

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

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Abstract :

"Servant leadership" is one form of leadership style that is based on sincerity and provides help without thought of personal gain or reward to be gained. Servant leadership is different from transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Because this type of leadership is a combination of environmental assessment related to good behavior "akhlakul karimah". Greenleaf are researchers who agree that this leadership style is very "up to date" and can apply to any form of organization, including educational organizations. This paper will explain what it is "servant leadership", the characteristics of which can be categorized as "servant leadership", advantages and disadvantages, and how to apply them into educational organizations, for example: UIN Raden Fatah Palembang

Key Word : Servant Leadership, Transformational, Karismatik

Introduction

Greenleaf (1977) stated that servant leaders are leaders who serve others first before becoming leaders; usually servant leaders put others' people first and interest above their own. Servant leadership might be a phenomenon since servant leadership relating to sacrifice of leaders to be a servant first and leaders' willingness to serve others. This article will describe servant leadership dealing with characteristics, model of servant leaderships and the strengths and limitations of servant leaderships. The purpose of this essay is to implement servant leadership in educational organization (State Islamic University "Raden Fatah Palembang South Sumatera).

The concept of Servant Leadership

The concept of servant leadership was introduced by Robert Kiefner Greenleaf (1904-1990) starting from his first essay entitled "The servant as leader" (Crippen, 2004). Robert Kiefner Greenleaf got the idea of servant leadership after reading Hermann Hesse's "Journey to the East" which told the story of a person named Leo, he was a servant and then became a noble leader (Greenleaf, 1977). According to Greenleaf (1977), "a great leader is seen as servant first". The leaders might be a servant first before they are chosen by followers to become leaders. However, the servant is not because of something, the servant is natural from their heart. Greenleaf (1977) stated that natural servants are people who understand that they are servant first and then the conscious choice determines people to aspire to lead.

Many authors have written in their articles that there are conceptual similarities of transformational and servant leadership. Bass (2000) concluded that servant leadership is close to the transformational component of inspiration and consideration of individualization (as cited in Wong, 2003). Smith, et.al,

(2004) also stated that transformational leadership is quite similar to servant leadership concept dealing with specific behavioral of transformational and servant leadership which have influence and motivation as their component. However, Smith, et.al (2004) claimed that the difference between transformational and servant leadership is servant leadership tend to apply a more static approach to the external environment than transformational leadership, transformational leadership is suitable for dynamic external environment.

On the other hand, servant leadership act as the moral leadership which is chose by followers due to their belief. However, servant leadership is not a “quick-fix” approach, this needs long term approach to life and work, create positive change in society as well (Spears, 1996).

According to covey (1996), the servant leadership concept refers to a principle and a natural way which relating to social system and personal attitude. Covey added that servant leadership emphasizes to serve the others and promote approach to work, to connect togetherness of community. Servant leadership may be needed in organization today because this focuses on service orientation. Bartuto & Wheeler (2006) stated that servant leadership was described as wise in both decision process and service orientation. Additionally, Yuki (1989) defined power as a mean to influence people and power stems from three sources; position, personal and political (as cited in Razik & Swanson, 2001, p. 65).

Servant leadership does not centralize power but share power to make decision. Covey (1996) claimed that servant leadership shares the power in decision making. Because of this servant leadership grow continuously in workplace. Spears (1996) stated that servant leadership grow and develop sharply in workplace in 1990s, so that this influences management concept and workplace revolution in the world. This fact might show that servant leadership has a unique concept.

The Characteristics of Servant Leadership

The New York times identified that servant leadership relates to reality of power in daily life, its legitimacy and its results can be beneficial through an appropriate use of power (as cited in Spears, 1996, p. 3). Many researchers conclude the characteristics of servant leadership that introduced by Greenleaf. Spear (1996) stated that there are ten characteristics of servant leadership; they are:

- Listening
- Empathy
- Healing
- Awareness
- Persuasion
- Conceptualization
- Foresight
- Stewardship
- Commitment to the growth of others
- Building communities

Crippen (2004) described each of those characteristics, namely:

1. Listening means the leaders has deep commitment to listen to others and always to be an effective communicator and a good listener.
2. Empathy is to attempt to understand and to give solution of problems to others.
3. Healing refers to the capability of leaders in healing themselves and others.
4. Awareness shows that servant leadership has general awareness, particularly self awareness.
5. Persuasion means that the servant leader has effort to convince and influence others.
6. Conceptualization is the ability to evaluate and analyze the past history and the future goals.
7. Foresight is the ability of servant leadership in predicting the even in the future.
8. Stewardship means “accountability without control or compliance”
9. Commitment to the growth of people is the commitment of servant leader in committing individual growth of human being.
10. Building community means that servant leader tries to build community through several approaches, such as; service to community.

