Chapter XLVI
Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument

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BACKGROUND

The SLAI measures the seven concepts found in Patterson's (2003) theory of servant leadership. According to Patterson (2003), the servant leader (a) leads and serves with love (Winston, 2002), (b) acts with humility (Sandage & Wiens, 2001), (c) is altruistic (Kaplan, 2000), (d) is visionary for the followers (Tangney, 2000), (e) is trusting (Hauser & House, 2000), (f) is serving (Wis, 2002), and (g) empowers followers (Covey, 2002). These are the seven constructs that comprise the servant leadership in Patterson's model. Servant leadership as a theory emerged from Robert Greenleaf's (1977) work. Recent investigations have expanded servant leadership to include identification and assessment servant leadership factors (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Dennis & Winston, 2003; Laub, 1999; Page & Wong, 2000; Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2000; Russell & Stone, 2002).

The 42 items of the servant leadership assessment instrument (SLAI) cover a variety of attitudes and behaviors reflective of the aforementioned research.

RELIABILITY

Research has indicated that the SLAI is internally consistent and reliable. Alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .89 to .92 have been reported (Dennis, 2004) for factors of *love*, *empowerment*, *vision*, and *humility*. *Trust* factor, however, has loaded with two items on two second-data collections (Dennis, 2004) and one sample (Irving, 2005). The following alpha coefficients were found, measuring servant leadership at the individual leader level: (a) .92 for the SLAI *love* scale; (b) .92 for the SLAI *empowerment* scale; (c) .86 for the SLAI *vision* scale; and (d) .92 for the SLAI *humility* scale. A Cronbach alpha coefficient could not be calculated for the SLAI trust scale because it only has two items in the scale (Irving, 2005).

VALIDITY

Face and content validity was built into the test development process, following methods set

in DeVellis' (1991, 2003) Scale Development Guidelines. The criterion-related validity and construct-related validity of the instrument were established empirically and have been supported (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Irving, 2005).

RESULTS

The Web survey has two parts: one with the 42-item Likert-type SLAI scale, the other with nine demographic questions. The SLAI items are reflective of servant leadership characteristics of a given leader as seen by his or her followers. Participants are invited to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each of the questionnaire items on a 1 to 7 scale: the higher the number, the stronger the agreement with that statement. Statements are reflective of how participants' leader would think, act, or behave. The corresponding items of the seven servant characteristics of a leader are:

1. Loving: items 1.2, 1.7, 1.17, 1.19, 1.21, 1.27;
2. Humble: items 1.8, 1.12, 1.20, 1.22, 1.37, 1.39;
3. Altruistic: items 1.5, 1.9, 1.16, 1.18, 1.23, 1.26;
4. Visionary: items 1.14, 1.32, 1.34, 1.36, 1.40, 1.42;
5. Trusting: items 1.3, 1.10, 1.13, 1.30, 1.31, 1.41;
6. Serving: items 1.1, 1.4, 1.15, 1.29, 1.35, 1.38;
7. Empowering: items 1.6, 1.11, 1.24, 1.25, 1.28, 1.33.

The demographic items in the second part of the Web survey include nine items, 2.1 to 2.9, as follows: age, gender, ethnicity, occupation, tenure at current job, longest job tenure ever, workforce tenure, education, and work situation.

The online instrument was created and published using SurveySuite. This survey generation tool provided by the University of Virginia is located at http://intercom.virginia.edu/SurveySuite. After a 14-day free trial period, an annual fee is required to continue the service. The service includes online survey creation and administration, and tallying results. Additionally, all data collected are made available in a format compatible with any statistical software. Such statistical software is required for any analyses beyond summarized descriptive statistics.

The instrument is self-report and takes no more than 10 minutes to complete. Individual responses are anonymously entered into a database of responses. All results are kept confidential.

COMMENTARY

Other instruments have been developed to measure servant leadership. However, none of the instruments have measured over three factors of servant leadership. One instrument, the OLA (Laub, 1999) measures servant leadership at the organizational level. The SLAI, given its high reliability and validity, is recommended as a way to assess servant leadership for both self-assessment and group assessment for a leader.

Those interested in using the SLAI online survey in their own research are advised to contact the author to get an additional research code that participants can include in the demographic section of the form in order for the author to be able to detect and extract tagged data sets from the database.

COST

The SLAI is free to take and use online. The SLAI's author, however, encourages those interested in using the instrument to contact him by e-mail. Collaborative research is suggested for further advancing the uses and implications of this new leadership assessment tool.