Hotel employees' perceptions of supervisors' servant leadership behaviors, and relationships with employees' affective commitment

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Hotel employees’ perceptions of supervisors’ servant leadership behaviors, and relationships with employees’ affective commitment

by

Ruya Han

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Hospitality Management

Program of Study Committee:
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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Servant Leadership (SL) has received an increasing amount of interest and recognition in recent years. Researchers have indicated employees’ perceptions of their supervisors’ SL behaviors improve organizational performance by building organizational trust (Reinke, 2004) and has a positive relationship with the leader’s personal values (Washington, Sutton, & Field, 2006). Researchers also found SL increases team effectiveness by enhancing team potency (Hu & Liden, 2011) and decreases employee withdrawal (Hunter, Neubert, Perry, Witt, Penney, & Weinberger, 2013). In addition to empirical research, some of Fortune’s 100 best companies in America have practiced and recommended SL (Levering & Moskowitz, 2000; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Spears, 2004; Brownell, 2010). However, a few researchers have focused on the effects of SL on the hospitality industry, particularly in relation to affective commitment.

Global hospitality organizations are deeply affected by their leaders’ behaviors and influence on subordinates (Brownell, 2010). Therefore, effectiveness of leadership is important to the success of hospitality organizations. As suggested by Brownell (2010), SL is a promising style of leadership, which may be the next step of leadership evolution in the hospitality industry. Greenleaf (1977) also stated SL shows promise in creating excellent service and being hospitable, which are both propositions of the hospitality industry.

Employees’ affective commitment (AC) to an organization has attracted considerable attention by scholars and practitioners. AC, as a component of employees’ organizational commitment, has been shown to increase employees’ job satisfaction (Wong, Ngo, & Wong, 2002; Schmidt, 2007; Alnıaçık, Alnıaçık, Akçin, & Erat, 2012; Bilgin & Demirer, 2012) and decrease employees’ turnover intentions (Wong, Ngo, & Wong, 2002; Poon, 2012). Studies also indicated AC positively relates to employees’
perceived organizational support (Bilgin & Demirer, 2012), trust in the organization, and job security (Wong, Ngo, & Wong, 2002). Schmidt (2007) found AC is a moderator between work stress and related outcomes.

Researchers found employees’ AC has a positive relationship with different kinds of leadership, including authentic leadership (Leroy, Palanski, & Simons, 2012), ethical leadership (Kim & Brymer, 2011), and transformational leadership (Acar, 2012; Simosi & Xenikou, 2010). However, researchers have not studied the relationship between SL and AC in the context of the hospitality industry.

Research Objectives

This study assesses hotel employees’ perceptions of their present supervisors’ SL behaviors and their relationships with hotel employees’ self-reported AC. Therefore, the research objectives for this study include:

1. Assess which dimensions of SL are most, and least, displayed by supervisors, as perceived by hotel employees.
2. Investigate which dimensions of SL, if any, are highly correlated when assessing the hotel employees’ perceived SL behaviors of their current supervisors.
3. Examine if an employee’s perceptions of his/her supervisor’s SL behaviors are different according to employee demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, work department, length of time working in the hotel industry, length of time working with present supervisor, and hotel type).
4. Investigate which dimensions of perceived SL, if any, have significant relationships with hotel employees’ AC.

Significance of Study

This study calls attention to the importance of SL for both scholars and hospitality industry practitioners. It provides empirical research of SL theory in the hotel industry
and expands the relationship between SL behaviors and employees’ AC to the hospitality industry. Results from this study could show hotel employees' perceived SL behaviors of their current supervisors have a significant effect on employees’ AC. Therefore, hospitality industry employers can better understand what benefits SL can bring and how to develop SL behaviors to increase their employees’ AC.

**Definition of Terms**

**Servant Leadership (SL):** This is a style of leadership whereby a leader “is committed to the growth of both the individual and organization, and who works to build the community within the organizations” (Reinke, 2004, p33). Seven dimensions of the SL scale identified by Liden et al. (2008) are defined below.

- **Emotional healing** is when a leader has acted in a way that shows sensitivity to subordinates’ personal concerns (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008).

- **Creating value for the community** is when a leader shows a conscious, genuine concern for helping the community in which the organization operates (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008).

- **Conceptual skills** are when a leader possesses knowledge of the organization and work tasks; therefore can assist and guide others; especially his/her subordinates (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008).

- **Empowering** is when a leader encourages and facilitates subordinates to identify and solve problems, as well as to determine when and how to complete work-related tasks by themselves (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008).

