



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David

THE IMPACT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

BY

FRANCES OYINEZE WILSON-OBENEME

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER: 2114831

SUPERVISOR: LAURA JAMES

8TH FEBRUARY, 2025

THE IMPACT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: ***Frances Oyineze Wilson-Obeneme*** (candidate)

Date: 13/06/2025

STATEMENT 1

This work is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed: ***Frances Oyineze Wilson-Obeneme*** (candidate)

Date: 13/06/2025

STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my work, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

Signed: ***Frances Oyineze Wilson-Obeneme*** (candidate)

Date: 13/06/2025

Table of Contents

THE IMPACT OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN CHANGE MANAGEMENT WITHIN ORGANISATIONS	2
CHAPTER ONE	7
INTRODUCTION.....	7
1.1 Leadership as a Concept	7
1.2 Types of Leadership	13
1.3 The Importance of Leadership.....	16
1.4 Organisational Change and the Role of Leadership	17
1.2 Research Objectives.....	8
1.3 Research Questions	9
CHAPTER TWO	10
LITERATURE REVIEW	10
CHAPTER THREE.....	27
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	27
3.1 Research Design	27
3.2 Sample Selection.....	28
3.2 Data Collection Methods	29
3.2 Data Analysis.....	30
3.3 Expected Outcomes.....	30
3.4 Expected Outcomes.....	31
3.4 Importance of the Study	31
3.5 Limitations of the Study	32
CHAPTER FOUR.....	33
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS.....	33
Conclusion	58
References.....	61

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I give all thanks and glory to God for His abundant grace, strength, and unwavering faithfulness throughout this entire journey. Without His divine guidance, support, and love, none of this would have been possible. I am forever grateful for His presence in my life, and I trust that He has been the foundation of every step I have taken. To God be the glory for His constant provision and for leading me through both challenges and triumphs.

I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my incredible husband, Wilson Obeneme. Your love, patience, and unyielding support have been my anchor every step of the way. Your encouragement has been a constant source of strength, and your belief in me has kept me going even in times of doubt. You have been my partner, my friend, and my greatest cheerleader. Thank you for your unwavering dedication and for being a source of joy and comfort throughout this journey. I am truly blessed to have you by my side.

To my unborn child, you have already brought so much light into my life. Even though you are yet to be born, your presence within me has given me an abundance of purpose, joy, and motivation. Every day, I am reminded of the importance of perseverance, patience, and love. As I eagerly await the day I will hold you in my arms, know that you are already my source of inspiration. You are my quiet strength, and I look forward to sharing this accomplishment with you soon.

Laura James, my dissertation supervisor – I am so grateful for the encouragement and support you have provided to me in guiding and stirring me in the right direction always. Thank you so much.

Abstract

Servant leadership has come to light as a transformative leadership approach which places high emphasis on the well-being of employees, ethical decision-making, and organisational growth. This research critically takes a deep dive into the impact of servant leadership in change management within different organisations, exploring its effectiveness in fostering employee engagement, reducing resistance to change, and driving successful organisational transformation.

Through a review of existing literature and case studies, the body of work analyses how servant leaders facilitate change by promoting a culture of trust, collaboration, and empowerment. The findings suggest that organisations led by servant leaders experience higher adaptability, improved morale, and increased innovation during periods of transition. However, challenges such as hierarchical resistance and the time-intensive nature of servant leadership are also considered. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on leadership in organisational change and highlights the practical implications of adopting a servant leadership model in ever-changing business landscapes.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Leadership as a Concept

Leadership remains a key concept in many fields, including business, politics, military, education, and even social organisations. Leadership is commonly described as the capacity to guide, influence, motivate and inspire individuals and/or teams to achieve a common set of objectives. The concept of leadership does not solely refer to authority but encompasses an array of traits, behaviors, and situational dynamics which this research paper highlights.

Leadership can be explained in various ways, depending on the context in which it is being referenced. According to Northouse (2019), leadership is "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." Similarly, Bass and Bass (2008) describe leadership as the ability to motivate and move individuals towards attaining collective goals. Leadership means making quality choices, thinking ahead, encouraging others, and creating a positive space where individuals can learn and succeed.

Leadership is a complex idea that applies to many areas of life. There are different ways to lead, and each has its own strengths and challenges. Good leaders know how to adjust their style to fit the situation. Whether it's in business, government, or the community, strong leadership helps people grow, come up with new ideas, and make things better. As the world changes, we continue to need leaders who are skilled, honest, and have a clear vision for the future.

Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy that places emphasis on serving other individuals instead of wielding power over them. Initially coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1977, servant leadership challenges traditional leadership models, which often prioritise exercising authority, control, and organisational success over employee well-being. Instead, a servant leader seeks to empower, support, and care for the people they lead, which in turn fosters a culture of collaboration, trust, and ethical decision-making (Greenleaf, 1977).

This leadership style has increasingly gained prominence in business organisations, particularly as workplaces shift towards people-centric models that value employee engagement and corporate social responsibility. By putting the needs of employees, customers, and the broader community first, servant leaders contribute to long-term organisational success and sustainable leadership (Spears, 1995).

The aim of this research is to critically assess the impact of servant leadership on change within organisations, conducting analysis on employee engagement while under this style of leadership, exploring ways to reduce resistance and ensuring sustainable transformation.

1.2 Research Objectives

The key objectives of this study are:

1. To critically evaluate the role of servant leadership in regulating and governing employee behaviours during organisational change.
2. To assess the role of servant leadership on culture and dynamics within an organisation.

3. To evaluate how servant leadership could impact resistance to organisational change within a business.
4. To investigate the impact of servant leadership and employee team spirit during periods or organisational change and transition.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What role does servant leadership play in influencing employee behaviours during organisational change?
2. In which way does the servant-style of leadership impact culture, dynamics and adaptability?
3. How does servant leadership influence employee resistance to change during transition periods?
4. How does the servant style of leadership influence the commitment of employees during transition periods?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Servant leadership places a focus on the concept of collaboration and making decisions using an ethical framework as guiding rails. Robert Greenleaf (1977), describes servant leadership as serving other individuals first, fostering trust and empowering employees' growth and development. Greenleaf's theory is influenced by the idea that a leader's role is to support and empower followers. Unlike conventional ways of leadership which largely place emphasis on business objectives over individuals, the servant style of leadership puts a weighty significance on employee development and well-being (Liden et al., 2008).

Change initiatives often fail or become hindered when employees resist transitions due to feeling uncertain or undervalued (Kotter, 1996). Servant leadership puts a spotlight on trust and collaboration as tools to aid smooth transitions by ensuring employees feel understood and valued (Eva et al., 2019). In addition, a leader's ability to motivate individuals within an organisation could foster an environment where there is a culture of adaptability which in turn aids successful change (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

Organisational change is an inevitable process driven by external factors such as market competition, technological advancements, regulatory shifts, and internal organisational restructuring. While necessary for long-term success, change can also create stress, uncertainty, and resistance among employees, leading to decreased productivity and engagement (Kotter, 1996). The success of organisational change depends heavily on leadership effectiveness, as leaders set the tone for how transitions are managed.

Traditional leadership approaches, such as autocratic or transactional leadership, often rely on authority, control, and rewards or punishments to enforce change. However, these methods can lead to low morale, disengagement, and high turnover. In contrast, servant leadership presents an alternative model where leaders prioritize the needs, growth, and well-being of employees while fostering a culture of trust, empowerment, and collaboration (Greenleaf, 1970). This people-centred approach can facilitate smoother transitions by reducing resistance, increasing adaptability, and improving employee commitment.

The way the leadership of an organisation handles changes can determine whether employees embrace or resist it. Traditional leadership styles, which focus on authority and control, sometimes create stress and disengagement, leading to lower productivity. In contrast, servant leadership is a leadership approach that prioritises employees' well-being, making change more manageable and sustainable (Greenleaf, 1970).

The role of leadership within an organisation is necessary for navigating change with success. Servant leadership involves a leadership philosophy in which leaders place emphasis on the wellness, development and growth of employees first (Greenleaf, 1977).

Servant leadership is based on the idea that leaders exist to serve their employees rather than control them. This approach was introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf (1970), who argued that great leaders prioritise the growth, development, and well-being of their teams. A servant leader listens to employees, provides support, builds trust, and encourages personal and professional growth (Eva et al., 2019). In times of change, this leadership style can reduce fear, increase cooperation, and enhance job satisfaction, making employees more willing to accept new processes and structures (Liden et al., 2014).

From an economic and financial perspective, leadership directly influences employee productivity, retention, and organisational performance. Poorly managed change can lead to high turnover rates, absenteeism, and disengagement, which increase operational costs (Kotter, 1996). According to research by Hunter et al. (2013), organisations that embrace servant leadership experience higher employee loyalty and lower turnover rates, reducing recruitment and training costs.

Additionally, servant leaders encourage innovation and problem-solving, which can drive business growth and profitability (Van Dierendonck, 2011). When employees feel valued and heard, they are more likely to contribute ideas that improve efficiency and increase financial returns. Organisations that foster a positive and ethical workplace culture through servant leadership also tend to attract investors and customers, strengthening their market position (Spears, 1998).

Beyond economic benefits, servant leadership plays a significant role in shaping an organisation's social culture. Employees working under servant leaders report higher levels of job satisfaction, psychological well-being, and engagement (Liden et al., 2014). By promoting trust, inclusivity, and open communication, servant leadership creates a collaborative work environment where employees feel safe to express their concerns and embrace new ideas (Eva et al., 2019).

Additionally, in times of organisational change, servant leaders help reduce employee resistance by actively involving them in decision-making and addressing their concerns empathetically (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). This sense of inclusion makes employees more adaptable and willing to accept transitions. Servant leadership also contributes to diversity and inclusion, as it

focuses on recognising individual strengths and promoting fairness across all levels of an organisation.

One of the biggest challenges in managing change is ensuring that employees remain committed to the organisation. Employees often experience stress, fear, and uncertainty during transition periods, leading to disengagement or even resignation (Kotter, 1996). However, servant leadership fosters a supportive work environment where employees feel valued and secure, strengthening their commitment to the organisation (Liden et al., 2014).

