SPIRITUALITY AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT
Leadership has always been at the forefront of discussion when organizations would seek to improve their bottom line. It is understood that effective leadership is the foundation for organizational success. This papers is an exploratory study of the impact of the servant leader and work-environment spirituality on employees and employees' willingness to perform in a manner that may exceed what may be considered normal expectations. It is commonly believed that people, in the workplace, who see their leaders in in a servant posture, and are able to express their own positive spiritual beliefs without fear of ridicule, are more satisfied in their work environment and committed to accomplishing the goals of the organization.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Leaders in any organization are perceived as those who give orders to the rank-and-file. Some of the traditional leadership styles are the transactional, and laissez faire leader. Transactional leadership is a more traditional, hierarchical (bureaucratic) structured authority wherein the followers obey their leaders' orders (Mester, Visser, Roodt, & Kellerman, 2003). Its basic characteristics are bargaining, clarification of expected roles and tasks, task-oriented management, and reward-and-punishment leadership (Mester, Visser, Roodt, & Kellerman, 2003). Laissez faire leadership lacks motivation of employees by the leader, recognition and satisfaction of each employee's needs, and leadership participation in decisions. There also seems to be no provision for reward, punishment, or feedback to followers or employees (Mester, Visser, Roodt, & Kellerman, 2003). The leader is described to be passive or absent (Mester, Visser, Roodt, & Kellerman, 2003). In these two leadership styles, the only concern of upper management/leadership is the accomplishment of the organization's objectives and achievement of expected outcomes, with minimal or no concern for the employees/followers. Oftentimes, this situation resulted in the dissatisfaction of the rank-and-file employees of that organization. This situation calls for another leadership mode called *steward and/or servant leadership*. This situation gave rise to the need for *spirituality* in that organization, the workplace.

2. DEFINITION OR TERMS

Stewardship is the type of leadership centered on the employees or followers of an organization, with the goal of empowering these employees to make decisions for themselves and have control over their own work for the purpose of the general accomplishment of their organization's goals (Lussier & Achua, 2013). *Stewardship* connotes the entrustment of time, talent, and treasure to a leader and the need to multiply this time, talent, and treasure for the benefit of others. *Servant leadership* is leadership whereby the leader is seen as the servant of the employees or followers. They serving their followers and consider their needs as they help them improve personally and/or professionally while accomplishing the organization's goals (Lussier & Achua, 2013). A servant is a person who is subordinate to others and is expected to render service to those "others" for their mutual benefit.

Spirituality is the animated quality that defines the inner self and makes human beings alive (Neal, 2013). It defines the human beings as embodied spirits, a unified whole. These three concepts—stewardship, servant leadership, and spirituality—are interrelated, overlapping, and offshoots of each other.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE STEWARDSHIP

An effective steward is characterized as having strong, unified teamwork, noncentric decision -and-power brokering, and equality and reward concepts, according to Lussuer and Achua (2013). S*trong, unified teamwork* means that the leader and his/her employees/followers work as a team to generate and accomplish their common goals, methodologies, and policies to accomplish their organization's goals and expected outcomes. *Non-centric decision-and-power brokering* says that power and decision-making tends to rest on the employees more than on their leader. The employees or followers are empowered to make decisions for themselves and exercise self-leadership, whereas their leader acts as their facilitator and supporter. The *equality concept* means that the leader-follower relationship is based on equality and generates the values of mutual respect, trust, and honesty. The *reward concept* is one where the empowered employees would be expected to have greater responsibilities for which corresponding greater rewards are provided. If so, this would further encourage these employees/followers to work more for their organization's purpose and further success for it would mean the employees' success as well. Spirituality in the workplace involves seeing one's work as a means to further his/her own and co-workers' spiritual and temporal (professional/economic/and so on) growth and improvement.

4. CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Servant leadership emanates from a viewpoint that each person has a moral responsibility for one another and to serve as well as to lead. It has the following characteristics, namely: serving others over and above oneself, effective and active listening to others, generating and keeping other people's trusts, and assisting others to discover their innermost spirit and potentialities to help others as well. By these qualities, the servant leader is able to accomplish his/her goals, followers' goals, and the organization's goals and

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interests at the same time, with a wider perspective (beyond his/her own), and with a more wholistic approach.

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUALITY IN ONE'S WORKPLACE

Characteristics of spirituality in one's workplace includes the following values: friendship, compassion, openness, trust, kindness, honesty, moral and ethical consideration; a harmonious, aesthetic, and peaceful environment, a strong sense of solidarity, presence of fun, love, serenity, religious activity, religiosity, corporate social responsibility, mutual respect, truth; the presence of common goals, attitudes, interdependency, guidance, patience, praying habits, positive examples and thoughts among employees, "faith in God," and management (Vasconcelos, 2013) Based on these qualities, spirituality in the workplace involves the presence of a belief in a Higher Being, with opportunities to practice one's religion which can lead to generation and thereby the presence the aforementioned qualities or values.

Work-environment spirituality also means the presence of a serene and wholesome workplace atmosphere where employees and leaders have excellent human relationships, interconnectedness, and community formation. Spirituality may possibly mean the physical make-up or arrangement of the company environment. For example, there may be an area within the company—a quiet room or chapel—for conducting religious services. Or the interior decoration or aesthetics may be individualized or personalized for each employee or group of employees in his/her work cubicle or office. Spirituality would be part of the general corporate culture that gives leeway to each employee's own personal spiritual values.

6. IMPACTS OF STEWARDSHIP AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

There are five dimensions of servant leadership. Four of those dimensions (love, humility, trust, and empowerment), enhance employees' work performance. The fifth dimension, leader's vision, does not. (Hussain & Ali, 2012). In another study, servant leadership had a significant positive effect on job satisfaction, but inversely or negatively affected "organizational commitment" in a college setting (Drury, 2004). The literature indicates that organizational commitment was contrary to the general finding on the positive effect of servant leadership on this factor (Drury, 2004). The negative effect of servant leadership on organizational commitment was affected by a compounding factor - job tenure - which was temporary for all positions in the college under study (Drury, 2004). Servant leadership behavior positively affects employees' organizational citizenship or participant behavior and work performance (Zehir, Akyuz, Eren, & Turhan, 2013). Stewardship and servant leadership share common characteristics and are, in fact, overlapping. Stewardship is part of servant leadership.

7. IMPACTS OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Spiritual values in the workplace enhance the positive impact of total quality management (TQM) strategies on the employees and management's commitment to their organization (Adawiyah, Shariff, Saud, & Mokhtar, 2011). Spirituality enhances employees' total well-being, interrelationships, purpose in life, quality-of-life, work performance, and organizational total profitability and performance (Beheshtifar & Zare, 2013; Karakas, 2010).   Spirituality in the workplace encourages community formation, evokes challenges, "meaningfulness," interconnectedness; feelings of joy, work enjoyment and fulfillment, congruence of personal values with those of the organization, and increased sense of personal growth and self-worth (Crumpton, 2012). Therefore, spirituality in one's workplace improves the employees' and management's perspective, work outlook, performance, and commitment. Spirituality is born out of servant leadership and part of the workplace environment and culture (McCown, 2014). Due to the fact that servant leadership entails the moral obligation to care for one's followers, the spirituality dimension is part of stewardship and servant leadership.

8. BALANCING SPIRITUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Due to the fact that spirituality is part of stewardship and servant leadership and that spirituality has similarly positive effects on employees' and managements' behavior, commitment, job performance, quality of life, and other factors, there may be synergistic effects of all three on the same factors. Therefore, integration of spirituality into stewardship and servant leadership paradigms or frameworks is what is called for and not so much for balancing of all three. For integration of spirituality into stewardship and servant

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leadership to be successful or have positive effects on factors related to employees, the management, and the organization, delineating the components of the stewardship and servant leadership paradigms, best practices or practice model, and the implementation of these paradigms and best practices are necessary.

