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Abstract

The study was undertaken in response to calls in extant literature for extension of servant leadership empirical work into new contexts. The study was done as an exploratory research in a developing country context, Kenya using an integrated set of servant leadership attributes drawn from previous work on servant leadership with the aim of finding out which servant leadership attributes are applicable to the non-profit sector and how the NGO institutional characteristics condition the application of the servant leadership practices. Data was obtained from 365 respondents drawn from 72 religious non-profit organizations in Kenya and analysed using exploratory factor analysis. Ten attributes of servant leadership were extracted with their corresponding set of operational indicators. The institutional context was found to condition servant leadership practices among the non-profit organizations through institutional isomorphism. The extracted 10 factors indicate that servant leadership attributes are relevant for applications in the non-profit sector and require the conceptual and theoretical input of the contingency and institutional theories.

Keywords: *Institutional context, Non-profit organizations, Religious non-profit organizations, Servant leadership, Servant leadership components*

1. Introduction

Scholars in organizational studies attribute the source of the origin of organizations that continues to define their mandate in their life time to spring from the society in which they are founded and operate (Robbins, 2004). As such, the society provides different opportunities for diverse kinds of organizations to emerge as they seek to solve societal problems along which they design themselves and establish systems and structures for undertaking work in a manner they can attract personnel, mobilize economic resources, create and deliver value and establish systems for the coordination of work to obtain optimal results through utilization of both human and non-human resources. Over time in the history of the study of organizations, organizations have been formed taking different forms with one of the most prominent system of

categorization being that which groups them into profit and non-profit organizations (Daft, 2007). Even though in both types of categorizations, the goals remain those of attaining the mission expectations of the founders who seek to satisfy societal needs, the manner in which they undertake to pursue achievement of their missions differ, an aspect that is integral to the unique characteristic taken by organizations in the different categories.

A non-profit entity is one that is devoted to further a certain social effect. Such organizations most of the time are exempted from taxes. They can run in various arenas like research, education, religion and science (Daft, 2007). They are expected to uphold high levels of honesty, trustworthiness, openness and accountability to every individual who has invested faith, time and money in that particular organization and as such are accountable to the founders, public, community, donors, volunteers and the recipients of their services. Non-profit entities have an obligation to their funders, founders and stakeholders to manage resources in a responsible manner. The boards of management put guidelines and procedures in place that will give oversight for the leadership. These guidelines are meant to prevent problems with nepotism, conflicts of interest, financial management and unfair labour practices (Hicks & Gullett, 1975).

Due to the societal issues that set the stage for the emergence of the non-profit organization, there is need for establishment of an infrastructure to support its value creation comprising components of the value chain that range from the sequence of acquisition of resources to the process and the systems through which the resources are coordinated. The non-profit context presents unique societal issues that have implications on how an outfit targeting to respond to societal issues needs to be coordinated and operated to adequately meet the societal concerns. Among the aspects of the infrastructure is the role expected to be played by the leadership system that is considered a critical part of coordinating the value creation using diverse kinds of resources in responding to the societal issues. Even though leadership is broad in its nature and dimensions, the stream leaning towards servant leadership can be considered a critical component of the package for leadership systems for adoption among organizations seeking to achieve non-profit ends (Stone & Deno, 2017; Retno *et al.*, 2020).

The extant knowledge disseminated on servant leadership has traced the leadership style to a set of characteristics postulated by Greenleaf, regarded as the founder of servant leadership, who asserted that servant leaders are the type of leaders who put the interests and aspirations of other people first, hence placing their needs after (Stone & Deno, 2017; Tak, Nur & Saoda, 2021). Any organization that desires to embrace this leadership style as its basic orientation that will characterize its management, needs to have it applied into its systems for not only do servant leaders have an understanding of the organizational sense of direction, but also manage the context of the operation of this leadership style, and motivate followers to selflessly pursue the desired sense of long term direction, as pointed to, by the servant leader (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, Dierendonck & Lider, 2019; Canavesi & Minelli, 2021).

Non-profit organizations have been considered partners in development by governments for purposes of enabling governments to enhance the level of development at community and national levels. Due to this, bilateral and multilateral bodies and governments inject significant amounts of resources into programs implemented by non-profit organizations to enhance community level development in line with government policy. Despite this massive injection of resources, the sector continues to experience a poor state of community development due to poor program implementation. Evidence for this has been found in prevailing high levels of poverty, illiteracy, and a lack of essential amenities such as medical care, shelter and education

in most communities where these non-profit organizations claim to have their presence (Mowjee, 2010; Willitts-king et al., 2018).

There is however, a weakness in the manner in which the problems leading to poor levels of program implementation have been understood whereby they have not been considered as components of a leadership problem that needs to be sorted. Since non-profit organizations work in communities to respond to prevailing community development constrains, a suitable leadership that identifies with the constrains needs to be integrated in the analysis of the issues affecting program implementation by non-profit organizations. When it is well applied in organizations, servant leadership style brings about transformations likely to account for better levels of program implementation (Adebisi *et al.*, 2017). Although this leadership approach has been recommended for adoption in the management of non-governmental organizations, the state of extant literature on servant leadership indicates that it has not been exhaustively researched to firm up on its state in the non-profit sector. For instance, Greenleaf, the founder of servant leadership theory, left plenty of room for speculation which Larry Spears tried to address in 2004 by developing a major extension in servant leadership with ten physiognomies of a servant leader (Chishimba, 2018; Hoch *et al.*, 2018). Since Spears (2010) did not fully address the issue, it led to Joe Larocci to further pursue it, where he developed some fundamental principles that govern the operations and practices in work environments, leaving out the aspects on how this leadership style affects not only the leaders, but also the followers (Eva, *et al.*, 2019; Russell, 2014; Yigit & Bozkurt, 2017).

In addition to that, servant leadership has not been scientifically measured via conceptual and theoretical literatures to gain authority for application not only in empirical studies, but also in practice (Rachmawati & Lantu, 2014). Further, in a review of the extant theoretical, conceptual and empirical literature on servant leadership done globally - reviewing 289 articles that were researched for a span of 20 years (1998 – 2018) by Eva et al., (2019), it is observed that a lot of ground has been covered with regard to servant leadership as a distinct area contributing to the success of organizations. However, there still remains unexplored aspects of servant leadership which presents a call for extension of the literature on servant leadership, with a focus on new contexts.

