



- TITLE** Examination of Leadership Practices of Principals Identified as Servant Leaders
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- OBJECTIVE** The purpose of this study was to examine the leadership practices of principals identified as servant leaders.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A representative sample of the total population of principals in Missouri were selected, yielding 330 elementary principals, 151 middle school principals and 264 high school principals receiving the survey. From that sample 112 principals (15% response rate) returned the completed Self-assessment of servant leadership profile survey (Page & Wong, 1998). Three teachers from each of the principal's schools were randomly selected from the faculty to complete the Leadership Practices Inventory Observer and asked to assess their principals' effectiveness. Two hundred and fifty teachers responded. The typical principal was male (66%), Caucasian (100%), and all held post-graduate degrees or certificates (100%). There were 43 elementary-level, 32 middle-school, and 37 high school principals.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

No significant differences were found between servant and non-servant leaders (based upon a median split on the servant leadership profile) on the basis of gender, administrative experience, ethnic background, school level or academic degrees. Servant leaders rated themselves as most frequently engaging in Model, followed by Enable, Encourage, Challenge and Inspire; while non-servant leaders rated themselves most frequently in Enable, Model, and then Encourage, Challenge, and Inspire. The leadership frequency scores on all five leadership practices were significantly higher from the servant leaders than from the non-servant leaders. Public school principals who rated themselves high in terms of their perception of their use of the characteristics of servant leadership were also rated significantly higher by their teachers for all of the five best leadership practices.

The authors conclude:

Utilizing the five best leadership practices as a framework, higher education preparatory programmes should integrate servant leadership characteristics and practices into leadership and teacher curricula. Educational institutions should also take steps to enhance educational leaders' skills in modelling, enabling and encouraging their followers. While the argument could be made that one of the most critical components of effective leadership that attracts followers is the ability to see clearly the best mission and vision for the organisation. This data, however, shows that in order to have that vision and to share it with their followers the leader must first be an example of effective leadership so others will model themselves on that behaviour. By understanding their purpose as a leader the servant leader can guide others through appropriate modelling towards that shared vision. Thus, in a leadership programme the development of a leadership platform is imperative (pp. 415-416).