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Challenges in implementing the servant leadership concept in healthcare Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

In the most recent leadership crises within many countries, much of which is caused by the strife of identifying an active leader, people want leaders who listen to them and empower them rather than who practices power over them (Pellicer, 2008). Such response behaviour or actions would create a sense of anxiety for any leader especially in trying to adopt an appropriate leadership style to produce the required change. It is believed that Prophet Muhammad embraced the leadership approach that focused on people and their needs as a priority. Boyum (2008) pointed out that servant leadership has been a favourite subject in both secular and scholarly literature, as organisations progressively demand both ethical and authentic leaders. Servant leadership has become widely an accepted term in the leadership and organisational literature (Spears, 1966). Many written works such as Greenleaf writings (1977) and Sipe and Frick (2009) asserted that servant leadership reinforces ethical, insightful and principle-centered decisions. Since the ability to influence others is fundamental to the success of all managers and leaders (Stahl, 2007). Servant leadership has recently brought to prominence for its effectiveness as highlighted by Wis (2002), and its potential of grounding organisation in ethical and moral empowerment of others (Boyum, 2008). The results of the study conducted among Military healthcare managers found a statistically significant correlation between the servant leadership style and the staff's affective and normative team effectiveness. There was a significant statistical correlation that existed between the leader's servant leadership style of leadership and the staff's continuance teamwork to the organisation. Servant leadership shows that more must be done by the managers to develop the emotional maturity of the managers that they engage and work with and the trust relationship among the managers was also additional findings when the data was analysed. People need to be understood, and managers need to shepherd the people they work with using great care and compassion. The other issue of attention is that managers must become less selfish by esteeming the colleagues better than themselves and by being self-sacrificing regarding their needs. Putting others first is a sure way to promote servant leadership in any institution. The initial look at the concept of servant leadership might imply a negative meaning due to the connotation of the word "servant" (Wis, 2002). For some, a servant could imply weakness or inability to lead, which comes from the definition of a servant: a person who performs duties for others, especially a person employed in a house on domestic duties or as a personal attendant (Oxford English Dictionary, 2009). On the contrary, this concept has been brought to prominence due to its effectiveness in raising people who are caring and serving each other; it is "the rock upon which a good society is built" (Sipe and Frick, 2009). Among the leadership styles proposed to influence organizational success, servant leadership has been suggested to be the leadership style of the future. Servant leaders build relationships among followers in order to strengthen organisational behaviour and culture towards attaining organisation's goals.

Keywords: Servant leadership, leadership, Saudi Arabia, culture, Islam

Introduction

The idea that there is no one best style has emerged with contingency theories where the situation and the followers, as well as the leaders control the most effective leadership styles. More recent studies have focused on charismatic and transformational theories of leadership. When one searches for servant leadership and team effectiveness, the results are minimum with none covering this relationship in healthcare in Saudi Arabia. If the search is reduced to just servant leadership or team effectiveness individually the results jumped to many. This indicates that servant leadership has gained increasing interests in recent years, especially where the knowledge gap between the leaders and their followers is diminishing due to the applications in the workplace.

Servant leadership has received an increasing amount of interest and recognition in recent years. Researchers have indicated employee's perceptions of their supervisor's servant leadership behaviours improve organisational performance by building organisational trust and teamwork Reinke (2004) ^[62], and has a positive relationship with the leader's values (Washington, Sutton and Field, 2006) ^[86]. The most effective leaders have responded to the dynamism of the healthcare field by altering their leading skill set. Identification and application of the most suitable leadership style are essential in transforming the health sector in Saudi Arabia.

The term leadership erupts from the perspective of leading, motivating and empowering. By the changing of time, our general views of leadership behaviour also change (Van Dierendonck, 2011) ^[81]. The 21st century has opened the door of vast human resources through the research of leadership behaviour (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) ^[81]. Nowadays it is believed that the role of leadership should be ethical in practice where the leaders will promote good behaviour in the workplace and prevent influencing bad actors (Neubert *et al.* 2008) ^[49]. So the scholars like Luthans (2002) ^[42]; Macik-Frey, Quick, & Cooper (2009) ^[43] believe that leadership behaviour is one of the most influencing factors for empowering employees and flourishing organisations in the field of positive organisational behaviour. Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber (2009) ^[11] stated that during few decades the leadership studies changed its direction like transformational leadership towards a shared, relational and universal arena where leader communicates directly without maintaining the organisational hierarchy. According to Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson (1997) ^[20], "The importance of moving management theory beyond the principles of agency theory with its assumption of the homo economicus who is individualistic, opportunistic, and self-serving to governance based on viewing individuals as pro-organisational, self-actualising, and trustworthy". Keeping a relationship with the moving management theory a new leadership approach was developed by Robert k. Greenleaf in 1970. Though Greenleaf conceptualizes the approach of servant leadership he did not show any measurement of a mathematical application. However, servant leadership has brought a new dimension of leadership behaviour and it is the first approach which thinks serving and emphasising the need of followers first. Patterson, (2003) ^[56], Lad and Luechauer (1998) ^[40] suggested that "Servant-leaders typically have a passionate zeal for creating a preferred future. Then again, Hitler, Mussolini and Jim Jones all had visions. What differentiates servant leaders from maniacal dictators is their deep desire to pursue this vision from the basis of humility, empathy, compassion, and commitment to ethical behaviour. In short, they articulate a vision and then enable, ennoble and empower those around them to work for the attainment of that vision. In essence, servant leadership represents a pull rather than a push model of vision attainment. Simply put, servant leadership may be defined as a moral component present in leader which encourage and enhance moral reasoning in its followers, focus on development of employees not just for the development of the organisation but also for the development of employees and is concerned with the success of all stakeholders. The models for servant leadership, where it has been implemented, has significant implications for the individual and the organisation as a