The nature of the work of non-profit organizations is particularly suited for the application and use of the servant leadership style in order to bring about the desired non-profit oriented outcomes that improve the welfare of society and create strong communities (Allison & Kaye, 2017; Amir et al., 2021). In this study, the authors adopt an exploratory approach to integrate diverse perspectives to propose a set of servant leadership components in order to investigate how they would be suited for the non-profit sector. The authors selected a more homogeneous group of organizations in the community development programs drawn from the religious non-profit organizations in a developing context. The authors find this context suitable as it enables scholarship to extend the current understanding of servant leadership in terms of its scope in conceptualization and theoretical anchorage as well as the context of practice.

In terms of conceptualization, the authors consolidate a set of practices drawn from the work of different scholars and develop an integrated set to find how they would apply for adoption in a context that is least studied yet very critical to community, national and regional development and as well relevant to the growing concerns in leadership studies. Thus, this attempt extends the state of the extant literature further towards a more crystallized level of the set of servant leadership operational indicators that help in its application in response to some of the criticisms that authors such as (Chishimba, 2018; Hoch et al., 2018; Eva et al., 2019),

have often cited to be evident in extant scholarly work. Secondly, alongside the conceptualization, the study moves to link the theoretical underpinning of servant leadership drawn from the work of Greenleaf with other well founded theoretical works that have continued to inform scholarly efforts in leadership at both academic and practical levels. Towards this, the authors suggest that if Greenleaf's servant leadership model is adopted for theory development in leadership, then integration with other theoretical models such as the contingency theories and the behavioural theories becomes necessary. In this regard, the selection of the context of the study fulfils this quest of identifying relevant suitable theoretical models that stand to explain the phenomenon derived from the application of servant leadership. While this is being achieved, the study also helps to respond through the methodological approach adopted to enhance the scientific quality of the scholarly effort and extend the research efforts into new horizons in the context of the religious non-profit sector of a developing country. Thus, the study sought to answer these two questions:

1.2 Research Questions

- i) What servant leadership attributes are most suited for the nonprofit sector in Kenya?
- ii) What contextual contingencies condition the servant leadership practice in a developing country context

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Background

The concept of servant leadership was first conceptualized by Robert Greenleaf in 1970, and earlier by the historical figure Jesus Christ. Robert Greenleaf gave an incredible definition of servant leadership involving serving first as opposed to leading. This was practically done by Jesus Christ in His ministry on earth about two thousand years ago. Robert Greenleaf pointed out the key and central terms in this leadership style of “*serve first then aspire to lead*” (Rachmawati & Lantu, 2014). A few years later in 1978, Burns wrote about servant leadership positing that “(Transforming) leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality... But transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that, it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and the led, thus it has a transforming effect on both” (p. 20) as quoted by (Mulla & Krishnan, 2009).

Thus, servant leadership has its origin from religion which advocated for leaders to stand no different to their followers, rather, the leaders served the followers back with emotional healing and empowering the followers to newer and better heights. Servant leadership style picks its roots from Greenleaf work of the story of Herman Hesse –(Parris & Peachey, 2013). Even in the commercial organizations setting, this leadership style is of great use and influence in making things work and it delivers performance (Dreier et al., 2019). A leader who exercises servant leadership can motivate employees and in return, help the personnel to find the workplace a better and meaningful place. With an inclusion of organizational culture, servant leadership can be enhanced hence, enhancing the entire organization for greater performance.

The philosophical basis of servant leadership theory is grounded on the motivation of serving first. The servant leader is prompted by conscience to serve and is driven by conformity with some normative prospects. The self-concept of a leader that allows them to view themselves as stewards makes them critically accountable in all ways (Russell, 2014). Greenleaf asserted that servant leaders are the type of leaders who put the interest and aspirations of other people first and theirs, if any, later (Stone & Deno, 2017). Accordingly, service to others is the core choice of a servant leader and their principal purpose is to render service to others first and not leading.

Further, Greenleaf (1970) postulates that the fundamental purpose they seek to achieve in their leadership is transforming their followers to “grow healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely to become servants themselves” (p. 13-14), driven by humility as their central focus and without which, there will be no servant leadership.

As demonstrated by this basic belief, servant leadership originates from the leader’s desire to serve others as opposed to leading and finding gain for themselves. One can only distinguish a servant leader from the rest through the traits and characteristics they uphold. The spirit to impact other people’s life through their acts of compassion will clearly show that they are not hungry for power, but rather value service to and for others (Beck, 2014; Qin et al., 2021). The unique traits that distinguish a servant leader are elements of personality. Thus, the personality of the leader manifested in their traits is demonstrated through a passion to serve others (Langhof & Guldenberg, 2020). Such leaders realize the flow of these tenets from the unselfish “others directed” orientation that resides deep inside the leader’s heart. This orientation projects their values, principles, and ethics that have been found to lie at the focal point of the leadership style and are vital to the longstanding wellbeing of the company being served (Fields, Thompson & Hawkins, 2015).

Servant leadership according to Tanno (2017) is an ethical leadership style that can be adopted by all leaders, at all levels, and can be practiced globally giving forth employee commitment and guarantee of high productivity in an organization. This leadership style further sorts out the social and environmental concerns that are predominant for all leaders of diverse nature. Furthermore, servant leadership is an empowerment leadership model that is associated with humility, vision, empowerment, altruism, love and trust which are vital components for any leader who wants to impact a needy community (Stone & Deno, 2017; Retno et al., 2020). At the heart of this leadership style lies the leader’s concern for the followers, seeking to empower them to take on leadership roles. Désirée and Chavremootoo (2018) define servant leadership as the capacity of a person to bring out the best in the people being led by positively influencing their behaviours and attitudes towards service. This kind of leadership in a greater way relies on one-to-one style of passing information from the leaders to the followers, to allow them fully comprehend the capabilities, potentials, objectives, aims and desires of each follower with the intention of wholly putting them to use for a better outcome (Slack, Singh, Narayan & Sharma, 2019; Canavesi & Minelli, 2021). For this reason, this leadership style has been found relevant for adoption in program implementation at various levels of analysis among organizations along community development work (Ambali et al., 2011).

