical testing occurred only at the level of the individual, whereby individuals’ ratings of their leaders are correlated with individual-level antecedents and outcomes. This approach does not lead to an understanding of such multi-level issues as how leadership operates at both the individual and group-levels to influence key outcomes, such as performance or organizational commitment (Schriesheim, Neider, & Scandura, 1998; Yammarino et al., 2005). We concur with Klein, Dansereau, & Hall’s (1994, p. 208) contention that researchers may benefit by “examining familiar constructs at less familiar levels of theory”.

In the current investigation, we explored the possibility that across all of their followers, leaders differ in the extent to which they engage in servant leadership behaviors. Thus, although much may be learned by investigating within-group variation in servant leadership with respect to key outcomes, it is also necessary to explore the influence of servant leadership at the group-level, by aggregating servant leadership across each leader’s followers (i.e., group of subordinates). An added advantage of examining servant leadership with a multi-level perspective is that this approach takes into consideration the lack of independence that occurs when multiple followers rate the same leader. In the current study, lack of independence was also an issue with respect to the fact that each leader rated the job performance of his or her subordinates. To complement Hypothesis 2 at the individual level, we propose that servant leadership aggregated to the group-level also relates to key individual outcomes. In essence, we contend that the pervasiveness with which leaders engage in servant leader behaviors across all followers in their work groups influences each individual in that work group to be more committed to the organization, to perform at higher levels, and to be more active in serving the community in which the organization is located. The relational model of justice (Lind & Tyler, 1988) is relevant to understanding the responses of group members to group-level leader behaviors. This approach, which focuses on social bonds and relationships, suggests that individual group members’ attitudes and behaviors are influenced not only by their own relationships with the leader, but also by the degree to which they feel that the leader treats all group members fairly. In our case, aggregated servant leadership captures the overall treatment of group members. To the extent that followers do focus on social bonds with others, they will respond more positively in terms of attitudes and behaviors when they sense that others are treated fairly. Conversely, if they feel that the leader is not engaging in servant leader behaviors with many other followers, focal individuals may be concerned about the possibility that in the future the leader will similarly not provide them with the benefits of servant leadership. Such expectations of future unfairness, or “anticipatory injustice,” may exert as much influence on current attitudes and behaviors as actual unfair treatment (Shapiro & Kirkman, 2001, p. 153). In sum, there is reason to expect that servant leadership, at the group-level, influences individual attitudes and behaviors.

Hypothesis 3. Servant leadership aggregated to the group-level is positively related to individual-level employee community citizenship behaviors, in-role performance, and organizational commitment.

5. Method

5.1. Scale development overview

Our scale development consisted of two phases. In phase 1, servant leadership items were generated from a review of the relevant literature. Drawing from widely accepted scale development methods (e.g., Rahim & Magner, 1995), these items were pooled, subjected to content validation, and pilot-tested with a large and diverse sample of students. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the pilot study results revealed the emergence of seven distinct dimensions of servant leadership. The four highest-loading items on each of these dimensions were compiled to create a 28-item scale of servant leadership.
In phase 2 of this project, this 28-item scale was validated by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using an organizational sample. Hierarchical linear modeling (HLM; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) was used to assess whether the dimensions of servant leadership (at both the individual and group-levels) might explain variance in subordinate-level outcomes beyond that explained by transformational leadership and LMX.

5.2. Item generation

The review of the leadership literature resulted in the identification of nine dimensions of servant leadership. All authors assembled to discuss each dimension and conduct a search of servant leadership scales used in prior research. We were able to uncover a very small number of empirical studies that measured servant leadership as an independent construct. Based on face validity, three preexisting measures of servant leadership were considered—those identified by Ehrhart (2004), Barbuto & Wheeler (2006), and Page & Wong (2000). Our desire to develop a servant leadership measure that is relevant in work organizations led to the conclusion that none of these existing scales met our criteria for the scale: (1) It must be based on the same nine dimensions of servant leadership identified by our team; (2) it must be relevant to members of work organizations; and (3) it must contain at least three items per dimension to facilitate the estimation of internal consistency reliability. Therefore, we wrote new items and classified usable items from the existing measures according to our nine dimensions.

5.3. Content validation

Each member of our research team independently reviewed the full list of potential items, selecting those items that would best capture each servant leadership dimension. All team members then met to discuss individual selections and reach a consensus on a final list of items. In total, we generated 85 items, with the following dimension-level distribution: relationships, 8 items; creating value for the community, 9 items; empowering, 8 items; helping subordinates grow and succeed, 10 items; behaving ethically, 10 items; conceptual skills, 10 items; putting subordinates first, 12 items; emotional healing, 8 items; and servanthood, 12 items.