whole (Guillaume, Honeycutt and Cleveland, 2012) ^[34] The current climate in many healthcare organisations do not align or embrace the idea of servant leadership styles as envisioned by the founder of the concept Robert Greenleaf when he originally introduced the concepts of servant leadership. He envisioned a model of leadership that is rooted in the fundamentals of the human drive to care for others and to contribute to the betterment of society. Though there has been an improvement in service delivery by the organisations in the recent many years, there is still a lot that needs to be done or implemented to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The challenges facing the health sector in Saudi Arabia suggest a need to transcend traditional rationality and move towards recognising the pivotal role leadership plays, particularly leadership based on moral values in fostering team work (Reinke, 2004) ^[62]. There is however little research conducted to document the use of this leadership style in healthcare within Saudi Arabia. In a climate that features health care demands, service excellence, best and safe practices, job satisfaction and human resources shortage of skills and global challenges, the presence of effective leaders and effective teams represent organisational efficiencies, especially within this sector of health care. As the search for increased understanding of what facilitates servant leadership and team effectiveness continues, health care based case study strategies are becoming a widely used approach in operations management research.

Definition servant leadership

Servant leadership was first identified by Greenleaf (2002) ^[31], which focused on the premise that a successful leader must be willing to serve the interests and needs of his or her followers while assisting in the development of these followers to become leaders. According to Reinke (2004) ^[62], the servant leader was the one who held the organisation in trust to the public or community it served, while remaining intimately aware of the needs and situations of those who worked within the organisation. The origins of servant leadership can be traced back nearly 2,500 years ago, indicating that it is a timeless, universal aspect of leadership. This leadership principle and practice can enable improvement in the management of corporations, governments, universities, schools, states' agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other organizations. Servant leadership implies a comprehensive view of the quality of people, work, and community spirit, and requires a spiritual understanding of identity, mission, vision and environment. Servant leaders are often seen as humble stewards of their organization's resources: human, financial and physical. Servant leadership is an approach to leadership with strong altruistic and ethical overtones that asks and requires leaders to be attentive to the needs of their followers and empathize with them; they should take care of them by making sure they become healthier, wiser, freer and more autonomous. The ultimate goal is to teach others to become servant leaders (Northouse, 2004).

Servant Leadership Style

Servant leadership style is a making waves in the business world as the leadership style of the future (Spears, 2004, Correia de Sousa & Dierendonck, 2010, Guillaume, Honeycutt & Cleveland, 2012) ^[75, 82, 34]. The reason for such interest is the needs of organizations for a specific

leadership style, which is capable of respond to a changing world; the world of a knowledge-based economy (Guillaume *et al.* 2012) ^[34]. The servant leadership style can be defined as a leadership style characterized by serving others. The leader's aim is to enhance the growth of others as well as himself and to involve all parties in the decision making (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 2004) ^[32]. In this way, he offers employees a sense of worth and belonging, motivating them to contribute to the growth and success of the organization (Northouse, 2010) ^[48].

Attributes of servant leadership

Scholars generally agree that these characteristics are central to the development of a servant leader. On Greenleaf's (1990-2007) 10 attributes and definition, Larry Spears (2005) emphasized that these 10 characteristics are by no means exhaustive. The following are Greenleaf's ten servant leadership attributes

