

Servant Leadership: A New Model of Service at University?

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to relate servant leaders' attributes in university. As construction of leadership behavior that is multidimensional and unique compared to other leadership models, servant leadership emphasizes personal integrity in providing services to members of the organization and other stakeholders. Universities as higher education institutions are expected to adapt to the needs and demands of the environment by applying leadership style that gives more attention to the transformative progress of organization members. Given the complex environment and its social responsibility, leaders in the university must actively listen to its stakeholders to pursue organizational changes that fit with the need of wider publics while uploading high-quality academic outcomes and maintaining institutional values. This study focuses on the implementation of servant leadership at Tadulako University from seven dimensions of servant leadership through questionnaires distributed to 47 respondents. The results of this study indicate that leaders at various levels in Tadulako University have practiced servant leadership attributes moderately. At some points, leaders exhibit servant leadership behavior that shows their awareness of 'creating value for the community' and 'empowering' while still working on 'put subordinates first'.

Keywords: *servant leadership, university, higher education, service, and organization*

INTRODUCTION

Organizations are constantly changing various aspects. Forming an 'ideal' leadership characteristic is a process that must be carried out by leaders on an ongoing basis by the needs of the organization, environmental demands, and characteristics of members of the organization. Along with various changes in the environment both internal and external, organizations today need leaders who can provide optimal service for their followers. The more mature a leader with superior integrity, the

better he will be in providing services to its subordinates [1]-[3]. Service-oriented leadership shows a transformation of behavior that leads to adaptation to changing environments. The dynamics and organizational changes are strongly influenced by the environment and organizational culture [4]. This value is also reflected in Tadulako University as the largest tertiary institution of higher education in Central Sulawesi. Tadulako University continuously improves its capacity in providing qualified and competent graduates. The university must facilitate the needs of the entire academic community to achieve organizational goals based on the roles and functions of different stakeholders. Related to this, leaders are required to be able to set policies that allow for breakthroughs. They must have a service-oriented leadership mindset.

The role of leadership in universities is very multidimensional. In the process of making Tadulako a superior university, leaders in Tadulako University in general still experience various obstacles in accommodating various demands from the public. On the other hand, the university is expected to be able to fulfill this with effective leadership behavior. Various conflicts and polemics that have arisen in Tadulako University involving students, employees, lecturers, parents and the community show that current leadership is insufficient to provide optimal services to the academic community. The solution aims to identify a leadership style that enables the leaders to facilitate the completion of tasks because indeed, a true leader is a 'servant' for others [3],[5],[6].

Furthermore, Irving in [7] states that servant leadership is a process in which leaders and followers work together to achieve the organization's vision. Servant leadership enables a leader to serve employees or members of the organization, customers, and the surrounding community by striving for development and prosperity to meet organizational goals [8]-[10]. The practice of servant leadership is characterized by an increased desire to serve others by taking a holistic approach to work, the community, and the decision-making process that involves all parties. Servant leaders recognize the honor and importance of the value of each individual as a noble being

[11]. The leader considers that empowering and developing followers is a mandate that must be fulfilled.

Servant leadership is considered as an appropriate leadership concept to be applied in a dynamic work environment due to a paradigm shift in the concept of leadership. The conservative paradigm views workers solely as one factor of production, while the new paradigm considers workers as a major asset in a company or organization. Workers must be seen as a whole person who has feelings, desires, abilities, self-esteem, and the right to prosperity and happiness in life. The leader who intends to adjust to the development of the organizational environment must change his paradigm of thinking.

METHOD

This research was conducted at Tadulako University by distributing questionnaires to 47 respondents, leaders at the main office, and faculty levels, who were selected purposively. Data is analyzed by using descriptive statistics to analyze responses that are measured on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Furthermore, interpretation of scores can be seen in the following based on servant leadership questionnaire [2].

Table 1: Score Interpretations

No.	Criteria	Scores	Interpretation
1.	<i>High</i>	23 - 28	Demonstrate a true servant leadership behavior
2.	<i>Moderate</i>	14 - 22	Demonstrate an average of servant leadership behavior
3.	<i>Low</i>	8 - 13	The behavior of servant leadership is below the average
4.	<i>Very Low</i>	0 - 7	Not showing servant leadership behavior at all

The score shown on the questionnaire indicates the extent to which seven behavioral characteristics reflect the attributes of a servant leader.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

The study finds that the implementation of servant leadership among leaders at Tadulako University is in the ‘moderate range’.

