



Surveying the Experience of Servant Leadership within the Fire and Emergency Services

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Abstract

This quantitative descriptive statistics research study involved surveying fire and emergency services professionals in order to discover whether servant leadership was experienced, and to what extent, within the profession. The research involved $N = 130$ professional uniformed and sworn fire and emergency service personnel from seven fire departments within a countywide metro response area in a Western State. Researchers employed the Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI) for surveying the participants. The SLAI was developed to measure the 7 virtuous constructs of servant leadership. The findings of the survey seem to demonstrate that the majority of the participants experienced six of the seven constructs of servant leadership throughout the profession: agapao love, altruism, humility, trust, empowerment, and service. The implication of the study's findings relates to changing the culture of the profession by changing leadership education, training, and officer development programs so as to cultivate servant leaders within the career field. The researchers also discuss the study's limitations and identify future research needs.

Keywords: Servant Leadership, Fire and Emergency Services, Firefighter, Descriptive Statistics

The purpose and scope of this quantitative survey research set forth to understand whether the constructs of servant leadership are realized or simply an ideal within the fire and emergency services. Currently, empirical works involving servant leadership within the fire and emergency services theoretically and qualitatively identify the constructs of servant leadership as an ideal way to lead, as well as desirable qualities for leaders to possess (Reed; 2015; Russell, 2016a; Russell, Broomé, & Prince, 2016). Additionally, the literature seemingly displays a natural fit for servant leadership within the fire and emergency services (Carter, 2007; Russell, 2016a; Russell, 2014a; Russell, 2014b; Russell et al., 2016). Empirical works appear to show both commonalities between servant leadership and what brings responders to the profession, as well as how responders interpret the role of fire and emergency services leaders (Reed, 2015; Russell, 2016a; Russell, 2014a; Russell et al., 2016). Though these works display commonalities to the characteristics, constructs, and attributes of servant leadership literature, it is still unknown whether such a servant leader role is simply an ideal leader or a leadership type commonly experienced throughout the fire and emergency service profession; this unknown became the purpose for this study.

To discover this unknown, researchers set forth to expand current servant leadership research within the fire and emergency services by surveying uniformed and sworn fire and emergency service professionals from seven countywide metro fire departments within a large urban county in a Western state. The central question that guided the research asked to what extent do fire and emergency services professionals experience the constructs of servant leadership in their chosen profession. The researches utilized Qualtrics™ survey software, and with permission, employed Dennis & Bocarnea's (2007) Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI) to survey the study's participants.

In order to recruit our probability sample of firefighters, the survey invitation went out through email to 7 metro fire chiefs asking them if they could share it with all of the responders within their agencies, all 7 agreed. From the 7 metro departments, N = 130 completed the survey. The implication of this research is the possibility of altering leadership development, leadership training, and leadership education, as well as promotion assessment criteria for the fire and emergency services by identifying servant leadership as not simply an ideal, but rather, a standard experience throughout the profession that can be honed and supported. This matters to the profession due to the mental health and burnout factors facing responders when it comes to the culture of the profession (Kirschman, 2004). Servant leadership offers a positive pathway for changing that culture within the fire and emergency services; an issue research has shown to be a factor that impacts responder wellbeing (Russell, 2016a).

The need for the research emerged from the literature and this article now moves on to delineate on the empirical works that came together to shape this study. Then the work presents the survey methodology and the background of the SLAI instrument. Finally, the work displays the results of the survey using descriptive statistics, and offers a discussion on the findings as well as limitations and the need for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Extant research showed some salient consistencies that converged to form this study. The review begins with a snapshot regarding the foundations of servant leadership, focusing on the core theoretical constructs. Next, scholars have delved into the virtuous nature of servant leadership, explaining each of the seven constructs (Patterson, 2003). These constructs made up the survey instrument the researchers employed to conduct the research. We conclude the literature review with a delineation of servant leadership research for the fire and emergency services profession.