Servant leadership paradigm is seen within three context - attributes/characteristics. , behavior, and job environment (Abel, 2000). With respect to characteristics of servant leadership, previously discussed, Abel (2000) included additional characteristics of servant leaders. They are "personal" and "relational" characteristics." (Abel, 2000). Personal characteristics of servant leaders are those inherent in the person, whereas "relational" characteristics are those born out of the servant leader-follower relationship (Abel, 2000). Relational characteristics of servant leaders are constancy, approachability, cooperation, collaboration, and openness to others (Abel, 2000). All these characteristics are changeable/malleable. Behaviors of servant leaders include careful and active listening, participative decision-making with followers, share and transfer his/her personal vision or philosophy to followers, excellent at motivating and supporting people, and training followers for their improvement and success (Abel, 2000). Effective servant leadership occurs within effective job environments. Effective job environments or workplaces would be those with an atmosphere that is people-oriented, rather than profit-centered; where personal and professional growth of people are encouraged, speaking the truth, positive human values, knowledge learning, and interaction, and the attributes of the servant leader are emphasized. From Abel's discussions, servant leadership is both a leadership style and part of the workplace or job environment the same as spirituality.

Wong and Davey (2007) described the best practice traits and behaviors of a servant leader, similar to Abel (2000). Wong and Davey state that "right identity, motivation, method, impact, and character" are the traits of the servant leader. "Right identity" is cultivating the characteristics of being a servant which are being humble, selfless, a steward, and having a calling. "Right motivation" means being habitually helpful, sacrificing one's interest for the sake of others, helping others improve, and empowering other, all for God's sake. "Right method" is actively listening to, empathic with and open to others, sharing decision-making or having a common consensus with others, teamwork, and offering positive encouragement or affirmation to followers. "Right impact" means being a model leader and empowering others to achieve excellence and higher ideals. "Right character" is being transparent and having integrity. The difference between Abel (2000) and Wong and Davey (2007), is that Wong and Davey have combined characteristics of a servant leader and work-environment spirituality. These traits as described by Wong and Davey (2007) showed the integration of spirituality and servant leadership. It is not so much of a balance, but rather the integration of these two concepts of spirituality and servant leadership.

Another study focused on the interrelationship of different leadership styles, such as servant leadership, with spirituality in one's workplace and culture, and other organizational factors. Servant leadership was described as a leadership or management style which is participative, with empathy, active listening, and vision or philosophy backed by work-environment spirituality (Abel, 2000; Drury, 2004; Hussain & Ali, 2012; Lussier & Achua, 2013; McCown, 2014; Neal, 2013). On the other hand, spirituality in the workplace encourages interconnectedness and other values as previously stated. A company's mission and vision may embody spiritual principles which may guide followers in deciding their own spirituality that fits within the organization's culture (McCown, 2014). This type of leadership style and work-environment spirituality produces a work-environment characterized as familial, friendly, unified teamwork, fun, encouraging, open, participative, and empowering (McCown, 2014). This atmosphere can be maintained and sustained through strategies such as periodic "cultural training", sustained support of the company vision, mission, and values, ethical hiring and termination of employees, relationship building, and company activities that would foster servant leader-follower dialogue and relationship (McCown, 2014). McCown (2014) proposed the following schematic paradigm to illustrate the relationship of several factors relating leadership style (such as servant leadership), work-environment spirituality with excellent internal human relations. All three - servant leadership, spirituality, and internal human relations - are grounded in the company (or the leader's) mission/vision/faith (McCown, 2014). Furthermore, these three aforementioned factors lead to the enhancement of follower growth and empowerment, interrelational communication, and maintenance of a people-centered corporate culture. In turn, follower growth and empowerment, interrelational communication, and maintenance of a people-centered corporate culture lead to the strengthening and unity of relationships and of the organization, and follower leadership development

