

Servant Leadership in a Marketing Context

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Dissertation submitted to the
Department of Strategy and Management
Norwegian School of Economics
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

October 2023

Acknowledgements

Thank you God. Thank you for the family, friends, supervisor, time, thoughts, opportunities and academic environment that facilitated this endeavor.

Abstract

Research on Servant Leadership (SL) is gaining momentum in the management literature, but the role and effects of this style of leadership have not received much attention in the marketing literature. The purpose of this PhD thesis was, in three interconnected studies, to first investigate the foundations of SL, second, to review previous research on SL in the marketing literature, and third, to start exploring one of the promising avenues for future research by testing effects of SL on marketing creativity.

The first study was the first in-depth citation analysis of SL research, using 24,030 references from the Web of Science spanning a period of 50 years. The analyses revealed eight distinct streams of research on SL, which emerged at different points in time, but have continued to coexist. The results provided first-hand insights into how the field evolved, where it is heading and how to advance future research.

The second study filled a gap in the marketing literature by conducting the first systematic literature review of the effects of SL on marketing outcomes, reviewing publications from 228 marketing-indexed journals over the past 52 years. One key conclusion was that SL seems to be more conducive to creativity in marketing organizations than other common styles of leadership, though empirical evidence was lacking.

In the third study, the comparative effects on creativity of four leadership styles (incl. SL) were tested in an experimental setting, using a sample of 526 marketing professionals. In line with the propositions, it was found that SL led to higher levels of marketing creativity in the followers, and this effect was mediated by psychological safety.

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Chapter 1: Introduction, motivation and objectives

This chapter begins with a brief review of the existing literature on leadership, with a focus on recent developments in leadership style and the state of research on Servant Leadership (SL). Then, the core attributes that have enabled the evolution of SL theory are derived and discussed in more detail. Next, focused on the unique attributes of the servant leaders, the state of SL research in the marketing literature is reviewed and critical research gaps are identified and discussed. To address these gaps, three interconnected studies on the nexus of SL and marketing are proposed. Finally, the chapter ends with an overview of the studies motivation, objectives, research questions, methods, and main findings.

1.1. An overview of leadership styles

Leadership is one of the oldest and most durable concepts in social sciences (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). It has historically contributed to the development of civilized societies, and occupationally contributed to the formation of modern organizations (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Substantial developments in the field of leadership in the past 50 years (Bass & Stogdill, 1990) and developments in positive psychology in the early 2000s (Owens et al., 2011) have led to the emergence of new leadership styles with different orientations (for an overview see Figure 1)¹. While classical types of leadership emphasize mainly on the achievement of organizational goals, follower-oriented leaders focus on the quality of the leader-member exchange relationship as well (see Appendix 1), thus new sets of psychological outcomes can be expected including the followers' empowerment, growth, positive emotions, and well-being. In fact, leaders who balance organizational goals with the psychological needs of followers (leadership styles on the line of the inner circle) are among the most popular (Zhu et al., 2019) and effective leadership styles (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Jackson et al., 2013;

¹ Figure 1 results from a subjective exercise rooted in Rosch & Lloyd's (1978) principles for category formation. The first principle, "perceived world structure" emphasizes that our perception of the world relies on organized information, not random or unpredictable traits. The second principle, "cognitive economy" suggests that category systems should provide maximum information with minimal cognitive efforts.

Lee et al., 2020; Schyns & Schilling, 2013). Unlike Machiavellian leaders, effective leaders empower subordinates, provide them with meaningful work, and act ethically. Such a leader cares about the well-being of its followers and provides them with a thriving environment to develop their character and grow.



Figure 1. Proliferation of leadership styles

Although the concept of effective leadership has recently been highlighted, interestingly surveys from the past century have consistently confirmed its relevance to the psychology and performance of subordinates (e.g., see Bergen, 1939; Brown et al., 2005; Houser, 1927; Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1970; Lee et al., 2020; Liden et al., 2014; McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Thomas, 1988;

Walumbwa et al, 2011; Yammarino et al., 1993). There is growing empirical evidence suggesting that, effective leaders can positively contribute to major business functions including human resources (De Clercq et al., 2014), strategy (Eva et al., 2018), finance (Barling et al., 1996), public relations (Aldoory & Toth, 2004), and marketing and sales (Jaramillo et al., 2009). However, according to recent meta-analytical reviews, only a few of these leadership styles can inspire extraordinary achievements in followers (such as creativity; Lee et al., 2020). Therefore, exploring effective leadership styles and their underlying mechanisms have been one of the most durable streams of leadership research (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). One of the effective leadership styles, emphasized after the 1970s movement², is *servant leadership*.

1.2. Servant leadership: Introduction and state of the research

The concept of SL was introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf (1904-1990). It was proposed as a remedy to the harsh environment of corporate world, to shift perspective from profit maximization to employee wellbeing and happiness. In his classic essay “The Servant as Leader” in 1970 he coined the concept and according to Greenleaf, the power of leadership lies in understanding and serving the followers, and this is the primary role of leaders: “the servant-leader is servant first” (Greenleaf, 1977). Servant leaders are humble stewards who show a sincere intrinsic interest in the followers’ growth and personal development. According to this articulation of the SL concept, the motive of developmental service provision should emerge from the leader’s inner desire, not as an obligation or duty. Further, servant leaders are not only concerned with the followers’ current capabilities, but also their potential; what they could be capable of becoming (Greenleaf, 1977). Lastly, the followers themselves are expected to ideally turn into future servant leader as well. SL nowadays is recognized as a well-developed form of leadership associated to various positive psychological outcomes in organizations (see Eva et al., 2019).

Scientific documents published on SL suggest that research on SL is receiving significant attention from the business and management literature (see Figure 2).

² The movement that is also known as theory-driven leadership (Bass & Stogdill, 1990).

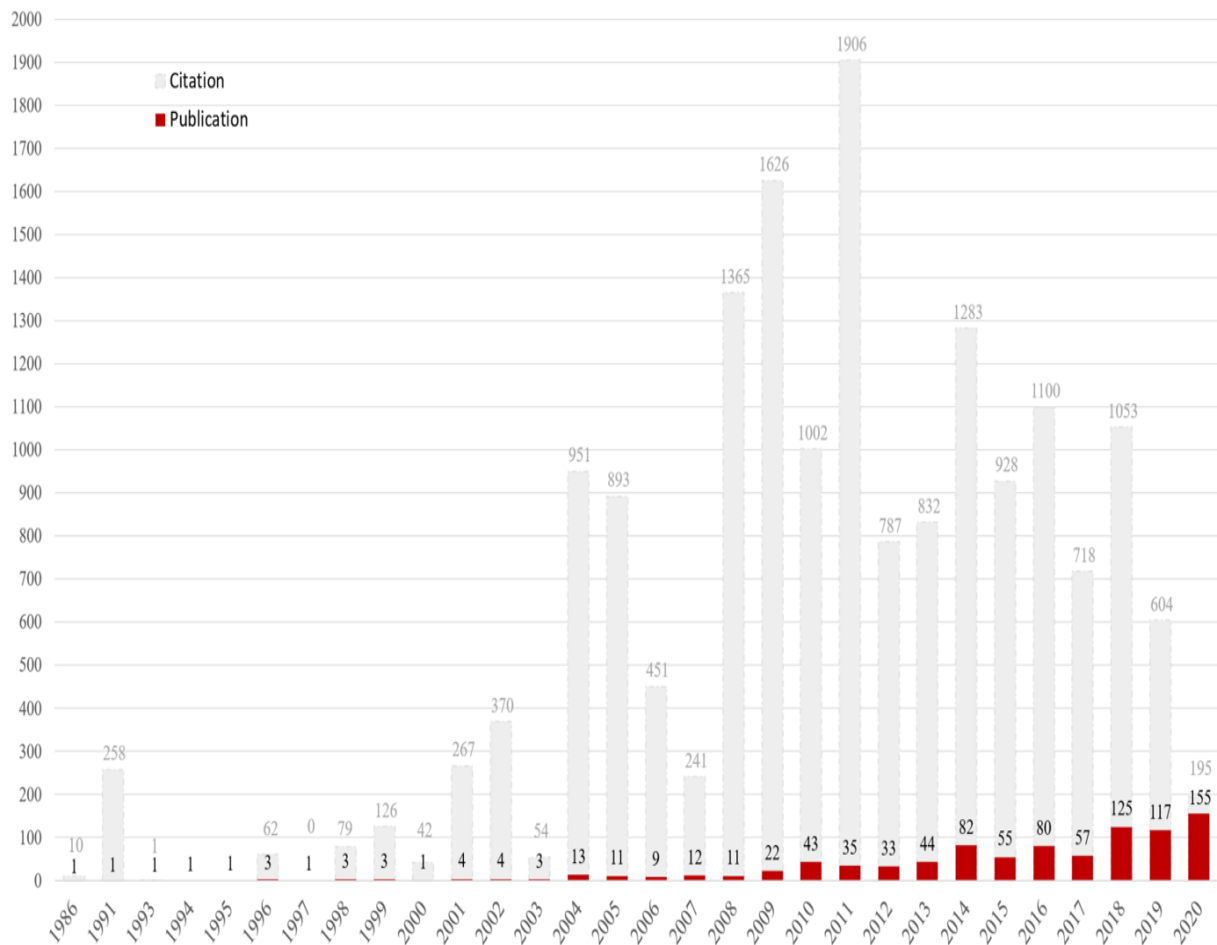


Figure 2. SL documents citation per publication year (1986-2020)

Exploring Scopus-Elsevier database reveal that, in total 931 articles with the keyword of *servant leadership* have been published in scientific peer-reviewed journals from 1986 to 2020, with a total of 17,204 citations. The number of articles published during the first 23 years was relatively small (83 documents, 9% of the publications), indicating a low degree of public awareness or internet in the concept of SL. During this period, SL is still in the incubation stage, and leading scholars struggle to position it as a unique and legitimize leadership style (see Graham, 1991; Greenleaf, 1970; 1977; 1991; Laub, 1999; Spears, 1995; 1998). However, after this period of incubation it took only 9 years for the SL research to receive 451 new publication (48% of all the publications). At this stage in the development of SL, groundbreaking conceptualization works were proposed (e.g., see Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Dennis & Winston, 2003; Ehrhart, 2004; Liden et al., 2008; Liden et al., 2014; Liden et al., 2015; Page and Wong, 2000; Reed, Vidaver-Cohen & Colwell,

2011; Reinke, 2004; Sendjaya et al., 2019; Sendjaya, Sarros & Santora, 2008; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; Winston & Fields, 2015). Nowadays, SL research is gaining a lot of interest from scholars, as evidenced by the 397 new publications on SL (43% of all publications) just during the past three years, from 2018 to mid-2020. Overall, the figures suggest that research on SL is gaining momentum in the business and management literature. This raises the question of what makes SL unique?

1.3. The essence of servant leadership theory

Earlier studies, including Greenleaf's own efforts, aimed at defining SL by including series of general leadership attributes such as foresight (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears & Lawrence, 2002), vision (Patterson, 2003), pioneering (Russell & Stone, 2002), awareness (Spears, 1998), and team building (Wong & Page, 2003). As a result, servant leaders were affiliated with more than 83 attributions (see VanMeter et al., 2016). Thus, the discriminant validity of SL was soon criticized (see Figure 3)³. By including general leadership traits, the concept became less precise and lean (see Appendix 2). Therefore empirically impossible to test for its unique effects with regard to its nomological network of associations with other constructs of interest. Further, the earlier version of SL exhibited high communalities with other leadership styles (Graham, 1991; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Spears, 1995). Thus, SL was soon criticized for overlapping with positive and moral styles of leadership, such as with role modeling and inspirational components of transformational leadership (TFL; Podsakoff et al., 1996), honesty and moral features of ethical leadership (Brown et al., 2005), authentic-self of authentic leadership (Gardner et al., 2011) and charismatic leadership (Fuller et al., 1996).

³ The list of SL attributions is borrowed from VanMeter et al.'s (2016) review of the domain elements of SL. The general leadership attributes are based on Kirkpatrick and Locke's (1991) leadership traits, and the shared and unique attributes of SL are derived from the core literature on the SL concept, including works of Graham (1991), Greenleaf (1970; 1977), Liden et al. (2008), Russell and Stone (2002), Sendjaya et al. (2008), Spears (1995), and Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011).

(3) and outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others within the organization and the larger community.” (Eva et al., 2019).

More recent conceptualization studies focus on unique components of SL including being a servant, putting subordinates first, serving attitude, serving others, standing back, empowerment and stewardship (see Ehrhart, 2004; Liden et al., 2015; Liden et al., 2008; Sendjaya et al., 2008; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; Van Dierendonck, 2011).

1.4. The state of servant leadership research in marketing

Research on SL is gaining momentum in the management literature (Eva et al., 2019). Recent meta-analytical studies claimed SL to be a meaningful leadership style, structurally unique from the rest, and exceptionally relevant to creative behaviour (Lee et al., 2020). Potential of SL for marketing and-sales research is enormous. Servant leaders constitute features that are of paramount importance for marketing research and creativity, such as moral behavior (Graham, 1991) and empowerment (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Servant leaders are known to behave according to inner moral values, and provide the followers with meaningful work. They care about the followers’ wellbeing, provide them with a thriving environment and personalized one-on-one services to develop their characters and grow, hence achieve higher marketing and-sales performance (Jaramillo et al., 2009). In spite of the potentials and recent calls for further research on SL across studies (see. Grisaffe et al., 2016; VanMeter, 2016), the concept has surprisingly yet remained understudied in marketing research. In fact, the role and effects of this style of leadership have not received much attention in marketing, with some notable exceptions (Schwepker, 2016; Varela et al., 2019).

1.5. An overview of the research questions and studies

This PhD thesis investigates the role of SL in marketing by first reviewing the foundations of SL, second, synthesizing previous research on SL in marketing-indexed journals, and finally, identifying and following promising avenues for future research

on the effects of SL on the psychology and behavior of marketing professionals. To this end, the first two main research questions are as follows:

- *What are the major streams of research and gaps on SL in business and management sciences? (Study #1)*
- *What are the major empirical findings and gaps on the effects of SL in marketing research? (Study #2)*

The final research question (#3) arose after addressing the first two questions, which is to start following one of the promising avenues for future research on SL and marketing creativity:

- *How and to what extent does SL influence marketing creativity above other leadership styles? (Study #3)*

Table 1 describes the purpose, characteristics, methods and contributions of the studies further.

Table 1. An overview of the studies aim, data, method, and main findings

-	Study #1	Study #2	Study #3
Title	Research Streams, Gaps and Opportunities in Servant Leadership Research	Servant Leadership in Marketing: A Critical Review and a Model of Creativity-effects	Effects of Leadership on Marketing Creativity: A Comparative Study of Four Leadership Styles
The aim	The purpose of this bibliometric study is to investigate major research clusters, emerging trends, their underlying concepts, turning points and gaps of SL research.	This research aims to map the frontiers of SL research in the marketing literature. It is an attempt to integrate the field, and offer the first nomological model of the empirical effects of SL on marketing outcomes and identify promising research gaps.	The objective of the study is to study the distinctive effects of leadership style (servant-, transformational-, transactional- and laissez-faire leadership) and explore their underlying creative agency and motivational mechanisms (i.e.,

			intrinsic motivation, autonomy, creative self-efficacy, and psychological safety).
Data	24,030 references from 549 articles (spanning a period of 50 years) from Thomson Reuters Web of Science™	228 marketing-indexed journals (over the past 52 years) from Elsevier’s Scopus® and the ABS (Association for Business Schools)	527 marketing- and salespeople filled in questionnaires and generated 1.736 brand slogans (scored by a panel of judges)
Method and data analysis	Document co-citation analysis method and clustering algorithms (latent semantic index, the log-likelihood ratio, and the mutual information index)	Systematic and strategic literature review and content analysis	In an experimental design (imaginative scenario) the participants were exposed to four leadership conditions (servant-, transformational-, transactional- and laissez-faire leadership). To analyze data and test the structural models series of multivariate data analysis techniques were used including ANOVA, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), and structural equation modeling (SEM)
Findings and Contribution	The cluster analyses revealed the most influential articles, authors, journals in each stream. The study recognized marketing as a promising stream of research on SL that needs	Results integrated the field, provided a variety of useful propositions and set the stage for empirical expansion of SL in marketing. It identified promising research gaps, including a major gap in the	The model of major effects of leadership on marketing creativity was tested. The analyses revealed that some relational styles of leadership (i.e., servant leadership) have

	<p>further systematic investigations. The findings suggests that the available SL scales contain items that are not descriptive of SL behavior, thus, future based on socio-cognitive theories it was argued that research must make distinction between <i>servant leadership motivation</i> and <i>behavior</i>.</p>	<p>literature that was lack of studies on the effects of SL on marketing creativity. The study suggested that SL might be more conducive to creativity in marketing organizations than other common styles of leadership. Critical research questions on the origin of marketing creativity were delivered, and building on dual-process theories of mind and creative cognition psychology the first conceptual model for future research on SL-effects on marketer creativity was developed.</p>	<p>superior effects on marketing creativity, and result in a higher number of marketing ideas, and higher scores on originality and relevancy. Several significant creative agency and motivational mediators were also identified. The official bootstrap mediation testing pointed to psychological safety as the main mechanism mediating the effect of SL on creativity (originality and overall) above other styles.</p>
<p>Publication status</p>	<p>Second revision submitted to the <i>Leadership & Organization Development Journal</i> (ABS 2).</p>	<p>Published in the <i>Journal of Business Research</i> (ABS 3), December 2022.</p>	<p>Under revision at the <i>Journal of Business Research</i> (ABS 3). An early version received the Best Paper Award at the <i>Johan Arndt Conference</i>, Bergen, Norway, May 2023.</p>

Chapter 2: Positioning studies

In this section, research gaps are highlighted and studies are positioned in the relevant literature. Each study positioning includes three parts as follows: In the first part, an overview of the concept of SL is presented, with an emphasis on the distinctive dimension of SL for the study. The second part delves into the limitation of previous research and identification of research gaps (structural and functional) in SL research. This is achieved by utilizing a critical literature review perspective. The final section of positioning summarizes the purpose of the study, research questions and contributions.

2.1. Study1: Research streams, gaps and opportunities in SL research

Study 1 is a comprehensive citation analysis of literature on SL research. The analysis offers fresh perspectives on the development of the field, its current trajectory, and potential avenues for future research. Furthermore, the research identifies the most influential articles, authors, and journals.

Research on SL is burgeoning, since SL is particularly relevant for modern companies with highly educated and self-conscious followers, it is attracting the attention of an increasing number of researchers and managers (Eva et al., 2019; Parris & Peachey, 2013). The defining characteristic of SL is a leader's focus on the growth and well-being of their followers. In endeavoring to enhance followers' personal development, servant leaders are not only concerned with their current needs and skills but also their potential—what they are capable of becoming (Greenleaf, 1970; 1977). Empirical studies have shown that this kind of leadership style may have positive effects on followers' behaviors, including work commitment, work effectiveness, organizational citizenship behaviour, psychological well-being, creativity and trust in the leader (Joseph et al., 2005; Malingumu et al., 2016; Miao et al., 2014; Yoshida et al., 2014). Combined with the promising findings so far, there are reasons to expect a continued growth in research on SL (see Figure 2); in fact, the research on SL is gaining momentum in the business and management literature. However, the sheer growth of studies on SL has left many structural and functional questions unanswered, including:

- Which subfields constitute the structure of SL-research?
- What are the major knowledge gaps and unresolved problems in SL-research?
- What important directions can be identified for future research on SL?
- What are the contributions of marketing and sales management to SL-research?
- Which articles, journals, and authors have played a central role in the evolution of SL research?

In response to these questions, the current study offers five main contributions, as follows. First, it identifies distinct subfields of SL research. Eva et al. (2019) recently presented a systematic literature review of 285 articles on SL research (1998-2018) and developed a nomological network of SL in relation to its antecedents, outcomes, mediators, and moderators. Further the authors suggested that the field consists of three broad phases or categories, based on subjective analysis: (1) conceptual development, (2) measurement and (3) model development (Eva et al. 2019; Parris and Peachey 2013). Reviewing recent publications on SL challenges the three-stage development of SL research and suggests more and distinct subfields of SL research (see e.g., Beck, 2014; Bobbio et al., 2012; Burton et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2015; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; 2018; Hunter et al., 2013; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Mayer et al., 2008; Neubert et al., 2008). The studies suggest that the intellectual structure of the literature on SL is more fine-grained and consists of distinct subfields, further, the subfields did not evolve in a strict sequential manner. Secondly, it identifies knowledge-gaps and unresolved problems in the SL-research. Researchers in the field find SL-research fragmented, lacking coherence and clarity (Eva et. al. 2019; Parris & Peachey, 2013; VanMeter et al., 2016; Zarei et al., 2022). In spite of the progress, yet there exists unresolved issues, measurement challenges, gaps in the research literature on SL (Eva et al., 2019; Mcquade et al., 2021; VanMeter et al., 2016; Zarei et al., 2022). Thirdly, it identifies important topics for future research, which are not addressed fully in previous reviews: Instruction and training methods for development of SL skills. Fourthly, following recent studies on sales performance and SL, it investigates the role of marketing in the evolution of SL-research (e.g., see. Anderson and Oliver, 1987; Churchill, Ford, Hartley and Walker, 1985; DeConinck, 2011; Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko and Roberts, 2009; Schwegker, 2015; Schwegker and Schultz, 2015). Finally, after investigating the methodological foundations, turning points, and emerging trends of SL research, this study systematically identifies the most influential articles, journals, and authors that have played a central role in the evolution of the field.

2.2. Study 2: SL in marketing: A critical review

The leadership style of managers has a significant impact on a variety of organizational outcomes (Lee et al., 2020). One of the leadership styles that is gaining attention in both general leadership research and the marketing field is SL (Eva et al., 2019; Jaramillo et al., 2009). However, the literature on SL in marketing is very fragmented, and there is a need for systematic attempts to unify the field (Zarei et al., 2022). This study presents the first systematic literature review (SLR) of the effects of SL on marketing outcomes, followed by a list of major gaps and recommendation for future research on SL-effects on marketer creativity.

SL is about the followers' personal growth and well-being (Greenleaf, 1970; 1977). The purpose is to unleash the potential of the followers to thrive and grow personally and professionally through one-on-one prioritizing of individual needs and interests (Eva et al., 2019). A major distinctive dimension of SL is the other-directed motivation of the leader (Eva et al., 2019): Thus, the motivation is not the status of the leader, but the growth of followers. Popular measures of SL include dimensions such as *empowerment* (Liden et al., 2015), *helping subordinates grow and succeed* (Liden et al., 2008), *humility, authenticity* (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and *behaving ethically* (Liden et al., 2015). Therefore, SL is deemed particularly relevant in modern marketing organizations with highly educated and self-conscious employees.

Several reviews of empirical research on SL in the broader management literature show that SL has many positive effects on follower performance, psychological well-being, and trust in the leader (e.g., see Eva et al., 2019, Gui et al., 2021; Hoch et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020, Parris & Peachey, 2013). However, there is a need for a targeted and critical review of SL-effects in marketing for four main reasons: First, the number of studies on SL-effects on marketing outcomes is still limited despite increasing attention and several promising findings (e.g., Bande et al., 2016; Riquelme et al., 2020). A critical review may accelerate research in this area by identifying important gaps and research questions. Second, SL is a highly relevant leadership-style for marketing organizations because marketing is essentially about serving the needs of customers and clients (e.g., Houston, 1986). It is a reasonable conjecture that the attitudes and behaviors of servant leaders will transfer to the

followers and to the culture of marketing functions of the organization and thus influence marketing outcomes, possibly to a larger extent than other styles of leadership⁴. Any evidence to support this prediction, or new research questions for future research, would be beneficial. Third, SL seems to foster creativity (Eva et al., 2019), and creativity is a major driver of marketing performance (e.g., Im et al., 2013, Rosengren et al., 2020). However, creativity is context-dependent and domain-specific (e.g., see Gomes et al., 2016; Kaufman & Baer, 2004), and a closer look is needed at the specific nature and potential of SL-effects on marketing creativity. Fourth, more studies have been published on the effects of SL on marketing outcomes after Eva et al. (2019) published their review.

To this end, the overall purpose of the current study is to explore the current state of knowledge on SL-effects in marketing literature and identify opportunities for future research. This review aims to answer six interrelated research questions:

- RQ1: How is SL understood and defined in marketing research?
- RQ2: What kinds of marketing outcome variables are addressed in research on SL-effects?
- RQ3: What kinds of theories dominate in the development of hypotheses and the explanations of SL-effects in marketing?
- RQ4: What kind of methods (samples, data-collection methods, measures, analyses) are used to study SL-effects in marketing?
- RQ5: Which are the major empirical findings on the effects of SL in marketing research and which variables mediate and moderate these effects?
- RQ6: How and to what extent does SL influence marketing creativity above other styles?

By answering these questions, the study offers three main contributions to the literature: (1) Identifying streams of research on SL-effects in marketing and give directions for future research. (2) Reporting limitations with current conceptions and

⁴ For an overview of other leadership styles studied in the thesis, see the last section of this chapter

measures of SL in marketing. With focus on the important dimensions of SL in marketing. (3). Developing a new conceptual model of the effects of SL on marketer creativity and the mediators of these effects (minding other leadership styles).

Before moving on to the literature review and develop the conceptual model of the effects of SL on marketer creativity, it is essential to describe similarities and differences between SL and three other popular leadership styles: *transactional*, *ethical*, and *transformational* leadership. Transactional leadership (TRA) is dominant in the classic leadership literature and, in many ways, a contrast to SL. Ethical leadership and transformational leadership are the types of leadership most strongly related to SL. TRA is concerned with transactions between manager and employees and focuses on task accomplishment and rewards (Bass, 1990).

Transactional leaders clarify roles and job tasks, monitor followers' performance and, take corrective actions when needed (Avolio & Bass, 2004). SL is fundamentally different from TRA both in terms of the motivation and the behavior of the leader. While transactional leaders focus on employee performance and interfere only when problems occur or procedures and standards are not met (Avolio & Bass, 2004), servant leaders actively support the personal and professional growth and development of followers based on a desire to serve first (Greenleaf, 1970; Russell & Stone, 2002). However, there is also some overlap between the two styles of leadership: Both address role clarification and follower accountability (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Ethical leadership is defined as:

"The demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown et al., 2005).

Thus, ethical leadership focuses on common ethical norms, such as listening to employees, treating employees fairly, and showing concern (Brown et al., 2005). There is considerable overlap with SL: Integrity, trustworthiness, caring for employees and behaving ethically are also elements of SL (Ehrhart, 2004; Liden et al., 2008;

Liden et al., 2015; van Dierendonck, 2011). In addition, they both highlight the importance of two-way communication with followers (van Dierendonck, 2011). However, SL is a broader concept that includes more than ethical behavior. Servant leaders proactively empower followers to grow and develop both skills and character (Greenleaf, 1970). Also, SL provides more freedom in terms of how things can be done, rather than focusing on practicing accepted organizational norms (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Transformational leaders provide the vision, inspiration, knowledge and training needed for followers to perform beyond their perceived capabilities (Bass, 1990). Such leaders give followers autonomy as well as the authority to make decisions once they have been properly trained. Transformational leadership overlaps with SL. Both types of leadership are concerned with the growth of followers and both encompass morality. However, morality in SL is directed toward the followers' wellbeing, while transformational leadership morality is directed toward the organization (Graham, 1991). Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) suggest that servant leaders are different from transformational leaders in two respects: the servant leader is (a) interested in serving marginalized people and (b) dedicated to the followers' need fulfilment. Experimental evidence suggest that these differences in leadership style have empirical consequences. SL has been found to affect the psychological needs of followers (psychological need satisfaction), whereas transformational leadership primarily influences perceptions of the leader (e.g., perceived leadership effectiveness; van Dierendonck et al., 2014).

2.3. Study 3: Effects of leadership on marketing creativity

Study 2 found that creativity is a key driver of success for marketing organizations, however very little is known about the relative impact of different styles of leadership on marketing creativity. In the current study, which is an experimental study, hypotheses are tested on the comparative effects of four leadership styles (including SL) on the dimensions of creativity (i.e., originality and relevancy of slogan ideas for a new brand).

The profitability of brands is strongly influenced by the ability of marketing managers to keep their brands attractive and differentiated from the competition (Swaminathan et al. 2022). The level of attractiveness is, in turn, dependent on the creativity of marketing programs (Andrews and Smith 1996; Brodherson et al. 2017; Im and Workman 2004). Thus, stimulating creativity is a key leadership objective for marketing managers. Previous studies have explored and tested several determinants of creative behavior in marketing organizations (see Althuizen et al., 2016; Andrews & Smith, 1996). In this study, focus is on an organizational factor, which so far has received modest attention in research on marketing creativity: The leadership style of the supervisors. Particularly, in this study the focus is on four major leadership styles: SL, TFL, TRA, and LF⁵, and it is expected that some are more conducive to creativity than other leadership styles.

LF is often termed “non-leadership”, “absent leadership”, or “hands-off leadership”, and is the most passive style of leadership described in the literature (Bass 1985; Yang 2015). LF does not simply reflect low levels of other styles of leadership, such as TFL or TRA. Rather, LF is a distinct type of passive leader behavior (e.g., Antonakis et al. 2003). The sum of previous research on the effects of LF suggests that, overall, LF has negative consequences on follower motivation, effort, and job satisfaction (Krasikova et al. 2013). TRA leaders have a transactional perspective on the leader-follower relationship: they offer benefits in exchange for work effort (Bass 1985). Such leaders develop clear rules and systems, monitor behavior, and respond to deviances from expectations by using various types of rewards (praise, recognition, bonuses, etc.) and punishment (e.g., correction, criticism, cut in bonuses, etc.) (Howell

⁵ For a brief descriptions of the leadership styles review previous section.

and Avolio 1993; MacKenzie et al. 2001). The logic or underlying mechanism of TRA is *instrumental compliance* (MacKenzie et al. 2001); transactional leaders focus on stimulating and controlling behavior without much concern for the psychological needs of followers. In contrast, TRF leaders inspire subordinates to identify with, and internalize, their visions and objectives (Bass 1985; MacKenzie et al. 2001). TRF leaders thus transform and align the perspectives and motivation of followers. SL leaders focus primarily on the development and well-being of the follower. SL is the “new challenger” promoted as particularly conducive to marketing creativity (Zarei et al. 2022). TRF leaders are primarily concerned with individual development as a means of achieving organizational objectives (Stone et al. 2004). This means that SL leaders have a stronger and more altruistic commitment for the well-being and growth of their followers than TRF leaders (Eva et al. 2019). Thus, it is expected that the following hypothesis to hold:

- **Hypothesis 1:** Active styles of leadership (i.e., servant, transformational, and transactional) have stronger positive effects on marketing creativity than laissez-faire leadership (LFL).

When comparing the different active styles of leadership, Zarei et al. (2022) suggest that SL is more effective than TFL in stimulating marketing creativity. Further, this study predicts that SL to stimulate more marketing creativity than TFL and TRA for two main reasons. First, SL can result in a higher level of *psychological safety* in followers than TFL and TRA. Psychological safety refers to the beliefs among employees about the consequences of interpersonal risk-taking in the workplace (Edmondson and Lei 2014). When the level of psychological safety is high, employees expect colleagues and leaders to have positive intentions, and they feel respected and appreciated. They feel free to be themselves, and to experiment and take risks (Edmondson 1999; Edmondson and Lei 2014). Psychological safety is a known determinant of creative behavior (see Eva et al. 2019) and seems particularly relevant to the context of the study, with frequent evaluations of creative outcomes and significant identity involvement. Psychological safety will likely influence both the number of ideas generated and the willingness to share ideas. The notion that finds support with research on creativity inspired by the

reflective-impulsive model (Strack and Deutsch 2004). TRF leaders likely trigger lower levels of psychological safety in followers than SL leaders because TRF leaders' interpersonal involvement is motivated primarily by organizational objectives (Stone et al. 2004). Even lower levels of psychological safety are expected for TRA-leaders, who are not as much concerned with the psychological needs of followers as are SL and TRA leaders, but rather focus on control, reward, and punishment (Bass 1985).

The second reason why SL may stimulate more marketing creativity than TRF and TRA regards its impact on *intrinsic motivation*. Whereas psychological safety concerns emotions and expectations about the reporting of creative outcomes, intrinsic motivation refers to the creative activity as such. Previous research shows that both SL and TRF may stimulate intrinsic motivation (Eva et al. 2019), but the relative impact is not clear. Thus, SL will probably create more intrinsic motivation for creative marketing tasks than TRF and that this effect will partly explain the superior effect of SL on creativity. TRA however, focuses explicitly on external rewards and punishment and is not expected to stimulate as much intrinsic motivation as SL leadership. Over time, TRA may contribute to a sense of mastery of creative tasks (creative self-efficacy) but via extrinsic motivation (see Beauchamp et al. 2007), and the higher level of self-efficacy may in turn stimulate intrinsic motivation. However, this indirect effect of TRA on intrinsic motivation is expected to be low, at least in the short run. Based on the discussion above, the follow hypotheses are suggested:

- **Hypothesis 2.** The effect of servant leadership on marketing creativity is significantly stronger than the effects of (a) transformational, (b) transactional leadership.
- **Hypothesis 3.** The stronger effects of SL on marketing creativity (compared to transformational and transactional leadership, are mediated by (a) psychological safety, and (b) intrinsic motivation.

There are many studies of the relationship between leadership and creativity in the general management literature, but the findings are equivocal (for reviews, see Hughes et al. 2018; Lee et al. 2018). Hughes et al. (2018) suggest that the use of limited or inappropriate research designs is a major reason for the lack of clear results. To explain

the relative contribution of different leadership styles, experimental designs are needed (Podsakoff & Podsakoff, 2019), which is rare in this stream of research (Hughes et al., 2018). Another limitation of previous research is the frequent use of subjective scales of employee creativity, either rated by the follower or the supervisor. This approach is usually less valid than expert (or customer) ratings of real creative outputs (e.g., Ng and Feldman, 2012). A third limitation of previous research on leadership and creativity is the low number of studies on the “positive” styles of leadership: ethical, authentic, and SL (Hughes et al., 2018; Zarei et al., 2022). In sum, the main contributions of the current study are:

Firstly, this study is the first experimental evidence of comparative leadership effects on marketing creativity, and the findings are expected to confirm that active leadership is critically important (compared to laissez-faire leadership (LF)). Thus, more research is called for on the role and effects of leadership in stimulating marketing creativity. Second, for the first time in the marketing context and in an experimental setting it is tested that, SL is a stronger predictor of creativity than TFL and TRA. Previous research has found significant effects of TFL on creativity and has suggested that this style of leadership is the most conducive of creative behavior (see Gong et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2018). It is predicted that SL is more effective than transformational in stimulating marketing creativity. This is a contribution not only to the marketing literature, but also to the broader literature on leadership and creative behavior. Third, the mechanisms explaining the superior effect of SL are explored. Specifically, psychological safety is predicted to be a significant mediator of the superior effect of SL on marketing creativity.

Chapter 3: Main findings

The following is the organization of the findings sections of the studies: First, the study objectives are reviewed briefly including restatement of the purpose and main research questions. Next, a general description of the methodology, analysis, and source of data is presented. Finally, main findings are reported, along with conclusions, and contributions of the studies⁶.

⁶ The studies presented here may differ slightly from the final versions submitted to the journals, both in terms of content and structure.

3.1. Study 1: Research streams, gaps and opportunities in SL research

3.1.1. Restatement of the purpose of the first study

Empirical studies suggest that SL may have positive effects on followers' behaviors (Joseph et al., 2005; Malingumu et al., 2016; Miao et al., 2014; van Dierendonck et al., 2023; Yoshida et al., 2014). However, the sheer growth of studies on SL has left many structural and functional questions unanswered. To fill in this gap, the current bibliometric study is designed to investigate major research clusters, emerging trends, their underlying concepts, turning points and gaps of SL research. This is particularly advantageous in unifying the field and recognizing the gaps and opportunities in SL research.

3.1.2. A methodology of document co-citation analysis

A document co-citation analysis (DCA) is used in Study 1 to detect, analyze and visualize emerging trends and patterns (Chen, 2006, 2014) in SL literature. DCA as a systematic scientometric method of analyzing citations it relies on analyses of how often certain articles are cited together (co-cited). References cited together often have something in common; thus, DCA is used as a tool to identify chains of key co-cited articles that share a common latent theme or concept. CiteSpace II system v. 5.6.R2 was used for the analyses (Chen, 2006). This software employs progressive network analysis (PNA), which focuses on the nodes that have played a determining role in the evolution of a scientific field (Chen, 2006, 2014). In this study, three cluster analysis techniques: the latent semantic index (LSI), the log-likelihood ratio (LLR), and the mutual information (MI) index were applied to different sections of the articles to generate cluster labels (Chen et al., 2010). The frequently applied terminologies in the citation analysis method are explained in Appendix 3.

3.1.3. The Web of Science database (source of data)

The dataset on SL research was retrieved during May 2020 from the Web of Science (WoS). The included papers had the keyword "servant leadership" mentioned at least once in the title, the abstract or in the keyword section. All the published documents on SL indexed in WoS were included and no restrictions were placed on the search

results. The final dataset consisted of 549 qualified documents, with a total of 24,030 distinct and valid references (i.e. the references in the included documents).

