



R&D OF A SCALE FOR THE 6-TRAITS CHURCH SERVANT LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The study reviewed the trait approach to leadership of church leaders. With reference to Bible teaching and related literature review, six traits of church leaders, namely, Commitment, Humility, Resilience, Integrity, Service, and Teamwork (Acronym: CHRIST), were proposed as essential traits of church leaders to build up a Servant Leadership Culture. A measurement scale was developed and validated to contribute to future research studies of a church leadership model, including traits as antecedents. Confirmatory Factor Analysis showed that the measurement scale had reliability and validity. The measurement scale was psychometrically sound to measure six essential traits of church leaders with invariant properties for different gender and background such as Christian with or without service experience. The scale for measuring the six traits is the first of its kind. It can be used in future studies to examine the relationships among traits, vision, behaviours and outcomes of church leaders. It may also be used to identify emergent church leaders. A simplified scale of six items is also developed to measure the broad trait of church leaders with good psychometric and invariant properties. This Scale can also be used to measure the Culture of fellowship by the church members at large.

Keywords: R&D; Traits of Church Leaders; Commitment; Humility; Resilience; Integrity; Service; Teamwork

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1. INTRODUCTION

Jesus declared that he came to serve and not to be served (Mathew 20:28). Jesus washed the feet of His disciples and asked them to follow His example to serve one another (John 13:12-15). Paul proposed that leaders should follow the example of Jesus Christ to serve. Many Christian leaders view Jesus Christ as the ultimate model of a Church leader and a church leader should follow the teaching of the Bible and the example of Jesus Christ concerning how they take a leadership role in serving the church.

Servant leadership was coined by Greenleaf (1970). Servant leadership emphasizes humility, service to others, and ethical behavior—values that align closely with Christian teachings. Greenleaf, influenced by his Christian faith, believed that the primary role of a leader is to serve others. Hence this study proposed that servant leadership is particularly relevant in Christian churches and hence this study also adopted reviewed research studies related to servant leadership on the traits of church leaders.

Antecedents or traits of leaders are crucial elements affecting the behaviours and outcomes of leadership in general (Yukl, 1989), and of servant leadership in particular (Eva et al., 2019). This study identified six traits related to church leaders from a literature review and the teaching of Bible and developed a measurement scale of the six factors for church leaders with validity and reliability by going through the steps required for developing a measurement instrument (Hinkin, 1995; Taherdoost, 2017).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Trait as an Approach to Leadership

Yukl (1989) classified leadership research into the power-influence, trait, behaviour, and situational approaches. The trait approach dominated the study of leadership before 1948 (Antonakis et al., 2004; Stogdill, 1948; Zaccaro, 2007). The success of the mental testing movement in the early part of the twentieth century encouraged researchers to employ the then-recently developed “personality tests” in their search for leadership traits.

Stogdill (1948) reviewed leadership studies between 1904 and 1947 to find a reliable and coherent pattern related to leaders. The publication of Stogdill’s paper in 1948 marked a turning point in the study of leadership, leading to a decline in the popularity of the leadership trait theory approach (Zaccaro, 2007).

Recently, the leader trait approach regained its importance in the study of leadership (Bono & Judge, 2004; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Zaccaro, 2007). Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) argued that leadership traits such as drive, achievement, ambition, energy, initiative, motivation, honesty, integrity, self-confidence, and cognitive ability were essential for effective leadership. Bono and Judge (2004) examined the relationship between personality and transformational and transactional leadership behaviours. They found that in 26 independent studies, personality traits using the Big 5 model were related to three transformational and transactional leadership dimensions. The personality trait of agreeableness was related to servant leadership (Sun & Shang, 2019). The five traits in the Big 5 model adopted in the above studies are popular in personality and psychology studies, and they are not selected with theory proposing that the traits are related to effective church leadership or servant leadership.