- **Helping subordinates grow and succeed** is when a leader shows sincere concern for subordinates' career growth and development by providing support and mentoring (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008).
Putting subordinates first is in a leader when he/she uses words or acts in a way that satisfies subordinates’ work needs as a priority over their own (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008).

Behaving ethically is when a leader interacts with others openly, fairly, and honestly during work hours (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008).

Affective Commitment (AC): “employees’ emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (Meyer and Allen, 1991, p.67).
CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The relationship between employees’ perceived servant leadership (SL) and employees’ affective commitment (AC) has received little attention in the hotel industry. The first section in this review of literature is on SL, including definitions and dimensions of SL and the effects of SL on organizational trust and performance, leader’s personal values, employee’s attitudes, team potency and effectiveness, and employee withdrawal. The second section discusses the influences of employees’ AC on organizations and relevant variables related to AC. The third section summarizes literature about the effects of different types of leadership on employees’ AC. The final section introduces the measurement tools for both SL and AC.

Servant Leadership

Reinke (2004) defined SL as the ability of a leader “who is committed to the growth of both the individual and the organization, and who works to build community within organizations” (p. 33). Earlier, Greenleaf (1977) stated servant leaders place their subordinates’ needs above their own, and help them grow to achieve organizational and career success. He also suggested SL improves organizational performance because it builds a community or culture of trust within the organizations.

In recent decades, research on SL has been limited to developing functional models and creating measurement tools in an attempt to provide future empirical studies with a solid theoretical foundation. To date, there is a growing body of empirical studies that examined servant leadership in a given organizational setting. Liden et al. (2008) developed a seven-dimension SL scale based on previous literature, including: (1) emotional healing, (2) creating value for the community, (3) conceptual skills, (4) empowering, (5) helping subordinates grow and succeed, (6) behaving ethically, and (7)
placing subordinates first. This scale has been used to measure SL in some research and proven a reliable tool.

Brownell (2010) reviewed several publications on leadership and proposed SL is promising, especially for restoring public trust and employee engagement. Through a brief review of leadership theory, Brownell (2010) emphasized the key characteristic of SL is the leader’s motivation to serve and empower employees, respect their judgments, and trust them. In addition, Brownell (2010) suggested hospitality educators should place more emphasis on relevant SL principles and practices into future hospitality leaders to create integrity and an ethical organizational culture in the hospitality industry.

Russell (2001) examined relevant literature for values in leadership and tested their influence on SL. Additionally, Russell found functional leadership attributes, especially trust, appreciation of others, and empowerment of SL, are grounded in the internal values of servant leaders. The values of leaders also affect the leaders’ organizations. Thus, Russell concluded a leader’s personal values determine the success of servant leadership.

Later, Russell and Stone (2002) reviewed relevant literature about SL and developed a rational model by classifying and evaluating nine attributes of SL. They also developed a more encompassing model, linking SL to organizational performance mediated by organizational culture and employees’ attitudes. However, this model needs confirmation through empirical research.

Parolini et al. (2009) investigated the distinctions between transformational and SL by studying 2,162 employees (a 24% response) in corporations, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and religious organizations through 56 survey data sites. These researchers measured distinctions using a self-designed questionnaire reviewed by a panel of experts. They found five dimensions (moral, focus, motive and
mission, development, and influence), drawn from relevant literature, were significantly different between transformational and SL. Parolini et al. (2009) suggested these five dimensions should be considered during the organizational hiring and training.

Reinke (2004) studied 651 employees (39% response) of Suburban County in Georgia to explore the relationship among perceptions of SL, the level of trust between employees and supervisors, and organizational performance. Using 14 self-designed questions, Reinke measured openness, stewardship, and vision of servant leadership from previous studies and 12 questions from previous research to measure organizational trust. Reinke found SL has a significant relationship with the level of trust and the trust level is correlated to organizational performance. In addition, Reinke found stewardship, one component of SL, is the determinant of the trust level. Based on published literature about the relationship of trust and organizational performance, and his findings, Reinke further concluded SL could improve organizational performance by building organizational trust.

Washington et al. (2006) investigated the relationship among employees’ perceptions of leaders’ SL, leaders’ values of empathy, integrity and competence, as well as their own agreeableness. They studied 126 supervisors and 283 employees from three different organizations, including a mid-sized community development agency, a small municipal clearinghouse, and a municipal government. Employees’ perceptions of SL were measured using Dennis and Winston’s (2003) 23-item SL scale. Washington et al. (2006) found SL behaviors have a positive relationship with leaders’ perceived values of empathy, integrity and competence, as well as leaders’ own agreeableness. They also found competence and effectiveness are critical components of SL behaviors. Washington et al. suggested organizations could maintain a SL culture with selected leaders, based on these personal attributes.

