# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND STAFF SATISFACTION IN ETHIOPIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE CASE OF KOTEBE METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

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## ABSTRACT

*According to recent empirical studies, the servant leadership paradigm appears to be appropriate for providing employees with the empowerment and participative job characteristics that are linked to staff and customer happiness. Despite the fact that there have been several studies on servant leadership throughout the world, there is little or no literature on the subject in Ethiopia. By using questionnaire survey and structured interview, Kotebe Metropolitan University was used to examine the extent and connection between servant leadership practice and staff job satisfaction. The study enlisted the participation from the total of 832-university professionals 25% (208 in number) including senior and intermediate leadership members. To examine the quantitative data gathered, descriptive statistics such as correlation and Chi-Square were used. According to the results of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis, servant leadership is well implemented at Kotebe Metropolitan University, and the university is classified as a servant-oriented organization by the Organizational Leadership Assessment tool. Furthermore, it appears that the university's employee work satisfaction is quite high (89%) and that it is an example for other such universities. According to the findings of the correlation coefficient study, there was a positive link between work satisfaction and the overall practice of servant leadership style and the five characteristics of servant leadership. Furthermore, several independent factors such as respondents' organizational position, department, gender, service year, and age exhibited significant correlations with employee work satisfaction and the amount of servant leadership characteristics practice. Finally, it was concluded that the university's leadership showed and created a model of servant leadership in Ethiopian higher education.*

**Keywords**: Higher Education, Relationship, Staff Satisfaction, Servant Leadership.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The term 'servant' refers to a concept centered on service or serving. The concept of servant leadership has its origins in religion. The servant leader model of Jesus Christ is mentioned in ancient scripture. Jesus said, according to Matthew, you know that the Gentile rulers lord power over them, and their high officials wield control over them, you, however, are not among them. Rather, anybody who aspires to be great among you must serve you (Matthew, New International Version). The Apostle Paul recommends in the Epistles that anybody wishing to follow in Jesus' footsteps should humble himself and take on "the nature of a servant." (Phil 2:7).

Out of religion concept, secularly, servant leadership has been traced back to the 4th century B.C., with passages attributed to Lao-Tzu, a Chinese philosopher who lived about 570 B.C. (Brewer, 2010). As a result, it appears that servant leadership has a deeper historical base than other types of leadership. On the other hand, the contemporary study of servant leadership may be linked directly to Greenleaf's groundbreaking work (1977). Servant leadership model looks to be a suitable fit for providing employees with the empowerment and participatory job qualities that have been related to both employee and customer pleasure.

Servant leadership is a leadership style in which the leader serves his or her stakeholders and followers in a supportive and service-oriented manner (Russell, 2001). Putting others before oneself is what servant leadership is all about. As a consequence, servant leaders are concerned about their subordinates, other people's goals take precedence over their own, and service is prioritized. Servant leadership encourages people to be valued and developed, communities to be formed, authenticity to be practiced, leadership to be provided for the benefit of those led, and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the organization as a whole, and those served by it (Winston, 2004). The servant leader assists others by enhancing their talents, removing obstacles, encouraging innovation, and allowing people to handle issues creatively (Spears, 2006).

On the other side, the term "job satisfaction" relates to a person's attitude toward his or her job and the firm, and may be defined as an employee's emotional reaction to their work environment based on a comparison of actual results to expectations (Phillips & Gully, 2012). According to Saari & Judge (2004), job happiness is a predictor of employee performance, and the connection is stronger for professional jobs. Effectively managing the variables that influence employees' behavior and job satisfaction affects their discretionary efforts and performance levels (Phillips & Gully, 2012). Stringer (2006) found empirical evidence that good supervisor-employee interactions are linked to both subjective and extrinsic work satisfaction. Mohammad et al. (2011) also identified a link between leadership behavior and job happiness.

Servant leadership is built on the qualities of trust, others' appreciation, and empowerment, as well as the basic principles of caring for and serving others (Hoveida, et al., 2011).The servant leadership model shares these characteristics, making it the best leadership style for boosting organizational performance and employee satisfaction by putting a greater emphasis on the customer (Jones, 2012). Netemeyer et al. (2005) discovered that servant leadership inspires workers to go above and beyond the basic demands of their job duties via their relationships with clients. According to Walumbwa et al. (2010), servant leadership encourages good employee attitudes and creates work environments that benefit both people and groups. Employee happiness and organizational commitment are important factors in determining the success and efficiency of a company (Rehman, 2012).

