Servant Leadership and Indigenous Samoan Organic Leadership

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Abstract

Effective leadership is at the heart of institutions and organisations, and as Radcliffe (2010) pointed out "Powerful and effective leaders are guided by the future they want. Furthermore, the leader is strongest when that future is powerfully connected to what he or she cares about" (p. 10). In today's society, dynamic and global change has reached monumental proportions (Bennis & Nanus, 2003; Covey, 2002; Senge, 2006; Wheeler, 2012). According to Covey (2002), the importance of institutions, organisations, and the workplace in this maelstrom of change calls for effective leadership. The servant leadership concept offered by Greenleaf (1970) provides an alternative leadership discourse in a global world plagued by changing attitudes, values, morals and ethics. This changing discourse facilitated the paradigm shift in the way leaders are perceived in organisations from the dominant perspective of the leader at the helm to the leader that serves. Servant leadership with its focus on a serving leader stands in contrast to early notions of leaders that predominately adhere to their role in the traditional hierarchical structure.

Defining Servant Leadership

Spears (1995) provided the foundational constructs for the servant leadership model comprising of ten attributes: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community. These are classified under two dimensions, the caring and the service continuum and presents the cornerstone of the servant leadership characteristics. The caring continuum includes listening, which is perceived as a critical element of the caring component that people regardless of age, want to be heard. Through receptive listening, being sensitive and responsive; leaders become empathetic and can mentally and emotionally relate to the needs of others (Ferch & Spears, 2011; Hesselbein, 2011). The healing aspect is triggered when listening, and empathy is intricately interwoven to make people feel whole. Awareness of what is happening in the local, national and the world arena can be meaningful when one is cognizant of the situation concerning themselves and others (Cashman, 2012; Lidow, 2014). Persuasion then becomes a collaborative effort of more profound and evocative sharing towards consensus-building (Evans & Foster, 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Caring institutions, organisations and people, particularly caring leaders, exude verisimilitude that is perceived as a concomitant to the growth and wellbeing of members.

Practising the caring dimension activates conceptualisation as service hinges on leaders being visionary and thinking beyond the present (Kouzes & Posner, 2012;

Sergiovanni, 2007). Leadership with foresight draws from the past, are guardians of the present and designers of the future. Stewardship embraces responsibility and accountability of institutions for societal good (Chaleff, 2009; Fullan, 2005). Commitment to the growth of people invests in individuals to be contributing members of society (Hargreaves et al., 2014; Sendjaya, 2015) and building community embodies a service-oriented culture (Hunter, 2012).

Researchers have defined, redefined and provided variations of the constructs. Laub (1999) developed six clusters such as values people, develops people, builds community, displays authenticity, provides leadership, and shares leadership. Russell and Stone (2002) identified twenty characteristics, nine were considered functional, and the others aa accompanying attributes. Patterson (2003) created a model with seven attributes related to virtues such as leader's agapao, translating humility, altruism, vision and trust into empowerment and service. Van Dierendonck (2011) synthesised a model from all known constructs into six essential characteristics. These included empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction and stewardship.

Practice of Servant Leadership

The practice of servant leadership has its historical roots in eastern beliefs and Christianity. Although Greenleaf is coined the father of the servant leadership movement in academia, the concept is an ancient philosophy and can be traced to Lao-Tzu a Chinese philosopher in the sixth century B. C. The Bible also exemplifies in the persona of Jesus Christ, the embodiment of the servant leader.

Servant leadership is based on the desire to serve others (Anderson, 2008; Taleghani & Mehr, 2013), which is not equated to being servile. Service in Greenleaf's view is a moral dimension, "the actions and attitudes of service can transform relations among real human beings…things get done by people serving one another" (Greenleaf & Spears, 1998, p. xii). It is leadership that up-ends the traditional hierarchical structure of the leader in the dominant and most powerful position (Waterman, 2011). From this perspective, the leader is a servant first because they put the needs of those, they want to develop first. They initiate action, provide opportunities, create endless possibilities and take risks to promote and empower others. Through their efforts of serving others first, they provide a haven that instigates trust, confidence and teamwork (Tate, 2003) which can propel institutions, organisations and followers to become more and better entities for society.

Sendjaya and Pekerti (2010) conducted a study to explore servant leadership in Australia and Indonesia. Their findings revealed that servant leadership is commonly

practised in both countries. Although their research showed similarities concerning trust and respect, there were differences in aspects of independence, and in power distance on the social milieu of the specific culture. This provided the basis for comparison of servant leadership and indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches.

A further study conducted in European and Asian cultures by Mittal and Dorfman (2012) on servant leadership across cultures indicated that there were variations of cultural degrees on the constructs used. While the five dimensions of servant leadership egalitarianism, moral integrity, empowering, empathy and humility were validated, there were differences in cultural emphasis. In Nordic European countries, egalitarianism and empowering were particularly favoured while in Asian countries, compassion and humility were emphasised.