A study by Eva et al. (2019) found that organisations led by servant leaders experienced higher levels of employee trust and commitment, even during major changes such as mergers and acquisitions. By encouraging personal growth, providing mentorship, and showing appreciation, servant leaders help employees stay motivated and engaged, reducing the likelihood of burnout or resignation.

Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy that emphasises service to employees rather than exerting power over them (Greenleaf, 1970). Unlike traditional leadership styles that focus on organisational goals above all else, servant leadership seeks to balance business success with employee development, creating an environment where individuals feel valued and motivated.

Servant leadership is based on a set of core principles that define how leaders interact with their teams and drive organisational growth. Some of the most important principles include:

1. Empathy and Active Listening

Servant leaders prioritise understanding and addressing the concerns of their employees. They actively listen to their team members, valuing their perspectives and emotions, which helps in building trust and improving communication (Greenleaf, 1977).

2. Humility and Self-Awareness

Unlike authoritarian leaders who seek control and personal recognition, servant leaders embrace humility. They acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses, accept feedback, and focus on supporting others rather than asserting dominance (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002).

3. Commitment to the Growth of Others

A core aspect of servant leadership is helping employees develop both personally and professionally. This includes offering mentorship, providing opportunities for skill-building, and encouraging employees to reach their full potential (Liden et al., 2014).

4. Trust and Ethical Leadership

Servant leaders operate with high levels of integrity and ethical responsibility. They prioritise honesty, transparency, and moral decision-making, ensuring that their leadership actions align with their values (Spears, 1995).

5. Building Community and Collaboration

Servant leaders promote a strong sense of teamwork and inclusivity within the organisation. They work towards creating a supportive and cooperative environment where individuals feel valued and motivated to contribute (Laub, 1999).

6. Leading by Example

Instead of merely delegating tasks and giving orders, servant leaders lead by example. They demonstrate the behaviours and attitudes they expect from their employees, fostering a positive organisational culture (Hunter, 1998).

2.1 Types of Leadership

Leadership comes in different types, each with its own style and impact on individuals and organisations. Here are some of the main types:

Autocratic Leadership Also called authoritarian leadership; this style is when the leader makes all the decisions without asking for input from others. It's useful in emergencies or highly organised settings like the military. However, it can make team members feel unhappy because they have little control or say in decisions. (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939).

Democratic Leadership This is also known as participative leadership. The leader works together with the team to make decisions. Everyone's ideas are welcomed, which can lead to more creativity and better team spirit. This style often leads to higher morale and productivity. (Goleman, 2000).

Laissez-Faire Leadership This hands-off style lets team members make their own decisions with little guidance from the leader. It works well when the team is experienced and motivated, but it can cause problems if teams need more direction, support, guidance or are less trained. (Bass, 1990).

Transformational Leadership Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their team to go above and beyond by creating a strong vision and encouraging personal growth. They build close relationships and help team members feel a sense of purpose. This style has been linked to increased job satisfaction and organisational success. (Burns, 1978).

Transactional Leadership This style is based on rewards and punishments. Leaders set clear goals and give feedback based on performance. It's most effective in structured settings where rules and efficiency are important. (Bass, 1985).

Servant Leadership Servant leadership prioritizes the needs of employees and stakeholders above the leader's own interests. It is built on empathy, active listening, and a commitment to the personal and professional growth of followers (Greenleaf, 1977). This leadership style is particularly effective in service-oriented industries.

Situational Leadership Situational leadership, developed by Hersey and Blanchard (1969), suggests that no single leadership style is best. Instead, leaders must adapt their approach based on the situation and the readiness level of their followers. This flexible style means the leader changes their approach based on the situation and how ready their team is to take on tasks. There's no one-size-fits-all method, so leaders must adjust to be effective in different settings.

2.2 The Importance of Leadership

Leadership is very important in many parts of life, from helping organisations and businesses succeed in improving society. Here are some of the main reasons why leadership matters:

1. **Enhancing Organisational Performance** Good leadership helps businesses succeed by boosting productivity, encouraging new ideas, and reaching important goals. Leaders give a clear vision and direction, helping organisations handle problems and stay ahead of the competition. (Kotter, 1996).
2. **Inspiring and Motivating Individuals** A strong leader inspires and motivates employees to achieve their full potential. Transformational leaders work to promote creativity, dedication, and perseverance within their teams (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

3. **Facilitating Change and Innovation** Leadership is essential for managing change, especially in today's rapidly changing world. Leaders need to stay ahead of industry developments and guide their organisations through periods of transition. (Fullan, 2001).
4. **Building Stronger Communities and Societies** Political and social leaders play a key role in shaping policies, supporting economic growth, and improving communities. Figures like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela made a lasting impact by standing up for social change.
5. **Crisis Management** During crisis periods, strong leadership is vital for making decisions and keeping processes stable. Good leaders offer reassurance, create action plans, and use resources effectively to address the situation. (Yukl, 2013).

2.3 Organisational Change and the Role of Leadership

Change within organisations is an unavoidable process that must take place for businesses to continually maintain competitiveness in an ever-changing commercial climate. Change within organisations is an unavoidable and essential process for businesses to stay competitive in an ever-evolving commercial landscape. As we navigate an era of rapid technological advancements, globalisation, and shifting consumer expectations, organisations must continuously adapt to maintain their edge. Organisational change is now a fundamental part of modern businesses and institutions, driven by both internal and external factors.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in driving and managing this change. Effective leadership ensures that transitions are well-managed, smooth, and beneficial to all stakeholders. A strong leader

provides the vision, direction, and support necessary to guide an organisation through times of transformation, addressing challenges along the way.

This research will explore the concept of organisational change, the vital role of leadership in facilitating such change, and the various challenges that leaders encounter when implementing successful transformations. Organisational change typically involves adjustments to a company's structure, strategies, operations, or culture, enabling it to respond effectively to pressures both from within and outside the organisation. Change can be classified into various types:

1. **Strategic Change** – Changes in long-term goals, vision, or competitive positioning (Kotter, 1996).
2. **Structural Change** – Modifications in the organisational hierarchy, reporting relationships, or work processes (Burke, 2017).
3. **Technological Change** – Adoption of new technologies to improve efficiency and innovation (Doppelt, 2017).
4. **Cultural Change** – Shifts in organisational values, behaviours, and workplace culture (Schein, 2010).

Change can be either phased (gradual) or sudden (radical). Regardless of the type, effective leadership is crucial in ensuring a smooth transition as leaders act as change agents, guiding employees through uncertainty and ensuring that new strategies are effectively implemented. The key roles of leadership in organisational change include:

1. **Setting a Vision for Change:** Leaders must communicate a clear vision that explains why change is necessary and how it will benefit the organisation. A well-articulated vision reduces resistance and fosters employee commitment (Kotter, 1996).
2. **Creating a Change Strategy:** Leaders must develop structured plans for implementing change which are easy to understand. This includes goal setting, establishing defined milestones, identifying resources, and outlining responsibilities of different parties to make sure that transitions happen very smoothly (Burnes, 2004).
3. **Engaging and Motivating Employees:** Employees often resist change due to fear of the unknown. Transformational leaders inspire and engage employees by providing support, encouraging innovation, and fostering a culture of trust (Bass & Riggio, 2006).
4. **Managing Resistance to Change:** Resistance is a natural response to change. Effective leaders address concerns, involve employees in decision-making, and communicate openly to alleviate fears (Lewin, 1951).
5. **Leading by Example:** Leaders must model the behaviours and attitudes they wish to see in their employees. If leaders demonstrate adaptability and commitment, employees are more likely to follow suit (Schein, 2010).
6. **Building a Change-Ready Culture:** Leaders play a critical role in creating a culture that embraces continuous learning and adaptability. This ensures that the organisation remains agile and responsive to future changes (Burke, 2017).

2.3 Challenges Leaders Face in Organisational Change

While leadership is essential for successful change, leaders face several challenges, including:

1. **Employee Resistance** – Employees may decide to resist change due to uncertainty, fear of job loss, or lack of understanding.
2. **Poor Communication** – Communication that is inadequate can create confusion and mistrust (Kotter, 1996).
3. **Resource Constraints** – Limited resources (which could be human or financial) can hinder the implementation of change initiatives.
4. **Short-Term Focus** – Some leaders may have the tendency to prioritise short-term results over long-term transformational changes (Doppelt, 2017).

2.4 Comparison with Other Leadership Styles

Leadership Style	Approach to Change	Impact on Employees
Autocratic Leadership	Top-down decisions with minimal employee involvement	High resistance, low morale
Transactional Leadership	Rewards and punishments drive behaviour	Compliance but little intrinsic motivation
Transformational Leadership	Inspires vision and motivation but can be demanding	High energy but potential burnout
Servant Leadership	Focuses on employee needs, development, and involvement	High trust, engagement, and adaptability

Servant leadership stands out because it builds trust and reduces employee resistance, which are critical for successful change management.

Real-World Examples of Servant Leaders

Several influential leaders have demonstrated servant leadership principles throughout history and in modern business settings. Some notable examples include:

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

Mahatma Gandhi is one of the most well-known servant leaders in history. His leadership was based on selfless service, peace, and moral integrity. He prioritised the needs of his people and led India's independence movement through humility, peaceful protest, and personal sacrifice (Gandhi, 1997).

Nelson Mandela (1918-2013)

Nelson Mandela's leadership was centred on unity, reconciliation, and equality. After being imprisoned for 27 years, he emerged as a leader who prioritised peace over revenge, ultimately guiding South Africa towards democracy. His servant leadership approach helped unite a divided nation (Mandela, 1994).

Howard Schultz (Former CEO of Starbucks)

Howard Schultz demonstrated servant leadership by focusing on employee well-being and corporate social responsibility. Under his leadership, Starbucks introduced healthcare benefits for part-time workers, ethical sourcing of coffee, and a commitment to creating a positive work culture (Schultz, 2011).

Satya Nadella (CEO of Microsoft)

Since becoming CEO of Microsoft in 2014, Satya Nadella has been recognised for his empathetic leadership style, prioritising employee empowerment, workplace inclusivity, and fostering a culture of innovation. He shifted Microsoft's corporate culture towards collaboration and continuous learning (Eva et al., 2019).