The Foundations of Servant Leadership

The contemporary philosophy of servant leadership stems from the work of Greenleaf (1970), in particular his theoretical concept titled *The Servant as Leader*. For years, Greenleaf (1977/2002) both witnessed and experienced toxic environments existing within corporate cultures. His vision of servant leadership was offered as an alternative, one that can change and/or overcome negative organizational practices (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). The foundation of Greenleaf's (1970) vision is this notion that an organization thrives and remains healthy when leaders work towards creating an environment of serving their followers. This is not a situation of servitude, but rather, one where the leadership meets the needs of their followers so followers can grow, be creative and innovative, and achieve (Russell, 2016b). This growth and achievement in turn positively benefits followers, the organization, and also the leader (Russell, Maxfield, Russell, 2017). Becoming a servant leader begins with a desire to serve the needs of others. This desire is personal, stemming from an internal wanting to see others thrive. According to Greenleaf, (1977/2002),

Servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He is sharply different from the person who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve after leadership is established. The leader first and the servant first are two extreme types. Between them, there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature (p. 27).

Servant leadership philosophy is rooted in three essential questions, according to Greenleaf (1977/2002). The first asks, “do those served grow as persons (p. 27)?” This question refers to the individual's tomorrow. Is the individual served stronger and better off because of having their needs met. It is about changing a follower's trajectory. Serving him or her in a way so they can transcend their present state.

The second question Greenleaf (1977/2002) asked was, “do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become

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servants (p. 27)?” This goes to the heart of infusing servant leadership in a way that others become servant leaders. Research has shown that the way an individual experiences leadership molds the way they will lead others (Hiatt, 2010). Individuals are impressionable; the vast majority of people will function in leadership roles simply by mimicking learned leadership behavior from past experiences (Hiatt, 2010; Russell et al., 2016). People in positions of authority, i.e. leaders over others, need to understand this concept and consciously work towards outwardly displaying servant leadership so as to mold others into becoming future servant leaders themselves.

Greenleaf’s (1977/2002) third question asks, “what is the effect on the least privileged in society--will they benefit or at least not be further deprived (p. 27)?” It needs noting that when those in positions of power within the public services make decisions, it is always the most vulnerable in society that are impacted the greatest. For example, when a mayor or a city council decides to close a fire station or do away with an engine company or ambulance, it is the most vulnerable that will be impacted the most. For, it is the least privileged within society that rely upon government services the most (Russell, 2016a). What Greenleaf (1977/2002) is getting at with this question is the idea that leaders take time to reflect upon their choices before they make them, asking themselves, how will these decisions impact the most vulnerable and why would those with the least be asked to give up more.

Over time, other works began to surface, one of the most influential came from Spears (2010), a student of servant leadership, whose work identified common traits that all servant leaders share. Spears’ (2010) work stemmed from studying the foundational writings of servant leadership and from them, he set forth ten non-exhaustive characteristics. The specific characteristics are: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Spears, 2010).

In addition to the characteristics, other scholars began to advance the philosophy. Autry’s (2001) work conceptualized the practice of servant leadership within organizations as a way to improve outcomes and relationships. Others such as Blanchard and Hodges (2003), Hunter (2004), Keith (2008), Sipe and Frick (2009), and Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) came forth with literature that deepened the understanding of the philosophy. With the vast amount of theoretical and conceptual literature being published, Russell and Stone (2002) put forth the call for scientific studies. Researchers answered the call, stepping forward to empirically understand the philosophy and developing measurement instruments in order to study servant leadership’s impact and effects on organizations (Page & Wong, 2000; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). In addition, the research of Patterson (2003) revealed seven virtuous constructs of servant leadership. These constructs became the foundation of this study and thus will be expounded upon in the next section of the literature review. Finally, Dennis and Borcanea (2007), whose research quantified Patterson’s (2003) seven virtuous constructs, developed an assessment instrument for use

in servant leadership research that specifically measures the different constructs; this instrument was used as the survey tool for this study.

The Virtuous Constructs of Servant Leadership

Mentioned previously, Patterson (2003) identified seven virtuous constructs that existed within core servant leadership literature. These specific constructs are: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service (Patterson, 2003). The virtuous constructs make up the philosophy. As servant leadership is practiced, these constructs are shown in a constant cycle that continually moves and flows from a moral love of others to serving others.

Agapao Love. The concept of love as it pertains to servant leadership is one of moral love for others. When Patterson (2003) studied Greenleaf's original writings, there seemed to be this constant state of moral love for one's people. Patterson's (2003) argument was that servant leadership stems naturally from love. A leader's love is what drives their desire to serve the needs of others, so as to see followers grow into the potential they possess (Caldwell & Dixon, 2010).

