

# A Meta-Analytic Review of Servant Leadership: Construct, Correlates, and the Process

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Increasingly, leadership research is investigating leadership models that address concerns for ethics, morality, and values in the workplace. The traditional frameworks based on agentic perspective, with its view of individuals as self-serving, and competitive, are deemed inadequate in today's workplace reality and therefore giving way to emergent leadership theories that emphasize relational perspective with its view of individuals as self-actualizing and cooperative. The current study focused on one such leadership approach that puts strong emphasis on leader *servicing* followers. **Servant leadership** is described as a holistic approach where leaders focus on the social, emotional, and ethical aspects of the leader-follower relationship such that the leaders help followers enhance and grow their capabilities and thus, attain their full potential. When introduced, servant leadership was challenged:

1. Whether the role of managers can be aligned with servant leaders?
2. As an aspirational theory of leadership, whether it can translate to positive outcomes for employees in the workplace?

Based on a meta-analytic review of servant leadership literature (85 independent studies, total N=16,803), Dr. Anjali Chaundry (Dominican University), Xiaoyun Cao (UIC), Dr. Robert Liden (UIC), and Dr. Prajya Vidyarthi (University of Texas at El Paso) discovered:

- Servant leadership behaviors increase employees' job satisfaction, commitment, and identification with organization.
  - Servant leadership behaviors positively affect employees' job performance, creativity, and organizational citizenship behaviors.
  - Employees are less likely to quit when having a servant leader.
  - Employees view the servant leaders as more fair and trust them more, comparing with transformational leaders.
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## Implications of the Results:

In contrast to the traditional view of effective leadership as a social influence reflected in employees' pro-organizational performance and work-related attitudes, servant leadership emphasizes the genuine concern of serving employees. The observed relationships between servant leadership behaviors and desired employee attitudes and behaviors proved that servant leaders can get things done while helping people. Servant leadership also enhances employees' justice perceptions and builds trust in leaders. Therefore, managers are encouraged to attend to employees' needs and help them grow.

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