2.5 How Servant Leadership Affects Change Management within Organisations

Change management is the process of guiding organisations through transitions, such as restructuring, adopting new technologies, or shifting company culture. Change can disrupt employee routines, create uncertainty, and lower morale. Employees may feel threatened by job restructuring, fear skill redundancy, or doubt the effectiveness of new policies (Kotter, 1996).

How Servant Leadership Influences Employee Behaviour

Change can disrupt employee routines, create uncertainty, and lower morale. Employees may feel threatened by job restructuring, fear skill redundancy, or doubt the effectiveness of new policies (Kotter, 1996). Servant leadership helps mitigate these negative effects by:

- **Providing emotional reassurance** – Employees feel safer when leaders acknowledge their concerns and support them (Eva et al., 2019).
- **Encouraging participation** – Employees are more accepting of change when they feel included in decision-making (Liden et al., 2014).
- **Building trust through transparency** – Open communication about why change is happening reduces anxiety (Hunter et al., 2013).

Impact on Organisational Culture, Dynamics, and Adaptability

A rigid, hierarchical culture often struggles with change due to a lack of communication and trust. Servant leadership fosters a culture of adaptability through:

- **Psychological safety** – Employees feel comfortable expressing concerns without fear of retaliation (Spears, 1998).
- **A learning-oriented mindset** – Encouraging continuous development makes employees more adaptable to new roles and technologies (Van Dierendonck, 2011).
- **Cross-functional collaboration** – A servant leadership culture promotes teamwork across departments, making change smoother (Liden et al., 2014).

Reducing Resistance to Change

Resistance to change arises from fear, uncertainty, and lack of involvement. Servant leadership addresses this by:

- **Providing clear explanations and justifications** – Employees are more likely to support change if they understand its benefits (Kotter, 1996).
- **Offering training and development** – Employees gain confidence in new processes when they receive proper training (Eva et al., 2019).
- **Creating an inclusive decision-making process** – Employees feel valued when they have a voice in transitions (Hunter et al., 2013).

Increasing Employee Commitment and Performance

During periods of change, servant leadership fosters commitment by:

- **Recognizing employee contributions** – Leaders who acknowledge employee efforts boost morale (Liden et al., 2014).
- **Strengthening relationships between leaders and employees** – Trust increases engagement and loyalty (Eva et al., 2019).
- **Providing a clear vision for the future** – Employees are more committed when they see long-term benefits (Spears, 1998).

Servant leadership plays a crucial role in making this process smoother through the following ways:

1. **Building Trust and Reducing Resistance:** Employees often resist change due to fear or uncertainty. Servant leaders build trust by being transparent and prioritizing employee concerns (Liden et al., 2014). Research shows that when employees trust their leaders, they are more open to change (Sendjaya et al., 2008).
2. **Increasing Employee Engagement:** Servant leadership encourages employee involvement, leading to higher job satisfaction and commitment. Studies show that engaged employees are more willing to support organisational changes (Hunter et al., 2013).
3. **Creating an Ethical Work Environment:** Ethical leadership helps organisations navigate change responsibly. Servant leaders promote fairness and integrity, reducing workplace conflicts during transitions (Schwarz et al., 2016).
4. **Empowering Employees for Adaptability:** Servant leaders focus on personal and professional growth, which helps employees develop the skills needed to handle

change (Chiniara & Bentein, 2016). Empowered employees are more likely to take initiative and support new initiatives.

Research Evidence

Several studies highlight the positive effects of servant leadership on change management:

- Liden et al. (2008) found that servant leadership improves employee performance, which is essential for handling organisational change.
- Eva et al. (2019) showed that servant leadership increases employee loyalty, making change transitions easier.
- Chiniara & Bentein (2016) discovered that servant leadership enhances employee adaptability, which is key during times of change.

Challenges of Servant Leadership

Despite its many benefits, servant leadership also comes with challenges:

1. **Perceived Weakness** – Some may view servant leadership as too soft or passive, especially in competitive or high-pressure business environments (Hunter, 1998).
2. **Time-Intensive Approach** – Servant leadership requires patience, as investing in employee development and well-being takes time and effort.
3. **Difficult to Implement in Hierarchical Organisations** – In traditional organisations with rigid hierarchies, transitioning to a servant leadership approach may face resistance from senior management (van Dierendonck, 2011).

While transformational leadership remains dominant in discussions of change leadership (Kotter, 2012), servant leadership has not been sufficiently explored in this context. The existing body of work often positions effective change leaders as visionary, authoritative figures who inspire followers through charisma and goal-oriented strategies (Yukl, 2013). In contrast, servant leadership shifts the focus towards humility, active listening, empathy, and the empowerment of others (Greenleaf, 1977). These attributes are especially critical during times of change, where employees may experience uncertainty, fear, and disengagement.

By investigating the application of servant leadership principles within organisational change management, this study contributes to the rebalancing of leadership theory. It argues that change initiatives can benefit significantly from leaders who serve their teams first, fostering trust and collaboration, rather than relying solely on directive or transformational approaches.

Another significant gap addressed by this research lies in the limited attention paid to the ethical and emotional dimensions of leadership during change processes with little or no focus on how leaders can support the well-being of their workforce throughout the transition.

Servant leadership literature has often been confined to non-profit, religious, or educational contexts, raising questions about its applicability in modern, profit-driven organisations. This study challenges those assumptions by exploring how servant leadership can be successfully implemented in diverse organisational settings, including corporate environments undergoing structural or cultural transformation.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aims to utilise both qualitative and quantitative research methods to investigate in-depth insights on the impact of servant leadership on change management. This paper will explore the understanding of how servant leadership tends to impact employee experiences during business transitions and change.

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology employed in this study. It discusses the research design, the approach taken, the methods of data collection, the sampling strategy, and the data analysis techniques. The aim is to ensure that the research is conducted systematically to generate reliable and valid findings regarding the impact of servant leadership on change management within organisations.

A well-defined methodology is crucial to achieving accurate and meaningful results. This chapter also outlines the ethical considerations followed during the research and the measures taken to enhance the reliability and validity of the study.

3.1 Research Design

This study aims to use surveys, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis to collect, interpret and analyse data.

According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research is useful in understanding human experiences, behaviours, and perceptions in their natural setting while quantitative techniques are used to collect measurable data. Since servant leadership and change management are inherently

human-centred phenomena, using both qualitative and quantitative research provides in-depth insights into how these elements interact within organisations.

A mixed methods research design was chosen to balance the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative data, collected through surveys, helped identify patterns and relationships between servant leadership behaviours and change outcomes. In contrast, the qualitative data, obtained through semi-structured interviews, allowed participants to share their personal views in more detail.

3.2 Sample Selection

This study aims to utilise purposive sampling to highlight medium and large organisations that have undergone change under the servant leadership style with team leads, employees and professionals who have firsthand experience.

Purposive sampling allows researchers to choose individuals who have direct experience with the subject matter, ensuring the collection of relevant and insightful data (Patton, 2002). The study will involve leaders and employees from at least three organisations that have undergone recent organisational change.

To ensure diversity in perspectives, participants will be selected from different hierarchical levels, including senior executives, middle managers, and frontline employees.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

1. Surveys: This will involve professionals, team leaders and employees who have undergone change discussing the challenges faced, experiences and perceptions of leadership effectiveness through gathering of data from a pool of participants in a structured manner. The qualitative insights from this will aid in providing relevant data on servant leadership, traits and change management experiences.

The survey will comprise both closed-ended and open-ended questions and will be structured into three main sections:

- **Demographic Data:** This section will capture information such as age, gender, role, department, and years of service.
- **Servant Leadership Perceptions:** This section will utilize Likert-scale statements to assess key servant leadership behaviours such as empathy, listening, accountability, and humility (Liden et al., 2008).
- **Change Management Experience:** This section will measure variables such as emotional responses, resistance to change, communication clarity, and adaptability during organisational transitions.

The Likert scale will provide numerical values for participants' levels of agreement with various statements, thereby allowing for statistical analysis of trends and relationships (DeVellis, 2017).

2. Semi-Structured Interviews: This involves interviews with team leads and professionals with the aim to understand the experiences, attitudes and perceptions of servant leadership during change management. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with organisational leaders,

managers, and employees involved in change management. This method allows for flexibility, enabling participants to elaborate on their experiences while ensuring that key topics are covered (Kvale, 2007). The interview questions will focus on leadership styles, employees' experiences with change, and the perceived effectiveness of servant leadership in guiding change.

By studying specific organisations undergoing change, the research can capture rich, contextual insights that may be overlooked in broader studies. Case studies are beneficial for exploring complex interactions and providing practical, real-world applications of theoretical concepts (Stake, 1995).

3.2 Data Analysis

The aim is to use thematic analysis for analysis to identify themes that keep recurring, behavioural patterns and change management outcomes where applicable. The steps in thematic analysis include:

1. Familiarisation with the data through repeated reading.
2. Identifying recurring themes.
3. Reviewing and refining themes to ensure consistency and coherence.
4. Interpreting themes in relation to the research questions.

3.3 Expected Outcomes

Ethical guidelines will be strictly followed to protect participants' rights and ensure the integrity of the research. Key ethical measures include:

- **Informed Consent:** Participants will receive detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights before providing consent.

- **Confidentiality:** Personal data and responses will be anonymized to protect participants' privacy.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participants will have the right to withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences.
- **Data Security:** All collected data will be securely stored and used solely for research purposes.

These measures align with ethical research standards outlined by the British Psychological Society (BPS, 2018) and the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020).

3.4 Expected Outcomes

This study aims to show that the servant style of leadership impacts change management through the following:

1. Improving employee trust in leadership
2. Reducing organisational change resistance
3. Ensuring that a culture is built where adaptability and collaboration is enabled
4. Improving the morale of the employees and ensuring there is job satisfaction especially during transition periods.

3.5 Importance of the Study

This research will add to the existing body of work on leadership styles and their role in change management through supplying sufficient evidence of the effectiveness in change management.