The ten characteristics above identify that servant leadership has relationship with moral leadership which develop their ability rather than power or position. According to Daft (2008), moral leadership encourages the changing of followers into leaders who develop their potential rather than position in controlling people. Servant leadership is also relevant with charismatic leaders. Graham (1991) identified that servant leadership is as the moral of charismatic effect (as cited in Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). This statement is probably true because servant leadership is formed from the followers’ belief and religious factor. Akuchi (1993) stated that servant leadership is dealing with biblical roots which explore religious and spiritual construct (as cited in Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

In addition, the notion of both servant and charismatic leadership are originally quite similar (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). The researchers had defined “charisma”. Sendjaya & Sarros (2002) stated that there are definitions of charisma; Weber in 1947 defined that charisma is as a quality of a person who is supernatural or superhuman or at least specifically qualities, also Bass in 1999 defined charisma notion means a person who is endowed with divine grace from God. For example: Muslims believe that Muhammad pbuh is a charismatic leader who keeps toleration among different belief.

Model of Servant Leadership

Many authors identified model of servant leadership as transformational leadership model. Farling, Stone and Winston (1999) describe a hierarchical model of servant leadership as a cyclical process which consists of behavioral and relational. These three authors found servant leadership variables in the literature. According to Farling, Stone and Winston (1999), there are five variables which are identified by literature in servant

leader-follower transformational model; vision, influence, credibility, trust and service. Vision means the ability to see external object. Webster (1828) stated that vision means a sense of understanding and knowing something which is unknown before and seeing something that cannot be seen naturally (as cited in Farling, Stone & Winston, 1999, p.54).

Influence is the second model which is recommended in literature. Greenleaf (1977) suggested that persuasion is one of characteristic of servant leader which has function to influence the followers. Spears (1996) stated that servant leaders attempt to convince others rather than force compliance. Influence is connected with credibility of leaders because influence refers to individual behavior and the role of leaders and followers (Farling, Stone & Winston, 1999). The variable of credibility is essential for the implementation of servant leadership. Greenleaf (1977) stated that servant leadership is based on the active day-to-day role; this is part of followers' belief of leaders' quality.

Trust and service are the last two variables which are important as well. Trust is the fundamental of servant leadership and decision making (Greenleaf, 1977). Bennis & Nanus (1985) defined trust as emotional factor that fasten leaders and followers together (as cited in Farling, Stone & Winston, 1999, p. 63). Service might be the main model of servant leadership. Greenleaf (1977) stated that servant leaders are the people who desire to give service.

The Strengths and Limitations of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership may link to charismatic, transformational and stewardship leadership. Block (1993) stated that servant leadership is similar to stewardship leadership because both of them emphasize the need to minimize self interest with service others as the basic of power (as cited in Wong, 2003). Lussier & Achua (2007) defined stewardship as a kind of leadership that is employee-focused form that empowers followers to decide something and control their own jobs, servant leadership is a kind of leadership that serve the other need by helping them professionally and personally.

Servant leadership is growing around the world (Covey, 1996). However, there are misconceptions of servant leadership. Wong (2003) stated that there are five misconceptions of servant leadership in his research:

- The leaders believe that they are chosen by God to lead people, so that they have right to punish people as directed by God.
- They are servant of God, but they do not want to be servants of followers
- They have responsibility to God but not to the people.
- They do not want to hinder in God's truth, so they do not care about the people' questions.
- They keep their power and authority without sharing to the others because they think that would weaken their effectiveness in doing duties from God.

Servant leadership also has strengths and limitations. According to Wong (2003), there is much strengths and limitations of servant leadership, particularly in organization or at workplace, the strengths of servant leadership are:

1. Type of servant leader is able to give their full attention to developing followers and building organization.
2. Servant leaders have a positive opinion of their workers as individual who has capability to develop their potential and to become leaders.
3. Servant leaders recognize environment and attempt to facilitate self-management and productivity.
4. Type of servant leaders always care about their workers and have effort to give the best to workers.
5. Servant leaders can help to reduce uncontrolled emotion and build healthy organization.

