

TRANSLATION AND ADAPTATION OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE INTO CZECH LANGUAGE

Jana Kolářová – Pavlína Honsová – Michal Konvalinka

Abstract

Plenty of leadership theories have emerged as our environment has been rapidly evolving in terms of social, technological, economical, political and ecological changes. Servant leadership is distinguished from prior theories by its follower-centric premise which is guided by a set sequence of choices: to serve first, then to aspire to lead (Greenleaf, 1970). Servant leadership is an exception within new leadership models having passed the test of showing incremental validity after controlling for transformational leadership and leader-member exchange (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). This study is focused on the process of translation and adaptation of a 28-item servant leadership scale developed by Liden et al. (2008) into the Czech language. Firstly, the scale was independently translated twice into Czech and the back-translation was compared to the original scale. Secondly, pilot interviews were carried out in order to ensure sufficient comprehension of the translation. Finally, an expert group evaluated the outcomes of the previous steps and created a final version of the items in the Czech language. The translated questionnaires were administered to 192 students of a bachelor programme at University of Economics, Prague. Finally, a statistical analysis was carried out.

Key words: servant leadership, questionnaire, translation, adaptation

JEL Code: C83, D23, M14

Introduction

This paper aims to anchor a new leadership theory within the context of the Czech Republic. After such corporate scandals as Enron or Lehman Brothers emerged, ethics and corporate social responsibility became more important in business schools' curricula and also in a development of leadership theories. Ghoshal (2005) criticizes development of new courses without having reviewed old theories, e. g. corporate governance or transaction cost economics. He argues that such theories and ideas subsequently legitimize the management practices that cause amoral behaviour. Given that our region has already been struck many

times by corporate scandals (e. g. Volkswagen's manipulation of emissions), we perceive an introduction of servant leadership to the Czech environment as beneficial in order to give an alternative approach to the usual leadership theories.

First of all, this paper provides a theoretical background of servant leadership with an overview of its current operationalisation and measurement methods. Secondly, methods used to adapt the chosen servant leadership questionnaire are described. Finally, the results are both presented and discussed.

1 Theoretical background

Servant leadership challenges conventional beliefs about leadership (Northouse, 2015) by putting followers first to serve them in their personal growth. The term was coined in Greenleaf's (1970) seminal work. It might be an answer to a call to address 21st century issues with its emphasis on a service to others (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Liden, Panaccio, Hu & Meuser (2014) note that servant leadership was overlooked by the academic community until the 2000s. In view of the current changes towards process models of leadership, rather than focusing on a person or a position, authors offer a comprehensive theoretical model with such components as creating value for the community or behaving ethically. Despite many theoretical and empirical studies, servant leadership suffers from the same lack of consensus about its definition and the theoretical framework as the field of leadership theories (van Dierendonck, 2011). The distinction from other leadership theories (e. g. transformational leadership, LMX theory) lies also in a leader's responsibility towards a wider range of organizational stakeholders and the emphasis on moral principles (Ehrhart, 2004).

There are several strengths of servant leadership. Sound psychometric measures are available (Liden, Panaccio, Hu & Meuser, 2014). It is investigated across a variety of contexts, cultures, and themes (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Several organizations have already used it as a guiding philosophy (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002), e. g. Southwest Airlines. On the other hand, there are also weaknesses. Its paradoxical name might diminish the potential value of the theory, it has an utopian ring and could be perceived as moralistic (Northouse, 2015). Servant leaders might face several challenges such as role conflicts, high levels of emotional labour or manipulation by more savvy followers (Liden, Panaccio, Hu & Meuser, 2014).

1.1 Current operationalisations

Multi-dimensional operationalisations were utilized by many authors (Winston & Fields, 2015). Given little consensus in a definition of the servant leadership construct, there are various descriptions and formulations, e. g. voluntary subordination, authentic self, covenantal relationship, responsible morality, transcendent spirituality, transforming influence (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002); wisdom, persuasion mapping, organizational stewardship, altruistic calling, emotional healing (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006); creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, emotional healing, behaving ethically (Liden et al., 2008).

Winston & Fields (2015) criticize the usage of numerous dimensions as problematic in terms of their application ambiguity, inclusion of behaviours and attributes similar to other leadership theories and possibility of follower perceptions' reflection. Thus the authors propose an essential set of leader behaviours in order to clarify the loci and mechanisms of servant leadership. Such an approach may be truly beneficial to the development of servant leaders, however, this paper further focuses on a promising model by Liden, Panaccio, Hu & Meuser (2014). It provides us with a core construct, which is more carefully defined.