5.4. Participants and procedure

This study consisted of data collected from two samples. In the first phase of our research, we evaluated our 85 items in a pilot study with a sample of 298 students from a Midwestern university. This sample consisted of 98.7% undergraduate students. All students had current (67.4% of the sample) or recent work experience (32.6% of the sample). Participation was voluntary, and students completed a questionnaire with the 85-item servant leadership scale during class.

In the second phase of our research, we collected data from 164 employees (response rate=56.9%) and 25 supervisors (response rate=86.2%) of a Midwestern production and distribution company. These data were used to confirm the results obtained from the pilot study and to assess the predictive validity of the servant leadership dimensions.

The demographic breakdown for the employees was as follows: white, 78.6%; African American, 12.6%; Latino/Latina, 8.2%; and Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.6%. In the employee sample, 73.1% of the employees were male and 26.9% were female. In terms of education, 68.8% of the employees reported no training beyond a high school diploma. The average age of these employees was 35.5 years, average organizational tenure was 5.6 years, average job tenure was 3.5 years, and average length of time that the subordinate had worked with the supervisor was 2.0 years.

With respect to the supervisors, 80% were male and 20% female. In terms of ethnicity, 84% of the supervisors were white; 8% were African American; 4% were Latino/Latina; and 4% were Asian/Pacific Islander. Their average age was 42.4 years. Their average organizational tenure was 13.3 years and their average job tenure was 5 years.

All organizational employees were invited to participate in the research project, and participation was completely voluntary. Subordinate and supervisor surveys were completed in groups, on site, and in the presence of one of the researchers. Supervisors and subordinates completed surveys in separate rooms. All participants received their regular hourly wages for the time required to complete the survey. Absentee packets were left for both supervisors and subordinates who did not attend data collection sessions. These packets included copies of the survey and stamped envelopes addressed to the first author. One supervisor and 13 subordinates mailed back completed absentee surveys. Supervisors who were direct reports to other organizational superiors completed both supervisor and subordinate surveys.
In total, 182 individuals provided complete ratings of their superiors on the 28-item servant leadership scale. Therefore, the sample size for the CFA was 182. At the dyadic level, complete data for all study variables were available for 153 supervisor–subordinate dyads. To enhance our ability to test our hypothesis regarding the relationship between group-level servant leadership scores and subordinate outcomes, only data from groups in which complete data were available for three or more individuals were used in the HLM analyses. For the purpose of this study, “groups” are defined as individuals who report to a common supervisor. The resulting sample sizes were 145 subordinates (level 1) and 17 supervisors (level 2), with an average of 8.53 subordinates per supervisor.

5.5. Measures

Responses to all measures included in the student and organizational surveys were scaled from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Scale scores were created for the study variables by averaging the responses to all items pertaining to each measure. With respect to the servant leadership scale, an average score was computed for each dimension. Additionally, scale reliabilities for the servant leadership dimensions were reported for both the CFA and HLM samples.

5.5.1. Servant leadership (student sample, pilot study)

The servant leadership scale used in the pilot study consisted of 85 items used to measure the nine dimensions of servant leadership conceptualized by the research team. While the majority (80%; \( n = 68 \)) of the items used in this scale were created by the authors for this project, some items were taken directly or adapted from previous studies. Nine items were transposed directly from Ehrhart’s (2004) servant leadership scale, and two items were taken with modification intended to render them more effective in capturing the meaning of the dimension in which they were categorized. Five items were taken from Page & Wong (2000), and three items were borrowed from Barbuto & Wheeler (2006). An exploratory factor analysis resulted in the emergence of seven distinguishable factors, with scale reliabilities for the four-item scales of conceptual skills (\( \alpha = .86 \)); empowerment (\( \alpha = .90 \)); helping subordinates grow and succeed (\( \alpha = .90 \)); putting subordinates first (\( \alpha = .91 \)); behaving ethically (\( \alpha = .90 \)); emotional healing (\( \alpha = .89 \)); and creating value for the community (\( \alpha = .89 \)).

5.5.2. Servant leadership (organizational sample, subordinate survey)

The four highest-loading servant leadership items on each of the seven distinguishable factors that resulted from the pilot study were selected to create the 28-item, revised servant leadership scale. This scale was administered to the organizational sample. The responses to these items were then used to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis of the seven servant leadership dimensions that emerged from the pilot study. The scale reliabilities for the four-item scales of each dimension for this sample were as follows: conceptual skills (\( \alpha = .81 \), CFA sample; \( \alpha = .80 \), HLM sample); empowerment (\( \alpha = .80 \), CFA sample; \( \alpha = .77 \), HLM sample); helping subordinates grow and succeed (\( \alpha = .82 \), CFA sample; \( \alpha = .83 \), HLM sample); putting subordinates first (\( \alpha = .86 \), CFA sample; \( \alpha = .86 \), HLM sample); behaving ethically (\( \alpha = .83 \), CFA sample; \( \alpha = .82 \), HLM sample); emotional healing (\( \alpha = .76 \), CFA sample; \( \alpha = .78 \), HLM sample); and creating value for the community (\( \alpha = .83 \), CFA sample; \( \alpha = .84 \), HLM sample).

