

**TITLE:** Examination of Leadership Practices of Principals Identified as Servant Leaders

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**OBJECTIVE:** The purpose of this study was to provide empirical analysis of the concept of “servant leadership” and to discover (validate) the leadership practices associated with servant leadership.

**METHODOLOGY:** The study was divided into two phases. In the first phase the Self Assessment of Servant Leadership (SASL; Page & Wong, 1998) was used to survey a group of Missouri public school principals (from a population of 342, a stratified random sample of 112 responded, representing one elementary, one middle/junior high school and one high school in every county). These principals, in the second phase, had between three and five teachers within their school complete the Leadership Practices Inventory Observer. The results of this survey were used to create two groups of principals for the second phase in comparing principals who utilized servant leadership with those who did not by comparing their scores on the Leadership Practices Inventory. The typical respondent was male (66%), equally likely to be at any one of the educational levels, with between 10 and 30 years of educational experience (78%), with less than 9 years of administrative experience (60%), and at least a college degree (38% with masters’ and 15% with doctoral degrees).

**KEY FINDINGS:** No demographic variables (e.g., gender, school type, educational level, years of administrative experience) were significantly related to the overall SASL rating. While the rank order of the five leadership practices was relatively consistent across the servant and non-servant leader principals, the LPI scores on all five practices were significantly higher for the servant leader principal group. In other words, public school principals in Missouri who rate themselves high on the SASL are, in turn, rated significantly higher by their teachers on the five leadership practices.

“From these results,” says the author, “one can assume that servant leaders, as identified by the SASL, are perceived by their teachers as more effective leaders as measured by the LPI” (p. 123).