2.2. Characteristics of Church and Servant Leaders

Through a literature review of servant leadership and the Bible, this study attempted to identify some traits or personal attributes related to effective church leaders. After carefully studying Greenleaf's conceptualization of servant leadership, Spears (2010) proposed that there were ten characteristics related to servant leadership, namely, Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to Growth of People, and Building Community.

Numerous studies investigated the characteristics of servant leaders with different approaches (Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Robert F. Russell & Gregory Stone, 2002; Sendjaya et al., 2008; Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017). A review of studies conducted on servant leadership showed that attributes or characteristics were frequently used without clear definitions. At least 16 measurement instruments were developed to measure servant leaders' characteristics (Eva et al., 2019). Some characteristics of servant leaders could be interpreted as leadership behaviours in some studies, such as sharing leadership (Laub, 1999), and empowerment (Robert F. Russell & Gregory Stone, 2002). However, some characteristics proposed by Spears and some characteristics measured by other studies, such as honesty (Page & Wong, 2000; Russell & Stone, 2002), integrity (Page & Wong, 2000), and empathy (Page & Wong, 2000; L C Spears, 2000) are traits of servant leaders.

2.3. Traits as an Essential Component of Church Leaders

According to personality and psychology studies, traits were relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours that reflected the tendency to respond in specific ways under certain circumstances (Roberts, 2009). Leadership behaviours in a particular situation were observable responses and actions taken by a leader to achieve effective organizational outcomes due to the effects of traits, environment and other contextual factors, as depicted by some integrative models of leadership (Eva et al., 2019; Yukl, 1989). Eva et al. (2019) reported that only seven out of 16 measures against a set of predetermined servant leadership characteristics had sufficient evidence of construct validity. The above review also showed that very few studies focus on antecedents or traits of servant leaders.

This study adopts two approaches in identifying the traits for church leaders. The first approach is to identify important traits as reported by relevant research studies. The second approach is to identify the traits of church leaders through the teaching of Bible.

By referring to the conceptualization of servant leadership and the Bible, this study identified six traits from the literature review as essential traits of Church Servant Leaders: Service, Integrity, Humility, Commitment, Teamwork and Resilience.

3. KEY COMPONENTS FOR SERVICE-LEADERS

3.1. COMMITMENT as an Essential Trait of Church Leaders (Referred to as Commitment hereafter)

Jesus Christ **committed** to achieving His mission by dying on the cross even under the unwillingness and fear of facing His death (Mark 14: 32-36). Paul the Apostle showed his commitment to the vision from God in spreading the gospel to the end of his life (Acts; 26: 19; Timothy II 2: 6-7). He faced persecution, imprisonment, and hardships, yet he remained steadfast in his mission to preach Christ and establish churches (2 Corinthians 11:24-28). His words in Philippians 3:13-14 reflect his unwavering focus on his calling.

Moses showed unwavering commitment to God and His people. Despite facing numerous challenges, including opposition from Pharaoh and the Israelites' complaints, he remained dedicated to leading them to the Promised Land. His intercession for the people during times of sin (Exodus 32:11-14) exemplifies his deep commitment to their welfare.

As Moses' successor, Joshua displayed strong commitment in leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. He encouraged the people to be courageous and faithful to God's commands (Joshua 1:6-9). His declaration in Joshua 24:15, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord," illustrates his steadfast commitment to serving the Lord.

Nehemiah exemplified commitment by returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the city's walls despite facing significant opposition (Nehemiah 2-6). His dedication to prayer, planning, and leading the people in this effort showcased his strong commitment to restore his homeland.

Commitment to the growth of people is a characteristic of servant leadership (Liden et al., 2008; Page & Wong, 2000; Larry C Spears, 2010). With reference to the above review, commitment is proposed to be an essential trait for church leaders in this study.

3.2. HUMILITY as an Essential Trait of Church Leaders (Referred to as Humility hereafter)

Humility is a construct of servant leader studied by several researchers (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Hale & Fields, 2007; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and was proposed to be a characteristic of servant leaders in 27 articles (Coetzer et al., 2017).