The servant leader leads by example and equips his or her followers with all of the resources they need to succeed. As a result of this genuine care and sincerity for the needs of others, organizational efficiency has risen. Several studies show that servant leadership has a positive influence on employee behavior and, as a result, job satisfaction. According to Johns (2006) & Ehrhart (2004) study, there is a significant relationship between leaders and followers, with the benefit of improved organizational performance. In addition, servant leadership has a significant link to employee satisfaction (Donghong et al., 2012). Efforts and empirical study have been done, mostly in the Western world, to explore servant leadership and its influence on employee job satisfaction (Greenleaf, 1977; Laub, 1999; Spears, 2004; Walumbwa, et al., 2010; Hoveida, et al., 2011; Rehman, 2012). Based on a literature study of leadership, Spears (1998) defined the servant leadership style as an effective and better predictable in organizational members by improving employee happiness, commitment, and lowering turnover intention in the service sector and other companies.

Furthermore, organizational commitment and employee job satisfaction were discovered to be key determinants in predicting organizational performance and effectiveness (Baffie, 2014; Markos, 2015; Rehman, 2012). At the Ethiopian Development Bank, Alemnnew (2014) discovered that work satisfaction had a substantial positive impact on job performance. He also discovered a good link between job performance and the task itself, as well as a significant positive relationship between supervisor and job performance. Servant leadership, on the other hand, is directly and favorably connected to employee performance, according to Whetstone (2002) & Ehrhart (2004). The researcher, however, was unable to

find any published or unpublished Ethiopian study reports on servant leadership and/or its link to employee work satisfaction. As a result, the goal of this research was to find out how much servant leadership is used at Kotebe Metropolitan University and how it affects employee work satisfaction. As a consequence, this study had two main research variables: servant leadership style, which has five characteristics, and employee job satisfaction, which was a dependent variable.

## Statement of the Problem

In today's competitive and demanding environment, higher education institutions are crying out for ethical and effective leadership that serves others, invests in their progress, and accomplishes a shared objective. Similarly, nations and people, particularly in developing countries, want their leaders, whether in government or non-government organizations, to provide efficient and useful services. Furthermore, it is well recognized that leaders in the poor world, particularly in Africa, are notorious for authoritarian, corrupt, and self-centered leadership styles, as opposed to service and people-centered leadership styles. Furthermore, it is self-evident that a leadership issue may have a major influence on employee job satisfaction, work performance, and, ultimately, productivity in any organization. According to this, servant leadership is the most essential concept for controlling employee behavior and developing corporate values that promote organizational success.

Additionally, employee satisfaction and organizational commitment were discovered to be significant predictors of organizational performance and effectiveness (Baffie, 2014; Markos, 2015; Rehman, 2012). Despite the fact that there are several conceptual and empirical studies accessible throughout the world, the researcher was unable to discover any published or unpublished study reports in Ethiopia on servant leadership practice and/or its link to employee job satisfaction. On the other hand, given the cultural differences between Western and African cultures, the necessity to examine servant leadership phenomena becomes even more critical, since Hofstede (2004) highlights the significance of recognizing cultural variations while investigating people's attitudes and actions.

Organizational behavioral theories developed in one country cannot be applied successfully in another due to major cultural differences such as individualism/collectivism, power distance, nurturing/achievement, and so on. As a consequence, discrepancies might be utilized as yet another reason to examine servant leadership and its link to employee job satisfaction at Kotebe Metropolitan University in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The study's findings will benefit higher education policymakers, educators, and administrators by emphasizing the importance of higher education's human component and attempting to improve the lives of its employees for no other purpose. The leader realizes that aiding members of higher education will give advantages to staff and for making an improvement on university's teaching and learning process.

## Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gather data to address the following three research questions.
1. To what extent does Kotebe Metropolitan University practice servant leadership?
2. How satisfied is Kotebe Metropolitan University's staff with their jobs?
3. What is the relationship between Kotebe Metropolitan University's servant leadership approach and employee job satisfaction?

## Hypotheses

The research hypothesis were as follows:

*Hlo: Employee job satisfaction has no substantial relationship with any of the five components of Servant*

*leadership (valuing people, developing people, displaying authenticity, delivering leadership, and sharing leadership), either in aggregate or individually.*

*H1A: Employee job happiness is linked to the five components of Servant leadership (valuing people, developing people, displaying authenticity, offering leadership, and sharing leadership), both collectively and individually.*

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

### General Objective

The study's ultimate objective was to assess the quantity of servant leadership practice and employee work satisfaction at Ethiopia's Kotebe Metropolitan University, as well as their connection.

### Specific Objectives

1. To determine Kotebe Metropolitan University's degree of servant leadership practice.
2. To asses how satisfied Kotebe Metropolitan University's staff are with their jobs.
3. To examine if there is a link between servant leadership and staff happiness at Kotebe Metropolitan University, and if so, how strong it is.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since issues of servant leadership and commitment are constant points of reference in the execution of public policy in public institutions, and they demand the attention of governments all over the world, this studies finding will be useful in providing insights on higher education servant leadership and staff satisfaction. Similarly, since the success of stated public policy and its execution by the responsible agency or organization is completely dependent on the characteristics of the leader and the followers' devotion, policy makers can get policy improvement idea from the finding of this study (Alemnew, 2014). On top of it, the findings of this study will be helpful in respects of servant leadership concepts, which are relevant to all higher education institutions. Its characteristics are beneficial for leaders as a road map for dealing with the complicated circumstances and challenges of globalization and the current economic crisis, which might threaten higher education growth. The current study's research output has also the ability to provide empirical data that will aid in the practical implementation and theoretical discussions of servant leadership in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the findings of this study have the ability to address issues raised by a dearth of research in the field of servant leadership in Ethiopian educational service-giving organizations. Furthermore, the findings of this study might provide additional insight into whether an individual leaders and manager's of servant leadership principles has a link with their own or others' degree of job satisfaction, which supports work performance in Ethiopian higher education.

### Study Area Descriptions

### Brief History of Kotebe Metropolitan University

Kotebe Metropolitan University (KMU), the former Kotebe College of Teacher Education, was set up within the Haile Selassie I University (HSIU) in 1959 under the name College. In 1969, the College left HSIU and went to the present Addis Ababa technical and Vocational College where it came to be known as Teacher Training College. Later, the name was changed to Addis Ababa College of Teacher Education. It was in 1976 that the College

transferred to the present site and got its name, Kotebe College of Teacher Education.

Upon the approval of the Commission of Higher Education, the college launched degree programme in six areas of study: English Language and Literature, Ethiopian Languages and Literature, Geography, History, Health and Physical Education and Mathematics in 1989.

In 1997, the Addis Ababa City Administration took over the responsibility of running the college from the Ministry of Education. Following the transfer of the college to Addis Ababa City Administration, degree programs accept the Department of Health & Physical Education was discontinued.

After 9 years of relentless effort made by the college management, the college community, former graduates of the college and other stakeholders, the degree program was re-launched in 2007 in affiliation with Bahr Dar University. Degree program students were assigned in 10 departments namely Biology, Chemistry, Civics and Ethical Education, English Language and Literature, Ethiopian Languages and Literature, Sport Science, History, Geography, Mathematics and Physics. It also ran a diploma program in linear and cluster modalities.

In addition to these, the college ran a one-year certificate program in preschool Teacher Education.

The year 2014 ushered a major landmark in the history of Kotebe college of Teacher Education When Addis Ababa City Government granted it the status of a University College by the decree Addis Ababa City Government Regulation Number56/2013.

Another milestone in the history of the institution occurred on December 15, 2016 when Kotebe University College is upgraded to a full-fledged Metropolitan University by the Addis Ababa City Government.

Following this, KMU is restructured into 8 units. These are: College of Education and Behavioral Studies, College of Natural and Computational Sciences, Faculty of Languages and Humanities, Faculty of Urban Development Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Business and Economics, Sport Academy and Science and Technology innovation Center.

