



RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT OF A SIX-TRAIT TQ SERVANT-LEADERSHIP MODEL

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ABSTRACT

The current study reviews the trait approach to leadership and servant-leadership theories. It proposes six traits of servant leaders (quoted under an acronym CHRIST): Commitment, Humility, Resilience, Integrity, Service & Teamwork as the essential identifiers of servant-leaders. These form a broad framework of traits of such leaders. A measurement scale was developed and validated to contribute to future research studies of servant-leadership models, including traits as antecedents. Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the measurement scale had reliability, discriminant validity, and metric and scalar invariance. The measurement scale was found to be psychometrically sound in measuring the six essential traits of servant leaders, which have not been subject to previous studies. The scale may be used in future studies to examine the relationships among traits, vision, behaviors, and outcomes of servant leaders. It may also be used to identify emergent servant leaders. A simplified scale of six items with good psychometric properties has also been developed to measure the broad traits of servant leaders.

Keywords: Traits of Servant-Leaders, Service, Integrity, Resilience, Commitment, Humility, Teamwork

Cite this Article: Chui, H. S., Lee, K. Y. Y., Yeung, S. M. C., Fung, A. L. K., & Ho, S. K. M. (2024). Research & Development of a Six-Trait TQ Servant-Leadership Model. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management*, 15(3), 10–25.

https://iaeme.com/MasterAdmin/Journal_uploads/IJARM/VOLUME_15_ISSUE_3/IJARM_15_03_002.pdf

1. INTRODUCTION

The term “servant-leadership” was coined by Greenleaf (1970), and numerous articles on servant-leadership have been published in the last 20 years (Eva et al., 2019; Kumar, 2018). According to Greenleaf (2002), a servant leader is motivated by a natural feeling to serve first, and the choice of serving others results in the aspiration to lead. Many studies on servant-leadership were conducted based on Greenleaf’s original conceptualization of a servant leader (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

The values, attitudes, traits, characteristics, behaviors, followers, and organizational outcomes of servant leaders were analyzed in different studies using different approaches and in different sectors and countries (Eva et al., 2019; Kumar, 2018; Liden et al., 2014; Sendjaya et al., 2008). After conducting a comprehensive review of studies on servant-leadership, Eva et al. (2019) observed that most provided a loose description of servant leaders’ behavior toward their followers. A nomological network of servant-leadership research was proposed in their study to guide future research.

Antecedents or traits of leaders are crucial elements affecting the behaviors and outcomes of leadership in general (Yukl, 1989), and of servant-leadership in particular (Eva et al., 2019; Langhof & Guldenberg, 2020). The current study identified six traits related to servant leaders from the literature and developed a valid and reliable measurement scale of the six traits by working through the process required for developing a measurement instrument (Hinkin, 1995; Taherdoost, 2017).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Total Quality Management (TQM) and Servant-leadership

2.1.1. Key Principles of TQM

- Customer Focus: TQM emphasizes understanding and meeting customer needs, which is essential for organizational success.
- Continuous Improvement: A commitment to ongoing enhancement of processes, products, and services is central to TQM.
- Employee Involvement: Engaging all employees in the quality process is crucial for fostering a culture of quality.
- Process Approach: TQM advocates for managing interrelated processes to achieve desired outcomes effectively.
- Fact-Based Decision Making: Decisions should be guided by data and statistical methods to ensure quality improvements. (Ho, 1999)

2.1.2. Key Principles of Servant-leadership

- **Empathy:** Servant leaders prioritize understanding and addressing the needs of their team members.
- **Listening:** Open communication and active listening are fundamental to servant-leadership.
- **Healing:** Creating a supportive environment that promotes personal and professional growth is vital.
- **Community Building:** Encouraging collaboration and a sense of belonging among team members enhances team dynamics.
- **Stewardship:** Servant leaders take responsibility for the well-being of their organization and its employees.