A study undertaken to explore the presence of servant leadership attributes at nontraditional tertiary education institutions in Trinidad and Tobago (Joseph, 2006 cited in Rennaker, 2008) did not provide the expected findings. Results from the study demonstrated statistically predictive value in vision, service and humility but not empowerment, love and trust. Others have pointed to the importance of examining leadership behaviours that seek to constructively reconceptualise authority for the people and society (Purcell, 2011). Punnett's (2013) research suggests that people in the Caribbean generally do not favour power distance and hierarchies. Evidence of post-colonial leadership structure is still evident, discouraging trust and the empowerment of people. Punnett further argues "this lack of fit between leadership style and cultural values results in lower motivation, lower productivity, higher absenteeism and a range of negative outcomes" (p. 186). The study demonstrates that a mismatch between leadership approaches and what people perceive as worthwhile can have a detrimental effect on efficiency and effectiveness. The Caribbean experience can shed light on the application of servant leadership in Samoa.

Using Greenleaf's framework, the characteristics exemplified by researchers across cultural organisations are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Authors and Servant Leadership characteristics

Authors	Servant Leadership Characteristics
Spears (1995)	Listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, building community
Laub (1999)	Values people, develop people, builds community, displays authenticity, provides leadership, shares leadership.
Russell & Stone (2002)	Functional attributes: vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modelling, pioneering, appreciation of others, empowerment.
	Accompanying attributes: communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching, delegation.
Hale & Fields (2007)	Performance orientation, future orientation, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, power distance, humane orientation, uncertainty avoidance.

Authors	Servant Leadership Characteristics
Melchar & Bosco (2010)	Modelling behaviour, stewardship, honesty, trust integrity, credibility, appreciation of others, concern for the growth of people, community building, delegation, teaching, empowerment, encouragement, listening, communication.
van Dierendonck (2011)	Empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, stewardship.
Wheeler (2012)	Service to others, facilitate the needs of others, foster problem solving and taking responsibility, promote emotional healing, means are essential as ends, keep one eye on the present and one on the future, embrace paradoxes and dilemmas, leave a legacy to society, model servant leadership, develop more servant leaders.
Mittal & Dorfman (2012)	Egalitarianism: service, consultative, putting subordinates' first.
Sendjaya (2015)	Moral integrity: moral courage, ethical behaviour. Empowering: empowering and developing people. Empathy: interpersonal acceptance and emotional healing. Humility: humility and modesty. Voluntary subordination: being a servant, acts of service. Authentic self: humility, integrity, accountability, security, vulnerability. Covenantal relationship: acceptance, availability, equality, collaboration. Responsible morality: moral actions, moral reasoning Transcended spirituality: religiousness, interconnectedness, sense of mission,

	wholeness. Transforming influence: vision, modelling, mentoring, trust, empowerment

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guides understanding of the concept of servant leadership and connects it to other theories such as the sociocultural theory, the constructivist theory and the interpretive paradigm, including indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches.

Greenleaf's servant leadership provides the theoretical framework where he proposes a leader that is focused on service, "an application of the philosophy of service to the practice of leadership" (Greenleaf & Spears, 1998 p. xi). Service is perceived as a good relationship, and the leadership moral imperative is supported (Baron, 2010; Northouse, 2013; Robson, 2011; Wallace, 2007) as a significant element of servanthood. Greenleaf and Spears (1998) further challenge leadership conceptions by postulating that a servant leader is not "What service can you render as a leader" but what leadership can you exercise as a servant?" (p. 12). Leaders entrust their followers to go beyond the present, and be empowered to contribute effectively to the system (Broom, 2015; Trompenaars & Voerman, 2009). Leadership is inherently collaborative and aims at empowerment of individuals to serve institutions and the community (Bolden et al., 2011; Hickman, 2010a, 2010b; Humphrey, 2014).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework focuses on the characteristics of servant leadership based on the belief that good, effective leaders are first and foremost servants before leaders. The term servant leader is a paradox (Hunter, 2004; Spears & Lawrence, 2004), a contradiction, an enigma, but the impossibility opens probabilities that institutions and organisations could benefit from (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Leithwood & Seashore-Louis, 2012; Wheeler, 2012). The traditional views of leaders in trait theory focus on leaders being born not made. The behavioural approaches emphasise leaders' development and the contingency theories highlight leadership as situation-based. These are conceptually different from servant leadership. The ten characteristics of servant leadership are caring and

service-oriented, and servant leaders are committed to ensuring leaders serve their followers (Bjugstad et al., 2006; Blackshear, 2004; Daft, 2015, 2008).