At present, the University is running certificate, diploma, undergraduate and graduate studies in its regular, evening extension and summer programs. The number of KMU staff accounts about 832 of which 450 represents the academic staff (KMU, website, 2019).

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

There were five components to this study, which included both quantitative and qualitative data. Part one of this study allowed for the collection of demographic data such as gender, age, education, job experience, and organizational function. Second section of this investigation was a quantitative research design to evaluate the extent of servant leadership practice within institutional leaders/managers in Kotebe Metropolitan University as viewed by their workers. As a result, the second phase of the study gathered data on servant leadership practice by modifying the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) research instrument (Laub, 1999) that has been proven to be an effective tool for the purpose. Furthermore, unlike most other comparable instruments, this research tool (OLA) is recognized to integrate both service and leadership aspects of leadership style, whereas most other similar tools focus just on the servant component of leadership.

Laub (1999) used a Delphi study to design the OLA, and then put it through a larger field test for dependability, resulting in a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of.98. A total of 30 questions were asked, with participants reporting their replies on a five-point Likert scale. 1 denotes strong disagreement, 2 denote disagreement, 3 denote indecision, 4 denote agreement, and 5 denote strong agreement.

Part three of this research used a quantitative approach, utilizing a constructed

questionnaire with 12 items to assess employee job satisfaction (Laub, 1999). As a result, there were 12 questions that assessed employee work satisfaction using a five-point Likert scale as the method of reporting replies. 1 equal severely disagrees, 2 equals disagree, 3 equals uncertain, 4 equals agree, and 5 equals highly agree.

In addition, in part four of this study, the relationship between servant leadership practice characteristics and employee job satisfaction was investigated. Furthermore, the relationships between independent factors (organizational position, department, sex, and employee service year) and servant leadership practice and employee work satisfaction were investigated.

Lastly, in section five, a qualitative method was used, which included Kotebe Metropolitan leaders and managers and formulated interview questions.

### Operational Definitions

Managers: Are the people to whom this management task is assigned, and it is generally thought that they achieve the desired goals through the key functions of planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, problem solving and controlling (Kotter, 2001).

Leaders: On the other hand set a direction, align people, motivate and inspire (Kotter, 2001).

### Population and Sample Size

A sample size between 10% and 20% of the total population is representative (Gay & Airasian, 2003). Gay and Airasian are educational researchers of this time whom many are using their suggestion of taking a sample size in between of 10% and 20%. Similarly the researcher of this study took 25% 834 professional staff, which are a total of 208 from Kotebe Metropolitan University in Ethiopia. Kotebe Metropolitan University in Ethiopia had 834 professional workers at the time of data collection for this study. The whole professional staff was not asked to take part in this study. Due to the reasonable quantity of the expected data from this relatively bigger institution, the whole population of professional staff of Kotebe Metropolitan University was not examined. Through the backing of the organization's leadership, all feasible efforts were made to encourage staff involvement, and a 92 percent response rate from 208 respondents was obtained. For the qualitative data, all Kotebe Metropolitan University senior leaders and managers and six intermediate level leaders and managers who have been in the job for more than five years were included.

### Data Source and Collection Methods

The data for this study came from a primary source and was gathered using an adapted Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) research instrument (Laub,1999) with some modification that has been known as effective tool for the purpose. On doing so, structured adapted questionnaire and interview was done. Formal authorization for the research was obtained from the concerned leadership prior to the delivery of the adapted questionnaire. Moreover, utilizing individual staff primary data was obtained from Kotebe Metropolitan University professional personnel in Ethiopia via a self-administered questionnaire. 25% of professional staff of Kotebe Metropolitan University was invited to participate in the study, which was followed by a friendly reminder for those who did not complete the survey in the allotted time. A week after the survey questions was sent, one report on the response rate was given to acknowledge and encourage the concerned leadership and the remaining staff members. Furthermore, for the qualitative data, all Kotebe Metropolitan senior leaders and managers and six intermediate level management members who have worked in the current managerial capacity in the university for more than five years were examined.