2.1.3. Integration of TQM and Servant-leadership

- **Empowering Employees:** Servant-leadership fosters employee engagement, which aligns with TQM's focus on involving all staff in quality initiatives. This empowerment can lead to higher job satisfaction and lower turnover rates, as employees feel valued and included in decision-making processes (Canavesi & Minelli, 2021).
- **Creating a Supportive Culture:** A servant leader cultivates a culture that encourages continuous improvement, essential for TQM success. This supportive environment can enhance collaboration and innovation within teams (Spalding University, 2024).
- **Enhanced Communication:** Open lines of communication in servant-leadership facilitate the feedback loops necessary for TQM. Effective communication ensures that employees are aware of quality goals and can contribute to achieving them (Avneesh, 2024).
- **Focus on Customer Satisfaction:** Both TQM and Servant-leadership emphasize understanding and meeting customer needs, leading to higher quality outcomes. Servant leaders can drive a customer-centric approach that aligns with TQM principles.
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Servant leaders can utilize TQM's emphasis on facts and data to empower their teams and make informed decisions. This approach helps in identifying areas for improvement and measuring the impact of changes made.

2.1.4. Benefits of Combining TQM and Servant-leadership

- **Increased Employee Morale:** A supportive leadership style can boost employee morale, making them more invested in quality initiatives.
- **Higher Quality Products/Services:** Engaged and empowered employees are more likely to contribute to continuous quality improvement.
- **Stronger Team Collaboration:** A culture of empathy and community fosters collaboration, essential for TQM success.
- **Sustainable Growth:** Organizations that integrate these approaches often see long-term improvements in customer satisfaction and operational efficiency.

Combining TQM and Servant-leadership creates a holistic approach to organizational management that prioritizes quality, employee engagement, and customer satisfaction. By fostering a culture of empowerment and continuous improvement, organizations can achieve sustainable success.

2.2. Trait as an Approach to Leadership

Yukl (1989) classified leadership research into several approaches: power-influence, trait, behavior, and situational. The trait approach dominated the study of leadership before 1948 (Antonakis et al., 2004; Stogdill, 1948; Zaccaro, 2007). The success of the mental testing movement in the early part of the twentieth century encouraged researchers to employ the then-recently developed “personality tests” in their search for leadership traits.

Stogdill (1948) reviewed leadership studies between 1904 and 1947 to find a reliable and coherent pattern related to leaders. The publication of Stogdill’s paper in 1948 marked a turning point in the study of leadership, leading to a decline in the popularity of the leadership trait theory approach (Zaccaro, 2007).

In more recent years, the trait approach has regained its importance in the study of leadership (Bono & Judge, 2004; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Zaccaro, 2007). Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) argued that leadership traits such as drive, achievement, ambition, energy, initiative, motivation, honesty, integrity, self-confidence, and cognitive ability were essential for effective leadership. Bono and Judge (2004) examined the relationship between personality and transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. They found that in 26 independent studies, personality traits using the Big 5 model were related to three transformational and transactional leadership dimensions. The personality trait of agreeableness was found to be related to servant-leadership (Sun & Shang, 2019). The five traits in the Big 5 model are commonly used in personality and psychology studies, and they are selected with theories proposing that the traits are related to effective servant-leadership.

2.3. Characteristics of Servant Leaders

Through an extensive review of the literature, the current study attempted to identify traits or personal attributes related to effective servant leaders. After studying Greenleaf’s conceptualization of servant-leadership, Spears (2010) proposed that there were ten characteristics related to servant-leadership, namely, Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to Growth of People, and Building Community. Numerous studies investigated the characteristics of servant leaders using different approaches (Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sendjaya et al., 2008; Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017).

A review of studies conducted on servant-leadership showed that attributes or characteristics were frequently used without clear definitions. At least 16 measurement instruments were developed to measure servant leaders’ characteristics (Eva et al., 2019). Some characteristics of servant leaders could be interpreted as leadership behaviors in some studies, such as sharing leadership (Silva, 2014), and empowerment (Russell & Stone, 2002). However, some characteristics proposed by Spears and some characteristics measured by other studies, such as honesty (Russell & Stone, 2002; Wong & Page, 2000), integrity (Wong & Page, 2000), and empathy (Spears, 2000; Wong & Page, 2000) are viewed as traits of servant leaders.