Figure 1. Concentric representation of servant leadership. Its circular movements begin with listening and end with community building. All the elements converge on the servant as leader.
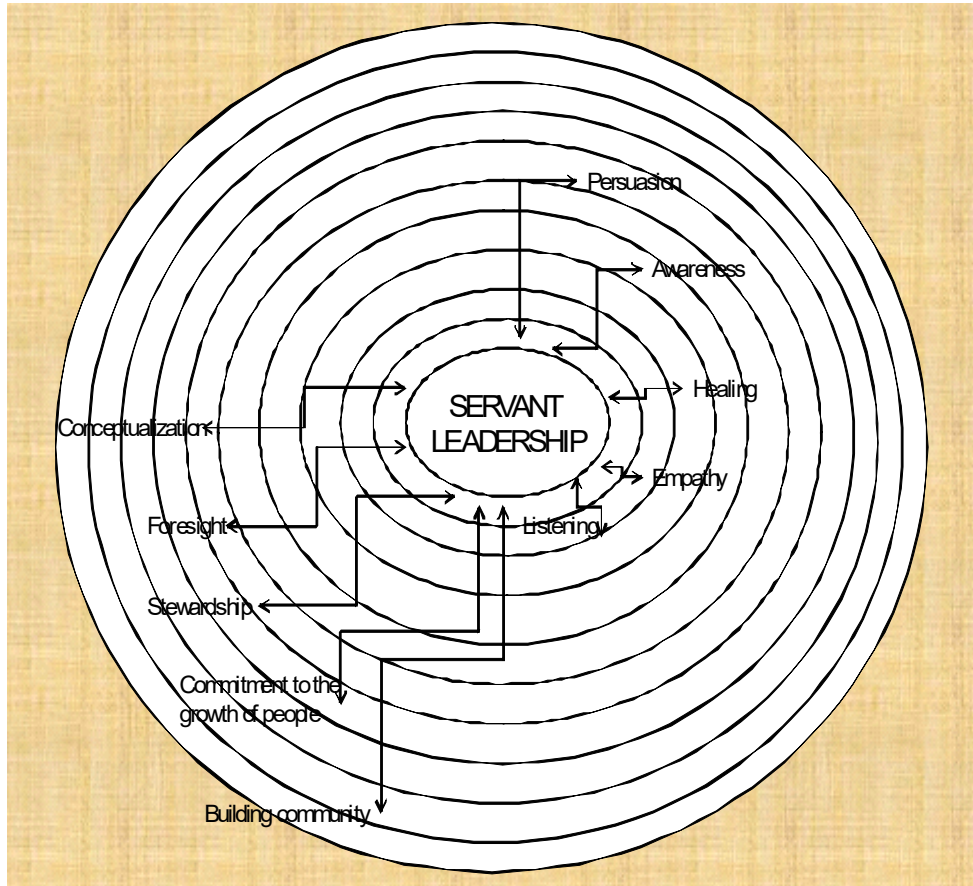
The concentric representation illustrates the intricate, inimitable and fiduciary nature of leadership. While listening may undergird all leadership attributes, there is flexibility and fluidity that intersects the caring and service boundaries.

Figure 2. **Conceptual model of servant leadership. The characteristics are classified into two groups the caring and service dimensions.**
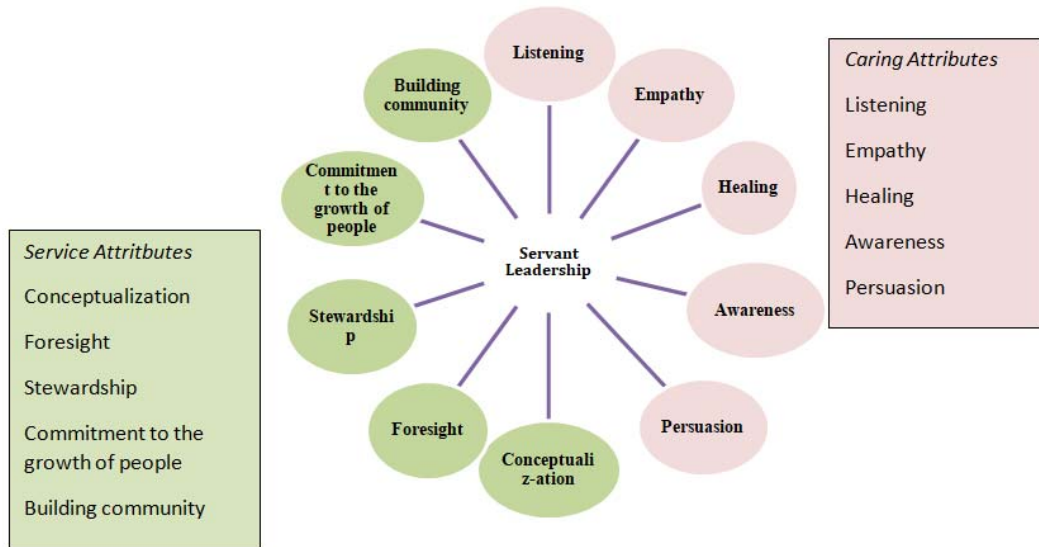
Servant leadership attributes as exemplified in themodel illustrates the dual purpose of servant leadership in its two dimensions the caring and service attributes. The caring dimension: listening, empathy, healing, awareness and persuasion are critical in teacher educators' practice. Its application and implementation activate and advance the service dimension: conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community.