Wong (2003) mentioned the limitations of servant leadership, they are:

1. Leaders feel insecure to implement servant leadership because they are worry about their ability to lead.
2. Leaders are afraid to take high risk because servant leadership adopts a humanistic and empowering approach. Servant leadership also shows ambitious individuals who tend to be selfish.
3. This is impossible to implement servant leadership in “an entrenched authoritarian hierarchy”.
4. This is difficult to implement servant leadership before senior management doing personal transformation.
5. This is difficult to implement servant leadership in military environment because military environment follow the order of commanding officer to survive, particularly, on the battlefield.

The other author, Nielsen (1999) claimed the strengths and limitations of servant leadership methods, the strengths are:

1. The method facilitates change peacefully.
2. The method reforms traditions of organization
3. The method can produce win-win solution
4. The method facilitates belief conversion toward the ethical and does not change behavior.

Whereas the limitations are:

1. The method becomes ineffective when the people feel no “we” fellowship relationship or when there is conflict “we” relationship is more important.
2. The method can be ineffective when there is no negative bias in tradition system.
3. Powerful people will frame ethics issues and ignore other frame.
4. The method can be misinterpreted and stimulated negatively toward other cognitions and behaviors.

The limitations of servant leadership above do not mean servant leadership is impossible in organization. Servant leaders are needed in organization since servant leadership display a number of special skills such

as; listening receptively, persuading and articulating and communicate effectively (Greenleaf, 1977).

Implementation of Servant Leadership in Organization

Levering & Moskowitz (2000) stated that servant leadership type has used in many companies in America by focusing on openness and fairness, friendliness, opportunities, pride in work, pay or benefit and security (as cited in Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002, p. 62). According to Spears (1996), many institutions adopt servant leadership as a philosophy and as foundation for their mission, such as; educational institution.

Educational organization, State Islamic University "Raden Fatah" Palembang south Sumatera is the example of educational institution which is established in 1964. Servant leadership might be an appropriate concept in this organization as servant leadership has suitable framework in educational institutional. Spears (1996) suggested that servant leader concept is compatible in educational institution because this has framework that enhance leadership and management models and increase total of management quality through learning organization and building community.

Undoubtedly, different organizations have different perspectives of servant leadership. Educational institutional for instance, seek a leader who has characteristics relate to education environment context, such as; serving his/her colleagues and students, providing in-service and acting as a speaker.

The servant leadership style might an appropriate leadership style for the next leaders in educational organization since servant leadership styles are not selfish and arrogance as leaders. Wong (2003) promoted four clusters of self-less motivation and attitudes:

- Servant leaders desire to serve and care others
- They have commitment to develop and empower the followers
- They sacrifice and suffer for others
- They prefer to put people first to organizational success.

The four statements above may be needed in each institution, including my organization. Wong (2003) added that servant leadership is not only humanistic and ethical leadership but also can increase moral, job satisfaction and productivity because this is based on compassion and care.

Lecturers, administrators and staff should learn more about servant leadership to implement this leadership style in educational organization. Crippen (2004) recommended programs of educational leadership in implementing servant leadership, namely:

1. Searching further investigation as viable model for school and higher education.
2. Doing research into educational institutions for evidence in implementing of servant leadership.
3. Including the model of servant leadership in the course of study which is held by faculties.

Crippen (2004) stated that the most important step is to provide a pilot project to use this model by collecting data and finding result from the reports. Additionally, Razik & Swanson (2001) suggested that research should be

followed by training to analyze leadership style dealing with definitions, models and applications.

Conclusion

To sum up, servant leadership is a type of leadership which emphasize of serve and care. The leaders put others people need and inspiration above their own. The leaders have desire to serve. Our prophet Muhammad is a model of servant leadership. Islam believes that Muhammad did not only taught but also practice servant leadership. Servant leadership is close to religion and belief.

Servant leadership relates to charismatic, stewardship and transformational leadership. There are ten characteristics of servant leadership which become fundamental of servant leaders. Servant leadership is drawn as categorically wise and self-less. So that, many organizations are interested in implementing servant leadership. However, servant leadership has limitations as well. This does not mean servant leadership is inappropriate to be implemented in organization. Servant leadership is still needed in many organizations, particularly educational institution. In my opinion, servant leadership is suitable in educational organization because this leadership type emphasizes service orientation. To implement this type, State Islamic University Raden Fatah Palembang needs more time to learn and socialize it. Lecturers and administrators need do research to convince that servant leadership is more suitable than other leadership types.

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