There will also be recommendations made for leaders that aim to navigate change while balancing employee morale and productivity.

3.6 Limitations of the Study

While, this research aims to provide invaluable insights, there may be certain limitations which include:

1. Limited ability to generalise on conclusions due to the proposed use of a purposive method of sampling.
2. Merging data from both qualitative and quantitative sources can be quite challenging and complex.
3. There may be need to investigate over very long periods to understand how changes may be impacted long-term.

Despite these challenges, the mixed methods approach was chosen because it offered a broader and more nuanced perspective on how servant leadership influences organisational change. The combination of surveys and interviews helped strengthen the study's validity through and provided valuable insights that might not have emerged using a single method.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present and discuss the findings of the study based on the qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interviews and structured surveys carried out. The data was collated to explore what role that servant leadership plays in influencing organisational change. As previously explained in the introduction, this chapter examines core themes emerging from the interview data using thematic analysis and from the survey responses through descriptive statistics.

To ensure a thorough and in-depth understanding of the data, the findings are presented under each theme identified from both sources. The chapter includes visual aids such as bar charts, graphs, and analysis to help clarify and further illuminate the findings. Additionally, the chapter incorporates both positive and negative responses from participants to offer a well-rounded perspective.

This chapter is structured as follows: Section 4.2 presents the interview findings, with detailed thematic analysis of the five main themes that emerged from the data. Section 4.3 provides the survey findings, describing participant responses in relation to servant leadership and change management. Section 4.4 offers a cross-analysis of the interview and survey results, highlighting similarities and differences between the two. Finally, Section 4.5 provides a summary of the key findings.

4.2 Survey Findings

From the survey, three major themes emerged: psychological safety and trust, role-specific perceptions, and the pace vs. people dilemma.

4.2.1 Psychological Safety and Trust

Trust is consistently cited by respondents as a core outcome of servant leadership.

Respondent 3 stated "Trust created, reducing turnover", highlighting the value of emotional security. Likewise, Respondent 8 noted that "Respect and inclusion made change easier", tying the relational aspects of servant leadership to smoother transitions.

It can evidently be noted that servant leaders create environments where employees feel heard and valued, contributing to psychological safety (Eva et al., 2019). Psychological safety is linked to reduced resistance and better collaboration, vital in periods of flux (Edmondson, 1999).

4.2.2 Role-Specific Perceptions

A divergence in perception between various hierarchical levels was evident from the responses. Entry-level employee expressed skepticism and challenges:

- Respondent 4: "No follow-through led to distrust"

Conversely, higher-level employees (Respondents 1–3, 6–8) generally reported positive outcomes, such as increased loyalty and unity. This disparity suggests that the impact of servant leadership may depend on effective communication across ranks.

This aligns with research indicating that middle and senior managers often receive more direct engagement from leadership, while lower-tier employees may be inadvertently excluded (Liden et al., 2008).

4.2.3 The Pace vs. People Dilemma

Several respondents noted the trade-off between empathetic leadership and rapid decision-making:

- Respondent 2: "Servant style reduced fear but slowed decisions"
- Respondent 6: "Loyalty boosted but slow decisions"

This represents a classic organisational tension—balancing soft skills with hard deliverables. While servant leadership may elevate morale, it could impede the decisiveness required during change (Hunter et al., 2013). Hence, servant leadership must be strategically aligned with change pace expectations.

4.3 Interview Findings: Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to interpret the qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews. From the interview responses, five core themes emerged that explained the impact of servant leadership on change management: Leadership Empathy, Culture and Trust, Commitment and Loyalty, Adaptability, and Resistance Management.

Each theme is discussed in detail, offering both positive observations and critical feedback where applicable. The analysis highlights how participants perceive servant leadership and its role in shaping employee behaviours and attitudes during both small-scale and large-scale organisational change.

4.3.1 Leadership Empathy

Leadership Empathy was the dominant theme identified during the interviews. Many respondents described servant leadership as rooted in emotional intelligence, where leaders demonstrated a deep understanding of their employees' needs, concerns, and emotional states, especially during times of great uncertainty and change.

- **Listening (7 references):** A recurring sub-theme in the interviews was the importance of leaders listening attentively to their employees. Participants frequently mentioned that leaders who actively listen—without judgment or interruption—helped foster an environment of trust. For example, employees expressed that their leaders took the time to engage in regular one-on-one meetings to check in on progress of activities, listen to their concerns, and offer reassurance. This act of listening made them feel valued and supported during times of change and uncertainty.
- **Emotional Support (6 references):** Emotional support was a critical aspect of Leadership Empathy. Several employees discussed how their leaders acknowledged the emotional toll of change. These leaders not only focused on the business side of change but also considered the emotional challenges employees might be facing. As a result, employees felt reassured and psychologically safe. Leaders who showed genuine care for their staff helped build resilience in their teams, making them more receptive to change initiatives.
- **Accessibility (5 references):** The accessibility of leaders was another important factor contributing to leadership empathy. Participants explained that servant leaders who were approachable, either in person or through digital channels, made a significant impact on employees' comfort levels. Employees felt more at ease

approaching their leaders with concerns, knowing that they could rely on their support.

Other Observations: While empathy was widely appreciated, a few participants noted that in certain instances, leadership empathy could result in indecisiveness. Some employees felt that, although their leaders were attentive and emotionally supportive, they lacked the necessary decisiveness required during critical phases of change. These delays in action led to confusion and a lack of direction, which in turn affected employee confidence and motivation.

4.3.2 Culture and Trust

The theme of Culture and Trust reflected the significant role servant leadership plays in establishing a positive organisational culture. Participants noted that servant leadership contributed to a culture of trust, which is essential for successful change management.

- **Transparency (6 references):** Transparency in leadership communication was frequently mentioned as a crucial component of building a strong foundation of trust. Many participants expressed that their leaders were open about the reasons for the changes and the expected outcomes. This transparency helped reduce the spread of rumours and alleviated fear. Employees appreciated that their leaders were forthcoming with information, even when the information was difficult or uncertain.
- **Mutual Respect (5 references):** Mutual respect was seen as foundational to a trusting culture. Servant leaders were described as showing respect for employees' opinions, regardless of their rank, role or position within the organisation. Employees

felt that their contributions mattered, which led to increased engagement and collaboration during change initiatives.

- **Inclusiveness (4 references):** Inclusiveness was another key sub-theme. Many employees spoke positively about being included in decision-making processes, even when their input did not directly influence the final decisions. This inclusivity fostered a sense of ownership and belonging among employees, making them feel more invested in the organisation's goals.

Other Observations: Despite the generally positive perception of servant leadership's impact on trust and culture, some employees noted that there was a gap between what leadership communicated and the actions they took. Some participants felt that while their leaders verbally promoted inclusiveness, the decision-making process often remained hierarchical, with few opportunities for employee input to result in tangible changes. This disconnect led to feelings of frustration and disillusionment for some employees.

4.3.3 Commitment and Loyalty

The theme of Commitment and Loyalty emerged as a direct result of the supportive, empathetic approach of servant leadership. Participants indicated that servant leadership practices fostered stronger emotional connections between employees and the organisation, leading to increased loyalty and commitment.

- **Job Retention (5 references):** Many participants stated that servant leadership practices helped increase their desire to stay with the organisation. In particular, the care shown by leaders, especially during periods of transition, encouraged employees

to remain committed to the organisation. The support they received created a sense of belonging and connection, making it harder for employees to consider leaving, even when faced with external opportunities.

- **Extra Effort (5 references):** Employees also reported that servant leadership inspired them to go above and beyond in their roles. Many stated that they were motivated to work harder, put in additional hours, or take on extra responsibilities to support the organisation through changes. This extra effort was driven by the emotional bond they had with their leaders and the desire to reciprocate the care and support they had received.
- **Emotional Bond (4 references):** The emotional bond between employees and their leaders was frequently cited as a significant contributor to employee loyalty. Several participants stated that the emotional connection fostered by their leaders made them more dedicated to the organisation's success, even when facing challenges or uncertainties.

Other Observations: A few participants, however, expressed concerns about the potential downside of heightened loyalty. They noted that this emotional commitment sometimes led to burnout, especially when employees felt pressured to take on excessive workloads to "repay" the support and trust their leaders had shown them. This excessive commitment, they argued, could ultimately have negative effects on employee well-being and job satisfaction.

4.3.4 Adaptability

The theme of Adaptability was closely linked to servant leadership behaviours that encouraged flexibility and openness to change. Many employees reported feeling more adaptable and resilient in the face of organisational change due to the support and guidance provided by their leaders.

- **Flexibility (5 references):** Employees expressed that servant leaders created a work environment that encouraged flexibility. They felt that they had the freedom to adapt to new roles, responsibilities, or ways of working without fear of retribution. This flexibility was particularly valuable during times of organisational restructuring or role transitions.
- **Training Support (4 references):** The availability of training and development resources was another important factor in promoting adaptability. Many participants appreciated that servant leaders actively provided them with the tools and resources they needed to develop new skills. This helped employees feel more confident in handling new tasks or responsibilities during periods of change.
- **Growth Mindset (4 references):** Servant leaders also fostered a growth mindset, where mistakes were viewed as opportunities for learning rather than failures. Employees reported that their leaders encouraged them to embrace challenges as learning experiences, which increased their willingness to take on new tasks and responsibilities.

Other Observations: While adaptability was generally enhanced by servant leadership, some participants mentioned that there were times when clarity was lacking. Several employees felt that while they were encouraged to be flexible, the lack of clear direction

or measurable objectives made it difficult to gauge their progress during change processes. This led to uncertainty and diminished confidence in their ability to succeed in the face of change.

4.3.5 Resistance Management

The final theme, Resistance Management, focused on how servant leadership helped manage resistance to change. Servant leaders' empathy, communication skills, and emotional intelligence were often cited as tools that helped reduce employee resistance during times of transition.