3.1.4. Main Findings

3.1.4.1. Using cluster analysis to identify streams of SL research

All the included nodes and links between them form a united network called the co-cited network. Two important metrics that describe the overall structure of the co-cited network are Modularity Q and Mean Silhouette (Chen, 2014). Modularity Q indicates the density of linked communities of nodes (clusters) in the network. Thus, higher scores suggest the presence of clusters. The mean silhouette score refers to how similar (homogeneous) citations are on average to other citations in the same cluster compared to citations in other clusters. For the citations included in the analysis, the modularity score is relatively high (Modularity Q = 0.5681). The Mean Silhouette score is medium level (Mean Silhouette = 0.2432) (Chen, 2014). These findings suggest that the generated network consists of eight clusters that, on average, have an acceptable level of homogeneity. Each cluster represents a subfield of SL research (see Table 3 for an overview of the clusters). To identify the underlying research themes of the clusters three cluster analysis techniques were employed (LSI, LLR and MI index; Chen et al., 2010). While LSI selects the most common themes, LLR and MI algorithms select the most unique theme. The three algorithms were applied to different sections of the documents (title, abstract, and keywords) to generate the most appropriate labels of each cluster (Chen et al., 2010). In line with the recommendations of Chen et al (2010), first all labels generated by the three techniques were considered. Then the top ten cited documents in each cluster were reviewed (see Table 2) and their references in order to find the most reasonable cluster labels (see Table 3).

3.1.4.2. Timeline visualization of SL research

Following the recommendations timeline visualization was applied (Chen et al. 2012, Chen, 2017), to further break down the eight SL research clusters into finer-grained, distinguishable virtual components. A timeline visualization of SL research is presented in Figure 4.

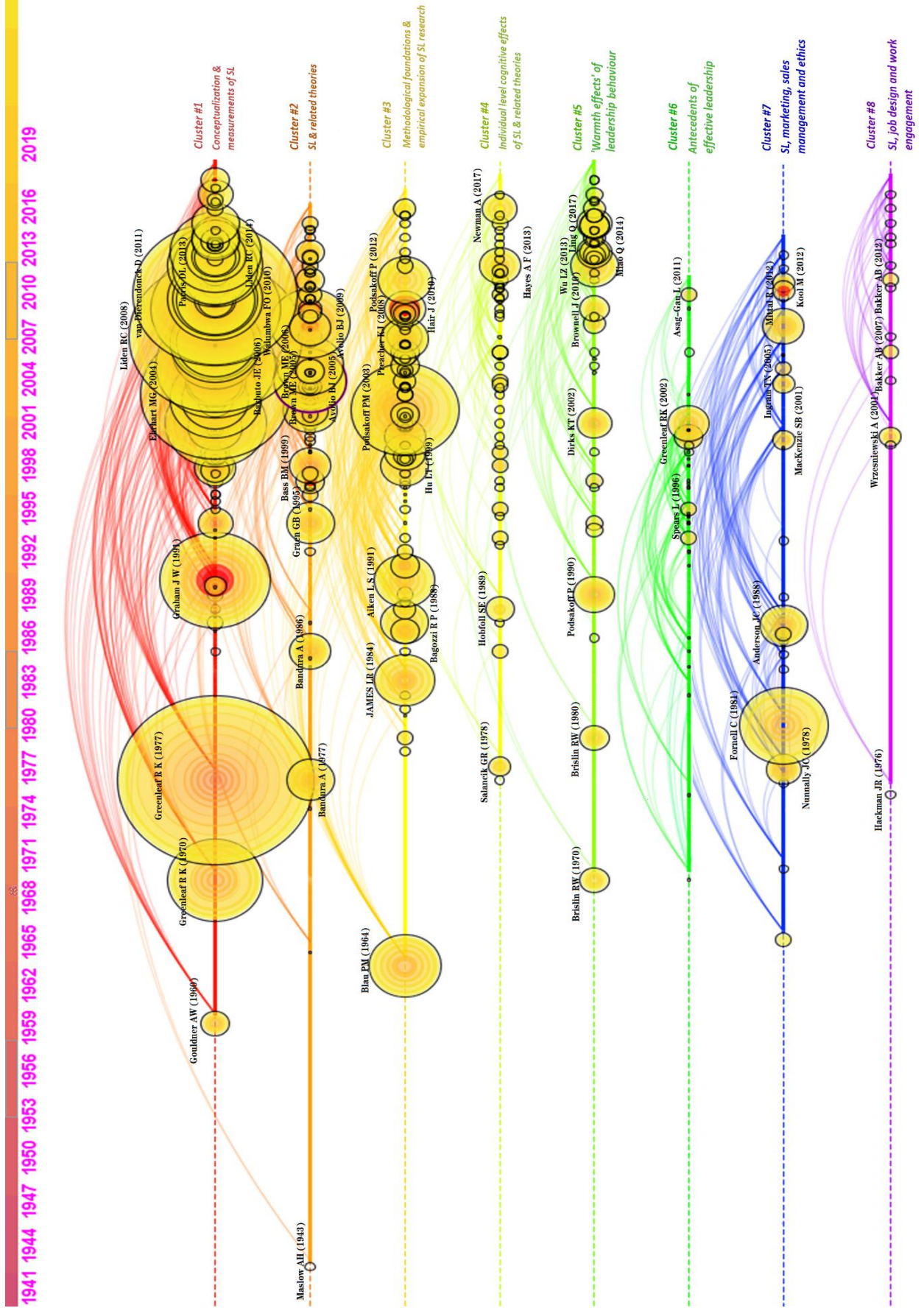


Figure 4. A visualized landscape of SL-research

Further, timeline visualization is particularly useful for displaying the multidimensional structure of a co-cited network in a single frame (Chen 2004; 2006; Chen et al. 2010; Chen, 2018).

In the visualized landscape, each circle represents a cited reference (known as node), and its size indicates the number of citations it has received within the research network. For example, Liden et al.'s (2008) measurement model and van Dierendonck's (2011) review are highly cited nodes in the first cluster, demonstrating their exceptional contribution to the first cluster of research on conceptualizing and measuring SL. The lines in Figure 4, known as links, represent connections between the references and research clusters. References with a higher volume of links have been central to the SL research. For example Graham (1991), that was among the first to compare different leadership styles to SL. In this seminal work he concludes that SL is different in its origin and direction of morality, which this concept was a turning point in the evolution of SL research.

The large number of recent publications on the right side of the visualized landscape suggests that SL research is vibrant and growing. Further, it is important to understand the unique contributions of the recent movement.

As Figure 4 shows, some research clusters were more active in the 2000s (e.g., conceptualization and measurement studies, Cluster #1), while others were more active in the 1990s (e.g., antecedents of effective leadership, Cluster #6). This pattern suggests a gradual evolution in the SL research, as SL theory has been applied to wider business topics and functions, such as job design (Cluster #8) and marketing (Cluster #7), especially from the cognitive perspective.

Such insights are valuable for understanding the evolution of SL research and for drawing future research directions. The next section explores the landmark documents in each research cluster in more detail, as well as some of their unique contributions.

3.1.4.3. The landmark documents of SL research

The software generated eight main research clusters with high density and a reasonable number of citer documents. These eight research clusters and their labels are shown in

Table 3. The ten documents with the highest number of citations within each cluster are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. The landmark documents in each cluster

Cluster #	Ranking		Author(s)	Title	Frequency	Half-life	Citation counts on Google Scholar
	Overall	Cluster					
1	1	1	van Dierendonck (2011)	Servant Leadership: A Review and Synthesis	244	7	1,703
	2	2	Greenleaf (1977)	Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness	242	40	Varies
	3	3	Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008)	Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment	240	9	1,653
	4	4	Ehrhart (2004)	Leadership and procedural justice climate as antecedents of unit-level organizational citizenship behavior	166	13	1,447
	5	5	Walumbwa, Hartnell and Oke (2010)	Servant leadership, procedural justice climate, service climate, employee attitudes, and organizational citizenship behavior: A cross-level investigation	139	7	887
	6	6	Barbuto and Wheeler (2006)	Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership	126	10	1,576
	7	7	Liden, Wayne, Liao and Meuser (2014)	Servant leadership and serving culture: Influence on individual and unit performance	108	4	622
	9	8	Graham (1991)	Servant-leadership in organizations: Inspirational and moral	98	25	1,001
	10	9	Parris and Peachey (2013)	A systematic literature review of servant leadership theory in organizational contexts	96	5	862
	11	10	Russell and Stone (2002)	A review of servant leadership attributes: Developing a practical model	93	15	1,631
	2	23	1	Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005)	Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing	65	13
24		2	Avolio and Gardner (2005)	Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership	58	12	4,715
26		3	Brown and Treviño (2006)	Ethical leadership: A review and future directions	56	11	3,318
30		4	Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009)	Leadership: Current theories, research, and future directions	52	7	3,508
34		5	Bandura (1977)	Social learning theory	46	41	Varies
44		6	Luthans and Avolio (2003)	Authentic leadership development	37	15	2,455
52		7	Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995)	Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective	33	23	7,206
61		8	Bass and Steidlmeier (1999)	Ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership behavior	29	16	4,264
63		9	Bandura (1986)	Social foundations of thought and action	29	31	89,790
66		10	Mayer, Kuenzi, Greenbaum, Bardes and Salvador (2009)	How low does ethical leadership flow? Test of a trickle-down model	26	9	1,385

	8	1	Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003)	Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies	104	15	42,524
	21	2	Blau (1964)	Exchange and power in social life	71	54	Varies
	29	3	Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012)	Sources of method bias in social science research and recommendations on how to control it	52	7	4,946
	36	4	Aiken, West and Reno (1991)	Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions	43	27	44,784
	39	5	James, Demaree and Wolf (1984)	Estimating within-group interrater reliability with and without response bias	41	34	5,118
3	42	6	Hu and Bentler (1999)	Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives	40	19	66,903
	50	7	Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2010)	Multivariate Data Analysis	33	9	Varies
	55	8	Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson (2008)	Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure	32	9	3,302
	59	9	Bagozzi and Yi (1988)	On the evaluation of structural equation models	30	30	24,233
	60	10	Preacher and Hayes (2008)	Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models	30	10	23,082
	64	1	Hayes (2013)	Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis	28	6	28,782
	65	2	Newman, Schwarz, Cooper and Sendjaya (2017)	How servant leadership influences organizational citizenship behavior: The roles of LMX, empowerment, and proactive personality	28	2	178
	111	3	Hobfoll (1989)	Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress	15	31	10,476
	116	4	Salancik and Pfeffer (1978)	A social information processing approach to job attitudes and task design	14	40	5,210
	140	5	Morris, Brotheridge and Urbanski (2005)	Bringing humility to leadership: Antecedents and consequences of leader humility	11	12	457
4	142	6	Owens and Hekman (2012)	Modeling how to grow: An inductive examination of humble leader behaviors, contingencies, and outcomes	11	7	422
	145	7	Neubert, Hunter and Tolentino (2016)	A servant leader and their stakeholders: When does organizational structure enhance a leader's influence?	11	3	93
	147	8	Scott and Bruce (1994)	Determinants of innovative behavior: A path model of individual innovation in the workplace	10	24	6,090
	158	9	Kark and Van Dijk (2007)	Motivation to Lead, Motivation to Follow: The Role of the Self-Regulatory Focus in Leadership Processes	9	11	965
	159	10	Podsakoff and Organ (1986)	Self-Reports in Organizational Research: Problems and Prospects	9	32	14,548
	53	1	Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990)	Transformational leader behaviors and their effects on followers' trust in leader, satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behaviors	32	28	7,016
5	58	2	Wu, Tse, Fu, Kwan and Liu (2013)	The Impact of Servant Leadership on Hotel Employees' "Servant Behavior"	31	5	124
	75	3	Ling, Lin and Wu (2016)	The trickle-down effect of servant leadership on frontline employee service behaviors and performance: A multilevel study of Chinese hotels	23	3	92
	79	4	Dirks and Ferrin (2002)	Trust in leadership: Meta-analytic findings and implications for research and practice	22	16	3,926

	78	5	Miao, Newman, Schwarz and Xu (2014)	Servant leadership, trust, and the organizational commitment of public sector employees in China	22	5	125
	83	6	Chan and Mak (2014)	The impact of servant leadership and subordinates' organizational tenure on trust in leader and attitudes	20	5	152
	88	7	Brislin (1970)	Back-translation for cross-cultural research	19	49	8,812
	98	8	Huang, Li, Qiu, Yim, and Wan (2016)	The impact of CEO servant leadership on firm performance in the hospitality industry	17	3	65
	100	9	Schwarz, Newman, Cooper and Eva (2016)	Servant leadership and follower job performance: The mediating effect of public service motivation	17	3	54
	106	10	Brownell (2010)	Leadership in the service of hospitality	16	9	144
	49	1	Greenleaf (2002)	Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness	34	15	Varies
	92	2	Russell (2001)	The role of values in servant leadership	18	16	861
	155	3	Asag-Gau and van Dierendonck (2011)	The impact of servant leadership on organisational commitment among the highly talented: the role of challenging work conditions and psychological empowerment	10	5	72
	175	4	Bass and Avolio (1994)	Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership	8	23	7,925
6	191	5	Spears (1996)	Reflections on Robert K. Greenleaf and servant-leadership	7	20	419
	259	6	Avolio and Locke (2002)	Contrasting different philosophies of leader motivation: Altruism versus egoism	5	12	223
	345	7	Colquitt (2001)	On the dimensionality of organizational justice: a construct validation of a measure	3	12	5,848
	-	8	No title, no source	-	-	-	-
	386	9	Bierly, Kessler and Christensen (2000)	Organizational learning, knowledge and wisdom	3	14	890
	387	10	Block (1996)	Stewardship: Choosing service over self-interest	3	17	Varies
	19	1	Fornell and Larcker (1981)	Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error	72	37	64,385
	40	2	Anderson and Gerbing (1988)	Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach	40	30	38,752
	51	3	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko and Roberts (2009)	Examining the impact of servant leadership on sales force performance	33	8	241
	71	4	Nunnally (1978)	Psychometric Theory	25	39	Varies
7	127	5	Kool and van Dierendonck (2012)	Servant leadership and commitment to change, the mediating role of justice and optimism	13	5	170
	128	6	MacKenzie, Podsakoff and Rich (2001)	Transformational and transactional leadership and salesperson performance	13	18	1,196
	148	7	Ingram, LaForge, Locander, MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2005)	New directions in sales leadership research	10	11	179
	120	1	Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001)	Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work	14	17	3,547
	210	2	Bakker and Demerouti (2007)	The job demands-resources model: State of the art	7	13	8,147
	223	3	Bakker, Tims and Derks (2012)	Proactive personality and job performance: The role of job crafting and work engagement	6	8	769
8	225	4	Richard and Oldham (1976)	Motivation through the design of work: Test of a theory	6	44	11,022
	263	5	Grant (2008)	Does intrinsic motivation fuel the prosocial fire? Motivational synergy in predicting persistence, performance, and productivity	5	10	1,477

255	6	Tims, Bakker and Derks (2012)	Development and validation of the job crafting scale	5	8	1073
264	7	Tims, Bakker and Derks (2013)	The impact of job crafting on job demands, job resources, and well-being	5	7	789
291	8	Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner and Schaufeli (2001)	The job demands-resources model of burnout	4	19	8,978
305	9	Tims, Bakker and Derks (2014)	Job crafting and job performance: A longitudinal study	4	5	200
359	10	Bakker, Rodríguez-Muñoz and Sanz Vergel (2016)	Modelling job crafting behaviours: Implications for work engagement	3	2	123

* Citations were retrieved May 2020

Table 2 shows two rankings with respect to number of citations: the publication's overall ranking within SL research network, and the ranking within the respective cluster. The "frequency" index shows the number of the citations a document received within the network. The "citation half-life" index is also included. This index shows the number of years it takes for a publication to receive half of its citations since the date it was first published (Chen, 2005; Chen, 2014).

Table 3. The main research clusters on SL research

Cluster #	Underlying research theme
Cluster 1	Conceptualization and measurements of SL
Cluster 2	SL and related theories
Cluster 3	Methodological foundations and empirical expansion of SL research
Cluster 4	Individual level cognitive effects of SL and related theories
Cluster 5	'Warmth effects' of leadership behaviour
Cluster 6	Antecedents of effective leadership
Cluster 7	SL, marketing, sales management and ethics
Cluster 8	SL, job design and work engagement

3.1.4.4. Research clusters

Cluster 1: Conceptualization and measurements of SL

This cluster has the highest concentration of nodes, 136 documents. The silhouette value is 0.511, indicating a moderate level of homogeneity. The cluster includes fifty years of research on conceptualization and measurement of SL (1970-2019). A review of the landmark documents revealed three sub-streams.

The first sub-stream contains papers on conceptual definitions, conceptual clarifications, and review of conceptualizations of SL. It includes the early contributions of Greenleaf (1970; 1977) and later attempts to discriminate SL from other types of leadership (Graham, 1991; Spears, 1995; 1998; 2004; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) claimed that servant leaders are different from other leaders in terms of their self-concepts and leadership intentions. In the view of these authors, some dimensions of SL are more central than others, including stewardship, empowerment, spirituality and humility. They argued that SL is different from transformational leadership in at least two ways, regarding the leader's interest in serving marginalized people and his/her dedication to the followers' need fulfilment. Russell and Stone (2002) review SL research and suggest that the SL consists of 9 main attributes, partly overlapping with those of Sendjaya and Sarros (2002). After 2004, the focus turned to measurement and development of a unified theoretical model of SL. A main contributor in this period was Van Dierendonck (2011), who claimed that the key factor of SL is the motivation to serve people with the aim of empowering them.

A second sub-stream of the first cluster focuses on measurement models of SL. A series of scale were developed from 1999 to 2011 (Brabuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Erhart, 2004; Laub, 1999; Liden et al. 2008; Page & Wong 2000; Reinke, 2004; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). In the 2008-2011 period, three scales gained momentum and emerged as popular measures of SL. The first was the 7-factor measurement model developed by Liden et al. (2008). The second popular scale was the "Servant Leadership Behavior Scale" developed by Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora (2008). This multidimensional measure of SL consists of 35 items representing 6 dimensions of SL manifested through voluntary subordination, authentic self, covenantal relationship, responsible morality, transcendental spirituality, transforming influence. The third popular scale was developed by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), known as "Servant Leadership Survey (SLS)". This scale consisted of 30 items and 8 dimensions of SL. More recent papers offer shortened version of the full scales (e.g., Liden et al., 2014; Liden et al., 2015; Sendjaya et al., 2019).

The third stream of research in this cluster consists of replications, minor improvements and validations of previous conceptualizations and measures of SL (see e.g., Beck, 2014; Bobbio, Dierendonck & Manganeli, 2012; Burton, Peachey & Wells, 2017; Chen, Zhu & Zhou, 2015; Chiniara & Bentein, 2016; 2018; Hu & Liden, 2011; Hunter et al., 2013; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Mayer, Bardes & Piccolo, 2008; Neubert et al., 2008; Panaccio et al., 2015; Peterson, Galvin & Lange, 2012; Schaubroeck, Lam & Peng, 2011; Schneider & George, 2011; Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010; Van Dierendonck et al., 2014; Walumbwa, Hartnell & Oke, 2010; Washington, Sutton & Feild, 2006; Yoshida et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2012).

Cluster 2: SL and related theories

The second cluster is made of 86 documents and have two sub-streams of research (silhouette value of 0.525). The main theme in this cluster is the relationship between SL and related theories. Inspection of the landmark documents in this cluster revealed two sub-streams.

The first sub-stream consists of discussions of the similarity, differences and overlap of SL and four related styles of leadership: authentic leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003), ethical leadership (Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005), transformational leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999) and spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003). Despite considerable overlap between SL and all the four other leadership styles, SL is found to have unique elements. Specifically, servant leaders have a stronger dedication for the followers' need fulfilment and for serving marginalized people (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). They are more focused on serving the followers than on developing their own charisma. The moral dimension of servant leadership is also directed toward the followers, rather than the organization (Graham, 1991).

The second sub-stream in this cluster consists of documents on foundational theories of SL and related leadership styles, mainly from social psychology and sociology. Two major foundational theories in these discussions are social learning theory (Bandura, 1977; 1986; Brown & Treviño, 2006) and social exchange theory (e.g., Graen & Uhl-Bien's 1995).

Cluster 3: Methodological foundations of SL research

The third largest cluster includes 85 cited documents on methodological issues, with a silhouette value of 0.625. These documents give an overview of the major methodological approaches, analyses and methodological problems of SL research.

A range of classic method papers was found in this cluster, showing that SL research has been founded on state-of-the-art methodologies. Landmark studies in this cluster include the classic book on multivariate data analysis by Hair et al (2010), a frequently cited paper on interrater reliability of James, Demaree and Wolf (1984), the Aiken, West and Reno (1991) paper on interactions in multiple regression, seminal work on structural equation modeling by Bagozzi & Yi and Hu & Bentler (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Hu & Bentler, 1999), a standard reference on method bias by Podsakoff et al. (2012), and landmark work on moderation and mediation analyses by Preacher and Hayes (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Cluster 4: Individual level cognitive effects of SL

Cluster 4 is made of 51 documents and has a silhouette value of 0.657. The relatively recent papers in this cluster focus on various individual cognitive effects of SL and can be divided into two sub-streams.

The first sub-stream consists of papers examining the individual cognitive outcomes of SL. In this stream there is a recent meta-analysis of 130 studies showing a large number of positive effects of SL, including task performance, organizational citizenship behavior and individual creativity (Lee et al., 2020).

The second sub-stream of cluster 4 is research on the mediators and moderators of the individual effects of SL. The most cited documents address the following variables: personality (Newman et al., 2017), regulatory focus (Kark & Van Dijk, 2007), green crafting and green role identity (Tuan, 2020), employee self-efficacy (Qiu et al., 2020), psychological safety of teams (Edmondson, 1999), and the well-being of employees (Der Kinderen et al., 2020).

Not all types of outcomes, moderators and mediators of leadership are included in this cluster. One other specific type of “warmth-variables” is grouped in a separate fifth cluster.

Cluster 5: “Warmth effects” of leadership behaviour

Cluster 5 is relatively homogeneous (silhouette value 0.788) and consists of 43 comparatively recent papers. The common theme in this cluster is “warmth-effects of leadership”, drawing on the terminology of the stereotype model in social psychology (Fiske et al., 2002). Warmth in this model refers to a range of human characteristics related to morality and sociability.

The term “warmth effects” was borrowed to label the fifth cluster because the research in this cluster deals specifically with leadership effects on “warm” effects, including organizational citizenship behavior (Podsakoff et al., 1990; 2009; Wu et al., 2013), organizational commitment (Miao et al., 2014; Lapointe & Vandenberghe, 2018), service motivation (Brownell, 2010; Chen, 2015) and organizational trust (Chan & Mak, 2014; Ling et al., 2017). All these variables have moral and/or (pro-) social overtones. The finding that research on these variables is lumped together in a separate cluster, shows that a significant part of the community of SL researchers have taken a special interest in the affective, moral and social implications of SL.

Cluster 6: Antecedents of effective leadership

This sixth cluster is highly homogeneous (silhouette value of 0.917) and is formed of 41 documents. The common theme in this cluster is “antecedents of effective leadership”.

A broad range of antecedents are addressed, spanning 40 years of leadership research. Here are papers on charisma (e.g. Conger & Kanungo, 1987) and knowledge (e.g. Bierly et al., 2000), and more recent studies on empowerment (e.g. Russell, 2001), stewardship (Block, 1993), emotional intelligence (George, 2000), prosocial motivation (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986), fairness (Colquitt, 2001) and wisdom (Barbuto & Gifford, 2010).

Several papers deal specifically with the antecedents of SL, for instance Beck (2014) and Russel (2001). Major antecedents addressed by these authors are leadership experience, volunteerism, trusting relationships, altruistic mindset and wisdom.

Cluster 7: SL, marketing, sales management and ethics

This seventh largest research cluster includes 25 relatively recent documents and is highly homogeneous (silhouette value 0.882). The articles in this cluster explore the effects of SL on marketing-related variables, such as customer value and sales performance (e.g., see. Anderson & Oliver, 1987; Churchill et al., 1985; DeConinck, 2011; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Schwepker, 2015; MacKenzie et al., 2001). Ethical and social concerns in marketing are also addressed in this cluster (e.g., Jaramillo et al., 2015; Ogunmokun et al., 2020; Schwepker & Schultz, 2015). Finally, this cluster includes methodological papers used in the research on SL and marketing, including classic papers by Fornell and Larcker (1981), Gerbing (1988), and Nunnally (1978).

Cluster 8: SL, job design and work engagement

In the 8th and final cluster, it was found recent papers within another specific area of management: job design and work engagement. This cluster has 14 documents and a high silhouette value (0.948 suggests), indicating a high degree of homogeneity.

The most cited document in this cluster is the work by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001). In this conceptual article the authors define the concept of job crafting and propose a process model, including motivations, moderators, practices, and both specific- and general outcomes of job crafting. Bakker, Tims and Derks (2012; 2013) draw on the job demands–resources (JD-R) model of Bakker and Demerouti (2007) and suggest that job crafting affects work engagement, in-role performance, job satisfaction and burnout (decreased burnout). Similar to cluster 7, this final cluster shows a recent and interesting turn in research on SL, in which the concept of SL is linked to specific management functions.

3.1.4.5. The most influential articles

In this section it was identified the most influential articles cited in SL research across clusters. The concentration was on two major metrics of influence in previous bibliometric research: burst and betweenness centrality (Chen, 2006; 2014). Burst is an indicator of the level of sudden increase in citations for an article over a certain period of time. High burst means that an article stimulated the work of many other

researchers in that period. Betweenness centrality is a measure of the extent to which a document connects citations in the network. High centrality means that an article contributed to the bridging of many different contributions within the field. Thus, betweenness centrality is an indicator of influence in terms of field integration.

3.1.4.6. Analysis of citation burst

Out of 24,030 references indexed within the SL research network, only 27 references received citation bursts. Figure 5 is a visual representation of these documents (documents with a red circle inside). The CiteSpace software employs an adopted version of the Kleinberg's burst-detection algorithm as a criterion of suggesting documents with burst (Chen, 2006; Chen, 2014). As it was aimed at retrieving all the documents with citation burst, no restriction was imposed on the recommended threshold by the software.

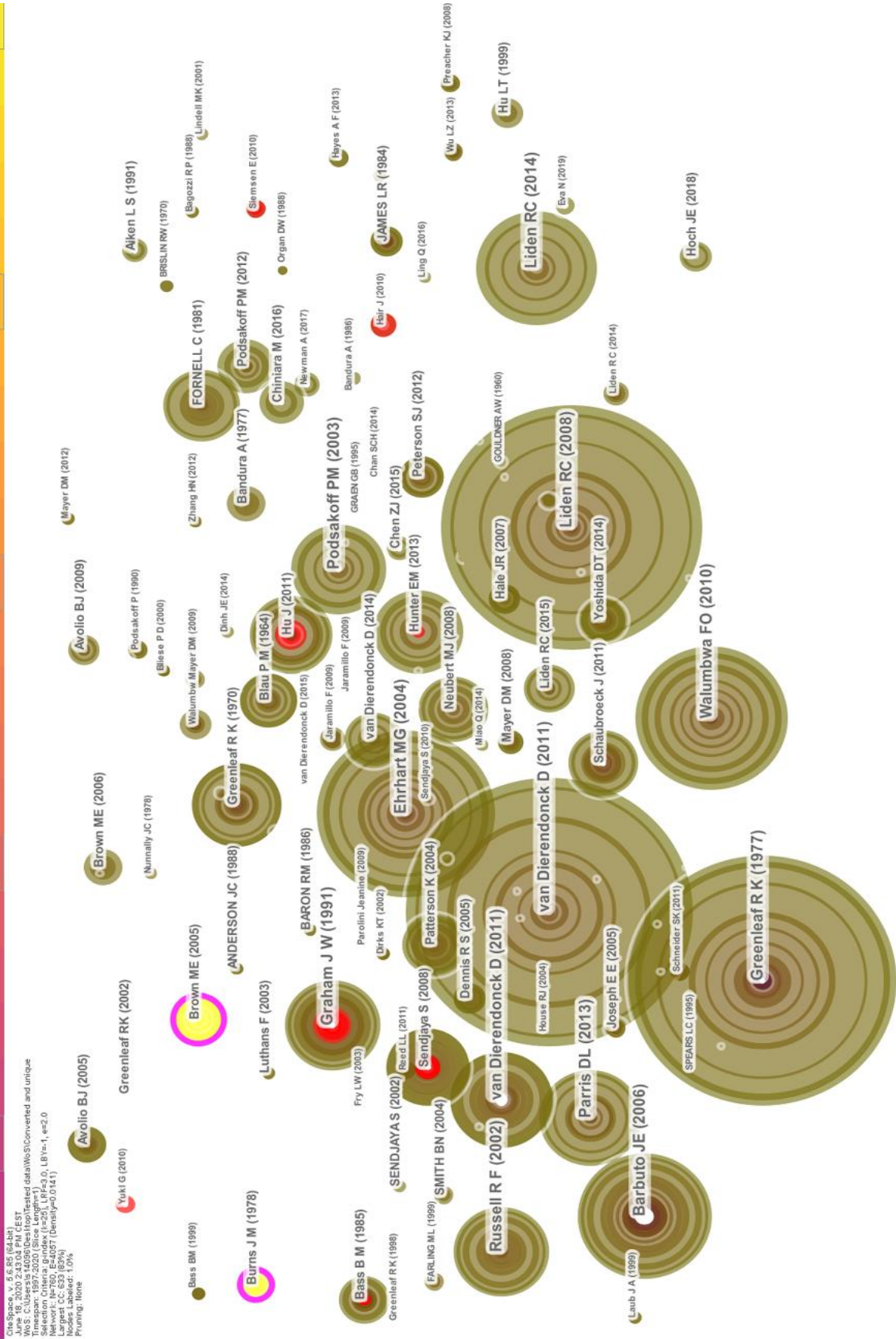


Figure 5. Vitalization of the citation burst within the SL research

The 25 documents with the highest citation burst are shown in Table 4. The citation with the highest burst score (8.8459) in Table 4 belongs to the first formative cluster and is a conceptual study by Graham (1991): “Servant-leadership in organizations: Inspirational and moral”. Clearly, this work on the nature of SL stimulated a lot of interest in the research community. The two next on the list are general books on leadership theory (Bass 1985; Yukl, 1981), followed by two seminal articles on the definition and measurement of SL (Senjaya et al. 2008; Farling et al. 1999).

Table 4. Documents with the highest citation burst

Rank	Author(s)	Title	Cluster	Strength	Duration	Virtualized range (1997 - 2020)
1	Graham (1991)	Servant-leadership in organizations: Inspirational and moral	0	8.845	2008- 2015	
2	Yukl (2006)	Leadership in organizations	0	7.1292	2011 -2015	
3	Bass (1985)	Leadership and performance beyond expectations	6	6.673	2005 - 2013	
4	Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora (2008)	Defining and measuring servant leadership behaviour in organizations	0	5.95	2010 - 2014	
5	Farling, Stone and Winston (1999)	Servant leadership: Setting the stage for empirical research	0	5.8906	2007 - 2016	
6	Parolini, Patterson and Winston (2009)	Distinguishing between transformational and servant leadership	0	4.7869	2011 - 2014	
7	Bass and Steidlmeier (1999)	Ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership behavior	1	4.3959	2012 - 2013	
8	Smith, Montagno and Kuzmenko (2004)	Transformational and servant leadership: Content and contextual comparisons	0	4.2341	2010 - 2014	
9	Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010)	Multivariate Data Analysis	2	4.1604	2018 - 2020	
10	Han, Kakabadse and Kakabadse (2010)	Servant leadership in the People's Republic of China: A case study of the public sector	0	4.008	2014 - 2016	
11	Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009)	Leadership: Current theories, research, and future directions	1	3.7338	2011 - 2014	
12	Hu and Liden (2011)	Antecedents of team potency and team effectiveness: An examination of goal and process clarity and servant leadership	0	3.7273	2013 - 2016	
13	Joseph and Winston (2005)	A correlation of servant leadership, leader trust, and organizational trust	0	3.7048	2011 - 2016	
14	Mittal and Dorfman (2012)	Servant leadership across cultures	10	3.6263	2015 - 2017	
15	Greenleaf (1998)	The power of servant-leadership	1	3.6173	2017- 2018	
16	Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson (2008)	Authentic leadership: Development and validation of a theory-based measure	2	3.5729	2010 - 2013	

17	Asag-Gau and van Dierendonck (2011)	The impact of servant leadership on organisational commitment among the highly talented: the role of challenging work conditions and psychological empowerment	5	3.5367	2014 - 2017	
18	Fry (2003)	Toward a theory of spiritual leadership	1	3.5278	2012 - 2014	
19	Ilies, Nahrgang and Morgeson (2007)	Leader-member exchange and citizenship behaviors: A meta-analysis	0	3.5219	2012 - 2015	
20	House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman and Gupta (2004)	Culture, leadership, and organizations	1	3.5158	2010 - 2012	
21	Burns (1978)	Leadership	6	3.5138	2001 - 2013	
22	Pekerti and Sendjaya (2010)	Exploring servant leadership across cultures: Comparative study in Australia and Indonesia	0	3.4275	2012 - 2016	
23	Hunter, Neubert, Perry, Witt, Penney and Weinberger (2013)	Servant leaders inspire servant followers: Antecedents and outcomes for employees and the organization	0	3.4217	2014 - 2016	
24	Spears (1996)	Reflections on Robert K. Greenleaf and servant-leadership	5	3.3598	2016 - 2017	
25	Spears (1995)	Reflections on leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf's theory of servant-leadership influenced today's top management thinkers	0	3.3304	2011 - 2013	

* This reference was not part of the main 8 clusters solution.

Table 4 shows that 52% of the documents with burst (13 out of 25) come from cluster 1, and 20% (5 out of 25) from cluster 2 (on SL and related theories). These findings suggest that the documents that triggered the most intensive interest among SL researchers were either contributions on the specific nature and measurement of SL, or work that situated SL in the larger context of leadership theories.

In addition to the strength of bursts, the period of burst is also an indicator of influence. As a burst event could last for one or several years (Chen, 2004). According to Table 4, the following documents acquired the longest periods of burst: Burns (1978) -12 years, Farling, Stone and Winston (1999) - 9 years, Bass (1985) - 8 years, Graham (1991) - 7 years, and the articles by Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora (2008) and Smith, Montagno and Kuzmenko (2004), which both had 4 year burst periods.

3.1.4.7. Analysis of betweenness centrality

Documents with high betweenness centrality bridge citations or clusters and may represent turning points in the evolution of a scientific field (Chen, 2014). Such documents have a strategic position in the network of SL research. They are important for understanding how different pieces of the SL research network became integrated to form a more unified field of research. Table 5 represents the 15 documents with the highest centrality scores within the SL research network. All the documents with the highest betweenness centrality values were retrieved and no restriction was imposed on the betweenness centrality thresholds recommended by the software.

Table 5. Documents with the highest betweenness centrality

Rank	Author(s)	Title	Centrality	Cluster #
1	Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005)	Ethical leadership: A social learning perspective for construct development and testing	0.13	1
2	Burns (1978)	Leadership	0.11	6
3	Greenleaf (1977)	Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness	0.10	0
	Bass (1985)	Leadership and performance beyond expectations	0.10	6
4	Barbuto and Wheeler (2006)	Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership	0.08	0
	Bass (1990)	From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision	0.08	7
5	Ehrhart (2004)	Leadership and procedural justice climate as antecedents of unit-level organizational citizenship behavior	0.07	0
	Neubert, Kacmar, Carlson, Chonko and Roberts (2008)	Regulatory focus as a mediator of the influence of initiating structure and servant leadership on employee behavior	0.07	0
	Blau (1964)	Exchange and power in social life	0.07	2
6	Avolio and Gardner (2005)	Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership	0.06	1
	Anderson and Gerbing (1988)	Structural equation modeling in practice: A review and recommended two-step approach	0.06	10
7	Graham (1991)	Servant-leadership in organizations: Inspirational and moral	0.04	0
	Sendjaya, Sarros and Santora (2008)	Defining and measuring servant leadership behaviour in organizations	0.04	0

Hu and Liden (2011)	Antecedents of team potency and team effectiveness: An examination of goal and process clarity and servant leadership	0.04	0
Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee and Podsakoff (2003)	Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies	0.04	2

On top of the ranking of articles with high betweenness centrality scores in Table 5, there is Brown, Treviño and Harrison's (2005) article on ethical leadership (centrality value of 0.13). This finding is interesting because it suggests that ethical perspectives on leadership have played a prominent role in the integration of SL research. Three books follow next; Burns (1978) and Greenleaf (1977) with a centrality value of 0.10, and Bass (1985: centrality value = 0.08). Nearly half (7) of the 15 documents in Table 5 come from cluster 1.

Interestingly, it was observed that two documents in Table 5 are methodological papers: Anderson and Gerbing's paper on structural equation modeling (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988) and the paper on common method bias by Podsakoff and colleagues (Podsakoff et al., 2003). These methodological advancements have been important for the integration of sub-streams within the field of SL research.

It is also notable that five of the papers with highest centrality scores in Table 5 are also found on the list of papers with the highest burst scores (Table 4): Bass (1985), Burns (1978), Graham (1991), Hu and Liden (2011) and Sendjaya et al. (2008). Suggesting that these five contributions have both triggered a strong interest among SL-researchers during a specified period and had a strong unifying effect on the field.

3.1.4.8. The most cited authors

The author citation index is another useful tool in citation analysis for detecting the most influential authors and their contributions within a research network (Chen, 2005). The author citation index detects the most cited authors in the network by accumulating the citations they have received from different publication sources over time. Figure 6 visualizes the most cited authors in the SL research network.

The authors in Figure 6 are considered influential because they have made significant contributions to the advancement of SL research. Table 6 ranks the 15 most cited authors in the network, including their burst and centrality scores.