2.4. Traits as an Essential Component of Servant-leadership

According to personality and psychology studies, traits were relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that reflected the tendency to respond in specific ways under certain circumstances (Roberts, 2009). Leadership behaviors in a particular situation were observable responses and actions taken by a leader to achieve effective organizational outcomes due to the effects of traits, environment and other contextual factors, as depicted by some integrative models of leadership (Eva et al., 2019; Yukl, 1989). Eva et al. (2019) reported that only seven out of 16 measures of a set of predetermined servant-leadership characteristics showed sufficient evidence of construct validity.

The literature contains very few studies that focus on antecedents or traits of servant leaders (Eva et al., 2019; Langhof & Guldenberg, 2020). By referring to the conceptualization of servant-leadership and the integrative leadership model, the current study identified six traits from the literature as essential traits of servant-leadership (quoted under an acronym **CHRIST**): *Commitment, Humility, Resilience, Integrity, Service & Teamwork*.

C = Commitment to the growth of people is a characteristic of servant-leadership noted in a range of studies (Chan et al., 2017; Liden et al., 2008; Spears, 2010; Wong & Page, 2000). Since personality trait is a multi-dimensional and multi-level/hierarchical concept (Eysenck, 1991), the current study proposes a broader trait category of *Commitment* related to commitment to fulfilling all the responsibilities of a servant leader, in addition to commitment to the growth of people. Since *Commitment* includes a commitment to the growth of people, it is seen in the current study as an essential trait relevant to servant-leadership.

H = Humility was found to be a characteristic of servant leaders in 27 articles (Coetzer et al., 2017). *Humility* formed the essential backbone of the servant leader (Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2001), and so *Humility* is seen as an essential trait of a servant leader in the current study.

R = Resilience is the ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune, was proposed as an essential trait of servant leaders in the current study. Unlike the five traits of servant leaders proposed above, which had support as essential characteristics of servant-leadership in the literature, no existing study in servant-leadership has proposed *Resilience* as an essential trait of servant-leadership. However, there were studies stressing the importance of resilience for leaders (Southwick et al., 2017; Wiroko, 2021). Some studies found employee resilience to be an outcome of servant-leadership (Batool et al., 2022; Cai et al., 2023). Hence, it is proposed in the current study that *Resilience* is an essential trait of servant leaders.

I = Integrity is an essential attribute of an effective leader (Duggar, 2009), and a servant leader, as posited in 11 studies (Russell & Stone, 2002; Winston, 1999; Wong & Page, 2000). *Integrity* was described as honesty and fairness (Bennis, 1989; Coetzer et al., 2017; Russell & Stone, 2002; Verdorfer, 2019). Bennis (1989) suggested that *Integrity* is one of the key qualities of authentic leaders. These studies suggested that *Integrity* is an essential trait of a leader in general and a servant leader in particular. Hence, *Integrity* is considered to be an essential trait of servant leaders in the current study.

S = Service is the desire to serve is an essential trait of servant leaders, and numerous studies treated *Service* as an essential dimension or characteristic of servant-leadership (Dutta & Khatri, 2017). According to the conceptualization of Greenleaf (1970) and the definition of personality traits (Roberts, 2009), *Service* is a characteristic trait of a servant leader, and servant leaders will act to serve others according to the needs and situation of their organizations. In the current study, *Service* is viewed as a key trait and essential characteristic of a servant leader.

T = Teamwork is an essential dimension of servant-leadership proposed by Wong and Page (2000). Team-building is a leadership behavior affecting the effectiveness of teamwork in an organization (Hacker, 1999). To achieve serving and developing followers, a servant leader needs to work with his followers as a team and build up an effective team with a teamwork spirit (Wong & Page, 2000). Hence, in the current study *Teamwork* is considered an essential leadership trait of a servant leader.

The Six-Trait TQ Servant-Leadership Model combines elements of TQM and servant-leadership to create a framework for effective leadership. **Figure-1** shows the six traits associated with this model as generated by the SPSS Structural-Equation Modeling Procedure to arrive at the desired outcome of TQ Servant-Leadership.