1.2 Measurement methods

A synthesis of 39 appropriate empirical studies, based on a systematic literature review, revealed that researchers are using multiple measures to explore servant leadership (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Previously presented operationalisations are further developed mainly into instruments with a reliability and validity tested. Questionnaires have a different number of items, e. g. 10 items (Winston & Fields, 2015), 23 items (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006); 28 items (Liden et al., 2008) or 35 items (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). The measurement strategy for servant leadership theory is still not agreed on (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

This study gives a priority to a 28-item measure developed by Liden et al. (2008), later supported by an advanced theoretical model (Liden, Panaccio, Hu & Meuser, 2014). The measure was developed after a literature review was carried out, where 9 dimensions were identified. Afterwards, an exploratory factor analysis of the pilot study revealed 7 distinct dimensions. Phase 1 consisted of a pilot test of 85 servant leadership items with a student sample of 298 individuals. Phase 2 involved a confirmatory factor analysis using an organizational sample of 182 individuals. Authors validated their 28-item measurement which passed the test of showing incremental validity after controlling for leader-member exchange

and transformational leadership. Furthermore, Liden et al. (2015) developed a 7-item measure of global servant leadership based on previous 28-item servant leadership measure.

2 Methods

Our methodology consisted of two stages. In the first stage, translation and adaptation of a questionnaire was carried out. Secondly, a pilot study was conducted. Subsequently, a statistical analysis was carried out.

2.1 Translation and adaptation

The translation and adaptation of the questionnaire was designed based on Procházka, Kulhavý, & Jirásek (2015). Two researchers translated the questionnaire independently and then discussed the differences in order to create one version in Czech. It was presented to a third researcher with experience in professional translations and with a limited prior knowledge of the servant leadership theory. A back-translation into English revealed the differences between the original items and the first translation. Changes in translation in the selected items were proposed.

Following discussion of all the three researchers was aimed to create a semi-final version of the translation. Items of creating value for the community were particularly difficult to agree on given the context of the Czech Republic where such activities are not so widespread and the word “community” has a specific connotation with an alternative or community treatment (such as psychotherapeutical). In order to ensure an appropriate adaptation, six pilot interviews were conducted in order to reveal how different individuals might react to our translation. Responses were obtained from 6 working adults. An attention was paid to their diversity, therefore their selection was determined by the gender, education and age. The sample consisted of 3 females (age group 20 – 35 and 51 – 65 with university education, 36 – 50 with high school education) and 3 males (age group 20 – 35 and 51 – 65 with high school education, 36 – 50 with university education). After the interviews, a next meeting of the three researchers was held in order to prepare a final version of the questionnaire for a pilot study. The items of creating value for the community proved again to be more difficult to understand.

Likert scale was used with response options from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). Liden et al. (2008) used a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) for

both the student and organizational surveys. We decided to use less detailed scale in order to narrow down respondents' possibility of choice.

2.2 Pilot study

In the second phase, we conducted a pilot test of the 28-item servant leadership questionnaire with a student sample. The version of the questionnaire which was filled by the participants can be found in the attachment of this paper. The data were collected from undergraduate students of a bachelor programme Business Administration at University of Economics, Prague. We selected subject Psychology and sociology in management due to its connection to our topic and a convenient number of 240 active students. Majority (98 %) were in the second year of their studies with almost equal distribution of female (52 %) and male (48 %) students. The responses were obtained from 192 students out of which 10 questionnaires had to be eliminated because of missing values. The final number of respondents is 182.

The lecturer of the seminar introduced the study. Each respondent was asked to reply to each item based on his or her experience with a specific leader. Participation was voluntary with an option to withhold. The students completed the questionnaire during the time of their seminar.

3 Results

The data collected in the second phase of our study were subjected to a basic statistical analysis. Table 1 shows its results. There was a great deal of items exceeding the skewness of 0.5 and the kurtosis values as well. We determined items to be too difficult when exceeding 0.9 and too easy when not reaching 0.1 based on Říčan (1977). None of the items showed inappropriate values, yet item 11 was the closest to the borderline. We determined the correlation with the raw score not to be lower than 0.2. Item 16 showed a correlation, which was too low. The reliability of our measurements was determined by computing Cronbach's alfa (0.913), which showed a sufficient value.