2.2 Perspectives and Dimensions

An important issue raised by theorists and researchers is the lack of consensus on the set of dimensions applicable in the empirical measurement of servant leadership. Several attempts made so far have suggested diverse categories of the dimensions. In this section, the authors review some of the perspectives that scholars have used in order to generate a viable set of dimensions of servant leadership that can be applied in practice. The study identified several perspectives. The first perspective is attributed to Greenleaf (1970) who came up with ten servant leadership attributes as follows; listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community. To further the discourse, Patterson (2003) came up with the following servant leadership attributes; humility, agape love, trustworthiness, serving, altruism and empowering the followers. Following this discourse, Spears (2010) made a major extension in servant leadership and affirmed the ten attributes of a servant leader by Greenleaf as follows; empathy, healing, persuasion, foresight, stewardship, healing, commitment to the growth of people,

awareness and developing communities (Coetzer et al., 2017; Davis, 2017; Educators, 2019, p. 159). In extending the work of Greenleaf, Focht and Ponton (2015) summarized Greenleaf's various traits of the servant leader into the seven "pillars of servant leadership that include being a person of character, putting people first, being a skilled communicator, being a compassionate collaborator, having foresight, being a systems thinker, and leading with moral authority" (p. 35). How the servant leader's attributes manifest themselves leads to a multiplicity of qualities that diverse scholars have tried to describe (Langhof & Guldenberg, 2020).

Further on in the development of servant leadership, Takoeva (2017) came up with eight servant leadership characteristics as follows; vision, integrity, credibility, empowerment, humility, authenticity, stewardship, and altruistic. In the same year, Basri et al., (2017) also came up with a set of six servant leadership characteristics as follows; kindness, selflessness, humility, patience, respect and forgiveness. One year later, Ningrum and Hamidah (2018) came up with another list of six as follows; authentic self, voluntary subordination, responsible morality, covenantal relationship, transforming influence, and transcendental spirituality. Musiyambiri (2019), proposed the following seven leadership tenets; listening, vision, trust, stewardship, service, influence, and appreciating others. The descriptions so far have resulted in a situation where the literature is scattered with no clear interpreted set of dimensions. In the extant literature, it is evident that different writers have come up with varied servant leadership characteristics that are defined from diverse backgrounds. According to Alasmari (2018), empowerment is a pivotal servant leadership characteristic that should be highly embraced by all leaders. This is because at the heart of empowerment lies the abilities of sharing power with other people, teamwork, equality, valuing love, and effective listening.

While the state of the conceptual literature remains scattered as depicted in the work of the few scholars attempting to generate an integrated set, it is also observed that the empirical situation may also be described to be in a relatively young state. Few empirical attempts have been made on application of servant leadership as conditioned by different contextual influences. The few attempts though giving attention to aspects of servant leadership, have focused on the leadership style without connecting it to its context so as to demonstrate how its features have been shaped by the uniqueness of the context of application. In one study by Augustine and Muslimah (2016), the focus was influence of servant leadership on policy implementation in a non-profit context in Indonesia and confirmed that it plays an important role, through the characteristics of the context shaping the manner of its deployment. The study by Ambali et al. (2011) sought to relate servant leadership to its outcomes at several levels of organizational analysis with the focus being explanation of its effect on policy implementation. Even though its effect was found to be positive, the dimensions of servant leadership contributing to this effect and the role played by the context in shaping the operation of servant leadership were not considered. Similarly, those studies done by Eva et al., (2019) confined themselves to desk review and attempted to integrate the hitherto extant understanding of servant leadership into a more clustered set of dimensions. The attempts however indicated that this progress so far achieved is still affected by the limitation in the contextual scope of the application of servant leadership from which the data used was drawn and thus called for more scholarly efforts in advancing the knowledge in servant leadership.

Table 1 - Summary of Servant Leadership Dimensions/Attributes

Researcher	Dimensions/Attributes
Musiyambiri (2019)	Listening, vision, trust, stewardship, service, influence, and appreciating others.
Takoeva (2017)	Vision, integrity, credibility, empowerment, humility, authenticity, stewardship, and altruistic.
Spears (2010)	Listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community
Basri et al., (2017)	Kindness, selflessness, humility, patience, respect and forgiveness.
Ningrum and Hamidah (2018)	Authentic self, voluntary subordination, responsible morality, covenantal relationship, transforming influence, and transcendental spirituality
Focht and Ponton (2015)	A person of character, putting people first, being a skilled communicator, being a compassionate collaborator, having foresight, being a systems thinker, and leading with moral authority
Alasmari (2018)	In empowerment lies the abilities of sharing power with other people, teamwork, equality, valuing love, and effective listening.
Jones (2018)	Humility, empathy, foresight, attention to detail, commitment to community development, stewardship, and awareness,
(Farrington & Lillah, 2019).	Forgiving, listening, empathy, self-awareness, building consensus, foresight to complete the company's vision and mission, capability to think over and above the day-in-day-out actualities and accountability
(Farrington & Lillah, 2019).	Total quality, team building, service ethics, total quality, participatory management, stewardship, and empowerment
(Wang, Xu & Liu, 2018).	Serving culture and service climate, virtues, ethics and morality
Vikhanskiy & Myrakyay (2018).	Desire to serve and serving first which yields gratitude, selflessness, modesty and gratitude in such a leader
(Toms, 2018; Mathias, 2018)	Servant leadership promotes organizational commitment and employee commitment that affect their behavior, role-performance and the community behaviors that are highly informed by the leadership style exercised.
Saltsman & Shelton (2019)	Servant leadership advocates making decisions based on moral and ethical contemplations and considerations that are motivated by fundamental individual values such as integrity and honesty
Setyaningrum, Satiawan & Surachman (2017).	Servant leadership cultivates solidarity and creativity which develops team confidence by affirming the diverse strengths of employees. innovation, ambition, creation and putting in more effort
Chishimba (2018)	Innovation and Creativity
Chi et al. (2020)	Authenticity and uprightness
(Kock et al. 2019; Goldberg et al., 2019 Shoukat and Khan 2019)	Emotionally and intellectually committed
Mutia & Muthamia (2016)	Altruistic, wisdom, organizational stewardship, emotional healing, and persuasive mapping
Patterson (2003)	Humility, agape love, trustworthiness, serving, altruism and empowering the followers
Megheirkouni (2017)	Developmental opportunities, support, mentoring, coaching, and other benefits to the personnel
Lillemoie (2018)	Servant leaders develop employees with high emotional engagement, productivity, loyalty and outperform competition over long periods of time.

Thus, in the context of non-profit organizations, the authors are of the view that leadership in such settings needs to be characterized by; humility, empathy, foresight, attention to detail, commitment to community development, stewardship, awareness, forgiveness, listener, empathy, self-awareness, building consensus, foresight to complete the company's vision and mission, capability to think over and above the day-in-day-out actualities and accountability for and in everything.

