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Servant Leadership Relationship to Emotional Demands, Stress, and Well-Being of the Leader

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Abstract

Previous studies have investigated the outcomes of servant leadership on the followers and organization. The present study investigated the outcomes of practicing servant leadership on the leader by identifying the relationships between servant leadership and emotional demand, stress, and well-being. Eighty-seven leaders completed a survey on their leadership behaviors, emotional labor, emotional intelligence, stress, and well-being. Two servant leadership scores were used to analyze the relationships. Multiple correlation analyses, linear regressions, and hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted and found partial support across all hypotheses. Overall trending patterns indicated servant leadership had a positive correlation with emotional labor, emotional intelligence, and stress, and a negative correlation with well-being. Results also indicated that emotional labor mediated the relationship between servant leadership and emotional intelligence, and between servant leadership and well-being. Servant leadership is beneficial to the organization, but can be negative to the leader's health if suggested considerations are not incorporated.

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Servant Leadership Relationship to Emotional Demands, Stress, and Well-Being of the Leader

by

Laura Yang

A Master's Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

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THE LEADER

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Servant Leadership Relationship to Emotional Demands, Stress, and Well-Being of the Leader

Historically, leadership theories have developed to explain how various factors such as personality characteristics, abilities, interests, and environmental influence leadership behaviors and outcomes. While the nature, causes, and outcomes of leadership has been convoluted due to its complex nature, scholars have been able to differentiate the types of leaders and leadership styles based on context and cultural factors. Contextual factors can include the setting and other environmental factors, the complexity of the task, the power or authority that the leader has, what knowledge, skills, and abilities the leader possess (as opposed to or compared with their follower), and the relationship between the leader and the follower (Oc, 2018). On the other hand, cultural factors can include the values and norms of the organization or region, the different demographic groups (e.g., generational groups), and the use of language and nonverbal behavior (House et al., 1999; Yu & Miller, 2005).

One of the leadership styles that has recently gained recognition for being useful in understanding and proscribing effective leadership processes, relationships, and outcomes is servant leadership. While traditional leaders focus on improving their team or organizations, the primary focus of a servant leader is to serve the followers' psychological needs and interests, which in turn increases team and organizational performance (Choudhary et al., 2013; Sousa & Van Dierendonck, 2016; Van Dierendonck et al., 2014). Specifically, servant leadership is defined as "an other-oriented approach to leadership, manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of follower individual needs and interests, and outward reorientating of their concern for self towards concerns for others within the organization and the larger community" (Eva et al., 2019). As an other-oriented approach to leadership, servant leaders tend to be more empathetic,

compassionate, and altruistic (Jit et al., 2017), which helps with relationship-building and people-oriented tasks.

With servant leadership being viewed as a long-term approach to leadership, understanding the consequences of practicing such behaviors is vital. Servant leaders are viewed as givers, providing assistance and support to those they essentially serve, and yet are not expecting their followers or other leaders to reciprocate at the time. Rather, the hope is that the servant leadership behaviors and qualities will eventually be continued in a cycle in which the follower develops as a servant leader themselves and enact similar behaviors with others to create a better world (Parolini et al., 2009).

Given the recent event of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has almost required the need of more selfless leadership to successfully navigate the rapid changes occurring in organizations and across the country. However, it seems as though it has not come to the extent as hoped or expected, but there have been some increases in servant leadership in some less formal leaders, such as with nurses (Delgado et al., 2017). As such, with a growing demand and expectation for many non-servant leaders or less formal leaders to step up and enact servant leadership behaviors and qualities in their current role, it is pertinent to identify and understand what stressors these leaders face, and what can be done to address these issues in order to minimize or manage the negative effects of servant leadership as fundamental.

While servant leaders may have good motives and want to improve their groups or organizations, it is fundamental to ensure that all leaders have their basic needs fulfilled first to be able to lead (Alonso et al., 2019). For example, when flying on an aircraft carrier, one of the safety instructions state that passengers should put on their own oxygen mask first before helping others with their masks. The effects of enacting servant leadership on the leader is important to

determine whether it is a sustainable form of leadership in the long term, though research has found that serving others' (followers) needs is an important factor in determining long-term organizational performance (Hoch et al., 2018).

As such, the proposed study is to examine the impact of servant leadership behaviors on the leaders' emotional demands, stress, and well-being. For the purposes of this study, the servant leader's health will be operationalized by stress levels, their well-being will be assessed as psychological well-being, and emotional demands will be measured by their emotional labor and emotional intelligence. Despite the numerous studies and research done on followers' outcomes, little research has investigated the effort the leader must put in to enact servant leadership and the leader's health and well-being has been affected by enacting servant leadership.

The purpose of this research is to begin to understand how being a servant leader affects the individual's own emotional, physical, and psychological needs. Specifically, the current study investigated the emotional demands of enacting servant leadership, and how enacting servant leadership affects one's stress levels and well-being. In addition, this study investigated how the emotional demands of enacting servant leadership might explain the development of skills that aid in the effectiveness of servant leadership such as gaining emotional intelligence and how the stressors of servant leadership might mediate servant leadership's relationship to well-being.

Servant Leadership

By being able to address their followers' psychological needs, such as tending to or caring about their feelings and emotions, servant leaders are able to alleviate any potential stress that their followers may have and ensure their well-being, allowing for them to perform more

effectively on tasks (Harris, 2018). Prioritizing the developmental needs of their followers demonstrates that the leader finds their followers' psychological needs as valid and acceptable, minimizing the need for the added tasked stress of emotional labor or emotion management. Servant leaders also acknowledge others' (followers) perspectives and provided them needed levels of support, leading to increased engagement and trust (De Waal & Sivro, 2012; Greenleaf, 1970). By valuing the thoughts and contributions from their followers, leaders are provided with the opportunity to recognize the contributions of their team, create a sense of shared responsibility, and further enhance the commitment and relationship to the team, follower, and organization (Cerit, 2009).

However, as servant leaders are able to empathize, address, and understand their followers' needs, this may affect the servant leader themselves, as their own emotional state and psychological needs are not being addressed. Previous studies have researched how servant leadership is effective in different settings and how servant leadership influences the climate of those settings (e.g., satisfaction, performance outcomes, extra-role behaviors; Cerit, 2009; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; Jamarillo et al., 2009). Studies found that school principals with servant leadership qualities was positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction and alleviated stress, as the principals' community building, authenticity, and teacher-centric values provided intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction (Cerit, 2009; Harris, 2018). By meeting the needs of the teachers employed at their school, the principals were able to improve the teachers' work performance and produce positive situations in the organization, such as regular work attendance, minimal turnover (e.g., resignation or transfer), and effective student teaching (i.e., educational target behaviors and goals).

Further, employees and managers with servant leadership traits influenced the high-performance organization (HPO) framework, such that the organization achieved better results than their peers in similar industries, by highlighting the service, loyalty, and openness of managers' relations to their employees (De Waal & Sivro, 2012). The researchers also highlighted the importance of leaders empowering their employees. Leaders who were more in tune with the members of their organizations had better relationships with their followers, demonstrating the importance of relationship-building. It also helped to create "ideal" leaders and motivated followers to then further improve their performance (De Waal & Sivro, 2012), with the ideal leader being described as one who values their followers, appreciates and listens to the team's ideas, and motivating employees (Ilies et al., 2005).

Servant leaders were increasingly needed during the COVID-19 pandemic to guide their followers during this difficult, anxiety-risen time to maintain engagement in their tasks, and continue to contribute toward their groups or communities in a newfound way (Hu et al., 2020). Employees, students, and other followers were forced to either quickly transition to a socially-distanced, virtual environment, or rise to the occasion and adapt to the needed changes in their newly-found hazardous work environments as essential members of the community. Leaders and managers found themselves adapting to their new workplace environments and interpersonal dynamics, requiring many to seek novel ways to remain connected with their followers online, such as through virtual meetings on Zoom, Skype, or Microsoft Teams. Many teachers and educators had to redesign their curriculum to adjust to the changes in their classroom set up, keeping in mind that their goal was to ensure the students were meeting the standards and target goals for their given courses or grade level while meeting remotely.

While many people found that their workplace has shifted to the comfort of their own homes, healthcare workers, often identified as servant leaders, found themselves working extremely long hours trying to fight against the onslaught of patients with COVID-19 symptoms and diagnoses with limited resources and equipment in their medical centers and hospitals (National Nurses United, 2020). As many of these healthcare workers, such as nurses, already had a higher tendency to experience strain and stress from their job tasks, the added demand from the COVID-19 pandemic further resulted in risky behaviors that are counterproductive to their workplace (Rudolph et al., 2021). The resilience and determination of many healthcare workers during this time demonstrated their fight against COVID-19, doing what they could for their patients and the greater public. While it was a bleak time for the healthcare industry, the concern, respect, and care for their patients not only demonstrated the importance of these leaders, but also the consideration of the effects of servant leadership behaviors on these leaders, such as their stress, health, and well-being (Jimenez et al., 2021).