Smith (2021) explores the intersection of servant-leadership and TQM, emphasizing empathy and collaboration as key drivers of organizational success. Johnson (2020) examines how integrity and vision in leadership influence employee engagement and commitment in high-performance organizations. Brown (2022) analyzes the impact of service orientation on team dynamics and performance, highlighting the role of servant-leadership in fostering a quality-driven culture. Davis (2019) investigates the role of commitment to growth in leadership and correlates leadership development with organizational quality outcomes. Chan (2021) focuses on collaboration as a trait of servant-leadership, demonstrating its effectiveness in multicultural teams within quality frameworks. Wong (2020) investigates how servant-leadership traits, particularly empathy and integrity, contribute to sustainable organizational practices. Tan (2022) highlights the importance of a vision in leadership, linking it to enhanced organizational quality and employee satisfaction.

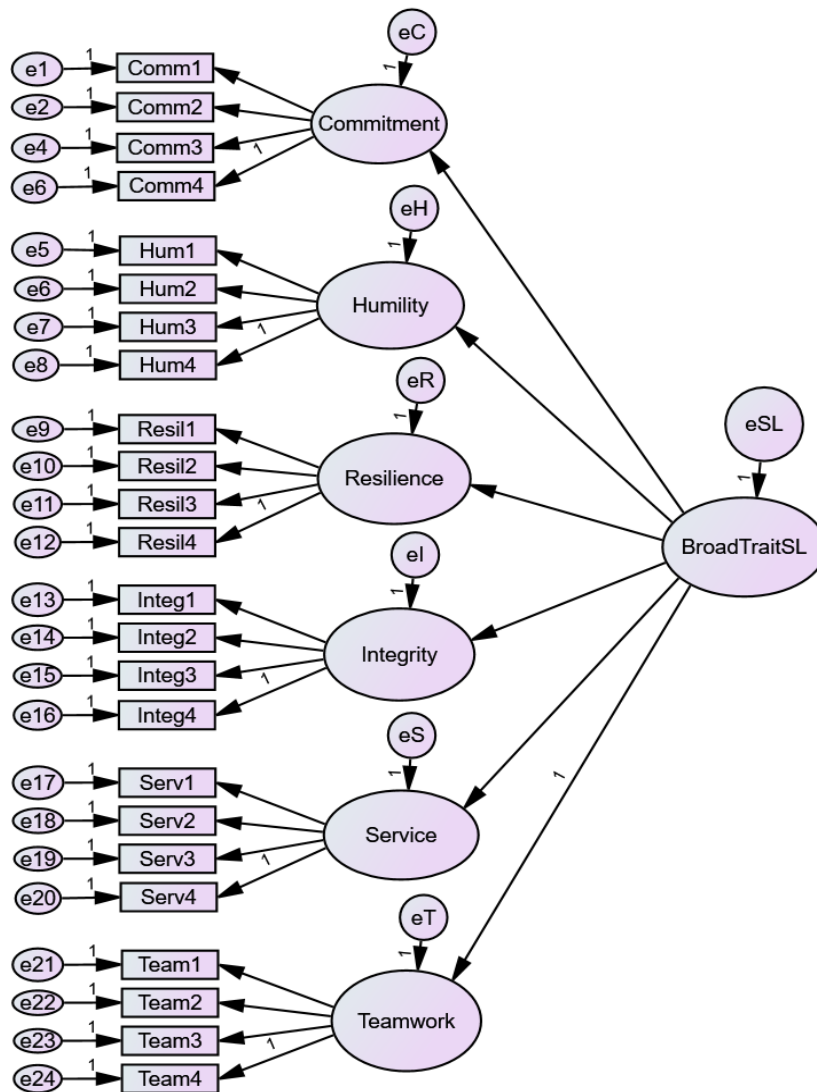


Figure-1: The 6-Trait Model generated by the SPSS Structural-Equation Modeling arriving at the desired outcome of TQ Servant-Leadership

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Definition of Servant Leaders

Like studies on leadership, there are many definitions of servant-leadership and almost no consensus (Parris & Peachey, 2013). After reviewing the literature on servant-leadership, a definition is proposed to guide this study based on the original proposal by Greenleaf (1970), the integrated model of leadership (Yukl, 1989), and the more recent definition proposed by Eva et al. (2019).

A servant leader is defined as a leader with the traits and vision to serve and lead, with importance attached to developing followers and bringing about an outcome beneficial to the followers, the organization, and the larger community. It is proposed in this definition that traits and vision to serve and lead are the most essential and defining characteristics of a servant leader according to Greenleaf's conceptualization (1970) and other studies on servant-leadership (Greenleaf, 1997; Patterson, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002). This definition highlights another vital aspect of servant leaders: serving their followers to develop them to become servant leaders and contribute to improving the organization and the wider community.