1. **Listening:** Traditionally, and also in servant leadership, managers are required to have communication skills as well as the competence to make decisions. A servant leader has the motivation to listen actively to subordinates and support them in decision identification. The servant leader particularly needs to pay attention to what remains unspoken in the management setting. This means relying on his inner voice in order to find out what the body, mind and spirit are communicating.
2. **Empathy:** A servant leader attempts to understand and empathize with others. Workers may be considered not only as employees, but also as people who need respect and appreciation for their personal development. As a result, leadership is seen as a special type of human work, which ultimately generates a competitive advantage. Empathy can be taught from an early age as an effective tool to enable social development through kindness, compassion and tolerance.
3. **Healing:** A great strength of a Servant Leader is the ability for healing one's self and others. A servant leader tries to help people solve their problems and conflicts in relationships, because he wants to encourage and support the personal development of each individual. This leads to the formation of a business culture, in which the working environment is dynamic, fun and free of the fear of failure.
4. **Awareness:** A servant leader needs to gain general awareness and especially self-awareness. He has the ability to view situations from a more integrated, holistic position. As a result, he gets a better understanding about ethics and values.
5. **Persuasion:** A Servant Leader does not take advantage of their power and status by coercing compliance; they rather try to convince those they manage. This element distinguishes servant leadership most clearly from traditional, authoritarian models and can be traced back to the religious views of Robert Greenleaf.
6. **Conceptualization:** A servant leader thinks beyond day-to-day realities. That means he has the ability to see beyond the limits of the operating business and also focuses on long term operating goals. A leader constructs a personal vision that only he/she can develop by reflecting on the meaning of life and how this relates to the type of work the organization does. As a result, he/she derives specific goals and

implementation strategies.

7. **Foresight:** Foresight is the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation. It enables the servant leader to learn about the past and to achieve a better understanding about the current reality. It also enables the servant leader to identify consequences about the future. This characteristic is closely related to conceptualization.
8. **Stewardship:** CEOs, staffs and trustees have the task to hold their institution in trust for the greater good of society. Servant leadership is seen as an obligation to help and serve others. Openness and persuasion are more important than control.
9. **Commitment to the growth of people:** A servant leader is convinced that people have an intrinsic value beyond their contributions as workers. Therefore, they should nurture the personal, professional and spiritual growth of employees. For example, they spend money for the personal and professional development of the people who make up their organization. The servant leader will also encourage the ideas of everyone and involve workers in decision making.
10. **Building community:** A servant leader identifies means to build a strong community within his organization and wants to develop a true community among businesses and institutions.

Based on the above attributes, it is clear that this type of leadership style is crucial in the knowledge-dependent environment and can result in increased organizational productivity (Spears, 1998; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010, Sial *et al.* 2014) ^[73, 82, 70]. By involving followers, servant leaders create a sense of belonging and self-worth among them, making them see that they play a role in creating the organizational culture and contribute to the organizational success (Lapp, 1991). It fosters strong commitment to the organization (Drucker, 1999; Zareen *et al.* 2014) ^[23, 89], and provides freedom to be creative and innovative (Fredrickson, 1998) ^[28]. Servant leader's ability to encourage followers to feel part of a whole, as well as accepted and respected will lead them to share their knowledge willingly among employees (Politis, 2005; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010) ^[82, 60].

Islamic theory of leadership

The transformational dimension is very much a part of the Islamic paradigm of leadership, which stresses the reciprocal enrichment of the leaders and the followers. In fact, Islam demands that you, as a leader, pay attention to your followers' needs. In a hadith (no. 2942) reported in Sunan Abu Dawud by Abu Maryam al-Azdi, the Prophet (s) said:

If Allah puts anyone in the position of authority over the Muslims' affairs and he secludes himself (from them), not fulfilling their needs, wants, and poverty, Allah will keep Himself away from him, not fulfilling his need, want, and poverty.

Any analysis of an Islamic group should take into consideration the social, cultural, religious, and political elements that the group's leadership uses to establish its authority (Bar, 2012) ^[12]. Based on the example of Prophet Mohammed and his companions, who became the first four successors, or caliphs, spirituality is an integral component of leadership in Islam. In Islam the role, and attendant

responsibility, of leadership is not to be chased after as an ambition (Kriger & Seng, 2005) ^[39], the process involves the ability to improve the status quo to the benefit of all members of the organisation (Beekun & Badawi, 1999). Islamic school leaders must therefore, empower others, project a clear image of the organisation's mission and vision to model the way for stakeholders, whilst concurrently supporting, motivating, and encouraging followers (Elsegeini, 2005) ^[25]. Effective leadership is sparse within Western Muslim organisations (Sahadat, 1997) ^[65]. In fact, Aabed (2006) ^[1] asserts the most pressing problem for Islamic schools is that they lack 19 competent leadership demonstrated by the fact that school boards do not have the leadership training to run a school and in essence he purports, most Islamic school administrators seldom hold a graduate degree in the field of educational leadership, or school administration. Furthermore, this manifests itself in the lack of adequate resources, high turnover, and student attrition, as well as the hiring of under or ill-qualified educators (Aabed, 2006) ^[1]. While the studies demonstrating the tenets of effective leadership in Islamic schools are limited, Yukl (1998) ^[88] asserts leadership efficacy can be measured by the leader's contribution to the quality of group processes, and the extent to which the organization performs its tasks, and goals, successfully. Fattah (2009) ^[26] further argues that traditionally Arab or South Asian perceptions, held by Muslims in North America regarding leadership, are what hamper the success of Islamic organisations. Leaders are unable to transfer the tenets of Islam in a Western setting, and though they may conduct training camps and activities in North America, the area of human development and leadership has been neglected (Altalib, 2001) ^[6]. Siddiqui (2002) ^[71] bolsters this argument through her observation that the top-down leadership approach imported from the Islamic world has clashed with a more team-oriented, and horizontal approach, that is prevalent amongst many of the teachers who have been raised and educated in North America.