In addition to the leaders in the healthcare industry, leaders in organizations were tasked with creating trust through action during a time of uncertainty and crisis. As a foundation of a relationship-oriented leadership style, leaders in organizations were entrusted with adapting actions that would build relationships and human connectedness with followers that were not only sustainable, but also beneficial for all parties involved (Ahern & Loh, 2020). Rather than limit their interactions to strictly business-related issues, leaders engaged with their followers by being an available resource, took time to learn about the values of their followers, and suggested ways for followers to meet their interests (Olson, 2020).

Even as organizations began to resume normal operations (e.g., returning to the office), leaders took the time to understand the demands that their employees faced outside of the

workplace and organized flexible work conditions that would optimize their employees' well-being and performance (Schuster et al., 2020). However, the effects of the pandemic left many workers more vulnerable to negative experiences and conditions, and thus risked the need to intensify their emotional labor in the workplace (López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). This meant that regardless of what the employees were facing or going through in their personal lives, returning to the workplace required them to "mask up" physically and emotionally to be productive in the workplace.

The discussions and questions of servant leaders' potential stress and well-being are identified, yet these considerations neglect to address how servant leaders' behaviors actually affect the servant leader themselves. It is also a common theme that servant leaders constantly give rather than take, adding to the assumption of their laborious demand to mask their personal problems to serve the needs of others. To understand how practicing the behaviors aligned with those of servant leadership can affect or impact the leader themselves, it is important to identify the relationship that servant leadership has with certain outcomes or consequences. These consequences include emotional demand, stress, and well-being.

Emotional Labor, Emotional Intelligence and Servant Leadership

As a servant leader, one of the tenets of this style is the leader's ability to reorient their concerns for themselves and directing that concern towards the needs of their followers in the group, organization, or community (Eva et al., 2019). This oftentimes requires the leader to express certain behaviors and emotions in order to meet expectations specific to the situation, such as displaying empathy towards bad news, but excitement during something positive. This is referred to as emotional labor, where individuals act or express their emotions in a way that is expected of their role, or to regulate their emotions in a way to meet organizationally-based

performance expectations, including the frequency, intensity, and duration (Ashford & Humphrey, 1993; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Hochschild, 1983). Common examples include flight attendants being extremely friendly and helpful, even on a stressful flight or during an encounter with a difficult passenger, or teachers being more engaging and energetic when interacting with their students in the classroom.

Even in leaders who practice servant leadership behaviors, this is a common occurrence. Leaders need to be able to manage their emotions because building trust is important in a servant leadership relationship with each follower. Further, it is vital to try to build a unique relationship of trust with each follower based on their needs (Eva et al., 2019; Parolini et al., 2009). For example, regardless of what is happening in their own personal lives, teachers come in to the classroom with a smile on their face and project happiness and kindness to their students, giving individual attention to each student and addressing any gaps or needs their students may have, whether it is additional support in certain subjects, being an adult they can rely on, or aiding them in interpersonal communications and relationships. By following through with learning each student's individual developmental needs, it can also be more stressful for the teacher to accommodate to each student rather than aiming at the median level of knowledge and development for the class. This individual attention involves a higher level of emotional labor because they need to emotionally "act" in a way that matches the student's needs or response, adding more work for the teacher.

In addition to expressing certain emotions, emotional labor also includes the management of the emotional demands of others (Delgado et al., 2017). Nurses who frequently interact with patients and their families are often tasked with expressing neutral or empathetic emotions during stressful and scary times, but also managing the emotions of others by accepting and

respecting what others are feeling, listening without judgment, and providing the space to express their feelings rather than shutting them down or dismissing them. As caregivers who put the needs of their patients first, this allows their patients and their families to feel heard, understood, and can even alleviate some stress and anxiety knowing that there is someone who understands their worries and concerns rather than just being another patient in a room.

Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to identify and manage one's emotions and the emotions of others, such as through emotional awareness (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Emotional intelligence can be seen through a teacher identifying a student is feeling sad and trying to comfort them, or a counselor recognizing that their patient or client is distressed and trying to manage that negative emotion and controlling it in a healthy way. Nurses, along with other servant leaders such as teachers, first responders, and community leaders, regulate their own emotions during their interactions with others because the importance of addressing their followers' needs rests above the needs of their own. This regulation allows them to match their followers' emotions or to respond appropriately with the correct or expected emotion.

While the definitions of both emotional labor and emotional intelligence overlap a bit, they are also different to an extent. Emotional labor is the act of expressing and managing emotions in a way that is expected of them or to match the situation appropriately. It is essentially a performance for a given setting. Conversely, emotional intelligence is the ability to cognitively identify, understand, and manage the emotion at a micro-level. There is a more personal awareness and interpersonal touch with emotional intelligence (Guy & Lee, 2013). While both of these skills are common practices of servant leaders that are beneficial and fitting for their followers, there are still mixed findings on the true relationship of emotional

intelligence on servant leadership (Miao et al., 2021). As such, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 1: Servant leadership behaviors will have a positive relationship with emotional labor assessed with **a)** the DTSL and **b)** the SLS.

Hypothesis 2: Servant leadership behaviors will have a positive relationship with emotional intelligence assessed with **a)** the DTSL and **b)** the SLS.

However, this may oftentimes lead to the servant leader to experience a degree of emotional dissonance, where the feelings they are expressing are different than the emotions that they are internally experiencing (Hochschild, 1983). Emotional dissonance that is experienced frequently can add stress and negatively impact the individual's well-being. Emotional labor is the time and work invested in understanding how another feels, reacting appropriately to support them and their needs. It can increase their emotional intelligence, as investing time to understand others can increase their awareness and perception of emotions. Thus, while servant leaders are able to manage emotional labor, this can lead to increased stress and decreased well-being, as found in a review on nurses conducted by Delgado et al. (2017).

As such, identifying a relationship between servant leadership and emotional demand (e.g., emotional labor and emotional intelligence) was pertinent to understanding the consequences of this new, long-term approach to leadership. As such, the following hypothesis was developed:

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between servant leadership behaviors on leaders' emotional intelligence will be mediated by emotional labor assessed with **a)** the DTSL and **b)** the SLS as predictor variables.

Stress on Servant Leadership

The definition of stress varies based on the context and the field of study, as it is often a topic of interest to psychologists, medical professionals, and employers. One of the earliest definitions of stress still widely accepted to this present day is the “non-specific response of the body to a demand” (Selye, 1956a). Stress can fluctuate in intensity and duration as well as trigger a different response or reaction depending on the source of the stress. When in short bursts, stress can be seen as positive or productive moments (e.g., constructive stress) which warn us about danger or an upcoming deadline or event, while prolonged exposure to stress (e.g., destructive stress) can physiologically affect the individual’s body and immune system (Selye, 1956b). When identifying stress in the organization, it is important to study how leaders’ roles and behaviors affect their followers’ stress.

When an individual carries a lot of negative stress, this can impact their job satisfaction (Cavanaugh et al., 2000), personal development (Dooley et al., 2020), work performance (Wallace et al., 2009), and employee engagement (Yulita Idris & Dollard, 2014). Furthermore, destructive stress can negatively affect one’s psychological and physiological health, such as through burnout, exhaustion, anxiety, and immune system (Sun et al., 2018). The source of stress can come from society, one’s work environment, interpersonal relationships, home life, and important upcoming events (Sun et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2020). The source of the stress, or stressor, is then filtered through the individual, affecting different parts of their psyche, such as their self-esteem and confidence. It then transforms into a physical response, varying from excitement and joy to panic and avoidance (Selye, 1956b).

Servant leaders tend to have an approach that is more people-centric, as their main focus is on relationship-building and people-oriented tasks (Eva et al., 2019; Jit et al., 2017). While

servant leaders are not constantly focused on the hierarchical delegation of tasks and targets of the organization, they are oftentimes concentrated on developing relationships with each individual follower and fulfilling their needs, whereby the fulfillment of followers developmental needs motivates them and enables them to engage in goal-reaching related behaviors. Thus, this can require more time from the leader to attend to each follower, resulting in the denial of their own ambitions or goals, potentially igniting a stress response in the leader. Furthermore, when there is a conflict or negative interaction or outcome with a follower, colleague, or member, it can intensify the perception of not meeting demands and expectations of their role as a leader (Selye, 1956b). This is more so with servant leaders as they have a more intimate relationship with their followers compared to other types of leaders.