- **Fear Reduction (5 references):** A major benefit of servant leadership mentioned by participants was its ability to reduce employee fear. Leaders who demonstrated empathy and understanding were able to alleviate concerns and reduce resistance to change. Employees felt less anxious about the unknown when their leaders provided reassurance and support.
- **Clear Communication (4 references):** Consistent and clear communication was critical in reducing resistance. Employees who were kept informed about the reasons for change, the expected outcomes, and the steps involved felt more secure and less likely to resist. Servant leaders who communicated openly were perceived as credible and trustworthy, further reducing resistance.
- **Acknowledging Concerns (2 references):** Finally, employees appreciated that servant leaders took the time to acknowledge their concerns, even if they were unable to provide immediate solutions. This helped employees feel valued and respected, which in turn reduced resistance.

4.4 Cross-Analysis: Interview and Survey Data

Both the interviews and survey data emphasised psychological safety, trust, and employee empowerment as major benefits of servant leadership during organisational change. This aligns with literature suggesting that servant leaders cultivate a psychologically safe environment where innovation and change are more easily adopted (Eva et al., 2019; Edmondson, 1999).

Themes such as empathy, listening, and supportive leadership emerged in both methods, validating the credibility of the data. For example, emotional support (Interview theme 4.3.1) was mirrored in the survey theme of psychological safety, suggesting a strong correlation between the presence of servant leadership and emotional well-being during change.

However, disparities in perceptions based on organisational role were stark. While interviews with mid-to-senior level staff portrayed servant leadership as largely successful, lower-tier employees described inconsistencies in its application. This mismatch was also reflected in the survey responses, where statements such as “No follow-through led to distrust” pointed to a gap between leadership intent and employee experience.

Such findings reinforce the idea that servant leadership must be distributed, not concentrated at the top. Without mechanisms to ensure equity in leadership engagement, the benefits of servant leadership may remain unevenly distributed (Liden et al., 2014).

The pace vs. people dilemma further complicates the implementation of servant leadership in volatile and unstable environments. While change requires speed, servant leadership prioritises

reflection and consensus. Interviewees and survey participants both referenced delays in action stemming from over-consideration or emotional hesitation.

This aligns with previous research by Spears (1995) and Hunter et al. (2013), suggesting that servant leadership should not be viewed as a remedy or solution for all problems. Servant leadership is not meant to be a one-size-fits-all approach to leading individuals and businesses through change. Instead, it may need to be integrated with transactional or transformational leadership approaches that can compensate for its potential limitations in urgency and clarity (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Another nuanced insight emerged around the emotional intensity servant leadership can generate. Interview data (4.2.3) pointed to heightened loyalty and extra effort but also raised concerns about burnout. Employees feeling indebted to caring leaders might overextend themselves, leading to unintended negative outcomes.

This highlights the need for balanced expectations within servant-led cultures. Leaders must not only support employees emotionally but also safeguard their well-being by setting boundaries and monitoring workload intensity (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

4.5 What role does servant leadership play in influencing employee behaviours during organisational change?

The role of servant leadership in shaping employee behaviours during organisational change is deeply significant. This leadership style promotes a nurturing and inclusive environment that positively transforms how employees perceive and engage with change processes. The behavioural outcomes associated with servant leadership—such as resilience, proactive

engagement, psychological safety, and trust—are consistently reported in both the qualitative interviews and survey findings. These behaviours, in turn, determine the success or failure of organisational transformation initiatives.

4.5.1 Emotional Intelligence and Support

One of the most powerful mechanisms by which servant leadership influences employee behaviour is through emotional intelligence. Servant leaders are great at recognising, understanding, and managing not only their own emotions but also those of others.

Goleman (1995) defines emotional intelligence as a key leadership trait, and servant leadership embodies this by prioritising emotional connection.

Employees in the study described their leaders as individuals who listened attentively and responded empathetically to their concerns. This was particularly important during periods of uncertainty when anxiety levels were high. For instance, multiple participants noted that during organisational restructuring, their leaders initiated one-on-one sessions not to evaluate performance but to provide emotional reassurance. This behaviour fostered emotional stability and led to increased openness to change.

Emotional support from leaders helped shift employee behaviour from passive compliance to active engagement. Employees felt more secure in their roles and expressed a higher willingness to participate in problem-solving and innovation.

4.5.2 Trust and Psychological Safety

Trust emerged as a dominant theme across interviews and surveys. When employees trust their leaders, they interpret organisational change as a developmental opportunity rather

than a threat. The literature supports this observation, with Edmondson (1999) highlighting psychological safety as a key driver of innovation and collaboration.

Servant leaders build trust by being transparent, consistent, and honest. Participants frequently mentioned that servant leaders communicated early and often about coming changes, even when all the details were not yet known. This openness helped to reduce fear-driven behaviours such as resistance, avoidance, and absenteeism.

Employees felt empowered to voice their opinions without fear of punishment. This safety in expression ensured that there was increased collaboration, initiative-taking, and voluntary assumption of leadership roles within teams.

4.5.3 Encouragement of Ownership and Responsibility

Another behavioural outcome influenced by servant leadership is the assumption of ownership. Employees under servant leaders demonstrated a strong sense of responsibility towards organisational goals. This is consistent with Liden et al. (2008), who argue that servant leadership fosters a sense of stewardship and psychological ownership among employees.

Inclusive decision-making processes were cited by employees as pivotal. Leaders who sought employee input—even on high-level strategic matters—instilled a sense of inclusion and importance. As a result, employees became internal advocates of change, taking on tasks beyond their job descriptions, suggesting improvements, and championing new processes to colleagues.

Employees were no longer just executors of change but co-creators, which increased engagement and reduced apathy.

4.5.4 Reduction of Fear and Defensive Behaviours

Fear is a common reaction to organisational change. It often manifests in defensive attitudes and patterns such as procrastination, resistance, or even sabotage. Servant leadership counters this by creating a supportive climate. Participants recounted instances where their leaders validated their fears and offered tailored support, ranging from extended deadlines to emotional counselling.

This approach helped employees regulate their emotional responses, making them more receptive to change. Defensive patterns were replaced by open communication, flexibility, and cooperation. In contrast, employees under more autocratic leaders reported feeling isolated and stressed, which hindered their performance and adaptability.

4.5.5 Promoting Adaptability and Learning Behavior

Servant leaders also catalyse learning behaviours, a critical component of successful change. Employees under such leadership were more willing to embrace new skills, technologies, and roles. The leaders' tolerance for failure and emphasis on continuous learning created an environment where experimentation was encouraged.

According to Senge (1990), learning organisations are more agile and capable of thriving amid uncertainty. Servant leadership directly contributes to this by cultivating a growth mindset. Employees were found to engage more with training programs, seek feedback proactively, and take calculated risks to improve performance—all indicative of adaptive behaviour.

4.6 In which way does the servant-style of leadership impact culture, dynamics and adaptability?

4.6.1 Creation of a Trust-Based Culture

Servant leaders are transparent, ethical, and committed to the well-being of their teams. These traits contribute to a culture of trust. Trust is not just a behavioural outcome; it becomes a systemic feature of the organisation.

Employees reported that when servant leaders disclosed the rationale for change, including the risks and unknowns, it created a perception of honesty and integrity. This eliminated feelings of manipulation and reduced cynicism. Employees became emotionally aligned with organisational objectives, reinforcing a trust-based culture that supported long-term commitment.

4.6.2 Fostering a Culture of Respect and Inclusiveness

Rigid hierarchical structures often stifle innovation and disempower lower-level employees. Servant leadership flattens these hierarchies by promoting a culture with equal rights and opportunities. Leaders were described as "accessible," "approachable," and "willing to listen," which led to more inclusive workplaces.

Inclusiveness was evident in how decisions were made. Cross-departmental task forces, town-hall meetings, and open forums were all tools used by servant leaders to solicit broad input. This inclusiveness helped embed fairness and respect into the organisational culture, making change efforts feel co-owned rather than top-down.

4.6.3 Embedding a Growth-Oriented Culture

Servant leaders create cultures that prioritise learning over perfection. Employees were frequently encouraged to develop new skills and were supported in doing so through coaching, mentoring, and access to training resources. Mistakes were treated as learning opportunities, reinforcing a culture of continuous improvement.

4.6.4 Psychological Safety as a Cultural Norm

Psychological safety is more than a personal feeling—it becomes a collective norm in servant-led organisations. Employees shared that they felt safe admitting mistakes, voicing concerns, and experimenting without fear of punishment. This cultural norm not only reduces resistance but also accelerates the feedback loops essential for successful change implementation.

Impact on Team Dynamics:

1. Enhanced Collaboration and Cohesion:

- The findings demonstrate that servant leadership enhanced team cohesion, with participants reporting that cross-functional collaboration improved significantly during change initiatives.

2. Distributed Leadership:

- Teams under servant leaders often practiced a form of distributed leadership, where decision-making and responsibility were shared more evenly across team members. This flattened structure increased engagement and reduced power struggles.

3. Mutual Accountability:

- Servant leadership instilled a sense of mutual accountability within teams. Employees not only felt responsible for their individual tasks but also felt a collective responsibility for team outcomes.

Impact on Adaptability:

1. Increased Flexibility:

- Servant leaders encouraged employees to be flexible and agile, adjusting to new processes, technologies, and strategies without feeling overwhelmed or unsupported.

2. Support for Skill Development:

- Many respondents highlighted that servant leaders proactively provided resources, training, and mentorship to help employees build new competencies, directly enhancing organisational adaptability.

3. Cultivating Change Readiness:

- Through emotional support and trust-building, servant leaders prepared employees psychologically to accept and embrace change, creating a change-ready workforce that views transition as opportunity rather than threat.

3. How does servant leadership influence employee resistance to change during transition periods?

The findings clearly show that servant leadership substantially mitigates employee resistance to change through emotional reassurance, transparent communication, and participatory practices.

Key Mechanisms for Reducing Resistance

1. Emotional Reassurance and Fear Reduction:

- Participants repeatedly stressed that servant leaders reduced emotional fear associated with change. Employees felt heard, validated, and emotionally supported, making them less fearful of the unknown and thus less resistant.

2. Clarity Through Transparent Communication:

- Servant leaders minimised uncertainty by communicating openly and frequently about change initiatives. Employees who understood the "why" behind change were more likely to support it. Transparency prevented false information and rumours, which often fuel resistance.