### Methods of Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows, version 26.0, was used to enter and analyze the data. Summaries, averages, and percentages of the data were calculated using descriptive statistics. The data was also analyzed using Pearson Chi-Square and nonparametric Spearman's correlation statistics. Data cleansing and missing value management were done as needed before to statistical analysis. Outliers, missing data, and mistakes were verified in the frequency distributions of all variables. The frequency counts and percentages of demographic data were computed using summary statistics analysis. The scoring of the OLA was the first stage in determining sub-scores and a total score for servant leadership. Adding all of the items on each scale and dividing by the number of elements on each scale calculated sub-scores. The total scores were calculated by summing each scale's sub-scores. Valuing People, Developing People, Displaying Authenticity, Providing Leadership, and Sharing Leadership were the five subscales of servant leadership examined in this study. The other variables connected to employee work satisfaction were studied in the same way. For the servant leadership practice and work satisfaction, each question was based on a five-point Likert scale, with a strong disagree response receiving one point and a strong like response receiving five points. In this study, Spearman's correlation was used to address part of research question three. It was used to see if there were any significant relationships between the five subscales of servant leadership's independent variables and the dependent variable of employee job satisfaction. In addition, the Pearson Chi-Square test was used to examine the relationships between the research variables (servant leadership dimensions and job satisfaction) and the other demographic and organizational-related independent factors included in this study

### RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The consistency of an instrument in choosing the required information is characterized as its dependability. The validity of an instrument, on the other hand, is defined as its capacity to measure what it was designed to measure. Laub (1999) used a wide sample of data to assess the dependability of the data gathering techniques used in this study. Laub (1999) used a Delphi study to design this tool, and then put it through a larger field test for dependability, resulting in a Cronbach alpha coefficient of.98. The Delphi approach revealed 54 traits of servant leaders, which were then classified into six main categories.

The Cronbach-Alpha coefficients for each of the five variables used in this study are (a) valuing people (0.91), (b) developing people (0.90), (c) exhibiting authenticity (0.93), (d) giving leadership (0.91), and (e) sharing leadership (0.91), according to Laub (1999). (0.93). Furthermore, Laub (1999) stated that the instrument had a reliability of.98 and that it might be beneficial for future servant leadership study. Furthermore, Thompson (2002) & Miears (2004) showed excellent levels of dependability while doing research with this instrument in various situations. Furthermore, the existing data collecting methods were assessed for dependability, and good reliability findings (all greater than 0.84 Cronbach's alpha value) were discovered for all six variables examined in this study, as shown below Reliability Test Result (Table1). Cronbach's alpha of 0.60, according to Nunnally (1978), is an acceptable threshold for measuring dependability.

From the other side, several deliberate measures were made to assure the authenticity of the data gathering instruments used in the current study. The information was gathered from a legitimate and trustworthy source, namely, professional personnel, via an online questionnaire administered in strict confidence. Every one of the items in the questionnaire had previously been designed and evaluated in other forms of research data collecting and were then used for this study

| | | | Table 1 | |
| | | RELIABILITY TEST RESULT | | |
| No | Scale item | N of items | Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient | Reliability |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Job Satisfaction | 12 | 0.899 | Acceptable level for reliability |
| 2 | Valuing People | 6 | 0.874 | Acceptable level for reliability |
| 3 | Developing People | 6 | 0.832 | Acceptable level for reliability |
| 4 | Displaying Authenticity | 6 | 0.871 | Acceptable level for reliability |
| 5 | Providing Leadership | 6 | 0.889 | Acceptable level for reliability |
| 6 | Sharing Leadership | 6 | 0.845 | Acceptable level for reliability |

*Source: From the calculation of the collected survey 2021*

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Relevant ethical considerations were examined when performing this study. Respondents were given information on the study's goal, methodology, and potential applications. They participated willingly and anonymously, and they were promised that their replies would be kept completely secret. Maximum effort was made to make the respondents feel comfortable and clarifying the research's aim and objective preserved confidentiality.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF QUANTITATIVE DATA