ICC(1), ICC(2) (Bliese, 2000), and \( r_{wg}(j) \) values (James, Demaree, & Wolf, 1993) were also calculated for each dimension of servant leadership, given the authors’ interest in testing the potential for aggregated, group-level scores to explain the variance in subordinate outcomes.

\( t \) Significant between-group variance was apparent in the perceptions of supervisor conceptual skills \( F(16, 128) = 2.24, p < .01 \). ICC(1), ICC(2), and median \( r_{wg}(j) \) values were .13, .55, and .89, respectively.

\( t \) Perceptions of empowerment, however, did not vary significantly across groups \( F(16, 128) = 1.28, p > .05 \) and the ICC(1), ICC(2), and median \( r_{wg}(j) \) values were .03, .22, .80, respectively.

\( t \) The between-group variance in reports of supervisors’ helping subordinates grow and succeed approached significance \( F(16, 128) = 1.69, p < .06 \), and the ICC(1), ICC(2), and median \( r_{wg}(j) \) values were .08, .41, and .81, respectively.

\( t \) The between-group variance in reports of putting subordinates first was not significant \( F(16, 128) = 1.23, p > .05 \), and the ICC(1), ICC(2), and median \( r_{wg}(j) \) values were .03, .19, and .77, respectively.

\( t \) Perceptions of supervisors’ ethical behavior did vary significantly across supervisors \( F(16, 128) = 2.51, p < .01 \), and the ICC(1), ICC(2), and median \( r_{wg}(j) \) values were .15, .60, and .84, respectively.
Subordinate reports on the dimension of emotional healing also exhibited significant between-supervisor variance \( F(16, 128) = 2.11, p < .05 \), and the ICC(1), ICC(2), and median \( r_{wg}(j) \) values were .12, .53, and .69, respectively. Between-supervisor variance on subordinate reports of their supervisors’ creating value for the community approached significance \( F(16, 128) = 1.63, p < .10 \). The ICC(1), ICC(2), and median \( r_{wg}(j) \) values were .07, .39, and .92, respectively.

In sum, these results suggest acceptable levels of interrater agreement on the servant leadership dimensions, as indicated by the \( r_{wg}(j) \) values. Additionally, they suggest between-group differences on perceptions of some—but not all—dimensions. The ICC(2) values for the dimensions of empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and creating value for the community indicate low reliability of the group means. This low reliability might be due, in part, to the modest group sizes in the sample (Bliese, Halverson, & Schriesheim, 2002). These small group sizes rendered it difficult to find group-level effects for these dimensions, as the group scores are not reliably differentiated from one another (Bliese, 2000). Acknowledging this limitation, the servant leadership scores were aggregated to the group-level.

5.5.3. Transformational leadership (organizational sample, subordinate survey)
Transformational leadership was measured with a 20-item transformational leadership scale from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1995). An example item was “My manager talks optimistically about the future” \((\alpha = .94)\).

5.5.4. Leader–member exchange (organizational sample, subordinate survey)
The 12-item multidimensional measure of leader–member exchange (LMX-MDM; Liden & Maslyn, 1998) was used to assess LMX relationships. The use of the LMX-MDM as a global measure is consistent with Liden & Maslyn’s (1998) support for a higher-order factor representing the four subdimensions. An example item was “I like my manager very much as a person” \((\alpha = .93)\).

5.5.5. Organizational commitment (organizational sample, subordinate survey)
Organizational commitment was measured using Wayne, Shore, & Liden’s (1997) seven-item adaptation of Mowday, Steers, & Porter’s (1979) affective commitment scale. An example item was “For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work” \((\alpha = .88)\).

5.5.6. Community citizenship behavior (organizational sample, subordinate survey)
We were unable to locate a scale of community citizenship behavior that had been used in past research, so we developed a seven-item scale \((\alpha = .84)\):

1. I am involved in community service and volunteer activities outside of work.
2. I believe it is important to give back to the community.
3. I take into consideration the effects of decisions I make in my job on the overall community.
4. I believe that our company has the responsibility to improve the community in which it operates.
5. I encourage others in the company to volunteer in the community.
6. When possible, I try and get my organization involved in community projects that I am involved in.
7. I believe than an organization is obligated to serve the community in which it operates.