Item 11 "*My manager has a thorough understanding of our organization and its goals.*" seems to us very problematic given its median 1.00, item difficulty 0.16 and very positive skewness value of 1.35 and kurtosis value 2.25.

Tab. 1: Descriptive statistics

Item	M	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis	Item Difficulty	Correlation with raw score
1	3.28	1.20	4.00	-0.31	-0.95	0.57	0.45
2	2.38	0.97	2.00	0.44	-0.19	0.35	0.67
3	2.47	1.18	2.00	0.46	-0.73	0.37	0.64
4	3.16	1.12	3.00	-0.08	-0.74	0.54	0.60
5	3.23	0.92	3.00	-0.08	0.37	0.56	0.43
6	2.99	1.05	3.00	-0.19	-0.70	0.50	0.68
7	3.38	1.24	4.00	-0.43	-0.84	0.60	0.52
8	3.82	1.13	4.00	-0.71	-0.40	0.70	0.42
9	2.42	1.03	2.00	0.75	0.20	0.36	0.57
10	2.08	0.92	2.00	0.52	-0.54	0.27	0.54
11	1.63	0.77	1.00	1.35	2.25	0.16	0.42
12	2.45	0.97	2.00	0.48	-0.39	0.36	0.54
13	2.62	1.07	2.00	0.36	-0.53	0.40	0.54
14	2.21	1.04	2.00	0.67	-0.22	0.30	0.60
15	2.40	1.04	2.00	0.48	-0.31	0.35	0.51
16	3.31	1.14	3.00	-0.38	-0.57	0.58	0.16
17	3.16	1.05	3.00	-0.16	-0.55	0.54	0.70
18	3.30	1.13	3.00	-0.27	-0.72	0.58	0.67
19	2.35	1.04	2.00	0.53	-0.36	0.34	0.62
20	2.87	1.35	3.00	0.11	-1.16	0.47	0.65
21	3.93	1.00	4.00	-0.65	-0.21	0.73	0.63
22	4.08	0.91	4.00	-0.65	-0.49	0.77	0.51
23	3.99	0.99	4.00	-0.89	0.42	0.75	0.53
24	2.78	1.04	3.00	0.30	-0.48	0.45	0.59
25	2.57	1.00	3.00	0.35	-0.24	0.39	0.55
26	2.42	1.09	2.00	0.65	-0.06	0.35	0.54
27	2.60	1.11	2.00	0.40	-0.51	0.40	0.65
28	2.95	1.07	3.00	-0.01	-0.62	0.49	0.68

Source: Authors

4 Discussion

The results show that the Czech version of the questionnaire provides reliable information, however there are some problematic items to be discussed further. The process of a back-translation, a discussion, pilot interviews and again a discussion of our team helped us to create a quality Czech version for the pilot study. The main decisions during those two discussions were concerned with cultural and vocabulary adaptations. Specifically, items 5, 6, 7, 8 related to the factor *Creating value for the community*, were difficult to translate. We used four different translations for the word community, based on our understanding of items and mainly based on the Czech environment. On the other hand, the usage of such

a questionnaire can help further cultivate community citizenship at the individual level of corporate leaders. Liden et al. (2008) see such a trait as a very important one also in the light of corporate scandals that influenced the credibility of corporate leaders as a group. Furthermore, our results might indicate that voluntary activities have not been yet taken as a prevalent practice in the Czech environment.

Among measures of the central tendency, item 11 “My manager has a thorough understanding of our organization and its goals.” has median at the value of only 1.00. We are wondering whether translation (“Můj / má vedoucí má podrobný přehled o naší organizaci a jejich cílech.”) needs to be adjusted or it is influenced by our sample’s characteristics.

Furthermore items 21, 22 and 23 related to the factor *Putting subordinates first* are skewed to the left, all of median value 4.00 and almost the same mean values near 4.00. Such a result might indicate that respondents lack the very core factor of the servant leadership in their leaders.

There are several practical implications of the study. First of all, the adapted questionnaire can be used in organizations which decide to embrace servant leadership. Such an instrument can be very useful during change management. Secondly, individuals interested in their further development in servant leadership approach can use it in order to self-assess their level, but always with respect to the limits the method bears.

The study has strengths and limitations. The adoption of the back-translation helped us discover most problems prior to the pilot interviews. Increased attention was paid to the problematic items during the interviews. The sample size (N = 182) is sufficient for a basic statistical analysis. One methodological consideration is related to sample characteristics which are limited to bachelor students who have limited work experience. We suggest the future researchers to follow up on our study with a validation study with a more representative sample. It might be beneficial to reconsider the usage of 7-point scale.