3.2. Definition of Leadership Traits

A clear definition of servant-leadership traits is required to identify and develop a measurement scale for the leadership traits of servant leaders. Concerning the proposed definition of personality traits by Roberts (2009) and the definition of leadership traits by Zaccaro (2007), the current study defines the broad leadership traits of servant leaders as the relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, values, feelings, and behaviors that reflect the tendency to respond in relatively coherent ways to serve and to lead others across a variety of group and organizational situations. As traits are a multi-dimensional and multi-level construct (Eysenck, 1991), the current study identifies six specific leadership traits at a lower level under the broad leadership trait of servant leaders through the extensive literature review and according to the definition in the current study.

3.3. Development of the Measurement Scale of the Six Traits

The current study developed its measurement scale through the following stages according to Hinkin (1995):

- (1) reviewing related literature and instruments already developed and collecting input from academics with expertise in the area;
- (2) proposing constructs related to the current study and defining the constructs to be measured;
- (3) developing instruments according to the proposed constructs and regarding instruments used in other studies;
- (4) seeking comments from focus groups and experts to refine the proposed instruments;
- (5) collecting data to validate the instruments by two pilot studies;
- (6) conducting confirmatory factor analysis to validate the instruments;
- (7) collecting more data to support the validity and reliability of the final draft from four different groups at four points in time in 2022.

The first five steps took place over two years with inputs from academic staff from the School of Social Work and the School of Psychology of a tertiary institution in Hong Kong. With reference to a literature review and measurement scales used by other studies, a set of measurement scales was developed for the six traits. Two pilot tests were administered to check

the validity and reliability of the scale. The result of the first two pilot tests showed that the scale needed further improvement after performing confirmatory factor analyses.

A final revision of the draft measurement scale was developed after an in-depth analysis of each scale item used in the two pilot tests with inputs from all academic staff involved in the project. All members of the institution’s staff accepted the definitions described in the current study and the final fine-tuned scale. The institution collected data from students for the third time. Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the measurement scale had reliability and validity.

Responses from three more groups of respondents were collected at different times: social workers in Hong Kong, workers from the business sector in Hong Kong, and social workers in Mainland China. The data collected from all four groups were analyzed by SPSS version 28 and AMOS.

3.4. Sample and Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed online and on paper to four groups of respondents at different times. Respondents were requested to respond to the questionnaire concerning their traits. A total of 949 completed responses were received and analyzed, with 155 responses from university students, 135 from social workers in Hong Kong, 300 from the business sector, and 359 from social workers in Mainland China.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Descriptive Statistics and Factor Analysis

SPSS version 28 was used to analyze the data. The exploratory factor analysis showed that six distinct factors were obtained according to the proposed six traits measured by 24 items of the measurement scale.

4.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The confirmatory factor analyses of the data from different groups were performed by AMOS. **Table-1** below shows the goodness of fit indices for all responses and sub-groups. The results support the model’s validity by using all the responses of 949 data with IFI and CFI above 0.95 and RMSEA below 0.06. The figures show an excellent fit of the model. The model also supports all the sub-groups individually with acceptable indices of CFI and IFI above 0.915 and RMSEA below 0.082.

Table-1: Goodness of Fit Indices of Confirmatory Factor Analyses for All Participants and Different Sub-groups

Group	Chi-square	df	Sample Size	IFI	CFI	RMSEA
All responses	861.1	229	949	.955	.955	.054
Social workers in Hong Kong	364.1	229	135	.919	.917	.066
Hong Kong students	450.2	229	155	.916	.915	.079
Hong Kong business sector	447.5	229	300	.927	.929	.056
Social workers in Mainland China	774.8	229	359	.929	.929	.082

4.3. Reliability and Discrimination Validity of the Measurement Model

Table-2 below shows the reliability of the scales with the composite reliability ranging from 0.761 to 0.877. The results show that the measurement model has good reliability.