Jesus Christ requested his disciples to follow His example of meek and lowly in heart (Matthew 11:29). Paul pointed out the act of humility of Jesus Christ by "humbling himself, becoming obedient even unto death" (Philippians 2:8).

In the old testament, Moses is often described as a humble leader. In Numbers 12:3, it is mentioned that "Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth." While Job is often recognized for his patience in suffering, his humility is evident in his acknowledgment of God's sovereignty. Despite his trials, he ultimately submits to God's will, recognizing that he cannot fully understand God's purposes (Job 42:1-6). Nehemiah exhibited humility in his leadership as he returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. He fasted and prayed for the people (Nehemiah 1:4-11) and identified himself with their sins. He did not seek personal glory but focused on the welfare of his people and the honor of God.

With reference to the above literature, humility is proposed to be an important trait of a Church Leader.

3.3. RESILIENCE as a Trait of Servant Leaders (Referred to as Resilience hereafter)

Resilience, the ability to bounce back from adversity, frustration, and misfortune, was proposed as an essential trait of church leaders in this study. There were studies stressing the importance of resilience for leaders. The Apostles demonstrated their resilience as an important trait for their service. Peter continued to follow Jesus' calling to serve after his denial of Jesus Christ (John 21:15-18,). The apostles and disciples continued their evangelical work after persecution (Acts 8:1-6). Paul continued his ministry after having been exposed to many threats, imprisoned and beaten to almost death (II Corinthians 11:23-29).

Job is a profound example of resilience in suffering. After losing his wealth, health, and family, he maintained his faith in God. Even when his friends questioned him and urged him to curse God, Job responded with unwavering trust, stating, "Though he slay me, I will hope in him" (Job 13:15). His story highlights enduring faith with resilience amid profound trials.

David experienced numerous trials, including persecution from King Saul, personal failures, and family strife. Despite these challenges, he continually sought God's guidance and strength. His psalms often reflect his struggles and his resilience in trusting God for deliverance (Psalm 27:14).

Hence it was proposed in this study that *Resilience* was a trait of church leaders.

3.4. INTEGRITY as an Essential Trait of Church Leaders (Referred to as Integrity hereafter)

Integrity is an essential attribute of an effective leader (Duggar, 2009), and a servant leader, as mentioned in more than 11 studies (Page & Wong, 2000; Robert F. Russell & Gregory Stone, 2002; Winston, 1999). *Integrity* was described as honesty and fairness (Bennis, 1989; Coetzer et al., 2017; Robert F. Russell & Gregory Stone, 2002). Bennis (1989) suggested that integrity is one of the best qualities of authentic leaders.

Jesus taught his disciples to behave with integrity (Matthew 5:37). James also echoed the teaching of Jesus (James 5 : 12). In the Old Testament, Joseph, the son of Jacob, displayed remarkable integrity throughout his life. Despite being sold into slavery by his brothers and later imprisoned in Egypt, he remained faithful and honest. His refusal to sin with Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:6-12) highlights his commitment to integrity, even under pressure.

Daniel exemplified integrity by refusing to compromise his beliefs while in Babylon. He maintained his Jewish dietary laws and continued to pray to God, even when it was against the king's decree (Daniel 6:10).

David's sin began when he committed adultery with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11). When the prophet Nathan confronted him about his sins, David acknowledged his wrongdoing without making excuses. In 2 Samuel 12:13, he said, "I have sinned against the Lord.". Following his confrontation with Nathan, David wrote Psalm 51, a heartfelt prayer of repentance. This demonstrates his integrity in taking responsibility for his actions and seeking forgiveness.

Hence, integrity is an essential trait of a leader in general and a church leader in particular, enabling them to lead effectively according to God's will, inspire trust, and reflect their faith. The above suggests that *Integrity* is an essential trait of a church leader. Hence, *Integrity* is proposed to be an essential trait of church leaders in this study.