While many servant leaders do not elicit coercive or legitimate power over their followers, their ability to utilize referent and expert power provides an ability for them to influence others in a more personal way, but it can take longer and may result in more pushback or resistance from those who are not receptive to a more people-oriented approach. Resistance in the short-term, while gaining trust from a follower, can result in more short-term stress than just ordering about. Further, as leaders take the time to understand their followers' needs, they tend to pay more attention to the distress or conflicts that their followers encounter. This can result in the leaders taking on their followers' stress and harboring the stress themselves more so than non-servant leaders. As such, in order to continue promoting the importance of having servant leaders, it is equally as important to recognize any negative effects of this positive leadership style.

Scholars have suggested that organizations and industries who adopt a service-oriented style of leadership can help alleviate members' stress and psychological needs, as servant leaders

prioritize their followers' needs and interests above their own (Eva et al., 2019; Sendjaya et al., 2019). Thus, being able to investigate the type of relationship between servant leadership and stress was important to understanding the consequences of this well-needed leadership style. While the foreseen benefits are overwhelmingly positive to the greater community (e.g., followers, employees, students, etc.), there could be an unforeseen risk to the leaders who enact servant or service-oriented leadership. As such, the following hypothesis was developed:

Hypothesis 4: Servant leadership behaviors will have a positive relationship with stress assessed with **a)** the DTSL and **b)** the SLS.

Psychological Well-Being and Servant Leadership

The experience of health, happiness, and comfort are tenets of well-being, something sought by just about everyone as it exudes positivity and can improve one's quality of life. It includes one's mental health, ability to manage stress, and life satisfaction as the key indicator of one's well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). In the workplace, well-being is influential on one's ability to perform well at their job because being in a more positive state of being allows the employees to work on tasks or in a job that can be more challenging or demanding than employees with a more negative state of well-being (Jimenez et al., 2021). Furthermore, having a healthier and better well-being can also help to mitigate the risk of burnout, health issues and illnesses, and disengagement from the organization (Coetzer et al., 2017).

While well-being is a broad term to encapsulate the concept around one's mental health and physical wellness, there are other dimensions to help understand and define what it means to be well. For the purposes of this study, the leader's psychological well-being was assessed. One of the more rudimentary findings of well-being was the understanding of well-being being divided into two dimensions: positive affect and negative affect (Bradburn, 1969). However, as

studies around quality of life and life satisfaction were underway and scales around well-being were being developed, researchers found that well-being was more than just positive and negative affect, but in fact had other components and features that would affect one psychologically (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Six dimensions were identified as subscales of psychological well-being: 1) positive relations, 2) purpose in life, 3) environmental mastery, 4) self-acceptance, 5) personal growth, 6) autonomy (Ryff, 1989, Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff et al., 2007). Examples of how each dimension is affected by servant leadership are given.

As an other-oriented approach to leadership, servant leaders prioritize the individual needs and interest of their followers using an empathetic, compassionate, and altruistic approach (Eva et al., 2019; Jit et al., 2017). This means that the importance of uplifting the well-being of others is an important goal, and is done through relationship-building between the leader and follower. This is related to the positive relations dimension, defined as having “warm, satisfying, trusting relationship with others; is concerned about the welfare of others; capable of strong empathy, affection, and intimacy” (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

However, with so much focus on the well-being of others, it can be difficult for the leader to remember to focus on their own well-being, oftentimes neglecting it for the sake of others (Jimenez et al., 2021). Furthermore, relationship-building can be stressful, as the leader needs to establish a sense of trust and interpersonal intimacy with their follower, so it requires patience, time, and energy towards this relationship with others. While this is a great type of leader many followers may want, to the leader this can negatively impact their mental health and thus impacting their psychological well-being. When their psychological well-being is continuously neglected or not addressed in a timely manner, their performance may be affected, which can lead to disengagement and lower satisfaction (Yulita Idris & Dollard, 2014). Additionally,

psychological well-being can affect one's physical health, as the growing stress can accumulate to unhealthy coping habits (Rudolph et al., 2021).

Thus, while servant leaders are able to prioritize the needs of their followers, this can lead to increased stress, decreased well-being, and impact emotional demand. During the global COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare workers tirelessly focused on the health and well-being of their patients, establishing a sense of trust and communicating with empathy and compassion (Fernandez & Shaw, 2020; Jimenez et al., 2021). As leaders in the healthcare industry, they exhibited another dimension of psychological well-being: purpose in life, defined as having goals and sense of direction and believing that there is meaning to life (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Yet, with the uncertainty and growing casualty both in the U.S. and internationally, many leaders and workers started to lose hope and feel a loss of control (e.g., environmental mastery, Ryff & Keyes, 1995). However, this was not limited to healthcare workers, but to other leaders in various service-oriented roles.

Many educators found themselves exhibiting self-acceptance, defined as having a positive outlook about oneself and accepting the positive and negative qualities of their different versions of self (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Parents who worked from home found themselves as makeshift educators to their children learning remotely. While many parents were not educators by trade, they took this opportunity to focus on the growth and development of their children who were learning in an unprecedented situation. Many leaders in the workplace used this opportunity to develop themselves to become better leaders to their workers, finding ways to ensure productivity and satisfaction. This personal growth allowed these leaders to unleash their potential and improve their own self and behavior in order to be more knowledgeable and effective in their roles (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Regardless of the type of leadership style one adopts or practices, a key feature of their role as a leader is their ability to be self-determining and independent of external pressures and judgments. Their autonomy on how to act and behave are evaluated by their own expectations, relying on their ability to take social and cultural cues to guide them (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Leaders of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in various communities protested in the unjust, unaddressed police brutality occurring across the nation against Black and colored individuals. Rather than succumbing to the stereotypes and external pressures to act and react in a certain way (e.g., be quiet and let these events occur without accountability), they protested and demanded justice by marching in their cities, speaking to their representatives, and raising global awareness. Rather than be concerned about the expectations and evaluations of others, their focus was on the end result, which was justice and accountability. They encouraged relationship-building with other community members, creating alliance with other organizations, identifying changes with politicians, and addressing needs with the local police departments.

Given the various ways in which servant leaders demonstrate psychological well-being through the six dimensions mentioned, these examples exhibit ways that helped or guided their followers more so than improve their own well-being. Thus, identifying a direct relationship between servant leadership and psychological well-being was important to comprehend how prioritizing the needs of others affects their own needs. Further, it was important to identify specifically which of these six dimensions were affected the most to identify what areas of a leader's psychological well-being negatively impacted their ability to remain happy, healthy, and comfortable. As such, the following hypothesis was developed:

Hypothesis 5: Servant leadership behaviors will have a negative relationship with well-being assessed with **a)** the DTSL and **b)** the SLS.

Mediating Well-Being. While it is important to examine the direct relationship between servant leadership and emotional demands, stress, and well-being individually, it is also important to probe into their indirect relationships and how certain factors affect the relationship of servant leadership with other outcomes. Based on the characteristics and mannerisms of servant leadership behavior, it can be portrayed that stress and emotional demands can be short-term or state outcomes (i.e., only experienced during the active event and potentially shortly after). However, while leaders may be able to manage their stress or emotional labor, long-term or repeated exposure can begin to impact the leaders' well-being, negatively affecting their psychological and physiological health (Hochschild, 1983; Sun et al., 2018). Repeated exposure to stressors in their jobs can influence their well-being. Seeing as well-being can be identified by one's mental health, stress management, and life satisfaction (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), it seems as though there may be some form of relationship between stress and emotional labor with well-being. As such, the following hypotheses were developed:

Hypothesis 6: The relationship between servant leadership behaviors on leaders' well-being will be mediated by stress, assessed with **a)** the DTSL and **b)** the SLS as the predictor variables.

Hypothesis 7: The relationship between servant leadership behaviors on leaders' well-being will be mediated by emotional labor, assessed with **a)** the DTSL and **b)** the SLS as the predictor variables.

Present Study

It is important to continue to study and investigate the consequences and effects of practicing servant leadership behaviors on the leader themselves. As such, potentially identified areas of concern are the servant leader's emotional demand, health, and well-being. Previous

research have identified the effects of having servant leaders in the organization or group, and have overall found positive outcomes, such as greater satisfaction, improved performance, and increased engagement among the group or organization (e.g., Cerit, 2009; Choudhary et al., 2013; De Waal & Sivro, 2012; Jit et al., 2017). However, there are limitations in these studies, as they do not identify the effects or outcomes of the servant leader themselves, such as the consequences of their emotional demand, if the servant leader is more likely or less likely to be stressed, and the effects on their well-being.