Islamic leadership does not rely, for its legitimacy, upon traditional authority, but rather on rational-legal systems based on unity of purpose, acknowledgement of one God, and the foundational example of Prophet Muhammad, whose referent and charismatic authority lives on through the Sunnah (Almoharby & Neal, 2013) ^[5]. It is thus vital to utilize, as a frame of reference, the Qur'an and Sunnah, both of which postulate the characteristics of Islamic leadership by setting forth the example of leadership prototypes through the example of Prophet Muhammad and his companions (Shah, 2006) ^[66]. To lead in Islam means to take the initiative in a relationship with the followers, to actualize tawhid, which also means following and enforcing shari'ah, by achieving justice, socially and politically. In Islam, leadership is an honorably moral activity and a process of communication towards the achievement of a goal. Leaders are primarily distinguished from the followers by the knowledge they have, their commitment to the Islamic principles and their greater moral values. Thus, Islamic leadership establishes depth of reason connecting leaders and followers in actions that suit their needs for a strong sense of community and identity. Neither party should exert any effort to influence or to exploit the other. They are rather involved in a process in which the accomplishment of the ordinary reason is vital. The leader and the led both recognize the objective and agree to strive

jointly for its attainment. Since the objective is to discover, they will be motivated through its beliefs and thus are constantly in the act of 'ibadah' (worship though not always physical). Hence, practicing genuine leadership in Islam is conceived as an 'ibadah.

Trends of servant leadership

(Ryan & Fuhrmann, 2015) ^[64] refer to the importance of servant leadership in schools for example listening to others, connecting to customers and cope with administrative developments Awareness and paying attention to important issues, consensus building, development of individuals from both personal and professional perspectives., encouraging learning, development and constructive feedback. The ability to use past lessons for success going forward. Functional commitment developing talent. Patterson (2003) ^[56] presented the dimensions of servant leadership love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service as the essential dimensions of servant leadership

Servant leadership aims Patterson (2003) ^[56].

1. Make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served.
2. Helps workers develop and perform as highly as possible.
3. Meet the expectations of the beneficiaries
4. Contribute to solving the problems of workers
5. Guidance and direction all workers to the best ways to present the Services

Some Challenges Implementing Servant Leadership in Saudi Arabia Healthcare

The life of a modern-day leader clearly is not easy. Inside their educational institutions, they need to lead and motivate a diversified group of people, work across organizational boundaries, improve efficiency, and achieve growth. These are difficult challenges, and many leaders feel ill-prepared to tackle them. Developing leaders who can face these challenges is tricky indeed. William and others (2014) ^[87]. Today various leadership styles are applied in different organizations of the world but it could certainly be said that leadership modern styles like strategic, transformational and servant has a wide application in all kinds of organizational environments, and many Healthcare organizations have utilized this style in recent years in order to manage their organizations. Blakesley, Simon (2011) ^[13]. But in the Arab context according to (Oqil M. Refai 2013) ^[50] found that most managers acute failure of performance and a study for William and others (2014) ^[87] confirmed the importance of applying Modern trends in Arab leadership to face Six Challenges, they are: Developing Managerial Effectiveness, Inspiring Others, Developing Employees, Leading a Team, Guiding Change and Managing Internal Stakeholders and Politics. In relationship to the concept Servant leadership and its challenges in an Arab culture, The theory's originator, Robert K. Greenleaf, intentionally sought a descriptor that would give people pause for thought, and challenge any long-standing assumptions that might be held about the relationship between leaders and followers in an organisation. By combining two seemingly contradictory terms, Greenleaf asks to reconsider the very nature of leadership. He felt it a necessary choice to turn established conceptions about the organisational pyramid on their head, and jump-start insight into a new view of leadership. Carol

Smith (2005) ^[16].

Servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The difference manifests itself in the care the servant takes first to ensure that other people's highest priority needs are served. The best test is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants?; (2010). The three main challenges anticipated are related to:

- Culture
- Hierarchical
- Paternalism Culture

Culture is a broad concept that includes values, customs and behaviour. It evolves in groups over time. Schein (2010) ^[67] calls it "a phenomenon that surrounds us at all times, being constantly enacted and created by our interactions with others". "It reflects the learned and shared knowledge, beliefs and rules of social groups that influence behaviours" (Wibbeke, 2009) ^[85]. While Hofstede defines culture as "the mental programming of a society" (Sivakumar & Nakata, 2001) ^[72] Of a number of constructs that have been posited as potential determinants of leadership behaviour, national culture is regarded as a crucially important behavioural factor for its long identified influential role in determining people's behavioural choices (Brislin, 2000; Hofstede, 1983; Adler, 1992) ^[14, 2]. How cultural values play an important role in shaping leadership styles and behaviours has also come under the focus of leadership researchers.