3.5. SERVICE as a Trait of Church Leaders (Referred to as Service hereafter)

Jesus Christ came to earth lived His life as a Son of Man and a servant leader. He taught His disciple that "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve" (Mark 10:45). Jesus Christ began His ministry by serving all who were sick (Mark 1:32-34), and developed His disciples to serve. He washed the feet of His disciples and asked His disciples to follow His example to serve others (John 13: 12-15). So Service should be an important trait of a Church leader.

In the Old Testament, several leaders are referred to as "servants" of God, highlighting their roles in obedience and leadership. Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai and he was referred to as the "servant of the Lord," (Deuteronomy 34:5). Joshua, as Moses' successor, was also called the "servant of the Lord" in the Book of Joshua (Joshua 24:29). David, the king of Israel, was described as a servant of the Lord (2 Samuel 3:18). Elijah, a prophet, was referred to as a servant of the Lord (1 Kings 18:36), where he called upon God to demonstrate His power. Isaiah, another prophet, was depicted as a servant of the Lord who suffered for the people (Isaiah 20:3, 42, 49, 50, and 53). These leaders exemplified humility and dedication to God's will, fulfilling their roles as servants while guiding the people of Israel.

In the New Testament, Paul the Apostle frequently referred to himself as a servant of Christ. His letters often emphasise his commitment to serving others through preaching the Gospel and establishing churches (Romans 1:1, 2 Corinthians 4:5). Peter the Apostle encouraged leaders to serve humbly. In 1 Peter 5:2-3, he instructs elders to shepherd the flock willingly and not for shameful gain. Stephen, one of the first deacons, served the early church by managing resources and helping those in need (Acts 6-7). Timothy, a close companion of Paul, is described as a servant of Christ who faithfully served in various capacities, including pastoral roles (Philippians 2:19-22).

From the Bible, it can be seen clearly that church leaders should serve the Lord and become servant leaders. Hence, characteristics of servant leaders will be studied to identify the traits of Church leaders.

The desire and behaviour to serve is a servant leader's essential trait and feature. Numerous research studies treated Service as an essential dimension or characteristic of servant leadership (Dutta & Khatri, 2017). According to the conceptualization of Greenleaf (1970) and the teaching of Jesus Christ (Mark 10:45), serving is a characteristic trait of a servant leader as well as a church leader.

The definition of a servant leader according to Greenleaf is a leader with a vision to serve. Service or stewardship is a construct of servant leader studied by several researchers (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Hale & Fields, 2007; Russell and Stone, 2002; Sendjaya, Sarrors, and Santora, 2008; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

It was proposed in this study that Service is an indispensable trait and essential characteristic of a church leader.

3.6. TEAMWORK as an Essential Trait of Servant Leaders (Referred to as Teamwork hereafter)

Cooperativeness is an important trait for leader according to findings of more than 10 research studies (Stogdill, 1948). **Teamwork** is similar in meaning to cooperativeness. Working through and with people is one of the important ways of completing a task by a leader, especially for a servant leader who puts the followers first. In order to achieve serving and developing followers, a servant leader needs to work with his followers as a team and build up an effective team with a teamwork spirit (Page & Wong, 2000). Hence *Teamwork* is another essential leadership trait of a servant leader (Greenleaf, 1997; Page & Wong, 2000).

Jesus Christ set up a team of 12 disciples to achieve His mission. After His resurrection, the disciples worked as a team in the spreading of Gospel (Acts, 1:12-14; 2:14). Paul stressed the importance of good teamwork of the Church by using the holistic organic model of every member being a part or member of the Church which is visualized as the body of Jesus Christ (Corinthians I 12:12-31). He frequently collaborated with others in his missionary journeys. He worked closely with Barnabas, Silas, and Timothy, among others, to spread the Gospel and strengthen the churches (Acts 13-16). Their teamwork enabled them to reach a wider audience and provide mutual encouragement.

When Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land, he relied on the support of the tribal leaders and the priests. They worked together to conquer cities and allocate land (Joshua 1:10-11). This collaboration was essential for achieving their collective goal.

Nehemiah mobilized the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the city's walls. He organized them into teams, assigning different sections of the wall to various families (Nehemiah 3). This collaborative effort exemplified how teamwork was vital for accomplishing a significant task. Nowadays, committees, task groups are usually formed to achieve the goal of an organization and teamwork is essential for performance in such setting. The church is no exception. Hence Teamwork is an important character of a church leader.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Definition of Church Leaders

Similar to the studies on leadership, there are many definitions of leadership and almost no consensus (Parris & Peachey, 2013). After reviewing related literature on the study of servant leadership and the Bible, a definition of church leaders is proposed to guide this study regarding the original proposal by Greenleaf, the integrated model of leadership (Yukl, 1989) and the teaching of Bible.

A church leader is defined as a leader with the traits and vision to serve the Lord and lead the church, with importance attached to developing followers and bringing about an outcome beneficial to the followers, the church and the larger community. Jesus gave His example of developing the apostles and bringing an outcome beneficial to the apostles, followers, the church and the whole world. It is proposed in this definition that traits and vision to serve and lead is the most essential and defining characteristic of a church leader according to the above review of literature. This definition highlights another vital aspect of church leaders: serving their followers to develop them to become church leaders and contribute to improving the followers, church and the larger community, supported by Greenleaf's conceptualization and many studies (Greenleaf, 1997).

4.2. Definition of Leadership Traits

A clear definition of church leadership traits is required to identify and develop a measurement scale for the leadership traits of church servant leaders. With reference to the proposed definition of personality traits by Roberts (2009) and the definition of leader traits by Zaccaro (2007), this study defines the broad leadership traits of church leaders as the relatively enduring patterns of thoughts, values, feelings and behaviours that reflect the tendency to respond in relatively coherent ways to serve and to lead others across a variety of group and organizational situations. As traits are a multidimensional and multi-level construct (Eysenck, 1991), this study identifies six specific leadership traits at a lower level under the broad leadership trait of church leaders through the above literature review and according to the definition in this study.

4.3 Development of the Measurement Scale of the Six Traits (see Figure-1)

This study developed the measurement scale through the following stages according to Hinkin (1995): (1) reviewing related literature and instruments already developed and collecting input from academics with expertise in the area; (2) proposing constructs related to this study and defining the constructs to be measured; (3) developing instruments according to the proposed constructs and regarding instruments used in other studies; (4) seeking comments from focus groups and experts to refine the proposed instruments; (5) collecting data to validate the instruments by two pilot studies; (6) conducting confirmatory factor analysis to validate the instruments; (7) collecting more data to support the validity and reliability of the final draft from four different groups at four points in time in 2022.