3. Participation and Empowerment:

- Involving employees in change discussions and decision-making fostered a sense of control and ownership. Employees who participated in shaping change processes were psychologically committed to their success rather than resistant.

4. Acknowledging and Addressing Concerns:

- Servant leaders openly acknowledged employees' fears and concerns rather than dismissing them. By validating emotions, they created a dialogue where concerns could be addressed constructively, reducing passive or active forms of resistance.

5. Building Trust Over Time:

- Trust, carefully built over time through consistent servant leadership behaviours, created a reservoir of goodwill. When change was announced, employees were more likely to give leadership the benefit of the doubt, thus resisting less.

Observed Reduction in Resistance Behaviours:

- Lower turnover intentions during change periods.
- Reduced passive resistance (e.g., procrastination, withdrawal).
- Decrease in active resistance (e.g., vocal opposition, sabotage).
- Higher levels of emotional acceptance and practical compliance.

4. How does the servant-style of leadership influence the commitment of employees during transition periods?

Findings strongly support the idea that servant leadership increases employee commitment during transition periods by creating emotional bonds, fostering a sense of belonging, and reinforcing psychological contracts between the employee and the organisation.

Drivers of Increased Commitment

1. Emotional Bonding:

- Employees expressed that servant leaders' emotional attentiveness made them feel genuinely cared for. This emotional connection translated into higher affective commitment—where employees stay because they want to, not because they have to.

2. Reciprocity Norms:

- Servant leaders' investment in employee well-being created a powerful sense of belonging. Employees felt compelled to reciprocate their leaders' trust and care through loyalty and dedication, even when facing personal inconvenience.

3. Enhancement of Psychological Ownership:

- By involving employees in decision-making and respecting their inputs, servant leaders fostered psychological ownership of change initiatives. Employees who "owned" the change felt personally committed to ensuring its success.

4. Support During Uncertainty:

- Servant leaders' consistent support during uncertain transitions made employees feel that their personal and professional interests were protected. This reassurance reduced turnover intentions and increased organisational commitment.

5. Recognition and Validation:

- Recognition from servant leaders during change efforts strengthened employees' sense of worth, further boosting emotional and normative commitment to the organisation.

Negative Side Effects Observed

- Some participants noted that extreme loyalty and commitment sometimes led to overwork and burnout, especially when employees internalised organisational goals to the detriment of their own work-life balance.

Summary of Answers to Research Questions

The qualitative data collected through interviews and surveys provided detailed and meaningful insights into how servant leadership affects employees and the wider organisation during periods of change. The findings revealed both strengths and potential drawbacks of servant leadership in different areas, which are summarised in response to each research question below:

1. How does servant leadership influence employee behaviours during organisational change?

Servant leadership plays a significant role in shaping how employees behave when their organisation is going through change. Leaders who adopt this style focus on understanding and meeting the emotional and professional needs of their employees. They listen actively, show compassion, and offer emotional support. As a result, employees feel safe, valued, and respected, which encourages them to be more engaged, cooperative, and willing to take initiative during times of transition.

Servant leaders also promote a sense of adaptability. Employees feel supported in trying new things and are more open to learning, which helps them cope with the challenges that often come with organisational change. However, some participants mentioned that servant leaders can sometimes be too focused on empathy and support, which may delay decision-making or cause confusion about priorities. When there is a lack of clear direction or timely action, employees may become uncertain or hesitant, which can slow down progress.

2. In what ways does servant leadership influence organisational culture, team dynamics, and adaptability?

The research showed that servant leadership has a positive influence on the culture of an organisation, how teams interact, and how well the organisation adapts to change. Servant leaders build a culture based on trust, respect, and transparency. They encourage open communication, involve employees in discussions, and treat everyone fairly, regardless of their position. This inclusive approach helps employees feel more connected to the organisation and each other.

In terms of team dynamics, servant leadership leads to stronger collaboration and mutual accountability. Teams become more united and supportive, with a greater willingness to share responsibility and help one another. Employees are also more willing to take on new roles or adapt to changes in the workplace because they trust their leaders and know they will be supported.

That said, the findings also revealed that some employees felt that servant leadership did not always result in real inclusion when it came to decision-making. While leaders often spoke about the importance of employee input, decisions were still sometimes made at the top without meaningful involvement from staff. This gap between words and actions could lead to frustration and a sense of disconnection.

3. How does servant leadership help reduce employee resistance to change?

One of the clearest findings from the study is that servant leadership helps to reduce employee resistance during organisational change. Change can be stressful, and people often resist it out of

fear, uncertainty, or a lack of understanding. Servant leaders help to ease these concerns by being empathetic, honest, and approachable. They create a safe space for employees to share their worries, and they take the time to explain the reasons behind the change in a clear and straightforward way.

By involving employees in the process and giving them a voice, servant leaders increase feelings of trust and fairness. This helps employees feel more in control and less threatened by the changes around them. As a result, they are more likely to accept and even support change initiatives.

However, the findings also pointed out that if servant leaders are too optimistic or avoid discussing difficult aspects of change, it can backfire. When employees are not fully prepared for the challenges ahead, they may become disappointed or lose trust in leadership. Transparency and realistic communication are therefore essential.

4. How does servant leadership influence employee commitment during times of change?

The study found that servant leadership has a strong positive effect on employee commitment, especially during transition periods. Employees reported feeling emotionally connected to their leaders and to the organisation as a whole. They felt cared for, supported, and appreciated, which motivated them to stay with the organisation and give their best efforts, even when facing uncertainty or increased workloads.

Many employees described going “above and beyond” in their roles because they wanted to give back to leaders who had supported them. This sense of emotional reciprocity and mutual loyalty was a powerful force for building commitment and dedication during change.

Nonetheless, some participants raised concerns about the risks of this emotional bond. A few employees said they felt guilty or pressured to always perform at a high level to repay the support they had received. This pressure, combined with the demands of organisational change, sometimes led to stress, overwork, and even burnout. While servant leadership encourages strong commitment, it is important for leaders to balance this by watching for signs of exhaustion and promoting healthy boundaries.

Looking at all four research questions, the findings clearly show that servant leadership has a powerful and wide-ranging impact on how change happens in organisations. It goes beyond just making structural or process changes—it influences how people feel, think, and behave during times of change.

Servant leaders help shape the emotional and social environment in the workplace. They do this by building trust with their teams, showing genuine care and emotional support, involving employees in decisions, and creating a sense of belonging. This supportive approach helps people feel more secure and valued, which makes them more willing to accept and adapt to change.

Because of these qualities, servant leadership not only helps leaders manage change more effectively but also helps build organisations that are stronger, more flexible, and more committed in the long run. Staff are more likely to stay with the company, work hard, and support each other, even when things are uncertain or challenging.

These findings suggest that if organisations want to create lasting, people-focused change, they should seriously consider adopting servant leadership as a core part of their leadership style. It

helps create a more positive workplace culture and increases the chances of successful change that benefits both the organisation and its employees.

Conclusion

This study looked at how servant leadership affects how organisations and employees handle change. Using interviews and surveys, the research found that servant leadership makes a real difference. It helps leaders support their teams emotionally, encourages better communication, builds trust, and creates a more positive work culture.

When leaders act with kindness, listen carefully, and involve staff in decisions, employees feel more valued and confident. As a result, they are more likely to stay with the company, work hard, and be open to changes. Servant leadership also helps reduce fear and resistance to change by making employees feel safe and supported.

However, the study also showed that this type of leadership needs to be balanced. Being too focused on support and not making clear decisions can lead to confusion. Also, if leaders are too positive and avoid talking about the hard parts of change, staff may feel unprepared or let down later.

In summary, servant leadership can help organisations manage change better by making people feel more involved, trusted, and respected. But to be truly effective, it should be used with clear planning, honest communication, and strong decision-making.

Recommendations

Based on what was learned in the study, here are some simple steps organisations and leaders can take to use servant leadership effectively during change:

1. Make Servant Leadership Part of Everyday Work

Organisations should train their managers to lead with kindness, empathy, and good listening. These values should become part of the workplace culture so that staff feel supported every day—not just during big changes.

2. Be Supportive, But Also Take Action

Leaders should care about their staff's well-being, but they also need to make clear and timely decisions. This balance helps staff feel both supported and confident that their leaders know what they're doing.

3. Communicate Honestly About Change

Leaders should talk openly about both the good and the difficult parts of any changes. Being realistic helps staff feel more prepared and less likely to worry or resist the change.

4. Involve Staff in Real Decisions

It's important to let staff share their ideas and feel that their opinions matter. Leaders should not only ask for feedback but also use it when making decisions so that staff feel truly included.

5. Look After Employee Well-Being

While many employees are happy to give extra effort, leaders must make sure they are not overworking. It's important to watch for signs of stress or burnout and help staff keep a healthy work-life balance.

6. Have Clear Plans for Change

Alongside being caring, leaders should have clear plans and explain the steps of any change.

This helps staff understand what's happening and what's expected, which reduces confusion and stress.

References

1. American Psychological Association (APA). (2020). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. APA.
2. Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. Free Press.
3. Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organisational Dynamics*, 18(3), pp.19–31.
4. Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications*. Free Press.
5. Bass, B. M., & Riggio, R. E. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
6. Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), pp.27–40.
7. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), pp.77–101.
8. British Psychological Society (BPS). (2018). *Code of ethics and conduct*. BPS.
9. Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
10. Burnes, B. (2004). *Managing change: A strategic approach to organisational dynamics*. Pearson Education.
11. Burke, W. W. (2017). *Organisation change: Theory and practice*. Sage Publications.
12. Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. Harper & Row.
13. Chiniara, M., & Bentein, K. (2016). Servant leadership and employee outcomes: The moderating role of autonomy. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 27(2), pp.300–316.
14. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.
15. Denzin, N. K. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(2), pp.80–88.
16. DeVellis, R. F. (2017). *Scale development: Theory and applications* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
17. Doppelt, B. (2017). *Leading change toward sustainability*. Routledge.
18. Edmondson, A. C. (1999). Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), pp.350–383.
19. Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., van Dierendonck, D., & Liden, R. C. (2019). Servant leadership: A systematic review and call for future research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 30(1), pp.111–132.
20. Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. John Wiley & Sons.
21. Gandhi, M. K. (1997). *The story of my experiments with truth*. Beacon Press.
22. Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books.
23. Goleman, D. (2000). Leadership that gets results. *Harvard Business Review*, 78(2), pp.78–90.
24. Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. Paulist Press.
25. Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. H. (1969). Life cycle theory of leadership. *Training & Development Journal*, 23(5), pp.26–34.
26. Hoch, J. E., Bommer, W. H., Dulebohn, J. H., & Wu, D. (2018). Do ethical, authentic, and servant leadership explain variance above and beyond transformational leadership? A meta-analysis. *Journal of Management*, 44(2), pp.501–529.