Humility. Seemingly misunderstood as lessening oneself, the concept of humility has nothing to do with taking away from one's own achievement or position. Instead, humility is simply putting one's own position of privilege and power into perspective (Hayes & Comer, 2011). Simply put, humility is being able to set aside one's achievement and ability in a way that doesn't create a barrier between leaders and followers (Patterson, 2003). When the leader can enter the relationship with the follower from a place of humility, they foster a healthy environment for dialogue and relationships (Hayes & Comer, 2010; Owens & Hekman, 2012).

Altruism. Within the leader-follower relationship exists this altruistic giving of self to the other with the interaction (Russell, 2016a). Patterson (2003) identified this altruistic relationship within the foundational works of the servant leadership philosophy. Within that relationship, the leader gives fully of him or herself to the follower and the follower gives fully of his or her self to the leader (Monroe, 1998; Winston, 2003). This relational giving of self to another forms a relationship where each member is wholly committed to others (Chandler, Conley, & Versterlund, 2010).

Vision. A servant leader is identified as one that can conceptualize, has the foresight to build, and persuades followers to carry out a vision for an organization (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Patterson, 2003; Spears, 2010). The vision becomes the trajectory for the organization and what followers desire to collectively work towards. A leader's vision becomes the pathway to follow, it is accepted and believed in by followers (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Wise, 2012). The shared vision of the leader becomes the organization's purpose (Fisher, 2004).

Trust. At the heart of a healthy leader-follower relationship is trust (Caldwell & Dixon, 2010). Patterson (2003) noted this and identified trust as a construct of the servant leadership philosophy. It is trust of a leader that allows followers to gift to them legitimate power (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). For the trusted leader has followers believing in their intentions, they don't question their motives, they desire to work towards bringing a leader's vision to fruition and it all comes down to the fact that followers trust the leader (Caldwell & Clapham, 2003; Greenleaf, 1977/2002). As Hosmer (1995) noted, it is trust that brings the organization together, allowing it to thrive.

Empowerment. From trust flows empowerment. This comes from a leader-follower relationship that is healthy and mutually trusting (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003). Within that relationship is the reciprocation of trust, trust that the leader has in the follower to be able to manage a task and trust in the follower that the leader supports their work and decisions (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003). Empowerment is a gift, one that outwardly displays a leader's belief in followers. (Asag-Gau & van Dierendonck, 2011). Empowerment is also a pathway for fostering the growth of people, allowing them to function at the next level. In addition, empowerment of followers grows feelings of ownership and strengthens loyalty to the organization (Russell et al., 2017; Young-Richie, Lanchinger, & Wong, 2009). This all stems from a servant leader's belief and commitment to the growth of others (Choo, Park, & Kang, 2011; Spears, 2010).

Service. The virtuous constructs of servant leadership form a cycle beginning with love; they all flow collectively towards the final construct, service (Patterson, 2003). It is the moral love for others that sparks the desire to serve their needs (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). This service is not servitude, but rather a true commitment to followers with the understanding that, as they grow and achieve, so do both the leader who serves and the organization as a whole (Russell, 2016b). This service to others is a culmination of the constructs leading to a proven pathway for success (Keith, 2008).

Servant Leadership within the Fire and Emergency Services

The same negative and toxic culture of bureaucracy Greenleaf (1970) witnessed in the corporate world seems to be the very thing that hurts the professional responder in the fire and emergency services career field the most (Alexander & Sanjay, 2013; Kirschman, 2004; Russell, 2016b). The professional responder enters the career field from a desire to serve (Russell, 2016b). Though a newly assigned responder cannot fully comprehend the psychological ramifications associated with experiencing emergency scenes, they do have an idea as to the nature and trauma of the work (Russell, 2016b; Russell et al., 2016). Seemingly, it's not so much the experience of emergency services work that negatively impacts the responder, but rather, the culture of the profession, attitudes, and navigating the bureaucracy (Alexander & Sanjay, 2013; Fishkin, 1990; Floren, 1984; Russell, 2016a; Russell et al., 2016; Sweeney, 2012). The bureaucracy is something that removes the

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human relationship and instead replaces it with policies and procedures, rules and checklists (Russell et al., 2016).