Many such studies e.g. Offerman and Hellmann, (1997) ^[51], Rodrigues (1991) ^[63], Schmidt and Yeh, (1992) ^[68] and House *et al.*, (1997) ^[37] have stressed a strong connection between culture and leadership behaviors by reporting differences among countries with regard to use of specific leadership behaviours. Saudi culture is predicated on two main principles: firstly religion, and secondly the traditional nomadic tribal system. The country's religious identity is heightened by the country's status as home to the two Mosques at the centre of the Islamic world. The influence of Islam extends to definition of social manners, traditions, obligations and the practices of society in Saudi Arabia. Key characteristics of this tradition, in terms of relevance to the business community are the strong emphasis afforded to respecting the elderly, protecting face, pursuing a virtuous path, and demonstrating humility, forgiveness, compassion, courage and obedience (Mellahi, 2001) ^[44]. The role of kinship and the family have a major role in the work place, and this is derived principally from the tribal systems that still determine the Saudi individual's position in society. The tribe to which one belongs can be a pivotal factor in success or failure in the work place (al-Shehry, 2006) ^[7]. The role played by tribal and religious traditions also heightens the value of family in Saudi society, and the status and support of the family affects everyone, from the most highly educated to the least educated people in the country. In Arabic, Muslim societies, self-interest is always secondary to the interests of the family Kabasakal, (2002) ^[38] as is emphasized in both the Qur'an and the Sunna. At all times an individual is required to sustain good relationships with their relatives, extending to the provision of assistance and generosity as required. This culture of interdependence extends into the workplace, where it relies on the sustainability of the wider network of relationships that

offer security to individuals by connecting them to the group to which they belong, rather than through individualism and privacy. As described above in reference to tribalism and religion it is evident that Arab culture forms the basis of Saudi culture and as such understanding of this culture by previous researchers suggests there is likely to be resistance to change in the workplace (Straub, 2001).

As a consequence the presence of cultural conflicts between the western management style and that of Arab leaders and workers can result as a major challenge in implementing servant leadership style within the Healthcare environment. The extent to which the characteristics of the Saudi Arabian workforce are derived from tradition and which are derived from the country's nomadic past are not especially relevant to this research. It is a complex task to determine which attitudes and behaviours have a religious doctrine supporting them, and which a cultural one, although it is true that the majority of the tribal and family values that prevail in Saudi Arabia descend directly from its Islamic heritage (Mellahi, 2001) ^[44]. Generally, the Arab world tends to be strongly group oriented, male-oriented and dominated by large power distance, strong uncertainty avoidance, and long term orientation. This is reflected in the tribal systems adopted by the majority of Arab societies. These cultural characteristics exert a great influence on management systems in general and organizational change in particular. In Arab societies, change is often considered as a threat and people prefer the status quo. Therefore, the successful implementation of change in Arab contexts requires strong support from senior management, especially those who have power position within the organizational structure. However, Alzoman focused on two leadership styles and examined their influence on the multinational work environment, namely the charismatic leadership style (Conger and Kanungo, 1998) ^[17] and the ethical leadership style (Masuda, 2005) ^[45]. Findings indicate that in order to enhance leadership effectiveness, there must be a sufficient relationship between team identity and leaders within the organisation, and great concern to cultural differences.

Hierarchical Society

A hierarchy is a logical organisational structure in which power belongs to the position rather than the individual. The risk of an organisation's leader abusing power is thus reduced. An organisation's leadership structure determines how workflow, accountability and authority work together. Hierarchical leadership employs a top-down, pyramid-shaped structure with a small centre of power that is infiltrated down to widening bases of subordinate levels. Nonhierarchical leadership flattens the pyramid to form a structure with decentralised authority and fewer levels. Efficient organisational design applies the structure that's likely to be most effective in helping the organisation achieve its mission. Saudi Arabia is perceived to be a hierarchical society, as described, this means that everyone is assigned a specific and delineated role to maintain the status quo (kwintessential.co.uk). As a consequence of their position, according to (Cavanagh 2011) ^[18], Saudi Arabian managers often work in an authoritarian manner, being rule-bound, resistant to innovation, and also frequently discriminating between that members of the organisation that they consider being in-group and out-group. Such behaviour reflects a desire to make the right connections and to secure one's own preferential position within the