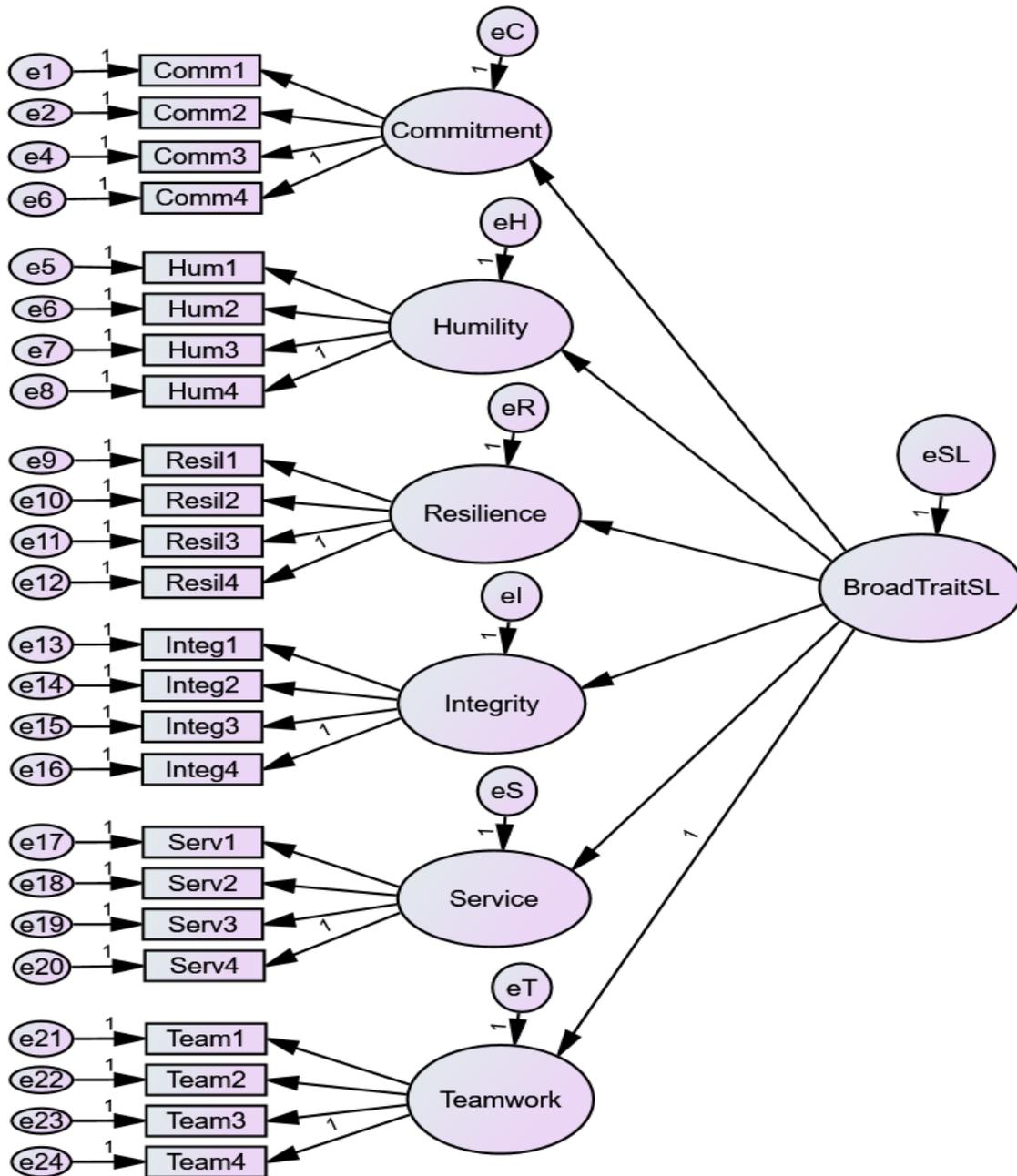


Figure-1: The 6-Trait Model generated by the SPSS Structural-Equation Modeling arriving at the desired outcome of Church Servant Leadership

The first five steps mentioned above went through two years with inputs from academic staff from the School of Social Work and School of Psychology of a Tertiary Institution in Hong Kong. With reference to a literature review and measurement scales used by other studies, a set of measurement scales was developed for the six traits. Two pilot tests were administered to check the validity and reliability of the scale. The result of the first two pilot tests showed that the scale needed further improvement after performing confirmatory factor analyses.

A final revision of the draft measurement scale was developed after an in-depth analysis of each scale item used in the two pilot tests with inputs from all academic staff involved in the project. Responses from Christians coming from more than 150 churches in Hong Kong were collected in September 2024. The data were analyzed by SPSS and AMOS version 29.

5. SAMPLE AND PROCEDURE

The questionnaire was distributed online to Christians in September 2024. Respondents were requested to respond to the questionnaire concerning the traits of their leaders. A total of 331 completed responses were received and analyzed. After cleaning of data 320 responses from Christians in Hong Kong were used for analysis..