Table 6. The most cited authors within SL research network

Rank	Author	Citation counts	Centrality	Burst
1	Robert K. Greenleaf	349	0.09	-
2	Robert C. Liden	289	0.01	-
3	Dirk van Dierendonck	276	0.01	-
4	Fred O. Walumbwa	190	0.04	-
5	Bernard M. Bass	172	0.21	9.78
6	Philip M. Podsakoff	172	0.08	-
7	Mark G. Ehrhart	169	0.04	-
8	Sen Sendjaya	145	0.02	4.24
9	Bruce J. Avolio	140	0.11	5.32
10	John E. Barbuto	138	0.11	3.62
11	Robert F. Russell	107	0.01	-
12	Denise L. Parris	103	0.01	-
13	Mitchell J. Neubert	103	0.04	-
14	David M. Mayer	101	0.04	-
15	Jill W. Graham	100	0.03	8.08

Not surprisingly, Table 6 shows that Robert K. Greenleaf is the most cited author in the SL research network with a total of 349 citations, followed by Robert C. Liden (289), Dirk van Dierendonck (276), Fred O. Walumbwa (190), Bernhard M. Bass (172) and Philip M. Podsakoff (172). Table 6 also shows that the question of author influence depends on the type of metric used: citation counts, centrality or burst. A few authors score high on all three metrics: Bass, Graham, Sendjaya, Avolio and Barbuto. Greenleaf scores high on two metrics; citation count and centrality, but not burst. Others have high scores on only one metric, such as the authors behind the article with the highest betweenness centrality score, Brown, Treviño and Harrison (2005). These authors are not found in the lists of the two other metrics.

3.1.4.9. The most cited journals

In this section, as shown in Figure 7, the most significant publication sources of SL research are identified.

Further Table 7 ranks 15 top publication sources of SL literature. Except Greenleaf's book, which is ranked as number 10 (Greenleaf, 1977), the publication sources in the table are all journals. It is notable that the journals in this list are top tier journals in management and psychology. This finding suggests that the most influential works in SL-research are high-quality. Moreover, there is a broad spectrum top tier journals on the list. The list includes specialized journals such as Personnel Psychology and Group & Organization Management, but also broad, general journals such as the Academy of Management Journal, Human Relations, and Journal of Management.

Table 7. The top cited journals within the SL research network

Ranks	Journal	Citation counts	Centrality	Half-life
1	Leadership Quarterly	424	0.01	15
2	Journal of Management	374	0.01	15
3	Journal of Applied Psychology	371	0.03	15
4	Academy of Management Journal	336	0.15	16
5	Journal of Business Ethics	294	0.02	17
6	Personnel Psychology	277	0.02	15
7	Leadership & Organization Development Journal	277	0.01	10
8	Journal of Organizational Behavior	264	0.01	15
9	Academy of Management Review	251	0.24	16
10	Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness (book by Greenleaf, 1977)	222	0.00	10
11	Group & Organization Management	195	0.02	14
12	Psychological Bulletin	168	0.02	10
13	Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes	163	0.02	14
14	Journal of Business and Psychology	162	0.02	7
15	Human Relations	160	0.01	14

The five journals with the highest number of citations are Leadership Quarterly (424), Journal of Management (374), Journal of Applied Psychology (371), Academy of Management Journal (336), and Journal of Business Ethics (294). Six of the journals on the list of top cited publications sources are also found on the list of the journals with most SL-publications in Eva et al. (2019, Table 7): Academy of Management Journal, Leadership Quarterly, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Management and Personnel Psychology.

How the field of SL research emerged?

The findings provide a more nuanced picture of the development of SL research compared to the three-stage development scheme suggested by Eva et al. (2019) and Parris and Peachey (2013). The first phase in Eva et al.'s (2019) scheme is “conceptual development” (p. 111). The next is the “measurement phase”, which focused on measures of SL and simple studies of effects via cross-sectional data, and the third and current stage is termed “model development”, in which researchers use more advanced designs and study more complex relationships. The first two stages of this scheme share resemblance with cluster 1, and to some extent, with cluster 3 in the analysis. The third stage of Eva et al. (2019), “model development” is very broad. The clusters 2-8 cover topics and relationships that are all relevant for the development of a “grand nomological model”. For each of the 8 clusters in this study it was identified the landmark documents. These are “must-reads” for scholars and doctoral students interested in SL research.

The results of the cluster analyses suggests that SL did not evolve in a simple three-step sequential manner. Though contributions on conceptual and measurement issues were foundational at the early stage of SL research, researchers kept publishing on these topics, and still do (e.g. Sousa and van Dierendonck, 2016; van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). The idea that SL started with conceptual developments and then proceeded to a “measurement phase” is not consistent with the study's findings. The cluster analysis showed that citations of papers on conceptual and measurement issues belong to the same cluster (cluster 1), and it was observed that, after some initial conceptual contributions, SL researchers continued to address both conceptual and measurement issues (e.g., Barbuto and Wheeler (2006); Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008); Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008); Russell and Stone, 2002). Thus, conceptual and measurement improvements seem to have developed in tandem. The other six clusters of SL citations emerged at different points in time, but continued to coexist as researchers kept revisiting the underlying topics and challenges of these research streams.

There is a certain sequence in the initiation of new topics, but streams rarely “dried out” before new ones emerged. Most streams continued to exist alongside new

emerging streams of SL research. What we see today is a research field consisting of several active areas or streams of research on servant leadership. Still, some are more recent and vibrant than others. In particular, there is a new interest in studying the effects of SL in specific functional areas of firms, such as sales and marketing (cluster 7) and job crafting (cluster 8).

The most influential sources and authors

There are several ways for authors to influence the development of a research field. This is why in this study three types of metrics were used: citation counts, burst scores (strong temporary increase in citations) and betweenness centrality scores (bridging of citations). The conceptual work of Greenleaf was instrumental for the development of the discipline, and also for the integration of SL research. However, other authors attracted stronger temporary interest in the research community (higher burst scores), see Table 4. The following authors scored high on at least two out of three metrics: Bruce J. Avolio, John E. Barbuto, Bernard M. Bass, Jill W. Graham, Robert K. Greenleaf, Philip M. Podsakoff, and Sen Sendjaya. The findings on author influence show that a multi-dimensional perspective on influence is needed in order to understand the contribution of SL researchers.

In the rankings on burst and betweenness centrality it was found that several books are ranked high on both lists. In the list of work with high burst, 2 out of the 5 works topping the list are books (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 2006). For betweenness centrality, 3 out of the 5 highest ranked are books (Bass, 1985, Burns, 1978, and Greenleaf, 1977). This finding is noteworthy and suggests that books have played a crucial role in the development of SL research, probably because this format allows for more depth and elaboration of concepts and their relationships than articles.

3.2. Study 2: SL in marketing: A critical review

3.2.1. Restatement of the purpose of the second study

The first study suggest that SL has many positive effects on the followers' psychology and performance. SL is deemed particularly relevant in modern marketing organizations (e.g., Houston, 1986) with highly educated and self-conscious employees. In addition, SL seems to foster creativity (Eva et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2020; Yoshida et al., 2014), and creativity is a major driver of marketing performance (e.g., Im et al., 2013, Rosengren et al., 2020). However, there is a need for a targeted and critical review of SL-effects in marketing, including creativity, as the first study revealed, the number of studies on SL-effects on marketing outcomes are still very limited (e.g., Bande et al., 2016; Riquelme et al., 2020). The overall purpose of this study is to, in a systematic way, answer to research questions on the major empirical findings on the effects of SL on marketing variables.

3.2.2. A methodology of systematic literature review

The guidelines for strategic literature reviews developed by Parris and Peachey (2013) was used in the second study. The keywords searched in the relevant articles were the same as Eva et al. (2019). The search was restricted to journals on Elsevier's Scopus and the ABS (Association for Business Schools) Journal list that were fully or partly affiliated with the marketing discipline. Further, since Greenleaf first launched the concept of SL in 1970, the study covered a time span of 52 years, from 1970 to 2021. For an overview of the article selection process see Appendix 7.

3.2.3. The Elsevier's Scopus and the ABS-indexed journals (source of data)

Data was retrieved from 169 unique journals indexed in the Elsevier's Scopus and the ABS Journal lists that were fully or partly affiliated with the marketing discipline (for an overview of the journal list see Appendix 6). The ABS list is commonly used as a source for reviews of high-quality business research (Davidsson & Gruenhagen, 2021). Some reviews limit the search to the top-tier journals on the ABS list (levels 4*, 4, and 3; e.g., Battisti et al., 2021). No such restrictions was made, because it is expected to find a limited number of relevant articles on SL.

3.2.4. Main findings

The search process resulted in 23 articles on SL in marketing (see Table 8). In this section these articles are synthesized further to answer to the research questions, and provide directions for future research.

3.2.4.1. Identified articles on SL in marketing journals

Two of the final articles published in *Services Marketing Quarterly* (SMQ) were not included in further analysis (see Table 8). SMQ is not on the ABS-list, but the articles were relevant and insightful and the quality acceptable. A review of the references of the 23 papers identified one extra ABS-listed article that did not contain the keywords, but it was relevant, thus this article was included (Lytle et al., 1998). One article was excluded as it was not indexed in the ABS list and exhibited quality seemingly less than found in the other articles.

Table 8. Identified articles on SL in marketing journals

Journal	Rank (ABS)	Title and author(s)	Included in review?
<i>Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management</i>	2	Examining the impact of servant leadership on sales force performance (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts, 2009b)	Yes
		Influence of the ethical servant leader and ethical climate on customer value enhancing sales performance (Schwepker and Schultz, 2015)	Yes
		Servant leadership and ethics: A dyadic examination of supervisor behaviors and salesperson perceptions (Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela, 2015)	Yes
		A qualitative study of leader behaviors perceived to enable salesperson performance (Peesker, Ryals, Rich and Boehnke, 2019)	Yes
		Serving first for the benefit of others: Preliminary evidence for a hierarchical conceptualization of servant leadership (Grisaffe, VanMeter, and Chonko, 2016)	Yes
		Examining the impact of servant leadership on salesperson's turnover intention (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts, 2009a)	Yes
<i>Industrial Marketing Management</i>	3	Emotions and salesperson propensity to leave: The effects of emotional intelligence and resilience (Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela, and Jaramillo, 2015)	Yes
		Service leadership for adaptive selling and effective customer service teams (Wong, Liu and Tjosvold, 2015)	No
		Effect of service-related resources on employee and customer outcomes in trade shows (Jha, Balaji, Ranjan, and Sharma, 2019)	No

<i>Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing</i>	2	Exploring the relationship among servant leadership, intrinsic motivation and performance in an industrial sales setting (Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela-Neira, and Otero-Neira, 2016)	Yes
		Servant leadership, distributive justice and commitment to customer value in the salesforce (Schwepker, 2016)	Yes
<i>Services Marketing Quarterly</i>	-	Relative effects of leadership and technology on bank employees' job outcomes (Yavas, Jha, and Babakus, 2015)	Yes
		Service worker burnout and turnover intentions: Roles of person-job fit, servant leadership, and customer orientation (Babakus, Yavas, and Ashill, 2010)	Yes
<i>Academy of Marketing Science Review</i>	2	In search of clarity on servant leadership: domain specification and reconceptualization (VanMeter, Chonko, Grisaffe, and Goad, 2016)	Yes
<i>Journal of Services Marketing</i>	2	SERV* OR in China: testing the effect of service orientation on service skills performance (Luk, Lu, and Liu, 2013)	No
<i>Journal of Strategic Marketing</i>	2	Let marketers reclaim corporate strategy (Mattsson, Ramaseshan, and Carson (2006)	Yes
<i>Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing</i>	2	Servant leadership, proactive work behavior, and performance overall rating: Testing a multilevel model of moderated mediation (Varela, Bande, Del Rio and Jaramillo (2019)	Yes
<i>Australasian Marketing Journal</i>	1	An emerging south-east Asian brand: MK Restaurants (Itthiopassagul, Patterson and Piyathasanan, 2009)	No
<i>International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management</i>	1	Retail service excellence: Antecedents and consequences (Padma and Wagenseil, 2018)	No
<i>International Journal of Bank Marketing</i>	1	The influence of servant leadership on an organization's serving-driven capabilities in a Kuwaiti bank environment (Riquelme, Rios, and Gadallah, 2020)	Yes
<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	3	The empirical study of consumers' loyalty for display technology (Lin, Wu, and Cheng, 2015)	No
		The study of service innovation for digiservice on loyalty (Wu, 2014)	No
<i>Journal of Distribution Science</i>	-	The Effect of Employees' Perception of a Supervisor's Servant Leadership on Employees' Perceived Organization's Support: The Mediating Effect of Employees' Perceived Supervisor's Supports (Kang and Hwang, 2014)	No
<i>Journal of Retailing</i>	4	SERV* OR: A managerial measure of organizational service-orientation (Lytle, Hom, and Mokwa (1998)	Yes

*The search for articles was completed in January 2021.

After reading the remaining 23 articles, 7 of them were found irrelevant. These articles were first included because they contained the cue “service leadership.” However, they all discussed various aspects of service marketing and service management, but none

of them addressed SL in any way. Thus, these articles were excluded. After removing these 7 articles the study was left with 16 high quality relevant articles, 2 conceptual and 14 empirical. The literature review was based on these 16 articles, (see Table 8).

3.2.4.2. Perceived SL in marketing research (RQ1)

There is not full agreement on the meaning of SL in the marketing literature, and several authors point to a need of further clarification of the concept (Grisaffe et al., 2016; VanMeter et al., 2016). In reply to the call, conceptual definitions of SL in the 16 documents was reviewed and three common dimensions were identified: (1) servanthood, (2) empowerment, and (3) ethical behavior.

Servanthood is the major dimension of SL in the marketing literature (e.g., Babakus et al., 2010; Bande et al., 2015; Bande et al., 2016; Grisaffe et al., 2016; Jaramillo et al., 2009a; Jaramillo et al., 2009b; Lytle et al., 1998; Peesker et al., 2019; Schwepker & Schultz, 2015; VanMeter et al., 2016; Yavas et al., 2015) and denotes the intrinsic desire to serve followers first (Greenleaf, 1977; VanMeter et al., 2016). Servanthood relies on the influence of self-giving behaviors without expecting self-glory (Stone et al., 2004). This dimension distinguishes SL from other leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, because servanthood is directed strongly toward the followers rather than the organization or the interests of the leader. Servanthood in marketing leaders may transfer onto followers and affect positively the servingdriven capabilities of marketing organizations (Riquelme et al., 2020).

Empowerment is the second major dimension of SL in the marketing literature (e.g., Bande et al., 2015; Peesker et al., 2019; Schwepker & Schultz, 2015; Schwepker, 2016; Yavas et al., 2015). Empowerment is seen as the servant leader's commitment to motivating and supporting followers in developing the cognitive and operational skills required to efficiently achieve their developmental goals. Most marketing studies of

SL borrow definitions and measures of empowerment directly from landmark studies in the general leadership literature (e.g., Dennis & Winston, 2003; Ehrhart, 2004; Greenleaf, 1977; Liden et al., 2008; Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2001; van Dierendonck, 2011; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). In marketing studies of SL, empowerment is mostly seen as a

second-order construct. Second-order constructs represent structures of first-order factors. Recent research in the methodology literature, and based on philosophical concepts of hylomorphism, has shown that such structures can function as explanatory variables (Bagozzi, 2022). Thus, less is known about the independent or direct components of effects of empowerment on marketing processes and outcomes, which have been inconsistently or have been studied in terms of the components, not necessarily as organized structures of components. Such structures can function also holistically as independent, dependent, mediating, or moderating variables, but this has as yet to be investigated.

Ethical behavior is the third core dimension of SL identified in the reviewed articles (e.g., Jaramillo et al., 2009a; Jaramillo et al., 2015; Peesker et al., 2019). In definitions of ethical leader behaviors in the context of SL, marketing researchers typically refer to the works of Ehrhart (2004) and Liden et al. (2008) and the ability of leaders to behave in honest, fair, and transparent ways. The ethical behavior of leaders may foster an ethical work climate, which in turn can improve industrial sales performance (Jaramillo et al., 2015). Ethical leader behavior may also reduce salespeople's turnover intentions (Jaramillo et al., 2009a).

The three-dimensional understanding of SL in the marketing literature is consistent with the conception of SL in the general leadership literature, but there are also notable differences. Specifically, three sub-concepts of SL in the general leadership literature is identified (reviewed in Eva et al., 2019), which are not addressed in the marketing literature on SL: stewardship, humility and authenticity. In an organizational context, stewardship refers to the level of responsibility employees take for the common good of the organization and of society (e. g., see Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Spears, 1995; van Dierendonck, 2011). Humility is about the extent to which leaders accept their limitations and recognize the contributions of others (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Authenticity is about expressing the true self in leadership behavior and is defined as the degree of consistency between leaders' actions and their inner values (Laub, 1999; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

3.2.4.3. Kinds of addressed marketing outcome variables (RQ2)

Across the 16 articles on SL in marketing, it was identified four categories of outcome variables (see Table 9). The first and largest category consists of studies on the effects of SL on salespeople’s psychology and behavior (e.g., Jaramillo et al., 2015; Jaramillo et al., 2009b; Grisaffe et al., 2016; Peesker et al., 2019; Schwepker & Schultz, 2015; Varela et al., 2019). This stream of research includes outcome variables such as sales performance, customer orientation, self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation of salespeople. In all, 8 of the 16 documents (50 %) belong mainly to this category.

Table 9. Empirically tested relationships of SL with marketing variables

Input variable	Outcome variable	Streams of research	Reference	Quality indicator
Managers’ SL behaviors	Participation in quota setting	Perceptions of ethicality	Schwepker (2016)	I
Managers’ SL behaviors	Perceptions of fairness in reward allocation	Perceptions of ethicality	Schwepker (2016)	I
SL	Salesperson’s self-efficacy	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela-Neira, and Otero-Neira (2016)	II
SL	Salesperson’s intrinsic motivation	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela-Neira, and Otero-Neira (2016)	II
SL	Salesperson’s adaptivity	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela-Neira, and Otero-Neira (2016)	II
Managers’ SL behaviors	Salesperson’s proactive behaviors	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Varela, Bande, Del Rio and Jaramillo (2019)	I
Salesperson’s perceived SL	Ethical work climate (ethical responsibility and trust)	Perceptions of ethicality	Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela (2015)	I
Salesperson’s perceived SL	Ethical work climate (unethical peer behaviors)	Perceptions of ethicality	Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela (2015)	I
Supervisors’ SL behaviors	Salesperson’s perceived SL	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela (2015)	I
Sales managers’ SL	Salesperson’s satisfaction	SL and job-related factors	Grisaffe, VanMeter, and Chonko (2016)	II

Sales managers' SL	Salesperson's outcomes (CSR, OCB and performance)	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Grisaffe, VanMeter, and Chonko (2016)	II
Sales managers' SL	Salesperson's customer behaviors	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Grisaffe, VanMeter, and Chonko (2016)	II
SL	Salesperson's perceived ethical level of the firm	Perceptions of ethicality	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009a)	I
SL	Person-organization fit	The relationship between sales people and organizations	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009a)	I
SL	Organizational commitment	The relationship between sales people and organizations	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009a)	I
Salesperson's perceived SL	Salesperson's customer orientation	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009b)	I
SL	Salesperson's value enhancing behavior performance	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Schwepker and Schultz (2015)	I
SL	Salesperson's outcome performance	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Schwepker and Schultz (2015)	I
SL behaviors	Salesperson's outcome performance	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Peesker, Ryals, Rich and Boehnke (2019)	I
SL	Front-line employees' person-job fit	The relationship between sales people and organizations	Babakus, Yavas, and Ashill (2010)	I
SL	Front-line employees' burnout	SL and job-related factors	Babakus, Yavas, and Ashill (2010)	I
SL	Organizational commitment	The relationship between sales people and organizations	Yavas, Jha, and Babakus (2015)	I
SL	Job satisfaction	SL and job-related factors	Yavas, Jha, and Babakus (2015)	I
SL	Serving-driven capabilities	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Riquelme, Rios, and Gadallah (2020)	I
Managers' SL behaviors	Salesperson's overall performance	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Varela, Bande, Del Rio and Jaramillo (2019)	I
SL	Salesperson's performance	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela (2015)	I

Salesperson's perceived SL	Salesperson's customer-directed extra-role performance	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009b)	I
Salesperson's perceived SL	Salesperson's outcome performance	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009b)	I
SL	Front-line employees' turnover intentions	SL and job-related factors	Babakus, Yavas, and Ashill (2010)	I
SL	Front-line employees' turnover intentions	SL and job-related factors	Yavas, Jha, and Babakus (2015)	I
SL	Customer-service behaviors	Sales peoples' psychology and behavior	Riquelme, Rios, and Gadallah (2020)	I
SL	Identification with the branch (firm)	The relationship between sales people and organizations	Riquelme, Rios, and Gadallah (2020)	I

A second category of studies addresses the effects of SL on followers' perceptions of ethicality. These perceptions refer to three different aspects of the firm: the allocation of rewards (Schwepker, 2016), work climate, and the firm in general (Jaramillo et al., 2009a; Jaramillo et al., 2015; Schwepker, 2016). SL has positive effects on all three perceptions of ethicality.

A third and minor stream of studies concerns the effects of SL on the relationship between employees and organizations. Examples of outcome variables in this category are perceived person-organization fit, organizational commitment, and organizational identification (Babakus et al., 2010; Jaramillo et al., 2009a; Riquelme et al., 2020; Yavas et al., 2015). Finally, it was identified a stream of studies on the effects of SL on job-related factors, such as job satisfaction, employee burnout, and turnover intentions (Babakus et al., 2010; Yavas et al., 2015). The impact of SL on these outcomes are promising, with positive effects on job satisfaction and negative effects on burnout and turnover intentions of primary interest.

3.2.4.4. Dominant theories of SL-effects in marketing (RQ3)

Three classes of theories dominate in the development of hypotheses about SL-effects: socio-psychological theories, motivational theories, and ethical theories. The most prominent socio-psychological theories are Bandura's (1977) social cognitive learning

theory and the social identity theories of Tajfel and Turner (1979) and Ashforth and Mael (1989). The role modeling concept of social cognitive learning theory plays an important role in explanations of the effects of SL on the will and learning capacity of followers (Hunter et al., 2013). Marketing researchers have used social identity theory to explain how SL may affect the collective self of salespeople (Varela et al., 2019), which in turn influences sales behavior. Some authors draw on theory about norms of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) in discussions of how SL transfers to followers (Varela et al., 2019).

Several theories of motivation are used to explain SL-effects. In some studies, authors use self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and cognitive evaluation theory (DeNisi et al., 1984; Deci & Ryan, 1985) to explicate how SL may affect the psychological need satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and proactive behavior of salespeople (Bande et al., 2016; Yavas et al., 2015).

Others use Locke and Latham's (1990) goal setting theory and House's (1971) path goal theory to explain how SL may stimulate organizational goal setting and salesforce motivation (Jaramillo et al., 2009b; Schwepker, 2016). It was found also applications of Kinicki and Kreitner's (2003) attribution theory. The basic logic of attribution theory is that employees assess their own performance, which in turn affects their work motivation (Bande et al., 2016).

Ethical theories applied in marketing studies of SL include Bertland's (2009) theory of virtue ethics. This theory is used to explain how the virtuous behaviors of servant leaders may stimulate the institutionalization of ethical values and the improvement of followers' ethical capabilities (Jaramillo et al., 2009). Others draw on Ferrell, Gresham and Fraedrich's (1985) ethical decision-making theory or Victor and Cullen's (1988) theory of ethical work climate when explaining how SL influences the ethical climate of marketing organizations, which in turn may affect sales behavior (e.g., Schwepker & Schultz, 2015).

Finally, it was observed interesting applications of two other theories in single studies. Babakus et al. (2010) draw on Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory to develop hypotheses on how SL may reduce the problem of burnout among frontline employees. According to this theory, employees use various resources for

completing work tasks such as attentional resources, cognitive effort, time and physical energy, but they need to restore those resources during breaks in order to avoid stress (Hobfoll, 1989). Finally, resource-based theory (Barney et al., 2001) is applied in one study to explain how SL can be viewed as an intangible strategic resource of the firm and a source of competitive advantage (Yavas et al., 2015).

3.2.4.5. Methods and samples to study SL-effects in marketing (RQ4)

Most marketing studies of SL are empirical and quantitative. As Table 10 shows empirical studies included data from 6,109 individuals mostly through questionnaires (surveys). Several studies (n = 6) use multi-level data collections with responses from both followers/salespeople and leaders/supervisors (Bande et al., 2016; Jaramillo et al., 2015; Lytle et al., 1998; Peesker et al., 2019; Riquelme et al., 2020; Varela et al., 2019).

Table 10. Samples, measures and analytical techniques

	Index	Quantity	Percentage
Typology of the research	Empirical	14	87.5
	Conceptual and review	2	12.5
Data analysis approach	Quantitative	12	85.7
	Qualitative	1	7.1
	Mixed-method	1	7.1
Data collection tools	Questionnaire	6,046	99
	Interview	63	1
Respondents' gender	Male	2.118	54.7
	Female	1.752	45.3
Data analysis techniques	SEM	12	85.7
	CFA	12	85.7
	EFA	5	35.7
	PLS	1	7.1
	Focus Groups	1	7.1
	Grounded Theory Method	1	7.1
	The Guttman method	1	7.1
Applied scales	Ehrhart's (2004) scale	6	42.9

	Liden et al.'s (2008) scale	3	21.4
	Lytle et al.'s (1998) scale	2	14.3
	Self-developed scale	2	14.3
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Geographical zone of the respondents			
	USA	5	35.7
	Spain	4	28.6
	New Zealand	2	14.3
	Kuwait	1	7.1
	Multinational	1	7.1
	Not specified	1	7.1
<hr/>			
Sampling industries			
	Finance, insurance, and accounting	11	19
	Manufacturing	10	17.2
	Sales and advertising	8	13.8
	Technology and ICT	8	13.8
	Healthcare	4	6.9
	Consulting and business services	4	6.9
	Construction	4	6.9
	Food, beverage and restaurant	2	3.4
	Government	2	3.4
	Transportation	1	1.7
	Agriculture	1	1.7
	Real estate	1	1.7
	Hospitality	1	1.7
	Art and editing	1	1.7
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The gender of the respondents is not reported in all the studies, but based on the reported ones male participants are dominant. The average age of participants was 43.4 years (reported in five studies). The average years of organizational tenure was 8.5, and the average years of working experience was 13.5 (reported in six studies).

The type of data analysis techniques used in the quantitative studies were reviewed and it was found that structural equation modeling (SEM), including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), was employed by the majority of the studies (e.g., Bande et al., 2016; Jaramillo et al., 2015; Riquelme et al., 2020; Varela et al., 2019), and to a lesser extent Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) (e.g., see Babakus et al., 2010; Bande et al., 2015; Lytle et al., 1998; Yavas et al., 2015). Other applied methods were Partial Least-Squares Regression (PLS) (Riquelme et al., 2020, Focus Groups

(Lytle et al., 1998), the Grounded Theory Method (Peesker et al., 2019), and the Guttman method (Grisaffe et al., 2016).

Most marketing researchers used established scales of SL. Ehrhart's (2004) scale is the most popular one (e.g., Jaramillo et al., 2009a; Jaramillo et al., 2009b; Jaramillo et al., 2015; Varela et al., 2019). This scale represents SL as a second-order construct with seven dimensions: forming relationships with subordinates, empowering subordinates, helping subordinates grow and succeed, behaving ethically, putting subordinates first, and creating value for those outside the organization.

Another popular SL scale is the one by Liden et al. (2008), which is applied in three studies (Riquelme et al., 2020; Schwegker & Schultz, 2015; Schwegker, 2016). Two studies use Lytle et al.'s (1998) SERV*OR measure. Two studies use their own measure of SL (Grisaffe et al., 2016; Lytle et al., 1998). Finally, one study was also qualitative without any reported applied scale.

The Ehrhart (2004) and Liden et al (2008) scales are also popular in the general leadership literature. However, two other popular scales in leadership research are not found in marketing studies of SL: Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) five-dimensional scale and Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) eight-dimensional measure of SL.

With such a variety of factors measuring SL, and the possibility of different numbers of second-order factors and even different structures or organizations of the first-and second-order factors, it is important to do further conceptual and empirical research to verify what SL is. The possibility of hylomorphic arrangements of factors mentioned above deserves consideration. Does SL function as distinct factors or structures of factors operating as independent, dependent, mediating, or moderating variables? Deriving a valid conceptualization and measurement of SL is needed to better understand what it is and what is its role in marketing. The samples of the empirical studies come from several geographical areas. One study is multinational (Peesker et al., 2019), and one does not clearly specify the geographical location of respondents (Jaramillo et al., 2009a). Finally, respondents are recruited from a variety of industries, however many come from the service sector.

3.2.4.6. Major empirical effects of SL in marketing (RQ5)

To answer this question, the empirical findings were summarized in a framework showing the significant effects of SL on marketing outcomes and the mediators and moderators of these effects (see Figure 8). Despite the relatively low number of studies (16), many different relationships have been tested, and the overall picture is that SL has many positive effects for the owners, the leaders and the employees of marketing organizations.

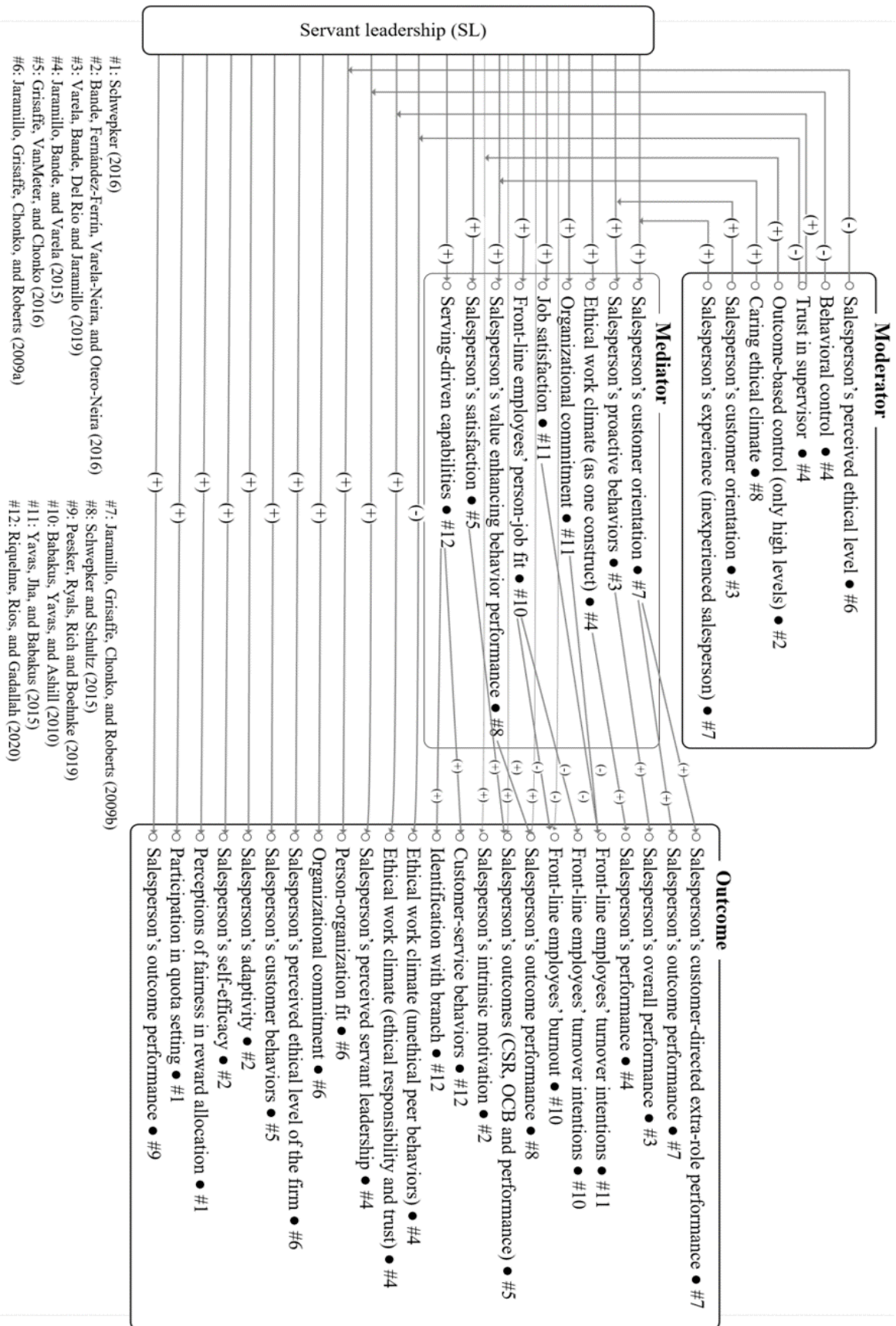


Figure 8. Empirical effects of SL on marketing outcomes: An integrative model

In response to RQ2, four classes of outcome variables were identified: (1) *sales peoples' psychology and behavior*, (2) *follower perceptions of ethicality*, (3) *relationships between employees and organizations*, and (4) *job-related factors*. In Figure 8, it is shown that variables belonging to these four categories have been tested either as dependent variables or as mediators. Seven variables significantly moderate the effects of SL. Three of them are questionable: trust in supervisor, caring ethical climate, and salesperson's customer orientation. These variables are better regarded as mediators because there are good theoretical reasons to expect that they are influenced by SL.

3.2.5. The influence of SL on marketing creativity (RQ6)

Due to the importance of creativity in marketing and the promising effects of SL in related disciplines, a stream of research on SL-effects on marketing creativity is expected. To the contrary, a single study on this topic was not identified. In order to start exploring potential answers to RQ6 and to identify promising opportunities for future research in this area, a conceptual model of SL-effects on individual marketer creativity was developed.

3.2.6. A model of SL-effects on marketer creativity

SL may affect both individual marketer creativity and team creativity. Because team creativity is more complex and the understanding of teams will partly build on knowledge about individual effects, the concentration here is on SL-effects on individual marketer creativity. It was also considered the effects of SL compared to TFL and TRA in order to identify when and why SL may have superior (or inferior) effects on marketing creativity.

Effects of SL on creative agency and motivation

SL may have strong and positive effects on marketer creativity, defined here as the originality and relevance of marketing ideas (Finke et al., 1992). Moreover, these effects are mediated by four variables concerning creative agency and motivation (see Figure 9).

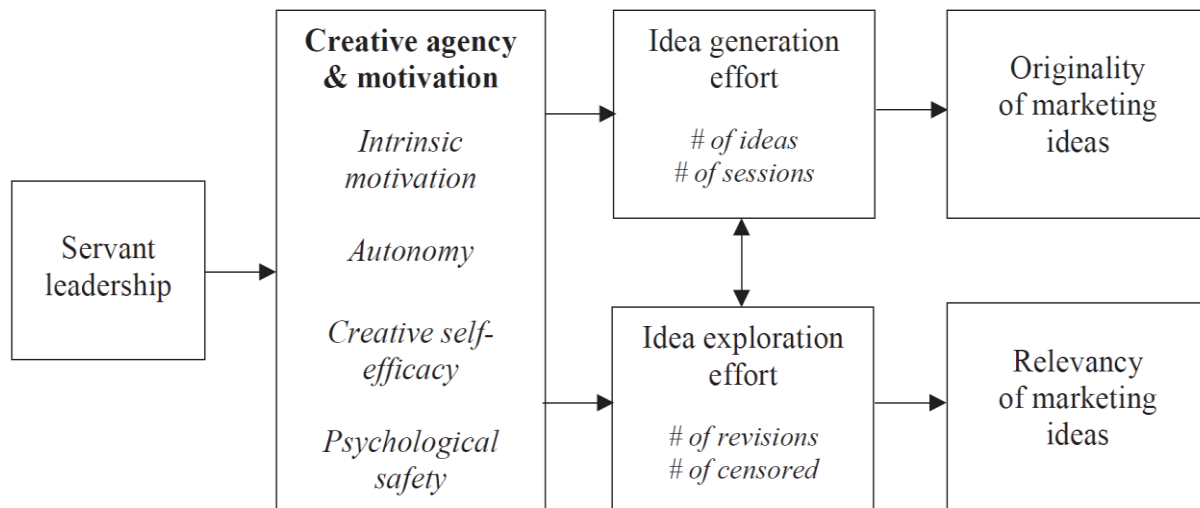


Figure 9. A conceptual model of SL-effects on marketer creativity

First, SL may enhance the intrinsic motivation of followers to engage in creative tasks (Su et al., 2020). Because servant leaders focus on the abilities and needs of followers rather than extrinsic rewards of performance, their followers feel more liberated and empowered when doing creative tasks and more likely enjoy these work tasks. Second, SL probably stimulates perceived autonomy for similar reasons. Servant leaders do not control creative processes but empower marketers based on in-depth insight on individual needs and skills. The result is a sense of empowered autonomy. A third related concept here is creative self-efficacy (Yang et al., 2017). Self-efficacy is about people's beliefs in their own capabilities (Bandura, 1997). High creative self-efficacy in this context means that marketers have a strong belief in their capability of delivering creative outputs (Yang et al., 2017). SL should have a positive effect on creative self-efficacy for three main reasons. Servant leaders are concerned with the personal and professional development of creative people. The individual support will likely increase the followers' expectations of success. Second, when followers succeed with creative tasks, servant leaders do not take the credit, but actively ascribe the success to the effort of followers. Finally, previous research suggests that SL contributes to followers' psychological safety (Iqbal et al., 2020). Two dimensions of SL are especially relevant here: forgiveness and interpersonal acceptance (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Followers of transactional leaders will probably score significantly lower than followers of SL-leaders on all these variables. The focus on

rewards will stimulate extrinsic rather than internal motivation and the control and monitoring of followers will reduce perceptions of autonomy. Creative self-efficacy will also be lower because transactional leaders do not actively support the development of follower skills. Finally, followers of transactional leaders feel less safe because their leaders are less concerned with developing relationships to followers and are less prone to signal social acceptance of employees. In sum, it is suggested that SL has stronger effects on all four variables:

Proposition 1. *Compared to transactional leadership, SL has stronger positive effects on (a) the intrinsic motivation, (b) autonomy, (c) creative self-efficacy, and (d) psychological safety of marketers working with creative tasks.*

It is also expected that SL will stimulate two of these psychological mediators to a larger extent than transformational leadership, and thus have stronger total effects on creativity. Specifically, it is suggested that SL will have stronger effects than transformational on creative self-efficacy and psychological safety. First, creative self-efficacy is expected to be weaker for followers of transformational leaders because such leaders are less concerned with ascribing success to the followers than servant leaders. There are usually several competing explanations for a successful creative output. Servant leaders actively and systematically attribute success to the skills and effort of followers. This is not a characteristic of transformational leaders (Eva et al., 2019). Another reason why followers of servant leaders may experience higher levels of creative self-efficacy is that SL have stronger and more complete empowerment components. In SL empowerment is related both to skills and the needs and well-being of followers. Empowerment is rooted in the desire of leaders to see followers grow personally and professionally. The perspective on empowerment in transformational leadership is leaner and more directed towards the goals of the organization. Thus, followers of transformational leaders may experience less psychological empowerment than followers of servant leaders. In partial support of this contention, previous research has failed to establish a positive relationship between transformational leadership and psychological empowerment (Martin & Bush, 2006). Secondly, SL has

a stronger effect on psychological safety due to the dimensions of forgiveness and interpersonal acceptance, which are not part of transformational leadership. Thus, it is proposed:

Proposition 2. *The positive effects of leadership on (a) creative self-efficacy and (b) psychological safety are stronger for SL than for transformational leadership.*

Effects of SL on idea generation and exploration

The creative effort is often divided into two types of processes: idea generation and idea exploration. Idea generation is the process in which individuals come up with new ideas. The effort on idea generation is measured in terms of the number of generated ideas and the number of completed sessions. When there are several sessions, this means that individuals have more opportunities for breakthrough and can make new attempts to generate more ideas. Idea exploration is about the evaluation, exploration, and advancement of generated ideas. Two measures of exploration effort are number of revisions and number of censored ideas. A revision is a change or improvement in generated ideas. Censored ideas are those that have been removed or erased from the list of ideas. Dual-process theories of creativity suggest that idea generation is the mechanism responsible for the originality of ideas, whereas idea exploration is responsible for the relevancy dimension (Sowden et al., 2015). The quality of ideas is of course also important on marketer creativity, but little or no research exists here.