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(McCown, 2014). This whole preceding framework is what McCown (2014, p. 8) calls the "model of internal relationship building" (see figure 1).
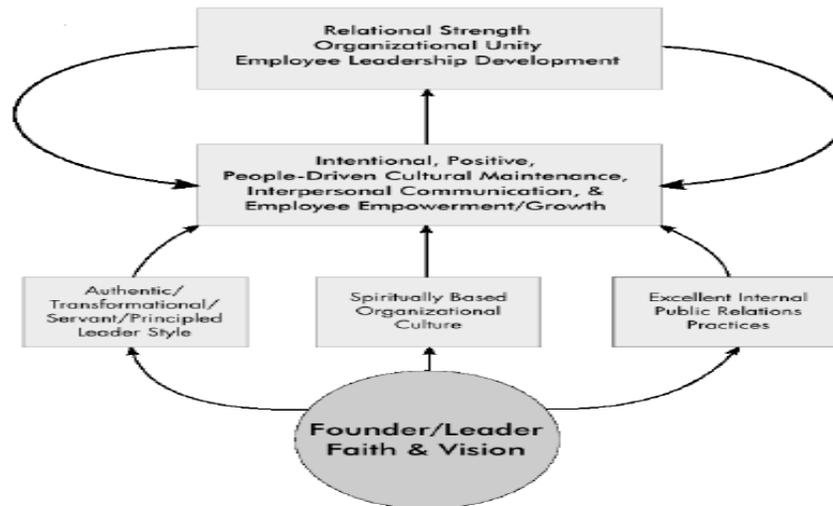

Figure 1. "Model of Internal Relationship Building" (McCown, 2014, p. 8)

Based on Abel (2000), Wong and Davey (2007), and McCown (2014) discussions, servant leadership connotes leadership style (personal and relationship character traits and behaviors of a servant leader) within the context of the workplace (Abel, 2000; McCown, 2014; Wong & Davey, 2007) and culture. Servant leadership works together with spirituality and interpersonal human relationships in order to improve interpersonal communications, follower empowerment and personal/professional growth, and maintenance of a positive and people-centered corporate culture, and in turn, influences human relationships, unity within the organization, and follower leadership. This framework or model is for purposes of building positive and harmonious interpersonal human relationships which lead to better organizational unity and outcomes.

In addition, according to Abel (2000), Wong and Davey (2007), and McCown (2014), the challenges lie in developing leadership training to emphasize skills in servanthood, and how to develop qualities and attributes of a leader in general, and of a servant leader in particular. There is a need to develop excellent skills in interpersonal human relationship, communication, negotiation, conflict management, and empowerment skills.

Abel (2000), Wong and Davey (2007), and McCown (2014) all emphasized active, careful, and excellent listening skills among servant leaders. Active, careful, and excellent listening skills should also be emphasized among the employees/followers in an organization. Listening and communication are interpersonal skills that are important to develop, maintain, and sustain excellent interpersonal human relationships. Abel (2000), Wong and Davey (2007), and McCown (2014) also emphasized participative decision- or consensus-making. Participatory approach may be applicable also in several aspects of organizational functions such as task training, values formation, and team-building, corporate social responsibility. Abel (2000), Wong and Davey (2007), and McCown (2014) also focused on the end-goals of servant leadership, work-environment spirituality, and excellent interpersonal human relations, which are strengthening of human relationships, organizational unity, and enhancement of follower/employee leadership potentials. These three last factors are important in achieving organizational goals and outcomes. Management must therefore look to improve its human resources and human resource department.

9. CONCLUSIONS

Servant leadership is a leadership style that portrays the leader as a servant to his followers or employees, empowering them to become good leaders and to grow themselves, for the purpose of building, enhancing, and strengthening leader-follower relationships; improving, maintaining, and sustaining a people-centered corporate culture and unity within the organization. Servant leadership overlaps or includes work-environment spirituality.

Spirituality in the environment includes a belief in a Higher Being, and spiritual values such as humility and honesty. It also includes maintenance of aesthetics conducive to serenity and harmony. In conclusion, servant leadership, workplace spirituality, and excellent interpersonal relationships lead to the strengthening of these relationships, maintaining and sustaining a people-centered corporate culture and organizational unity.

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