Using survey questionnaire and structured interview questions, the level of servant leadership practice and employee job satisfaction at Kotebe Metropolitan University were examined. As a result, 180 (86.5%) of the 208 respondents feel that servant leadership is well applied at Kotebe Metropolitan University (strongly agree or agree). Following this, a further in-depth analysis was conducted utilizing the five servant leadership aspects examined in the present study. Accordingly, out of the total 208 responses, 180 (86.5%) were either strongly agree or agree, indicating that the various servant leadership characteristics or dimensions are well practiced at Kotebe Metropolitan University and that servant leadership is an established culture at Kotebe Metropolitan University. Furthermore, the total composite score for all five aspects of servant leadership was 80.0 percent of the maximum predicted score (11,039 out of 13,800). According to the interpretation guide provided for the OLA by Laub (1999) this puts Kotebe Metropolitan University in the category of a servant-oriented institution.

Furthermore, the cumulative responses of the five dimensions of servant leadership (strongly agree and agree) were (77.6%), (84.7%), (83.2%), (79.3%), and (80.2%) of the total 208 responses for providing leadership, valuing people, sharing leadership, displaying authenticity, and developing people, respectively, out of the total 208 responses. Developing people, on the other hand, had the highest rate (8.5%) of disagreement (disagree or strongly disagree) responses (with a significant number of undecided responses (14.8%)). For the displaying authenticity dimension, developing people had the highest rate of disagreement and

undecided responses. As a result, the developing people and displaying authenticity dimensions of servant leadership appear to be less practiced than the other servant leadership dimensions.

The majority of the responses (89.8 percent) were strongly agree or agree for those twelve positive job satisfaction related statements in this study, which revealed that the majority of the responses (89.8percent) were strongly agree or agree for those twelve positive job satisfaction related statements. Based on this data, it appears that the organization's employee work satisfaction is quite high, and it is a model for other similar higher academic institutions. Further examination of the research data revealed a statistically significant (P=0.01) relationship between the total degree of servant leadership practice and work satisfaction among leaders/managers and non-managerial personnel. Non-managerial staff had a lower assessment grade for servant leadership practice and job satisfaction than leadership or management members. Furthermore, the different independent factors examined in this study, such as respondents' department, sex, years of service, and age, exhibited significant correlations with job satisfaction of employees and the degree of servant leadership practice characteristics.

The relationship between job satisfaction and the overall practice of servant leadership style and the three dimensions of servant leadership was positive and moderate, according to the nonparametric Spearman's correlation coefficient analysis, whereas the relationship between job satisfaction and the other two dimensions-providing leadership and developing people was positive but weak. As a result, it is critical to conduct a more thorough cause and effect analysis research that take into account the many important elements of leadership practice and employee job satisfaction in order to fully understand and describe the root causes.

According to the outcomes of the structured interview, the leaders of Kotebe Metropolitan University feel that servant leadership is well implemented and that it is an established leadership culture at the university. Furthermore, they all think that servant leadership is a suitable and successful leadership style for achieving the university's planned mission and vision. It is indeed their firm belief that all five aspects of servant leadership are successfully implemented in the university, and they strongly encourage other companies, particularly those focused on development and service, to embrace and apply the servant leadership style. Furthermore, interview participants answered that servant leadership has a significant beneficial influence on employee work satisfaction and, as a result, on employee performance.

Based on the current interview participants, some individuals may misunderstand and misuse servant leaders' humility, leaders may be afraid or concerned about probable disrespect from others, and some irresponsible people may fail to fulfill their tasks, slow decision-making, needing more time and resources for nurturing and fostering others, surrendering self-interest in favor of others' needs, and requiring greater understanding and tolerance of everyone else and responsibilities. Apart from that, it requires bravery and a great level of dedication to deny oneself and put others first for the benefit of others, and it is not always understood or acknowledged by everyone else. Almost all of the above-mentioned problems associated with servant leadership, according to the researcher, may be mitigated if servant leaders correctly comprehend and apply all dimensions of servant leadership as a whole. Gaining in-depth understanding of followers is a basic element that supports servant leadership. Effective leaders understand that touching someone's heart involves real effort and compassion, and that you must touch their heart before asking for a hand (Maxwell, 1998).

## DISCUSSION OF QUALITATIVE DATA RESULTS

This phase of the qualitative data collecting and analysis was done in order to further substantiate and triangulate the quantitative data findings. As a result, the conclusions of qualitative data obtained through structured interviews with higher education leaders at Kotebe Metropolitan University are shown below.