5.5.7. Subordinate in-role performance (organizational sample, supervisor survey)
Managers rated their subordinates’ in-role performance using three items developed by Williams & Anderson (1991). An example item was “This employee fulfills responsibilities specified in his/her job description” \((\alpha = .86)\).

6. Results

6.1. Exploratory factor analysis

In the first phase of our study, we conducted a pilot test of the 85-servant leadership items with a student sample. Data collected from 298 college students were subjected to an EFA using the principal components method with the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Emotional healing</th>
<th>Creating value for the community</th>
<th>Conceptual skills</th>
<th>Empowering</th>
<th>Helping subordinates grow and succeed</th>
<th>Putting subordinates first</th>
<th>Behaving ethically</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would seek help from my manager if I had a personal problem.</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td>−.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My manager cares about my personal well-being.</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>−.06</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>−.22</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>−.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My manager takes time to talk to me on a personal level.</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>−.21</td>
<td>−.09</td>
<td>−.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My manager can recognize when I’m down without asking me.</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>−.02</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>−.17</td>
<td>−.12</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My manager emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>−.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My manager is always interested in helping people in our community.</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>−.02</td>
<td>−.05</td>
<td>−.04</td>
<td>−.03</td>
<td>−.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My manager is involved in community activities.</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>−.08</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>−.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am encouraged by my manager to volunteer in the community.</td>
<td>−.10</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>−.14</td>
<td>−.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My manager can tell if something is going wrong.</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>−.59</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>−.10</td>
<td>−.08</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My manager is able to effectively think through complex problems.</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>−.50</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>−.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>−.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My manager has a thorough understanding of our organization and its goals.</td>
<td>−.13</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>−.55</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>−.09</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>−.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. My manager can solve work problems with new or creative ideas.</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>−.52</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>−.19</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>−.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. My manager gives me the responsibility to make important decisions about my job.</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>−.02</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. My manager encourages me to handle important work decisions on my own.</td>
<td>−.02</td>
<td>−.04</td>
<td>−.08</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>−.04</td>
<td>−.09</td>
<td>−.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. My manager gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>−.08</td>
<td>−.14</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>−.10</td>
<td>−.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. When I have to make an important decision at work, I do not have to consult my manager first.</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>−.03</td>
<td>−.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. My manager makes my career development a priority.</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>−.03</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>−.62</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. My manager is interested in making sure that I achieve my career goals.</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>−.02</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>−.56</td>
<td>−.16</td>
<td>−.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. My manager provides me with work experiences that enable me to develop new skills.</td>
<td>−.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>−.12</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>−.60</td>
<td>−.10</td>
<td>−.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. My manager wants to know about my career goals.</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>−.62</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td>−.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. My manager seems to care more about my success than his/her own.</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>−.13</td>
<td>−.76</td>
<td>−.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. My manager puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>−.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. My manager sacrifices his/her own interests to meet my needs.</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>−.01</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>−.12</td>
<td>−.65</td>
<td>−.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. My manager does what she/he can do to make my job easier.</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>−.01</td>
<td>−.14</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>−.50</td>
<td>−.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. My manager holds high ethical standards.</td>
<td>−.06</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>−.06</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>−.00</td>
<td>−.10</td>
<td>−.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. My manager is always honest.</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>−.02</td>
<td>−.04</td>
<td>−.03</td>
<td>−.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
number of factors not specified. Nine factors emerged with eigenvalues greater than 1; a scree test also indicated the presence of nine factors. To better interpret the factor loadings, oblique rotation was employed because of the anticipated intercorrelation among the factors. We interpreted each factor based on items with a loading of at least .4 on the intended factor and no cross loading of more than .3 on any other factor. Two of the nine factors were judged as problematic. Factor 8 was deemed non-interpretable because no items loaded on that factor above .4. Factor 9 was also classified as non-interpretable because no single grouping of items representing the intended factor emerged as the dominant source for the factor.

The remaining seven factors were made up of 54 items. After examining the items that loaded on each factor, the following dimensions of servant leadership were identified: emotional healing (9 items); creating value for the community (7 items); conceptual skills (9 items); empowering (6 items); helping subordinates grow and succeed (8 items); putting subordinates first (4 items); and behaving ethically (11 items). To create an efficient yet reliable scale for use in the current study and in future research, we selected the four highest-loading items on each factor to create a revised, 28-item scale of servant leadership. Table 1 shows the rotated factor loadings for each of these 28 items.