organisation hierarchy is a logical organisational structure in which power belongs to the position rather than the individual. Management assigns duties according to employees' specialised skills, so roles and power structures are defined, and employees have the opportunity to grow within their niches. The possibility of advancement serves as employees' primary motive for success. The rigidity of a hierarchy is well-suited to highly regulated businesses. The concept of governance and oversight ultimately is a good thing. Lord Acton expressed the need for oversight in general when he wrote in 1887, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Retrieved Oct 10, 2017, from <http://www.phrases.org.uk>). Early corporate law concluded that a system of checks and balances in organizations needed to be put in place to ensure that power and greed did not become out of control (Morck & Steier, 2005) [6]. A country like Saudi Arabia with a Monarchy ruling approach will require such governance approach for effective leadership in order to lead the people into understanding that leadership is not about power but more focused on interaction with people. As McGee-Cooper and Trammell (2002) [47] explain, "A different kind of leadership is required for the future" (McGee-Cooper & Trammell, 2002:141) [47]. This kind of leadership should call us to "serve a higher purpose, something beyond ourselves" (De Graaf, Tilley, & Neal, 2004:134) [21]. This new kind of leadership should "helps organisations and staff identify their higher purpose" (De Graaf *et al.*, 2004:134) [21]. This different kind of leadership is one that has character and integrity as its foundation. It is a kind of leadership that leads from the heart, from a deep profound wisdom and an acute awareness of one's own accountability. This type of leadership is characteristic of servant-leadership.

Paternalism

The paternalism of Arab leaders is not a new phenomenon, historically in western cultures, a structure in which managers took on the role of "pater," or "father" was common until the latter part of the twentieth century. More recently, however, such a structure has been increasingly less common, as it is largely seen in the west to leadership a style restricting the freedoms and responsibilities of subordinates or dependants in what is considered to be their best interests (OED, 2009). A leader who takes on the role of the father is assuming that they know what is best for their employees, much as a father may decide he knows what is best for his children. This form of power responds to a deeply rooted experience in the psychology of most adults and acceptance of a leader as a parent is a prevalent phenomenon (Pellegrini and Scandura, 2008: 568) [59]. In Saudi Arabia where corporate life is an extension of family life the emphasis of such a relationship on obedience and respect is deemed to be appropriate. However, as was noted formerly in Western organisations, a paternalistic structure is not without disadvantages; in particular, it can be responsible for crippling employees' initiative. Creativity in a paternalistic framework requires direction and as such is limited by the vision of the manager overseeing the task (worldbusinessculture.com). Despite different descriptions highlighted by various authors across time and cultures, however, more recent research typically defines paternalistic leadership style as a style that combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence (Farh & Cheng, 2000: 91) [27]. Research on paternalistic leadership has

increasingly flourished within the past two decades, but paternalism as a management concept dates back to the early works of, who conceptualised paternalism as one form of legitimated authority. They further reiterated that in paternalistic cultures those in authority consider it their obligation to protect those under their care. In return, they expect loyalty and deference. The extent to which this relationship is of significance is often questioned by many researchers. Some assert that benevolence is there because the power holder wants something in return. Hence, paternal relationships create obligations. Another way of approaching this subject is that paternalism is conducive to societal cultures where mutual commitments are a feature of what Hofstede (1980) and others have referred to as the term collectivism.

It is common in individualistic societal contexts, where there is a clear distinction made between the authoritarian and democratic forms of management styles (McGregor's Theory X & Theory Y, or Likert's Authoritarian, Consultative and Participative management) that paternalistic control does not fit neatly into one of these slots, and if it does, it fits into the authoritarian one. Pellegrini and Scandura (2008) [59], also highlighted to the relationship between paternalism and leader-member exchange in various literature. Because the concepts of paternal leadership are so personal, it is also dependent on the quality of individual relationships with subordinates. Undoubtedly in-group or out-group relations are essential but not considered the only factor. This being the situation, there is much scope or the tendency with the paternalistic relationships to show some favouritism and special treatment to particular individuals or groups of tribes or people from the same tribe. Nepotism (*wasta*) certainly appears to be a factor in relationships in Arab countries although as Ali, (1995: 190), highlights, this may be against or contradictory to Islamic principles and teaching as is in many other such collectivist societies. Whether there are direct or indirect relationships between such paternalistic leadership and nepotism, it is not very clear. The fact that the word or the concept of nepotism carries negative connotations or understandings, it does not meant or interpreted as that of personal favours are unethical. The Arabic *wasta* aims not to reflect such negative ideas or thoughts, however, reflects the taking care of one's own in a tribal group or such paternalistic society. While Islamic principles, for example, appear to favour competence over personal favour, it also looks towards the boss or the head of any organisation as a shepherd to his flock. Looking after his flock, as opposed to taking care of someone else's to the detriment of his own, also raises interesting (ethical) issues. There are a few studies that exist of such paternalism in the Middle Eastern countries or regions, other than in Turkey (e.g. Aycan *et al.*, (2000) [10], Pellegrini and Scandura, (2006), other regions such as sub-Saharan Africa are also not well represented. As Aycan *et al.*, (2013) highlighted following Kagitcibasi (1996), paternalism represents the predominant mode of leadership in the majority world. Aycan *et al.* (2013: 977) further relates the main facets of the paternal leadership identified in her research as creating a family environment in the workplace and establishing close personalised relationships with subordinates, getting involved in employees non-work lives, expecting loyalty and deference from subordinates (leader considers loyalty more important than performance) and 'maintaining

authority and status hierarchy’.