According to the results of an assessment conducted using structured interview questions administered to organizational senior leaders and managers and other staff members, all of them believe that servant leadership is well practiced and that it is a well-established leadership culture at the university. Furthermore, they all think that servant leadership is an effective and acceptable leadership style for achieving the university's stated objective and mission. It is indeed their firm belief that all five characteristics of servant leadership style examined in this study are well applied in the university, and they strongly advise similar educational institutions to employ servant leadership style, particularly those involved in education, community service, and research. The interviewees, on the other hand, stated that servant leadership had a significant beneficial influence on employee work satisfaction and, as a result, on staff performance. Furthermore, they feel there is a good relationship between servant leadership and staff job happiness, and they are deliberate in their leadership style.

The following are the traits or characteristics of servant leadership that were mentioned by the majority of respondents in answer to the question regarding common characteristics or qualities of servant leadership. Active listening to others, modeling or leading by example, selflessness and sacrifice for the good of others, serving the right needs of others, consistency in action and character, earnest love and care for others, people oriented, putting oneself in others' shoes, loyalty, empathy, and emotionally connected with others are some of the qualities mentioned. Numerous different attributes listed include servant leaders who bring joy and excitement to people regardless of their nature, good intentions, a tendency to focus on the positive side of people, not only influence people but are willing and ready to be influenced by others (i.e. they believe in mutual leadership), faithfulness and honesty, and leadership is mainly for satisfying the interests of everyone else. Servant leaders lead by common understanding and are always given opportunities to do so; they are faithful and honest, recognize their own needs and are willing to be served by others; they recognize their own needs and are learners from all sides, which include followers.

The qualities of servant leadership revealed in this study are consistent with other scholars' definitions and descriptions of servant leadership. According to Greenleaf, servant leaders prioritize helping others and sacrificing their own interests for the benefit of others so that individuals might gain more knowledge, authority, and become servant leaders. Servant leadership values human equality and seeks to develop the individual members of the organization. Servant leadership is defined as a leader's perception and behavior that prioritizes the interests of others over his or her own (Boffie R, 2014). Thus according Greenleaf, servant leadership is founded on a service mentality, which involves serving and meeting the needs of subordinates. To everything else in the institution, servant leaders favor empowerment, mutual trust, cooperation, ethical power use, and the importance of serving followers (Greenleaf, 1970).

The responders, on the other hand, mentioned some of the key advantages of servant leadership to the leaders and the university. Experiencing internal and deep pleasure as a result of fulfilling the needs of others, having a healthy and congenial working environment/atmosphere are just a few of the benefits of servant leadership that have been stated. Acknowledgement and trust building, enhanced employee commitment, increased productivity, encourages employee motivation and creativity, improved team building and trust, reduced grievance, supports people's inputs and contributions, acquiring legitimate power, increased learning and growth (Barbuto, 2006). Other advantages include: it aids in gaining followers' trust, as trust is one of the qualities of leadership; the leader will become a member of his team; the best way to influence people is to influence from within; it provides strategic position for influencing people; it helps to know people about their potential and growth areas for further growth and development of others; and it pays to understand people about their prospective potential and growth areas. Servant leadership focuses on a person, which helps to build a strong foundation for the company. These qualities of servant leaders are totally shared

by the researcher, and many literatures on servant leadership are consistent with it (Greenleaf, 1970; Spears, 2006; Laub, 1999 &Thomson, 2002).

Based on their extensive leadership experience, the respondents also expressed their thoughts on the key obstacles and costs of practicing servant leadership. On of the most frequently mentioned challenges and/or costs of practicing servant leadership are the possibility of some people misinterpreting and abusing leadership humility, fear or concern about possible disrespect for leaders, failure of some irresponsible people to discharge roles and duties, slow decision making, and so on. This necessitates walking together, takes more time and resources to nurture and cultivate others, requires self-sacrifice and prioritization of others' needs, and demands more compassion and acceptance of someone else. It is critical to emphasize one of the dimensions of servant leadership, which is setting clear expectations and providing leadership to followers, in order to reduce the risk of some of the commonly mentioned challenges, such as misunderstanding and abuse of servant leaders' humility, disrespect, and failure to discharge duties and responsibilities by some people.