Owing to the state of the extant literature on servant leadership and its application in diverse contexts in view of the few researches so far done, the authors are of the view that effort is needed to consolidate the gains made so far in conceptualization, theory and empirical work by identifying a relevant set of servant leadership dimensions that are applicable in different contexts. Towards this call, the authors identify the non-profit organizations. The uniqueness of the sector requires a set of servant leadership attributes that would condition the

organizations and work teams to be well empowered to carry out development work and enhance development at community, regional and national levels. Out of the variety of dimensions drawn from the previous work as summarized in Table 1, the authors identify the following set of 36 dimensions to be more applicable in the non-profit organizations; sense of mission, training, mentorship, empowerment, teamwork, emotional health, ethical, spirituality, honest, genuineness, support amongst employees, respect, authenticity, accountability, stewardship, uprightness, creativity and innovation. The authors argue that how the dimensions manifest in the day to day running of the non-profit organizations is likely to be conditioned by the characteristic of the context of the NGOs.

2.3 The Contingent Role of the Institutional Context

The institutional context is critical in influencing the structures adopted by organizations to facilitate how work is done. This is likely to shape the behaviour of both leaders and their followers. The concept of institutionalism derives its mandate from the origin of organizations that sets the mission as well as the contexts of their operation. This is based on a range of methodological approaches used in institutions that lay emphasis on how a particular institutional industry runs. The institutional emphasis is understood as structures, rules, regularities and context that in general influence the organization and shape its conduct (Schmidt, 2017).

The non-profit organizations are key instruments for policy implementation contributing to community development due to the role they have grown to play. The non-governmental organizations' body has professional characteristics which include hybridity, identity, managerialism, and philanthropy (Zajda & Pasikowski, 2018). This body of organizations aims to solve community issues through relevant economic and social effects on social development and employment. Such entities fall within the larger context of social organizations whose main purpose is to make supportable communal value, and trade and industry prosperity at the community level. The institutionalization process for the non-governmental organizations has been shaped by several forces like; the registration process, role of government regulation, conformance to self-regulation, and professional characteristics (Zajda & Pasikowski, 2018).

Non-profit organizations are voluntary and autonomous. They must be registered and have an agenda that promotes development in communities. Their agenda is multifaceted with the emergence of global and societal problems that are characterized by complex, rapid and unpredictable political, environment, demographic and socio-economic changes. The setting for the operations of the non-profit organizations bears several characteristics that constitute an institutional context suitable to influence how leadership operates to bring about desired results that are aligned with the nature of the context. The non-profit institutional setting can be described to comprise several dimensions as (i) institutional characteristics, setting the state on how servant leadership should be deployed. (ii) Institutional pressure for conformance due to the nature of the institutional characteristics. The non-profit institutional environment bears several characteristics of hybridity, managerialism, identity and philanthropy. Hybridity refers to non-profit organizations having formal business structures and strategic plans on how they will realize the outlined outcomes. Goals and objectives should be set, and evaluations and monitoring frequently done to check on progress made and challenges faced (McMullin & Skelcher, 2018; Fletcher & Weinstein, 2018). On the other hand, managerialism deals with the belief that non-profit organizations should be built on corporate management practices and knowledge for better performance and growth (Pilon, 2019). Identity for non-profit organizations refers to the various aspects of the behaviours of both the followers and leaders in the running of the company comprising of the values, interests, norms, and abilities an

individual ascribes themselves in a social role context like the religious faith of a Christian (Taylor & Scapens, 2016). Philanthropy is the aspect of non-profit organizations focusing on investing money for charity while providing business expertise to deliver quality services as they serve the organization and the community (Chidi, 2017).

Since these characteristics are essential defining elements of the institutional environment for the non-profit organizations, they will enact an institutional context that will exert diverse forms of pressure on the organizations to conform with. The institutional theory which underpins the role of institutional environment in conditioning the strategic behaviour of organizations identifies the role of the concept of isomorphism in explaining the behaviour exhibited by organizations (Alziady & Enayah, 2019). Isomorphism is described as pressures that dictate the manner of operation of a particular set of organizations operating under the same context. Accordingly, there are three forms of isomorphism namely; mimetic, coercive, and normative. Mimetic refer to the pressure that occurs when an organization tries to imitate the structure of another organization, perceiving it to be beneficial (Arvidson, 2018). The coercive isomorphism regards to that pressure which typically comes from legal mandate, or from organizations non-profits are dependent upon for either funding or support (Hoflund, 2019; Alziady & Enayah, 2019). Lastly, the normative isomorphism regards to the type of pressure that usually comes from other people and councils which push the organization to conform to their demands (Claeyé & Jackson, 2012). Based on the logic of this discussion, the authors identified 12 indicators of the three forms of isomorphism as being relevant in conditioning servant leadership among non-profit organizations; pressure for accountability from stakeholders and donors, pressure to maintain strong relationships with donors, pressure to promote philanthropy, pressure to demonstrate functional governance, pressure to uphold core values that identify as community development agency, pressure to come up with strategies in consistency with a community development agency, pressure to learn from reputable non-profit organizations, pressure to comply with NGO council's guidelines, pressure to uphold acceptable norms, pressure to maintain organization's positive reputation, pressure to comply with government mandatory regulations and pressure to operate within required regulations.

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used an exploratory survey research design. An explanatory research design offers an avenue of finding out more on a particular subject for better understanding and application. This design helps in giving explanations of the study in a detailed manner (Ragab & Arisha, 2017). The study obtained data from more than one organization, so a survey was suitable for the study. The data was collected at a singular point in time, hence giving rise to a cross-sectional type of study.

3.2 Research Data and Analysis

The study obtained primary data on two study constructs: servant leadership and religious non-profit institutional context. Each of the constructs was operationalized using indicators drawn from the reviewed literature and a questionnaire structured on a 5 point Likert scale to measure the extent of emphasis and practice of 36 servant leadership dimensions and the perception of the pressure to conform to the 12 components of the institutional context. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire through drop and pick method using the effort of prior trained research assistants. Exploratory factor analysis was applied on each of the variables so as to identify themes contained in the data and the specific factors underlying the themes. Further, this analysis helped to reduce a large number of variables into fewer numbers of factors. It also

helped to reduce the rotated matrix down to its underlying dimensions through checking variables that can cluster together in a meaningful way without losing the original meaning (Decoster & Hall, 1998). This is what is usually referred to as data condensation. This helps to simplify data by reducing the number of variables in the regression models. According to Field (2009), there are two types of factor analysis but this study chose exploratory factor analysis because it is commonly used by researchers for its assumption that any variable or indicator can be associated with any factor. Exploratory factor analysis was used to explore the underlying structure of a set of the observed variables which forms a very significant step in the scale development process.