6.2. Confirmatory factor analysis and test of Hypothesis 1

The next step in validating the 28-item servant leadership scale was to perform a CFA using the organizational sample. CFA produces assessments of goodness of fit and can be used to confirm previously hypothesized models. The CFA was based on the covariance matrix, and we used maximum likelihood estimation, yielding the results shown in Table 2. Consistent with the EFA results, our hypothesized model was the seven-factor model with four indicators per factor. We interpreted the CFA results using the following standards of goodness of model fit provided by Hu & Bentler (1999): CFI ≥ .96, and SRMR ≤ .10; or RMSEA ≤ .06 and SRMR ≤ .10. For the hypothesized model, the chi-squared value was 549.14 (df = 329, p < .01), but the fit indices indicated a good overall fit (CFI = .98; RMSEA = .06; SRMR = .05).

We also tested several alternative models, but none produced a better fit than the hypothesized model:

1. A six-factor model with “conceptual skills” and “behaving ethically” combined, because both are more self-centered ($\chi^2 = 606.48, df = 335; \text{CFI} = .97; \text{RMSEA} = .07; \text{SRMR} = .06$)
2. A six-factor model combining “helping subordinates grow and succeed” and “putting subordinates first,” because of the conceptual similarity of the two dimensions ($\chi^2 = 583.49, df = 335; \text{CFI} = .97; \text{RMSEA} = .06; \text{SRMR} = .05$)
3. A three-factor model, with “conceptual skills” and “behaving ethically” as the first factor; “helping subordinates grow and succeed,” “putting subordinates first,” “empowering,” and “emotional healing” as the second factor (because they are all subordinate-centered); and “creating value for the community” as the third factor, because it is community-centered ($\chi^2 = 871.21, df = 347; \text{CFI} = .95; \text{RMSEA} = .09; \text{SRMR} = .07$)
4. A single-factor model with all items loading on one global factor ($\chi^2 = 1,194.99, df = 350; \text{CFI} = .93; \text{RMSEA} = .12; \text{SRMR} = .08$).

The chi-squared difference tests shown in Table 2 revealed that the seven-factor model was significantly better than these alternative models. Thus the seven-factor hypothesized model derived from the student sample was confirmed by the organizational sample.
Together, the results of both the EFA and the CFA support a multidimensional conceptualization of the servant leadership construct, consistent with Hypothesis 1. Although support was not found for all nine dimensions originally identified, we did identify support for seven dimensions. Given these findings, we then explored the ability of servant leadership, at both the individual and group-levels, to account for variance in subordinate-level outcomes.

6.3. Examining subordinate-level outcomes

Because of the nested structure of our data (subordinates nested within supervisors) as well as our interest in exploring the main effects of aggregated, group-level servant leadership dimensions on subordinate-level outcomes, HLM was used to test Hypotheses 2 and 3. Recall that level 1 signifies subordinates nested within level 2 supervisors. In all models, the independent variables were grand-mean-centered to facilitate the interpretation of the intercepts (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002), as values of zero on constructs such as transformational leadership, LMX, and servant leadership behaviors may not be typical in organizations. To promote statistical efficiency, subordinate-level slopes were fixed across supervisors, meaning that the relationships between subordinate-level independent and dependent variables were constrained to be the same across supervisors. The adequate testing of our hypotheses did not necessitate that slopes be treated as random. Finally, because of the relatively small number of level 2 units in this study, results obtained with generalized least squares standard errors were reported.

6.4. Descriptive statistics and correlations

The descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of the study variables collected from the organizational sample appear in Table 3. As anticipated, the seven servant leadership dimensions correlated moderately with one another. Additionally, all seven servant leadership dimensions correlated moderately to strongly with transformational leadership (.43 to .79) and LMX (.48 to .75). These results suggest that the servant leadership dimensions are not redundant with transformational leadership or LMX. In addition, all servant leadership dimensions were significantly correlated with organizational commitment, and four of the seven dimensions were correlated with in-role performance, providing initial support for the predictive validity of the servant leadership dimensions.

6.5. Tests of Hypotheses 2 and 3

A series of models were generated to test our hypotheses regarding the ability of servant leadership at the individual and group-levels to account for variance in subordinate-level outcomes. First, we tested fully unconditional models, equivalent to one-way random effects ANOVAs, in which no independent variables were entered at either the subordinate or the supervisor levels. The results of these models provided an indication of the between-supervisor and within-supervisor variance associated with each outcome variable. With respect to community citizenship behaviors, the chi-squared test indicated a lack of significance in between-supervisor variance: $\chi^2(16)=16.30, p>.05$. The results for in-role performance did indicate significant between-supervisor variance: $\chi^2(16)=62.37, p<.01$. The intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was .29. Finally, the chi-squared test also indicated significant between-supervisor variance in organizational commitment: $\chi^2(16)=34.79, p<.01$, ICC=.12. Thus we were justified in examining level 2 HLM models for in-role performance and organizational commitment, but not for community citizenship behaviors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 145. aAggregated scores. For the correlations, aggregated scores were assigned to individuals reporting to the same supervisor (effective n = 17). *p < .05. **p < .01.
6.5.1. Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2, which focused on the individual level, contended that servant leadership behaviors explain variance in subordinates’ community citizenship behaviors, in-role performance, and organizational commitment beyond that explained by transformational leadership and LMX. This hypothesis was tested with three models for each outcome variable. The first model included only transformational leadership as a level 1 predictor of each outcome. In the second model, LMX was included as a second predictor at level 1. In the third model, transformational leadership, LMX, and the seven servant leadership dimensions were entered as level 1 predictors.