27. Hunter, E. M., Neubert, M. J., Perry, S. J., Witt, L. A., Penney, L. M., & Weinberger, E. (2013). *Servant leaders inspire servant followers: Antecedents and outcomes for employees and the organisation. The Leadership Quarterly*, 24(2), pp.316–331.
28. Hunter, J. C. (1998). *The servant: A simple story about the true essence of leadership*. Crown Business.
29. Kotter, J. P. (1996). *Leading change*. Harvard Business Review Press.
30. Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing interviews*. Sage Publications.
31. Laub, J. A. (1999). *Assessing the servant organisation: Development of the servant organisational leadership assessment (SOLA) instrument*. Florida Atlantic University.
32. Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science*. Harper & Row.
33. Lewin, K., Lippitt, R., & White, R. K. (1939). *Patterns of aggressive behavior in experimentally created social climates. The Journal of Social Psychology*, 10(2), pp.271–299.
34. Liden, R. C., Panaccio, A., Meuser, J. D., Hu, J., & Wayne, S. J. (2014). *Servant leadership: Antecedents, processes, and outcomes*. In Day, D. V. (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of leadership and organisations* (pp.357–379). Oxford University Press.
35. Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Liao, C., & Meuser, J. D. (2014). *Servant leadership and serving culture: Influence on individual and unit performance. Academy of Management Journal*, 57(5), pp.1434–1452.
36. 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), pp.161–177.
37. Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.
38. Mandela, N. (1994). *Long walk to freedom: The autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. Little, Brown and Company.
39. Northouse, P. G. (2019). *Leadership: Theory and practice*. Sage Publications.
40. Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Sage Publications.
41. Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organisational culture and leadership*. John Wiley & Sons.
42. Schultz, H. (2011). *Onward: How Starbucks fought for its life without losing its soul*. Rodale Books.
43. Schwarz, G., Watson, B., & Callan, V. (2016). *Speaking up about change: A conceptual model. Human Resource Management Review*, 26(2), pp.166–179.
44. Sendjaya, S., Sarros, J. C., & Santora, J. C. (2008). *Defining and measuring servant leadership behaviour in organisations. Journal of Management Studies*, 45(2), pp.402–424.
45. Spears, L. C. (1995). *Reflections on leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf's theory of servant leadership influenced today's top management thinkers*. John Wiley & Sons.
46. Spears, L. C. (1998). *Insights on leadership: Service, stewardship, spirit, and servant leadership*. John Wiley & Sons.
47. Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Sage Publications.
48. Van Dierendonck, D. (2011). *Servant leadership: A review and synthesis. Journal of Management*, 37(4), pp.1228–1261.
49. Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. Sage Publications.
50. Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in organisations*. Pearson Education.



Participant Information Sheet

Title of Study: The Impact of Servant Leadership in Change Management within Organisations

Invitation to Participate: You are being invited to take part in a research study exploring how servant leadership influences employee behaviour, team dynamics, adaptability, resistance to change, and commitment during periods of organisational change.

Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being conducted and what your participation will involve.
Please take a few moments to read the following information carefully.

Purpose of the Study: The aim of this study is to examine how leadership that focuses on serving others can affect employee responses and organisational success during times of change.

Why Have You Been Chosen?

You have been selected because you are currently employed and may have experienced organisational changes where leadership styles could have influenced outcomes.

Do You Have to Take Part?

Participation is completely voluntary.
You may choose not to take part or to withdraw at any point without giving a reason.
There will be no penalty for choosing not to participate or withdrawing.

What Will Happen if You Take Part?

You will be asked to complete a survey that will take about 10–15 minutes.
The survey will include both multiple-choice and open-ended questions about your experiences and perceptions during organisational changes.

Will Your Information Be Kept Confidential?

Yes.

All responses will be anonymous and treated confidentially.

No identifying information will be collected.

The results will be used solely for academic purposes, and data will be securely stored.

What Are the Possible Risks or Benefits of Taking Part?

There are no significant risks expected.

While there is no direct benefit to you, your participation will help increase understanding of how leadership styles impact organisational change and may contribute to better management practices in the future.

Contact for Further Information:

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Frances Oyineze Wilson-Obeneme

Email: 2114831@student.uwtsd.ac.uk

Institution: University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Consent Form

Title of Study:

The Impact of Servant Leadership in Change Management within Organisations

Please read the following statements carefully and indicate your agreement by ticking the box.

Statement	Tick (✓)
I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet.	☐
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	☐
I understand that my responses will be anonymous and confidential.	☐
I agree to take part in this research study.	☐

Participant's Signature (if applicable): _____

Date: _____



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David

Introduction:

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking part in this study!

This survey aims to explore how leaders who focus on serving their teams influence how people behave, adjust, and stay committed during times of change at work.

Your answers are confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

The survey will take about **10 minutes** to complete.

There are no right or wrong answers — please be honest!

Section A: About You

(Please select or fill in where appropriate.)

1. Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

2. Age Group:

- ☐ Under 25
- ☐ 25–34
- ☐ 35–44
- ☐ 45–54
- ☐ 55 and above

3. Your role in the organisation:

- ☐ Team Member
- ☐ Supervisor/Team Leader
- ☐ Middle Manager
- ☐ Senior Manager
- ☐ Executive

4. Industry:

- Public sector (government, education, etc.)
- Private sector (business, finance, etc.)
- Non-profit organisation
- Other (please specify): _____

5. How long have you worked in your current organisation?

- Less than 1 year
- 1–3 years
- 4–6 years
- 7–10 years
- More than 10 years

Section B: Servant Leadership during Change

(Please rate how much you agree with the following statements based on your experience. 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree.)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Leaders listen carefully to employees' worries during change.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	Leaders support employees' personal growth while changes happen.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	Leaders put employees' needs before their own during changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	Leaders show care, patience, and respect to employees during changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	Leaders encourage open and honest conversations during transition periods.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section C: Impact on Culture, Team Dynamics, and Adaptability

(Please rate based on your experience.)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
6	Leaders create a culture where people feel safe to share ideas during change.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	Leaders help teams stay united and work together better during changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	Leaders inspire employees to be more flexible and open-minded when facing changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section D: Resistance to Change

(Please rate based on your experience.)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
9	Leaders help reduce fear and uncertainty about new changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	Leaders deal with resistance by understanding and addressing employee concerns.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	Employees are more willing to accept change because of the way leaders support them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E: Employee Commitment

(Please rate based on your experience.)

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
12	Leaders make employees feel valued, which strengthens their commitment during change.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	Leaders' support makes employees more motivated to stay and contribute during transitions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	Leaders inspire a sense of loyalty even when the organisation is going through big changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section F: Your Thoughts (Optional)

(Please write a few sentences.)

15. In your opinion, how do leaders who focus on serving their teams influence how employees behave during changes?

16. Can you describe a situation where a leader's servant style either helped or made change easier?

17. What advice would you give to leaders trying to help teams through big changes?

Thank you very much for your time and honest answers!



PRIFYSGOL CYMRU

Y Drindod Dewi Sant

UNIVERSITY OF WALES

Trinity Saint David

Interview Guide for Research Study

Research Title:

The Impact of Servant Leadership in Change Management within Organisations

Opening Statement to Participant:

"Thank you for agreeing to be part of this interview. This conversation is to explore your experiences and views on leadership — especially leadership that focuses on serving others — during times of organisational change. Your responses will be treated confidentially. Please feel free to speak openly. There are no right or wrong answers."

Section A: Leadership Experience During Change

1. Can you tell me about a time when your organisation went through significant change?

(Possible prompts: What was the change about? Who led it?)

2. How would you describe the leadership style of the person (or people) leading the change?

(Prompt if needed: Did they focus on the team's needs, or were they more directive?)

Section B: Impact of Leadership on Employee Behavior

3. How did the leader's behavior (such as listening, support, or encouragement) affect how employees responded to the change?

(Prompt: Motivation, teamwork, openness to change?)

4. From what you observed, did employees react differently when leaders showed more care and understanding?

(Prompt: Examples of positive or negative reactions?)

Section C: Culture, Team Dynamics, and Adaptability

5. In your view, how did the leadership style affect the organisation's culture during the change?

(Prompt: Sense of trust, teamwork, or communication?)

6. Did the leadership approach make the organisation more flexible and able to adjust to change?

(Prompt: Were employees more willing to adapt and try new things?)

Section D: Handling Resistance to Change

7. Was there any resistance to the changes among employees?

(Prompt: What were some of the reasons?)

8. How did the leader's approach help to reduce or manage that resistance?

(Prompt: Listening to concerns, involving employees in decisions?)

Section E: Building Commitment During Change

9. How did leadership behaviours during the change impact employees' commitment to the organisation?

(Prompt: Did people feel more loyal, motivated, or connected?)

10. In your opinion, what role did servant-style leadership play in keeping employees engaged and committed during the transition?

(Prompt: Encouragement, recognizing contributions, involving employees?)

Section F: Final Thoughts

11. If you could give advice to leaders managing change, based on your experience, what would you suggest they do differently or continue doing?

(Prompt: Traits or actions that make a difference?)

