



The Impact of Servant Leadership on Organizational Excellence in Sports Institutions in Misan Province

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Abstract
<p><b>Objectives.</b> The objective of this research is to identify the impact of practicing servant leadership on achieving organizational excellence in sports institutions within Maysan Governorate. Specifically, the study aims to recognize the level of practicing servant leadership in these sports institutions, determine the level of organizational excellence, and explore the nature of the relationship between servant leadership practices and organizational excellence in the sports clubs of Maysan Governorate.</p> <p><b>Materials and Methods.</b> The researcher utilized the descriptive methodology, applying its various steps and procedures to suit the nature of the study. The research population consisted of sports specialists working in sports clubs across Maysan Governorate. The research sample was selected randomly and included specialists from clubs such as Naft Maysan, Maysan, Dijlah, Al-Amara, Al-Risala, Al-Mashrah, Al-Amir, Al-Maimouna, Ali Al-Gharbi, Al-Majr, and Ahrar Maysan. The total sample comprised 50 specialists for the survey phase and 239 specialists for the main research phase, allowing for comprehensive coverage and robust data collection.</p> <p><b>Results.</b> The research findings indicated that the level of estimation of the servant leadership variable among the research sample was moderate overall. Among the dimensions of servant leadership, the variable of persuasion received the highest level of estimation, indicating it is the most recognized aspect of servant leadership among sports specialists. Conversely, the empowerment variable received the lowest estimation, suggesting that efforts to empower team members are less emphasized within these institutions.</p> <p><b>Conclusion.</b> In conclusion, the study highlights the moderate practice of servant leadership within sports institutions in Maysan Governorate, with particular strengths in persuasion but notable weaknesses in empowerment. The findings underline the importance of adopting a servant leadership style by officials in sports clubs to drive organizational excellence. To enhance leadership practices, the study recommends organizing training courses for managers and sports specialists focusing on the principles and applications of servant leadership.</p>
Keywords : Servant Leadership, Organizational Excellence, Sports Institutions.

**Introduction**

The sporting clubs are known to be vital hotbeds where management philosophies change based on all the reasons of management change to include new leadership teams and the practical experience in various sports and the increasing diversity in the competitive environment. Due to that, we are forced to continue revising the traditional management principles within every club to remain viable and develop. We live in a competitive and highly dynamic world where sport clubs are being compelled to implement new ideas and management practices that enhance performance, address the arising issues and achieve the output that drives institutional excellence.

The best in sports clubs is developed as an overall model that brings all activities and technology that is in use today together. It is meant to take performance to levels that enable organizations to be ahead of their rivals. However, one cannot achieve that through chance or wishful thinking; it has to be done through concerted actions of all levels. Having that means good leaders that create such standards, which lay the groundwork to implement plans and programs and bring alignment of the organizations strategic goals and vision in the future within a cohesive policy framework that regulates business operations. Also, it is essential to work under flexible structures that would react to external and internal changes, correspond to performance standards, and achieve strategic objectives.

In this framework, leaders of sports-clubs play a pivotal role in assisting the teams to complete tasks and guide them to outputs that can make them stand out among the rival institutions. According to this notion, Asma Mahmoud Maarouf (2012) stresses that the very notion of servant leadership is not novel, and it has earlier risen in the teachings of Islam, as one of the narrations of Anas ibn Malik states the following: The leader of people is their servant, a saying of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This highlights the long historical tradition of selfless leadership.

The researcher argues that leadership within sports institutions requires further advanced investigation, especially considering the evolving views of the Ministry of Youth and Sports leadership, which increasingly go beyond the traditional frameworks of inclusive and competitive sports. To better meet the growing demands placed on sports institutions, there has been a shift towards incorporating investment and marketing perspectives into the

sports industry. Apparently, then, leadership strategies must continue to adapt, as well, by leaping onto the current trends of leadership, such as servant and transformational leadership, in order to drive growth and excellence.

According to Jamal and Ali (2009), the sports world is not becoming slow due to lack of money, facilities and staff. Instead, it is a result of mere loopholes in the management of sports, in number and quality. Good management- courtesy of good leaders- can attract money, develop facilities, make the best out of the available, and get the necessary individuals to implement the strategies. Good leadership draws everybody into one endeavor to establish permanent growth of the sports sector, which highlights the significance of good leadership as the key to success of the institution.

Against that background, my study will be focused on discovering the influence that practicing servant leadership has on organizational excellence in Maysan Governorate sports institutions. Namely, it aims to: (1) measure the extent of servant leadership practice within these institutions; (2) identify the extent of organizational excellence in this respect; (3) test the connection between servant leadership practices and organizational excellence; and (4) model which aspects of servant leadership have the largest impact on the organizational excellence in this respect..