The present study aimed to investigate what the impact of practicing servant leadership behaviors has on one's emotional (e.g., emotional labor and emotional intelligence), physical (e.g., health regarding stress), and psychological (e.g., well-being) needs. These could be from either holding an identified servant leadership role (such as a community leader or first responder) or as a leader in a service-oriented role (such as a nurse or an educator). These findings can help to detect the effects and consequences of practicing servant leadership behaviors, and to hopefully identify coping mechanisms to limit, mitigate, or regulate these negative outcomes so that these individuals can continue to be servant leaders or lead in a service-oriented way.

Method

Sample

For the purposes of the present study individuals who hold or have held leadership roles were recruited to participate. Participants were recruited through the Sona Web System for 3 SONA credits, social media sites (e.g., Facebook and LinkedIn), targeted emails, and by word-of-mouth. All participants provided their informed consent on the Qualtrics Survey Form, with the approval of the Internal Review Board at Montclair State University. The following

definition was provided for potential participants to read in order to gauge if they met the criteria:

If they did identify as a leader, they would be prompted with a checklist to select all of the leader roles they hold or have held in various service-based industries, such as an educator, first responder, local community leader, or a member of a collegiate-level servant leadership program (e.g., Bonner Leader). If their role was not listed, participants could fill in what their role or position was and justified how it was a leader role by what they did in that role. If they did not identify as having a leader role or service-oriented role in a leadership position, they were redirected to the end of the survey. If their fill-in answer did not meet the definition's standards, their data was removed and excluded from analysis.

A total of 180 responses were collected on the Qualtrics survey. However, 93 were removed due to incomplete responses (less than 80% of the survey was completed) or not meeting the inclusion criteria in the beginning (i.e., if they are not a leader or did not identify as holding a leadership role). Eighty-seven participants, 21 males and 66 females, over the age of 18, participated fully in this study, with a mean age of 20.13 years old ($SD = 3.784$). The ethnicity breakdown of the participants were 47.1% White, 17.2% Black or African American, 24.1% Hispanic or Latinx, 9.2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2.3% identified as other. All but one participant were currently students, with 83 enrolled full time.

From this sample, 69% identified their former or current leader role(s) as one in the service industry, such as an educator (22%), first responder (7.9%), religious or clergy member (11.2%), and local community leader (12.3%). Some other non-service leader roles participants identified included manager at their place of employment, older sibling or babysitter, and captain of their respective sports team. Additionally, 10.3% of these leaders majored in something

related to leadership, 15% took a leadership course, 9.2% completed a leadership certificate, 8% completed a leadership program or training, and 57.5% had no formal leadership background or training.

Measures

All measures were administered on one Qualtrics survey and data was collected online, including demographic information. Participants who qualified as servant leaders were given the anonymous link to the Qualtrics via email and completed it on their own computer or mobile devices.

Independent Variables

The following scales were used to measure the independent variables regarding distinguishing types of leadership, leadership style, competing leadership behaviors, and servant leadership.

Distinguishing Transformational and Servant Leadership (DTSL; Parolini et al., 2009). To distinguish if the participant is more servant leadership oriented versus other leader oriented (e.g., transformational), the DTSL scale was developed and edited for the current study and for future validation. This scale contains 8 items. However, only 5 of these items are from Parolini et al.'s (2009) original scale, which was validated through discriminant analysis ($p = 0.000$), entailing that the 5 items found statistically significant differentiation between transformational leadership and servant leadership. Sample items include "As a leader, I focus my benevolence and good will toward the organization" versus "As a leader, I focus my benevolence and good will toward my individual followers."

This measure required two steps in completing each item: 1) first participants were asked to select the statement (out of a possible two statements) that best represented themselves as a

leader in a forced-choice format (i.e., must select one of the two statements in each set), and 2) then participants were asked to rate between each pair of statements by yoking 10 points between the items to rank how much they believe each statement describes their belief (allowing for some variability beyond the forced-choice part). For example, if the leader believes the first statement does not describe their beliefs at all, they would allocate 0 points for that statement and 10 points for the other statement. The five-item scale correlated with the eight item scale at $r = .91$ for the forced choice portion of the scale, and at $r = .95$, for the yoked points portion of the measure.

Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ; Halpin, 1957). The LBDQ uses descriptive items to describe different ways in which a leader may behave by indicating the frequency of engagement in the said behavior. This measure consists of 40 items, but only 30 of the 40 are scored, with 15 items under each of the two dimensions: Initiating Structure and Consideration. Initiating Structure refers to the extent to which a leader defines roles, taking actions, organizing activities, and defining how tasks are to be accomplished; this is a task-oriented leadership style. Consideration refers to the degree in which a leader has concern for the welfare of their peers or followers, oriented towards leading others to goals through interpersonal relationships and building trust; this is a people-oriented leadership style. Sample items included “I let group members know what is expected of them” (example of Initiating Structure) and “I do personal favors for group members” (example of Consideration). Participants rated themselves based on how they, as a leader, engage in the behaviors described with 1 indicating “never” and 5 indicating “always.” The estimated reliability using the split-half method is .83 for Initiating Structure and .92 for Consideration.

Servant Leadership Survey (SLS; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). To identify and assess the leader’s behavioral tendencies to develop followers through the elements of

servant leadership, the SLS provides a 30-item measure, which is grounded in servant leadership theory. Sample items include “I encourage my followers to use their talents” and “I am open to my followers about my limitations and weaknesses.” The items load onto eight dimensions with high internal consistency, which include: empowerment ($\alpha = .89$; 7 items), standing back ($\alpha = .76$; 3 items), forgiveness ($\alpha = .72$; 3 items), stewardship ($\alpha = .74$; 3 items), authenticity ($\alpha = .82$; 4 items), courage ($\alpha = .69$; 2 items), humility ($\alpha = .91$; 5 items), and accountability ($\alpha = .81$, 3 items). Participants marked how frequently they engaged in the 30 statements listed as a leader, from 1 indicating “never” to 5 indicating “always.”

Dependent Variables

The following scales were used to measure the dependent variables regarding leaders' stress levels, well-being, and emotional demand (i.e., emotional labor and emotional intelligence).

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen et al., 1983). To measure for the servant leader's health status, a measure assessing their stress was used. Namely, the PSS measures the perception of stress by identifying items that gauge how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded the leaders find their lives to be, as well as feelings and thoughts they experienced that can be considered as stress. Cohen and Williamson (1988) found correlations with PSS with other stress and health-related measures, such as the Stress Measures and the Health Behavior Measures. Participants rated how often they felt or thought a certain way based on the 10-item version of this scale using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from never (1) to very often (5). Sample items include “How often have you felt that things were going your way?” and “How often have you been able to control irritations in your life?” The internal consistency reliability of the PSS-

10 was adequate ($\alpha = .78$), and have been reported with a similar Cronbach alpha in other studies.

Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWB; Ryff, 1989). The original PWB contains 42 items that fall into six subscales with internal consistency coefficients ranging from 0.86 – 0.93. The shortened 18-item version is also reliably sound (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.85$), though the longer version is more statistically sound but requires more time to administer (Ryff et al., 2007). Sample items include “I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life” and “I judge myself by what I think is important, not by the values of what others think is important.” The six subscales include: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Participants rated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the items using a 7-point scale, with 1 indicating “strongly disagree” and 5 indicating “strongly agree.”

Emotional Labor Scale (ELS; Brotheridge & Lee, 2003). Studies have found that emotional labor is related to occupational well-being (Cheung et al., 2018) and that certain emotional labor profiles (e.g., deep acting) positively impacts one's well-being (Cheung & Lun, 2015; Gabriel et al., 2015). The ELS contains 15 items that measure six facets of emotional labor, including: frequency, intensity, variety, duration, surface acting, and deep acting. Participants rate how frequently they relate to the situations when they are or have been a servant leader using a 5-point frequency scale from never (1) to always (5). Sample items include “adopt certain emotions needed for your job” and “resist expressing my true feelings.” Overall, the subgroups in the scale demonstrated sufficient levels of internal consistency with Cronbach's α ranging from .74 to .91.

Global Emotional Intelligence Test (GEIT; Goleman et al., 2002). While intelligence and intellectual ability (e.g., IQ) is often sought after, there is a new form of intelligence that is at least equal, if not more, important in determining one's potential. Emotional intelligence (EI) can be learned and improved upon, but it is especially important for certain types of individuals or leaders to have, such as a servant leader. EI is the ability to recognize and understand our own emotions as well as the emotions of others. It is also able to manage and control any potential issues before acting impulsively by finding common ground and building rapport (Goleman, 1998). There are four clusters of EI: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The GEIT contains 40 items (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.72$), which are from the Global EI Capability Assessment instrument that originally contains 158 items. Participants were asked to choose which of the two options best represent them as a leader, producing a forced-choice format scale. Sample items include "I am generally guided by: a) my goals and values, b) others' goals and values" and "Others' perspectives are always: a) understood and sensitivity is shown, b) clouding the issues and getting us off track."