Other participants additionally characterized the problems of servant leadership from three perspectives: from the leader's perspective, from the perspective of followers or people, and from the perspective of the environment. It requires bravery and dedication to put others first for the benefit of others, and it is not always accepted or understood by others, determining if the cause that the leader is living up to is worthy of dying for. It takes ability, competency, and self-discipline to recognize the proper call/purpose. Individuals do not readily offer trust; convincing others is difficult; they may consider manipulating them; they may be skeptical or suspicious; they may refuse to be serviced or allow service; some people may be manipulative or abusive; they may extend much beyond the required threshold. People may believe that the leader is there to self-actualize, the way loyalty is ascribed by society, there is strictness in servant leadership, and the environment of leaders such as cultural bias-leadership is associated with power, benefit, and authority, and the expectations set by the people are high, making it a challenge for both the leader and the followers. People may believe that the leader is there to self-actualize, the way loyalty is ascribed by society, and the expectation set by the people is high, making it. The method leaders are presented may impact, the way leadership is viewed to accomplish all the work, and the behaviors assigned to leadership by the community may not be acceptable. Most of the aforementioned problems associated with servant leadership may be mitigated if leaders fully comprehend and apply all of the characteristics of servant leadership as a whole.

Participants were asked to provide their thoughts on the most important elements that leaders or their university should consider while establishing or maintaining servant leadership practices. As a result, they recommended the following points: top leadership modeling the values and qualities, cultivating a culture of trust, establishing an organizational direction and priority, working to change people's mindsets, steady improvement and intentionality, recognizing differences between individuals and appreciating diversity, firm commitment, and strengthening the way of life. Personal characteristics such as a feeling of purpose, calling, motivation, and passion may help to improve servant leadership. The values, beliefs, and expectations of the university should align with the concepts of servant leadership; Kotebe Metropolitan University should be a servant institution again for individuals. Leaders are the primary creators, guardians, and cultivators of corporate culture, as well as the values and conventions that govern the workplace, according to Russell (2001). Similarly, leaders, particularly top leaders or university presidents, play a critical role in creating and maintaining leadership practices as a culture in higher education institutions.

## CONCLUDING REMARK

The following conclusions were drawn based on the current findings from both quantitative and qualitative data collected and analyzed on the level of servant leadership practice, employee job satisfaction, and the associations of the various independent and dependent variables considered for this study. According to the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) tool used in the current study, servant leadership is well practiced at Kotebe Metropolitan University, which is found Ethiopia, and the university is classified as a servant-oriented organization. Besides which, various servant leadership characteristics or dimensions are well practiced, and servant leadership style is an established culture at Kotebe Metropolitan University, according to the findings. The leaders of this university truly think that all five dimensions of servant leadership are well practiced at the university, and they enthusiastically recommend servant leadership to other organizations, particularly those focused on education, research, and community service. As a result, it is reasonable to say that the leadership of this Metropolitan University has demonstrated and set the standard for servant leadership in higher education in Ethiopia and beyond. On top of that, it was discovered that two of the five aspects of servant leadership (developing people and demonstrating authenticity) require more focus and intentionality in the university's leadership style than the other three dimensions.

Furthermore, the outcomes of this survey indicated that the Kotebe Metropolitan staff work satisfaction is extremely high, setting an example for other higher education. The link between work satisfaction and the overall practice of servant leadership style and the five characteristics of servant leadership was positive, according to the nonparametric Spearman's correlation coefficient study. Furthermore, the interview participants acknowledged that servant leadership has a significant positive impact on employee job satisfaction and, as a result, on employee productivity. The connections of different parameters were examined in this study, and statistically significant ($P<0.01$) associations were found between leaders/managers and non-managerial employees' assessments of comprehensive servant leadership practice and work satisfaction. Finally, the numerous independent factors evaluated in the current study, such as the respondents' department, sex, service year, and age, all exhibited significant correlations with employee work satisfaction and the amount of servant leadership characteristics practice at Kotebe Metropolitan University.

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