12. Is there anything else you would like to share about leadership and change based on your experience?

				SURVEY RESPONSES				
	Respondent 1 - Team Lead	Respondent 2 - Senior Manager	Respondent 3 - HR Specialist	Respondent 4 - Entry Level Employee	Respondent 5 - IT Support Analyst	Respondent 6 - Operations Director	Respondent 7 - Project Manager	Respondent 8 - Communications Officer
Q1: Leaders listen	4	3	5	2	4	3	4	5
Q2: Support growth	5	4	5	3	4	5	4	5
Q3: Put employees first	4	3	5	2	4	3	3	5
Q4: Care and respect	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	5
Q5: Encourage openness	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	5
Q6: Safe culture	5	4	5	3	4	5	4	5
Q7: Teamwork	4	3	5	2	4	4	5	5
Q8: Flexibility	5	4	5	3	5	4	4	5
Q9: Reduce fear	4	3	5	2	3	4	3	5
Q10: Manage resistance	5	4	5	3	4	3	3	5
Q11: Acceptance of change	4	3	5	2	4	4	3	5
Q12: Feeling valued	5	4	5	3	4	5	4	5
Q13: Motivation to stay	5	4	5	3	5	4	4	5
Q14: Loyalty	4	3	5	2	4	4	3	5

Q15: Influence behavior	<i>Empathy made employees open — it created a work environment where individuals felt safe to express their thoughts and emotions without fear of judgment. This openness led to more honest communication, stronger team cohesion, and a greater willingness to engage with one another authentically.</i>	<i>Servant style reduced fear but slowed decisions — by prioritising support and empowerment, the leader created a safer, more inclusive environment where employees felt respected and heard. However, this collaborative approach sometimes delayed decision-making, as consensus-building took precedence over speed.</i>	<i>Trust created, reducing turnover — by fostering authentic relationships and consistently following through on commitments, leadership built a foundation of trust. This sense of reliability and psychological safety encouraged employee loyalty, leading to lower attrition and a more stable workforce.</i>	<i>No follow-through led to distrust — when commitments were made but not consistently honored, employees began to question the reliability of leadership. This lack of follow-through eroded trust, creating an atmosphere of skepticism and disengagement that hindered team morale and collaboration.</i>	<i>Support helped flexibility, but sometimes direction was unclear — while providing support allowed employees to adapt and adjust to changing circumstances, the occasional lack of clear direction created uncertainty. This ambiguity led to confusion about priorities, making it harder for teams to move forward with confidence and purpose.</i>	<i>Loyalty boosted, but slow decisions — by fostering a supportive and trusting environment, loyalty among employees grew, as they felt valued and connected to the organisation's mission. However, this focus on consensus and inclusivity sometimes led to slower decision-making, which could delay progress and responsiveness in fast-paced situations.</i>	<i>Team unity during change — the team stayed connected and worked together through the changes, supporting each other along the way.</i>	<i>Respect and inclusion made change easier — when everyone felt respected and included, it was easier for the team to accept and adapt to the changes.</i>
-------------------------	--	---	--	---	--	--	--	--

Q16: Example	Manager involved team in merger — by actively including employees in the process, the manager helped reduce uncertainty and build trust. Team members felt more informed, valued, and in control, which led to smoother transitions, increased engagement, and stronger alignment with the company's goals during the change.	Leader offered counseling during reorg — by providing emotional support and professional resources, the leader helped employees navigate uncertainty and stress. This compassionate gesture reinforced trust, showed a commitment to well-being, and eased the human impact of organisational change.	HR created change workshops — by proactively designing sessions to guide employees through transitions, HR equipped teams with tools to adapt, reflect, and engage. These workshops fostered resilience, reduced resistance, and encouraged a more informed and empowered response to organisational change.	Broken promises in tech rollout — when expectations set during the tech rollout were not met, it led to frustration and disappointment among employees. The failure to deliver on promises created a sense of unreliability and diminished confidence in the project, undermining its effectiveness and causing delays in adoption.	Training offered during software upgrade — by providing targeted training sessions during the software upgrade, employees were equipped with the necessary skills and confidence to adapt to the new system. This proactive approach minimised disruptions, reduced resistance to change, and ensured a smoother transition to the upgraded technology.	Town halls during the logistics overhaul — regular town hall meetings were held to keep everyone informed and address concerns during the changes to the logistics process.	Supervisor shared goals during the reorg — the supervisor communicated clear goals to the team, helping everyone stay focused and aligned during the organisational changes.	Weekly updates eased change fears — by providing consistent, transparent communication every week, employees felt more informed and less uncertain about the ongoing changes. This regular flow of information helped reduce anxiety, built trust in leadership, and reassured the team that they were being supported throughout the transition.
--------------	--	--	---	--	--	--	---	--

Q17: Advice	<i>Listen and be transparent — taking the time to genuinely hear employees' concerns and openly share information fostered trust and credibility. This approach not only strengthened relationships but also encouraged a culture of openness, where challenges could be addressed collaboratively and proactively</i>	<i>Balance compassion with action — showing empathy in challenging times is essential, but pairing it with decisive steps ensures progress. Leaders who balance emotional support with timely decisions foster both trust and momentum, helping teams feel cared for while staying focused on goals.</i>	<i>Communicate and empower — clear, transparent communication paired with the empowerment of employees creates a culture of ownership and accountability. By keeping teams informed and giving them the autonomy to make decisions, leaders foster trust, engagement, and a stronger sense of purpose.</i>	<i>Match actions to promises — aligning actions with commitments is essential for building trust and credibility. When leaders consistently follow through on their promises, they foster a culture of reliability, where employees feel confident in their direction and motivated to contribute toward shared goals.</i>	<i>Support skill-building early — by investing in skill development at the outset, employees were better prepared to face challenges and take on new responsibilities. This proactive approach not only boosted confidence but also laid a strong foundation for long-term success, allowing teams to adapt more effectively to evolving demands.</i>	<i>Balance speed and support — it's important to move quickly while also providing the necessary support to help people adjust and succeed.</i>	<i>Set goals but stay people-focused — it's important to have clear goals, but also make sure you're considering and supporting the needs of the people working toward them.</i>	<i>Show constant respect — consistently demonstrating respect in every interaction fosters a positive and supportive work environment. When people feel respected, they are more engaged, collaborative, and motivated, which strengthens relationships and cultivates a culture of trust, inclusivity, and mutual support.</i>
-------------	---	---	---	---	--	--	---	--

			INTERVIEW RESPONSES			
<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Interviewee 1 - Lecturer</i>	<i>Interviewee 2 - Risk Manager</i>	<i>Interviewee 3 - Sales Assistant</i>	<i>Interviewee 4 - Nurse Unit Manager</i>	<i>Interviewee 5 - Software Engineer</i>	<i>Interviewee 6 - Machine Operator</i>
<i>Q1: Major change</i>	<i>Department restructure</i>	<i>Policy updates</i>	<i>New tech rollout</i>	<i>Hospital system change</i>	<i>Product management system change</i>	<i>Automation upgrade</i>
<i>Q2: Leadership style</i>	<i>People-centered</i>	<i>Empathetic but indecisive</i>	<i>Top-down fake servant leadership</i>	<i>Highly supportive</i>	<i>Empathetic approachable</i>	<i>Surface level fake</i>
<i>Q3: Effect on behavior</i>	<i>Boosted morale</i>	<i>Reduced tension but confusion</i>	<i>Skepticism and disengagement</i>	<i>Stronger teams</i>	<i>Most adapted well</i>	<i>Resistance and distrust</i>
<i>Q4: Care and reaction</i>	<i>Built loyalty</i>	<i>Better emotional stability</i>	<i>Cynicism</i>	<i>Respect and support</i>	<i>Helped most</i>	<i>Felt manipulated</i>
<i>Q5: Impact on culture</i>	<i>Trust culture strengthened</i>	<i>Boosted emotional safety</i>	<i>Eroded trust</i>	<i>Collaboration increased</i>	<i>Improved teamwork</i>	<i>Distrust spread</i>
<i>Q6: Adaptability</i>	<i>Smoother adjustment</i>	<i>Varied adaptability</i>	<i>Chaotic change</i>	<i>More innovative</i>	<i>Higher flexibility</i>	<i>Increased resistance</i>
<i>Q7: Resistance</i>	<i>Initial fear</i>	<i>Resistance when unclear</i>	<i>Heavy resistance</i>	<i>Minimal resistance</i>	<i>Some senior resistance</i>	<i>Massive resistance</i>
<i>Q8: Leadership reducing resistance</i>	<i>Inclusion reduced fear</i>	<i>Counseling helped</i>	<i>Ignored concerns</i>	<i>Open forums helped</i>	<i>1-to-1 support plans</i>	<i>Had to change strategy late</i>
<i>Q9: Impact on commitment</i>	<i>Higher retention</i>	<i>Mixed commitment</i>	<i>Declined trust</i>	<i>Increased loyalty</i>	<i>Slight increase</i>	<i>Very low trust</i>
<i>Q10: Servant leadership engagement</i>	<i>Built loyalty</i>	<i>Emotional investment</i>	<i>Backfired badly</i>	<i>Maintained morale</i>	<i>Personal attention kept engagement</i>	<i>Needed authenticity</i>
<i>Q11: Advice</i>	<i>Prioritize transparency</i>	<i>Balance empathy and action</i>	<i>Match actions to words</i>	<i>Truly serve</i>	<i>Identify change champions</i>	<i>Be authentic</i>

Q12: Final comments	Involve employees at all stages - "When our department was restructured, our dean made sure every staff member had a say in how it would happen. It built trust and kept most people on board even though the	Clear action is key - "Our leader was very people-focused, but sometimes decisions were delayed too much while trying to please everyone. It made the change process slower, but overall, morale stayed high."	Servant leadership must be real - "They said they were servant leaders, but actions didn't match words. We had meetings but no real changes. People eventually stopped trusting the leadership."	Servant leadership is powerful - "Our manager always put patients and staff first. During a hospital system change, she personally helped teams adjust. Staff commitment actually grew during a very tough time."	Different approaches needed - "The team leads really tried to support everyone individually, but some employees still resisted change. Support helped most adapt, but there was no 'one size fits all' solution."	Real service matters - "We didn't feel genuinely supported. Managers used servant language but were still focused on deadlines. It felt like a strategy, not real care. Resistance was high until some supervisors changed their approach."
---------------------	---	--	--	---	---	---