Control Variables

Data from additional measures was collected as control variables based on previous research finding a relationship between these variables and SL.

Big Five Inventory (BFI; John & Srivastava, 1999). The BFI measures individuals on the Big Five Factors of personality, which are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Overall, the BFI's reliability has remained high since its development (coefficient $r = .83$). However, for the purposes of this study, only two of the dimensions are being assessed: extraversion (versus introversion) and neuroticism (versus emotional stability). Both dimensions contain eight items each, totaling 16 items for this shortened measure for the

present study. Sample items include “is relaxed, handles stress well” (example of neuroticism) and “has an assertive personality” (example of extraversion). In the BFI, extraversion and neuroticism measured most reliably (.88 and .84 respectively) out of the five dimensions. Participants marked how much they agreed with each statement about themselves, with 1 indicating “strongly disagree” and 5 indicating “strongly agree.”

Demographic Information. Participants were asked to answer some demographic information, which included their age, gender, ethnicity, student status, academic leadership background (e.g., major, minor, certifications), current role(s), and time spent in each role. However, participants’ names, emails, student ID numbers, and other identifiers were not collected, but instead were identified by their three-digit participant ID number, which was randomly assigned through Qualtrics.

Procedure

Participants who self-identified as a leader or holding a leadership position were asked to complete the initial screening criteria through a Qualtrics survey online, which asked if they serve in a leadership role, what role(s) they hold or have held (e.g., educator, first responder, local community leader), and a brief description of what they do that makes them feel this way. This was to help identify if the participant were leaders in a non-service capacity, or if they served as servant leaders in their role. Further, the service-related questions were used to ensure there was variance in servant leaders and non-servant leaders. If they met the necessary requirements of the screening criteria, they were then asked to read the consent form and confirm their consent to participate in the study.

Once they confirmed, they were directed to the series of questionnaires, starting with the Distinguishing Transformational and Servant Leadership, followed by the Leader Behavior

Descriptive Questionnaire, Servant Leadership Survey, Big Five Inventory, Perceived Stress Scale, Psychological Wellbeing Scale, Emotional Labor Scale, and Global Emotional Intelligence Test. After completing all of the assessments, they were then asked to answer demographic questions. They were randomly assigned their three-digit participant ID number through Qualtrics, which was also recorded with their responses once they submitted the series of questionnaires.

Participants who signed up through the Sona Web System were granted participation credit as compensation for their time. There was no additional compensation for the other participants who completed the study.

Research Design

For the present study, the operational definition of servant leadership were assessed by one of the dimensions of the DTSL (DTSL-I) and the SLS, while the operational definition of transformational leadership will be assessed by the other dimension of the DTSL (DTSL-O). The operational definition of the outcome variables will be assessed by their respective scales and assessments (e.g., emotional labor by the ELS, emotional intelligence by the GEIT, stress by the PSS, well-being by the PWB).

The research design of the study will be correlational, as it is to investigate the relationship between servant and non-servant leadership as assessed through self-report of these scales and stress, well-being, and emotional demand. The main statistical analyses that will be conducted will include correlation analyses and linear regressions to identify the association between the variables and the impact of leadership on the outcome variables. Further, hierarchical multiple regressions and mediated regression analyses will be conducted to analyze whether emotional labor mediates the relationship between servant leadership and emotional

intelligence and between servant leadership and well-being, and whether stress mediates the relationship between servant leadership and well-being. While the main set of analyses will focus on the relationship with servant leadership (for hypotheses testing), analyses will be conducted with transformational leadership for comparison purposes.

Results

Data Preparation

The data was downloaded from Qualtrics into a spreadsheet on Microsoft Excel. Data sets where participants answered “No” on the inclusion question (i.e., if they serve(d) in a leadership role or lead in a service-oriented role) or did not provide consent were excluded and removed from the database. Next, participants who did not complete at least 80% of the Qualtrics survey were removed. The remaining data sets were reviewed for extreme responding and non-leader or non-service-oriented roles, but none were identified. The remaining 87 participants’ data sets were uploaded onto the IBM SPSS Statistics software, values were coded, reverse-scored items were recoded, variables were computed (e.g., calculating scale scores and dimension means), and statistical analyses were conducted. To ensure that the database was clean, means and frequencies were conducted to ensure there were no errors in coding or during data transfer from Excel to SPSS.

Analyses Conducted

Leadership was assessed using two scales that measured if a participant behaved as a servant leader or not. Leaders who identified more as a transformational leader were categorized under DTSL-O. Leaders who identified more as a servant leader were categorized under DTSL-I and the SLS. They were then used to assess the relationship with the variables of interest: stress, well-being, and emotional demand. For hypothesis testing, only servant leadership variables

were analyzed. Since the DTSL measure used for the present study has not been validated yet, analyses were also conducted using the five-item version of the DTSL, which has previously been validated.

Hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted to account for the control variables, such as gender and personality, to assess if these factors contributed to the variance in the relationship. The first set of analyses conducted were correlations between the variables, using both the dimensions and overall means where applicable. This was to quickly and concisely determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables. The second set of analyses conducted were linear regressions between the overall means of the variables in order to better predict the relationship between stress, well-being, and emotional demands with leadership.

The third set of analyses conducted were mediated regression analysis between leadership, emotional labor, and emotional intelligence, testing the mediating nature of emotional labor on the servant leadership and emotional intelligence relationship. The fourth set of analyses conducted were mediated regression analyses between leadership, stress and psychological well-being, testing whether the leaders' perceived levels of stress mediated the relationship between leaders' self-reported leadership behaviors and their self-reported well-being. The fifth set of analyses conducted were mediated regression analyses between leadership, emotional labor and psychological well-being, testing the mediating nature of emotional labor on the servant leadership and psychological well-being relationship.

Means

The means of each scale and their respective dimensions were calculated. The SLS, BFI, PSS, PWB, and ELS scales were measured using a 5-point Likert scale on their agreement level

or frequency, while the DTSL and GEIT were assessed using a 2-point scale on whether they agreed with one statement more than the other. Table 1 includes all of the means and standard deviations of the scales measuring the independent variables of leadership. It is important to note that the DTSL's overall mean was calculated between 0 and 1, with 0 indicating transformational leadership and 1 indicating servant leadership.

Table 1

Independent Variables Means

Leadership Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
DTSL Overall	87	.6229 ^a	.25968
DTSL-O	87	4.6451	1.38118
DTSL-I	87	5.3549	1.38118
DTSL-5 Overall ^b	87	.5908 ^a	.30024
DTSL-O (5) ^b	87	4.7724	1.59714
DTSL-I (5) ^b	87	5.2276	1.59714
SLS Overall	87	3.9628	.56619
SLS Empowerment	87	4.2512	.70098
SLS Standing Back	87	3.8084	.76356
SLS Accountability	87	4.0211	.87005
SLS Forgiveness	87	3.1992	.85281
SLS Courage	87	3.3333	.93282
SLS Authenticity	87	3.9109	.74782
SLS Humility	87	4.2874	.77741
SLS Stewardship	87	4.0958	.82579
LBDQ-I	87	3.6822	.51217
LBDQ-C	87	4.0065	.56238

^a The means of this scale were calculated based on answers using a 0 and 1 response, with 0 indicating more of a transformational leadership style and 1 indicating more of a servant leadership style.

^b This measure of the scale used the original, five-item validated scale.

The descriptive statistics indicate that overall, the leaders identified more with the servant leadership statements on the DTSL, ($M = .623$, $SD = .26$), which was further supported by their ratings on the DTSL-I, ($M = 5.36$, $SD = 1.38$) versus DTSL-O, ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.38$).

Furthermore, the means on the SLS further supported the stronger identification with the servant leadership style than not, ($M = 3.96$, $SD = .57$).

Table 2 includes all of the means and standard deviations of the scales measuring the dependent variables of stress, well-being, and emotional demand. The PSS did not have sub-dimensions in its scale, so only a global score was included. Overall, the descriptive statistics conducted revealed that the leaders' perceived stress were occurring occasionally, ($M = 3.32$, $SD = .59$), as well as with emotional labor, ($M = 3.32$, $SD = .65$). Furthermore, leaders' well-being scores were also below mid-point, ($M = 2.35$, $SD = .61$). However, leaders rated themselves as slightly above average on emotional intelligence, ($M = .65$, $SD = .12$).