The internal motivation and autonomy of followers primarily have positive effects on idea generation (number of ideas and number of sessions). Internal motivation and autonomy create sense of joy and freedom in the generation of ideas that probably stimulate followers to spend more time on idea generation and thus increase the number of ideas and sessions. According to the reflective-impulsive theory of social behavior, intrinsic motivation activates positive affect in individuals, which in return activates cognitive processes of the impulsive system (Strack & Deutsch, 2004), the system responsible for idea generation and originality of ideas (Sowden et al., 2015).

The two other psychological mediators probably have positive effects on both idea generation and exploration. The belief in one's own creative capabilities (creative self-efficacy) likely increases the motivation to keep on generating ideas as well as the willingness to revise ideas (see Gong et al., 2009). The expectation of mastery increases the expected return on extra efforts and extra revisions. Previous research suggests that psychological safety is positively associated with creativity in terms of idea generation (Chaudhary & Panda, 2018). Thus, psychological safety may lead to less censoring of odd ideas and thus increase the number of ideas. Followers who feel safe will not fear the negative reactions of leaders. They may possess some of the same courage as their servant leaders (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Also, these followers are likely to revise and improve the relevance of odd or irrelevant ideas rather than removing them. Thus psychological safety may positively affect both idea generation and exploration.

Proposition 3. *Internal motivation and autonomy have positive effects on idea generation (number of ideas and sessions), whereas creative self-efficacy and psychological safety have positive effects on both idea generation and exploration (number of revisions and censored ideas).*

How the operations of the processes function in Fig. 3 on the quality of creativity need further consideration too.

Effects of SL on the originality and relevance of marketing ideas

Both SL and transformational leadership are expected to positively influence the four psychological mediators in the model (Figure 9), whereas transactional leadership is not. Thus, it is proposed that the former styles of leadership will have stronger effects on the originality and relevance of marketing ideas than transactional leadership. Finally, it is suggested that SL is more effective in creating original and relevant marketing ideas than transformational leadership. The main reason for this is the stronger impact of SL on two of the psychological mediators: creative self-efficacy

and psychological safety, which stimulate both the originality and relevance of marketing ideas. Thus, it is proposed:

Proposition 4. *Compared to transactional leadership, both SL and transformational leadership have stronger positive effects on the originality and relevance of marketing ideas.*

Proposition 5. *SL has stronger positive effects than transformational leadership on the originality and relevance of marketing ideas.*

3.3. Study 3: The effects of SL on marketing creativity

3.3.1. Restatement of the purpose of the third study

The first study highlighted SL as a relevant and highly productive leadership style for marketing organizations, however very little empirical evidences exist on the relative impact of different styles of leadership on marketing creativity. Based on this gap, the second study proposed a model of SL-creativity in the marketing context. In the current study, in an experimental setting, hypotheses driven from the proposed model are tested on the comparative effects of four leadership styles (Laissez faire vs Transactional vs Transformational vs Servant Leadership) on the originality and relevancy of slogan ideas for a new brand in a sample of 526 marketing and salespeople.

3.3.2. Methodological approach and the statistical sample

Similar to previous experimental research on leadership, “imaginative scenarios” was used to manipulate leadership style (De Cremer 2006; Dierendonck et al. 2014). A randomized between-subjects design was used to test the hypotheses. As a manipulation check ANOVAs ran across conditions, further structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses on comparative effects of leadership styles on marketing creativity.

The sample for the study consisted of 526 Iranian marketing professionals. Marketers in companies all over the country were contacted via membership lists (emails) of national marketing associations. Marketers on the lists were invited to participate in the study together with a brief description of the purpose to their marketing colleagues. Respondents who clicked on the link and went on to complete the study, were randomly assigned to one of the four leadership conditions (see Appendix 9). The creative task at hand was to develop slogan ideas for this new product (see Appendix 10). In performing this task, they were asked to imagine working under a supervisor and reporting their ideas to this person⁷. Participants received a gift card via email worth 1.4 USD for completing the study.

⁷ For an overview of the leadership items and scales used in the study see Podsakoff et al. (1990) and Van Dierendonck et al. (2014).

3.3.3. Main findings

3.3.3.1. Manipulation checks

Table 11 shows that the manipulation of leadership style was successful: in each condition the score is significantly higher for the manipulated leadership style (all p 's < .001).

Table 11. Manipulation check. (One-way ANOVA)

Condition	Servant leadership score		Laissez-faire leadership score		Transactional leadership score		Transformational leadership score	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Servant leadership	4.14	1.04	1.95	.92	2.93	.95	3.82	.69
Laissez-faire leadership	2.44	1.13	3.77	1.09	3.30	.73	2.71	.96
Transactional leadership	3.12	1.33	2.57	.88	3.73	1.02	3.29	.90
Transformational leadership	3.73	.77	2.30	.86	3.24	.83	4.17	.88
One-way ANOVA	F (3, 522) = 62.09 $p < .001$		F (3, 518) = 94.43 $p < .001$		F (3, 512) = 17.63 $p < .001$		F (3, 517) = 71.83 $p < .001$	

3.3.3.2. Measures and the structural model

The measures used in this study are available in Appendix 8, including indicators of construct validity and reliability. The overall fit of the measurement model was satisfactory: $\chi^2(247) = 277.23$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 1.122$; RMSEA = 0.017; SRMR = 0.028; CFI = 0.995; TLI = 0.994 (see Hu & Bentler 1999; Kenny, 2020). The full structural model including all dependent variables, mediators, and the control variables showed good fit to the data: $\chi^2(484) = 636.397$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 1.315$; RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) = .027; SRMR (standardized root mean square residual) = .045; CFI (comparative fit index) = .982; TLI (Tucker-Lewis index) = .978. More information about the cut-off values for good fit can be found in Kenney (2015).

3.3.3.3. Test of H1: Passive versus active leadership styles

It was expected that the three active styles of leadership (SL, TRA, TRF) would stimulate more creativity than the passive LF style of leadership. To test this prediction, the effect of leadership style on Maximum Originality, Maximum Relevance, Creativity Max and Creativity Average, using LF as the reference condition were analyzed, see Table 12.

Table 12. The total effects of leadership styles

Paths	Originality (max.)	Relevancy (max.)	Creativity (max.)	Creativity (mean)
Servant leadership	.43***	.44***	.38***	.27***
Transactional leadership	.21**	.24***	.22***	.21***
Transformational leadership	.14*	.32***	.20***	.16**

Laissez-faire leadership was set as reference group.

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed)

All the path-coefficients in Table 12 are positive and statistically significant ($p < .05$).

This means that all the active leadership styles (SL, TRA, TRF) generated more relevant and more original ideas than LF, both in terms of maximum scores and average scores. Thus, H1 is consistently supported.

3.3.3.4. Test of H2a and H2b: The superior effect of SL

Path coefficients for the effect of SL on marketing creativity compared to TRF and TRA are shown in Table 13. First, it was observed that the relative effect of SL vs TRF is positive and significant on Max Originality ($\beta = .294$, $p = 0.000$), Max Creativity ($\beta = .180$, $p = 0.000$), and Average Creativity ($\beta = .107$, $p = 0.039$). The relative effect on Max Relevance is only marginally significant ($\beta = .117$, $p = 0.049$). These findings support H2a.

Table 13. The relative effects of leadership styles

Paths	Originality (max.)	Relevancy (max.)	Creativity (max.)	Creativity (mean)
Servant leadership vs Transformational leadership	.29***	.11*	.18***	.10*
Servant leadership vs Transactional leadership	.22***	.20***	.15**	.05
Transformational leadership vs Transactional leadership	-.06	.08	-.02	-.04

Laissez-faire leadership was set as reference group.

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed)

The relative effect of SL vs TRA is also positive and significant for three out of four creativity variables: Max Originality ($\beta = .227$, $p = 0.000$), Max Relevance ($\beta = .202$, $p = 0.000$), and Max Creativity ($\beta = .158$, $p = 0.002$). The effect on Average Creativity is not significant (Max Originality ($\beta = .058$, $p = 0.262$)). In sum, these findings support H2b.

Hypotheses on the relative effects of TRF vs TRA were not included, but these effects are still interesting because previous research has suggested that TRF is more predictive of creativity than TRA (MacKenzie et al., 2001). The lower part of Table 13

shows the relative effects of TRF vs TRA on the four variables of marketing creativity. None of these effects is significant ($p > .05$).

3.3.3.5. Test of H3a and H3b: The mediators

It is expected that the stronger effect of SL on marketing creativity (H2a-b) would be mediated by psychological safety (H3a) and intrinsic motivation (H3b). In addition, two alternative mediators in the analyses were included, because previous research has suggested that autonomy and self-efficacy may explain the superior effect of SL on marketing creativity (Zarei et al. 2022). Coefficients for the four mediators on the four variables of marketing creativity are found in Tables 14, 15 and 16. The results are shown for each comparison of leadership styles (SL vs. LF, SL vs. TRA, and SL vs. TRF).

Table 14. The mediators of relative effect of SL vs. LFL

Paths	Originality (max.)	Relevancy (max.)	Creativity (max.)	Creativity (mean)
Psychological safety	.042	.063*	.073*	.068*
Intrinsic motivation	.032	.039	.047	.049
Autonomy	-.003	-.005	-.010	-.012
Creative self-efficacy	.035	.010	.027	.041

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Table 15. The mediators of relative effect of SL vs. TRL

Paths	Originality (max.)	Relevancy (max.)	Creativity (max.)	Creativity (mean)
Psychological safety	.042	.062*	.073*	.068*
Intrinsic motivation	.030	.037	.044	.046
Autonomy	-.005	-.007	-.014	-.019
Creative self-efficacy	.021	.006	.016	.024

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Table 16. The mediators of relative effect of SL vs. TFL

Paths	Originality (max.)	Relevancy (max.)	Creativity (max.)	Creativity (mean)
Psychological safety	.017	.025	.029*	.027
Intrinsic motivation	.011	.014	.016	.017
Autonomy	-.002	-.003	-.005	-.007
Creative self-efficacy	.008	.002	.006	.009

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

The results show that the effects of SL vs LF on Max Creativity and Average Creativity are significantly mediated by psychological safety ($\beta_{\text{Max Creativity}} = .073$, $p=0.012$; $\beta_{\text{Average Creativity}} = .068$, $p=.025$). The mediating effect of psychological safety on Max Relevancy is marginally significant ($\beta = .063$, $p=0.036$), and the effect for Max Originality is non-significant ($\beta = .042$, $p=0.161$). There are no significant effects of the other mediators.

A similar pattern of findings for the SL vs. TRA comparison was found. The effects of SL vs TRA on Max Relevancy, Max Creativity and Average Creativity are significantly mediated by psychological safety ($\beta_{\text{Max Relevancy}} = .062$, $p=0.034$; $\beta_{\text{Max Creativity}} = .073$, $p=0.013$; $\beta_{\text{Average Creativity}} = .068$, $p=0.026$), whereas this mediating effect on Max Originality is non-significant ($\beta = .042$, $p=0.167$). There are no significant effects of the other mediators.

The final analyses of mediators for the superior effect of SL vs. TRF show that psychological safety is a significant mediator of this effect on Max Creativity ($\beta = .029$, $p=0.035$). For two other creativity measures, it was found that the mediating effect of psychological safety is marginally significant ($\beta_{\text{Max Relevancy}} = .025$, $p=0.062$; $\beta_{\text{Average Creativity}} = .027$, $p=0.055$). The mediating effect for Max Originality is not significant ($\beta = .017$, $p=0.186$). Again, no effects were found for the other mediators. In sum, it was found support for the prediction that psychological safety mediates the superior effect of SL on marketing creativity (H3a), but no support for the mediating effect of intrinsic motivation (H3b).

To test the impact of the control variables, the paths of the full model to a model with no controls were compared. No significant changes were observed ($p > .05$) in the path coefficients when the control variables were removed, indicating that the findings are not sensitive to age, gender, education, tenure, or culture (power distance or individualism/collectivism).

4. General discussion

Leadership styles have profound effects on marketing outcomes. One style of leadership, which attracts increasing attention in marketing, is *servant leadership*. However, the growth of studies on SL has created a need for overview and structure, as SL research is fragmented, lacking coherence and clarity. The purpose of the thesis was to, in three interconnected studies, address shortcomings of research on SL and propose solutions to overcome these challenges.

In the first study, eight distinct streams of research on SL were identified, including a stream on SL and marketing. Further exploration of these streams shed light on the historical development of the field, its current trajectory, and suggestions for future research directions.

The second study addressed a literature gap by conducting a comprehensive systematic review of the impact of SL on marketing outcomes. Notably, it concluded that SL appears to foster creativity within marketing organizations more effectively than other leadership styles, though empirical evidence was lacking.

In the third study, the hypotheses regarding the relationship between SL and marketing creativity were tested in an experimental design. The comparative effects on creativity of four leadership styles (including SL) were tested, and it was found that, in line with the expectations, SL leads to higher levels of marketing creativity in the followers, and this effect is mediated by psychological safety.

The findings indicated that leadership style is an important determinant of marketing creativity. Fostering creativity in return can enhance happiness and the quality of life and well-being (Acar et al., 2021). Moreover, creativity potentially enriches all the linkages to stakeholders and benefits all parties engaged in social exchange. Thus, the role of SL in worker, firm, and stakeholder creativity, performance, and welfare is a highly promising pathway for future research.

Based on the lessons learned from the studies, the following section summarizes some methodological, theoretical and managerial implications should be considered to advance research on SL.

4.1. Methodological implications (conceptual and measurement issues)

There are still major unresolved conceptual and measurement issues. Definitions of SL are still loose and lack precision. One consequence is the use of measures of SL that contain items about general leader attributes that are not descriptive of servant leadership behavior⁸. However, non-descriptive items make SL measures less precise and probably inflate the effects of SL because the broader set of items catch more of the variance in the dependent variables than leaner measures. Conceptual and measurement improvements are imperative because the validity of empirical research rests on the quality of conceptual definitions and the corresponding measures (e.g. MacKenzie, 2003). As a response to the problems of loose definitions, Eva et al. (2019) suggested a definition that “has three features that make up the essence of servant leadership, namely its motive, mode, and mindset” (p. 114). The problem is that covert psychological motivations and mindset-variables are mixed with overt leadership behavior. When psychological and behavioral variables are lumped together in the same broad concept and integrated in comprehensive measures of SL, theoretical development suffers. This is because the integration may prevent researchers from studying the relationships between specific psychological variables and the relationships between psychological and behavioral variables.

4.2. Theoretical implications (antecedents of SL)

Research on the antecedents of SL is meager and fragmented. Future research should address the antecedents of both *servant leadership motivation* (SLM) and *servant leadership behaviour* (SLB). Some antecedents could be relevant for both constructs, others more specific to either servant leadership motivation or behavior. In particular, we need more research on the antecedents of SLM. From the analyses, it was identified leadership experience, volunteerism, trusting relationships, altruistic mindset

⁸ For instance, in the SL scale by Liden et al (2008) there are items about the ability of the leader to “think through complex problems” (item #10) and the ability to “solve work problems with new or creative ideas” (item #24). Because such non-descriptive items and “true” SL items are both positively worded and refer to favorable leadership behavior, they correlate together and “find their place” or load together in factor analyses.

and wisdom as antecedents of SL. Additionally, Eva et al. (2019) identified several personality factors, organizational identification, mindfulness and core self-evaluation. It is predicted that personality factors, altruistic mindset and leadership experience to influence both SLM and SLB. For instance, core self-evaluation could be particularly important for the formation of SLM. With new insights on the antecedents of SLM and the relationships between SLM and SLB, we would be in a better position of stimulating servant leadership behavior.

The relationship between SLM and SLB is an interesting avenue for future research as well. SLM is probably a strong predictor of SLB, but several mediators and moderators may weaken or strengthen this relationship between motivation and behavior. Servant self-efficacy for example could be an important moderator, defined as leader “judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391) as a servant leader (see Bandura, 1997; 2001). Likewise, “servant outcome expectancies”, defined as “judgment(s) of the likely consequences...[that] behavior will produce” (Bandura, 1986, p.391), may function as important moderators of the SLM to SLB relationship (see Scheier & Carver, 1985). If these are significant moderators, then the next step would be to identify the major determinants of self-efficacy and outcome expectancies in this context. Formal job descriptions (e.g. degree of autonomy), the leadership attitudes of the top-management team, and the experience and training of the leader could be relevant variables in this discussion. Future research may develop measures of “servant selfefficacy” and “servant outcome expectancies” and analyze both the moderating role of these constructs and their determinants. In addition, the relationship between motivation and behavior is often mediated by implementation goals and intentions (Gollowitzer, 1999). Motivation is more likely to transform into action when individuals define specific behavioral goals. In this context, implementation goals would be concrete goals and plans for how to be a servant leader. Future research may examine the role and importance of implementation goals in surveys and in experiments, which manipulate SLM and the presence of implementation goals.

4.3. Managerial implications

The findings of the studies have implications for recruitment and development of marketing managers. First, marketing organizations looking for new managers to supervise creative marketing activities should look for candidates with a SL style and avoid laissez-faire leaders. Specifically, candidates should have the ability to create a sense of psychological safety in their followers. This ability is particularly relevant to supervisors of newly employed marketers, who experience more uncertainty than their tenured colleagues. Servant leaders also have a strong moral character and a desire to see followers grow (Greenleaf 1970; 1977; Eva et al. 2019). Informed by these research insights, hiring procedures should carefully consider the personality, the moral character, and the leadership motivation of candidates, in addition to skills and competence. Anonymous interviews with previous followers about the leadership behavior of candidates would be very useful.

The findings also imply that internal leader programs for marketing managers should enhance SL skills and the ability to stimulate psychological safety. Development of such skills requires a different kind of approach than that applied in traditional competence courses or seminars, which typically consist of inspirational talks/lectures by some expert or a blend of lectures and group work. To strengthen the character and assist leaders in making a lasting reorientation of their leadership focus from their own status and performance to the growth and well-being of followers, there is a need for individually adapted processes that allow for the development of self-knowledge and the formation or strengthening of personal goals to serve (Eva et al. 2019). Such processes take time and require discipline.

Similar implications can be drawn for business education programs. To educate servant marketing leaders with the ability to create psychological safety in their teams, it is not enough to build theoretical knowledge. Educators need to assist students in developing a serving identity and form personal goals to be a servant leader. Thus, in addition to lectures a more process-oriented and individually adapted pedagogy is needed to develop SL skills.

5. Limitations

Some limitations of the studies should be noted. In the first study, a citation analysis technique was used, even though this is a robust technique of analyzing citations, but citations are not pure indicators of academic recognition or impact (Tahamtan & Bornmann, 2018). The decision to cite the work of other researchers could be inspired by camaraderie, nepotism or tactical concerns, such as citing the work of members of the editorial board of target journals (Erikson & Erlandson, 2014). Another limitation regards the citation metrics. The mainstream metrics of bibliometric analysis were used (Chen 2014), but all metrics have limitations and the use of other metrics may result possibly in (slightly) different results.

In the second study, the SCOPUS database and the ABS indexed journal list were used because the aim was to identify a comprehensive list of high-quality marketing papers on SL. SCOPUS is the most comprehensive database of scientific peer-reviewed literature and includes 36,377 titles. The ABS journal list helped us identify the high-quality journals within the marketing discipline. Thus, it is expected that the most important papers in the best marketing journals are included, but it is not claimed that the review comprises all published papers on SL and marketing. A complete review would include more databases, such as the ABDC (the journal quality list of the Australian Business Deans' Council) and the Web of Science (SCI, SSCI, ESCI).

The use of an experimental design in the third study answers the call of previous research for more comparative studies of leadership styles (Eva et al. 2019; Huges et al. 2018; Podsakoff and Podsakoff 2019). However, there are also limitations with experimental studies. Participants were asked to imagine themselves in the role of an employee reporting to a leader described in the scenario (imaginative scenarios; Van Dierendonck et al., 2014). Compared to real experience of leadership, this is a relatively weak (but precise) manipulation of leadership style. However, future research should compare the responses to different types of experimental manipulations to clarify what is gained and what is lost by using alternative procedures. A field experiment involving real experiences of leadership behavior may trigger richer emotional and cognitive responses in followers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Proliferation of leadership concepts/styles

Organizational-oriented	Relational/follower-oriented
Dogmatic leadership	Servant leadership
Transactional leadership	Authentic leadership
Pragmatic leadership	Ethical leadership
Cultural leadership	Empowering leadership
Laissez-faire leadership	Transformational leadership
Entrepreneurial leadership	Engaging leadership
Authoritarian leadership	Altruistic leadership
Army Leadership	Spiritual leadership
Charismatic leadership	Academic Leadership
Crisis Leadership	Benevolent leadership
Educational leadership	Inspirational leadership
Exploitative Leadership	Moral leadership
Evidence-based leadership	Team leadership
Directive leadership	Shepherd leadership
Adaptive leadership	Virtuous leadership
Dialogic Leadership	Humble leadership
Aversive leadership	Participative leadership
Sustainable leadership	Pastoral Leadership
Vertical leadership	Horizontal leadership
Passive leadership	Paternalistic leadership
Toxic leadership	Inclusive leadership
Instructional leadership	Self-leadership
Instrumental leadership	Personal leadership
Strategic leadership	Shared leadership
Lean leadership	
Primal leadership	
Situational leadership	
Democratic leadership	

Appendix 2. SL attributes

General leadership attributes	Shared SL attributes	Unique SL attributes
Foresight	Acceptance	Being a servant
Provides leadership	Emotional healing	Putting subordinates first
Goal setting	Empathy	Serving attitude
Holistic mindset	Encouragement	Serving others
Leading	Equality	Standing back
Listening	Forgiveness	Empowerment
Modeling	Accountability	Stewardship
Availability	Agapao	
Awareness	Altruism/altruistic calling	
Personality	Healing	
Persuasion	Relationship builders	
Persuasive mapping	Religiousness	
Pioneering	Appreciation of others	
Preoccupation with future	Authentic self	
Collaboration	Honesty	
Communication	Honors paradox	
Competence	Humility	
Conceptual skills	Influence	
Conceptualization	Inner consciousness	
Consensus builder	Inspirational	
Vision	Integrity	
Task	Interpersonal support	
Teaching	Behaving ethically	
Team building	Role modeling	
Credibility	Moral actions	
Visibility	Moral reasoning	
Security	Shared decisions	
Service	Shares leadership	
	Caring for others	
	Builds community	
	Capacity for reciprocity	
	Courage	
	Vulnerability	
	Wisdom	
	Trust	

	Values people	
	Egalitarianism	
	Voluntary subordination	
	Covenantal relationship	
	Creating value for the community	
	Delegation	
	Developing others	
	Displays authenticity	
	Transcendent spirituality	
	Transforming influence	
	Self-identity	
	Sense of mission	
	Acts of service	

* The original list of the attributions was derived from VanMeter et al. (2016).

Appendix 3. Applied terms in document co-citation analysis

Terms	Definitions (Chen, 2005; 2014; 2017)
Citation	An instance that a publication references to another publication.
Co-citation	When two items, such as documents or journals, are cited by a publication.
Node	Depending on the operated analysis a node could be a document, an author or an institute. Thus, accordingly the size of it can get different meanings; for example, size of a document as a node determines the number of the citations it has received since its publication.
Cluster	Some nodes (e.g., documents) that have been bunched together in a group as they have in common a latent theme.
Network	In citation analysis network can be defined as a unified web that counts for all the individual nodes and their reciprocal connections, which is usually visualized in a graphic form (the author).
Threshold	A selection criterion used by CiteSpace. The items must have values above certain thresholds to be included in the respected analysis (in section 4 further explanation on the threshold for citation burst is provided).
Time line view	A visualized view which in that each cluster is arranged on a horizontal timeline in line with other ones.
Citation half-life	The number of years a publication gets half of its citations since the date of its publication.
Cluster age	The average year of the indexed publication in a cluster. It indicates whether the cluster is formed by generally recent papers or the older papers.
Silhouette	It shows the homogeneity of a cluster. The higher the silhouette score, the more consistent the cluster members will be.
Citation burst	A sharp increase in the citations over a period of time. It is also a good indicator of the most active area of research.

Betweenness centrality	A metric of a node in a network. It measures how likely paths in the network will go through the node. A high betweenness centrality simply means that the node connects two or more large groups within the network.
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Appendix 4. The generated cluster labels of LLR, MI and LSI

Cluster ID	Size	Average year	Silhouette	Cluster labels		
				Log-Likelihood Ratio (LLR)	Alternatives	
					Mutual Information (MI)	Latent Semantic Index (LSI/TFIDF)
1	136	2005	0.511	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizational support (56.05, 1.0E-4) Job embeddedness (53.08, 1.0E-4) Empirical investigation (53.08, 1.0E-4) Job satisfaction (53.08, 1.0E-4) Foster employee (50.12, 1.0E-4) Voluntary green behavior (50.12, 1.0E-4) Sequential mediation model (50.12, 1.0E-4) Organizational politics (47.16, 1.0E-4) Intercollegiate athletics (44.21, 1.0E-4) Facet mindfulness questionnaire instrument (41.25, 1.0E-4) Turnover intention (39.45, 1.0E-4) King Frederick (38.29, 1.0E-4) Servant leadership theory (35.34, 1.0E-4) Leading public libraries (35.34, 1.0E-4) North America (35.34, 1.0E-4) Linking servant leadership (32.93, 1.0E-4) Cause-related sporting event (32.39, 1.0E-4) Qualitative study (32.39, 1.0E-4) Encouraging servant leadership (32.39, 1.0E-4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affective commitment (1.42) Chinese public sector (1.42) Measurement invariance (1.42) Business (1.42) Multilevel mediation model (1.42) Supervisory servant leadership (1.42) Leader (1.42) Servant leadership questionnaire (1.42) Contemporary leadership concept (1.42) Managerial anomalies (1.42) Role performance (1.42) K-12 principal gender (1.42) Work-family relationship (1.26) Servant leadership behavior (1.26) Sequential mediating effect (1.26) Mediation mechanism (1.26) Building employee (1.26) Distributive justice (1.26) Theoretical framework (1.26) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Servant leadership Customer-oriented behavior Service industry Dual-mechanism model Practice Individual performance Priorities Organizational citizens Turnover intentions Learning organization linking servant leadership Transformational leadership Outcomes Same difference Differential mechanisms Psychological ethical climate Employee creativity Servant leadership survey Individual performance Multidimensional measure
2	86	2003	0.525	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authentic leadership (70.86, 1.0E-4) Unit performance (55.79, 1.0E-4) Serving culture (55.79, 1.0E-4) Re-thinking ethical leadership (53.15, 1.0E-4) Interdisciplinary integrative approach (53.15, 1.0E-4) Unethical behavior intention (50.52, 1.0E-4) Authentic supervisor (50.52, 1.0E-4) Personal integrity (50.52, 1.0E-4) Self-interested behavior (47.91, 1.0E-4) German version (47.8, 1.0E-4) Organizational performance (45.32, 1.0E-4) Strategic leadership (45.32, 1.0E-4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contemporary leadership concept (1.37) Managerial anomalies (1.37) Measurement invariance (1.37) Business (1.37) Multilevel mediation model (1.37) Supervisory servant leadership (1.37) Leader (1.37) Servant leadership questionnaire (1.37) Affective commitment (1.37) Chinese public sector (1.37) Role performance (1.37) K-12 principal gender (1.37) Theoretical framework (1.21) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Servant leadership Influence Serving culture Unit performance Context Managerial anomalies Performance management coaching Gender implications Organizational performance Path research Implications New scale Executive servant leadership Organizational performance Path

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational justice perspective (42.75, 1.0E-4) • Follower need (42.75, 1.0E-4) • Prosocial behavior (40.19, 1.0E-4) • Leader influence (40.19, 1.0E-4) • Proactive behavior (40.19, 1.0E-4) • Task performance (40.19, 1.0E-4) • Work questionnaire (37.66, 1.0E-4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive leadership model (1.21) • Work-family relationship (1.21) • Servant leadership behavior (1.21) • Bridging micro (1.21) • Macro level (1.21) • Positive behavior (1.21) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrichment • Hotel salespeople • Priorities • Educational leadership
3	85	2001	0.625	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paternalistic leadership (105.57, 1.0E-4) • Public service motivation (98.65, 1.0E-4) • Public organization (81.46, 1.0E-4) • Work engagement (78.93, 1.0E-4) • Organizational citizenship behavior (72.24, 1.0E-4) • Linking authentic leadership (57.65, 1.0E-4) • Salespeople service performance (57.65, 1.0E-4) • Human resource flexibility (57.65, 1.0E-4) • Cross-level investigation (55.19, 1.0E-4) • Player creativity (52.74, 1.0E-4) • Coach humility (52.74, 1.0E-4) • Knowledge sharing (52.74, 1.0E-4) • Group diversity (52.74, 1.0E-4) • Citizen value co-creation (50.29, 1.0E-4) • Joint effect (50.29, 1.0E-4) • Job performance (47.85, 1.0E-4) • Vietnamese business context (45.41, 1.0E-4) • Moderation mechanism (45.41, 1.0E-4) • Engaging employee (45.41, 1.0E-4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multilevel mediation model (1.83) • Supervisory servant leadership (1.83) • Role performance (1.83) • Measurement invariance (1.83) • Business (1.83) • Leader (1.83) • Servant leadership questionnaire (1.83) • Affective commitment (1.83) • Chinese public sector (1.83) • Contemporary leadership concept (1.83) • Managerial anomalies (1.83) • K-12 principal gender (1.83) • Mediation mechanism (1.63) • Building employee (1.63) • Work-family relationship (1.63) • Servant leadership behavior (1.63) • Bridging micro (1.63) • Macro level (1.63) • Positive behavior (1.63) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servant leadership • Role • Ethical climate • Work group • Specific servant leadership • Activating employee • Pro-environmental behaviors • Leader • Building employees' • Empirical analyses roles • Human resource flexibility • Linking authentic leadership • Leader • Building employees' • Empirical analyses • Player creativity • Relationships • Multi-level assessment • Hospitality industry
4	51	2005	0.657	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader humility (53.86, 1.0E-4) • Leadership research (53.86, 1.0E-4) • Leadership behavior (53.07, 1.0E-4) • Psychological safety (51.34, 1.0E-4) • Empirical analyses (49.52, 1.0E-4) • Emulation intention (48.83, 1.0E-4) • Salesperson performance (48.83, 1.0E-4) • Customer orientation (44.72, 1.0E-4) • In-role performance (44.72, 1.0E-4) • Organizational identification (44.72, 1.0E-4) • Influence pathway (41.08, 1.0E-4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement invariance (0.76) • Business (0.76) • Multilevel mediation model (0.76) • Supervisory servant leadership (0.76) • Leader (0.76) • Servant leadership questionnaire (0.76) • Affective commitment (0.76) • Chinese public sector (0.76) • Contemporary leadership concept (0.76) • Managerial anomalies (0.76) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servant leadership • Employees • Impact • Behavioral outcomes • Abusive supervision instrumentality • Leaders' perceptions • Identification • Follower engagement • Customer service behaviors • Innovation role • Followers • Primary investigations

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational outcome (41.08, 1.0E-4) • Stakeholder management (41.08, 1.0E-4) • Responsible leadership (41.08, 1.0E-4) • Leadership style (37.46, 1.0E-4) • Leaderships style (37.46, 1.0E-4) • Equal relational energy (37.46, 1.0E-4) • Relational energy (37.46, 1.0E-4) • Different leadership style (33.87, 1.0E-4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role performance (0.76) • K-12 principal gender (0.76) • Work-family relationship (0.67) • Servant leadership behavior (0.67) • Bridging micro (0.67) • Macro level (0.67) • Positive behavior (0.67) • Sequential mediating effect (0.67) • Multilevel framework (0.67) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ratings • Leadership behavior • Organizations • Leader • Ethical perspectives • Leaderships styles • Upbringing
5	43	2008	0.788	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational citizenship behaviour (50.27, 1.0E-4) • Incremental contribution (32.31, 1.0E-4) • Meta-analytic examination (32.31, 1.0E-4) • Service industry (31.17, 1.0E-4) • Dual-mechanism model (31.17, 1.0E-4) • Customer-oriented behavior (31.17, 1.0E-4) • Dyadic study (23.92, 1.0E-4) • Leading other (23.92, 1.0E-4) • Manager mindset (21.77, 1.0E-4) • Organizational citizen (17.75, 1.0E-4) • Empirical evidence (17.75, 1.0E-4) • Service quality (14.72, 0.001) • Hospitality industry (14.72, 0.001) • Polynomial regression (14.72, 0.001) • Self-efficacy interact (14.72, 0.001) • Response surface analysis (14.72, 0.001) • Tourism employee (13.44, 0.001) • Green creativity (13.44, 0.001) • Dual mediation path (13.44, 0.001) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement invariance (0.26) • Business (0.26) • Multilevel mediation model (0.26) • Supervisory servant leadership (0.26) • Leader (0.26) • Servant leadership questionnaire (0.26) • Affective commitment (0.26) • Chinese public sector (0.26) • Contemporary leadership concept (0.26) • Managerial anomalies (0.26) • Role performance (0.26) • K-12 principal gender (0.26) • Sequential mediating effect (0.22) • Humble leadership (0.22) • Strengths use (0.22) • Work-family relationship (0.22) • Servant leadership behavior (0.22) • Bridging micro (0.22) • Macro level (0.22) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servant leadership • Customer-oriented behavior • Service industry • Dual-mechanism model • Person-supervisor fit • Voice • Leaders • Employee • Organizational citizens • Hospitality industry role • Servant leaders • Team-member exchange • Political climate • Person-supervisor fit • Voice • Leaders • Employee • Organizational citizens • Hospitality industry
6	41	1996	0.917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unit-level organizational citizenship behavior (61.7, 1.0E-4) • Scale development (53.36, 1.0E-4) • Mixed methods study (45.08, 1.0E-4) • Servant leadership (32.75, 1.0E-4) • Follower engagement (28.78, 1.0E-4) • Hierarchical power (28.78, 1.0E-4) • Short measure (25.27, 1.0E-4) • Shared servant leadership (25.27, 1.0E-4) • Behavioral integration (25.27, 1.0E-4) • Emotional intelligence (22.7, 1.0E-4) • Measurement invariance (8.39, 0.005) • Servant leadership questionnaire (8.39, 0.005) • K-12 principal gender (8.39, 0.005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servant leadership (0.05) • Measurement invariance (0.05) • Servant leadership questionnaire (0.05) • K-12 principal gender (0.05) • Business (0.05) • Multilevel mediation model (0.05) • Supervisory servant leadership (0.05) • Leader (0.05) • Affective commitment (0.05) • Chinese public sector (0.05) • Contemporary leadership concept (0.05) • Managerial anomalies (0.05) • Role performance (0.05) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servant leadership • Antecedents • Mixed methods study • Clarification • Scale development • Leadership • Procedural justice climate • Unit-level organizational citizenship behavior • Short measure • Antecedent short measure • Behavioral integration • Impacting team performance • Shared servant leadership • Team • Antecedent

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team performance (8, 0.005) • Ethical leadership (2.78, 0.1) • Servant leader (1.82, 0.5) • Paternalistic leadership (1.61, 0.5) • Psychological capital (1.61, 0.5) • Public service motivation (1.42, 0.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-family relationship (0.04) • Servant leadership behavior (0.04) • Bridging micro (0.04) • Macro level (0.04) • Positive behavior (0.04) • Sequential mediating effect (0.04) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional intelligence • Examination • Knowledge-sharing climate • Scale development
7	25	1995	0.882	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer value (64.67, 1.0E-4) • Enhancing sales performance (51.22, 1.0E-4) • Ethical servant leader (51.22, 1.0E-4) • Salesforce socialization (44.59, 1.0E-4) • Salesperson ethics (44.59, 1.0E-4) • Person-organization fit (44.59, 1.0E-4) • Supervisor behavior (38.05, 1.0E-4) • Dyadic examination (38.05, 1.0E-4) • Salesperson perception (38.05, 1.0E-4) • Salesperson propensity (31.61, 1.0E-4) • Emotional intelligence (28.67, 1.0E-4) • Employee outcome (28.54, 1.0E-4) • Motivating language (28.54, 1.0E-4) • Person-supervisor fit (25.3, 1.0E-4) • Mediation effect (25.3, 1.0E-4) • Nigerian restaurant employee (21.39, 1.0E-4) • Knowledge sharing behavior (21.39, 1.0E-4) • Distributive justice (14.24, 0.001) • Ethical leadership (7.73, 0.01) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurement invariance (0.11) • Business (0.11) • Multilevel mediation model (0.11) • Supervisory servant leadership (0.11) • Leader (0.11) • Servant leadership questionnaire (0.11) • Affective commitment (0.11) • Chinese public sector (0.11) • Contemporary leadership concept (0.11) • Managerial anomalies (0.11) • Role performance (0.11) • K-12 principal gender (0.11) • Distributive justice (0.1) • Work-family relationship (0.09) • Servant leadership behavior (0.09) • Bridging micro (0.09) • Macro level (0.09) • Positive behavior (0.09) • Sequential mediating effect (0.09) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Emotional intelligence • Influence • Role • Person-organization fit • Ethical leadership • Salesforce socialization • Performance • Salesperson ethics • Person-supervisor fit servant leadership • Motivating language • Mediator • Employee outcomes • Person-supervisor fit • Trust • Supervisor behaviors • Mediation effect • Role • Knowledge sharing behavior
8	14	2008	0.948	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job resource (29.78, 1.0E-4) • Missing entity (29.78, 1.0E-4) • Store manager job (29.78, 1.0E-4) • Store performance (29.78, 1.0E-4) • Crafting research (29.78, 1.0E-4) • Crafting mediate (22.69, 1.0E-4) • Unfavorable outcome (22.69, 1.0E-4) • Empowering leadership (22.69, 1.0E-4) • Employees core self-evaluation (22.69, 1.0E-4) • Shape job (15.73, 1.0E-4) • Servant leadership (7.15, 0.01) • Sequential mediating effect (6.99, 0.01) • Humble leadership (6.99, 0.01) • Strengths use (6.99, 0.01) • Mediating role (1.79, 0.5) • Ethical leadership (1.42, 0.5) • Servant leader (0.93, 0.5) • Organizational citizenship behavior (0.92, 0.5) • Paternalistic leadership (0.82, 0.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servant leadership (0.07) • Measurement invariance (0.02) • Business (0.02) • Multilevel mediation model (0.02) • Supervisory servant leadership (0.02) • Leader (0.02) • Servant leadership questionnaire (0.02) • Affective commitment (0.02) • Chinese public sector (0.02) • Contemporary leadership concept (0.02) • Managerial anomalies (0.02) • Role performance (0.02) • K-12 principal gender (0.02) • Sequential mediating effect (0.02) • Humble leadership (0.02) • Strengths use (0.02) • Work-family relationship (0.02) • Servant leadership behavior (0.02) • Bridging micro (0.02) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store performance • Crafting research • Relationships • Store manager job • Managers • Missing entity • Organizational citizenship behavior • Sequential mediating effect • Humble leadership • Strengths use empowering leadership • Unfavorable outcomes • Crafting mediates • Employees' core self-evaluations • Strengths use • Store performance • Missing entity • Organizational citizenship behavior • Coworkers

Appendix 5. Avenues for future research on SL

Topic	Research issues/questions
Conceptual definitions and measurement	Current definitions mix the motivations of leaders and the behavioural expressions of SL. Future research should make a distinction between the two and develop lean and precise definitions and measures of <i>servant leadership motivation</i> (SLM) and <i>servant leadership behaviour</i> (SLB), respectively.
Mediators and moderators of the relationship between SLM and SLB	Which variables mediate the relationship between SLM and SLB? Which variables moderate the relationship between SLM and SLB?
Multi-level analysis	There is a need for more SL research on the relationship between more than two levels of organisational hierarchies, for instance top management, middle managers, and followers.
Antecedents of SLM and SLB	What are the main antecedents of SLM and SLB? Which antecedents are common for the two, and which are construct-specific?
Pedagogics: How to develop SLM and SLB in practice	How can we assist students and managers in developing SLM and SLB? Which pedagogical approaches are needed? Which are most effective?
SLB in different business functions	How does the effect of SLB on follower performance and well-being vary across departments within firms, such as HR, Marketing, New Product Development, and R&D? What is the effect of SLB in start-up teams, in top-leader teams and executive boards? For which type of follower is SLB more and less effective?