Table 4 presents the results of these models. Neither transformational leadership nor LMX was significantly related to subordinate reports of community citizenship behaviors. The inclusion of the seven dimensions of servant leadership explained an additional 19% of the subordinate-level variance beyond that explained by transformational leadership or LMX. The “creating value for the community” dimension was positively and significantly related to community citizenship behaviors ($\gamma_{90} = .53$, $p < .01$). The “helping subordinates grow and succeed” and “behaving ethically” dimensions were significantly and negatively related to the outcome ($\gamma_{50} = -.24$, $p < .05$; $\gamma_{70} = -.33$, $p < .01$).

Neither transformational leadership nor LMX was significantly related to supervisor reports of subordinate in-role performance. The inclusion of the seven dimensions of servant leadership to the level 1 model explained an additional 5% of the subordinate-level variance. The “behaving ethically” dimension was positively and significantly related to in-role performance ratings ($\gamma_{70} = .20$, $p < .05$).

As can be seen in Table 4, both transformational leadership and LMX were positively and significantly related to subordinate reports of organizational commitment. Transformational leadership explained 11% of the subordinate-level variance and LMX accounted for an additional 3%. The inclusion of the seven servant leadership dimensions explained 4% of subordinate-level variance beyond that accounted for by both transformational leadership and LMX. The “helping subordinates grow and succeed” dimension was positively and significantly related to reports of organizational commitment ($\gamma_{50} = .22$, $p < .05$). The “emotional healing” dimension was negatively and significantly related to this outcome ($\gamma_{80} = -.18$, $p < .05$). Together, the results with respect to community citizenship behaviors, in-role performance, and organizational commitment provide support for Hypothesis 2.

Table 4
Hierarchical linear modeling results for the subordinate-level outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Community citizenship behavior</th>
<th>In-role performance</th>
<th>Organizational commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept $\gamma_{00}$</td>
<td>4.37** 4.37** 4.37**</td>
<td>5.82** 5.82** 5.80**</td>
<td>5.96** 5.96** 5.97**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership $\gamma_{10}$</td>
<td>0.14 −0.03 0.09</td>
<td>0.11 0.17 0.03</td>
<td>0.41** 0.15 0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMX $\gamma_{20}$</td>
<td>0.18 0.17</td>
<td>−0.06 −0.12</td>
<td>0.28** 0.40**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Servant leadership dimensions

| Conceptual skills $\gamma_{30}$ | 0.01 | −0.16 | −0.01 |
| Empowering $\gamma_{40}$ | 0.10 | 0.02 | −0.09 |
| Helping subordinates grow and succeed $\gamma_{50}$ | −0.24* | −0.03 | 0.22* |
| Putting subordinates first $\gamma_{60}$ | 0.20 | 0.05 | −0.07 |
| Behaving ethically $\gamma_{70}$ | −0.33** | 0.20* | −0.10 |
| Emotional healing $\gamma_{80}$ | −0.10 | 0.08 | −0.18* |
| Creating value for the community $\gamma_{90}$ | 0.53** | 0.03 | 0.10 |

Random effects

| $\sigma_{a}^2$ | 1.12 | 1.11 | 0.89 | 0.36 | 0.36 | 0.34 | 0.58 | 0.56 | 0.53 |
| $\tau_{00}^b$ | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.13** | 0.13** | 0.17** | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.01 |
| $R^2c$ | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.21 | 0.01 | 0.00 | 0.06 | 0.11 | 0.14 | 0.18 |
| $\Delta R^2d$ | 0.01 | 0.19 | 0.00 | 0.05 | 0.03 | 0.04 |

$n = 145$ (Level 1, subordinates); $n = 17$ (Level 2, supervisors).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

a Subordinate-level residual variance.

b Variance in the level 1 intercepts across supervisors. Chi-square tests indicated the significance of this variance.

c The proportion of level 1 (subordinate-level) variance explained by all independent variables included in the model.