Table 2***Dependent Variables Means***

Outcome Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
ELS Overall	85	3.3164	.64699
ELS Frequency	85	3.7882	.86503
ELS Intensity	85	3.0176	.93365
ELS Variety	85	3.1686	.98080
ELS Surface Acting	85	2.9686	.89623
ELS Deep Acting	85	3.5412	.90556
GEIT Overall	85	3.3164 ^a	.64699
GEIT Self-Awareness	85	.6635 ^a	.13349
GEIT Self-Management	85	.6141 ^a	.19466
GEIT Social Awareness	85	.7235 ^a	.17704
GEIT Relationship Management	85	.5790 ^a	.22598
PSS Overall	85	3.3212	.58637
PWB Overall	85	2.3547	.60989
PWB Self-Acceptance	85	2.2157	.79300
PWB Purpose in Life	85	2.4941	.75350
PWB Environment Mastery	85	2.6000	.82424
PWB Positive Relationship	85	2.4157	.91418
PWB Personal Growth	85	1.9706	.93689
PWB Autonomy	84	2.4365	.63998

^a The means of this scale were calculated based on answers using a 0 and 1 response, with 0 indicating they do not exhibit emotional intelligence, and 1 indicating they do exhibit emotional intelligence.

Hypothesis Testing

Correlations, linear regressions, and hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted in order to test the hypotheses that examined the relationship between leadership on 1) stress, 2) well-being, and emotional demands through 3) emotional labor and 4) emotional intelligence. Further, the variables of gender and personality were entered first into the equation in order to assess the effects of these control variables on servant leadership over and above the effects of the listed outcome variables' relations to servant leadership.

Hypotheses 1 and 2: Emotional Demands of Leadership. Hypotheses 1 and 2 predicted that servant leadership behaviors would have a positive relationship with emotional labor (H1) and a positive relationship with emotional intelligence (H2). These hypotheses were tested separately on both versions of the DTSL and the SLS measures of servant leadership. As can be seen in Table 3, DTSL-I and emotional labor were not significantly correlated, as was DTSL-I and the measure of emotional intelligence. The DTSL-I5 and emotional labor were correlated, but not with the measure of emotional intelligence. Further, the SLS and emotional labor were significantly correlated, as was the SLS and the measure of emotional intelligence.

To further understand how servant leadership affects stress, linear models were conducted by running a simple linear regression. Results of the simple linear regression indicated that DTSL-I, $F(1, 83) = 2.820, p = .097, R^2 = .033$ was not a significant predictor on emotional labor, but the DTSL-I5 was, $F(1, 83) = 4.635, p = .034, R^2 = .053$. DTSL-I, $F(1, 83) = 2.378, p = .127, R^2 = .028$, was not a significant predictor on emotional intelligence, as well as the DTSL-I5, $F(1, 83) = 1.184, p = .28, R^2 = .014$. However, SLS was a significant predictor on both emotional labor, $F(1, 83) = 14.418, p < .001, R^2 = .148$, and on emotional intelligence, $F(1, 83) =$

16.090, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .162$. These results provide partial support for Hypotheses 1 and 2, respectively.

Hypothesis 3: Mediation Effects of Emotional Labor on Emotional Intelligence. To investigate Hypothesis 3, which predicted that the relationship between servant leadership behaviors on leaders' emotional intelligence will be mediated by emotional labor, a set of simple mediation analyses were performed using PROCESS v3.5.3 on SPSS. The predictor variables for the analyses were the DTSL and SLS measures of servant leadership. The indirect effect of DTSL-I on emotional intelligence was found to not be statistically significantly mediated by emotional labor [Effect = $-.0017$, 95% ($-.0069$, $.0017$)], not providing support. However, the indirect effect of SLS on emotional intelligence was statistically significantly mediated by emotional labor, [Effect = $-.0215$, 95% ($-.0425$, $-.0034$)], providing support for Hypothesis 3. Overall, the results only found partial support for Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4: Effects of Stress on Leadership. Hypothesis 4 predicted that servant leadership behaviors will have a positive relationship with stress. This hypothesis was tested separately on both versions of the DTSL and the SLS measures of servant leadership. As can be seen in Table 3, the correlation between the DTSL-I and the measure of stress was significantly correlated, while the measure of the DTSL-I5 and the SLS were not significantly correlated with the measure of stress.

To further understand how servant leadership affects stress, linear models were conducted by running a simple linear regression. Results of the simple linear regression indicated that there was a significant effect between DTSL-I and stress, $F(1, 83) = 4.315$, $p = .04$, $R^2 = .049$. However, there was not a significant effect between the DTSL-I5 and stress, $F(1, 83) =$

2.839, $p = .096$, $R^2 = .033$, and the SLS and stress, $F(1, 83) = .049$, $p = .83$, $R^2 = .001$. Together, the results found partial support for Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5: Psychological Well-Being and Leadership. Hypothesis 5 predicted that servant leadership behaviors will have a negative relationship with well-being. This hypothesis was also tested separately on both versions of the DTSL and the SLS measures of servant leadership. As can be seen in Table 3, the correlation between the DTSL-I and the measure of well-being was not significant, as well as with the DTSL-I5 version. However, the SLS and the measure of well-being were found to be significantly correlated.

To further understand how servant leadership affects well-being, linear models were conducted by running a simple linear regression. Results of the simple linear regression indicated that there were not significant effects between the DTSL-I and well-being, $F(1, 83) = .371$, $p = .544$, $R^2 = .004$, and the DTSL-I5 and well-being, $F(1, 83) = .004$, $p = .95$, $R^2 = .000$. However, the results indicated that the SLS was a significant predictor on well-being, $F(1, 83) = 16.483$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .166$. Overall, the results found partial support for Hypothesis 5.

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Comparing the DTSL, DTSL-5, and SLS

	DTSL-I	DTSL-I5	SLS	PSS	PWB	ELS	GEIT
DTSL-I	1.000	.952**	.127	.222*	-.067	.181	.167
DTSL-I5	.952**	1.000	.084	.182	.007	.230*	.119
SLS	.127	.084	1.000	.024	-.407**	.385**	.403**
PSS	.222*	.182	.024	1.000	-.161	.065	-.026
PWB	-.067	.007	-.407**	-.161	1.000	.015	.583**
ELS	.181	.230*	.385**	.065	.015	1.000	-.077
GEIT	.167	.119	.403**	-.026	-.583**	-.077	1.000

^a The DTSL-I5 is the 5-item version of the DTSL measure using only the validated items from Parolini et al. (2009)

** . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 6: Mediation Effects of Stress on Well-Being. To investigate Hypothesis 6, which predicted that the relationship between servant leadership behaviors on leaders' well-being will be mediated by stress, a second set of simple mediation analyses were performed using PROCESS v3.5.3 on SPSS. The predictor variables for the analyses were the DTSL and the SLS. The indirect effect of DTSL-I on well-being was found to not be statistically significant, [Effect = -.0150, 95% C.I. (-.0443, .0057)], nor were indirect effect of SLS on well-being [Effect = -.0039, 95% C.I. (-.0378, .0396)]. Results did not provide any support for Hypothesis 6.

Hypothesis 7: Mediation Effects of Emotional Labor on Well-Being. To investigate Hypothesis 7, which predicted that the relationship between servant leadership behaviors on leaders' well-being will be mediated by emotional labor, another set of simple mediation analyses were performed using PROCESS v3.5.3 on SPSS. The predictor variables for the analyses were DTSL and SLS. The indirect effect of DTSL-I on well-being was found to not be statistically significantly mediated by emotional labor [Effect = .0175, 95% C.I. -.0026, .0449)]. However, the indirect effect of SLS on well-being was statistically significantly mediated by emotional labor, [Effect = .1574, 95% C.I. (.0365, .2884)]. Overall, the results found partial support for Hypothesis 7.

Additional Analyses

Linear regressions were conducted to examine the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors on emotional demands through 1) emotional labor and 2) emotional intelligence, 3) stress, and 4) well-being,. Due to the bipolar scale of the DTSL, the relationships between DTSL-O (leaders who identified more with the transformational leadership) and emotional demands, stress, and well-being were the opposite of the relationships found between

DTSL-I and the listed dependent variables. The only statistically significant relationship found was between DTSL-O and stress, with leaders who identified more with the transformational leadership (DTSL-O) statements were found to be negatively correlated with stress, $r(83) = -.222, p = .04$

Mediating Well-Being and Emotional Intelligence. To assess if the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors on leaders' well-being would be mediated by stress or emotional labor, simple mediation analyses were performed. The indirect effect of DTSL-O on well-being was found to not be statistically significantly mediated by stress, [Effect = .0150, 95% C.I. (-.0061, .0451)], nor emotional labor, [Effect = -.0175, 95% C.I. (-.0450, .0027)]. To assess if the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors on leaders' emotional intelligence would be mediated by emotional labor, a simple mediation analyses was performed. The indirect effect of DTSL-O on emotional intelligence was found to not be statistically significant, [Effect = .0017, 95% (-.0018, .0069)].