This becomes a problem because responders are people who respond to strangers in their time of need, thus becoming active players in the tragedies of others. The work is humanity shown outwardly to others and the culture of the profession needs to change so that it can reflect this reality (Russell, 2014a). Changing this culture begins with changing the way leadership is approached, moving from a policy-heavy administrative style to one of serving followers, meeting their needs, so they in-turn can serve the needs of others (Russell et al., 2016). This is the reason Carter (2007) called for the exploration of servant leadership within the fire and emergency services profession, because it holds such similarities to what calls those to serve in the profession.

Empirical findings used Carter's (2007) call for researching servant leadership within the fire and emergencies as a springboard to study the philosophy and its influence on responders and culture. Research consistently displays commonalities between the philosophy and a responder's desire to serve, as well as positive benefits associated with infusing servant leadership into the profession (Reed, 2015; Russell, 2014a; Russell, 2014b; Russell et al, 2016; Russell, 2016a).

The biggest positive is the possibility a servant leadership culture is for improving responder health, resiliency, and post-traumatic growth (Panaccio, Donia, Saint-Michel, & Liden, 2015; Paton, 2005; Paton, Violanti, Dunning, & Smith, 2004; Russell, 2016a). Meaning, servant leadership holds promise for intervening in the culture, thus strengthening responders before an incident occurs by giving them both a healthy and safe environment for growth and healing (Paton, 2005; Russell et al., 2016) Findings hold promise of changing the culture and strengthening the resolve of individual responders so that they can experience post traumatic growth and wellness; thus allowing them to psychologically navigate the traumatic situation in a way that doesn't negatively impact them in the long term (Paton, 2005; Russell, 2016a). The servant leadership culture promotes such resiliency by meeting the needs of followers so they can grow and heal (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Spears, 2010).

Identity is also a factor for infusing servant leadership into the fire and emergency services. Being a professional responder becomes a part of the individual's identity (Antonellis, 2007; Kirschman, 2004; Russell et al, 2016; Russell, 2016a). The fire and emergency services responder, often makes meaning out of their work, and their work is a defining characteristic of self (Russell et al., 2016). The same holds true for servant leadership, being a servant leader often is a part of the individual's identity- like being a responder, it defines who one is (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Keith, 2008). As Russell et al. (2016) stated, "fire and emergency services becomes a personal identifier for the individuals that operate in the career field (p. 64)."

The research and literature on the commonalities and positives are still lacking because a gap exists in the research regarding to what extent servant leadership is currently experienced throughout the profession. A question remains as to whether responders actually experience servant leadership in the profession and if so to what extent. Next we move on to discuss the methodology the researchers used to survey professional responders in order to explore this question with the hopes of filling that gap.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research was to survey professional uniformed and sworn fire and emergency service professionals as to what extent they experience the constructs of servant leadership in their chosen profession. As noted earlier, seven fire and emergency service organizations in a countywide metro were recruited to be a part of the study. To conduct the study the researchers decided that the survey method was a good option to assess current leadership experiences throughout fire and emergency service organizations. From the initial concept of this work to the data analysis and discussion, the researchers followed strict survey guidelines and protocols (Babbie, 1991; Fowler, 2013).

Survey Instrument and Instrument Reliability

To survey the participants, the researchers chose a legacy survey instrument known as the Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI), which had been both previously validated and utilized in dozens of quantitative servant leadership studies (Bocarnea, & Dimitrova, 2010; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007; Dennis, Kinzler-Norheim, & Bocarnea, 2010). The SLAI was developed as a way to measure Patterson's (2003) virtuous constructs of servant leadership; the instrument consists 42 questions, six construct-specific questions corresponding to each of the seven constructs (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007). The SLAI allows for surveying individual perceptions regarding the presence of servant leadership constructs within organizations (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007).

The researchers chose the SLAI as a survey instrument due to its strength for conducting individual and group assessment of leadership within organizations (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007). According to Dennis and Bocarnea (2007), the SLAI, "is recommended as a way to assess servant leadership for both self-assessment and group assessment for a leader" (p. 337). Before conducting the study, the researchers sought and received permission from the instrument's developers to use the SLAI.