Leaders who care, imbue their members with dreams and visions that one fulfils through service (Anderson, 2008; Neill, Hayward & Peterson, 2007; Phipps, 2010). As Nohria and Khurana (2010) state effective leadership ensures "followers are convinced of a leader's commitment to their success (not just their own), as well as how their success and the leaders' are entwined" (p. 161). This view promotes active service through modelling (Loughran & Berry, 2005; Solomon, 1997), effective facilitation (Ponte, Ax, Beijaard & Wubbels, 2004; Wilson, 1996), mentoring, (Bullough, 2005, Feiman-Nemser & Parker, 1993) and teamwork (Chaleff, 2009; Covey, 2004).All service attributes culminate in building a community which is

significant to the family, society and the global world (Arvey, Zhang, Avolio & Krueger, 2007; Lewis & Noble,2008).

Foundation, Development and Criticisms of Servant Leadership

Greenleaf's early experiences influenced him as an undergraduate student at university, and later working in organisations and educational institutions.

Servant leadership has gained momentum because it meets a need in organisations and institutions. According to Russell (2000) "Servant leadership value human equality and seek to enhance the personal development and professional contributions of all organisational members" (p. 79). Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) add:

> The servant leader's deliberate choice to serve and be a servant should not be associated with forms of low self-concept or self-image, in the same way as choosing to forgive should not be viewed as a sign of weakness. Instead, it would take a leader with an accurate understanding of his or her self-image, moral conviction and emotional stability to make such a choice. (p. 61)

Furthermore, Bjugstad et al., (2006) support the claim "that the effectiveness of a leader is to a great extent dependent on the willingness and consent of the followers" (p. 305). Current leadership studies focus more on the relationship between the leader and follower (Esera, 2002; van Dierendonck, 2011). Follett (1934) cited in Avolio (2011) voiced similar sentiments that "the exercise of power does not define leadership but by the capacity to increase the sense of power among those led" (p. 10); their actions and values reflecting those of the leaders (Senge, 2006; Grogan, 2013; Hays, 2008).

In the education arena Nichols (2010) argues a good leader has "a great passion for teaching, encouraging, and working with students and above all, the ability to stimulate student interest and enthusiasm" (p. 3). Steele (2010) describes servant leadership as a successful strategy in enhancing music teaching (Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon, 2005 cited in Crippen, 2005) enabling students to reflect, reason and become decision-makers.

Criticisms of the foundations of the theory are contested, and Greenleaf and Spears (2002) have acknowledged the lack of a well-designed conceptual framework. However, any germinating idea, would have flaws and lack precision but the movement should not take a back step because therein lies the danger, "to hear the analyst too much and the artist too little" (p. 25). Others have questioned servant leadership in terms of credence (Hunter, 2004); viability (Andersen, 2009); gender biased (Eicher-Catt, 2005); and association with slavery, oppression and discrimination (Johnson, 2009).

Northouse (2013) citing Russell and Stone (2002) also criticised the servant leadership model arguing that the conceptual framework lacked evidence from well-designed research and the theory is mostly anecdotal. In the last ten years, instruments have been devised to measure servant leadership. The multitudes of definitions, classifications and interpretations have rendered it difficult to measure servant leadership in its complexity and most instruments focused on people and not the leader (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Other researchers endorse the servant leadership focus on leaders concerning followers' growth and development. Concerns have been reduced with the development of instruments to assess servant leadership: Laub (1999), Page and Wong (2000); Wong and Page (2003); Dennis and Bocarnea's (2005) Barbuto Jr. and Wheeler (2006); Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora (2008), Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) and Reed, Vidaver-Cohen and Colwell (2011).

Despite the criticisms, servant leadership has gained momentum in the last two decades (Spears & Lawrence, 2004; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010) and education systems have joined the bandwagon (Nichols, 2010; Ricard & Brown, 2008; Wheeler, 2012).

Theories and Approaches to Leadership

According to leadership theorists the last two centuries have gradually changed focus to accommodate the type of leadership that suits a more relevant, eclectic and dynamic world (Blanchard & Miller, 2012; Covey, 2002, 2008; Drucker, 1999, 2002; Miller 2013; van Dierendonck, 2011). McGregor's theory points to Theory X as fostering an environment of distrust while expectations for self-direction in Theory Y may not be the norm (Stewart, 2010). Greenleaf and Spears (2002) claim:

> When people use their formal authority early on, their moral authority will be lessened. When we borrow strength, we build weaknesses in three places; in self, because we are not developing moral authority; in the other, because they become co-dependent with the use of moral authority; and in the quality of the relationship, because authentic openness and trust are never developed. (p. 12)

Servant leadership cuts across all levels of the contingency, situational approaches and the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory. Greenleaf and Spears (2002) espouse, "The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other's highest priority needs are being served" (p. 27). In this way the followers are positioned where they are most likely to grow and succeed.