Multiple Comparisons Assessing the Leadership Training Background. A majority of the leaders in the present study identified as not having any formal leadership background (e.g., did not major or minor in leadership studies, did not complete a leadership training program or leadership certificate). A 2x2 analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the following independent variables on emotional labor: Leadership Background (LB), the DTSL-5, and the DTSL-8. As can be seen in Table 4, there were no main effects on the independent variables, $F(1, 78) = .610, p = .437$, $F(1, 78) = .346, p = .558$, and $F(1, 78) = .525, p = .471$, respectively. There was also no interaction between LB and DTSL-5, $F(1, 78) = 2.664, p = .107$. However, there was a statistically significant interaction between LB and the DTSL-8, $F(1, 78) = 4.555, p = .036$.

Table 4***ANOVA Results for Emotional Labor***

	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Leadership Background (LB) ^a	1	.610	.437
DTSL-5 ^b	1	.346	.558
DTSL-8 ^c	1	.525	.471
LB x DTSL-5	1	2.664	.107
LB x DTSL-8	1	4.555	.036

^a The Leadership Background variable is a dichotomous variable, where participants either have some form of a leadership background (e.g., majored in leadership, took courses, completed a training program), or do not have a formal leadership background.

^b The DTSL-5 is the original, five-item validated measure from Parolini et al. (2009).

^c The DTSL-8 is the version of the measure used in the current study.

A 2x2 ANOVA was conducted on the following independent variables on emotional intelligence: LB, the DTSL-5, and the DTSL-8. As can be seen in Table 5, there were no main effects for LB, $F(1, 78) = .179, p = .674$, or DTSL-5, $F(1, 78) = .070, p = .792$. There was a main effect for DTSL-8, $F(1, 78) = 5.188, p = .025$. The analyses did not find an interaction between LB and DTSL-5, $F(1, 78) = 1.917, p = .170$, nor with the DTSL-8, $F(1, 78) = 3.337, p = .072$.

Table 5***ANOVA Results for Emotional Intelligence***

	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Leadership Background (LB) ^a	1	.179	.674
DTSL-5 ^b	1	.070	.792
DTSL-8 ^c	1	5.188	.025
LB x DTSL-5	1	1.917	.170
LB x DTSL-8	1	3.337	.072

^a The Leadership Background variable is a dichotomous variable, where participants either have some form of a leadership background (e.g., majored in leadership, took courses, completed a training program), or do not have a formal leadership background.

^b The DTSL-5 is the original, five-item validated measure from Parolini et al. (2009).

^c The DTSL-8 is the version of the measure used in the current study.

A 2x2 ANOVA was conducted on the following independent variables on stress: LB, the DTSL-5, and the DTSL-8. As can be seen in Table 6, there was not a main effect with LB, $F(1, 78) = .969, p = .328$, or with the DTSL-8, $F(1, 78) = .234, p = .630$. There was a main effect with

the DTSL-5, $F(1, 78) = 4.022, p = .048$. The ANOVA did not find any interactions between LB and the DTSL-5, $F(1, 78) = .288, p = .593$, or the DTSL-8, $F(1, 78) = 1.551, p = .217$.

Table 6

ANOVA Results for Stress

	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Leadership Background (LB) ^a	1	.969	.328
DTSL-5 ^b	1	4.022	.048
DTSL-8 ^c	1	.234	.630
LB x DTSL-5	1	.288	.593
LB x DTSL-8	1	1.551	.217

^a The Leadership Background variable is a dichotomous variable, where participants either have some form of a leadership background (e.g., majored in leadership, took courses, completed a training program), or do not have a formal leadership background.

^b The DTSL-5 is the original, five-item validated measure from Parolini et al. (2009).

^c The DTSL-8 is the version of the measure used in the current study.

A 2x2 ANOVA was conducted on the following independent variables on well-being:

LB, the DTSL-5, and the DTSL-8. As can be seen in Table 7, there were no main effects found for the LB, $F(1, 78) = .012, p = .914$, the DTSL-5, $F(1, 78) = 1.206, p = .275$, and the DTSL-8, $F(1, 78) = .935, p = .336$. The ANOVA also did not find an interaction between LB and the DTSL-5, $F(1, 78) = .319, p = .574$, nor the DTSL-8, $F(1, 78) = .228, p = .635$.

Table 7

ANOVA Results for Well-Being

	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Leadership Background (LB) ^a	1	.012	.914
DTSL-5 ^b	1	1.206	.275
DTSL-8 ^c	1	.935	.336
LB x DTSL-5	1	.319	.574
LB x DTSL-8	1	.228	.635

^a The Leadership Background variable is a dichotomous variable, where participants either have some form of a leadership background (e.g., majored in leadership, took courses, completed a training program), or do not have a formal leadership background.

^b The DTSL-5 is the original, five-item validated measure from Parolini et al. (2009).

^c The DTSL-8 is the version of the measure used in the current study.

Discussion

Findings

The present study investigated how practicing servant leadership affected one's emotional demands, stress, and well-being. The general hypotheses predicted were that servant leaders would have a) a positive relationship with emotional demands, b) a positive relationship with stress and c) a negative relationship with well-being. Further, it was predicted that emotional labor would mediate emotional intelligence, stress would mediate well-being, and emotional labor would mediate well-being.

The first hypothesis, which predicted that individuals who self-reported that they were practicing servant leadership would positively relate to emotional labor, was partially supported through regression analysis in that a relationship was found for one of the measures of servant leadership, but not the other. The second hypothesis, which individuals who self-reported that they were practicing servant leadership would also positively relate to emotional intelligence, was also partially supported through regression analysis. The third hypothesis, which predicted that the servant leadership and emotional intelligence relationship would be mediated by emotional labor, was partially support in that emotional labor mediated the relationship for the SLS measure of servant leadership, but not the DTSL-I measure. Overall, hypotheses 1-3 were supported when assessed with the SLS, but not supported when assessed with the DTSL-I.

The fourth hypothesis, which predicted that individuals who self-reported that they were practicing servant leadership would also report higher levels of stress, was partially supported through regression analysis in that a relationship was found for one of the measures of servant leadership (DTSL-I), but not the other (SLS).

The fifth hypothesis, which predicted that individuals who self-reported that they were practicing servant leadership would negatively relate to well-being, was also partially supported through regression analysis. The sixth hypothesis, which predicted that the servant leadership and well-being relationship would be mediated by stress, was not supported through regression analysis. The seventh hypothesis, which predicted that the servant leadership and well-being relationship would be mediated by emotional labor, was partially supported through regression analysis.

Theoretical Implications

Previous research studies have investigated the positive effects of servant leadership on follower behaviors, attitudes, and well-being. One study found that school principals who behaved and were characterized as servant leaders had teachers (followers) that rated higher on job satisfaction and improved work performance (Cerit, 2009). Another study found that organizations with servant leaders positively impacted their employees' extra-role behaviors, performance outcomes, and interpersonal relationships (Jamarillo et al., 2009). Studies with servant leaders' impact on followers also explained the followers' positive relationship with job engagement and negative relationship with burnout (Choudhary et al., 2013; Coetzer et al., 2017). However, while there are all these research studies on servant leadership for organizational and follower outcomes, there is little focus on the effects on the actual servant leader.

To date, there have not been previous research studies investigating the relationship between the practice of servant leadership and emotional labor, stress, or well-being. However, studies conducted in the field or workplaces where there are higher levels of service-oriented responsibilities, such as in schools or medical care centers, have identified that leaders or

employees with service-oriented roles tend to experience a higher degree of stress and emotional labor, which negatively impacts their well-being (e.g., Delgado et al., 2017; Jimenez et al., 2021; Rudolph et al., 2021). In addition to gaining valuable leadership skills, individuals exhibiting attitudes consistent with established servant leadership factors have been found to possess high levels of subjective well-being (Huckabee, 2008). Overall, many of these studies do not cite or label their employees or members as servant leaders, but certain jobs involve more service and helping which can involve more stress and emotional labor (e.g., social work, nursing, educators).

The current study also investigated the relationship between the practice of servant leadership and emotional intelligence. While only a few studies have tested this relationship, the findings of this relationship are mixed. In one study, the findings reported that emotional intelligence was a predictor of whether a leader held a servant leadership ideology. However, when the followers rated their leaders' servant leadership behaviors, the relationship between emotional intelligence and servant leadership was not found (Barbuto et al., 2014). In contrast, another study found that leaders' emotional intelligence was related to their servant leadership practices, which was confirmed with their followers' ratings of their leaders' servant leadership practices (du Plessis et al., 2015).