Hu and Liden (2011) researched 304 employees of 71 teams from five Chinese
banks to investigate how goal clarity, process clarity, and SL affect team potency and further impact team effectiveness, represented by team performance and organizational citizenship behavior. They used the 28-item SL scale developed by Liden et al. (2008) to measure servant leadership. Hu and Liden (2011) found SL increases team effectiveness by enhancing team potency. In addition, they found servant leadership is a moderator, impacting the positive relationship between goal, process clarity, and team potency. Hu and Liden (2011) emphasized leadership training is important to develop SL to build employees’ common beliefs and contribute to the team’s overall effectiveness.

Peterson et al. (2012) surveyed 308 chief executive officers (CEOs) (41% response) in the western United States from the technology industry to examine the relationship among CEO’s SL behavior, characteristics of narcissism, founder status, organizational identification, and organizational performance. Researchers selected 16 items from the 28-item SL scale developed by Liden et al. (2008) to measure SL. They found CEO’s narcissism has a negative relationship with SL and the CEO’s founder status is positively related. They also found organizational identification mediates the relationship between CEO characteristics and SL behavior. Moreover, CEO SL behavior has a positive effect on organizational performance controlling for transformational leadership. The researchers suggested CEO personality and demographic characteristics might predict SL.

Hunter et al. (2013) studied 425 employees, 110 managers, and 40 regional managers from a U.S. retail organization to investigate the relationship among SL, leader personality, and some essential employee and organizational outcomes. The researchers used Ehrhart’s (2004) 14-item scale to evaluate SL. Hunter et al. (2013) found leader agreeableness to be positively and leader extraversion to be negatively related to SL. They found SL has a negative relationship with employee withdrawal, represented by
turnover intentions and disengagement. Hunter et al. (2013) suggested organizations should take advantage of SL to create a favorable service climate, reduce employee withdrawal, and enhance their employees’ positive behaviors.

Liden et al. (2013) investigated relationships among SL, serving culture, employee identification, and organizational performance. Seventy-one managers (93% response rate) and 1,143 employees (71% response rate) from 76 restaurants in the United States participated in their survey. Researchers utilized a shortened version of the seven-dimension SL scale developed by Liden et al. (2008) to measure restaurant employees’ perceived supervisors’ SL behaviors. Results showed employees’ perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors have a positive relationship with organizational serving culture. Results also showed serving culture mediates the positive relationship between employees’ perceived supervisors’ SL behaviors and employee identification with the organization.

Affective Commitment

Buonocore (2010) investigated the relationship of employees’ work status (contingent and regular) and AC to organizations, and how organizational identification affects this relationship. The researcher studied 362 (118 contingent and 244 regular) employees from 14 reputable hotels in Italy. Buonocore used Meyer and Allen’s (1997) six-item scale to measure the AC to the organization and found contingent work status has a negative relationship with employees’ AC and organizational identification.

Bilgin and Demirer (2012) examined the relationships among employees’ AC, job satisfaction, and perceived organizational support. They surveyed 271 employees from seven hotels in Turkey using Meyer and Allen’s (1997) six-item scale to measure AC. Bilgin and Demirer (2012) found employees’ perceived organizational support has a positive relationship with employees’ AC and job satisfaction. They suggested hotel
managers should enhance organizational support to employees in an attempt to increase their employees’ job satisfaction and AC towards the organization, and, consequently, improve the overall performance of the organization as well as customer satisfaction.

Namasivayam and Zhao (2007) conducted a survey to investigate relationships among work-related conflict, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. They sent questionnaires to 120 employees (77% response rate) of a large independent hotel in India. They used Meyer, Allen, and Smith’s (1993) scale to measure hotel employees’ organizational commitment. Researchers found hotel employees’ AC has a positive relationship with job satisfaction and it moderates the effects of work-related conflict on employees’ job satisfaction.

Wong et al. (2002) examined the effects of justice, job security, and trust on employees’ AC by studying 295 employees from four joint venture factories in one of China’s provinces. They used an eight-item scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) to measure employees’ AC. Wong et al. (2002) found the employees’ AC has a negative relationship with the employees’ turnover intention. They also found trust in an organization partially mediates the relationship between job security and AC.

Schmidt (2007) investigated the effect of AC on the relationship between work-related stress and strain, and related outcomes (burnout and job satisfaction). In a German city, 506 staff members (78% response) from a municipal administration completed the questionnaires. The researcher used a German translation of Allen and Meyer’s (1990) eight-item AC scale with a seven-point Likert-type rating scale to measure employees’ AC. Schmidt (2007) discovered AC directly decreases burnout (emotional exhaustion and depersonalization) and increases the level of job satisfaction. The researcher also determined AC moderated the relationship between work stress and related outcomes. Schmidt suggested practitioners should take advantage of both direct and indirect effects
of their employees’ AC to contribute to organizational stress management.