Table-2 also shows the discriminant validity of the model with HTMT analysis. The correlations between traits range from 0.518 to 0.736. The correlations are moderate and all below 0.74, implying that each scale is distinct. Hence, the discriminant validity of the measurement scale is supported.

Table-2: Correlations among the Six Factors and Their Reliabilities

	Commitment	Humility	Resilience	Integrity	Service	Composite Reliability	CB's Alpha
Commitment	1.000					.825	.844
Humility	.574*	1.000				.761	.760
Resilience	.617*	.564*	1.000			.860	.860
Integrity	.674*	.702*	.684*	1.000		.807	.819
Service	.648*	.518*	.641*	.624*	1.000	.877	.874
Teamwork	.662*	.564*	.645*	.668*	.736*	0.877	0.870

* $p < .001$

4.4. Invariance of the Model among Four Groups of Respondents

Four groups of respondents have different backgrounds: university students, social workers in Hong Kong, social workers in Mainland China, and workers in the Hong Kong business sectors. Due to differences in background and culture, different groups may have different interpretations of the questionnaire.

Analyses of the invariance of the model among the four groups of respondents were conducted using the multi-group method by AMOS. There are four different invariant models: the configuration invariant model, the metric invariant model, the scalar invariant model, and the residual invariant model. The residual invariant model has the strictest requirement of identical residues, the same regression weights and the same intercepts for all different groups. The unconstrained model of AMOS is a test of the invariance of configuration referred to as the configural invariant model (Putnick & Bornstein, 2016).

The measurement weights model of AMOS is the metric invariant model (Putnick & Bornstein, 2016). It tests metric invariance by putting the constraints for all groups to have the same configuration and regression weights from the observable variables to the latent variables. Structural covariances (or scalar invariant models) impose an additional constraint requiring the variance of all latent variables having the same values. Measurement residuals (or residual invariant model) impose an additional constraint on the structural covariances by requiring all residues to have the same value for all groups of respondents. The results shown in **Table-3** below reveal the goodness of fit of the various invariant models.

Table-3: Goodness of Fit Indices for the Various Invariant Models

Model	NPAR	CMIN	df	p-value	CMIN/df	IFI Delta2	CFI	RMSEA
Unconstrained	284	2037.361	916	<.001	2.224	.926	.925	.036
Measurement weights	230	2107.851	970	<.001	2.173	.924	.923	.035
Structural covariances	167	2345.767	1033	<.001	2.271	.912	.912	.037
Measurement residuals	71	3364.954	1129	<.001	2.980	.849	.850	.046
Independence model	96	15968.289	1104	<.001	14.464	<.000	<.000	.119

The goodness of fit indices for the four invariant models shows that the unconstrained (invariant configural model), measurement weight invariance (or metric invariant model), and the structural covariances model (or scalar invariant model) are acceptable models because the CFI are all above 0.91 and the RMSEA below 0.037. The difference in chi-squares of the first two models is statistically insignificant (the chi-square difference is equal to 70, and the change in degree of freedom is equal to 54), implying no significant difference between the two models. However, the difference in the chi-squares of the second and third models is statistically significant (the chi-square difference is equal to 238, and the change in degree of freedom is equal to 63).

The analyses confirmed that the model has invariant properties constraints of having equal configuration, equal regression weight of each observable item on the latent variable, and equal covariance among latent variables. The results suggested that the model can be applied to different groups with good psychometric properties in the current study.

4.5. Convergent Validity

The standardized regression weight of the four respective measurement items on the six traits ranges from 0.591 to 0.868. All items except five have factor scores or standardized regression weights on their respective trait larger than 0.7. The results show that the model has construct convergent validity.

4.6. Second-Order Factor Model

The current study proposed that the six specific traits were related to a broad servant-leadership trait construct. A second-order model of a broad servant-leadership trait formed by the six specific traits was analyzed with confirmatory factor analysis. The goodness of fit indices show that the data support a second-order factor model (IFI= 0.933; IFI=0.933; RMSEA=0.063). The standardized regression weights of all six specific traits on the broad trait are higher than 0.793. The results show that the second factor has convergent validity.