To guide the research, the following questions were posed:

- 1) What is the level of servant leadership practice in sports institutions in Maysan Governorate?
- 2) What is the level of organizational excellence in Maysan Governorate sports institutions?
- 3) What is the relationship between the level of servant leadership practice and organizational excellence in sports institutions in Maysan Governorate?
- 4) Is it possible to predict the dimensions of servant leadership practice that affect organizational excellence in sports institutions in Maysan Governorate?

**Materials and Methods**

**Study Participants.**

The proposed research was generally targeted towards sports experts in sports clubs within Maysan Governorate. I randomly selected members of such clubs as Naft Maysan, Maysan, Dijlah, Al-Amara, Al-Risala, Al -Mashrah, Al- Emir, Al-Maymouna, Ali Al-Gharbi, Al-Majr, and Ahrar Maysan. The sample for the research was divided into two groups; survey group that consisted of 50 specialists who assisted us to test the clarity, reliability and validity of the instruments.

My final data collection and analysis consisted of 239 specialists as my main study sample. The participants will be a wide range of sports admins, coaches, supervisors, and support staff that play a fundamental role in the running and management of these clubs.

**Study organization.**

The current research design was a descriptive research design, which followed strictly designed steps to accurately identify the phenomena of servant leadership and organizational excellence in sports institutions found in Maysan Governorate. The first survey was conducted between October 10, 2024, and October 20, 2024, the aim of which was to test the data-collection tools. Findings of this pilot study confirmed that the instruments of measurement were unambiguously understandable, were suitably suitable in terms of the extent of understanding the participants, and had strong scientific validity and reliability. The main data- Collection period was then conducted on August 8, 2024, and August 20, 2024 using 21 items on five different measures as represented by the Servant Leadership Scale and 19 items on four different measures as represented by the Organizational Excellence Scale.

**Statistical analysis.**

Data collected during the study were processed and analyzed using **SPSS statistical software**. The following statistical techniques were employed:

- 1) **Pearson's correlation coefficient:** Used to test the internal consistency validity between items and their respective dimensions, as well as between dimensions and the overall scales.
- 2) **Cronbach's alpha coefficient:** Used to determine the reliability (internal consistency) of the measurement instruments.
- 3) **Arithmetic mean and standard deviation:** Calculated to describe the central tendency and dispersion of responses.
- 4) **Percentages:** Employed to interpret the levels of servant leadership practices and organizational excellence. The results from the survey sample confirmed the scientific integrity of the measurement instruments, ensuring the robustness of the main study's findings.

Result

1) Level of Servant Leadership Practice in Sports Institutions in Maysan Governorate

Table 1. Ranking and Estimated Level of Servant Leadership (n=239)

No.	Dimensions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage	Rank	Level
1	Altruism	2.060	0.459	68.667%	3	Moderate
2	Empowerment	1.988	0.513	66.278%	5	Moderate
3	Emotional Support	2.033	0.545	67.778%	4	Moderate
4	Persuasion	2.120	0.557	70.667%	1	Moderate
5	Authenticity	2.075	0.543	69.167%	2	Moderate
	Servant Leadership	2.055	0.523	68.238%		

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the overall degree of servant leadership practice was moderate with the composite mean of 2.055 (68.238 0.523) and a standard deviation of 0.523. The average scores of each of the individual dimensions were 1.988-2.120, which equates to percentages of 66.278 0.70667 and SD of 0.459-0.557. Persuasion had the highest mean in the dimensions, then authenticity, altruism, emotional support and lastly, empowerment.

2) Level of Organizational Excellence in Sports Institutions in Maysan Governorate

Table 2. Ranking and Estimated Level of Organizational Excellence (n=239)

No.	Dimensions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Percentage	Rank	Level
1	Leadership Excellence	1.970	0.433	65.667%	4	Moderate
2	Subordinates' Excellence	2.048	0.363	68.267%	3	Moderate
3	Organizational Strategy Distinction	2.080	0.434	69.333%	2	Moderate
4	Organizational Culture Excellence	2.102	0.412	70.067%	1	Moderate

Organizational Excellence	2.050	0.411	68.281%
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The results show that the overall level of organizational excellence was moderate, with a mean score of 2.050 (68.281%) and a standard deviation of 0.411. The mean scores across the dimensions ranged from 1.970 to 2.102, with percentages between 65.667% and 70.067%.

3. Relationship between Servant Leadership and Organizational Excellence

Table 3. Correlation Coefficients between Servant Leadership Dimensions and Organizational Excellence (n=239)

No.	Dimensions	Leadership Excellence	Subordinates' Excellence	Organizational Strategy Distinction	Organizational Culture Excellence	Organizational Excellence
1	Altruism	0.317*	0.128*	0.312*	0.256*	0.405*
2	Empowerment	0.190*	0.137*	0.138*	0.194*	0.168*
3	Emotional Support	0.309*	0.172*	0.304*	0.195*	0.196*
4	Persuasion	0.145*	0.147*	0.294*	0.119*	0.182*
5	Authenticity	0.138*	0.182*	0.162*	0.189*	0.135*
	Servant Leadership	0.262*	0.137*	0.309*	0.148*	0.443*

There was a statistically significant positive correlation between servant leadership and organizational excellence. The strongest correlation was between overall servant leadership and overall organizational excellence ( $r = 0.443$ ). The weakest was between authenticity and organizational excellence ( $r = 0.135$ ).