3.3 Population and Sampling Design

The type of organizations in Kenya that were studied fall into the several categories; charitable organizations, social advocacy groups, foundations, civil leagues, social welfare organizations and local employee association. They further take different forms of operations including; rehabilitation centres, day care centres for children and vulnerable adults, training services (adult learning centres), health care centres, civil rights, education, health and human services, and arts and culture and are aimed at strengthening communities, promoting the civil society, advocacy, entrepreneurship training, empowerment, microfinancing and meeting human service needs. They represent a more homogenous group of organizations in the community development programs.

The target population for this study was 291 religious non-profit organizations in Nairobi City County, with each giving 5 respondents from departments that are highly relevant in discharging duties concerning community projects and strategies in Nairobi County, Kenya. The non-profit organizations were distributed according to the different religious faiths in Kenya forming the strata. The strata were developed from the system of classification of the various religions in the world, which is also applicable in Kenya. According to Wessendorf, Jepsen and Jacquelin (2017) the major religions of the world are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Zoroastrianism, Baha'I, and Jainism. Out of these, those that are applicable for the context of the study were Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism (Wessendorf et al., 2017).

In each of the organizations, the study considered both the unit of analysis and observation. The unit of analysis was the non-profit organization, while that of observation was the key departmental leaders providing leadership in the areas of administration, human resource management, finance, project planning, project execution, procurement, public relations, and monitoring and evaluation (UN Task Force on Religion and Development, 2018). Using this approach, the total population of the units of observation who formed the pool of total population from whom respondents were selected is summarized in Table 2

Table 2 - Total Population of Respondents

No.	Strata	No. of Organizations	No. of Units of observation per Organization	Total No. of Potential Respondents based on units of observation	Proportionate Sample
1.	Christianity				
	1. Catholic	40	8	320	10
	2. Evangelicals	206	8	1,648	52
	3. Seventh-day Adventists	7	8	56	2
	4. Jehovah Witness	2	8	16	0
	Sub Total	255	8	2,040	64
2.	Islam	31	8	248	8
3.	Hinduism	3	8	24	1
4.	Buddhism	2	8	16	0
	Total	291		2,328	73

The study used a multiple stage sampling method for the quantitative approach. Multiple stage sampling involves the use of two or more frames, and independent samples were respectively taken from each of the frames. The study chose this type of sampling because of the two main stages (unit of analysis and observation) with their subsets that were undertaken in order to get the ultimate sample size. The first stage was that of determining the sample size for unit of analysis and that of observation using a formula by Daniel (1991). The study determined the sample size (n) of the unit of analysis (non-profit organizations) using the scientific method proposed by Daniel (1991) with the confidence level of 0.05 and statistical significance of $P < 0.05$ according to the formula:

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left(\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N} \right)}$$

$$n = [z^2 * p * (1 - p) / e^2] / [1 + (z^2 * p * (1 - p) / (e^2 * N))]$$

Where; $z = 1.96$ for a confidence level (α) of 95%, $p =$ proportion (expressed as a decimal), $N =$ population size, $e =$ margin of error.

Therefore, the sample size at the unit of analysis level (religious non-profit organizations) was 73 organizations. For the determination of sample size for unit of observation, the study targeted key departments whose work is thought to demonstrate manifestation of servant leadership by identifying 5 departments to be critical to the manifestation of servant leadership as; administration, human resource management, finance, project planning and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation (Harju et al., 2018). Based on the selected sample size of the non-profit organizations of 73, then the selected sample size of respondents was $(73 * 5) = 365$.

The second step was the distribution of respondents. Proportionate stratified method was used whereby different strata in the population were identified, and in which the number of elements drawn from each stratum was proportionate to the relative number of elements in each stratum (Ragab & Arisha, 2017). The strata were used to distribute the respondents according to the relative weight of each stratum to the total number of respondents as shown in Table 2. The third stage was the selection of respondents. The respondents in religious non-profit

organizations were identified through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is an acceptable kind of sampling for special situations, and it uses the judgement of an expert in selecting cases with a specific purpose in mind. This helped to produce a sample that was logically assumed to be representative of the population (Graff, 2017). These respondents were selected from the unit of analysis from each of the following departments; administration, human resource management, finance, project planning and execution, and monitoring and evaluation. The key leaders of these departments were the main respondents to the 5-Point Likert Scale questionnaire.

3.4 Results

Respondents and organizations Characteristics

The study targeted 365 respondents from 73 religious non-profit organizations in Nairobi City County. The response rate indicated 88% success rate. The characteristics of the respondents and the sampled non-profit organizations are summarized in figures 1-4.