Conclusion

The findings show that the adapted questionnaire provides reliable information about servant leadership. However, several problematic items need to be further considered before the final Czech version of servant leadership questionnaire is adapted. The strengths and limitations of the current research as well as some recommendations for future research are suggested. In conclusion, the objective of this study – the translation and adaptation of servant leadership questionnaire was achieved, but the statistical analysis of the pilot study showed some problematic issues in the test items, which need to be re-evaluated in a validation study.

Acknowledgment

This paper was supported by Internal grant agency of University of Economics, Prague, project number F3/24/2016.

References

- Barbuto, J. E., & Wheeler, D. W. (2006). Scale Development and Construct Clarification of Servant Leadership. *Group & Organization Management*, 31(3), 300–326. <http://doi.org/10.1177/1059601106287091>
- Ehrhart, M. G. (2004). Leadership and procedural justice climate as antecedents of unit-level organizational citizenship behavior. *Personnel Psychology*, 57(1), 61–94. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2004.tb02484.x>
- Ghoshal, S. (2005). Bad management theories are destroying good management practices. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 4(1), 75–91. <http://doi.org/10.1109/EMR.2005.26768>
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). *The servant as leader*. Westfield: Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership.
- Liden, R. C., Panaccio, A., Hu, J., & Meuser, J. D. (2014). Servant leadership: Antecedents, consequences, and contextual moderators. In D. V. Day (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Leadership and Organizations*. Oxford: Oxford University.
- Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Meuser, J. D., Hu, J., Wu, J., & Liao, C. (2015). Servant leadership: Validation of a short form of the SL-28. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26(2), 254–269. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2014.12.002>
- Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Zhao, H., & Henderson, D. (2008). Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19(2), 161–177. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2008.01.006>
- Northouse, P. G. (2015). *Leadership: theory and practice* (7th ed.). London: Sage.
- Parris, D. L., & Peachey, J. W. (2013). A Systematic Literature Review of Servant Leadership Theory in Organizational Contexts. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 113(3), 377–393. <http://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-012-1322-6>
- Procházka, J., Kulhavý, V., & Jirásek, M. (2015). TRANSLATION AND ADAPTATION OF THE ATTITUDES TOWARDS BUSINESS ETHICS QUESTIONNAIRE (ATBEQ) INTO CZECH LANGUAGE (pp. 544–557).
- Říčan, P. (1977). *Úvod do psychometrie*. Bratislava: Psychodiagnostické a didaktické testy.

- Sendjaya, S., & Sarros, J. C. (2002). Servant Leadership: Its Origin, Development, and Application in Organizations. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies (Baker College)*, 9(2), 57–64. <http://doi.org/10.1177/107179190200900205>
- van Dierendonck, D. (2011). Servant Leadership: A Review and Synthesis. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1228–1261. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310380462>
- Winston, B., & Fields, D. (2015). Seeking and measuring the essential behaviors of servant leadership. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 36(4), 413 – 434.

Contact

Jana Kolářová

University of Economics, Prague

Nám. W. Churchilla 4, Prague 3, 130 67 Czech Republic

jana.kolarova@vse.cz

Pavčina Honsová

University of Economics, Prague

Nám. W. Churchilla 4, Prague 3, 130 67 Czech Republic

pavlina.honsova@vse.cz

Michal Konvalinka

University of Economics, Prague

Nám. W. Churchilla 4, Prague 3, 130 67 Czech Republic

michal.konvalinka@vse.cz

Dotazník pro identifikaci stylu vedení a faktorů ovlivňujících výkonnost

Vážené respondentky a vážení respondenti,

rádi bychom vás požádali o vyplnění dotazníku, který je součástí výzkumného projektu *Servant leadership a podmínky pro jeho vliv na výkonnost následovníků*. Tato pilotáž je zaměřena na adaptaci zahraničního dotazníku pro české prostředí.

Zamyslete se nad následujícími tvrzeními, které se týkají postojů a chování vašeho / vaší vedoucí(ho). Zvolte pouze jednu osobu, ke které budete vaše odpovědi vztahovat. V případě, že nyní nemáte vedoucí(ho), využijte zkušenost z předchozího zaměstnání, brigády či jiné příležitosti (např. skautský oddíl, vyučující). V další části dotazníku se zamyslete nad tvrzeními, které se týkají vašeho přístupu k práci.