5.1. Data Analysis and Discussion

Descriptive statistics and Factor Analysis. SPSS version 28 was used to analyze the data. The exploratory factor analysis showed that six distinct factors were obtained according to the proposed six traits.

Confirmatory factor analysis. The confirmatory factor analyses of the data from different groups are performed by AMOS version 29. The goodness of fit indices for all responses support the model's validity with IFI at 0.949 and CFI at 0.948 and RMSEA at 0.069. These figures show a good fit of the model.

Table-1: Cronbach Alpha and Composite reliability

	ALPHA	CR
COMMITMENT	0.910	0.910
HUMILITY	0.811	0.845
RESILIENCE	0.897	0.899
INTEGRITY	0.876	0.878
SERVICE	0.892	0.895
TEAMWORK	0.880	0.897

Reliability and discrimination validity of the measurement model. **Table-1** reports the reliability of the scales. The composite reliability ranges from 0.845 to 0.910. The CronbachAlpha reliability ranges from 0.811 to 0.910. The results show that the measurement model has good reliability.

Table-2: Discriminant Validity with Correlations between Traits

	comm	hum	resilI	integR	servR	teamW
Comm.						
hum	0.676					
resilI	0.744	0.700				
integR	0.806	0.845	0.786			
servR	0.734	0.719	0.748	0.744		
teamW	0.809	0.765	0.759	0.819	0.771	

Table-2 also shows the discriminant validity of the model with correlations between traits range from 0.676 to 0.845. The correlations are moderate and all below 0.85, implying that each scale is distinct. Hence, the discriminant validity of the measurement scale is supported.

5.2. Invariance of the model among four groups of respondents

Due to differences in background and demographic data, different groups may have different interpretations of the questionnaire. Differences in gender may have different interpretations. Christians with or without service experience may have different interpretations of the traits of church leaders. Analyses concerning the invariance of the model among the four groups of respondents were conducted using the multi-group method by AMOS version 29. There are four different invariant models: the configuration invariant model, the metric invariant model, the scalar invariant model and the residual invariant model. The residual invariant model has the strictest requirement of identical residues, the same regression weights and the same intercepts for all different groups.

The unconstrained model of AMOS is a test of the invariance of configuration referred to as the configural invariant model (Putnick & Bornstein, 2016). The measurement weights model of AMOS is the metric invariant model (Putnick & Bornstein, 2016). It tests metric invariance by putting the constraints for all groups to have the same configuration and regression weights from the observable variables to the latent variables. Structural covariances (or scalar invariant models) impose an additional constraint requiring the variance of all latent variables having the same values. Measurement residuals (or residual invariant model) impose an additional constraint on the structural covariances by requiring all residues to have the same value for all groups of respondents.

The goodness of fit indices for the four invariant models shows that the unconstrained (invariant configural model), measurement weight invariance (or metric invariant model), and the structural covariances model (or scalar invariant model) are acceptable models because the CFI are all above 0.90 and the RMSEA below 0.044. The difference in chi-squares of the all four models is statistically insignificant with p value higher than 0.05, implying no significant difference between the four models. The analyses confirmed that the model has invariant properties constraints of having equal configuration, equal regression weight of each observable item on the latent variable, equal covariance and equal residues among latent variables. The results suggested that the model can be applied to different groups of Christians, irrespective of gender and experience in service with good psychometric properties in this study.

Convergent Validity: The standardized regression weight of the four respective measurement items on the six traits ranges from 0.643 to 0.840. All items except two have factor scores or standardized regression weight on their respective trait larger than 0.6. The results show that the model has construct convergent validity.

5.3. Second-Order Factor Model.

This study proposed that the six specific traits were related to a broad servant leadership trait construct. A second-order model of a broad servant leadership trait formed by the six specific traits was analyzed with confirmatory factor analysis. The goodness of fit indices showed that the data supported a second-order factor model (IFI= 0.947, IFI=0.947; RMSEA=0.068). The standardized regression weights of all six specific traits on the broad trait were higher than 0.862. The above results showed that the second factor had convergent validity.

