

Abstract

The present study examined the effectiveness of servant leadership in the organizational setting in Hong Kong. Factors influencing the emergence and effectiveness of servant leadership (which include sex, gender roles of the leaders, and the organizational culture) were also studied. One hundred and ninety-six full-time employees (76 males and 120 females) aged from 21 to 59 working in a wide variety of industries in Hong Kong participated in the study. They completed a questionnaire reporting their own working attitudes, perception of their immediate supervisors and the organizational culture of their companies. Results supported the effectiveness of practicing servant leadership in Hong Kong and showed the effect of leaders' gender roles on the emergence of servant leadership. Specifically, perceived feminine leaders, regardless of their biological sex, were rated as possessing more servant leadership characteristics than leaders perceived as masculine. Additionally, a marginal 3-way interaction effect was found among leader's sex, gender roles and levels of servant leadership expression on leadership effectiveness. The effect of sex and gender roles of the leaders was different between high-level servant leaders and low-level servant leaders wherein feminine male servant leaders were rated as the most effective. However, results did not reveal the moderating effect of supportive organizational culture on the effectiveness of servant leadership. Conceptual and applied implications of these findings are discussed.