Teacher educators can also utilise Jennings and Stahl-Wert's (2004), five principles. It involves a sense of great purpose in the vision of the future one pursues; the provision of opportunities for students to demonstrate their potential; being exemplary models in practice; focusing on a serving leader and upending the

leadership pyramid to converge on those being served. The model calls for the delivery of effective service for quality graduates and therefore, the importance of the role that teacher educators play. Likewise, Darling-Hammond (2013) advocates for visionary leaders that share pedagogical instruction.

Moreover, Fullan's (2001, 2008) change theory incorporates ideas of follower caring, the need for people to have a purpose, enhancing people capacity, continuous learning, openness, and systems as learning environments. Servant leadership encapsulates Fullan's agents of change concerning the caring of followers, understanding the need to listen and to be aware of the voice of the others, the growth of people, stewardship and community building.

Educational institutions serve people, and teacher educators should ensure students are holistically and effectively educated "a focus on acting in the interests of others, such as giving help, providing mentoring, sharing credit or making connections" (Grant, 2013, p. 5). Service is the humanising element that captures the inherent potential of people to work collaboratively for the betterment of society (Blanchard & Miller, 2012; Maxwell, 2007). By giving back to the community individuals do not lock themselves into the struggle for power and corruption. Greenleaf's concept of service is all-encompassing of acceptance, involvement in decision-making, willingness to take risks and collaborative partnership (Humphrey, 2014; Taylor et al., 2007).

Institutional culture can be an empowering aspect to support and enhance leadership on a lateral plane (Avolio et al., 2009) and this can be dealt with if the culture is positive and embracing (Kouzes & Posner, 2010, 2012; Lueneburger, 2014; Mahal, 2014; Miller, 2011; Radcliffe, 2010). Avolio (2011) identifies it as "members being willing to share in their leadership and followership responsibilities…for the good of the team" (p. 131) advancing teamwork and collaboration for institutional strengthening (Butler, Lauscher, Jarvis-Selinger & Beckingham, 2004; Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

Hays (2008) proposes that traditional education approaches tend to maintain the status quo of the teacher in power as opposed "to teacher who serves students and society: who gives them that voice, puts their welfare before self, and serves the interest of learning" (p. 114). Wheeler (2012) argues for "the importance of role models, it seemed to be an osmotic process as they observe and soak up all of the expectations, experiences, and behaviours of those exemplars" (p. 44). Hesselbein (2002) adds, "leaders need to be constant learners and effective teachers" (p. 61).

Indigenous Organic Samoan Leadership Approaches and Servant Leadership Characteristics

Leadership in the Samoan context is hierarchical, collaborative and empowering. It is a way of living associated with the concept of *tautua* (Anae, 2010a; Lilomaiava-

Doktor, 2009; Strachan, Akao, Kilavanwa, Warsal, 2010). *Matais* are chosen to serve not only the nuclear family but also the extended family and the village. In Samoan society, members have a particular place, culturally designated even before the arrival of the Europeans (Holmes, 1980). Children become part of the culture through the socialisation process, and this becomes deeply entrenched in the way they conduct themselves (Afamasaga, 2009; Ochs, 2014).

Service is ingrained in children from very early in life and they become prematurely aware of the responsibilities in the home, church and the community. Keesing and Keesing (1956) refer to subtle assimilation of children as "sitting on the fringes of household, family and village *fono* assemblies" (p. 48) where they "learn early to sit as quiet and respectful spectators if they want to be present, thus laying the groundwork for continuity" (p. 49). Mead (1928) conceives of children developing in *mafaufau* "an ability to exercise good judgment in personal and social matters" (p. 486) that starts at home. Children that take the initiative without being told what to do are considered leaders and others follow. The reward is the elders' acknowledgement that children get great satisfaction from.

In traditional Samoan society, there is no formal training for future leaders. However, axioms for leadership are taken from activities and duties that denote relationships with people, and the nature and art of doing (Thaman, 2013). These aspects of leadership provide guidelines for the way people live, function and perform.

Samoan culture and oratory provide numerous evidence of the importance of leadership and the processes leading to its achievement. The indigenous organic Samoan approaches: *tofa manino, tofa mamao, tofa saili, tofa loloto, tofa fetala'i, tomanatu,* and *soalaupule* depict cultural leadership approaches being practised. These are aligned to the servant leadership attributes and analogies are drawn from the relationship between the approaches.

Tofa Manino

Tofa is thought, and *manino* is clarity or clarity of thought. This term is often referred to the pursuit of cultural and genealogical knowledge, the wisdom and art of knowing and theorising and practice of applied knowledge. Barbuto Jr. and Wheeler (2006) cited Barbuto and Gifford (2010) "it is the height of knowledge and utility" (p. 7). It is characterised by listening, awareness, foresight, conceptualisation and stewardship.