4.7. A Simplified Model of the Broad Trait of Servant Leaders

Like the simplified servant-leadership behavior measurement used by Liden et al. (2014) with six items, the current study carried out a confirmatory factor analysis of the broad traits of servant leaders by picking up one measurement item with the highest factor loading to their respective narrow traits. The goodness of fit indices support the reliability and validity of the simplified measurement of broad traits of servant leaders.

The invariance of the simplified broad trait of servant leaders among four groups of respondents was analyzed similarly for the full model above. Similar to the result of the whole full model, the analyses confirmed that the model has invariant properties constraints of having equal configuration, equal measurement weights, equal measurement intercepts, and equal structural covariances with CFI all above 0.947 and all RMSEA below 0.042. The results

suggested that the simplified model of broad traits of servant leaders can be used for different groups with good psychometric properties.

5. RESULTS

The current study attempts to develop a valid and reliable measurement scale of six traits of servant leaders as antecedent variables for future studies of servant-leadership. As discussed in the development of the questionnaire, the questionnaire has face validity, construct validity, and content validity through the literature review and involvement of academic inputs. The questionnaire has reliability and discriminant validity and shows configural, metric and scalar invariance among the four data groups taken at different time slots with different backgrounds.

A second-order factor analysis further shows that the measurement scale of six traits of servant leaders has convergent validity. The second-order factor can be called the broad servant-leadership trait with six specific narrower traits: *Service, Integrity, Humility, Commitment, Teamwork and Resilience*. The six specific traits converge to the broad servant-leadership trait according to the proposal of the current study. The six traits are distinct but not too highly correlated. Since the six traits are related to the characteristics of servant leaders from the literature review, the second-order latent variable as higher-level servant-leadership trait has construct validity.

The broad servant-leadership trait can be measured by a simplified version using one item from each trait. The confirmatory factor analysis shows that the measure has excellent psychometric properties with good validity and reliability.

The results are the first in identifying six specific traits with a reliable and valid measurement instrument convergent to broad leadership traits. The broad leadership traits can also be measured by six items similar to the simplified version of the measure of servant-leadership by Liden et al. (2014). The findings bridge the gap in finding the relation between servant-leadership traits and other servant-leadership variables in an integrative model with a valid and reliable measurement instrument for traits of servant leaders. The traits of servant leaders can be measured by the questionnaire developed, which serves as an instrument for identifying emergent servant leaders.

6. DISCUSSION

With the development and validation of the measurement scale for six specific servant-leadership traits, which is convergent to a broad servant-leadership trait as proposed in the current study, light is cast on the concept and measurement of the traits of servant leaders, an important but seemingly neglected part of the antecedents of servant-leadership theory (Eva et al., 2019). Using the measurement scale will permit further research to investigate the integrative servant-leadership model and may enhance knowledge of our understanding of servant-leadership theory. The measurement of traits may also be used for research to identify emergent and effective servant leaders.

The Six-Trait TQ Servant-Leadership Model, supported by this research and those from leading academic institutions, underscores the importance of these traits in fostering effective leadership and enhancing organizational quality. Each trait contributes to a holistic approach that prioritizes the well-being and development of individuals within an organization.

The current study has limitations in that data were collected from students, social workers, business workers in Hong Kong, and social workers in Mainland China. The sample size, while significant, was limited to certain occupational sectors and, more importantly perhaps, consisted of Chinese respondents located in Chinese contexts. This means that the result may not be

generalizable across cultures. Further research is needed to test whether the model proposed here has invariant properties among cultural groups.

Implementation of the Model

Finally, to effectively implement the Six-Trait TQ Servant-Leadership Model, one should consider the following generic steps:

1. **Assessment:** Evaluate current leadership practices against these six traits.
2. **Training:** Provide training programs focused on developing these traits in leaders at all levels.
3. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Establish systems for receiving feedback from team members regarding leadership effectiveness.
4. **Recognition:** Recognize and reward leaders who exemplify these traits in their daily interactions.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly review and refine practices to enhance the model's effectiveness.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares NO conflict of interest. There are no other third parties in the design of the study, in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data, in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.

Citation: Chui, H. S., Lee, K. Y. Y., Yeung, S. M. C., Fung, A. L. K., & Ho, S. K. M. (2024). Research & Development of a Six-Trait TQ Servant-Leadership Model. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management*, 15(3), 10–25.

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