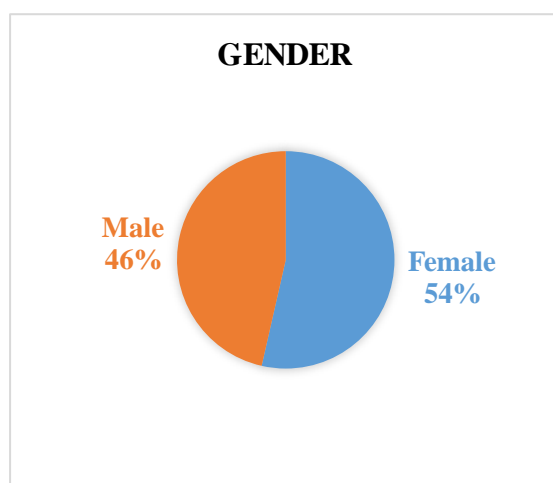


Figure 1 - Gender

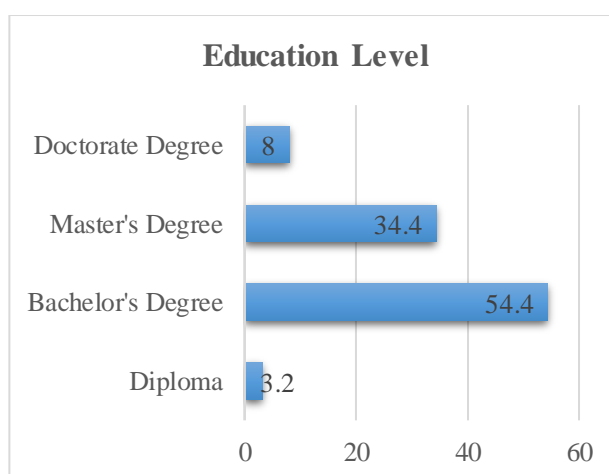


Figure 2 – Education Level

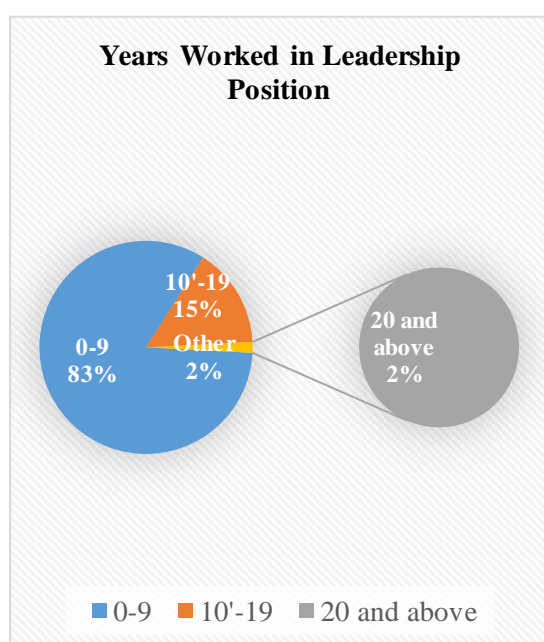


Figure 3 – Years in Leadership



Figure 4 – Programs Offered

The characteristics of the respondents and the organizations in which they worked summarized indicate that majority in leadership positions are female, relatively well educated and have a wide range of years of work experience in implementing programs addressing community development in areas ranging from healthcare to empowerment.

4 Current Servant Leadership Practices Among Non-profit Organizations

In order to ensure this objective, two statistical approaches were employed; exploratory factor analysis and measures of central tendency. A total of 36 dimensions were presented in the questionnaire to measure the extent to which the various leaders emphasized and applied each in their daily work. Factor analysis was applied at several steps to condense the responses and show the list of factors extracted and their constituent of components.

The rotated matrix summarized the total number of the extracted factors and displayed how each component was comprised as presented in Table 3. After the analysis of each component from the variables was done, they were rotated to produce a simple structure for easy and simpler understanding and interpretation. Through the rotated component matrix the study was able to determine what the components represent. By rotating the factors, it allowed for a full consideration of themes, trends, and patterns in the data that allowed the selection of significant components with meaningful data which accurately represented the underlying nature of their extracted factors' data. It is through the rotation that the factors got face validity by making the location of the axes fit the actual data points better making the data easy to interpret.

In addition, a component transformation matrix was done to arrive at new data clusters of variables that were relatively smaller and easier to understand and interpret for each of the study variables. This matrix displayed the loadings for each item on each rotated component clearly showing the items that make up the components and it presented correlations among the components prior to and after rotation as shown in Table 5. Under this stage, the components were renamed to rightly fit the clusters of items that made up each component for the study variables. Ten factors were extracted and their respective components identified using the factor loadings based on the criteria of a correlation of at least 0.5. The study relied on the criteria suggested by Field (2013) on the decision for retaining extracted factors based on the sample size of a study. The criteria suggest that for a sample size of 200 one should consider loadings of above 0.512 while for a sample size of 300 to consider a loading of 0.364. The sample for the current study was 365 and a loading of 0.5 was considered appropriate. The extracted factors were labelled according to the set of components with high factor loadings, and thus the study proposed the names of the 10 factors as: empowerment, holistic approach to work, relations, sense of community, drive towards development, morality, accountability to the community, service to others, uprightness and accountability to stakeholders. Table 3 presents this summary of the extracted factors.

Table 3 - Servant Leadership Extracted Factors

Attribute	Extracted Factors	Factor Loading	Mean	Std. Deviation	Reliability	Previous Work
Empowerment	Helping subordinates to grow and succeed in their personal life	0.688	3.54	.916	0.743	Chicca, Frank & Hagy (2018) Stone & Deno, (2017) Retno et al. (2020) Yaro, Arshad & Salleh (2017) Takoeva (2017) Stone and Deno (2017) Stone & Deno (2017) Retno et al. (2020) Takoeva (2017) Yaro, Arshad & Salleh (2017) Alasmari (2018) Milde & Yawson (2017) Ying et al. (2020) Salman and Hassan (2015) Asghar and Naseer (2017) Alex et al. (2017)
	Helping subordinates to grow and succeed in their professional line	0.672	4.07	.768		
	Aligning employees' tasks according to their capabilities	0.723	3.96	.673		
	Recognizing employees' input to work	0.783	4.11	.682		
	Seeking to empower others to be better workers	0.780	4.17	.691		
	Endeavoring to empower others to take up leadership roles in future	0.744	4.14	.761		
	Purposing to support my personnel to be emotionally healthy	0.679	3.95	.748		
	Supporting my personnel to feel holistically well	0.702	4.04	.642		
	Aggregate		4.00	.735		
Holistic Approach to Work	Continuously fostering covenantal relationships with the personnel	0.807	3.43	.859		Meylahn & Musiyambiri, (2017) Munjal (2017) Sharman, (2019) Chi et al. (2020) Eva et al., (2019) Greenleaf (1997) Mahdieh & Khanifar (2015) Chicca, Frank & Hagy (2018) Ying et al. (2020) Albareda-Tiana et al. (2018) Thao and Kang (2020) Carsten et al. (2018)
	Encouraging employees to show each other respect	0.828	4.44	.562		
	Encouraging employees to accept each other's diversities	0.828	4.41	.623		
	Aggregate		4.09	.681		
Building Relationships	Every time embracing spirituality in the organization	0.821	3.62	1.209		Mahdieh & Khanifar (2015) Ambali et al. (2016) Ahmed & Amiri (2019) Meyers (2020) Latham (2016) Perko (2017) Sombongse (2018) Bisailon & Liljenfors (2019) Phina et al. (2018)
	Constantly cultivating spirituality among the organization's personnel	0.898	3.40	1.101		
	Continually cultivating covenantal relationship with fellow leaders	0.873	3.45	.849		
	Continuously fostering covenantal relationships with the personnel	0.807	3.43	.859		
	Aggregate		3.47	.972		
Sense of Community	Always seeking to be accountable to the community	0.714	4.38	.652		Eva et al., (2019) Whitfield (2014) Ambali et al., (2016) Ahmed & Amiri, (2019) Kidsmatter (2019) Zani & Cicognani, (2012) Triraharjo, Aima & Sutawijaya (2019) Trespacios & Perkins (2016)
	Constantly seeking to be a steward of the donors' funds	0.737	4.63	.515		
	Always encouraging the personnel to be stewards to the community	0.755	4.27	.617		
	Constantly encouraging the workforce to develop concrete skills in decision making	0.768	3.88	.703		
	Availing platforms that nurture personnel skills in decision making	0.761	3.67	.740		
	Aggregate		4.17	.645		
Drive towards Development	Always seeking to uphold interpersonal acceptance tendencies within my workforce	0.644	4.19	.687		Ambali et al. (2011) Tierney et al. (2018) Kamaruddin and Prasajo (2017) Muhammad (2014) Zajda & Pasikowski (2018)
	Ensuring that all the workforce create value for the community	0.754	4.24	.610		
	Ensuring that the workforce has a strong sense of mission	0.726	4.42	.530		