Listening is considered one of the most fundamental attributes of effective leadership. It is through critical listening that one can hear "diverse and respective messages" (Hays, 2008, p. 123). Awareness is also essential for a servant leader as it provides windows of opportunities for creative and fresh insights into dealing with a problem (Sinek, 2009; Taufe'ulungaki, 2004; Thaman, 2014). Greenleaf and Spears (2002) point to awareness as lending objectivity, critical to viewing events and experiences. Foresight utilises different lenses to hone one's ability to move beyond possible threats and dangers. For Maxwell (2007), it is "seeing the possibilities in a situation while others are seeing the limitations" (p. 297). Conceptualisation is the ability to think beyond the day-to-day realities, to dream of possibilities and inspiring others to bring it to fruition (Ferch & Spears, 2011; Maxwell 2007). Stewardship and the commitment to the growth of others is more than achieving short-term goals. Thinking conceptually provides a clear, visionary approach to the future and stewardship ensures it is responsible and sustainable. Hays (2008) refers to the ability to "see the forest and the trees. They know the parts, and how they fit together to make the whole" (p. 127).

Tofa Mamao

Tofa is thought, and *mamao* is visionary, which implies seeing beyond the obvious an awareness that changes in society can change the order of things. Hesselbein and Johnston (2002) refer to changes as moving "beyond strategy to purpose" (p. 106), "beyond structure to process" (p. 107) and "beyond systems to people" (p. 109). Visionary leaders take the role of stewardship as a custodian function ensuring what is essential to retain is passed on for future generations. Listening, foresight, conceptualisation, stewardship and commitment to the growth of others are components of the *tofa mamao*.

Listening is an essential aspect of the *tofa mamao* as planning for war, a *malaga* [voyage], or ceremonial activities require "listening to the tone of the other, the body language of the other" (Grogan, 2013, p. 56). Sensitivity to others is a visionary approach that plans, protects and safeguards against the loss of what is valuable and unique in a society (Crossley,1993; Luteru & Teasdale, 1993; Thaman, 1991).

Foresight is a servant-leadership characteristic that Lueneburger (2014) refers to as "building a culture of purpose. strategic thinking" (p. x). An understanding of the whole spectrum past, present and future events impact institutional strategies and decision-making (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002).

Conceptualisation to Ferch and Spears (2011) accede that "Behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams" (p. xxx) and Senge (2006) believed commitment to the growth of people in "building shared visions fosters a commitment to the long term" (p. 12). Stewardship is a sense of ownership and responsibility (Block, 1996) and giving back to the community (Barbuto & Gifford, 2010). Hays (2008) agreed it is "acceptance of responsibility for protecting and acting with the best intentions" (p. 128).

Tofa Saii

Tofa is thought, and *saili* refers to the never-ending quest for truth, knowledge, patriotism, nationalism and self-rule. It is pertinent to ideas of What is life? What is freedom? What is essential? It is man's search for the essence of life. It is tied to ideas of freedom, independence, human rights, ascertaining the truth, voices from the past and beyond, the supernatural and the discovery of the what,the why and our existence. *Tofa saili* encapsulates listening, persuasion, healing, awareness and building community.

Tofa saili encourages people sharing a collective identity and goal to listen and listen critically in the fight for a common cause. In Samoa *tofa sailimalo* is the quest to overcome obstacles, conquer and achieve victory to become politically independent, leading to emotional healing. It is also connected to beliefs that there are more than one truth and more than one reality. Attentive listening can distinguish the difference mainly in Samoan society where families and villages often contest genealogy, titles and land. Servant leadership characteristics of listening, persuasion, healing, awareness and building community are integrated into the *tofa saili*.

It is the nature of humanity to be heard (Graham, 1995; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010) acknowledging the vision, the pursuit of truth, autonomy and legitimacy are accessed when leaders listen. Hays (2008) advanced that "only through listening with an open mind and open heart can one come to understand people" (p. 123).

Persuasion focuses on initiating concurrence among members to support a system's vision or mission. Barbuto and Gifford (2010) agreed that persuasion "offers compelling reasons to get followers to engage" (p. 7). This is based on people being listened to, understanding they have identified mutual goals and justification for specific courses of action. In servant leadership members are not coerced; the leader assists followers to unanimously make decisions and

compromises that will benefit the group. They are drawn, presented, requested and encouraged not manipulated (Hays, 2008).

The characteristic of healing has a recuperative effect on people who have been heard. Allowing members to participate in forums that influence their lives and wellbeing can contribute to emotional healing. Hays (2008) concurred "people cannot move forward when paralysed by excess stress, exhaustion and distrust" (p. 124). Evans and Foster (2014) echoed this sentiment "people simply do not grow in a fearful environment people working under conditions of fear or stress fall back on what is heuristic reasoning; relying solely on experience and failing to use their intellect to solve new problems" (p. 179). The art of persuasion plays an influential role in healing, as members are allowed to be guided and shown the pros and cons of an idea without undue pressure to conform to a leader's expectations. Healing provides members with feelings of completeness that they can share meaningful and positive relationships with others (Culver, 2013; Hunter, 2012; Wallace, 2009). Through persuasion and healing, self-awareness is set in motion as people are more receptive to environmental cues and awareness is heightened through "a transformative process of aligning actions with intentions" (Ferch & Spears, 2011, p. 160).