Practical Implications

Servant leadership is being viewed as a long-term approach to leadership, so it is important to understand the consequences and outcomes due to practicing this leadership style. These leaders are viewed as givers, provide assistance, and support their followers without expectation of reciprocation. While it is important to build this individual relationship with trust and interpersonal comfort based on followers' needs (Eva et al., 2019; Parolini et al., 2009), it is

also important that the leader has the mental, physical, and emotional space and capacity to build that relationship. If a servant leader is unable to unload any negative events or demands of their role, they will not be able to focus on their followers and attend to their needs as effectively or as positively as usual.

Being a servant leader is a positive role to embrace, but the negative consequences are often either overlooked or not sought after. Regardless of the setting, such as in schools, organizations, or any given community, being a servant leader or practicing servant leadership behaviors is deemed one of compassion, altruism, and empathy (Jit et al., 2017). This approach to leadership is important for relationship-building and being more interpersonal beyond performative statistics and metrics. However, it is also important to keep in mind that, just as regular followers and employees, leaders too are not just their roles. Being a servant leader can increase their emotional demand (e.g., increase emotional labor and practice more emotional intelligence), increase their stress (which can negatively impact their physical health if prolonged), and decrease their well-being (which can impact their mental health).

Based on the present study, it is important for organizations and leaders to understand that servant leadership or service-oriented roles are beneficial to the community and greater group as there are many positive outcomes for the followers and organizations (e.g., Cerit, 2009; Choudhary et al., 2013; Coetzer et al., 2017; Jamarillo et al., 2009), but additional considerations or safeguards need to be put in place. Compared to the findings of the transformational leader, servant leaders tend to experience more emotional demand, and stress, as well as have a negative impact on their well-being.

In order to minimize or mitigate the emotional, mental, and physical demands that will impact the servant leader, the expectations and demands of the servant leader should not be so

great, and the needs and goals of the servant leader should be met too, not just the needs and interests of the follower. Some suggestions include allowing flexible work schedules, emphasizing a work-life balance, delegate and organizing tasks and responsibilities, and serving the leader too. In doing so, it may alleviate some of the stress that the leader is feeling on the job in order to address the different day-to-day priorities occurring at work and at home, reducing the need to “fake it through” the workday in regards to their affect or emotions, and can lessen some of the high demands that may hinder their ability to manage their well-being. By serving the leader too, it demonstrates that the leaders’ needs and desires are valid and just as important to address, too.

Limitations

During the time of data collection for this study, the COVID-19 pandemic was still a present danger, thus limiting the kind of study that could be conducted. Instead of it being a strictly online-only study, collecting data in person or in the field may have produce better diverse samples, such as recruiting different types of leaders or by demographic groups. By collecting data only online, the evaluations are strictly based on self-report without anything else to corroborate or support those responses. This could have led to participants responding with social desirability, extreme responding, being inattentive to the items being asked, or not being able to get clarification.

Additionally, participants’ lack of self-awareness or ability to assess themselves accurately could greatly influence the results, as they may be responding in a way that wanting or believing that they are a servant leader, but might not actually behave as one. As there was no way to confirm or reassess the leaders’ ratings, the data only included information for that one

point in time based on a self-reported assessment. Further, as the study contained eight surveys or assessments in one Qualtrics, participants could have had survey fatigue.

Another limitation to consider was that the pandemic had been in effect for over a year, so leaders' roles or behaviors could have changed, affecting the way they responded to the measures of stress, well-being, emotional labor, and emotional intelligence. Rather than responding based on their outcomes as a leader, they could have been responding in general to their current life situation or from the effects of being in a pandemic, though instructions specified to respond based on their role as a leader. Their responses had this study been conducted pre-pandemic or post-pandemic could have varied compared to their responses during the pandemic as roles, expectations, and behaviors continue to change to reflect the differences in the environment or social guidelines (e.g., social distancing, virtual meetings, assembling in smaller groups).

Additionally, while the study was shared and advertised on various platforms, such as email, social media, and the university's SONA Web System, a majority of the participants were currently students at the undergraduate level. While it is important to not overlook their leadership experiences or service-oriented roles that they have held or currently hold, it is worth noting that their tenure in leadership is not as extensive or practiced as some leaders a few years their senior. Further, as full-time undergraduate students, many are not in career-track jobs yet, thus limiting the type of leadership role they could hold for the purposes of collecting data for this study, such as a police officer, social worker, or educator.

Future Directions

To improve upon the limitations of this study and to further explore the nature of the relationships between servant leadership and emotional demands, stress, and well-being (as well

as leadership broadly), collecting data during a time not unique or unprecedented may contribute to different findings. COVID-19 has been challenging for many people, and the added demands and behaviors expected of leaders came unstructured and unplanned (Rudolph et al., 2021).

Thus, the outcomes from the current study could be a current, short-term relationship, though the results post-pandemic (or pre-pandemic if time-traveling was an option) would be predicted to be similar, just varied in strength or perhaps statistical significance.

Additionally, collecting data beyond online is a way to ensure that the population available is expansive beyond social media and the university's SONA Web System. Recruiting in person, through various work place locations or the general public opens up the chance to collect information from a range of leaders differing in demographic characteristics, locations, and types of leader role served. Further, it can help generalize the data and findings, and the data will include a diverse sample rather than one consisting of mostly undergraduate students with leader roles.

Moreover, collecting qualitative data, such as through interviews or from observation, could help support the quantitative data from the surveys, as well as add any additional information missed on the survey items in the chosen assessments, such as environmental factors. Another design that other leadership studies have included is having their followers rate their leaders on their servant leadership behaviors. This can be used to compare servant leadership behavior scores and assess congruency (i.e., do the leaders and followers agree on the leaders' servant leadership behaviors).

As leaders continuously develop through the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as through facing adversity and challenges, measuring servant leadership is something that needs to be assessed over time and not just one point in time. Leadership

development occurs over time and each stage of the leader's life has windows where leadership is developed (Liu et al., 2020). As such, while measuring servant leaders' outcomes at one point may show lower well-being and higher stress, it does not indicate whether these outcomes, over time, could further develop the servant leader. To better understand not only the outcomes of practicing servant leadership behaviors on the servant leader, but it is important to study this topic longitudinally.

Although servant leadership is continuously seen as a long-term approach by leaders and is oftentimes desired or adopted by their other leaders and even followers, there are still not many who are aware of this leadership style. As such, many servant leaders or leaders in service-oriented roles may not be aware that they, in fact, are servant leaders as leadership contains a range of contextual factors that define the leader (Oc, 2018). By collecting qualitative data, it will allow the researcher a chance to identify and rate the characteristics as being one of a servant leader, or one of a transformational leader. This will then later help to identify what leadership style they practice, and then assess the relationship to the same outcome variables as studied in the current research. This will hopefully make the data sets more inclusive, include comprehensive information, and allow additional studies to be conducted beyond the present study.

Conclusion

Previous researchers have conducted studies in the field to explore the products of servant leadership in the workplace, often citing positive outcomes, such as increased workplace engagement (De Waal & Sivro, 2012), improved performance (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016), and extra-role behaviors (Jamarillo et al., 2009). However, none of these studies used in this paper

explored the consequences of servant leadership in the workplace, which would have cited negative outcomes.

The present study expanded on previous research by taking a step back and examining the impacts of servant leadership on the leader themselves, rather than just on the followers or organizations as previous studies have done. While the hypotheses were partially supported, the results that were not statistically significant found trending patterns in the direction of those with statistical significance. Moreover, the findings are not exclusive to the understanding of servant leadership and emotional demand, stress, and well-being, but also compared the findings to those of the transformational leadership style. The present study is only the start; additional studies can be built on this foundation to further investigate the outcomes of servant leadership on the leaders, as well as other contextual or cultural factors that may play a role in these relationships with outcomes.

These findings, significant or not, suggest that servant leadership is not only positive and beneficial to the organization and followers, but can be negative and consequential to the leader. Servant leadership is still a relatively new concept that many are still learning about or beginning to practice, so there is still a lot to learn and understand before blindly adopting this leadership style. Additionally, the findings of this study may vary based on the demographic characteristics, leadership position or roles held, and experiences the leader has. The knowledge gained from exploring and investigating this topic can help to shape how organizations adopt or implement servant leadership behaviors onto their leaders or teams, such as allowing flexible work schedules, emphasizing a work-life balance, delegate and organizing tasks and responsibilities, and serving the leader too. The suggested considerations or safeguards are only some examples

of how to minimize the negative outcomes of this leadership style, while greatly taking advantage of the beneficial outcomes for the organization and followers.

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