	Ensuring that the workforce has strong conviction of doing right	0.660	4.47	.518	
	Aggregate		4.33	.586	Giambatista, McKeage & Brees, (2020) Muhammad (2014)
Morality	Always embracing ethical behaviors	0.799	4.41	.596	Ningrum and Hamidah (2018)
	Always ensuring that the personnel behave ethically	0.727	4.33	.636	Fulton (2006) Mulla & Krishnan (2009) Fulton (2006)
	Aggregate		4.37	.616	
Accountability to the Community	Always seeking to be accountable to the community	0.714	4.38	.652	Ragnarsson, Kristjánsdóttir and Gunnarsdóttir (2018)
	Aggregate		4.38	.652	Canavesi and Minelli (2021)
Service to Others	Regularly encouraging voluntary subordination in all levels of operation	0.765	3.52	.838	Eva et al., (2019) Canavesi & Minelli (2021a)
	Determinedly seeking to practice voluntary subordination	0.770	3.73	.814	Fields, Thompson & Hawkins (2015) Olesia, Namusonge & Iravo (2013) Canavesi & Minelli (2021)
	Aggregate		3.63	.826	Greenleaf (1997) Qin et al., (2021) Retno et al. (2020) Prakash and Mohanty (2012) Stavrova and Fetchenhauer (2015)
Uprightness	Constantly seeking to uphold responsible uprightnes	0.802	4.14	.651	Chi et al. (2020)
	Always developing responsible uprightnes in my personnel	0.802	4.15	.632	Al-tabbaa et al. (2013) Alvehus (2021)
	Aggregate		4.15	.642	Albareda-Tiana et al. (2018) Ahmad & Adnan (2014) Mulla and Krishnan (2009) Beyene et al., (2019) Eva et al. (2019)
Accountability to Stakeholders	Always seeking to be accountable to the stakeholders (donors...)	0.698	4.79	.430	United Nations ESCAP (2017)
	Aggregate		4.79	.430	Al-tabbaa et al. (2013)

Further, from the analysed results, it is observed that the extracted 10 factors and their components based on the factor loadings show the structure of servant leadership within the religious non-profit organizations in Kenya. Given the composition of each factor as judged from the factor loading matrix, each dimension of the servant leadership has been given a clear set of operational indicators that managers in this sector can apply in their daily operations to entrench servant leadership practices in the sector. The set of extracted factors on servant leadership and their components is comparable to the previous attempts made in understanding the literature on servant leadership. While there has not been an agreed upon set of components of servant leadership, the various attempts suggested a variety of components that range from 6 to 10. In the current study, 10 factors comprising servant leadership were extracted. The study finds that this is comparable with previous researches by Musiyambiri (2019), whose list comprised seven leadership tenets; listening, vision, trust, stewardship, service, influence, and appreciating others. Takoeva (2017)'s set of servant leadership comprised eight as follows; vision, integrity, credibility, empowerment, humility, authenticity, stewardship, and altruistic. Larry Spears list comprised ten including; "listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community" (Coetzer et al., 2017; Davis, 2017; Educators, 2019, p. 159). Basri et al., (2017) suggested a set of six as follows; kindness, selflessness, humility, patience, respect and forgiveness. Ningrum and Hamidah (2018) came up with a list of six as follows; authentic self, voluntary subordination, responsible morality, covenantal relationship, transforming influence, and transcendental spirituality. Stone and Deno (2017) list had the following six: humility,

vision, empowerment, altruism, love and trust. Eva et al., (2019) set comprised four as follows; service to others, holistic approach to work, sense of community and sharing power in decision making.

5 Institutional Characteristics Conditioning Practice of Servant Leadership

In order to better explain the set of extracted servant leadership dimensions and offer justification for their relevance, the study considered those elements of the context in which they are operating. 12 items were presented to the respondents and factor analysis used to cluster them into relevant themes. Table 4 Summarizes the clusters, factor loadings and components.

Table 4 - Institutional Context Extracted Factors

Variable	Retained Indicators	Factor Loading	Mean	Std. Deviation	Reliability
Coercive Pressure	We experience pressure from stakeholders to be accountable over resources and funded projects	0.858	3.62	1.271	0.736
	We are under pressure to create and maintain strong relationships with donors	0.844	3.53	1.294	
	Aggregate		3.56	1.283	
Normative Pressure	We are required by the nature of the sector to embrace management practices that promote philanthropy	0.797	3.45	1.016	
	We are required to demonstrate that we have a functional governance system in our organization	0.645	3.85	.787	
	Aggregate		3.65	.902	
	Grand Aggregate		3.95	.936	
Mimetic Conformance	Operating in this sector demands that we embrace core values that identify us as a community development agency	0.805	4.05	.770	
	We formulate and implement strategies that are consistent with those of a community development agency	0.833	4.01	.858	
	We always commit to learn from the most reputed nonprofit organizations by the stakeholders	0.729	3.83	1.125	
	We operate within the required regulations in order to benefit from the government support	0.676	4.14	1.160	
	Aggregate		4.01	.978	
Coercive Conformance	We work closely with the NGO council to ensure we are compliant	0.719	4.52	.624	
	We uphold acceptable norms as an organization	0.713	4.51	.613	
	We work towards maintaining the organization's positive reputation	0.669	4.61	.550	
	We ensure compliance with the government and NGO council's mandatory regulations	0.776	4.67	.541	
	Aggregate		4.56	.582	