Building a community is the culmination of the *tofa saili* whether it is nation-building, institutional or the family. This is manifested through building people capabilities that can be translated into improving society (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Lidow, 2014).

Tofa Loloto

Tofa is thought, and *loloto* refers to depth. The term implies there is more to ideas and beliefs than what lies on the surface. A cohesive society is underpinned by the accumulation of knowledge, history and culture. A Samoan saying *e malu luga ae vilivili lalo* refers to the waters that look calm and serene, yet below is a whirlpool. This captures the nature of Samoan discourses and interactions. It implies delving into the recesses of one's consciousness to understand the dynamics embraced in the thought processes that are voiced during chiefly meetings and special occasions. Listening, empathy, awareness and building community are an integral component of the *tofa loloto*.

The leader that understands the essence of *tofa loloto* identifies and relates to people, accepts contributions, experiences, expertise and concerns that surpasses

the generation gap. Servant leadership characteristics of empathy, awareness and building community are features of the *tofa loloto*.

Listening is integral to the *tofa loloto,* as leaders listen to the inner voice, the voice of conscience that acknowledges the contribution of others in the search for answers (Prosser, 2007). It is centred on the mind reaching out during profound, reflective moments to deliberate decisions and a course of action (Cashman, 2008; Kirtman & Fullan, 2016). Farbman (2014) forewarned, "incredibly powerful message tends to skate right over the heads of people who aren't really listening" (p. 103). Furthermore, the concept suggests deep listening, which sometimes takes place in solitude and silence.

Empathy is the ability to put oneself in someone else's place whether they are thoughts, emotions or consciousness. According to Crippen (2005) "Teachers who reach out to students and extend a caring attitude may present an inviting and safe atmosphere for students" (p. 6). It profoundly reflects the concept of being in tune and being connected at a spiritual level with others. Empathetic servant leaders have a deeper connection with people that may not be visible at surface level. Hays (2008) described this as:

> Coming to see the world around oneself and the people in it as more salient, and the self as just one aspect of a larger system…to increasing tolerance and breadth of view, while reducing ego-centric narrow mindedness and self-centeredness. (p. 124) Empathetic leaders can earn people's trust because they can discern their needs, dreams and motivations, and they release others potentials, ideas and drive (Maxwell, 2007; Robson, 2011). People who feel safe become aware of what is happening around them and contribute to positive changes (Ferch & Spears, 2011).

Fostering awareness is critical for building community and is considered transformative (Cashman, 2008). It moves the leader from centring on self to others and the surrounding environment (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Grogan (2013) noted, "Awareness brings with it the responsibility to take constructive action for change" (p. 51). This involves an in-depth understanding of the interactions, discussions and relationships that affect motivation, practice and performance.

The ability to build a community is related to the *tofa loloto*. This focuses on the adequate knowledge of communities changing, but their history and culture embrace institutional cohesiveness, cooperation, collaboration and teamwork. Servant leaders recognise that institutions build their communities, as members attempt to discover in their places of work connections with the broader community

(Flint Jr., 2012). Hays (2008) argued, "It is how challenges are dealt with and the shared commitment to ownership for resolving them that mark a community's effectiveness" (p. 129). Olatunji et al. (2012) supported the view that "leaders should see followers as partners in progress" (p. 127) emphasising leadership action that gives the power to empower others.

Tofa Fetala'i

Tofa is thought, and *fetala'i* is open-minded, liberal and progressive and refers to eloquent, persuasive speakers, who listen to others, are unbiased and undogmatic. *Tofa fetala'i* advances flexibility compromises to keep the peace and ensuring unity and harmony in the community. Orators are renowned for balancing listening, thoughts and action with astuteness to end debates. Cashman (2008) warned, "your purpose may be calling, but your lack of listening creates vagueness" (p. 75). The leadership is concerned with listening, commitment to the growth of people and building community.

Listening attentively plays an essential role in *tofa fetala'i* as Samoan oratory requires listening critically to the language of idioms, axioms, innuendoes and familial affiliations that can elude even the most experienced *matai*. Lidow (2014) highlighted "good listening because it leads to the most accurate and timely exchange of information" (73). Rosen (2014) posed that a leader "focuses on listening and understanding what motivates others and where their vulnerabilities and strengths lie" (p. 67). Hays (2008) referred to listening as "essential to informed and reasoned decisions and courses of actions" (p. 123), requiring leaders to keep their options open.

Tofa fetala'i is also related to the growth of others as servant leaders. It is awareness that the development of members is achieved through opportunities where they learn the art of listening and speaking. The Samoan proverb *ia seu le manu ae silasila i le galu* is apt, meaning catch the bird, but watch the breakers. This reflects the *tofa fetala'i* leadership that is obligated to personal growth despite obstacles.

Hays (2008) asserted that growth "exemplify the leader as a learner; someone committed to the continuing expansion of his or her conscience and efficacy, and to that of others" (p. 127). Practical application is enhanced through active participation in village meetings and functions that provide real-life opportunities for growth and development. Greenleaf and Spears (2002) espoused leadership that

supports teaching and mentoring to facilitate the entry of the so-called like-mind to service.