Appendix 6. List of reviewed peer-reviewed marketing-indexed journals

#	Title	Elsevier's Scopus	ABS (Association for Business Schools)
1	Academy of Management Perspectives	Yes	-
2	Academy of Marketing Science Review	-	Yes
3	Academy of Marketing Studies Journal	Yes	-
4	ACM Transactions on Economics and Computation	Yes	-
5	Administration and Society	Yes	-
6	Advances in Consumer Research	Yes	Yes
7	Advances in International Marketing	-	Yes
8	American Review of Public Administration	Yes	-
9	Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics	Yes	-
10	Australasian Marketing Journal	Yes	Yes
11	Baltic Journal of Management	Yes	-
12	Banks and Bank Systems	Yes	-
13	Business Horizons	Yes	-
14	Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences	Yes	-
15	Cogent Business and Management	Yes	-
16	Communication and Management	Yes	-
17	Communication Today	Yes	-
18	Consumption Markets and Culture	Yes	Yes
19	Corporate Communications: An International Journal	-	Yes
20	Corporate Reputation Review	-	Yes
21	DLSU Business and Economics Review	Yes	-
22	EAI Endorsed Transactions on Energy Web	Yes	-
23	Electronic Commerce Research and Applications	Yes	-
24	Electronic Markets	Yes	Yes
25	European Journal of Management and Business Economics	Yes	-
26	European Journal of Marketing	Yes	Yes

27	European Research on Management and Business Economics	Yes	-
28	Event Management	Yes	-
29	Fashion and Textiles	Yes	-
30	Fashion, Style and Popular Culture	Yes	-
31	Food Science and Technology Research	Yes	-
32	Foundations and Trends in Marketing	Yes	-
33	Governance	Yes	-
34	Health Marketing Quarterly	Yes	Yes
35	Indian Journal of Marketing	Yes	-
36	Industrial Marketing Management	Yes	Yes
37	Innovar	Yes	-
38	International Business Review	Yes	-
39	International Journal for Housing Science and Its Applications	Yes	-
40	International Journal of Advertising	Yes	Yes
41	International Journal of Applied Ceramic Technology	Yes	-
42	International Journal of Bank Marketing	Yes	Yes
43	International Journal of Consumer Studies	Yes	Yes
44	International Journal of Design	Yes	-
45	International Journal of Electronic Marketing and Retailing	Yes	-
46	International Journal of E-Services and Mobile Applications	Yes	-
47	International Journal of Integrated Supply Management	Yes	-
48	International Journal of Internet Marketing and Advertising	Yes	Yes
49	International Journal of Management and Business Research	Yes	-
50	International Journal of Market Research	Yes	Yes
51	International Journal of Marketing Semiotics	Yes	-

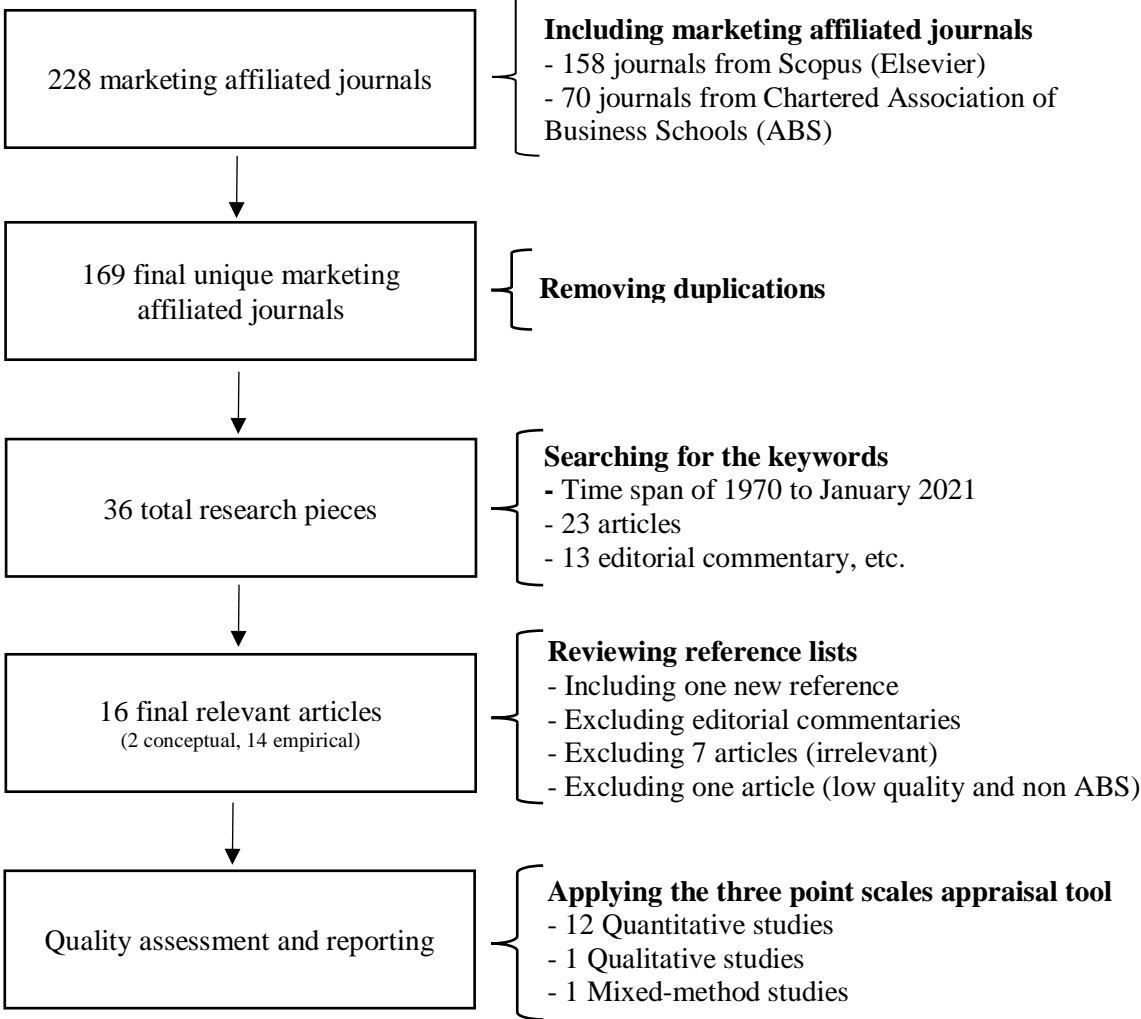
52	International Journal of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Marketing	Yes	Yes
53	International Journal of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Marketing	Yes	-
54	International Journal of Research in Marketing	Yes	Yes
55	International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management	Yes	Yes
56	International Journal of Services, Technology and Management	Yes	-
57	International Journal of Sport Finance	Yes	-
58	International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing	Yes	-
59	International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship	Yes	-
60	International Journal of Technology Marketing	Yes	-
61	International Marketing Review	Yes	Yes
62	International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research	Yes	Yes
63	International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing	Yes	Yes
64	Journal for Advancement of Marketing Education	Yes	-
65	Journal of Advertising	Yes	Yes
66	Journal of Advertising Research	Yes	Yes
67	Journal of Brand Management	Yes	Yes
68	Journal of Business and Finance Librarianship	Yes	-
69	Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing	Yes	Yes
70	Journal of Business Research	Yes	
71	Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing	Yes	Yes
72	Journal of Communication Management	-	Yes
73	Journal of Consumer Affairs	-	Yes
74	Journal of Consumer Behaviour	-	Yes
75	Journal of Consumer Culture	Yes	-
76	Journal of Consumer Marketing	Yes	Yes

77	Journal of Consumer Psychology	Yes	Yes
78	Journal of Consumer Research	Yes	Yes
79	Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising	Yes	-
80	Journal of Customer Behaviour	-	Yes
81	Journal of Destination Marketing and Management	Yes	-
82	Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice	Yes	-
83	Journal of Distribution Science	Yes	-
84	Journal of Eastern European and Central Asian Research	Yes	-
85	Journal of Electronic Commerce in Organizations	Yes	-
86	Journal of Empirical Generalisations in Marketing Science	Yes	-
87	Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies	Yes	-
88	Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management	Yes	Yes
89	Journal of Financial Services Marketing	Yes	Yes
90	Journal of Food Products Marketing	Yes	-
91	Journal of Global Fashion Marketing	Yes	-
92	Journal of Global Marketing	Yes	Yes
93	Journal of High Technology Management Research	Yes	-
94	Journal of Historical Research in Marketing	Yes	-
95	Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management	Yes	-
96	Journal of Interactive Marketing (formerly JDM)	Yes	Yes
97	Journal of International Consumer Marketing	Yes	-
98	Journal of International Food and Agribusiness Marketing	Yes	-
99	Journal of International Marketing	Yes	Yes
100	Journal of Internet Banking and Commerce	Yes	-
101	Journal of Islamic Marketing	Yes	-
102	Journal of Macromarketing	Yes	Yes
103	Journal of Marketing	Yes	Yes
104	Journal of Marketing Analytics	Yes	-
105	Journal of Marketing Channels	Yes	Yes
106	Journal of Marketing Communications	Yes	Yes

107	Journal of Marketing Education	Yes	-
108	Journal of Marketing for Higher Education	Yes	Yes
109	Journal of Marketing Management	Yes	Yes
110	Journal of Marketing Research	Yes	Yes
111	Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice	Yes	Yes
112	Journal of Medical Marketing	Yes	-
113	Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing	Yes	Yes
114	Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management	-	Yes
115	Journal of Place Management and Development	Yes	-
116	Journal of Political Marketing	Yes	-
117	Journal of Product and Brand Management	Yes	Yes
118	Journal of Promotion Management	Yes	-
119	Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	Yes	-
120	Journal of Public Policy and Marketing	Yes	Yes
121	Journal of Purchasing and Supply Management	Yes	-
122	Journal of Relationship Marketing	Yes	Yes
123	Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing	Yes	Yes
124	Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship	Yes	-
125	Journal of Retailing	Yes	Yes
126	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	Yes	Yes
127	Journal of Services Marketing	Yes	Yes
128	Journal of Social Marketing	Yes	Yes
129	Journal of Strategic Marketing	Yes	Yes
130	Journal of Supply Chain Management	Yes	-
131	Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Yes	Yes
132	Journal of the Operational Research Society	Yes	-
133	Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	Yes	-
134	Journal of Vinyl and Additive Technology	Yes	-
135	Journal of World Business	Yes	-
136	Keramische Zeitschrift	Yes	-
137	Marketing Health Services	Yes	-
138	Marketing Intelligence and Planning	Yes	Yes

139	Marketing Letters	Yes	Yes
140	Marketing Research	Yes	-
141	Marketing Science	Yes	Yes
142	Marketing Theory	Yes	Yes
143	Organizacija	Yes	-
144	Paint and Coatings Industry	Yes	-
145	Place Branding and Public Diplomacy	Yes	-
146	Psychology and Marketing	Yes	Yes
147	Public Administration Review	Yes	-
148	Public Relations Inquiry	Yes	-
149	Public Relations Review	Yes	-
150	Publishing Executive	Yes	-
151	Publishing Research Quarterly	Yes	-
152	Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal	Yes	Yes
153	Quantitative Marketing and Economics	Yes	Yes
154	RAE Revista de Administracao de Empresas	Yes	-
155	Real Estate Management and Valuation	Yes	-
156	Recherche et Applications en Marketing	Yes	-
157	Review of Marketing Science	Yes	Yes
158	Sales and Marketing Management	Yes	-
159	Service Science	Yes	-
160	Services Marketing Quarterly	-	Yes
161	Social Marketing Quarterly	Yes	Yes
162	Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC	Yes	-
163	Sport Management Review	Yes	-
164	Sport Marketing Quarterly	Yes	-
165	Sports, Business and Management	Yes	-
166	Total Telecom	Yes	-
167	Transformations in Business and Economics	Yes	-
168	Trziste	Yes	-
169	Young Consumers	-	Yes

Appendix 7. The process for selection and review of the articles



Appendix 8. Construct measures and reliabilities of the variables

Constructs and measurement items ⁹	Factor loadings (Standardized)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Composite reliability (CR)	Construct Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)
Originality (highest scores; ORI, scored by a panel of judges; Diedrich et al., 2015)		.70	.82	.829
This idea is less common.	.853			
This idea given by a few people.	.818			
Relevancy (highest scores; REL, scored by a panel of judges; Diedrich et al., 2015)		.69	.82	.818
This idea is feasible.	.864			
This idea solves the problem.	.797			
Intrinsic motivation (IM, Gagné et al., 2010)		.79	.92	.922
I enjoyed my task very much.	.930			
I had fun doing it.	.877			
This task brought me moments of pleasure.	.857			
Autonomy (AU, Idaszak & Drasgow, 1987)		.59	.81	.817
I had almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the task was done.	.741			
I had considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I did the task.	.799			
I had a chance to use my personal initiative and judgment in carrying out the task.	.758			
Creative self-efficacy (CSE, Tierney & Farmer, 2002)		.73	.91	.917
I felt that I am good at generating novel ideas.	.851			
I had confidence in my ability to solve problems creatively.	.877			
I had a knack for further developing the ideas of others..	.843			
I was good at finding creative ways to solve problems.	.844			
Psychological safety (PS, Edmondson, 1999)		.61	.82	.822
If you made a mistake with this supervisor, it would often be held against you.	.869			
This supervisor was able to bring up problems and tough issues.	.682			
This supervisor sometimes could reject me or others for being different.	.778			
Power distance (Yoo et al., 2011)		.61	.89	.889
People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions.	.818			
People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently	.780			
People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions.	.837			
People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions.	.731			
People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.	.735			
Collectivism (Yoo et al., 2011)		.51	.76	.753

⁹ Creativity was rated by two marketing experts following the procedure of Diedrich et al. (2015).

Both originality and relevancy were measured by two items (see Appendix 8). The experts rated all slogan ideas on both dimensions. The measures of originality and relevancy showed acceptable discriminant validity and internal consistency reliability.

Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties	.627
Group welfare is more important than individual rewards.	.795
Group success is more important than individual success.	.709

* A 5-point Likert scale was used for all the scaled measures.

Appendix 9. Manipulation transcripts of four leadership styles

- *Servant leadership:*

“Your supervisor knows what you personally need. Your supervisor is modest, of integrity, honest, and authentic and shares his/her thoughts and feelings with you. Your supervisor is courageous, allows for mistakes, and provides freedom so you can develop your own abilities. Your supervisor shows great humanity and understanding of your position.” (Van Dierendonck et al., 2014).

- *Transformational leadership:*

“Your supervisor has the capacity to create a vision. Your supervisor communicates goals, values, purpose, and the importance of the organization's mission. Your supervisor examines new perspectives for solving problems and completing tasks. Your supervisor focuses on the development and mentoring of followers.” (Van Dierendonck et al., 2014).

- *Transactional leadership:*

“Your supervisor clarifies your responsibilities to you, monitors your performance, and takes corrective actions if required. Your supervisor makes sure you meet certain standards despite your mistakes and failures. Your supervisor rewards you if your performance is satisfactory.” (Van Dierendonck et al., 2014).

- *Laissez-fair leadership:*

“Your supervisor takes no managing responsibility. Your supervisor is frequently absent and exhibits an absence of involvement during critical junctures. Your supervisor waits until problems become severe before attending to them and intervening.” (Van Dierendonck et al., 2014).

Appendix 10. The scenario on making brand slogan (the creative task)

Introduction

In the following text you will find a senior leader of a business called “Tyggegummi701”; producing natural chewing gum. Imagine the leader as your supervisor and yourself as one of the employees of the firm. The firm is about to introduce a new brand into the local Norwegian market and you have been assigned to an advertisement campaign to come up with attractive and meaningful brand slogans. Please, first read the following text to get to know your company, product, and leader better, then write down the brand slogan(s) that you can think of in the provided space.

Background of the company and the new product

Your firm (Tyggegummi701) is a well-known and respected food company in Norway, established by a group of young nutrition Norwegian entrepreneurs. Tyggegummi701 has a unique position amongst the Norwegian families, as since its establishment has always been committed to offer food products of high quality natural material with minimum health side effects. One of the products that Tyggegummi701 produces is chewing gum. Most of the available gums in the market are made of a chemical substance called “polyisobutylene” (known also as butyl rubber!). However, some evidences suggest that gums made of such “synthetic materials” might have some side effects on target organs. Recently Tyggegummi701 (your company) has come up with an ancient but revolutionary replacement called “turpentine”; a natural fluid obtained by the distillation of resin (Figure 1) harvested from a living tree called terebinth (Figure 2), to be found mainly in the Mediterranean region.



Figure 1: The harvested resin



Figure 2: Terebinth tree

The result of market analysis suggests that your new product (chewing gums) is ready to be introduced to the market. Its logo is also ready (see below picture). However now your supervisor asks you to come up with a brand slogan, that will go in the green circle of the logo.



Figure 3: The logo (your slogan goes into the green area)

Brand slogan is a short motto (statement) to be remembered by the customers easily and represents the core values of the firm and product. Thus, it has to be novel and meaningful, as well.

Before start generating the slogans please note that your supervisor is ... (see Appendix 8 for the leadership manipulation transcript). Now please by imagining your supervisor's behaviors, document your brand slogans in the provided box.

Article 1: Research Streams, Gaps and Opportunities in Servant Leadership Research

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- Second revision of the manuscript is submitted to the *Leadership & Organizational Development Journal* (ABS 2)¹⁰.

¹⁰ The article is subjected to some changes according to the journal's format and revisions received, therefore it is shorter and slightly different in format from the original version of the manuscript presented in the thesis.

Research Streams, Gaps and Opportunities in Servant Leadership Research

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose is to use co-citation analysis of servant leadership (SL) research to investigate the evolution of the field, its subfields, gaps, and opportunities for future research, in a systematic manner.

Design/methodology/approach – A document co-citation technique and three clustering algorithms (latent semantic index, the log-likelihood ratio, and the mutual information index) were employed to analyse 24,030 references from 549 articles spanning a period of 50 years.

Findings – Cluster analyses reveal that SL research consists of eight distinct subfields: (1) Conceptualisation and measurement of SL, (2) SL and related theories, (3) Methodological foundations and empirical expansion of SL research, (4) Individual-level cognitive effects of SL and related theories, (5) ‘Warmth effects’ of leadership behaviour, (6) Antecedents of effective leadership, (7) SL, marketing, sales management and ethics, and (8) SL, job design and work engagement. Important gaps and opportunities for future research are identified.

Originality – Previous research has categorized SL research into three broad categories or phases. The cluster analyses of co-citations reported here reveal a meaningful structure of eight distinct subfields. Knowledge-gaps within the subfields represent novel opportunities for future research on SL. The authors also suggest a new subfield of SL research: Pedagogical approaches to the motivation and development of SL skills.

Keywords servant leadership, evolution of servant leadership research, servant leadership motivation, servant leadership behaviour, co-citation analysis

Paper type Literature review

Introduction

Robert K. Greenleaf (1904-1990) introduced the concept of servant leadership (SL) in his classic essay “The Servant as Leader” in 1970. According to Greenleaf, the power of leadership lies in understanding and serving the followers, and this is the primary role of leaders: “the servant-leader is servant first” (Greenleaf, 1977). Servant leaders are humble stewards who show a sincere intrinsic interest in the followers’ growth and personal development. Further, servant leaders are not only concerned with the followers’ current capabilities, but also their potential; what they could be capable of becoming (Greenleaf, 1977). In addition to his seminal essay, Greenleaf also wrote several books on the topic of servant leadership, including “Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness” (Greenleaf, 1977) and “The Power of Servant Leadership: Essays” (1998). These works became cornerstones for research and practice in SL.

However, SL was soon criticized for overlapping with other positive forms of leadership, such as transformational leadership and charismatic leadership. Graham (1991) was among the first to compare these styles of leadership and concluded that SL was different in its origin and direction of morality: SL focused primarily on the followers, the others on the organization.

Graham’s work paved the way for other scholar to focus on the special characteristics of SL. Amongst the first notable attempts was Spears (1995; 1996), who came up with a list of 10 main characteristics of servant leaders based on Greenleaf’s philosophy, including: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth of people, and building community.

Today, research on SL is burgeoning. Since SL is particularly relevant for modern companies with highly educated and self-conscious followers, it is attracting the attention of an increasing number of researchers and managers (Eva et al., 2019). The defining

characteristic of SL is a leader's focus on the growth and well-being of his or her followers. Empirical studies have shown that this kind of leadership style may have positive effects on followers' behaviour, including work commitment, work effectiveness, organisational citizenship behaviour, psychological well-being, creativity and trust in the leader (Eva et al., 2019; Zarei et al., 2022). SL has strong links to morality in its broadest sense and concerns leaders' moral judgments and conduct regarding the people they lead (e.g., Brown and Treviño, 2006; Brown et al., 2005; Graham, 1991). We will say more about such aspects of SL in this paper.

The growth of studies on SL has created a need for overview and structure. Researchers in the field find SL research fragmented, lacking coherence and clarity (Eva et al. 2019, p. 112). To provide more integration and clarity, Eva et al. (2019) recently presented a systematic literature review of 285 articles on SL research (1998-2018) and developed a nomological network of SL in relation to its antecedents, outcomes, mediators, and moderators (p. 122). We build on this research and present the results of the first co-citation analysis of SL research. Co-citation analysis complements and extends qualitative or meta-analytical reviews by capturing a much bigger sample size of documents, including not only documents on SL, but also the references of these documents (Batistič et al., 2017). Moreover, such methods provide opportunities for quantitative analysis of how popular references are divided into distinct and coherent groups using bibliometric algorithms (cluster analysis, see Chen 2014). These analyses are designed to identify and map the subfields of a research area (Batistič et al. 2017). We used bibliometric cluster analysis on 24,030 references from 549 articles on SL, spanning a period of 50 years, to answer the following research questions: (1) Which subfields constitute the structure of SL research? (2) Which major knowledge-gaps are found in the subfields of SL-research? (3) Which important topics for future research can be identified?

Based on the answers to these questions, we offer three main contributions. First, we identify eight distinct subfields of SL research. Previous research suggests that the field consists of three broad phases or categories, based on subjective analysis: (1) conceptual development, (2) measurement and (3) model development (Eva et al. 2019; Parris and Peachey 2013). Our findings show that the intellectual structure of the literature on SL is more fine-grained and consists of eight distinct subfields. Also, the cluster analyses show that the subfields did not evolve in a strict sequential manner, but often evolved in tandem and continued to coexist over time.

Second, we identify knowledge-gaps and unresolved problems in the subfields and highlight important areas for future research on SL. Third, we suggest a new subfield for future research on SL, which is not addressed in previous reviews: Instruction and training methods for development of SL skills.

We begin by describing the methodology and the dataset before presenting and discussing the results of the analyses. We close with a critical evaluation that offers opportunities for future research.

Methodological Approach

Co-citation analysis

Document co-citation analysis (DCA) is used to detect, analyse and visualise emerging trends and patterns in scientific literature (Chen, 2006, 2014). DCA is a systematic scientometric method of analysing citations. It relies on analyses of how often certain articles are cited together (co-cited), instead of considering the citations to a single document. References cited together often have something in common; thus, DCA is used as a tool to identify chains of key co-cited articles that share a *common latent theme* or *concept*.

We used the CiteSpace II system v. 5.6.R2 for the analyses (Chen, 2006). This software employs progressive network analysis (PNA), which focuses on the nodes that have played a determining role in the evolution of a scientific field (Chen, 2006, 2014). PNA identifies clusters of references, and several methods of clustering are available (see the later section on cluster analysis). PNA also provides a series of metrics for analysing the development of a field of research over time and for identifying influential articles, authors and journals.

The dataset

We retrieved our dataset on SL research during May 2020 from Web of Science (WoS). WoS is the most significant multidisciplinary database in the world of scientific bibliometric analysis (Ruiz-Real et al., 2018). For the included papers, the keyword ‘servant leadership’ was mentioned at least once in the title, abstract or keyword sections. We included all published documents on SL indexed in WoS and placed no restrictions on the search results; all papers, regardless of discipline and time of publication, were included.

Our initial dataset included 665 documents. After removing duplicates and incomplete documents, the final dataset consisted of 549 eligible documents, with a total of 24,030 distinct, valid references (i.e. the references in the included documents). The final network structure of the co-citations yielded 760 nodes, with 4,057 links. The number of nodes in the network was higher than the number of cited documents, because the nodes represented the references of the cited documents.

Sometimes, relevant articles were not possibly included in the citation analyses for some reason. The analyses were not very sensitive to this problem because the results were generated from thousands of references, which usually included references from missing articles (Chen, 2014).

Employing a cluster analysis approach to identify streams of SL research

All the included nodes and the links between them formed a unified network called SL-research co-citation network. Two important metrics that describe the overall structure of any co-citation network are *modularity Q* and *mean silhouette* (Chen, 2014). Modularity Q indicates the density of linked communities of nodes (clusters) in a network, with higher scores suggesting the presence of clusters. The mean silhouette score refers to how similar (homogeneous) citations are, on average, to other citations in the same cluster compared to citations in other clusters. For the citations included in our analysis, the modularity score was relatively high (modularity $Q = 0.5681$). The mean silhouette score was medium (mean silhouette = 0.2432; Chen, 2014). These findings indicated that the generated network consisted of several clusters that, on average, had a medium level of homogeneity.

In this study, we employed three cluster analysis techniques: the latent semantic index (LSI), the log-likelihood ratio (LLR), and the mutual information (MI) index (Chen et al., 2010). While LSI selects the most common themes, LLR and MI algorithms select the most unique themes. We applied the three algorithms to different sections of the documents (title, abstract and keywords) to generate the most appropriate labels for each cluster (Chen et al., 2010). In line with Chen et al.'s (2010) recommendations, we first considered all labels generated by the three techniques. We then reviewed the top 10 cited documents in each cluster and their references to find the most reasonable cluster labels.

Findings: Eight clusters

The software generated eight main clusters of citations with high density and a reasonable number of citer documents. The eight clusters and their labels are shown in Table 1. Each cluster represents a subfield of SL research. We describe the subfields below and address major knowledge-gaps successively (see Table 2 for an overview).

Table 1. Clusters of SL research

Cluster #	Underlying research theme	Five references with the highest citation frequency
Cluster 1	Conceptualisation and measurement of SL	van Dierendonck (2011) Greenleaf (1977) Liden et al. (2008) Ehrhart (2004) Walumbwa et al. (2010)
Cluster 2	SL and related theories	Brown et al. (2005) Avolio and Gardner (2005) Brown and Treviño (2006) Avolio et al. (2009) Bandura (1977)
Cluster 3	Methodological foundations and empirical expansion of SL research	Podsakoff et al. (2003) Blau (1964) Podsakoff et al. (2012) Aiken et al. (1991) James et al. (1984)
Cluster 4	Individual-level cognitive effects of SL and related theories	Hayes (2013) Newman et al. (2017) Hobfoll (1989) Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) Morris et al. (2005)
Cluster 5	'Warmth effects' of leadership behaviour	Podsakoff et al. (1990) Wu et al. (2013) Ling et al. (2016) Dirks and Ferrin (2002) Miao et al. (2014)
Cluster 6	Antecedents of effective leadership	Greenleaf (2002) Russell (2001) Asag-Gau and van Dierendonck (2011) Bass and Avolio (1994) Spears (1996)
Cluster 7	SL, marketing, sales management and ethics	Fornell and Larcker (1981) Anderson and Gerbing (1988) Jaramillo et al. (2009) Nunnally (1978) Kool and van Dierendonck (2012)
Cluster 8	SL, job design and work engagement	Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) Bakker and Demerouti (2007) Bakker et al. (2012) Hackman and Oldham (1976) Grant (2008)

Cluster 1 on *Conceptualization and measurement* had the highest concentration of nodes (136 documents). The silhouette value was 0.511, indicating a moderate level of homogeneity, and

the cluster included 50 years of research on the conceptualisation and measurement of SL (1970–2019). This cluster contained papers on conceptual definitions (e.g., Graham, 1991; Greenleaf, 1970; 1977; Sendjaya and Sarros, 2002; Spears, 1995), measurement models for SL (e.g. Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006; Ehrhart, 2004; Laub, 1999; Liden et al., 2008; Sendjaya et al., 2019; van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011), and improvements and validations of previous conceptualisations and measures of SL (e.g. Hu and Liden, 2011; Hunter et al., 2013; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Joseph and Winston, 2005; Neubert et al., 2008; Panaccio et al., 2015; Schaubroeck et al., 2011; Sendjaya and Pekerti, 2010; van Dierendonck et al., 2014; Walumbwa et al., 2010; Yoshida et al., 2014). Despite the considerable efforts and progress made over the last 50 years to clarify, define, and measure SL, there is still considerable confusion and little agreement (Eva et al., 2019). We suggest that SL research would benefit from distinguishing between servant leadership *motivation* and servant leadership *behaviour*. We develop this argument in the section on critical analysis and directions for future research.

The second cluster, *SL and related theories*, contained 86 documents and had two research sub-streams (silhouette value 0.525). This cluster contained documents discussing the similarities, differences and overlaps between SL and four related styles of leadership: authentic leadership (Luthans and Avolio, 2003), ethical leadership (Brown et al., 2005), transformational leadership (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999) and spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003). Despite considerable overlap, servant leaders were found to have a stronger dedication to fulfilling their followers' needs and serving marginalised people (Sendjaya and Sarros, 2002). They focus more on serving their followers than their own interests. Their moral decisions are also directed towards followers rather than an organisation (Graham, 1991). This cluster also contained documents about the foundational theories of SL, such as social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) and social exchange theory (Blau, 1964).

The discussion of similarities and differences between SL and other leadership styles is hampered by the conceptual and measurement problems addressed in cluster #1. Thus, we recommend that new and more precise definitions and measures are needed to advance research in this subfield of SL research.

The third largest cluster, *Methodological foundations and empirical expansion of SL research*, included 85 cited documents on methodological issues, and had a silhouette value of 0.625. These documents provided an overview of the major methodological approaches, analyses and methodological problems of SL research, including the classic book on multivariate data analysis by Hair et al. (2010), a frequently cited paper on interrater reliability by James et al. (1984), Aiken and West's (1991) work on interactions in multiple regression, seminal works on structural equation modeling by Bagozzi and Yi (1988) and Hu and Bentler (1999), a standard reference on method bias by Podsakoff et al. (2012), and Preacher and Hayes's (2008) landmark article on moderation and mediation analyses. The documents in this cluster show that research on SL is based on advanced and well-known sources of methodological knowledge. However, we miss documents on multi-level analysis, especially studies including more than two levels of organisational hierarchies.

Cluster 4 (51 documents; silhouette value = 0.657) was labelled *Individual-level cognitive effects of SL and related theories*. In this cluster we find documents on individual cognitive outcomes of SL, including a recent meta-analysis of 130 studies showing a large number of positive effects of SL, including task performance, organisational citizenship behaviour and individual creativity (Lee et al., 2020). Related research on the mediators and moderators of the individual effects of SL are also found in this cluster (e.g., Kark and van Dijk, 2007; Newman et al., 2017; Tuan, 2020; Qiu et al., 2020). Documents on one specific type of

individual-level effects were grouped in cluster 5: “*Warmth effects*” of leadership behaviour (43 papers; silhouette = 0.788). The term “warmth” here refers to a range of human characteristics related to morality and sociability and is borrowed from the terminology of the social psychology stereotype model (Fiske et al., 2002). Examples of variables addressed in this cluster are organisational citizenship behaviour (Podsakoff et al., 1990), organisational commitment (Lapointe and Vandenberghe, 2018), service motivation (Brownell, 2010) and organisational trust (Chan and Mak, 2014).

The documents in cluster 4 and 5 address a wide range of individual effects of SL, but one type of study is missing: multi-level studies involving more than two levels of organisational hierarchies. There is a need for SL research on the relationship between three and more levels of organisational hierarchies, for instance the relationships between top management, middle managers, and followers (see Dong, Hui and Loi (2012) for an example of the usefulness of three-level analysis).

The sixth cluster (41 documents; silhouette = 0.917) included a broad range of documents on *Antecedents of effective leadership*, including papers on charisma (Conger and Kanungo, 1987), knowledge (Bierly et al., 2000), and more recent studies on empowerment (Russell, 2001), stewardship (Block, 1993), emotional intelligence (George, 2000), pro-social motivation (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986), fairness (Colquitt, 2001) and wisdom (Barbuto and Gifford, 2010). Despite the large number of antecedents identified in this cluster, we found no studies using this research in the design and testing of pedagogical methods for education and instruction of leaders for the purpose of developing servant leadership abilities. We return to this issue below.

The two final clusters consisted of documents that relate SL to various management functions: Cluster 7 on *Marketing, sales management, and ethics* (25 documents; silhouette value 0.882), and Cluster 8 on *SL, job design and work engagement* (14 documents; silhouette = 0.948). Both clusters consist of relatively recent papers and seem to represent a trend in modern SL research focusing on the specific effects of SL on follower behaviour in specific functional areas of companies. Findings are tentative and much more research is needed to understand how the impact of SL varies across functions and levels of the organisation.

The results of the cluster analysis shed new light on the development of SL research. Several authors have used a three-step sequential model to describe how the field evolved: (1) conceptual development, (2) measurement and (3) model development (Eva et al. 2019; Parris and Peachey 2013). The cluster analyses show a finer-grained picture of eight distinct subfields of SL, which did not evolve in a strict sequential manner. The subfields emerged at different times but continued to coexist. Some were more important in the early history of SL research, but most subfields developed in parallel and influenced each other.

Critical Analysis and Directions for Future Research

Based on discussions of the eight streams of SL research that emerged from the cluster analyses, we have identified six major topics for future research (see Table 2). Below we take a closer look at three topics that we believe are particularly important for the development of both research and practice in the field of servant leadership.

Conceptual definitions and measurement

Definitions of SL are still loose and lack precision. In response to this problem, Eva et al. (2019) suggested the following definition (p. 114):

Servant leadership is an (1) other-oriented approach to leadership (2) manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of follower individual needs and interests, (3) and outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others within the organization and the larger community.