The scores depicted in table 2 shows that leaders at Tadulako University have the potential to be servant leaders. They have shown servant attributes in their daily interaction, but they have not covered the whole aspects. This is evidenced

by dimensions with the highest score, namely ‘creating value for the community’ and ‘empowering’. While the dimension with the lowest score is ‘putting subordinates first’.

Table 2: Average Scores

No.	Servant Leadership Dimensions	Scores	Criteria
1.	Emotional healing	20	Moderate
2.	Creating value for the community	22	Moderate
3.	Conceptual skills	21	Moderate
4.	Empowering	22	Moderate
5.	Helping subordinates grow and succeed	21	Moderate
6.	Putting subordinates first	19	Moderate
7.	Behaving ethically	21	Moderate

The study is elaborated based on dimensions of servant leadership questionnaire [2] as follows:

1. Emotional healing is the act of showing sensitivity to others' concerns. The average score for 'emotional healing' is 20 (moderate). This score indicates that the ability of leaders at Tadulako University to reinforce emotional issues has not been done in-depth. The attention they give is limited to 'knowing' but has not taken the time and attention to listen and think of solutions to the issues faced by their subordinates. They don't take the time to discuss personal issues and try to understand the concerns of their members. Although showing concern, but the level of sensitivity to personal problems have not been a priority for leaders at Tadulako University.
2. Creating value for the community shows a conscious, genuine concern for helping the community. The implementation of this dimension emphasizes that leaders have a genuine sense of support for the surrounding community. The score (22) indicates that the concern of leaders at Tadulako University towards social values is at a moderate level. They realize the importance of contributing and are always ready to help the community, engage in community activities, and respect people who volunteer themselves. A sense of leadership to create value for the community can produce leaders who give sincere attention to help the community. Its implementation is through community service in the form of knowledge transfer through training, socialization, and applied research.
3. Conceptual skill means possessing organizational knowledge and understanding tasks to effectively support and assist others. The score for this dimension is 21, which means that the leaders of Tadulako University are moderately able to think about and understand

organizational problems and goals, and can solve problems with creative ideas, but are reluctant to tell if there is something wrong with the job. Thus, even though they have adequate knowledge about the organization and implementation of tasks, they have not yet found an effective formula to support and assist subordinates in achieving their goals.

4. Empowering means encouraging and facilitating followers in identifying and solving problems, as well as determining when and how to complete tasks. The results show the score for the dimension of 'empowering' is 22 (moderate). This shows that the average leader at Tadulako University has given freedom of space and responsibility to followers, encouraged them to be independent, and provided opportunities to deal with 'difficult situations'. However, this is only true for relatively easy tasks and not covering issues that are sensitive and urgent.
5. Helping subordinates to grow and succeed means demonstrating genuine concern for others' career growth and development by providing support and mentoring. This dimension gains a score of 21 (moderate), which means that leaders at Tadulako University have been supporting their subordinates to grow and succeed as well as to gain experience and learn new skills, but do not care much about their career direction. They provide support but are reluctant to follow the progress of their subordinates in detail.
6. Putting subordinates first means prioritizing subordinates through actions to show their importance. Leaders are always available to assist subordinates who are troubling in performing their assigned duties. The score for this dimension is 19 (moderate) with the highest response to the item 'leader sacrificing his interests so that others can meet their needs', and the lowest item is 'leader makes other people work easily'. This means that in certain matters, leaders in Tadulako University prioritize the interests and needs of their subordinates, but not involve in the work completion. This also means that leaders give some space for subordinates to find their ways of tackling the tasks.
7. Behaving ethically includes interacting openly, fairly, and honestly with others. The result shows an average score of 21, which means that the average leaders in Tadulako University have held ethical standards and honesty. But they tend to be less assertive and easy to compromise in matters related to personal. They are tolerant of mistakes made by subordinates, so they don't seem to have firmness.

CONCLUSION

Universities as the main initiators of high-quality human resources must be oriented to providing maximum service. Higher education is demanded a breakthrough as an agent of social change in meeting the needs of the campus environment, both internal and external. Servant leadership is expected to be implemented comprehensively and at various levels from leaders to administrative staff so that students and other stakeholders can receive greater benefits from higher education services. To deal with organizational change, leaders are expected to prioritize the interests of subordinates and provide more input and effort to facilitate them so that they can perform efficiently and effectively [12]- [14].

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that attributes as servant leaders have been held especially in the aspect of creating value for the community and empowering members of the organization. This shows that the leaders have included aspects of campus internal and external leadership. If this behavior is improved, it will have a better impact in terms of providing services to members of the organization and the wider community.

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