Dotazník je důležité vyplnit podle vlastní zkušenosti. V žádném případě se nejedná o test, žádná odpověď není špatně, nebo správně. Pro kvalitu následného vyhodnocení je velmi důležité, aby byly zodpovězeny všechny položky. Nebudete-li vědět, využijte vlastního odhadu. U každého tvrzení označte zakroužkováním jednoho z písmen, do jaké míry s tímto tvrzením souhlasíte.

Velmi vám děkujeme za váš čas a vynaloženou energii,

Ing. Jana Kolářová, Mgr. Pavlína Honsová, Ing. Michal Konvalinka

		zcela souhlasím	spíše souhlasím	tak napůl	spíše nesouhlasím	zcela nesouhlasím
1.	Vyhledal(a) bych pomoc své(ho) vedoucí(ho), kdybych měl(a) osobní problém.	a	b	c	d	e
2.	Mé(mu) vedoucí(mu) záleží na mé osobní pohodě.	a	b	c	d	e
3.	Můj / moje vedoucí si vyhradí čas, aby si se mnou promluvil(a) na osobní úrovni.	a	b	c	d	e
4.	Můj / moje vedoucí pozná, když jsem na dně, aniž by se mě zeptal(a).	a	b	c	d	e
5.	Můj / moje vedoucí zdůrazňuje důležitost splácení širší společnosti.	a	b	c	d	e
6.	Mého / mou vedoucí(ho) vždy zajímá, jak pomoci lidem v našem okolí.	a	b	c	d	e
7.	Můj / má vedoucí se zapojuje do veřejně prospěšných aktivit.	a	b	c	d	e
8.	Jsem povzbuzován/a mým /mou vedoucí(m) k dobrovolnickým činnostem.	a	b	c	d	e
9.	Můj / má vedoucí dokáže vycítit, pokud se něco vyvíjí špatně.	a	b	c	d	e
10.	Můj / má vedoucí je schopný/á efektivně promyslet složité problémy.	a	b	c	d	e

	zcela souhlasím	spíše souhlasím	tak napůl	spíše nesouhlasím	zcela nesouhlasím
11. Můj / má vedoucí má podrobný přehled o naší organizaci a jejich cílech.	a	b	c	d	e
12. Můj / má vedoucí je schopen/na vyřešit pracovní problémy pomocí nových nebo kreativních nápadů.	a	b	c	d	e
13. Můj vedoucí mi dává zodpovědnost dělat důležitá rozhodnutí o mé práci.	a	b	c	d	e
14. Můj / má vedoucí mě povzbuzuje, abych samostatně zvládl(a) důležitá pracovní rozhodnutí.	a	b	c	d	e
15. Můj / má vedoucí mi dává svobodu zvládnout náročné situace způsobem, o kterém cítím, že je nejlepší.	a	b	c	d	e
16. Pokud mám udělat důležité pracovní rozhodnutí, nemusím ho nejprve konzultovat s vedoucí(m).	a	b	c	d	e
17. Pro mého / mou vedoucí(ho) je rozvoj mé kariéry prioritou.	a	b	c	d	e
18. Můj / má vedoucí se ujišťuje, že dosahuji svých kariérních cílů.	a	b	c	d	e
19. Můj / má vedoucí mi poskytuje pracovní zkušenosti, které mi umožňují rozvíjet nové dovednosti.	a	b	c	d	e
20. Můj / má vedoucí chce znát mé kariérní cíle.	a	b	c	d	e
21. Zdá se, že mé(mu) vedoucí(mu) záleží více na mém úspěchu než na mém.	a	b	c	d	e
22. Můj / má vedoucí upřednostňuje mé zájmy před svými vlastními.	a	b	c	d	e
23. Můj / má vedoucí obětuje své vlastní zájmy, aby uspokojil mé potřeby.	a	b	c	d	e
24. Můj / má vedoucí dělá vše pro to, aby mi usnadnil(a) mou práci.	a	b	c	d	e
25. Můj / má vedoucí dodržuje vysoké etické standardy.	a	b	c	d	e
26. Můj / má vedoucí je vždy čestný/á.	a	b	c	d	e
27. Můj / má vedoucí by nikdy nezradil(a) etické principy, aby dosáhl(a) úspěchu.	a	b	c	d	e
28. Můj / má vedoucí si cení čestnosti více než zisku.	a	b	c	d	e