d The incremental level 1 variance explained by the addition of independent variables to the model.
6.5.2. Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3, which focused on the group-level, contended that aggregated scores of servant leadership are positively related to the subordinate-level outcomes. Because the results of the fully unconditional model for community citizenship behaviors did not indicate any significant between-group variance, this variable was excluded from further analysis. The fully unconditional models for in-role performance and organizational commitment both indicated significant between-supervisor variance in the outcomes. Thus we tested the potential for the group-level servant leadership scores to account for this between-supervisor variance. A "means-as-outcomes model" (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) was formulated for each outcome, and the seven servant leadership dimensions were included as level 2 predictors. Table 5 shows the supervisor-level results. Although no group-level servant leadership dimension was individually related to in-role performance ratings, the inclusion of the aggregated scores explained 11% of the between-supervisor variance. Likewise, no group-level servant leadership dimension was significantly related to organizational commitment ratings, although the "helping subordinates grow and succeed" dimension approached significance \( \gamma_{03} = .56, p < .06 \). Interestingly, after the group-level servant leadership scores were added as level 2 predictors, no significant between-group variance remained in organizational commitment ratings: \( \chi^2(9) = 2.66, p > .05 \). Thus partial support was found for Hypothesis 3.

To complement these HLM analyses, we employed ordinary least squares (OLS) regression to examine the relationships among the servant leadership dimensions and the outcome variables, controlling for both transformational leadership and LMX. These results are found in the Appendix to this article. Overall, the results of the OLS regression models were similar to those derived using HLM. The only notable difference was that in using the more traditional OLS regression approach, the relationship between the servant leadership dimension "behaving ethically" and in-role performance was not significant. The results of the ANOVA model examined in HLM indicated dependencies among subordinate performance ratings (ICC = .29). The results of the HLM analyses therefore reflected the relationship between supervisors’ ethical behaviors and ratings of in-role performance, taking into account the nesting of the individual subordinates within supervisors and the resulting dependencies among individual-level observations.

7. Discussion

In the current study, we developed and tested a multidimensional measure of servant leadership. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses provided support for seven servant leadership dimensions, thus providing evidence of construct validity. The resulting seven-dimension scale consisted of 28 items (four items for each of the seven dimensions).
Providing further support for the validity of the scale, individual-level servant leadership explained the incremental variance in subordinate organizational commitment, community citizenship behavior, and in-role performance, after controlling for transformational leadership and LMX. These results indicate that servant leadership holds promise as a framework for understanding how leaders influence the attitudes and behaviors of their followers. Although transformational leadership, LMX, and servant leadership were correlated, the magnitude of correlations was not so high as to suggest that servant leadership is redundant with traditional leadership approaches.

The ability of servant leadership at the individual level to uniquely explain community citizenship, in-role performance, and organizational commitment distinguishes it from both transformational leadership and LMX. Perhaps servant leaders are unique in the way they exhibit an active concern for the well-being of broader organizational constituencies and the community at large (Graham, 1991). This trait is of particular interest in a period during which the behavior of a small number of executives has caused the public to question the credibility and integrity of corporate leaders as a group.

The results pertaining to organizational commitment highlight a noteworthy aspect of the servant leadership construct. We have suggested that it is the process of interaction/exchange between the leader and the subordinate that is central to servant leadership theory. Prior research has invoked social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) to explain how leadership affects employee commitment (Liden et al., 2000). In essence, social exchange theory proposes that individuals who receive valued rewards from an exchange partner are motivated to reciprocate with contributions of similar value, up to a certain point. Because leaders are often perceived as the “face” or “personification of the organization” (Liden, Bauer, & Erdogan, 2004), subordinates may be motivated to respond in kind to their leader’s extra efforts by evincing increased commitment to the organization. As previously stated, these “extra efforts” are defined as the supervisor’s dedication to helping a subordinate grow and succeed beyond the requirements specified in a typical employment contract.

Servant leadership was also able to explain a significant amount of additional variance in supervisor-rated, subordinate in-role performance. The servant leadership dimension “behaving ethically” was most highly related to in-role performance. Leader ethical behavior and trust are constructs that have previously been linked in the leadership literature (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Thus it may be the case that servant leader behaviors (e.g., acting ethically) are moderated by trust when predicting performance-related outcomes.

7.1. Practical implications

Results of our study suggest that servant leadership may enhance both job performance and commitment to the organization. In addition, our findings indicate that leaders may inspire followers to take an active role in serving the community in which the organization is embedded. When many leaders in an organization embrace servant leadership, the organization may succeed in developing a culture of serving others, both within and outside the organization.

Organizations that seek to create such a culture should be careful to select managers who are interested in focusing on building long-term relationships with followers. Doing so involves conscious effort in getting to know all followers for the purpose of providing support and guidance tailored to each individual follower’s needs. Indeed, results of the current investigation revealed a relationship between the servant leadership dimension “helping subordinates grow and succeed” and organizational commitment. The relationship between the “behaving ethically” dimension of servant leadership and follower job performance identified by the current investigation also suggests that special concern be shown for selecting leaders of integrity and solid ethics.