The authors explained that this definition ‘*has three features that make up the essence of servant leadership, namely its motive, mode, and mindset*’ (Eva et al., 2019, p. 114). While this definition is certainly more precise than other definitions of SL in the literature (see Greenleaf’s (1977) own definition), it illustrates, in our opinion, a fundamental problem in current approaches to the conceptualisation of SL: the mixing of covert psychological motivations with overt leadership behaviour. When motivational and behavioural variables are grouped together into the same broad concept and integrated into comprehensive measures of SL, theoretical development suffers because broad definitions may prevent researchers from studying the relationships between specific psychological variables and the relationships between psychological and behavioural variables. Rather than developing and using broad, comprehensive definitions and measures of SL, we suggest that future research should formulate lean, precise definitions and measures that refer to *either* psychological *or* behavioural aspects of SL. Lean concepts provide a better basis for the development of rich theories.

Although Eva et al. (2019) claimed that the essence of SL has three main aspects, of which two are psychological and one is behavioural, they also suggested that ‘*the underlying motivation for taking up a leadership responsibility*’ is ‘*where it [SL] differentiates itself from other perspectives on leadership*’ (p. 114). This is an important point. A precise conceptual definition of SL should focus on the unique and differentiating aspects of the phenomenon (van Meter et al., 2016).

Thus, we suggest that future research should develop lean concepts and measures of *servant leadership motivation* (SLM). Notably, the relevant unit of analysis for SLM is the *leader*—not the followers.

Besides lean concepts of SLM, we need concepts and measures of *servant leadership behaviour* (SLB), which refers specifically to *behavioural indicators of servant leadership*. For these measures, the *followers* represent the relevant unit of analysis. SLB measures should focus exclusively on the unique behavioural expressions of SL. The underlying problem here is the lack of a stringent conceptual definition of SLB; hence, it is vital that we first develop lean and precise definitions of SLB and then revise the measures accordingly.

The distinction between motivation and behaviour is important in cognitive psychology, a major “support disciplines” of leadership theory (see Avolio et al., 2009). Moreover, the relationships between motivation and behaviour are discussed elsewhere in the leadership literature (see Badura et al., 2020). We suggest that making a distinction between the *motivation* and the *behaviour* in the measurement of SL (SLM and SLB) may improve research in the field in at least three ways. First, leaner, and more precise definitions and measures of SLB and SLM will make it easier to clarify the unique contribution of servant leadership compared to other leadership styles. In turn, this would provide new opportunities for identification of the specific contexts (organizational types, follower types, competitive situation, etc.) in which servant leadership is superior (or inferior) to other styles of leadership. Second, when measures of SLM and SLB are kept apart, future research may examine the relationship between servant motivation and behaviour, and its mediators and moderators. These analyses will offer new insights on how and when servant motivation leads to servant leadership behaviour. Third, when

motivation (SLM) and behaviour (SLB) are separate constructs, we are able to model and test the differential impact of each construct on organisation outcomes. For instance, it is not a given that the effect of SLM on organisation outcomes is fully mediated by SLB, and SLM is probably not the only determinant of SLB. Tests of alternative models may shed new light on the nature of SL and its impact on organisation outcomes.

Table 2. Avenues for future research on SL

Topic	Research issues/questions
Conceptual definitions and measurement	Current definitions mix the motivations of leaders and the behavioural expressions of SL. Future research should make a distinction between the two and develop lean and precise definitions and measures of <i>servant leadership motivation (SLM)</i> and <i>servant leadership behaviour (SLB)</i> , respectively.
Mediators and moderators of the relationship between SLM and SLB	Which variables mediate the relationship between SLM and SLB? Which variables moderate the relationship between SLM and SLB?
Multi-level analysis	There is a need for more SL research on the relationship between more than two levels of organisational hierarchies, for instance top management, middle managers, and followers.
Antecedents of SLM and SLB	What are the main antecedents of SLM and SLB? Which antecedents are common for the two, and which are construct-specific?

Pedagogics: How to develop SLM and SLB in practice	How can we assist students and managers in developing SLM and SLB? Which pedagogical approaches are needed? Which are most effective?
SLB in different business functions	How does the effect of SLB on follower performance and well-being vary across departments within firms, such as HR, Marketing, New Product Development, and R&D? What is the effect of SLB in start-up teams, in top-leader teams and executive boards? For which type of follower is SLB more and less effective?

Antecedents of SLM and SLB

Research on the antecedents of SL is meagre and fragmented. We suggest that future research should address the antecedents of both SLM and SLB. Some antecedents could be relevant for both constructs, others more specific to either motivation or behaviour. In particular, we need more research on the antecedents of SLM: Why are some leaders motivated to be a servant leader – and others not?

In addition to the antecedents discussed by Eva et al. (2019), we identified five other antecedents of SL based on the analyses of cluster #6: leadership experience, volunteerism, trusting relationships, altruistic mind-set, and wisdom. In sum, a broad set of antecedents are found in the literature, but we know very little about their relative importance or the interplay between them. We suggest that future research should test the impact of antecedents on both SLM and SLB, identify the most important antecedents, the conditions under which they influence SLM and SLB, and compare the differences between antecedents for SLM and SLB. Studies of this kind would significantly advance our knowledge of why some become servant leaders and other do not.

A new subfield: Pedagogics and development of SLM and SLB

We did not identify any studies on how to motivate and train students and managers to become servant leaders. New research on SLM and SLB, on the relationship between these constructs and their antecedents, will give us valuable knowledge on how to stimulate the right kind of motivation and behaviour. In turn, this knowledge must be combined with pedagogical research and theory to come up with effective methods for training and instruction.

SL is about the will to serve (Greenleaf, 1977), and serving in practice often comes at a cost because it means that leaders prioritize the needs of followers over their own. Therefore, development of SL abilities is fundamentally about development of moral character. Thus, when developing pedagogical approaches to assist students and managers in developing SLM and SLB, we need to draw on current research on moral psychology and moral maturation (e.g., Ellemers et al., 2019). This research suggests that pedagogical approaches to SLM and SLB should develop self-knowledge, awareness of personal norms and values, and assist students and managers in developing specific SL goals (see also Argandona, 2015). Such outcomes are difficult to obtain by means of traditional classroom lecturing. Other kinds of pedagogical approaches are needed. We suggest that research on pedagogical approaches to the development of SLM and SLB should become a new subfield of research on servant leadership. This research would improve our ability to educate more servant leaders, to the benefit of followers, organisations, and the leaders themselves.

Limitations

Some limitations of the analysis should be noted. The results of the bibliometric analyses show the most cited and influential works in the scientific development of SL research. The analyses do not show a *complete* picture of useful research on SL. Interesting works used by

subgroups of SL researchers may not have enough citations to be included in the results. Moreover, bibliometric analyses do not explain the impact of books, journals, and articles *on the practice of SL*. We welcome future analyses of the most influential sources of SL practice. We expect that managerial and practice-oriented books and journals, such as the International Journal of Servant Leadership and the Servant Leadership Theory and Practice, would play a central role in such analyses.

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Article 2: Servant leadership in marketing: A critical review and a model of creativity-effects

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- Published in the *Journal of Business Research* (ABS 3), Volume 153, December 2022, Pages 172-184¹¹.

¹¹ The article is subjected to some changes according to the journal format and revisions received, therefore it is slightly different in format from the original version of the manuscript presented in the thesis.



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Business Research

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jbusres

Servant leadership in marketing: A critical review and a model of creativity-effects

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Servant leadership
Creativity
Servanthood
Empowerment
Ethics
Marketing

ABSTRACT

Leadership styles have profound effects on marketing outcomes. One style of leadership, which attracts increasing attention in general leadership research as well as in marketing, is servant leadership (SL). We present the first systematic literature review of the effects of SL on marketing outcomes, including publications in marketing-indexed journals over the past 52 years. Four streams of marketing research on SL-effects are identified. Analyses of relevant articles reveal important gaps in the literature and provide directions for future research. A major gap is the lack of studies on the effects of SL on marketing creativity. We suggest that SL is more conducive to creativity in marketing organizations than other common styles of leadership and develop a conceptual model for future research on SL-effects on marketer creativity.

1. Introduction

Servant leadership (SL) is about the personal growth and well-being of followers (Greenleaf 1970, 1977). The purpose is to unleash the potential of followers to thrive and grow personally and professionally through one-on-one prioritizing of individual needs and interests (Eva et al., 2019). A major distinctive dimension of SL is the other-directed motivation of the leader (Eva et al., 2019): The motivation is not the status of the leader, but the growth of followers. Popular measures of SL include dimensions such as *empowerment* (Liden et al., 2015), *helping subordinates grow and succeed* (Liden et al., 2008), *humility*, *authenticity* (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and *behaving ethically* (Liden et al., 2015). SL is deemed particularly relevant in modern organizations with highly educated and self-conscious employees.

Several reviews of empirical research on SL in the broader management literature show that SL has many positive effects on follower performance, psychological well-being, and trust in the leader (e.g., see Eva et al., 2019, Gui et al., 2021; Hoch et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020, Parris & Peachey, 2013). We believe there is a need for a targeted and critical review of SL-effects in marketing for four main reasons: First, the number of studies on SL-effects on marketing outcomes is still limited despite increasing attention and several promising findings (e.g., Bande et al., 2016; Riquelme et al., 2020). A critical review may accelerate research in this area by identifying important gaps and research

questions. Second, SL is a highly relevant leadership-style for marketing organizations because marketing is essentially about serving the needs of customers and clients (e.g., Houston, 1986). It is a reasonable conjecture that the attitudes and behaviors of servant leaders will transfer to the followers and to the culture of marketing functions of the organization and thus influence marketing outcomes, possibly to a larger extent than other styles of leadership. Any evidence to support this prediction, or new research questions for future research, would be useful. Third, SL seems to foster creativity (Eva et al., 2019), and creativity is a major driver of marketing performance (e.g., Im et al., 2013, Rosengren et al., 2020). However, creativity is context-dependent and domain-specific (e.g., see Gomes et al., 2016; Kaufman & Baer, 2004), and a closer look is needed at the specific nature and potential of SL-effects on marketing creativity. Fourth, more studies have been published on the effects of SL on marketing outcomes after Eva et al. (2019) published their review.

The overall purpose of the current study is to describe the current state of knowledge on SL-effects in marketing and identify opportunities for future research. We first explain and compare the nature of SL to other styles of leadership and then present a systematic literature review (SLR) of previous research on SL in marketing. The review is designed to answer six related research questions:

RQ1: How is SL understood and defined in marketing research?

RQ2: What kinds of marketing outcome variables are addressed in

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.08.013>

Received 26 January 2022; Received in revised form 2 August 2022; Accepted 5 August 2022
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research on SL-effects?

RQ3: What kinds of theories dominate in the development of hypotheses and the explanations of SL-effects in marketing?

RQ4: What kind of methods (samples, data-collection methods, measures, analyses) are used to study SL-effects in marketing?

RQ5: Which are the major empirical findings on the effects of SL in marketing research and which variables mediate and moderate these effects?

RQ6: How and to what extent does SL influence marketing creativity?

By answering these questions, we were able to offer three main contributions to the literature: (1) We identify four streams of research on SL-effects in marketing and give directions for future research. (2) Limitations with current conceptions and measures of SL in marketing are identified. Specifically, we find that the important dimensions of stewardship, humility, and authenticity are not included. We also suggest that a distinction between behavioral and attitudinal dimensions of SL would be useful. (3). We develop a new conceptual model of the effects of SL on marketer creativity and the mediators of these effects.

2. SL and other major styles of leadership

Before moving on to the literature review, we briefly describe similarities and differences between SL and three other leadership styles: *transactional*, *ethical*, and *transformational leadership*. Transactional leadership is dominant in the classic leadership literature and, in many ways, a contrast to SL. Ethical leadership and transformational leadership are the types of leadership most strongly related to SL.

Transactional leadership is concerned with transactions between manager and employees and focuses on task accomplishment and rewards (Bass, 1990). Transactional leaders clarify roles and job tasks, monitor followers' performance and, take corrective actions when needed (Avolio & Bass, 2004). SL is fundamentally different from transactional leadership both in terms of the motivation and the behavior of the leader. While transactional leaders focus on employee performance and interfere only when problems occur or procedures and standards are not met (Avolio & Bass, 2004), servant leaders actively support the personal and professional growth and development of followers based on a desire to serve first (Greenleaf, 1970; Russell & Stone, 2002). However, there is also some overlap between the two styles of leadership: Both address role clarification and follower accountability (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Ethical leadership is defined as:

"The demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown et al., 2005).

Thus, ethical leadership focuses on common ethical norms, such as listening to employees, treating employees fairly, and showing concern (Brown et al., 2005). There is considerable overlap with SL: Integrity, trustworthiness, caring for employees and behaving ethically are also elements of SL (Ehrhart, 2004; Liden et al., 2008; Liden et al., 2015; van Dierendonck, 2011). In addition, they both highlight the importance of two-way communication with followers (van Dierendonck, 2011). However, SL is a broader concept that includes more than ethical behavior. Servant leaders proactively empower followers to grow and develop both skills and character (Greenleaf, 1970). Also, SL provides more freedom in terms of how things can be done, rather than focusing on practicing accepted organizational norms (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Transformational leaders provide the vision, inspiration, knowledge and training needed for followers to perform beyond their perceived capabilities (Bass, 1990). Such leaders give followers autonomy as well as the authority to make decisions once they have been properly trained. Transformational leadership overlaps with SL. Both types of leadership are concerned with the growth of followers and both encompass

morality. However, morality in SL is directed toward the followers' well-being, while transformational leadership morality is directed toward the organization (Graham, 1991). Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) suggest that servant leaders are different from transformational leaders in two respects: the servant leader is (a) interested in serving marginalized people and (b) dedicated to the followers' need fulfillment. Experimental evidence suggest that these differences in leadership style have empirical consequences. SL has been found to affect the psychological needs of followers (psychological need satisfaction), whereas transformational leadership primarily influences perceptions of the leader (e.g., perceived leadership effectiveness; van Dierendonck et al., 2014).

3. Systematic literature review of SL-studies in marketing: Methodological approach

We followed the guidelines for strategic literature reviews developed by Parris and Peachey (2013). The keywords used in the search of relevant articles were the same as in the recent general review of SL research by Eva et al. (2019), but we restricted the search to journals on Elsevier's Scopus and the ABS (Association for Business Schools) Journal list that were fully or partly affiliated with the marketing discipline (see Fig. 1).

The ABS list is commonly used as a source for reviews of high-quality business research (Davidsson & Gruenhagen, 2021). Some reviews limit the search to the top-tier journals on the ABS list (levels 4*, 4, and 3; e.g., Battisti et al., 2021). We made no such restrictions because we expected to find a limited number of relevant articles on SL, and interesting research can be found in less than top-tier journals.

Following Eva et al., (2019), we searched for the following keywords in the title, abstract and keywords sections of manuscripts: *servant leadership*, *servant leader*, *servant behavior*, *servant behaviour*, *servant organization* and *service leadership*. The concept of SL was first launched by Greenleaf in 1970. Thus, our search covered a time span of 52 years, from 1970 to 2021. This procedure resulted in 23 articles. Two of these articles published in *Services Marketing Quarterly* (SMQ) that we decided to include in further analysis. SMQ is not on the ABS-list, but the articles were relevant and insightful and the quality acceptable. A review of the references of the 23 papers identified one extra ABS-listed article that did not contain the keywords, but it was relevant, thus we included this article (Lytle et al., 1998). We excluded one article as it was not indexed in the ABS list and exhibited quality seemingly less than found in the other articles. After reading the remaining 23 articles, we found that 7 of them were irrelevant. These articles were first included because they contained the cue "service leadership." However, they all discussed various aspects of service marketing and service management, but none of them addressed SL in any way. Thus, we excluded these articles. After removing these 7 we were left with 16 high quality relevant articles, 2 conceptual and 14 empirical. The literature review was based on these 16 articles, (see Table 1).

4. Results

In this section we analyze the 16 articles on SL in marketing, suggest answers to the six research questions, and provide directions for future research.

4.1. RQ1: How is SL understood and defined in marketing research?

There is not full agreement on the meaning of SL in the marketing literature, and several authors point to a need of further clarification of the concept (Grisaffe et al., 2016; VanMeter et al., 2016). In reply to the call, we reviewed conceptual definitions of SL in the 16 documents and identified three common dimensions: (1) *servanthood*, (2) *empowerment*, and (3) *ethical behavior*.

Servanthood is the major dimension of SL in the marketing literature (e.g., Babakus et al., 2010; Bande et al., 2015; Bande et al., 2016;

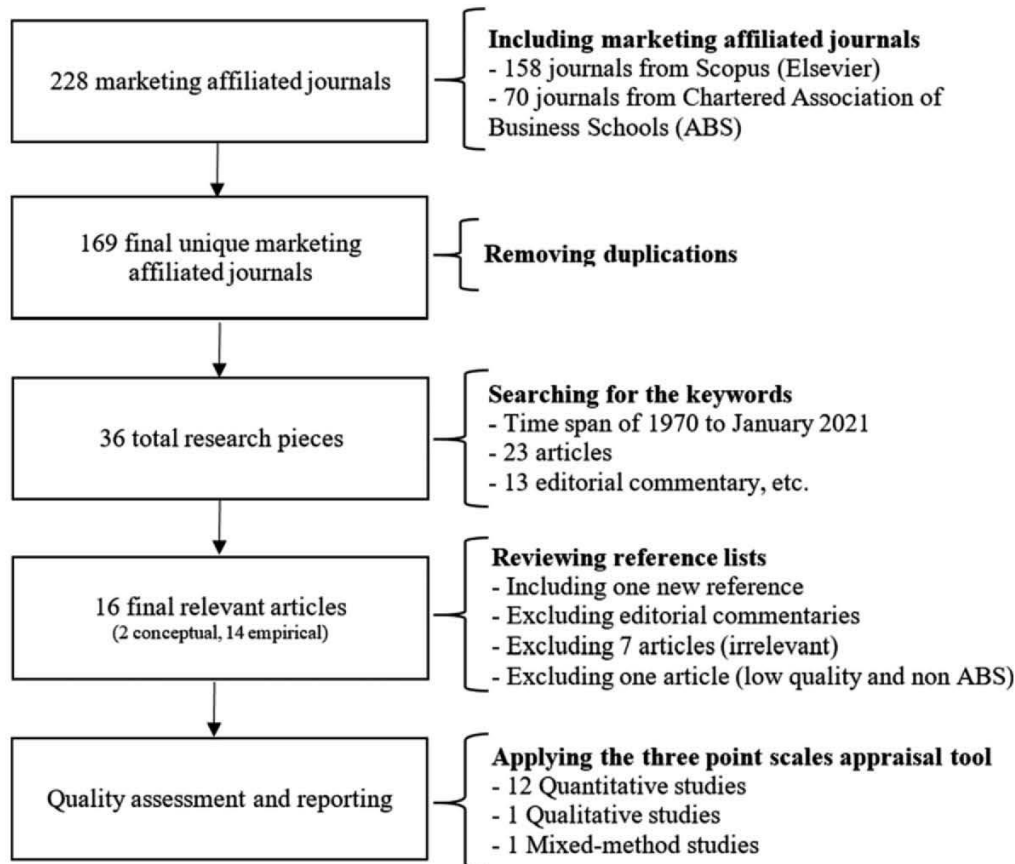


Fig. 1. Process for selection of articles.

Grisaffe et al., 2016; Jaramillo et al., 2009a; Jaramillo et al., 2009b; Lytle et al., 1998; Peesker et al., 2019; Schwepker & Schultz, 2015; VanMeter et al., 2016; Yavas et al., 2015) and denotes the intrinsic desire to serve followers first (Greenleaf, 1977; VanMeter et al., 2016). Servanthood relies on the influence of self-giving behaviors without expecting self-glory (Stone et al., 2004). This dimension distinguishes SL from other leadership styles, such as *transformational leadership*, because servanthood is directed strongly toward the followers rather than the organization or the interests of the leader. Servanthood in marketing leaders may transfer onto followers and affect positively the serving-driven capabilities of marketing organizations (Riquelme et al., 2020).

Empowerment is the second major dimension of SL in the marketing literature (e.g., Bande et al., 2015; Peesker et al., 2019; Schwepker & Schultz, 2015; Schwepker, 2016; Yavas et al., 2015). Empowerment is seen as the servant leader's commitment to motivating and supporting followers in developing the cognitive and operational skills required to efficiently achieve their developmental goals. Most marketing studies of SL borrow definitions and measures of empowerment directly from landmark studies in the general leadership literature (e.g., Dennis & Winston, 2003; Ehrhart, 2004; Greenleaf, 1977; Liden et al., 2008; Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2001; van Dierendonck, 2011; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). In marketing studies of SL, empowerment is mostly seen as a second-order construct. Second-order constructs represent structures of first-order factors. Recent research in the methodology literature, and based on philosophical concepts of *hylomorphism*, has shown that such structures can function as explanatory variables (Bagozzi, 2022). Thus, less is

known about the independent or direct components of effects of empowerment on marketing processes and outcomes, which have been inconsistently or have been studied in terms of the components, not necessarily as organized structures of components. Such structures can function also holistically as independent, dependent, mediating, or moderating variables, but this has as yet to be investigated.

Ethical behavior is the third core dimension of SL identified in the reviewed articles (e.g., Jaramillo et al., 2009a; Jaramillo et al., 2015; Peesker et al., 2019). In definitions of ethical leader behaviors in the context of SL, marketing researchers typically refer to the works of Ehrhart (2004) and Liden et al. (2008) and the ability of leaders to behave in honest, fair, and transparent ways. The ethical behavior of leaders may foster an ethical work climate, which in turn can improve industrial sales performance (Jaramillo et al., 2015). Ethical leader behavior may also reduce salespeople's turnover intentions (Jaramillo et al., 2009a).

The three-dimensional understanding of SL in the marketing literature is consistent with the conception of SL in the general leadership literature, but there are also notable differences. Specifically, we identified three sub-concepts of SL in the general leadership literature (reviewed in Eva et al., 2019), which are not addressed in the marketing literature on SL: *stewardship*, *humility* and *authenticity*. In an organizational context, stewardship refers to the level of responsibility employees take for the common good of the organization and of society (e.g., see Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Spears, 1995; van Dierendonck, 2011). Humility is about the extent to which leaders accept their limitations and recognize the contributions of others (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; van

Table 1
Identified articles on SL in marketing journals*.

Journal	Rank (ABS)	Title and author(s)	Included in review?	
<i>Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management</i>	2	Examining the impact of servant leadership on sales force performance (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts, 2009b)	Yes	
		Influence of the ethical servant leader and ethical climate on customer value enhancing sales performance (Schwepker and Schultz, 2015)	Yes	
		Servant leadership and ethics: A dyadic examination of supervisor behaviors and salesperson perceptions (Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela, 2015)	Yes	
		A qualitative study of leader behaviors perceived to enable salesperson performance (Peesker, Ryals, Rich and Boehnke, 2019)	Yes	
		Serving first for the benefit of others: Preliminary evidence for a hierarchical conceptualization of servant leadership (Grisaffe, VanMeter, and Chonko, 2016)	Yes	
		Examining the impact of servant leadership on salesperson's turnover intention (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts, 2009a)	Yes	
	<i>Industrial Marketing Management</i>	3	Emotions and salesperson propensity to leave: The effects of emotional intelligence and resilience (Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela, and Jaramillo, 2015)	Yes
			Service leadership for adaptive selling and effective customer service teams (Wong, Liu and Tjosvold, 2015)	No
			Effect of service-related resources on employee and customer outcomes in trade shows (Jha, Balaji, Ranjan, and Sharma, 2019)	No
<i>Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing</i>	2	Exploring the relationship among servant leadership, intrinsic motivation and performance in an industrial sales setting (Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela-Neira, and Otero-Neira, 2016)	Yes	
		Servant leadership, distributive justice and commitment to customer value in the salesforce (Schwepker, 2016)	Yes	
<i>Services Marketing Quarterly</i>	–	Relative effects of leadership and technology on bank employees' job outcomes (Yavas, Jha, and Babakus, 2015)	Yes	
		Service worker burnout and turnover intentions: Roles of person-job fit, servant leadership, and customer orientation (Babakus, Yavas, and Ashill, 2010)	Yes	
<i>Academy of Marketing Science Review</i>	2	In search of clarity on servant leadership: domain specification and reconceptualization (VanMeter, Chonko, Grisaffe, and Goad, 2016)	Yes	
	2		No	

Table 1 (continued)

Journal	Rank (ABS)	Title and author(s)	Included in review?
<i>Journal of Services Marketing</i>		SERV* OR in China: testing the effect of service orientation on service skills performance (Luk, Lu, and Liu, 2013)	
<i>Journal of Strategic Marketing</i>	2	Let marketers reclaim corporate strategy (Mattsson, Ramaseshan, and Carson, 2006)	Yes
<i>Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing</i>	2	Servant leadership, proactive work behavior, and performance overall rating: Testing a multilevel model of moderated mediation (Varela, Bande, Del Rio and Jaramillo, 2019)	Yes
<i>Australasian Marketing Journal</i>	1	An emerging south-east Asian brand: MK Restaurants (Itthiopassagul, Patterson and Piyathasanan, 2009)	No
<i>International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management</i>	1	Retail service excellence: Antecedents and consequences (Padma and Wägensel, 2018)	No
<i>International Journal of Bank Marketing</i>	1	The influence of servant leadership on an organization's serving-driven capabilities in a Kuwaiti bank environment (Riquelme, Rios, and Gadallah, 2020)	Yes
<i>Journal of Business Research</i>	3	The empirical study of consumers' loyalty for display technology (Lin, Wu, and Cheng, 2015)	No
		The study of service innovation for digiservice on loyalty (Wu, 2014)	No
<i>Journal of Distribution Science</i>	–	The Effect of Employees' Perception of a Supervisor's Servant Leadership on Employees' Perceived Organization's Support: The Mediating Effect of Employees' Perceived Supervisor's Supports (Kang and Hwang, 2014)	No
<i>Journal of Retailing</i>	4	SERV * OR: A managerial measure of organizational service-orientation (Lytle, Hom, and Mokwa, 1998)	Yes

*The search for articles was completed in January 2021.

Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Authenticity is about expressing the true self in leadership behavior and is defined as the degree of consistency between leaders' actions and their inner values (Laub, 1999; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

4.1.1. Future research

The three-dimensional conception of SL in marketing identified in this review (servanthood, empowerment, ethical behavior) should be conceptually challenged and empirically assessed. We see no reasons why the other dimensions of SL, which are found in the general management literature (stewardship, humility, and authenticity), would not be relevant in marketing from the other areas. Another critical question for future research is whether SL is different in marketing. Is there a need for different concepts and definitions of SL? In order to compare studies and grow knowledge of SL-effects across disciplines, a few commonly agreed-upon definitions are preferable. However, if leadership and servanthood are substantially different in marketing contexts, other concepts and definitions of SL could be warranted. For instance, lead planners in ad agencies may chair processes in which both agency employees and clients work together in teams. Leaders of product and service innovation processes are sometimes responsible for teams that include employees, technical experts, and lead customers (Sharma,

2021). What does servanthood mean in such contexts with a mix of “followers” with different needs and agendas? Should SL be restricted to leadership of company employees?

Another conceptual issue for future research is the potential problem of including both psychological and behavioral phenomena in the same broad concepts and measures (e.g., humility attitudes and ethical behavior). This is an issue for all research on SL. The problem is that, when both psychological and behavioral dimensions are lumped together in the same comprehensive constructs, we miss the opportunity to study their uniqueness if warranted, the relationships between them, and separated functions of psychological and behavioral variables if any. Precise and narrow constructs are better suited typically for theory development, especially in the early phases of research or for exploratory inquiry. Future research should develop leaner definitions of psychological and behavioral dimensions of SL and develop nomological network of relationships between these dimensions. Later more complex hierarchical concepts might be investigated (Bagozzi, 2022).

4.2. RQ2: What kinds of marketing outcome variables are addressed in research on SL-effects?

Across the 16 articles on SL in marketing, we identified four categories of outcome variables (see Table 2). The first and largest category consists of studies on the effects of SL on salespeople’s psychology and behavior (e.g., Jaramillo et al., 2015; Jaramillo et al., 2009b; Grisaffe et al., 2016; Peesker et al., 2019; Schwepker & Schultz, 2015; Varela et al., 2019). This stream of research includes outcome variables such as sales performance, customer orientation, self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation of salespeople. In all, 8 of the 16 documents (50 %) belong mainly to this category.

A second category of studies addresses the effects of SL on followers’ perceptions of ethicality. These perceptions refer to three different aspects of the firm: the allocation of rewards (Schwepker, 2016), work climate, and the firm in general (Jaramillo et al., 2009a; Jaramillo et al., 2015; Schwepker, 2016). SL has positive effects on all three perceptions of ethicality.

A third and minor stream of studies concerns the effects of SL on the relationship between employees and organizations. Examples of outcome variables in this category are perceived person-organization fit, organizational commitment, and organizational identification (Babakus et al., 2010; Jaramillo et al., 2009a; Riquelme et al., 2020; Yavas et al., 2015). Finally, we identified a stream of studies on the effects of SL on job-related factors, such as job satisfaction, employee burnout, and turnover intentions (Babakus et al., 2010; Yavas et al., 2015). The impact of SL on these outcomes are promising, with positive effects on job satisfaction and negative effects on burnout and turnover intentions of primary interest.

4.2.1. Future research

The four streams of marketing research on SL research identified in this review cover a wide range of important marketing outcomes. As the quality indicator index (see Parris & Peachey, 2013) presented in Table 2 shows, we found strong empirical supports for all the four streams of research. Surprisingly, however, we found no studies on the effects of SL on marketing creativity. This is surprising because creativity is a major driver of marketing performance, and research on SL in the general management literature suggests that this style of leadership may stimulate creativity in followers. To propel research on this topic, we develop a conceptual model of SL-effects on marketing creativity in a separate section below.

We also suggest that future research should investigate the effects of SL on followers’ brand identification and brand-supportive behaviors. To corporate brands in particular, employees are important brand ambassadors, and previous research suggests that brand-supportive behaviors are best supported by a blend of transformational and transactional leadership (Morhart et al., 2009). However, SL may have

Table 2
Empirically tested relationships of SL with marketing variables.

Input variable	Outcome variable	Streams of research	Reference	Quality indicator
Managers’ SL behaviors	Participation in quota setting	Perceptions of ethicality	Schwepker (2016)	I
Managers’ SL behaviors	Perceptions of fairness in reward allocation	Perceptions of ethicality	Schwepker (2016)	I
SL	Salesperson’s self-efficacy	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela-Neira, and Otero-Neira (2016)	II
SL	Salesperson’s intrinsic motivation	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela-Neira, and Otero-Neira (2016)	II
SL	Salesperson’s adaptivity	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Bande, Fernández-Ferrín, Varela-Neira, and Otero-Neira (2016)	II
Managers’ SL behaviors	Salesperson’s proactive behaviors	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Varela, Bande, Del Rio and Jaramillo (2019)	I
Salesperson’s perceived SL	Ethical work climate (ethical responsibility and trust)	Perceptions of ethicality	Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela (2015)	I
Salesperson’s perceived SL	Ethical work climate (unethical peer behaviors)	Perceptions of ethicality	Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela (2015)	I
Supervisors’ SL behaviors	Salesperson’s perceived SL	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela (2015)	I
Sales managers’ SL	Salesperson’s satisfaction	SL and job-related factors	Grisaffe, VanMeter, and Chonko (2016)	II
Sales managers’ SL	Salesperson’s outcomes (CSR, OCB and performance)	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Grisaffe, VanMeter, and Chonko (2016)	II
Sales managers’ SL	Salesperson’s customer behaviors	Sales peoples’ psychology and behavior	Grisaffe, VanMeter, and Chonko (2016)	II
SL	Salesperson’s perceived ethical level of the firm	Perceptions of ethicality	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009a)	I
SL	Person-organization fit	The relationship between sales people and organizations	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009a)	I
SL	Organizational commitment	The relationship between sales people and organizations	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009a)	I

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Input variable	Outcome variable	Streams of research	Reference	Quality indicator
Salesperson's perceived SL	Salesperson's customer orientation	Sales people's psychology and behavior	Chonko, and Roberts (2009b)	1
SL	Salesperson's value enhancing behavior performance	Sales people's psychology and behavior	Schwepker and Schultz (2015)	
SL	Salesperson's outcome performance	Sales people's psychology and behavior	Schwepker and Schultz (2015)	1
SL behaviors	Salesperson's outcome performance	Sales people's psychology and behavior	Peesker, Ryals, Rich and Boehnke (2019)	1
SL	Front-line employees' person-job fit	The relationship between sales people and organizations	Babakus, Yavas, and Ashill (2010)	1
SL	Front-line employees' burnout	SL and job-related factors	Babakus, Yavas, and Ashill (2010)	1
SL	Organizational commitment	The relationship between sales people and organizations	Yavas, Jha, and Babakus (2015)	1
SL	Job satisfaction	SL and job-related factors	Yavas, Jha, and Babakus (2015)	1
SL	Serving-driven capabilities	Sales people's psychology and behavior	Riquelme, Rios, and Gadallah (2020)	1
Managers' SL behaviors	Salesperson's overall performance	Sales people's psychology and behavior	Varela, Bande, Del Rio and Jaramillo (2019)	1
SL	Salesperson's performance	Sales people's psychology and behavior	Jaramillo, Bande, and Varela (2015)	1
Salesperson's perceived SL	Salesperson's customer-directed extra-role performance	Sales people's psychology and behavior	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009b)	1
Salesperson's perceived SL	Salesperson's outcome performance	Sales people's psychology and behavior	Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko, and Roberts (2009b)	1
SL	Front-line employees' turnover intentions	SL and job-related factors	Babakus, Yavas, and Ashill (2010)	1
SL	Front-line employees' turnover intentions	SL and job-related factors	Yavas, Jha, and Babakus (2015)	1
SL	Customer-service behaviors	Sales people's psychology and behavior	Riquelme, Rios, and Gadallah (2020)	1
SL	Identification with the branch (firm)	The relationship between sales people and organizations	Riquelme, Rios, and Gadallah (2020)	1

even stronger effects, especially when the brand positioning contains elements of service quality. Comparative studies of the effects of different leadership styles are needed to test this conjecture.

Another type of outcome variable for future research on SL-effects is co-production performance. Marketing leaders often chair co-production processes with teams consisting of employees and external experts or customers in the development of new products and services or new communication tactics. We would expect that SL is an effective style of leadership in this context. This is a ripe area for new theory development, testing, and practice.

4.3. RQ3: What kind of theories dominate in the development of hypotheses and the explanations of SL-effects in marketing?

Three classes of theories dominate in the development of hypotheses about SL-effects: socio-psychological theories, motivational theories, and ethical theories. The most prominent socio-psychological theories are Bandura's (1977) *social cognitive learning theory* and the *social identity theories* of Tajfel and Turner (1979) and Ashforth and Mael (1989). The *role modeling* concept of social cognitive learning theory plays an important role in explanations of the effects of SL on the will and learning capacity of followers (Hunter et al., 2013). Marketing researchers have used social identity theory to explain how SL may affect the collective self of salespeople (Varela et al., 2019), which in turn influences sales behavior. Some authors draw on theory about *norms of reciprocity* (Gouldner, 1960) in discussions of how SL transfers to followers (Varela et al., 2019).

Several theories of motivation are used to explain SL-effects. In some studies, authors use *self-determination theory* (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and *cognitive evaluation theory* (DeNisi et al., 1984; Deci & Ryan, 1985) to explicate how SL may affect the psychological need satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and proactive behavior of salespeople (Bande et al., 2016; Yavas et al., 2015).

Others use Locke and Latham's (1990) *goal setting theory* and House's (1971) *path goal theory* to explain how SL may stimulate organizational goal setting and salesforce motivation (Jaramillo et al., 2009b; Schwepker, 2016). We also find applications of Kinicki and Kreitner's (2003) *attribution theory*. The basic logic of attribution theory is that employees assess their own performance, which in turn affects their work motivation (Bande et al., 2016).

Ethical theories applied in marketing studies of SL include Bertland's (2009) *theory of virtue ethics*. This theory is used to explain how the virtuous behaviors of servant leaders may stimulate the institutionalization of ethical values and the improvement of followers' ethical capabilities (Jaramillo et al., 2009). Others draw on Ferrell, Gresham and Fraedrich's (1985) *ethical decision-making theory* or Victor and Cullen's (1988) *theory of ethical work climate* when explaining how SL influences the ethical climate of marketing organizations, which in turn may affect sales behavior (e.g., Schwepker & Schultz, 2015).

Finally, we observe interesting applications of two other theories in single studies. Babakus et al. (2010) draw on Hobfoll's (1989) *conservation of resources theory* to develop hypotheses on how SL may reduce the problem of burnout among frontline employees. According to this theory, employees use various resources for completing work tasks such as attentional resources, cognitive effort, time and physical energy, but they need to restore those resources during breaks in order to avoid stress (Hobfoll, 1989). Finally, *resource-based theory* (Barney et al., 2001) is applied in one study to explain how SL can be viewed as an intangible strategic resource of the firm and a source of competitive advantage (Yavas et al., 2015).

4.3.1. Future research

The ethical component of SL in marketing is both important and theoretically underdeveloped. Future research should investigate theories of moral philosophy and psychology in search of new insights and hypotheses on the motivation, cognition, and behavior of servant

leaders. One example is moral identity theory. Moral identity consists of highly accessible knowledge structures (Hammah et al., 2009) and therefore imposes a strong influence on how individuals regulate behavior (Carver & Schreier, 1998). Moral identity theory can be used to explore the characteristics of the identities of servant leaders and to develop predictions on how, or to what extent, SL influences the moral identity of followers.