The type of result-driven leadership encouraged in the West may not be appropriate therefore when applied in the majority world. Pelligrini and Scandura (2008) [59] further state that in paternalistic cultures, those in authority consider it their obligation to provide protection to those under their care. In return they expect loyalty and deference. Yet the extent to which this relationship is benevolent is often questioned. Some assert that benevolence is there only because the power holder wants something in return. Hence paternal relationships create obligations. Another way of looking at this is that paternalism is conducive to societal cultures where mutual obligations are a feature of what Hofstede (1980) and others have referred to as collectivism. Aycan (2006) [9] notes that much of the negative attitudes towards paternalism stems from the West. Despite diverse descriptions offered by different authors across time and cultures, more recent research typically defines paternalistic leadership as “a style that combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence” (Farh & Cheng, 2000: 91) [27].

Why servant leadership in Saudi Arabia healthcare

It is clear that Military organisations in Saudi Arabia in Health Care need strong servant leadership to help transform their organisations and serve the societies in which these organisations “live”. This notion of leadership has to begin at the top of the organisation. Leaders must see their role as serving the organisation and demonstrating a type of leadership that models that of servant leadership. In this, leaders would help organizations and society become “healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely for themselves to become servants” (Greenleaf, 2002: 24) [31]. To have a better understanding of the leadership development and the challenges faced by leaders across Saudi Arabia, Centre for Creative Leadership (CCL) analysed the leadership challenges through a process of data collection from Saudi public sector leaders who had attended CCL’s various leadership programs. Before attending the program, attendees described four leadership challenges they were currently facing. The group then analysed these data for overarching analysis of the trends. The data indicated that 18.5% reported difficulties with leading self (individual awareness and style, balancing multiple priorities, time management) A percentage of 45.9% reports challenges leading others (e.g., leading a team or group, influence, leading across various groups, and leading people) Further to this a percentage of 31.9% reported challenges leading the organisation (e.g., talent management, strategic issues, and business operations) • 3.7% said such difficulties with the external environment (e.g, regulatory, economic challenges, technology) These problems are similar to problems encountered by various public sector leaders around the world. The nature of being a leader in any organisation illustrates critical transition points among leaders who honoured their skills as technicians and eventually then moved into management often based on their excellent technical skills. Moving away from the professional and managerial areas and into leadership, particularly executive leadership, can create challenges around self-awareness, teamwork, and organisational understanding. (Centre for Creative Leadership). Good leadership is one of the main factors that allow organizations to face these new challenges

successfully and become innovative, while improving organizational performance (Teece *et al.* 1997; Dobbs, 2010) [79]. Effective leaders use strategic leadership styles and behaviour to mould organizations by facilitating a culture among employees that strives for success (Teece *et al.* 1997) [79]. Leadership style is one of the factors that can drive organizational growth through the development of positive systemic processes, starting with aligning people with the organizational environment, organizational processes and organizational goals. This alignment is necessary for an organization to be successful (Rašula *et al.* 2012) [61].

Closing the servant leadership gaps in Saudi Arabia leadership style

To identify ways to close the servant leadership gaps, it is essential to understand the specific skills and behaviours required for future leadership success and how these skills are developed through a period, and how they can be applied in the workplace. Below are four starting points for the development of leadership skills most critical for the Saudi leadership adoption for successful servant leadership style or approach.

- Understanding leadership as a collaborative activity: Effective leadership can create three essential outcomes namely, Direction, Alignment, and Commitment. Each of these results demands agreement from the leader and the led. Using the strength of communication and a strong team orientation mindset, and feedback in a vibrant environment will also support the culture needed for adapting rapidly to the changing world.
- Creating high-performance Teams: Developing people, understanding complexity, and having the resilience to sustain productivity are all critical to success in a rapidly changing, increasingly interconnected world which requires group cohesiveness and performance versus individual leader heroism.
- Risk-Taking: At first glance, this competency seems counter-intuitive to good governance, it is a key to efficient service. Risk taking is the initial approach towards innovation and creating new ideas for service to the country. Although frowned upon by many leaders, rewarding risks through simple efforts may tend to increase productivity and employee engagement.
- Resiliency and Work-Life Integration: Resilience, not more authority, is the key to higher productivity. Resilient workers can work longer, harder, and with greater engagement.
- Women in leadership In Saudi Arabia, society culture and traditions play a significant role. Culture predominantly influences women's' roles in Muslim society, because of the emphasis placed on women's status and acceptable behaviour as outlined in the Quran. Ahmed (1992) [3], believes that no matter what form the political system takes, or the level of education women attain or no matter what traditional values govern employment, Saudi women may not play significant leadership roles in modern day economics due to cultural factors have impeded their development. Various factors have impacted the Saudi female status and their position in society. The economy and the importance of the family units, including the educational opportunities that are accessible for

women, the degree of encouragement women encounter in their pursuit of education and work, and the degree of urbanisation attained are all critical factors that shape a society and mould many of its beliefs and values (Pinter, 1984). The level of leadership involvement and the participation of women in various positions in Saudi are faced with mainly two interrelated issues. Firstly, the effects of the constitutional rights on women and secondly is the status of women and their position about Islamic laws. Reformation on these concepts is urgently needed in both educational and employment sectors to provide more significant equality for women.