In many cases it may be necessary to supplement the selection criteria enforced for leaders with servant leadership training. For example, to develop leaders who are able to uncover the full potential in each follower, emotional intelligence training may prove valuable (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). High levels of emotional intelligence include the ability to be empathetic to the needs and concerns of followers; to show empathy, it is critical to listen to and understand followers. In developing such leaders, ethics training and training in employee empowerment may be useful (Spreitzer & Quinn, 2000).

7.2. Strengths and limitations

A strength of our study was our use of two research phases and two independent samples. The 28-item servant leadership scale, which was generated using student data, was validated by the results of the organizational sample. A
second strength of the study was the testing of the relationship between servant leadership and organizationally relevant outcome variables using data from both subordinates and their supervisors.

One limitation of the study was its cross-sectional design, which compromised the causal inference of the detected relationships. A second limitation was the low power available for detecting group-level effects. Some group-level effects approached standard significance levels, suggesting that, with a larger sample of groups and a larger sample of employees within groups, effects existing in the population might be detected. Additionally, the common organizational membership of the supervisors examined in this study may have constrained between-group differences in some servant leadership behaviors. Also, both phases of the research study were conducted with U.S. samples, leading to the suggestions that future research using our servant leadership scale be conducted across differing types of organizations and cultures.

7.3. Future research suggestions

The immediate research need is to address the limitations of the current investigation. Samples containing larger numbers of individuals within larger numbers of leader groups are needed to provide the power necessary to detect any group-level effects present in the population. A study that also involves a large number of leader groups nested within a large sample of organizations would be especially desirable, as it would allow for testing three-level models. Such variables as organizational culture could then be examined at the organization level, thereby providing the opportunity to develop an even clearer picture of the effects of servant leadership on outcomes of interest. It would also be desirable to employ longitudinal designs so that causal inferences can be made with respect to the associations found between servant leadership and outcomes. Finally, it might be beneficial to examine servant leadership in countries other than the United States. Due to the generally small degree of power distance in the United States, for example, the extent to which servant leadership would be effective in cultures characterized as having greater power distance remains an unanswered empirical question.

Another topic for future research is the extent to which people within a given culture show a desire for servant leadership. Hackman & Oldham (1976), for example, discovered that some employees do not want challenge and responsibility in their jobs. Likewise, perhaps some employees do not desire to work with servant leaders. Indeed, in informal conversations with participants in the current investigation, we discovered that some employees equate servant leadership with “micro-management.” Specifically, some employees did not want their immediate leader to get to know them and were uncomfortable with leaders who sought to help, develop, and guide them. More research is needed to explore the role of desire for servant leadership as a moderator of the relationships between servant leadership behaviors and outcomes, such as those examined in the current study.

Another fruitful area for future research might be the construction of a supervisor version of the servant leadership scale. As strongly argued by some researchers, such as Schriesheim, Castro, & Yammarino (2000), leadership by definition involves both leaders and followers. Hence, studying leaders to the exclusion of followers (or vice versa) is not adequate. In their earlier work, these authors advocated that leadership research involve perceptions of both leaders and followers. In future research, servant leadership might therefore be investigated from the perspectives of both leaders and followers.

8. Conclusion

The current investigation succeeded in developing a multidimensional measure of servant leadership. In validating this new measure, servant leadership was revealed to be a significant predictor of subordinate organizational commitment, community citizenship behavior, and in-role performance. At the individual level, these effects held even when controlling for transformational leadership and LMX. Consistent with Graham’s (1991) arguments, servant leadership therefore appears to be distinct from other prominent leadership theories. These results show promise for servant leadership as a framework for understanding how leaders influence their immediate followers, and ultimately the culture of the organization and the larger community in which the organization is embedded.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the funding from the Center for Human Resource Management at the University of Illinois, Chicago and Champaign campuses, and the research assistance of Tim Roberts and Ray Sparrowe.
Appendix A. Results for the subordinate-level outcomes using OLS regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables</th>
<th>Community citizenship behavior</th>
<th>In-role performance</th>
<th>Organizational commitment</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Step 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMX</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Servant leadership dimensions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual skills</td>
<td>.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empowering</td>
<td>.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping subordinates grow and succeed</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting subordinates first</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Behaving ethically</td>
<td>-.37**</td>
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<td>Emotional healing</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Creating value for the community</td>
<td>.52**</td>
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<td>$F$</td>
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<td>5.09**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
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<td>.18</td>
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**p<.01, *p<.05. N=145.

References