The SLAI's validity has been tested, validated, and supported (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007). According to Dennis and Bocarnea (2007), the SLAI Cronbach alpha reliabilities for the individual constructs of love, empowerment, vision, and humility range from $\alpha = .89$ to $\alpha = .92$. According to Bocarnea and Dimitrova (2010) alpha reliabilities of trust and service range from $\alpha = .66$ to $\alpha = .77$. The alpha for altruism remains undetermined (Bocarnea, & Dimitrova, 2010; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007).

Sample Selection

A probability sampling method was used to sample the study participants (Babbie, 1991; Babbie, 2010; Fowler, 2013). Specifically, the researchers employed a probability sampling technique known as systematic sampling due to the specific demographic need for the study, that demographic being professional uniformed and sworn fire and emergency services responders (Babbie, 1991; Fowler, 2013). The researchers however did not directly contact each participant out of respect for the authority of the seven individual fire chiefs. Relying on individual offices of the seven fire chiefs for both permission and distribution of the survey recruitment email to their members, the sampling became a type of quasi multi-stage sampling (Babbie, 1991; Levy & Lemeshow, 1999).

At the time the survey was sent, the seven fire departments collectively had 1,430 uniformed personnel, of those, $n = 148$ members agreed to participate and started the survey, with $n = 130$ members across the seven departments completing the survey. The confidence level of the survey was factored at 95% calculating an 8.20% margin of error for the sample size (Levy & Lemeshow, 1999).

Sample Demographics

The researchers identified specific demographics to be collected as a part of the survey. The data collection avoided collecting any identifying information, ensuring that the participants in the study remained anonymous. The sample demographics collected for this study were Fire Service Rank, Years of Service, and Education Level; see Table 1. The most common participant demographic for the study was an individual at the firefighter-engineer level ($N = 42$), with more than 20 years of professional experience ($N = 54$), and a college graduate with an awarded associate degree ($N = 41$).

Table 1

Sample Demographics (n = 130)

| | N | Percentage |
|--|----|------------|
| <i>Fire Service Rank</i> | | |
| Firefighter (i.e. Firefighter-Engineer) | 42 | 32.31% |
| Company Officer (i.e. Captain) | 36 | 27.69% |
| Command Chief Officer (i.e. Battalion Chief) | 31 | 23.85% |
| Executive Chief Officer (i.e. Assistant Chief) | 21 | 16.15% |
| <i>Years of Service</i> | | |
| 1 to 10 years | 25 | 19.23% |
| 11 to 20 years | 51 | 39.23% |
| 21 or more years | 54 | 41.54% |
| <i>Education Level</i> | | |
| High School | 35 | 26.92% |
| Associate Degree | 41 | 31.54% |
| Bachelor Degree | 35 | 26.92% |
| Graduate Degree | 19 | 14.62% |

Survey Distribution, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

The researchers used Qualtrics™ survey software to conduct the research and followed online data collection protocols specific to secure data collection and protection of participants (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). The online data collection avoided collecting any personal data and made sure that participation was anonymous. Individuals clicking on the survey link arrived at a participation page addressing voluntary participation in the survey. The Qualtrics™ software allowed for researcher access only password protected data storage of the participants’ answers (Granello & Wheaton, 2004). The SLAI was loaded into the Qualtrics™ software and an email link to the survey was generated by the system. That link was added to a recruitment email the researchers sent out to the seven fire chiefs of the departments surveyed who in turn distributed the recruitment emails to their entire departments. The 42-question survey used a Likert-scale of 1-5 consisting of: 1-strongly disagree; 2-disagree; 3-neither agree-nor-disagree; 4-agree; and 5-strongly agree.

To analyze the data, the researchers utilized the Qualtrics™ software to discover the descriptive statistics, specifically the mean, standard deviation, and variance of the participant responses (Babbie, 1991; Fowler, 2013). The questions were then grouped into their specific correlating constructs (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007). The data is presented as a descriptive statistics table format in the results section.

RESULTS

The survey results are in table format, displaying the descriptive statistics: mean, standard deviation, variance, and count for each question. In addition, the tables for presenting the results are clustered into the individual seven constructs consisting of the six construct-specific questions.

The first is the descriptive statistic survey results of the construct of agapao love, Patterson's (2003) first identified construct; see table 2. The reported Cronbach alpha reliability scale for agapao love is $\alpha = .92$ (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007). The collective average regarding participant responses for the six specific questions relating to the construct of agapao love are: Strongly Disagree = 9.36%; Disagree = 12.95%; Neither Agree Nor Disagree = 16.92%; Agree = 41.28%; Strongly Agree = 19.49%.