Servant leadership style can be seen as a style capable of overcoming leadership challenges because the leader assumes a highly supportive role and is extremely service orientated towards his followers by building their skill sets and empowering them (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1998; Thomson, 2010) [29, 73, 80]. Servant leadership is about building relationships based on openness, stewardship and trust.

Conclusion

In view of a rapidly changing world due to advances in technology, globalisation and the information explosion, many organisations nationally and globally is under pressure to change. Effective leadership is needed more than ever for the development and maintenance of organisations. The lack of leadership as the ability to hinder the advancement of organisations in the country. Healthcare organisations need competent leaders capable of maintaining a competitive structure. Servant leadership is one of the first leadership models that can effectively promote organisational success. Hence, an overview of the model has been presented that can enhance leadership productivity in organisations. Making sense of leadership development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is very important for some reasons. The kingdom is considered the heart of Islam and is one of the closest Arab allies to the United States and the largest producer of oil in the world. However, the country is undergoing rapid changes: Its aged leadership is ceding power to a new generation, and its society, which is dominated by young people, is restive. Saudi Arabia has long remained closed to foreign scholars, with a select few academics allowed into the kingdom over the past decade. The purpose of this discussion is to present contextual factors affecting leadership practices and development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The authors provide a historical and a geographical, and economic overview of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in connection to leadership practices; discuss cultural, economic, political, and other social aspects affecting leadership and leadership development in the kingdom; and present examples of how leadership practices are reflected in different sectors. The overall aims are related to understanding leadership as a collaborative effort versus an activity based solely on exerting positional authority. This can be achieved by creating teams that consistently achieve high performance despite challenging internal and external conditions and by building interdependent organisational cultures to improve innovation and creativity. Focusing on these areas may create results that matter across the Kingdom. The fact is that survival is not always possible unless the servant leader has a clear understanding of the

cultures within which they are working. Many cultures believe that it is improper or disrespectful to take on a superior role to someone who has been defined as the "leader" of a group or organisation. Pauchant (2005) [51] argues that leadership theories should be focused on leaders and their impact on their followers. The servant-leader approach to management should facilitate its application, and the servant-leader concept is growing more popular. At the very least, the servant-leader concept promotes emotional intelligence and reminds managers to take the needs of employees into account. Leaders and managers may decide to use only some of the insights that the servant-leader approach provides. The promise, however, should induce them to take some time to investigate the perspective. Researching qualitative methods and publishing papers in different kinds of journals need to be encouraged. This effort must be taken in all healthcare organisations to produce holistic leaders. Leadership has a crucial impact on the behaviour which employees portray in organisations. Servant Leadership is one of the approach based on the oriented leadership. As per Drucker, (1999) [24], a good organisation is one which consists and displays servant leadership as its characteristic. The studies conducted by various researchers in the line of servant leadership approaches during the early 1993 and 2001 have focused primarily on how servant leadership can be put to action in organisations.

As per Gucel and Gegec, (2012) [33], and Vondey, (2010) [83], there exists a significant relationship between servant leadership and organisational citizenship behaviour. The overall results of the study were in agreement with the findings of the said researchers. Namely, the six dimensions of servant leadership attributes namely empowerment, humility and authenticity, forgiveness, standing back, accountability and courage have been utilised to establish the relationship between the variables (Abdel-Rahman, 2014). However, one of the theoretical arguments it was discussed by Berryman (2001), who concluded that servant leaders could inspire others to voluntary actions, build teams that sustain competitive differentials, transform multiple personal agendas into collaborative action for good. The findings of the study were consistent with the benefit of servant leadership and indicated that the followers are more likely to reciprocate the leaders and has the ability to exhibit high organisational citizenship behaviour. The most important aspect of leadership that makes it hard to measure is people. Leadership is about communicating with people, understanding their diverse perspectives, respecting their cultural values, and reflecting their social identity. Over the years, leadership has been studied, defined and many theories on it have been developed, each one providing a critical understanding of the leadership phenomenon. However, the field research is continuing to expand as demand continues to grow. The context of KSA includes the social factors of culture, religion, education, economy and politics, which must all be considered when shaping the foundation of leadership styles and characteristics. As a Muslim leader, you need to have the right intention (*niyyah*). Are you truly leading this organization, or just holding on desperately to a leadership position because you are the founder? If you are the former, focus on helping those around you succeed without being concerned about your own personal gain or prestige. If you are the latter, step down; there are so many other opportunities to do good

work for the cause of Allah. You will learn how good your followers are only when you give them the freedom to succeed and become a servant-leader.

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