5.4. A Simplified Model of the Broad Trait of Servant Leaders.

Similar to the simplified servant leadership behaviour measurement of using six items by Liden et al. (2014), this study performs a confirmatory factor analysis of the broad trait of servant leaders by picking up one measurement item with the highest factor loading to their respective narrow trait. The goodness of fit indices for the simplified model are CFI: 0.976; IFI: 0.976. The standardised regression weights of the six items on the factor range from 0.753 to 0.876.

The results supported that the simplified measurement of broad trait of Church leader has reliability and validity

The invariance of the simplified broad trait of servant leaders among four groups of respondents was analyzed similarly for the full model above. Similar to the result of the whole full model, the analyses confirmed that the model has invariant properties constraints of having equal configuration, equal measurement weights, equal measurement intercepts, and equal structural covariances with CFI all above 0.965 and all RMSEA below 0.055. The difference in chi-squares of the all four models is statistically insignificant with p value higher than 0.05, implying no significant difference between the four models. The analyses confirmed that the simplified model has invariant properties constraints of having equal configuration, equal regression weight of each observable item on the latent variable, equal covariance and equal residues among latent variables. The results suggested that the model can be applied to different groups of Christians, irrespective of gender and experience in service with good psychometric properties in this study.

The results suggested that the simplified model of broad traits of servant leaders can be used for different groups in this study with good psychometric properties.

6. RESULTS

This study attempts to develop a valid and reliable measurement scale of six traits of servant leaders as antecedent variables for future studies of servant leadership. As discussed in the development of the questionnaire, the questionnaire has face validity, construct validity and content validity through the literature review and involvement of academic inputs. The questionnaire has reliability and discriminant validity and shows configural, metric and scalar invariance among the four data groups taken at different time slots with different backgrounds.

A second-order factor analysis further shows that the measurement scale of six traits of servant leaders has convergent validity. The second-order factor can be called the broad servant leader trait with six specific narrower traits: Commitment, Humility, Resilience, Integrity, Service, and Teamwork (CHRIST). The six specific traits converge to the broad servant leader trait according to the proposal of this study. The six traits are distinct but not too highly correlated. Since the six traits are related to the characteristics of servant leaders from the literature review, the second-order latent variable as higher-level servant leader trait has construct validity.

The broad servant leader trait can be measured by a simplified version using one item from each trait. The confirmatory factor analysis shows that the measure has excellent psychometric properties with good validity and reliability.

The result is the first in identifying six specific traits with a reliable and valid measurement instrument convergent to broad leadership traits for church leaders. The broad leadership trait can also be measured by six items similar to the simplified version of the measure of servant leadership by Liden et al. (2014). The findings may fill the gap in finding the relation between leader traits and other leadership variables in an integrative model with a valid and reliable measurement instrument for traits of servant leaders. The results can lead to the following practice points:

- Traits of church leaders can be measured by the questionnaire developed which can serve as an instrument for identifying emergent servant leader.
- The questionnaire can also serve as an instrument for identifying emergent church leader.

7. DISCUSSION

With the development and validation of the measurement scale for six specific church leader traits under the acronym CHRIST is convergent to a broad church leader trait as proposed in this study. The review of literature in this study shows that the six traits of church leaders are also characteristics of servant leaders. The traits of church leaders may also be treated as traits of servant leaders, which is an important but seemingly neglected part of the antecedents of servant leadership theory and practice. Using the measurement scale will permit further research to investigate the integrative church leadership model, and the servant integrative leadership model, which may enhance knowledge of our understanding of leadership theory. The measurement traits may also be used for research to identify emergent and effective church leaders. This study has limitations of only collecting data from students, social workers, business workers in HKSAR, and social workers in Mainland China. The result may not be applied to cities/countries with different cultures. Further research may test whether the model has invariant properties among cultural groups.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTEREST

The author declares NO conflict of interest. There are no other third parties in the design of the study, in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data, in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.

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