Capacity building refers to the development of service for progress to be made in the education, economic, social and political spheres. Global intrusions into communities that have survived outside onslaught for years face a new world order. The exogenic forces at work require human resources to juxtapose the old and new world to ensure the survival of the past in the present. Servant leadership characteristics of listening, commitment to the growth of people and building community are assimilated in the *tofa fetala'i*.

Tomanatu

It is a reflective practice that provides leaders, elders and chiefs to mull over an action. At critical times and especially during periods of conflicts, *tomanatu* is a handy tool. The *tomanatu* leader integrates active listening to critical decision-making, which includes the ability to listen to the inner voice and one's conscience. In acrimonious issues such as village conflicts, events that disrupt the social order or a change in protocol, leadership resort to a Samoan maxim, *se'i moe le toa* meaning the warrior needs to rest. It offers respite from making rash decisions that need careful thought, ample time and exhaustive discussion. Leadership utilises reflective practice and delays decisions that require more consultation, collaboration and reflection. Avolio (2005) articulated "If you do not step back to reflect on significant events, you will certainly never achieve your full potential as a leader" (p. xv). Servant leadership characteristics of listening, awareness and conceptualisation are incorporated in the *tomanatu*.

This space reclaims reasoning powers by listening to the inner voice and the objective balancing of actions and consequences. It is reflective practice "an increasing awareness of thoughts and feelings to see things in a new light and a complete light" (Ferch & Spears, 2011, p. 99). Critical issues leaders balance openness to feedback and information against reflective practice and self-awareness leading "to an attempt to clarify what is going on and what is at stake in the situation" (Grogan, 2013, p. 64).

Tomanatu also incorporates conceptualisation, the ability to think beyond the present as an integral part of the future (Buchen, 1999). Servant leaders are visionaries, and their reflective practice provides clarity for leading the way forward. Maxwell (2007) referred to leadership as having an open mind that allow many

possibilities during precarious times. Being reflective adds strength and positively impacts the effective leader (Rath & Conchie, 2008).

Soalaupule

The term *soa* means to distribute, *lau* is your and *pule* is power referring to the distribution of power. *Soalaupule* refers to the kind of decision-making that involves all. Culturally, *soalaupule* involves decision-making at the highest level, a form of democracy undertaken by the *matais* that make the decisions for the family. As Wander (2013) postulated "the individual is important but never the focus. It is about the production of many, not the few" (p. 130). This type of decision-making is deemed appropriate for listening, persuasion, commitment to the growth of people and building community.

Those in the *soalaupule* relationship understand what Cashman (2008) postulated "At the heart of service is the principle of interdependence" (p. 69). It highlights how effective relationships are formed when people are willing to share power in the decision-making process (Leithwood & Duke, 1998). According to Cashman (2008), it is listening "that speaks to you through feelings, inspirations, intuitions and possibilities" (p. xxxvi). The relationship is nurtured through people's willingness to listen to others and is defined by covenantal relationships and transforming influences (Sendjaya, 2015).

The approach also involves persuasion, as Grogan (2013) claimed, "effective persuasion, then, is the capacity to listen to the perspectives of others" (p. 35). The process of *soalaupule* is an avenue to be heard, and one has the legitimacy to speak freely to convince others. Although the process may be lengthy, persuading and convincing people are integral to the consultation and collaboration process. As Grogan suggested, "Moral authority relies heavily on persuasion" (p. 387) and not coercion.

Soalaupule is viewed as a distributive form of leadership involving the delegation of authority that focuses on a commitment to the growth of people. Servant leaders encourage members to engage in decision-making as well as recognising that there are avenues for personal and professional development in the deliverance of service (Radcliffe, 2010; Cashman, 2012). Servant leadership characteristics of listening, persuasion, commitment to the growth of people and building community are integrated in the *soalaupule*.

Encouraging and creating opportunities for members to flourish also contributes to ensuring this enhances community building (Miller, 2011). *Soalaupule* imbues

members with a strong sense of responsibility and involvement in community decision-making. The approach is empowering, supports investment in the growth of people and caters for community needs. Members, who share and discuss similar experiences and goals, are not only professionally fulfilled, but they also become members that augment community building (Bennis & Nanus, 2003).

Conclusion

Servant leadership is advocated in the education sphere and its focus on care and service can benefit institutions and organisations. It adheres to the idea of serving as a vehicle for the empowerment of others and stands in direct opposition to the leader at the helm. As such the impetus to make a difference in institutions of learning through care and service could enrich the lives of teacher graduates and contribute to community enhancement. It recognises the humanising side of leadership for institutions and organisations to be effective and productive. People need to grow.

The ten attributes categorised under the care and service dimensions show significant similarities to the indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches. Subsequently, the focus on faculty members' servant leadership approach, their conceptualisation of servant leadership in praxis and the influence of western leadership on Samoan leadership approaches has revealed linkages and connections.

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