Servant leaders stand back, are humble, and acknowledge the performance of followers over their own effort. This kind behavior has a psychological cost and requires extensive self-regulation. Thus, theories of self-regulation (see Muraven & Baumeister, 2000) could be helpful in explaining behavioral differences between transformational and servant leaders. Such theories may also provide insights on why marketing leaders who are motivated to serve may still fail to behave in a manner consistent with this motivation.

Moral emotions have proved powerful explanations for reactions of consumers to corporate social responsibility in recent years and might be adapted to theories of SL in marketing. Until recently, moral behavior in business has been accounted for primarily by rational theories where cognitive processes were the focus of inquiry. But in the past few years, Haidt's (2012) social intuitionist approach, where emotions constitute powerful automatic reactions to experienced corporate responsibility and irresponsibility, has been incorporated in marketing research. In an explosion of research emotions have been integrated with cognitive processes to explain such phenomena as offshoring (Grappi et al., 2013a; Lu et al., 2021), reshoring (Grappi et al., 2015), environmental and green behavior (Romani et al., 2013; Xie et al., 2015), bribery (Sharma & Bagozzi, 2022), community and social relations (Grappi et al., 2013b, Xie & Bagozzi, 2019), and identity (Antonetti & Maklan, 2018). In addition to moral emotions, the closely related self-consciousness emotions of pride and shame seem related to SL (Bagozzi et al., 2018). Guilt, embarrassment, and envy might be relevant as well. Leaders and subordinates both have moral and self-conscious emotions toward each other depending on how they act and fail to act, which can reinforce or interfere with their mutual relationships.

4.4. RQ4: What kind of methods (samples, data-collection methods, measures, analyses) are used to study SL-effects in marketing?

Most marketing studies of SL are empirical and quantitative. As Table 3 shows empirical studies included data from 6,109 individuals mostly through questionnaires (surveys). Several studies ($n = 6$) use multi-level data collections with responses from both followers/salespeople and leaders/supervisors (Bande et al., 2016; Jaramillo et al., 2015; Lytle et al., 1998; Peesker et al., 2019; Riquelme et al., 2020; Varela et al., 2019).

The gender of the respondents is not reported in all the studies, but based on the reported ones male participants are dominant. The average age of participants was 43.4 years (reported in five studies). The average years of organizational tenure was 8.5, and the average years of working experience was 13.5 (reported in six studies).

We reviewed the type of data analysis techniques used in the quantitative studies and found that structural equation modeling (SEM), including confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), was employed by the majority of the studies (e.g., Bande et al., 2016; Jaramillo et al., 2015; Riquelme et al., 2020; Varela et al., 2019), and to a lesser extent Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) (e.g., see Babakus et al., 2010; Bande et al., 2015; Lytle et al., 1998; Yavas et al., 2015). Other applied methods were Partial Least-Squares Regression (PLS) (Riquelme et al., 2020), Focus Groups (Lytle et al., 1998), the Grounded Theory Method (Peesker et al., 2019), and the Guttman method (Grisaffe et al., 2016).

Most marketing researchers used established scales of SL. Ehrhart's (2004) scale is the most popular one (e.g., Jaramillo et al., 2009a; Jaramillo et al., 2009b; Jaramillo et al., 2015; Varela et al., 2019). This scale represents SL as a second-order construct with seven dimensions: forming relationships with subordinates, empowering subordinates,

Table 3
Samples, measures and analytical techniques.

Index	Quantity	Percentage
Typology of the research		
Empirical	14	87.5
Conceptual and review	2	12.5
Data analysis approach		
Quantitative	12	85.7
Qualitative	1	7.1
Mixed-method	1	7.1
Data collection tools		
Questionnaire	6,046	99
Interview	63	1
Respondents' gender		
Male	2,118	54.7
Female	1,752	45.3
Data analysis techniques		
SEM	12	85.7
CFA	12	85.7
EFA	5	35.7
PLS	1	7.1
Focus Groups	1	7.1
Grounded Theory Method	1	7.1
The Guttman method	1	7.1
Applied scales		
Ehrhart's (2004) scale	6	42.9
Liden et al.'s (2008) scale	3	21.4
Lytle et al.'s (1998) scale	2	14.3
Self-developed scale	2	14.3
Geographical zone of the respondents		
USA	5	35.7
Spain	4	28.6
New Zealand	2	14.3
Kuwait	1	7.1
Multinational	1	7.1
Not specified	1	7.1
Sampling industries		
Finance, insurance, and accounting	11	19
Manufacturing	10	17.2
Sales and advertising	8	13.8
Technology and ICT	8	13.8
Healthcare	4	6.9
Consulting and business services	4	6.9
Construction	4	6.9
Food, beverage and restaurant	2	3.4
Government	2	3.4
Transportation	1	1.7
Agriculture	1	1.7
Real estate	1	1.7
Hospitality	1	1.7
Art and editing	1	1.7

helping subordinates grow and succeed, behaving ethically, putting subordinates first, and creating value for those outside the organization.

Another popular SL scale is the one by Liden et al. (2008), which is applied in three studies (Riquelme et al., 2020; Schwepker & Schultz, 2015; Schwepker, 2016). Two studies use Lytle et al.'s (1998) SERV*OR measure. Two studies use their own measure of SL (Grisaffe et al., 2016; Lytle et al., 1998). Finally, one study was also qualitative without any reported applied scale.

The Ehrhart (2004) and Liden et al (2008) scales are also popular in the general leadership literature. However, two other popular scales in leadership research are not found in marketing studies of SL: Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) five-dimensional scale and Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) eight-dimensional measure of SL.

With such a variety of factors measuring SL, and the possibility of different numbers of second-order factors and even different structures or organizations of the first- and second-order factors, it is important to do further conceptual and empirical research to verify what SL is. The possibility of hylomorphic arrangements of factors mentioned above deserves consideration. Does SL function as distinct factors or structures of factors operating as independent, dependent, mediating, or moderating variables? Deriving a valid conceptualization and measurement of

SL is needed to better understand what it is and what is its role in marketing.

The samples of the empirical studies come from several geographical areas. One study is multinational (Peesker et al., 2019), and one does not clearly specify the geographical location of respondents (Jaramillo et al., 2009a). Finally, respondents are recruited from a variety of industries, however many come from the service sector.

4.4.1. Future research

Despite the limited number of articles (n = 16), researchers have used a variety of methods and samples in studies of SL-effects in marketing. However, we found no experimental studies. This finding suggests that research on SL-effects in marketing is still in its infancy. Most of the research done with regards to moral and self-conscious emotions mentioned above uses experimental methods in the field, which may account for the many studies in the past decade. Conceptual and correlational research is often considered a necessary first step before explicit hypotheses on causal effects are developed and tested in experimental studies. We recommend that future research develop causal hypotheses on the effects of SL in marketing contexts and use experimental designs to test hypotheses. Leadership style can be manipulated by means of “imaginative scenarios” (see De Cremer, 2006; van Dierendonck et al., 2014). With this approach, several styles of leadership can be included and compared in the same study for their effects on marketing outcomes. In addition, different leadership styles and effects can be presented to managers and workers to ascertain their moral and self-conscious emotions, as well as cognitive reactions or boundary conditions, as found in the business ethics literature.

We also recommend the use of time series and panel data in future research on SL-effects in marketing. Some effects of SL may emerge slowly. For instance, effects of SL on the psychological safety of

followers or trust in the leader could be hard to detect in cross-sectional studies. Effects of SL on these variables probably evolve gradually over time. Rather than using comprehensive scales of SL, we recommend the use of leaner measures of specific psychological or behavioral dimensions of SL, such as empowerment, humility or servant attitudes. This practice will provide more precise insights on the role and effects of SL in marketing.

Finally, more qualitative and grounded inductive research are needed to gain in-depth insights into the nature of SL and SL-effects in marketing. We identified only one qualitative paper in this review. For instance, thought protocols, in-depth interviews, or critical incident responses with marketing leaders with different types of leader style on how they lead in various contexts may reveal new insights on cognitive and motivational differences between SL and other types of leaders. Similarly, in-depth qualitative responses from followers with different types of leaders may shed new light on the psychological effects of different leadership styles.

4.5. RQ5: Which are the major effects of SL in marketing and which variables mediate and moderate these effects?

To answer this question, we summarized the empirical findings in a framework showing the significant effects of SL on marketing outcomes and the mediators and moderators of these effects (see Fig. 2). Despite the relatively low number of studies (16), many different relationships have been tested, and the overall picture is that SL has many positive effects for the owners, the leaders and the employees of marketing organizations.

In our response to RQ2, we identified four classes of outcome variables: (1) sales peoples’ psychology and behavior, (2) follower perceptions of ethicality, (3) relationships between employees and organizations, and (4)

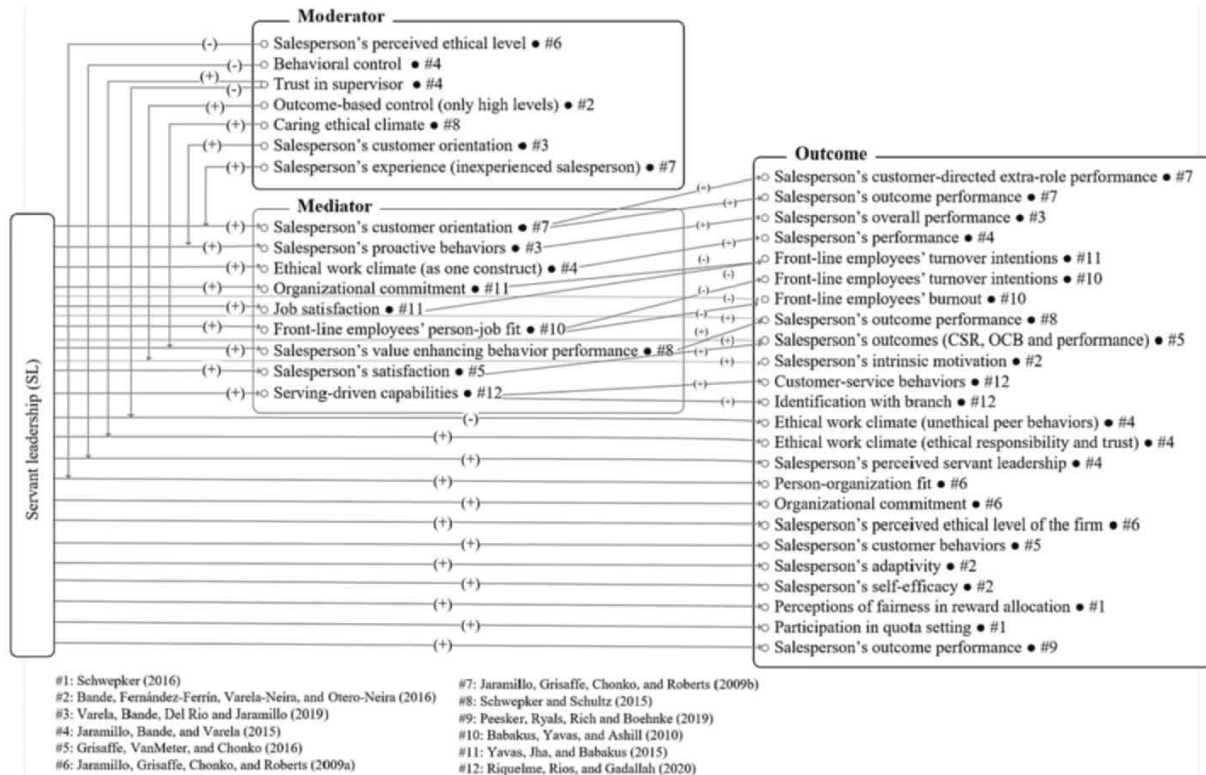


Fig. 2. Empirical effects of SL on marketing outcomes: An integrative model.

job-related factors. In Fig. 2, we see that variables belonging to these four categories have been tested either as dependent variables or as mediators. Seven variables significantly moderate the effects of SL. Three of them are questionable in our view: *trust in supervisor*, *caring ethical climate*, and *salesperson's customer orientation*. These variables are better regarded as *mediators* because there are good theoretical reasons to expect that they are influenced by SL.

4.5.1. Future research

Several opportunities for future research can be identified by comparison of the integrative model presented in Fig. 2 and the nomological framework of SL in the general leadership literature presented in Eva et al. (2019). For instance, other leadership styles have been found to moderate the effect of SL. In marketing, Morhart et al. (2009) found that transactional leadership moderated the effect of transformational leadership on brand-building behaviors. In a similar fashion, SL may have stronger effects on some marketing outcomes when combined with other styles of leadership. Organizational moderators, such as organizational structure and climate, may also play a role in marketing functions and organizations. The review by Eva et al. (2019) also identified several team-centered mediators of SL-effects, including team identification and team conflict. These mediators could also be relevant in a marketing context.

Another interesting issue for future research is the impact of diversity in groups of marketers on creativity. Previous research connects transformational leadership, diversity, and creativity (e.g., Fernando et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2016). We expect SL to facilitate employee diversity, possibly even more than transformational leadership. Servant leaders are more concerned with the psychological needs and safety of employees (see van Dierendonck et al., 2014). Such leaders are, perhaps, particularly attractive to employees belonging to minority groups who may find themselves at a disadvantage compared to majority group members. Diversity in turn stimulates creativity (e.g., Wang et al., 2016). Thus, diversity could be a relevant mediator of the effect of SL on marketing creativity. Alternatively, diversity may operate as a moderator that strengthens the effect of SL on creativity. We welcome studies that test whether diversity is a significant mediator or moderator of the effect of SL on marketing creativity.

It is also relevant to address the impact of employees' perceptions of the demographic characteristics of the servant leader, such as the gender, ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation. These perceptions may influence interpretations of leadership behavior and thus moderate the relationship between SL and marketing creativity (see Liu, 2019).

A related issue worthy of future research is the moderating effect of the culture in the country in which the marketing organization is operating (Pekerti & Sendjaya, 2010). For example, egalitarianism and empowerment are more valued in the Nordic cultures compared to Asian cultures (Mittal & Dorfman, 2012). Thus, effects of SL on marketing creativity could be stronger in the Nordics than in Asian countries.

A striking gap in the literature on SL-effects in marketing is the complete lack of studies on antecedents of SL. The general literature on SL is also weak in this area (see Eva et al., 2019). Thus, antecedents of SL represent an important issue for future research. How do leaders develop the motivation and ability needed to become servant leaders and how can we stimulate such processes in business education? In attempts to answer these questions, we recommend a visit to current research on moral psychology and moral maturation (e.g., Ellenens et al., 2019; Hannah et al., 2011). Empathy and altruism are possible antecedents of SL, as well as moderators of their effects. Collective or relational social identity, versus individualism, may also influence SL and its effects. Finally, pride, resilience, and professional identity could foster SL and are in need of study. The second striking gap in the literature on SL-effects in marketing is the lack of studies on marketing creativity, as mentioned. This issue relates to our research question #6.

4.6. RQ6: How and to what extent does SL influence marketing creativity?

Due to the importance of creativity in marketing and the promising effects of SL in related disciplines, we expected a stream of research on SL-effects on marketing creativity. To the contrary, we could not identify a single study on this topic. In order to start exploring potential answers to RQ6 and to identify promising opportunities for future research in this area, we developed a conceptual model of SL-effects on individual marketer creativity.

4.7. A model of SL-effects on marketer creativity

SL may affect both individual marketer creativity and team creativity. Because team creativity is more complex and the understanding of teams will partly build on knowledge about individual effects, we concentrate here on SL-effects on individual marketer creativity. We also consider the effects of SL compared to transformational and transactional leadership in order to identify when and why SL may have superior (or inferior) effects on marketing creativity.

4.7.1. Effects of SL on creative agency and motivation

We suggest that SL may have strong and positive effects on marketer creativity, defined here as the *originality* and *relevance* of marketing ideas (Finke et al., 1992). Moreover, we believe that these effects are mediated by four variables concerning creative agency and motivation (see Fig. 3).

First, SL may enhance the *intrinsic motivation* of followers to engage in creative tasks (Su et al., 2020). Because servant leaders focus on the abilities and needs of followers rather than extrinsic rewards of performance, their followers feel more liberated and empowered when doing creative tasks and more likely enjoy these work tasks. Second, SL probably stimulates *perceived autonomy* for similar reasons. Servant leaders do not control creative processes but empower marketers based on in-depth insight on individual needs and skills. The result is a sense of empowered autonomy. A third related concept here is *creative self-efficacy* (Yang et al., 2017). Self-efficacy is about people's beliefs in their own capabilities (Bandura, 1997). High creative self-efficacy in our context means that marketers have a strong belief in their capability of delivering creative outputs (Yang et al., 2017). SL should have a positive effect on creative self-efficacy for three main reasons. Servant leaders are concerned with the personal and professional development of creative people. The individual support will likely increase the followers' expectations of success. Second, when followers succeed with creative tasks, servant leaders do not take the credit, but actively ascribe the success to the effort of followers. Finally, previous research suggests that SL contributes to followers' *psychological safety* (Iqbal et al., 2020). Two dimensions of SL are especially relevant here: forgiveness and interpersonal acceptance (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Followers of transactional leaders will probably score significantly lower than followers of SL-leaders on all these variables. The focus on rewards will stimulate extrinsic rather than internal motivation and the control and monitoring of followers will reduce perceptions of autonomy. Creative self-efficacy will also be lower because transactional leaders do not actively support the development of follower skills. Finally, followers of transactional leaders feel less safe because their leaders are less concerned with developing relationships to followers and are less prone to signal social acceptance of employees. In sum, we suggest that SL has stronger effects on all four variables:

Proposition 1. *Compared to transactional leadership, SL has stronger positive effects on (a) the intrinsic motivation, (b) autonomy, (c) creative self-efficacy, and (d) psychological safety of marketers working with creative tasks.*

We also expect that SL will stimulate two of these psychological mediators to a larger extent than transformational leadership, and thus have stronger total effects on creativity. Specifically, we suggest that SL

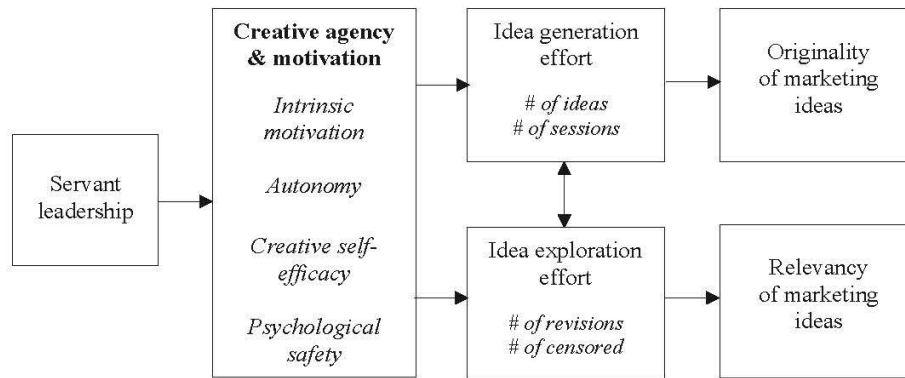


Fig. 3. A conceptual model of SL-effects on marketer creativity.

will have stronger effects than transformational on creative self-efficacy and psychological safety. First, creative self-efficacy is expected to be weaker for followers of transformational leaders because such leaders are less concerned with ascribing success to the followers than servant leaders. There are usually several competing explanations for a successful creative output. Servant leaders actively and systematically attribute success to the skills and effort of followers. This is not a characteristic of transformational leaders (Eva et al., 2019). Another reason why followers of servant leaders may experience higher levels of creative self-efficacy is that SL have stronger and more complete empowerment components. In SL empowerment is related both to skills and the needs and well-being of followers. Empowerment is rooted in the desire of leaders to see followers grow personally and professionally. The perspective on empowerment in transformational leadership is leaner and more directed towards the goals of the organization. Thus, followers of transformational leaders may experience less psychological empowerment than followers of servant leaders. In partial support of this contention, previous research has failed to establish a positive relationship between transformational leadership and psychological empowerment (Martin & Bush, 2006). Secondly, SL has a stronger effect on psychological safety due to the dimensions of forgiveness and interpersonal acceptance, which are not part of transformational leadership. Thus, we propose:

Proposition 2. *The positive effects of leadership on (a) creative self-efficacy and (b) psychological safety are stronger for SL than for transformational leadership.*

4.7.2. Effects of SL on idea generation and exploration

The creative effort is often divided into two types of processes: *idea generation* and *idea exploration*. Idea generation is the process in which individuals come up with new ideas. The effort on idea generation is measured in terms of the number of generated ideas and the number of completed sessions. When there are several sessions, this means that individuals have more opportunities for breakthrough and can make new attempts to generate more ideas. Idea exploration is about the evaluation, exploration, and advancement of generated ideas. Two measures of exploration effort are number of revisions and number of censored ideas. A revision is a change or improvement in generated ideas. Censored ideas are those that have been removed or erased from the list of ideas. Dual-process theories of creativity suggest that *idea generation* is the mechanism responsible for the originality of ideas, whereas *idea exploration* is responsible for the relevancy dimension (Sowden et al., 2015). The quality of ideas is of course also important on marketer creativity, but little or no research exists here.

We suggest that the internal motivation and autonomy of followers primarily have positive effects on idea generation (number of ideas and number of sessions). Internal motivation and autonomy create sense of

joy and freedom in the generation of ideas that probably stimulate followers to spend more time on idea generation and thus increase the number of ideas and sessions. According to the *reflective-impulsive theory of social behavior*, intrinsic motivation activates positive affect in individuals, which in return activates cognitive processes of the impulsive system (Strack & Deutsch, 2004), the system responsible for idea generation and originality of ideas (Sowden et al., 2015).

The two other psychological mediators probably have positive effects on both idea generation and exploration. The belief in one's own creative capabilities (creative self-efficacy) likely increases the motivation to keep on generating ideas as well as the willingness to revise ideas (see Gong et al., 2009). The expectation of mastery increases the expected return on extra efforts and extra revisions. Previous research suggests that psychological safety is positively associated with creativity in terms of idea generation (Chaudhary & Panda, 2018). We believe that psychological safety may lead to less censoring of odd ideas and thus increase the number of ideas. Followers who feel safe will not fear the negative reactions of leaders. They may possess some of the same courage as their servant leaders (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Also, these followers are likely to revise and improve the relevance of odd or irrelevant ideas rather than removing them. Thus psychological safety may positively affect both idea generation and exploration.

Proposition 3. *Internal motivation and autonomy have positive effects on idea generation (number of ideas and sessions), whereas creative self-efficacy and psychological safety have positive effects on both idea generation and exploration (number of revisions and censored ideas).*

How the operations of the processes function in Fig. 3 on the quality of creativity need further consideration too.

4.7.3. Effects of SL on the originality and relevance of marketing ideas

Both SL and transformational leadership are expected to positively influence the four psychological mediators in the model (Fig. 3), whereas transactional leadership is not. Thus, we propose that the former styles of leadership will have stronger effects on the originality and relevance of marketing ideas than transactional leadership. Finally, we suggest that SL is more effective in creating original and relevant marketing ideas than transformational leadership. The main reason for this is the stronger impact of SL on two of the psychological mediators: creative self-efficacy and psychological safety, which stimulate both the originality and relevance of marketing ideas. Thus, we propose:

Proposition 4. *Compared to transactional leadership, both SL and transformational leadership have stronger positive effects on the originality and relevance of marketing ideas.*

Proposition 5. *SL has stronger positive effects than transformational leadership on the originality and relevance of marketing ideas.*

5. Limitation

In the search for relevant papers, we used the SCOPUS database and the ABS indexed journal list because we wanted to identify a comprehensive list of high-quality marketing papers on SL. SCOPUS is the most comprehensive database of scientific peer-reviewed literature and includes 36,377 titles. The ABS journal list helped us identify the high-quality journals within the marketing discipline. Thus, we expect that the most important papers in the best marketing journals are included, but we do not claim that our review comprises all published papers on SL and marketing. A complete review would include more databases, such as the ABDC (the journal quality list of the Australian Business Deans' Council) and the Web of Science (SCI, SSCI, ESCI).

6. Conclusion

Most organizations in the world today follow implicitly at least, a logic of transactional leadership, where reward and punishment are the main motivators for getting workers to do what managers want them to do. Such an approach is an ancient one, rooted in primitive conceptions of human nature. Business, since the dawn of industrialization, has been guided especially by economic assumptions of why workers act as they do. But we would argue that economic theory is incomplete at best and flawed at worst. Economic man is driven by personal desires and follows a mentality of giving as little as possible to get as much as possible. People are regarded primarily as self-interested and selfish. Notions such as altruism, empathy, kindness, other directedness, and social welfare have little place in economics. It is no wonder that Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman said that stockholder satisfaction is the primary rationale for firms, and other issues such as corporate social responsibility should not play a central role in business.

Transformational and SL follow a very different model of human nature. Human happiness and well-being of multiple stakeholders, not merely stockholders, are important foci in both transformational and SL. So the welfare of workers, management, customers, suppliers, the environment, and greater society are taken into account. Unlike economic theory in general, and transactional leadership in particular, which view human behavior from the perspective of self-interest of individual actors, transformational leadership and SL take a more holistic view of human behavior, where joint satisfaction amongst stakeholders are primary concerns. Rather than self-interest governing human behavior, mutual interest and shared values and outcomes are explicitly taken into account.

SL, in particular, operates specifically on a value system where giving to others, so as to faster their happiness and well-being, as well as to promote shared welfare (e.g., organizational goals, social responsibility, citizenship behaviors) is a fundamental principle. Research on SL is in its beginning stages in marketing. But it fits well the rationale and creed of modern marketing to elevate social exchange and mutual welfare rather than rely on the presumed second-order effects of economic exchange, where individuals pursuing self-interest leads to the best outcomes for all as a matter of faith. SL builds into its principles the role of joint-interests and shared gains, without denying that people at times can be driven by self-interest. But self-interest, under SL, is one of a number of constraints that is taken into account or jointly negotiated, while pursuing a more socially constructed mutual path to stakeholder welfare inherent in SL precepts.

Of many benefits of SL, we focused on creativity. SL can lead to employee happiness and fulfillment through fostering creativity. It also can enhance the quality and quantity of organizational goals and outcomes. Moreover, creativity potentially enriches all the linkages to stakeholders and benefits all parties engaged in social exchange. The role of SL in worker, firm, and stakeholder creativity, performance, and welfare is a highly promising pathway for future research.

Finally, we wish to mention an understudied area of research that fits well the spirit of SL, but not transactional and transformational

leadership, and can promote creativity and other positive outcomes for organizations, marketing functions, customers, and workers. As countries increase in size and complexity, diversity often happens in ethnic, racial, political, gender orientation, generational, and other ways. SL values the welfare of all workers, but leadership can be challenged by diversity and how to cope with it. Research is needed into how justice and mercy can be fostered in organizations so as to elevate all that is good in people.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Mohammad Zarei: Writing – original draft, Conceptualization. **Magne Supphellen:** Writing – original draft, Supervision, Conceptualization. **Richard P. Bagozzi:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Conceptualization.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Article 3: Effects of Leadership on Marketing Creativity: A Comparative Study of Four Leadership Styles

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- Under revision at the *Journal of Business Research* (ABS 3)¹².
- An early version received the Best Paper Award at the *Johan Arndt Conference*, Bergen, Norway, May 2023.

¹² The article is subjected to some changes according to the journal format, therefore it is slightly different in format and content from the original version of the manuscript presented in the thesis.

Effects of Leadership on Marketing Creativity:

A Comparative Study of Four Leadership Styles

Abstract

Creativity is a major success factor for marketing organizations, but little is known about the relative impact of different styles of leadership on marketing creativity. In this experimental study, we use a sample of 526 marketing professionals to test hypotheses on the comparative effects of four leadership styles on the originality and relevancy of slogan ideas for a new brand. The results show that active leadership styles (servant, transformational, and transactional) stimulate more creativity than passive leadership (*laissez-faire*). Among the active leadership styles, we find that *servant leadership* is a stronger predictor of marketing creativity than transformational and transactional leadership styles. Tests of alternative mechanisms show that *psychological safety* is a significant mediator of the superior effect of servant leadership. No significant differences are observed between transformational and transactional leadership. Robustness checks suggest that the findings are not sensitive to age, gender, education or culture.

Keywords: Marketing creativity; Servant leadership; Transformational leadership; Transactional leadership; *Laissez-faire* leadership; Psychological safety

1. Introduction

The profitability of brands is strongly influenced by the ability of marketing managers to keep their brands attractive and differentiated from the competition (Swaminathan et al. 2022). The level of attractiveness is, in turn, dependent on the creativity of marketing programs (Andrews and Smith 1996; Brodherson et al. 2017; Im and Workman 2004). On a continuous basis, marketing managers need to develop and improve market offerings and communications to keep their brands interesting, relevant, and differentiated in the mind and heart of target group members. This need for continuous improvement and innovation has increased the current interest of researchers and practitioners in the development of *marketing agility*, that is, systems and cultures that facilitate rapid iterations between insights on changes in the marketplace and improvements of the marketing mix (Kalaighnam et al. 2021). Creativity is the fuel of marketing agility. Thus, stimulating creativity is a key leadership objective for marketing managers.

Previous studies have explored and tested several determinants of creative behavior in marketing organizations. Andrews and Smith (1996) summarized the findings in three categories of antecedents of marketing program creativity: (1) individual input factors (such as knowledge of the marketing environment, diversity of experience and diversity of education), (2) motivational factors (e.g., intrinsic motivation and risk taking), and (3) contextual factors (such as time pressure and planning process formalization). Other researchers group the determinants of marketing creativity into two broad categories: (a) individual (e.g., skills, personality) and (b) organizational factors (training, incentives, support systems, etc.), see Althuizen et al. (2016). We focus on an organizational factor, which so far has received modest attention in research on marketing creativity: The leadership style of the supervisors of marketing professionals.

In the broader management literature, however, there are many studies of the relationship between leadership and creativity, but the findings are equivocal (for reviews, see Hughes et al. 2018; Lee et al. 2018). Hughes et al. (2018) suggest that the use of limited or inappropriate research designs is a major reason for the lack of clear results:

“It is unclear which leadership approaches are the strongest predictors (of creativity) because the literature has largely failed to explain the relative contribution of different leadership variables” (p. 564, Hughes et al. 2018, emphasis added).

To explain the relative contribution of different leadership styles, we need experimental designs (Podsakoff and Podsakoff, 2019), which is rare in this stream of research (Hughes et al. 2018). Another limitation of previous research is the frequent use of subjective scales of employee creativity, either rated by the follower or the supervisor. This approach is usually less valid than expert (or customer) ratings of real creative outputs (e.g., Ng and Feldman, 2012). A third limitation of previous research on leadership and creativity is the low number of studies on the “positive” styles of leadership: ethical, authentic, and servant leadership (SL; Hughes et al. 2018). Recently, marketing researchers have suggested that SL could be a stronger predictor of marketing creativity than the more established styles of leadership, such as transformational and transactional (Zarei et al. 2022). They presented a conceptual model and several propositions about the (superior) effects of SL on marketing creativity. In the current study, we test these and other predictions in a randomized experiment comparing the effects of SL to those of transformational, transactional, and laissez faire leadership on real marketing creativity in terms of slogan ideas for a new brand. Respondents were marketing professionals, and the raters of creativity were marketing experts. Five main contributions are offered:

Firstly, we present the first experimental evidence of comparative leadership effects on marketing creativity, and the findings confirm that active leadership is critically important (compared to laissez-faire leadership (LF)). Thus, more research is called for on the role and

effects of leadership in stimulating marketing creativity. Second, we show for the first time, based on experimental evidence, that SL is a stronger predictor of creativity than transformational leadership (TFL) and transactional leadership (TRA). Previous research has found significant effects of TFL on creativity and has suggested that this style of leadership is the most conducive of creative behavior (see Gong et al. 2009; Lee et al. 2018). Our findings show that SL is more effective than transformational in stimulating marketing creativity. This is a contribution not only to the marketing literature, but also to the broader literature on leadership and creative behavior. Third, we offer insights on the mechanisms explaining the superior effect of SL. Specifically, we find that psychological safety is a significant mediator of the superior effect of SL on marketing creativity. Fourth, our findings challenge the proposition in previous research that TFL is superior to TRA in predicting creative behavior (e.g., MacKenzie et al. 2001). While both styles are more effective than LF (no leadership), we observe no significant differences between TFL and TRA styles. Finally, we show that the effects (and non-effects) of this study are not sensitive to age, gender, education, or culture. The findings have important implications for recruitment and development of marketing managers, for marketing education, and future research on marketing creativity.

2. Theory and hypotheses

We first define marketing creativity and then discuss the findings and limitations of previous research before developing hypotheses on the comparative effects of different leadership styles on marketing creativity.

2.1. Marketing creativity

Creativity is often defined in relation to innovation, where creativity refers to *idea generation*, and innovation to the actual transformation of ideas into better procedures, practices, or

products (Anderson et al. 2014; Hughes et al. 2018). Thus, creativity is the basis for innovation. In addition to the activity of idea generation, creativity refers to the *originality* and *relevance* of the output of such activity (Amabile 1996; Mumford and Simonton 1997; Runco 2004). Including relevancy as a dimension of the concept means that creativity is construed as a goal-directed activity. Novel ideas should be appropriate for reaching the specific goals, such as improving a product or service, defining a persuasive message, or coming up with a new brand slogan. Highly creative ideas score high on both originality and relevancy. Such ideas are the premier candidates for marketing innovation. On this basis, we define *marketing creativity* as *the generation of ideas about specified improvement-goals for the marketing mix or related support activities* (e.g., procedures for increasing marketing agility, market analysis, etc.), *and the originality and relevancy of the output of this activity*.

The level of originality and relevancy can be evaluated from the perspective of marketing professionals or the perspective of the customer. Research shows that consumer perception of creativity is also decided by the interaction of originality and relevancy (Smith et al. 2007). In the current study, we focus on the roles of marketing managers and how their leadership styles influence marketing creativity. The question is: What styles of leadership enhance or stifle marketing creativity?

2.2. Limitations of previous research

A recent meta-analysis of research on leadership effects on creativity in the general management literature showed that leadership is indeed important and may enhance or hinder creativity (Hughes et al. 2018). TRA, TFL, and LMX (relational leadership, see Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995) were the styles most frequently addressed in previous research. The number of studies on the effects of newer, positive styles of leadership, such as authentic leadership, empowering leadership, and SL were lower, but rising. For most leadership styles the meta-

analysis showed a broad range of positive correlations with creativity. The most frequent mediators identified in previous research were intrinsic motivation, empowerment, creative self-efficacy, and leader identification. Though most studies on each leadership style showed positive correlations, there were also examples of negative correlations. Moreover, the intervals of correlations were relatively homogeneous across leadership styles. The authors suggest that “*the homogeneity is likely a reflection of construct proliferation and construct redundancy within leadership research*” (Hughes et al. 2018, p. 554, emphasis added). This is a known problem in leadership research (see Shaffer et al. 2016). In addition to conceptual overlap or redundancy, the use of multi-item scales together with many other variables, creates a risk for respondent fatigue and shallow or careless responding. In this context, responses to different leadership scales may simply represent overall attitudes toward the leader rather than specific leadership behaviors (Lee et al. 2015). Thus, Hughes et al. (2018) recommend that future research on leadership effects should use more lean and precise measures of the unique aspects of leadership styles and compare the effects of different styles within studies, using experimental designs.

Within marketing research, the effects of leadership on marketing creativity seems to be an overlooked topic. A recent review of the effects of SL on marketing variables, did not identify any studies on SL-effects on marketing creativity (Zarei et al. 2022). We are neither aware of any studies of the effects of other leadership styles on marketing creativity in journals listed in the Academic Journal Guide, chartered by the Association of Business Schools. However, there is a long-standing research tradition on the effects of leadership styles within the sales management literature. Some of the variables addressed in this research could be related to, or even conducive of, creative behavior. Typically, this research has focused on the *transactional (TRA)* and *transformational (TRF)* leadership styles (e.g., Bass 1994; Comer et al. 1995; Dubinsky et al. 1995; Humphreys 2002; MacKenzie et al. 2001). TRA is based on

close follow-up routines of subordinates and clear rules for rewards and punishment (c.f., Avolio and Bass, 2004). This style of leadership can be described as a give-and-take transaction process. Early research on TRA showed several positive effects on salesperson attitudes and role perception, but weaker effects on sales performance (MacKenzie et al. 2001). Unlike transactional leaders, transformational leaders are not primarily concerned with control, reward, and punishment. Rather, they focus on how to inspire followers and create identification through articulating a purpose or vision, fostering acceptance of group goals, providing individual support, and intellectual stimulation (Howell and Avolio, 1993; MacKenzie et al. 2001). Previous research has shown stronger effects of transformational- than TRA on sales performance and organizational citizenship behavior (MacKenzie et al. 2001). However, more recent studies reveal that TRA sometimes lead to better sales performance than transformational. For instance, transactional was found to be more effective than TFL in improving sales performance after the 2020-2021 COVID pandemic (Alavi et al. 2022).

There has been an increase lately in studies of the effects of a third leadership style: *servant leadership (SL)* (for a review, see Zarei et al. 2022). SL overlaps to some extent with transformational (Bass and Avolio, 1994) but is different in terms of the leader's primary focus. Servant leaders focus on the growth and development of their followers, whereas transformational leaders primarily focus on organizational objectives (Stone et al. 2004). The research on SL has shown that this style of leadership has positive effects on several important variables in sales management research, including proactive sales behavior (Varela et al. 2019), sales job satisfaction (Yavas et al. 2015), sales performance (Peesker et al. 2019; Schwepker and Schultz 2015), salespeople's self-efficacy (Bande et al. 2016), and salespeople's intrinsic motivation (Bande et al. 2016). In sum, previous research shows that several styles of leadership have positive effects on major variables within sales management research, but like leadership research in general (Hughes et al. 2018), *the relative contribution* of different styles of

leadership is unknown because there are very few experimental within-study comparisons of styles.