4. Predicting Servant Leadership Dimensions that Affect Organizational Excellence

Table 4. Regression Analysis Results (n=239)

Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	F-Value	R <sup>2</sup>
Organizational Excellence	Altruism, Empowerment, Emotional Support, Persuasion, Authenticity	18.902*	19.7%

According to the regression analysis, the intercept of the regression was estimated as 2.247 which is the level of the organizational excellence at which all the explanatory variables are set to zero. The regression coefficient of altruism stands at the highest of 0.334, then the empowerment (0.315), emotional support (0.150), persuasion (0.111), and authenticity (0.104) which are all statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The model explained 19.7 percent of the differences in the organizational excellence with 80.3 percent attributed to other causes.

**Discussion**

The findings indicate a weak servant leadership in sports institutions of Maysan Governorate in every respect. Persuasion, which is the most ranked feature, suggests that the individuals in the leadership of a sports team concentrate on motivating their teammates to assume tasks, and empowerment was less significant. The researcher can explain this by the fact that the leaders of the sports clubs are more aware of their moral duty to society. They perform their organizational duties through establishing good relationships, emotional and psychological assistance and persuasive tactics to enhance cohesiveness of the team.

The conventional approach to leadership is also becoming unsuitable in generating future leaders. The servant-oriented leadership trend emphasizes honesty, compassion, persuasion, emotional support, and empowerment, which are necessitated by sports organizations with direct and continuous relationships with their members.

Hamida Mohamed Al-Najjar (2012) discovered that organizational commitment and citizenship are enhanced under servant leadership. The results indicate that the organizations have small organizational excellence in all areas, but the most evident is the excellence in organizational culture. This demonstrates that sporting organisations possess robust cultural values that favour objectives. Leadership excellence was lowest, which implies that it can be improved.

The results endorse the assertion by Khalid Mohammed Al-Thubaiti (2016) that the relevant standards of organizational excellence enhance growth and performance. Hassan Khaled Abdul Hayassat (2017) argues that employees are ready to be great because of performance review and professional development.



The close relationships between servant leadership and organizational excellence dimensions suggest that the following dimensions are critical determinants of high organizational performance namely benevolence, empowerment and emotional support. It has been recorded by GUPTA & PARYA (2003) as well as Olesia et al. (2013) that servant leadership promotes organizational commitment and creativity.

Regression analyses verify that variables of servant leadership, namely benevolence and empowerment, has a great impact on organizational success. The findings indicate that the intentional development of such practices can help the sports organizations to enhance the performance and competitive advantage.

The current findings support the authors of Saleh Abdul-Ridha Rashid and Laith Ali Matar (2016) and Rezaei et al. (2012) who stated that leadership leads to the development of trust, empathy, and better organizational performance.

**Conclusions.**

The results obtained of the study showed that the degree of appreciation of servant leadership variable among the research sample was moderate. Under the dimensions of servant leadership, persuasion dimension was ranked highest and empowerment dimension was ranked lowest. Likewise, the level of assessment of the variable of organizational excellence among the research sample was also moderate. Organizational culture excellence was rated the highest dimension among others and leadership excellence was rated lowest. In addition, it was established that the relationship between servant leadership and its dimensions with organizational excellence and its dimensions are significantly positive. Moreover, the findings also revealed statistically significant impact of dimensions of servant leadership on the total score of organizational excellence.

According to the findings, the researcher makes some recommendations to the officials in the Ministry of Youth and Sports as well as sports clubs. To begin with, the servant-leadership paradigm has to be implemented among club officials. Second, the systematic training programs aimed at managers and sports experts should be prepared, with the focus on the application of the servant-leadership practices. Third, the Ministry of Youth and Sports should strive to empower the competency of the club managers so they can execute the servant leadership quality and excellence. Fourth, specific focus is to be made on design of multifaceted incentive systems to motivate and raise the level of enthusiasm among sports specialists taking on programs, activities, and events as representatives of the servant-leadership model.. Fifthly, there is a need to review the role of human resources within sports clubs to evaluate its impact on achieving



organizational excellence. Sixthly, models involving promotion of the establishment of diverse work teams should be accentuated on considering their importance in promoting excellence within an organization. Seventh, it should strive to restructure the old organisational systems which are hierarchical to more horizontal systems, to enhance connectivity both in the communication and administration of the organisation and facilitate creativity in goal realisation. Lastly, more research on the issues of leadership and organizational excellence through servant leadership should be performed to further comprehend the issue and increase the implementation of the concept in practice.

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Conflict of interest

Have no conflict of interest to declare.

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