Table 2
Agapao Love Descriptive Statistics (N = 130)

| | M | SD | V | C |
|---|------|------|------|-----|
| <i>My leader is genuinely interested in me as a person.</i> | 3.42 | 1.26 | 1.6 | 130 |
| <i>My leader creates a culture that fosters high standards of ethics.</i> | 3.50 | 1.24 | 1.54 | 130 |
| <i>My leader has shown his or her care for me by encouraging me.</i> | 3.52 | 1.20 | 1.43 | 130 |
| <i>My leader has shown compassion in his or her actions toward me.</i> | 3.49 | 1.12 | 1.27 | 130 |
| <i>My leader makes me feel important.</i> | 3.35 | 1.25 | 1.55 | 130 |
| <i>My leader shows concern for me.</i> | 3.64 | 1.15 | 1.32 | 130 |

(Table Key: M = Mean, SDV = Standard Deviation, V = Variance, C = Count)

The second is the descriptive statistic survey results of the construct of humility, Patterson's (2003) second identified construct; see table 3. The reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for humility is $\alpha = .92$ (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007). The collective average regarding participant responses for the 6 specific questions relating to the construct of humility are: Strongly Disagree = 12.31%; Disagree = 12.18%; Neither Agree Nor Disagree = 24.36%; Agree = 30.13%; Strongly Agree = 21.03%.

Table 3
Humility Descriptive Statistics (N = 130)

| | M | SDV | V | C |
|--|------|------|------|-----|
| <i>My leader talks more about employees' accomplishments than his or her own.</i> | 3.35 | 1.25 | 1.57 | 130 |
| <i>My leader does not overestimate her or his merits.</i> | 3.43 | 1.14 | 1.29 | 130 |
| <i>My leader is not interested in self-glorification.</i> | 3.38 | 1.29 | 1.67 | 130 |
| <i>My leader is humble enough to consult others in the organization when he or she may not have all the answers.</i> | 3.52 | 1.36 | 1.85 | 130 |
| <i>My leader does not center attention on his or her own accomplishments.</i> | 3.41 | 1.28 | 1.63 | 130 |
| <i>My leader's demeanor is one of humility.</i> | 3.02 | 1.28 | 1.64 | 130 |

(Table Key: M = Mean, SDV = Standard Deviation, V = Variance, C = Count)

The third is the descriptive statistic survey results of the construct of altruism, Patterson's (2003) third identified construct; see table 4. The reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for altruism is $\alpha =$ undetermined (Bocarnea, & Dimitrova, 2010; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007). The collective average regarding participant responses for the 6 specific questions relating to the construct of altruism are: Strongly Disagree = 11.28%; Disagree = 13.98%; Neither Agree Nor Disagree = 24.49%; Agree = 34.23%; Strongly Agree = 16.03%.

Table 4
Altruism Descriptive Statistics (N =130)

| | M | SDV | V | C |
|---|------|------|------|-----|
| <i>My leader has shown unselfish regard for my wellbeing.</i> | 3.30 | 1.20 | 1.44 | 130 |
| <i>My leader has endured hardships, e.g., political, "turf wars," etc., to defend me.</i> | 3.11 | 1.29 | 1.67 | 130 |
| <i>My leader voluntary gives of him or her self, expecting nothing in return.</i> | 3.39 | 1.21 | 1.45 | 130 |
| <i>My leader gives of his or her self with no ulterior motives.</i> | 3.40 | 1.19 | 1.41 | 130 |
| <i>My leader has made personal sacrifice(s) for me.</i> | 3.02 | 1.23 | 1.51 | 130 |
| <i>My leader has made sacrifices in helping others.</i> | 3.57 | 1.11 | 1.23 | 130 |

(Table Key: M = Mean, SDV = Standard Deviation, V = Variance, C = Count)

The fourth is the descriptive statistic survey results of the construct of vision, Patterson's (2003) fourth identified construct; see table 5. The reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for vision is $\alpha = .8637$ (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007). The collective average regarding participant responses for the 6 specific questions relating to the construct

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of vision are: Strongly Disagree = 15.39%; Disagree = 13.85%; Neither Agree Nor Disagree = 21.80%; Agree = 31.80%; Strongly Agree = 17.18%.