Some researchers have even suggested that subordinates may perform better with no leadership at all, when allowed to work independently without leadership interference. For instance, Yang (2015) discussed the potential benefits of *laissez faire leadership (LF)*, sometimes termed “absent leadership” (Yang 2015, p. 1246). With this style of leadership, superiors allow followers to do their jobs with minimal oversight or leadership involvement. Followers make their own decisions, and leaders are reluctant to intervene (Avolio and Bass, 2004). According to Yang (2015), this kind of leadership may provide a strong sense of autonomy and may stimulate independence and self-efficacy among experienced followers. On the other hand, several studies show negative effects of LF leadership on follower behavior, such as lower effort, performance, and job satisfaction (for a review, see Krasikova et al. 2013). In the current experimental study, we included LF leadership as a control group condition. This made it possible to test not only the relative effects of different active leadership styles, but also the effects of active versus passive leadership on marketing creativity.

2.3. Comparative leadership effects on marketing creativity: Hypotheses

We focus on four major leadership styles in this study: SL, TFL, TRA, and LF. TFL and TRA are the most frequently studied styles of leadership. LF is included as a non-leadership control group condition, and SL is the “new challenger” promoted as particularly conducive to marketing creativity (Zarei et al. 2022). Following brief descriptions of the four leadership styles, we develop hypotheses on their comparative effects on marketing creativity. A conceptual model of the relationships tested in the study is presented in Figure 1.

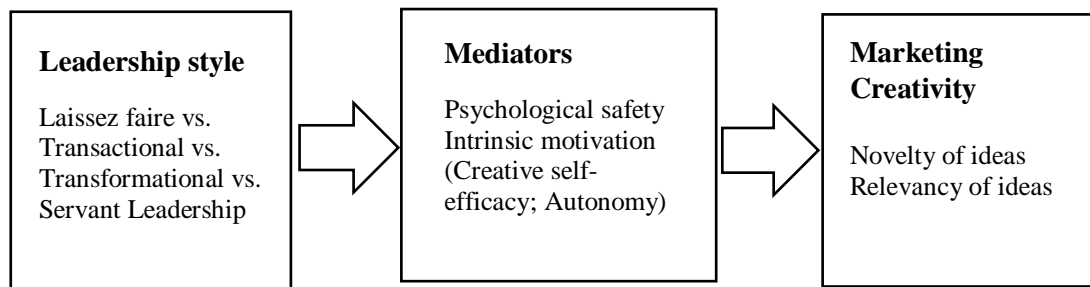


Figure 1. Conceptual model

LF is often termed “non-leadership”, “absent leadership”, or “hands-off leadership”, and is the most passive style of leadership described in the literature (Bass 1985; Yang 2015). LF leaders avoid taking any leadership action, even in the face of potentially severe problems. Subordinates are given full freedom in performing tasks and solving problems. LF does not simply reflect low levels of other styles of leadership, such as TFL or TRA. Rather, LF is a distinct type of passive leader behavior (e.g., Antonakis et al. 2003).

TRA leaders have a transactional perspective on the leader-follower relationship: they offer benefits in exchange for work effort (Bass 1985). Such leaders develop clear rules and systems, monitor behavior, and respond to deviances from expectations by using various types of rewards (praise, recognition, bonuses, etc.) and punishment (e.g., correction, criticism, cut in bonuses, etc.) (Howell and Avolio 1993; MacKenzie et al. 2001). The logic or underlying mechanism of TRA is *instrumental compliance* (MacKenzie et al. 2001); transactional leaders focus on stimulating and controlling behavior without much concern for the psychological needs of followers.

In contrast, TRF leaders inspire subordinates to identify with, and internalize, their visions and objectives (Bass 1985; MacKenzie et al. 2001). TRF leaders thus transform and align the perspectives and motivation of followers. This transformation is determined by four behavioral characteristics (Bass 1985): (1) charisma (or idealized influence), (2) inspirational motivation, (3) intellectual stimulation, and (4) individualized consideration. *Charisma*

(idealized influence) concerns the extent to which the leader behaves in favorable ways that cause followers to identify with him or her. *Inspirational motivation* refers to a leader's ability to articulate and promote an exciting vision or purpose and thus energize followers. *Intellectual stimulation* is about facilitating rethinking, learning and the discovery of new perspectives on how to solve challenges, and *individualized consideration* refers to mentoring of each subordinate in order to develop their professional potential (Antonakis et al. 2003; Bass 1985).

The last type of leadership addressed in this study is SL (Greenleaf 1970; 1977). According to Eva et al. (2019), SL has three defining characteristics (p. 114): (1) an other-oriented approach to leadership (2) manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of follower individual needs and interests, and (3) outward reorienting of leaders' concern for self towards concern for others within the organization and the larger community. Spears (1995) identified 10 characteristics of servant leaders based on Greenleaf's writings: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community. Despite some overlapping aspects (Bass, 1985), SL is both conceptually and empirically distinct from TRF (Hoch et al. 2018). The main conceptual difference concerns the primary motivation of the leader (Eva et al. 2019). SL leaders focus primarily on the development and well-being of the follower. The motivation is to serve followers in developing their full potential, both personally and professionally. TRF leaders are primarily concerned with individual development as a means of achieving organizational objectives (Stone et al. 2004). This means that SL leaders have a stronger and more altruistic commitment for the well-being and growth of their followers than TRF leaders (Eva et al. 2019).

So, which of the four styles of leadership has the stronger impact on marketing creativity? The first prediction is that the three active styles of leadership (SL, TRF, and TRA) will outperform passive leadership (LF) in stimulating marketing creativity. The sum of previous research on the effects of LF suggests that, overall, LF has negative consequences on follower

motivation, effort, and job satisfaction (Krasikova et al. 2013). For specific segments of highly independent and experienced followers, with a trusting relationship to their leader, LF could be equally or even more effective than the active styles of leadership because this segment may thrive under the conditions of extensive autonomy and independence provided by LF (Yang 2015). Most followers, however, would need more direction, support, and encouragement from their leader. Moreover, creative work in marketing functions and advertising agencies is characterized by high pressure and frequent presentations and evaluations of creative ideas by supervisors (see Kilgour et al. 2020). In this context, marketers with LF leaders will likely experience more uncertainty and less psychological safety than marketers reporting to leaders with more active leadership styles (see Rao-Nicholson et al. 2016). Uncertainty and lack of psychological safety hamper creativity behavior (see Hughes et al. 2018). Thus, we expect the following hypothesis to hold:

Hypothesis 1: Active styles of leadership (i.e., servant, transformational, and transactional) have stronger positive effects on marketing creativity than laissez-faire leadership.

When comparing the different active styles of leadership, Zarei et al. (2022) suggest that SL is more effective than TFL in stimulating marketing creativity. We also expect that SL is more effective than TRA. When comparing the effect of these leadership styles, we need to keep in mind the context of creative work in marketing functions. We have mentioned that such work is frequently evaluated by supervisors. Creative work is also personal. The outcome of creative processes is associated with the self-concept and the identity of its maker (Jaussi et al. 2007) and being creative is a significant aspect of marketers' identity. Therefore, when supervisors evaluate the outcome, creative people are psychologically vulnerable: the evaluation affects the

perceived ability and identity of the creative person (see West et al. 2008). In this context, we expect SL to stimulate more marketing creativity than TFL and TRA for two main reasons.

First, we expect SL to create a higher level of *psychological safety* in followers than TFL and TRA. Psychological safety refers to the beliefs among employees about the consequences of interpersonal risk-taking in the workplace (Edmondson and Lei 2014). When the level of psychological safety is high, employees expect colleagues and leaders to have positive intentions, and they feel respected and appreciated. They feel free to be themselves, and to experiment and take risks (Edmondson 1999; Edmondson and Lei 2014). Psychological safety is a known determinant of creative behavior (see Eva et al. 2019) and seems particularly relevant to our context, with frequent evaluations of creative outcomes and significant identity involvement. Psychological safety will likely influence both the number of ideas generated and the willingness to share ideas. Research on creativity inspired by the reflective-impulsive model (Strack and Deutsch 2004), shows that effective idea generation requires activation of the impulsive system (Sowden et al. 2015). Unlike the reflective system, which processes information in a sequential fashion, looking for logical connections between concepts, the impulsive system works in a self-configured way; governed by automatic rules, such as spreading activation and associative processing (Strack and Deutsch 2004; Strack and Deutsch 2006). Activation of a certain memory element activates clusters of other co-occurred elements, without consideration of their logical association. This fundamental feature of the impulsive system may lead to the activation of novel and original thoughts (Dijksterhuis and Meurs 2006; Sowden et al. 2015). The point here is that the impulsive system is more likely activated when individuals feel safe and experience positive affect (Strack and Deutsch 2004). Thus, we expect that, due to the genuine commitment of SL-leaders to followers' growth and well-being, followers have more positive associations to their leaders and to the context of reporting to such leaders, which in turn makes followers freer and more emotionally energized to engage their

impulsive systems in creative marketing tasks. TRF leaders likely trigger lower levels of psychological safety in followers than SL leaders because TRF leaders' interpersonal involvement is motivated primarily by organizational objectives (Stone et al. 2004). Even lower levels of psychological safety are expected for TRA-leaders, who are not as much concerned with the psychological needs of followers as are SL and TRA leaders, but rather focus on control, reward, and punishment (Bass 1985).

The second reason why SL may stimulate more marketing creativity than TRF and TRA regards its impact on *intrinsic motivation*. Whereas psychological safety concerns emotions and expectations about the reporting of creative outcomes, intrinsic motivation refers to the creative activity as such. Previous research shows that both SL and TRF may stimulate intrinsic motivation (Eva et al. 2019), but the relative impact is not clear. We suggest that SL will create more intrinsic motivation for creative marketing tasks than TRF and that this effect will partly explain the superior effect of SL on creativity. Intrinsic motivation concerns the level of personal interest and joy associated with an activity (Deci and Ryan 1985; Ryan and Deci 2000). Whereas extrinsic motivation comes from the expectation of external rewards (such as praise or bonuses), intrinsic motivation comes from the experience of performing an activity itself (internal rewards) (Ryan and Deci 2017). The relationship to leaders may influence the intrinsic motivation associated with creative tasks. When supervisors show empathy, recognition, and respect, and give thoughtful feedback on creative ideas, followers are more likely to associate creative tasks with positive affect and develop intrinsic motivation. We expect this effect to be stronger for SL leaders than for TRF leaders. Like SL-leaders, TRF leaders invest time and effort in giving useful feedback on creative outcomes, but TRF leaders will attend less to the emotional reaction and well-being of followers than SL leaders (see Eva et al. 2019; Stone et al. 2004). Thus, TRF leaders may overlook and fail to handle signs of negative emotions, such as dissatisfaction, disappointment, and frustration. They may also to a lesser extent than SL-

leaders confirm and share positive follower emotions related to the creative process and its outcome. The level of positive affect associated with the creative tasks will therefore be lower for TRF than SL leaders.

TRA focuses explicitly on external rewards and punishment and is not expected to stimulate as much intrinsic motivation as SL leadership. Over time, TRA may contribute to a sense of mastery of creative tasks (creative self-efficacy) but via extrinsic motivation (see Beauchamp et al. 2007), and the higher level of self-efficacy may in turn stimulate intrinsic motivation. However, this indirect effect of TRA on intrinsic motivation is expected to be low, at least in the short run. Based on the discussion above, we suggest the follow hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2. The effect of servant leadership on marketing creativity is significantly stronger than the effects of (a) transformational, (b) transactional leadership.

Hypothesis 3. The stronger effects of SL on marketing creativity (compared to transformational and transactional leadership), are mediated by (a) psychological safety, and (b) intrinsic motivation.

3. Method

3.1. Sample and procedure

The sample for the study consisted of 526 Iranian marketing professionals. Marketers in companies all over the country were contacted via membership lists (emails) of national marketing associations. Marketers on the lists were invited to participate and to distribute a link to the study together with a brief description of the purpose to their marketing colleagues. Participants received a gift card via email worth 1.4 USD for completing the study. In all, 2097 individuals clicked on the study link, and 526 completed the study (25.08%). The

average age of the participants was 34.19 (SD = 9.65). 38.73% were female, and 58.38% males (2.89% “other”). In terms of education, 28.24% had an associate degree, 23.6% had a bachelor's degree, 24.76% a master's degree and 23.40% a doctoral degree. On average, participants had 10.31 years of marketing experience (SD = 8.67) and represented a variety of industries: finance and insurance (23.19%), manufacturing (18.25%), internet services (10.08%), health care (8.17%), food industry (5.51%), higher education (5.32%), energy (3.99%), fashion (3.99%), cultural services (3.42%), advertising (3.23%) and (14.85% “other”).

We used a randomized between-subjects design to test the hypotheses. Respondents who clicked on the link and went on to complete the study, were randomly assigned to one of the four leadership conditions. Like previous experimental research on leadership, we used “imaginative scenarios” to manipulate leadership style (De Cremer 2006; Dierendonck et al. 2014). Participants were asked to imagine working for a company that was about to launch a new product into the local market: a new chewing gum based on natural ingredients (no additives). The creative task at hand was to develop slogan ideas for this new product. In performing this task, they were asked to imagine working under a supervisor and reporting their ideas to this person. The subsequent description of the supervisor contained the leadership manipulation. Descriptions focused on the core dimensions of each leadership style (see Appendix 8). After the leadership manipulation, respondents wrote down slogan ideas. There was no time limit on the creative task, but respondents could not proceed with the study and then go back later to add more ideas. On average, participants reported 6.48 ideas and dedicated 2.93 minutes to the idea-generation process. After the creative task, participants responded to questions on the leadership style of the supervisor (manipulation check). We followed the lead of Van Dierendonck et al. (2014) and used three core items from established scales to measure each leadership style. For SL we used three items from Ehrhart’s (2004)

scale (Cronbach's alpha = .91). TRA and TRF were operationalized with items from the scales developed by Podsakoff et al. (1990) (Cronbach's alphas are .80 and .85, respectively). Finally, for LF we used the same items as Van Dierendonck et al. (2014) (Cronbach's alpha = .90). The leadership scales were employed as a manipulation check only.

3.2. Measures

Table 1 describes the measures used in this study and the indicators of construct validity and reliability. We used 5-point Likert scales for all scaled measures. The overall fit of the measurement model was satisfactory: $\chi^2(247) = 277.23$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 1.122$; RMSEA = 0.017; SRMR = 0.028; CFI = 0.995; TLI = 0.994 (see Hu & Bentler 1999; Kenny, 2020).

Mediators. Following Guchait et al. (2014) we used three items from Edmondson's scale to measure psychological safety (Edmondson 1999). For intrinsic motivation we used three items from Gagné et al.'s (2010) Motivation at Work Scale. In addition to the two mediators addressed in Hypothesis 3, we wanted to test two alternative mediators suggested by Zarei et al. (2022): *autonomy* and *creative self-efficacy*. Like Kim et al. (2009), we used three items from the Idaszak and Drasgow's (1987) scale to measure autonomy. Creative self-efficacy was assessed with four items from the Tierney and Farmer (2002) scale, the same items as used by DiLiello and Houghton (2008). In Table 1 we observe acceptable discriminant validity and reliability for these measures. AVEs are above .51 and larger than the squared terms of the correlations. Cronbach's alphas are above .75.

Creativity was rated by two marketing experts following the procedure of Diedrich et al. (2015). The experts had master's degrees in business and several years of marketing experience. After an initial briefing about the company, the product, and the concepts of relevancy and originality, the experts rated the originality and relevancy of a few slogan ideas and discussed discrepancies in the responses to form a joint understanding of the two

dimensions of creativity. Both originality and relevancy were measured by two items, see Table 1 (Diedrich et al. 2015). Next, the experts rated all slogan ideas on both dimensions. The experts were blind to the purpose of the study. The measures of originality and relevancy showed acceptable discriminant validity; AVEs are .70 and .69, respectively – both higher than squared terms of the correlations. The internal consistency reliability scores are also high: Cronbach's alphas were .83 for originality and .82 for relevancy. In practice, managers focus on the most original and relevant ideas. Therefore, for each participant, we registered the ideas with the highest scores on originality (Max Originality), and relevance (Max Relevance). Creativity was measured in two ways: Max Creativity which is the highest average score of the four items measuring originality and relevancy across ideas, and Average Creativity which is the average combined score across ideas for each individual. These measures of creativity were not included in the measurement model but in the subsequent structural equation models.

Control variables. We included several exogeneous variables that may influence the effects of leadership styles. First, because some studies have shown that the effects of leadership styles can be sensitive to culture (see Lee et al. 2018), we included measures of power distance and individualism/collectivism. These two dimensions are important for describing the Iranian culture (e.g., Javidan and Dastmalchian 2003). We also included measures of gender, age, education, and marketing tenure.

Common method variance. We ran the Harman's single factor test to check for common method variance (Podsakoff et al. 2003). The results of unrotated principal component factor analysis suggested that it is not sufficient to use a single factor to represent the data. While the suggested seven-factor solution explained 64% of the total variance, the first and largest component explained only 22%. We also ran a CFA in which we included a single unmeasured latent method factor (see Ruge et al. 2021). The unmeasured latent factor

accounted for less than 1% of the variance, indicating that common method variance is not a serious problem in this study.

Table 1. Construct measures, factor loadings, AVE and reliabilities of the variables

Constructs and measurement items	Factor loadings (Standardized)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Composite reliability (CR)	Construct Reliability (Cronbach's alpha)
Originality (highest scores; ORI, scored by a panel of judges; Diedrich et al., 2015)		.70	.82	.829
This idea is less common.	.853			
This idea given by a few people.	.818			
Relevancy (highest scores; REL, scored by a panel of judges; Diedrich et al., 2015)		.69	.82	.818
This idea is feasible.	.864			
This idea solves the problem.	.797			
Intrinsic motivation (IM, Gagné et al., 2010)		.79	.92	.922
I enjoyed my task very much.	.930			
I had fun doing it.	.877			
This task brought me moments of pleasure.	.857			
Autonomy (AU, Idaszak & Drasgow, 1987)		.59	.81	.817
I had almost complete responsibility for deciding how and when the task was done.	.741			
I had considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I did the task.	.799			
I had a chance to use my personal initiative and judgment in carrying out the task.	.758			
Creative self-efficacy (CSE, Tierney & Farmer, 2002)		.73	.91	.917
I felt that I am good at generating novel ideas.	.851			
I had confidence in my ability to solve problems creatively.	.877			
I had a knack for further developing the ideas of others..	.843			
I was good at finding creative ways to solve problems.	.844			
Psychological safety (PS, Edmondson, 1999)		.61	.82	.822
If you made a mistake with this supervisor, it would often be held against you.	.869			
This supervisor was able to bring up problems and tough issues.	.682			
This supervisor sometimes could reject me or others for being different.	.778			
Power distance (Yoo et al., 2011)		.61	.89	.889
People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions.	.818			
People in higher positions should not ask the opinions of people in lower positions too frequently	.780			
People in higher positions should avoid social interaction with people in lower positions.	.837			
People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions.	.731			
People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions.	.735			
Collectivism (Yoo et al., 2011)		.51	.76	.753
Individuals should stick with the group even through difficulties	.627			
Group welfare is more important than individual rewards.	.795			
Group success is more important than individual success.	.709			

4. Results

4.1. Manipulation checks and descriptives

As a manipulation check, we ran four ANOVAs, one for each leadership style, across conditions, see Table 2. The table shows that the manipulation of leadership style was successful: in each condition the score is significantly higher for the manipulated leadership style (all p 's < .001). The 526 participants reported a total of 1.733 slogan ideas (i.e., 3.29 ideas per person).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and one-way ANOVA (manipulation check)

Condition	Servant leadership score		Laissez-faire leadership score		Transactional leadership score		Transformational leadership score	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Servant leadership	4.14	1.04	1.95	.92	2.93	.95	3.82	.69
Laissez-faire leadership	2.44	1.13	3.77	1.09	3.30	.73	2.71	.96
Transactional leadership	3.12	1.33	2.57	.88	3.73	1.02	3.29	.90
Transformational leadership	3.73	.77	2.30	.86	3.24	.83	4.17	.88
One-way ANOVA	F (3, 522) = 62.09 $p < .001$		F (3, 518) = 94.43 $p < .001$		F (3, 512) = 17.63 $p < .001$		F (3, 517) = 71.83 $p < .001$	

Means and standard deviations for dependent and mediator variables across experimental conditions (leadership styles) are shown in Table 3. There are several interesting differences between conditions. We attend to these differences in the following tests of hypotheses.

Table 3. Correlation matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Intrinsic motivation	.79							
2 Autonomy	.43***	.59						
3 Creative self-efficacy	.54***	.25***	.73					
4 Psychological safety	.37***	.36***	.24***	.61				
5 Power distance	-.11*	.02	-.12*	-.03	.61			
6 Collectivism	.12*	.18**	.10	.05	.12*	.51		
7 Max Originality	.21***	.10	.21***	.22***	.06	.02	.70	
8 Max Relevancy	.22***	.11*	.20***	.28***	.13*	.11	.68***	.69
Mean	3.74	3.87	3.69	3.16	2.48	4.00	3.36	3.48
SD	1.10	.87	.93	.99	1.10	.70	1.08	1.02

- * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed). The diagonal elements are the square roots of the corresponding AVE scores.

4.2. Test of hypotheses

We used structural equation modeling (SEM) to test the hypotheses on comparative effects of leadership styles on marketing creativity. SEM has several advantages over traditional experimental analyses such as analysis of variance: it is not restricted by the assumption of homogeneity in variances and covariances of the dependent variables across groups, it accounts for measurement error, and allows for a more complete modeling of relations between variables (Bagozzi and Yi 1989). Bootstrapping was used to deal with non-normality and to calculate the standard errors of the indirect effects. Note that in addition to originality and relevancy, Max Creativity (i.e., the highest average score of the four items measuring originality and relevancy across ideas) and Average Creativity (i.e., the average combined score across ideas for each individual) were included as outcome variables in our SEM models. We allowed for correlations between all these outcome variables.

The full structural model including all dependent variables, mediators, and the control variables showed good fit to the data: $\chi^2(484) = 636.397$, $p < .001$; $\chi^2/df = 1.315$; RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) = .027; SRMR (standardized root mean square residual) = .045; CFI (comparative fit index) = .982; TLI (Tucker-Lewis index) = .978. More information about the cut-off values for good fit can be found in Kenney (2015).

4.3. Test of H1: Passive versus active leadership styles

We expected that the three active styles of leadership (SL, TRA, TRF) would stimulate more creativity than the passive LF style of leadership. To test this prediction, we analyzed the effect of leadership style on Maximum Originality, Maximum Relevance, Creativity Max and Creativity Average, using LF as the reference condition, see Table 4. All the path-coefficients in Table 4 are positive and statistically significant ($p < .05$). This means that all the active leadership styles (SL, TRA, TRF) generated more relevant and more original ideas than LF, both in terms of maximum scores and average scores. Thus, H1 is consistently supported.

Table 4. The total effects of leadership styles

Paths	Originality (max.)	Relevancy (max.)	Creativity (max.)	Creativity (mean)
Servant leadership	.43***	.44***	.38***	.27***
Transactional leadership	.21**	.24***	.22***	.21***
Transformational leadership	.14*	.32***	.20***	.16**

Laissez-faire leadership was set as reference group.

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed)

4.4. Test of H2a and H2b: The superior effect of SL

Path coefficients for the effect of SL on marketing creativity compared to TRF and TRA are shown in Table 5. First, we observe that the relative effect of SL vs TRF is positive and significant on Max Originality ($\beta = .294$, $p = 0.000$), Max Creativity ($\beta = .180$, $p = 0.000$), and Average Creativity ($\beta = .107$, $p = 0.039$). The relative effect on Max Relevance is only marginally significant ($\beta = .117$, $p = 0.049$). These findings support H2a.

Table 5. The relative effects of leadership styles

Paths	Originality (max.)	Relevancy (max.)	Creativity (max.)	Creativity (mean)
Servant leadership vs Transformational leadership	.29***	.11*	.18***	.10*
Servant leadership vs Transactional leadership	.22***	.20***	.15**	.05
Transformational leadership vs Transactional leadership	-.06	.08	-.02	-.04

Laissez-faire leadership was set as reference group.

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed)

The relative effect of SL vs TRA is also positive and significant for three out of four creativity variables: Max Originality ($\beta = .227$, $p = 0.000$), Max Relevance ($\beta = .202$, $p = 0.000$), and Max Creativity ($\beta = .158$, $p = 0.002$). The effect on Average Creativity is not significant (Max Originality ($\beta = .058$, $p = 0.262$)). In sum, these findings support H2b.

We did not include hypotheses on the relative effects of TRF vs TRA, but these effects are still interesting because previous research has suggested that TRF is more predictive of creativity than TRA (MacKenzie et al., 2001). The lower part of Table 5 shows the relative effects of TRF vs TRA on the four variables of marketing creativity. None of these effects is significant ($p > .05$).

4.5. Test of H3a and H3b: The mediators

We expected that the stronger effect of SL on marketing creativity (H2a-b) would be mediated by psychological safety (H3a) and intrinsic motivation (H3b). In addition, we included two alternative mediators in the analyses because previous research has suggested that autonomy and self-efficacy may explain the superior effect of SL on marketing creativity (Zarei et al. 2022). Coefficients for the four mediators on the four variables of marketing creativity are found in Tables 6, 7 and 8. The results are shown for each comparison of leadership styles (SL vs. LF, SL vs. TRA, and SL vs. TRF).

Table 6. The mediators of relative effect of servant leadership vs. laissez-faire leadership

Paths	Originality (max.)	Relevancy (max.)	Creativity (max.)	Creativity (mean)
Psychological safety	.042	.063*	.073*	.068*
Intrinsic motivation	.032	.039	.047	.049
Autonomy	-.003	-.005	-.010	-.012
Creative self-efficacy	.035	.010	.027	.041

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

Table 7. The mediators of relative effect of servant leadership vs. transactional leadership

Paths	Originality (max.)	Relevancy (max.)	Creativity (max.)	Creativity (mean)
Psychological safety	.042	.062*	.073*	.068*

Intrinsic motivation	.030	.037	.044	.046
Autonomy	-.005	-.007	-.014	-.019
Creative self-efficacy	.021	.006	.016	.024

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed)

Table 8. The mediators of relative effect of servant leadership vs. transformational leadership

Paths	Originality (max.)	Relevancy (max.)	Creativity (max.)	Creativity (mean)
Psychological safety	.017	.025	.029*	.027
Intrinsic motivation	.011	.014	.016	.017
Autonomy	-.002	-.003	-.005	-.007
Creative self-efficacy	.008	.002	.006	.009

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001 (two-tailed)

The results show that the effects of SL vs LF on Max Creativity and Average Creativity are significantly mediated by psychological safety ($\beta_{\text{Max Creativity}} = .073$, $p=0.012$; $\beta_{\text{Average Creativity}} = .068$, $p=.025$). The mediating effect of psychological safety on Max Relevancy is marginally significant ($\beta = .063$, $p=0.036$), and the effect for Max Originality is non-significant ($\beta = .042$, $p=0.161$). There are no significant effects of the other mediators.

We find a similar pattern of findings for the SL vs. TRA comparison. The effects of SL vs TRA on Max Relevancy, Max Creativity and Average Creativity are significantly mediated by psychological safety ($\beta_{\text{Max Relevancy}} = .062$, $p=0.034$; $\beta_{\text{Max Creativity}} = .073$, $p=0.013$; $\beta_{\text{Average Creativity}} = .068$, $p=0.026$), whereas this mediating effect on Max Originality is non-significant ($\beta = .042$, $p=0.167$). There are no significant effects of the other mediators.

The final analyses of mediators for the superior effect of SL vs. TRF show that psychological safety is a significant mediator of this effect on Max Creativity ($\beta = .029$, $p=0.035$). For two other creativity measures, we find that the mediating effect of psychological safety is marginally significant ($\beta_{\text{Max Relevancy}} = .025$, $p=0.062$; $\beta_{\text{Average Creativity}} = .027$, $p=0.055$).

The mediating effect for Max Originality is not significant ($\beta = .017$, $p = 0.186$). Again, we find no effects of the other mediators. In sum, we find support for the prediction that psychological safety mediates the superior effect of SL on marketing creativity (H3a), but no support for the mediating effect of intrinsic motivation (H3b).

4.6. Test of control variables

To test the impact of the control variables, we compared the paths of the full model to a model with no controls. We observed no significant changes ($p > .05$) in the path coefficients when the control variables were removed, indicating that the findings are not sensitive to age, gender, education, tenure, or culture (power distance or individualism/collectivism).

5. Discussion

The findings in this study indicate that leadership style is an important determinant for marketing creativity. First, our findings confirm that active leadership stimulates marketing creativity: the passive leadership style (LF) caused significantly less original and relevant logo ideas than the active leadership styles (SL, TRF, and TRA). Second, in support of the hypotheses we found that SL facilitates more original and relevant ideas than TRF and TRA, and that this superior effect was mediated through psychological safety. No differences were observed between TRF and TRA. The findings have several implications for theory, practice, and future research.

5.1. Theoretical implications

To our knowledge, this study is the first to compare experimentally the creativity-effects of active leadership styles (SL, TRA, TRF) versus passive leadership (LF). The finding that LF

scored consistently lower than the active styles suggests that creative people in marketing organizations need the active involvement of superiors to perform well on creative tasks. The superior effects of active leadership are also relevant to the broader discussion of active versus passive leadership in the management literature. Recently, Foss and Klein (2022) have warned against the idea of the “bossless company”, that is, companies and functions within companies, with no hierarchies and passive leadership. They argue convincingly that companies need authority and hierarchy to coordinate work and make people thrive. Our findings support this position.

The current study offers the first test of Zarei et al.’s model of leadership-effects on marketing creativity (Zarei et al. 2022). The results partly support the predictions of this model. We found that SL created more original and relevant ideas than TRF and TRA, which is in line with the model. However, only one out of four suggested mediators in the model (psychological safety) was supported in our study (non-supported mediators: intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and creative self-efficacy). The superior effect of SL, mediated by psychological safety, is consistent with the claim in the literature, that a major distinction between SL and TRF is the primary focus of the leader; SL leaders focus primarily on the development and wellbeing of the follower, whereas TRF leaders are primarily concerned with individual development as a means of achieving organizational objectives (Eva et al. 2019; Stone et al. 2004). The superior effect of SL, and the higher level of psychological safety may come from the anticipation of more genuine care and support among followers of SL leaders.

It is premature, however, to conclude that the non-supported mediators are not relevant. More research is needed. Our manipulation of leadership in terms of “imaginative scenarios” mimicked the first impression of a leader early in a working relationship. At this very early stage, psychological safety seems to be the main factor in explaining a superior

effect of SL. The other mediators may play a stronger role later in leader-follower relationships. For instance, the effects of leadership on creative self-efficacy may develop over time, when followers repeatedly observe the outcome of creative tasks (see Tierney and Farmer 2011).

Another prediction of the Zarei et al.'s (2022) model, which is not supported in our study, is the superior effect of TRF over TRA. TRF did not facilitate better slogan ideas than TRA in our study. Together with the superior effect of SL, this finding implies that there is something unique about SL, which is neither found in TRF nor TRA leadership, that makes followers come up with more original and relevant ideas. The mediator analyses indicate that this unique SL factor creates a higher level of psychological safety than TRF and TRA. In line with conceptual discussions of the unique aspects of SL in previous research (see Eva et al. 2019), we suggest that this factor concerns the SL aspects of altruism and genuine care for followers (e.g., empathy). Variables referring to these aspects should be tested as mediators in addition to psychological safety in previous research. The effect sizes for the effects of psychological safety were modest, which means that there are other (related) mediators (and moderators) that may explain the superior effect of SL on marketing creativity.

A final hypothesis for future research is the role of identification with one's supervisor. Similar to identification with one's organization, identification with one's supervisor may have motivational impetus and exist in affective, cognitive, and evaluative forms (e.g., Bergami and Bagozzi 2000). We propose that identification with one's supervisor might moderate the effect of supervisor leadership style on creativity.

The non-finding on the comparative effect of TRF vs. TRA could also be due to the manipulation of leadership in this study. Though imaginative scenarios may trigger relevant beliefs and expectations about TRF leaders, it is likely that the full benefits of TRA, such as

follower inspiration, identification, and learning (Bass 1985) typically evolve over time through repeated interactions with TRF leaders (see Lee et al. 2018).

5.2. Implications for marketing management, training and education

The findings have implications for recruitment and development of marketing managers.

First, marketing organizations looking for new managers to supervise creative marketing activities should look for candidates with a SL style and avoid laissez-faire leaders.

Specifically, candidates should have the ability to create a sense of psychological safety in their followers. This ability is particularly relevant to supervisors of newly employed marketers, who experience more uncertainty than their tenured colleagues. One practical challenge in this regard is how to identify servant leader candidates with strong abilities to create psychological safety in followers. A common practice is to appoint tenured individuals who have performed well on the relevant work tasks. This is a risky strategy. Historic task performance is certainly relevant but may correlate poorly with SL skills and the ability to create psychological safety in others. The scant research on antecedents of SL shows that leaders who are more agreeable, less extraverted, with a strong sense of confidence in themselves and their abilities, and who are committed to their organization are more likely to exemplify SL behaviors (see Eva et al. 2019). Servant leaders also have a strong moral character and a desire to see followers grow (Greenleaf 1970; 1977; Eva et al. 2019).

Informed by these research insights, hiring procedures should carefully consider the personality, the moral character, and the leadership motivation of candidates, in addition to skills and competence. Anonymous interviews with previous followers about the leadership behavior of candidates would be very useful. Direct interviews with candidates and ratings of skills and personal characteristics are often subjected to impression management and faking of abilities (e.g., Melchers et al. 2020).

The findings also imply that internal leader programs for marketing managers should enhance SL skills and the ability to stimulate psychological safety. Development of such skills requires a different kind of approach than that applied in traditional competence courses or seminars, which typically consist of inspirational talks/lectures by some expert or a blend of lectures and group work. To strengthen the character and assist leaders in making a lasting reorientation of their leadership focus from their own status and performance to the growth and well-being of followers, there is a need for individually adapted processes that allow for the development of self-knowledge and the formation or strengthening of personal goals to serve (Eva et al. 2019). Such processes take time and require discipline, not least because “*prioritizing the needs of followers is in many ways counter to humans' survival instincts that are driven by a focus on self-interest*”. (Eva et al. 2019, p. 128, emphasis added).

Similar implications can be drawn for business education programs. To educate servant marketing leaders with the ability to create psychological safety in their teams, it is not enough to build theoretical knowledge. Educators need to assist students in developing a serving identity and form personal goals to be a servant leader. Like the notion of moral identity, we may define *serving identity* as the mental representation individuals hold about themselves as a serving person or leader (see Aquino and Reed 2002). The motivation to serve is related to the level of *internalization* of SL principles, which in turn is decided by how central these principles are to the self-concept. The formation of a serving identity takes time and individual guidance of every student, in addition to the development of knowledge about the theoretical concepts and their relationships. Thus, in addition to lectures a more process-oriented and individually adapted pedagogy is needed to develop SL skills.

A final caveat concerns the special contexts where the LF style of leadership might be effective. For organization environments that are unpredictable, change frequently, and require considerable flexibility and adaptation by front-line employees, a LF style of

leadership may be effective. Here, in addition, skills of front-line employees may need special attention, training, and experience to achieve the independence of mind and capabilities required in these contexts. For example, in certain business-to-business marketing environments, where specialized knowledge and technology are needed by sellers to handle complex, expensive, dynamic needs of buyers, a more LF style of leadership may be required to permit creative responding to changing conditions. Of course, a SL style of leadership might work here too, given its other-focus on unique needs of worker and customer, as opposed to the more self-focused (i.e., organization goals) of the TRF and TRA styles. More research is needed here to explore these possibilities.

5.3. Limitations and future research

The findings and the limitations of this study suggest several interesting avenues for future research. The use of an experimental design in this study answers the call of previous research for more comparative studies of leadership styles (Eva et al. 2019; Huges et al. 2018; Podsakoff and Podsakoff 2019). Randomized experiments make it possible to draw causal conclusions about the relative effect of leadership styles (Podsakoff and Podsakoff 2019). We also found the work on the leadership manipulations useful in the sense that it helped us clarify and sharpen the major distinctions between styles (Hughes et al. 2018). However, there are also limitations with experimental studies. Inspired by Van Dierendonck et al. (2014) we used “imaginative scenarios” to manipulate leadership style. Participants were asked to imagine themselves in the role of an employee reporting to a leader described in the scenario. Compared to real experience of leadership, this is a relatively weak (but precise) manipulation of leadership style. It is striking that, even with this relatively weak manipulation based on anticipation and imagination, we observed several meaningful and important effects of leadership style. However, future research should compare the responses to different types of

experimental manipulations to clarify what is gained and what is lost by using alternative procedures. A field experiment involving real experiences of leadership behavior may trigger richer emotional and cognitive responses in followers. Would this change the relative effects of SL, TRF and TRA? Would other mediators explain relative effects?

Previous research has revealed that SL has many positive effects on follower motivation, behavior, and well-being (for a review, see Eva et al. 2019). The present study shows that SL outperforms other leadership styles in stimulating marketing creativity. The cumulated evidence so far suggests that companies and educators should make the development of SL-skills a major objective in HRM strategies and business education programs, respectively. A key question is: how to do this effectively? There is a need for research on pedagogical procedures for developing SL-leaders. Because SL is not merely about knowledge and skills but is grounded in the character of the leader and personal goals to serve others (Greenleaf 1977; Spears 1995), traditional lectures are not sufficient. More individual and process-oriented approaches are needed. What should these methods look like? Would the implementation of new methods demand considerably more resources or is it possible to develop methods that are both effective in forming SL-leaders, and cost-effective in terms of the time, people, and monetary resources involved? More knowledge about the (superior) effects of SL, and how to educate SL marketing leaders, will provide a twofold benefit: improved creativity of marketing organization, and more marketers that thrive and prosper, personally and professionally.

Declaration of interest:

The authors confirm that they have no conflicts of interest.

Funding: This work was supported by the Norwegian School of Economics.

Author contributions:

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, to material preparation, data collection and analysis. The first draft of the manuscript was written by the first author and all authors commented on previous versions of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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