Factor analysis clustered the 12 factors conditioning the practice of servant leadership among the sampled non-profit organizations with focus on isomorphism, which the researchers labelled as; mimetic conformance, coercive conformance, coercive pressure and normative pressure. It is evident that the results of the factor analysis paint a clear picture of the conditions of the context and the manner in which they are conditioning the servant leadership practices. This has been clustered into two forms: the pressure on the one hand and conformance on the other. The pressure seems to arise from the pressure exerted by stakeholders to be accountable, relate with donors, managerial practices promoting philanthropy and governance systems. The emerging response is through conformance by embracing core values for identity with the community, implementing sector relevant strategies, learning from others, conformance to industry self-regulatory bodies and statutory regulatory ones. These include; pressure for

accountability from stakeholders and donors, pressure to maintain strong relationships with donors, pressure to promote philanthropy, pressure to demonstrate functional governance, pressure to uphold core values that identify as community development agency, pressure to come up with strategies in consistency with a community development agency, pressure to learn from reputable non-profit organizations, pressure to comply with NGO council's guidelines, pressure to uphold acceptable norms, pressure to maintain organization's positive reputation, pressure to comply with government mandatory regulations and pressure to operate within required regulations.

6 Discussions and Implications

The study sought to answer two main concerns: the set of servant leadership practices most suitable for a non-profit organization in a developing country context and the set of institutional characteristics likely to shape the operation of servant leadership in the non-profit sector. The data reported on the first research question showed that out of the 36 list of servant leadership dimensions, 32 of them were identified as suitable based on their loadings as per the statistical threshold used in extracting factors under factor analysis. Further, these 32 factors were clustered into 10 factors which helps researchers in addressing the gaps leading to the conceptualization of this study. The study had noted that the literature still remains scattered and a clean list of an integrated set of servant leadership practices among non-profit organization in a developing country was still lacking. The findings of the study generate an important list of servant leadership practices that are clustered into various sets with each factor clearly operationalized into relevant set of constituent elements. The authors find that this effort will go a long way in filling the gaps that researchers have often identified in previous work and help in enhancing the current understanding of the nature and application of servant leadership in contexts that have been least studied.

In line with this list of the ten factors the study makes a contribution to the continuing scholarship in servant leadership in two ways. First, the study integrated the extant literature on the attributes of servant leadership using a comprehensive set of items drawn from multiple streams of scholarship. While the previous studies had not attempted to group these items into broadly clustered factors, by application of factor analysis, it has been possible to structure the broad range of components of servant leadership into a narrow set of attributes and clearly demonstrate the components for each attribute. Secondly, by generating the clusters of the 10 factors and their components, the study makes a contribution to practice in that managers are better informed about the relevant set of servant leadership dimensions that are applicable in the non-profit sector and how they can apply each. The factor loading that highlighted the retained components for each factor serve to demonstrate how each attribute of servant leadership can be operationalized in the context of practice.

The second question touched on the characteristics of the context likely to be conditioning the operation of servant leadership. The study identified 12 indicators associated with institutional isomorphism resulting from the defining characteristics of the uniqueness of the context. All the 12 factors were retained on the basis of their factor loadings that were within the statistical threshold of above 0.5. The study noted that these conditioning attributes of the context fell into 2 facets namely; the pressure and the conformance. The pressure arises from stakeholders, donors, uniqueness of the sector and governance systems. The conformance facet is demonstrated by the manner in which the servant leadership has assimilated the pressure and operated itself to cope with the mimetic forces and manifested itself in terms of how the leaders have addressed the demands of the context through adoption of core values, strategies,

benchmarking, regulatory compliance and by paying according to the rules of the game of the industry.

The findings on the second concern of the study raise several implications touching on the practice of servant leadership in the context investigated and the theoretical underpinnings of the construct of servant leadership. Regarding the practice, what is coming out from the two broad forms of the extracted factors demonstrates the manner in which the servant leadership practices are shaped by the characteristics of religious non-profit organizations. The study points that the context conditions the practices through the pressure it exerts and the requirements for conformance. This logic is in line with the conceptual and theoretical reasoning of the institutional context that identifies the role of institutional isomorphism in shaping the formal structures adopted in organizations and the behaviours exhibited at individual and organizational levels.

In terms of the theoretical underpinnings of the construct of servant leadership, so far the extant literature has mostly relied on the model of servant leadership proposed by Greenleaf. From the conceptualization and findings of this study, the authors point at two implications. First, the application of servant leadership attributes though relevant in the non-profit sector is conditioned by the institutional characteristics of the context and therefore requires theoretical explanations based on the theoretical streams of theories in the study of organizations focusing on institutionalism. Thus, in discussing how to apply servant leadership attributes, managers would be more relevant in understanding their institutional characteristics and the forms of isomorphism inherent in that context. Second, the authors note that the manner in which servant leadership applies as conditioned by the characteristics of the context calls upon scholars to integrate the servant leadership model with those theoretical streams of leadership studies that are anchored on the role of the situation in which leadership is applied. Thus, the situational and contingency leadership school becomes complementary to the servant leadership model of leadership.

7 Conclusion and Recommendation for Future Research

The purpose of the study was to identify servant leadership attributes applicable to the non-profit sector of a developing country context. The findings of the exploratory study undertaken among 72 religious non-profit organizations in Kenya led the authors to make two conclusions. First, servant leadership attributes are relevant to the nature of the work and operations of organizations in the non-profit sector in a developing country. Towards this, ten clusters of servant leadership attributes with relevant list of operational indicators have been extracted making it possible to explain how servant leadership can be applied in this sector. Secondly, the manner in which the set of servant leadership attributes applicable in the non-profit sector are applied is conditioned by the unique characteristics of the non-profit sector. The study found that there are several forms of institutional isomorphism that exert pressure on managerial practices and thus require compliance through conformance.

In spite of these conclusions, the authors note that the study faced a number of limitations. This study was exploratory in nature, which limits generalizations due to the low rigor of the statistical techniques applied. Particularly, the statistical rigor in the measurements of the role of the contingent factor in shaping the behaviour of servant leadership in the selected context was too low. In the attempt to advance the servant leadership scholarship, the study relied on a set of only 36 dimensions to come up with 10 attributes of servant leadership suitable for a non-profit organization in a developing country, which limited the scope in the conceptualization of servant leadership. The study suggests that future research can extend the

current study by applying more rigorous designs in a similar context. We suggest that the scope of conceptualization can be expanded to include a wider range of the dimensions. In order to enhance the generalizability, the effect of the institutional context can be assessed using more robust statistical techniques suitable to measure both direct and moderating effects of the institutional context of the non-profit organizations.

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