Table 5
Vision Descriptive Statistics (N =130)

| | M | SDV | V | C |
|--|------|------|------|-----|
| <i>My leader has sought my vision regarding the organization's vision.</i> | 3.28 | 1.26 | 1.59 | 130 |
| <i>My leader has encouraged me to participate in determining and developing a shared vision.</i> | 3.37 | 1.28 | 1.65 | 130 |
| <i>My leader and I have written a clear and concise vision statement for our company.</i> | 3.02 | 1.36 | 1.84 | 130 |
| <i>My leader has asked me what I think the future direction of our company should be.</i> | 3.02 | 1.36 | 1.84 | 130 |
| <i>My leader has shown that he or she wants to include employee's vision into the firm's goals and objectives.</i> | 3.19 | 1.28 | 1.63 | 130 |
| <i>My leader seeks my commitment concerning the shared vision of our company.</i> | 3.40 | 1.26 | 1.59 | 130 |

(Table Key: M = Mean, SDV = Standard Deviation, V = Variance, C = Count)

The fifth is the descriptive statistic survey results of the construct of trust, Patterson's (2003) fifth identified construct; see table 6. The reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for trust is $\alpha = .77$ (Bocarnea, & Dimitrova, 2010). The collective average regarding participant responses for the 6 specific questions relating to the construct of trust are: Strongly Disagree = 7.57%; Disagree = 8.72%; Neither Agree Nor Disagree = 17.31%; Agree = 40.26%; Strongly Agree = 26.16%.

Table 6
Trust Descriptive Statistics (N =130)

| | M | SDV | V | C |
|---|------|------|------|-----|
| <i>My leader trusts me to keep a secret.</i> | 3.78 | 0.98 | 0.97 | 130 |
| <i>My leader shows trustworthiness in me by being open to receive input from me.</i> | 3.67 | 1.22 | 1.48 | 130 |
| <i>The level of trust my leader places in me increases my commitment to the organization.</i> | 3.71 | 1.19 | 1.42 | 130 |
| <i>My leader communicates trust to me.</i> | 3.55 | 1.24 | 1.54 | 130 |
| <i>My leader seeks to instill trust rather than fear or insecurity.</i> | 3.47 | 1.29 | 1.66 | 130 |
| <i>My leader knows I am above corruption.</i> | 3.94 | 0.99 | 0.98 | 130 |

(Table Key: M = Mean, SDV = Standard Deviation, V = Variance, C = Count)

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The sixth is the descriptive statistic survey results of the construct of empowerment, Patterson’s (2003) sixth identified construct; see table 7. The reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for empowerment is $\alpha = .92$ (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2007). The collective average regarding participant responses for the 6 specific questions relating to the construct of empowerment are: Strongly Disagree = 7.18%; Disagree = 10.90%; Neither Agree Nor Disagree = 11.54%; Agree = 42.05; Strongly Agree = 28.33%.

Table 7
Empowerment Descriptive Statistics (N=130)

| | M | SDV | V | C |
|--|------|------|------|-----|
| <i>My leader desires to develop my leadership potential.</i> | 3.34 | 1.30 | 1.69 | 130 |
| <i>My leader lets me make decisions with increasing responsibility.</i> | 3.76 | 1.13 | 1.27 | 130 |
| <i>My leader gives me the authority I need to do my job.</i> | 3.94 | 1.13 | 1.27 | 130 |
| <i>My leader turns over some control to me so that I may accept more responsibility.</i> | 3.82 | 1.17 | 1.36 | 130 |
| <i>My leader empowers me with opportunities so that I develop my skills.</i> | 3.68 | 1.17 | 1.37 | 130 |
| <i>My leader entrusts me to make decisions.</i> | 3.87 | 1.13 | 1.27 | 130 |

(Table Key: M = Mean, SDV = Standard Deviation, V = Variance, C = Count)

The seventh is the descriptive statistic survey results of the construct of service, Patterson’s (2003) seventh identified construct; see table 8. The reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for service is $\alpha = .66$ (Bocarnea, & Dimitrova, 2010). The collective average regarding participant responses for the 6 specific questions relating to the construct of service are: Strongly Disagree = 8.72%; Disagree = 13.33%; Neither Agree Nor Disagree = 20.00%; Agree = 40.77%; Strongly Agree = 17.18%.

Table 8
Service Descriptive Statistics (N =130)

| | M | SDV | V | C |
|--|------|------|------|-----|
| <i>My leader sees serving as a mission of responsibility to others.</i> | 3.48 | 1.18 | 1.39 | 130 |
| <i>My leader models service to inspire others.</i> | 3.35 | 1.20 | 1.44 | 130 |
| <i>My leader understands that serving others is most important.</i> | 3.52 | 1.11 | 1.23 | 130 |
| <i>My leader understands that service is the core of leadership.</i> | 3.54 | 1.20 | 1.45 | 130 |
| <i>My leader aspires not to be served but to serve others.</i> | 3.35 | 1.14 | 1.30 | 130 |
| <i>My leader models service in his or her behaviors, attitudes, or values.</i> | 3.42 | 1.20 | 1.43 | 130 |

(Table Key: M = Mean, SDV = Standard Deviation, V = Variance, C = Count)

DISCUSSION

The results of the study appear to demonstrate Patterson's (2003) constructs of servant leadership, excluding vision, are experienced by a majority of participants throughout fire and emergency services organizations; see figure 1. The researchers were able to cluster each construct's group of questions to find the collective average for each of the seven constructs. Seemingly, a majority of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with six of the seven constructs that Patterson (2003) identified within the servant leadership philosophy.

For the construct of empowerment, 70.39% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced empowerment from their leaders. For the construct of trust, 66.41% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced trust from their leaders. For the construct of agapao love, 60.77% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced moral love from their leaders. For the construct of service, 57.95% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced service from their leaders. For the construct of humility, 51.16% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed they experienced humility from their leaders. For the construct of altruism, 50.25% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced altruism from their leaders. The only construct where the majority of participants did not agree or strongly agree was vision, only 48.97% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that a leader's vision was experienced within their organization. This may be explained to be inherent in the bureaucratic structures of fire departments as (a) paramilitary organizations, and (b) governmental entities. As explained above, bureaucracies often stifle the flexibility needed for people within them to be innovative and progressive.

CONCLUSION

The fire and emergency services are about people, the profession requires responders to outwardly show humanity to another (Russell, 2016a). Furthermore, the profession is about being in service to others in their time of need, with responders becoming active participants in the tragedies of others (Russell, 2014a; Russell, 2016a). Therefore an approach towards leadership needs to mirror what it means to be a professional responder, servant leadership seems to do that (Carter, 2007; Reed, 2015; Russell, 2014a; Russell, 2016a).

These researchers set forth to understand whether servant leadership was simply an ideal for leadership within the fire and emergency services or something actually experienced throughout the profession (Russell et al., 2017). The findings from this study's survey seem to show that the majority of responders experience the constructs of servant leadership, excluding vision, within the fire and emergency services.

The implication of this study is that servant leadership is not simply an ideal, but rather, experienced and therefore can be cultivated, supported, and molded through leadership education, training, and development. However, the degree with which it is experienced could still be higher for many of the constructs that were floating around within the 60th percentile with servant leader education and on-the-job practice. This finding is important because the wellbeing of responders seems to be positively impacted by creating a culture of servant leadership throughout the fire and emergency services (Russell et al., 2017; Russell, 2016a).

There are several limitations to this study, the first is that the study centered on seven fire departments in one county in a Western State. Further research is needed with multiple fire and emergency services organizations both nationally and internationally. The second limitation has to do with rank, years of service, and education not being correlated. Future research is needed to determine whether a correlation exists between rank, years of service, and education and the perception of servant leadership constructs within leaders and leadership throughout the fire and emergency services. The third limitation is the use of a single quantitative survey. Future mixed-method research is needed to ask follow-up questions in order to delve deeper thus gleaning a richer understanding of the participant experience. The fourth and final limitation we acknowledge is that although the scores obtained on the SLAI in our data set seem to indicate that respondents agree that they do experience servant leadership at work, no comparison is made herein of our data set's responses to those of others in other occupational fields. Future research should incorporate inferential statistics and statistics comparing the fire and emergency fields to respondents across other occupational fields.

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