Alnıaçık et al. (2012) examined the relationships among employees’ career motivation, AC, and job satisfaction by studying 250 employees from various industries. They used Allen and Meyer’s (1990) eight-item AC measurement with a five-point Likert-type rating scale to assess employees’ level of AC to their organizations. Alnıaçık et al. (2012) determined employees’ career motivation has a positive relationship with AC and job satisfaction. They suggested managers should develop and support employees’ career motivations in an attempt to improve their AC and job satisfaction.

Poon (2012) surveyed 172 employees, who worked as part-time students in five large universities in Malaysia to examine the mediating effect of AC on the relationship between distributive justice and turnover intention. Poon’s research used a modified version of Meyer, Allen, and Smith’s (1993) AC subscale to measure employees’ AC. The researcher found that AC has a positive relationship with distributive justice and a negative relationship with turnover intention, despite procedural justice. Poon (2012) also found at the highest levels of supervisory procedural justice, AC partially mediates the relationship between distributive justice and turnover intention. The researcher suggested supervisors could reduce employee turnover intention, caused by low AC to organizations, by enhancing procedural justice.

Rousseau and Aubé (2010) investigated the influence of both supervisor and coworker support on employees’ AC to the organization. They surveyed 215 employees (48% response rate) from a health care organization in Canada. They used Meyer, Allen, and Smith’s (1993) six-item scale to measure employees’ AC to the organization. Researchers found both supervisor and coworker support have a positive relationship with employees’ AC.

Ruiz-Palomino et al. (2013) conducted research to investigate the relationship
between ethical culture and employee outcomes including employee job satisfaction, AC, intention to stay, as well as employee willingness to recommend the organizations to others. Researchers collected data from a sample of 436 employees (10.5% response rate) from several banks in Spain. They used three representative items from Allen and Meyer’s (1990) AC scale to measure employees’ AC. Results indicated an ethical culture has a positive relationship with employees’ job satisfaction, AC, intention to stay, and willingness to recommend the organization to others.

**Leadership and Affective Commitment**

Leroy et al. (2012) investigated relationships among authentic leadership behaviors, leader behavior integrity, employees’ AC, and employees’ work role performance. They studied 345 employees and 49 team leaders from 25 service organizations in Belgium, using Meyer, Allen, and Smith’s (1993) six-item scale to measure employees’ AC to the organization. These researchers determined leader behavior integrity mediates the effect of authentic leadership behavior on employees’ AC. Leroy et al. (2012) also found AC mediates a positive relationship between leader behavior integrity and employees’ work role performance.

Kim and Brymer (2011) studied effects of ethical leadership on managers’ job satisfaction, AC, firm performance, and managers’ behavioral outcomes (extra effort and turnover intention). The researchers surveyed 324 middle managers from 30 U.S. hotels and received 305 useful questionnaires. A five-item scale from previous research was utilized to measure the managers’ AC. They found the managers’ affective commitment is positively related to job satisfaction, their willingness to exert extra effort, and executives’ ethical leadership; while being negatively related to turnover intention. They suggested hotel executives should behave themselves ethically to foster a strong moral environment, which encourages their followers to commit to, become involved in, and be satisfied with
their organizations. Moreover, Kim and Brymer also suggested hotels should improve middle managers’ AC to make them exert extra effort and, consequently, enhance a firm’s competitive performance.

Acar (2012) investigated the relationship among transactional leadership, organizational culture, and organizational commitment by conducting a questionnaire survey of 344 employees from 37 logistic firms in Turkey. Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) developed a revised organizational commitment scale to measure employees’ commitment. The researcher found two dimensions of transactional leadership positively affect AC.

Simosi and Xenikou (2010) investigated the influence of transformational leadership behaviors and organizational culture (affiliative, achievement, humanistic, and self-actualizing culture orientation) on organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance commitment). These researchers surveyed 415 employees from a large Greek service organization. They used Meyer, Allen, and Smith’s (1993) scale to measure organizational commitment, and determined both transformational leadership and transaction contingent reward have a positive relationship with employees’ AC. Simosi and Xenikou (2010) also found organizational culture has a positive effect on employees’ AC.

Liden et al. (2008) developed a seven-dimension SL scale consisting of 28 items to measure employee’s perceptions of SL behavior. They used it to measure relationships among servant leadership, organizational commitment, community citizenship behavior, and subordinate in-role performance. These researchers collected data from 164 employees and 25 supervisors from a Midwestern production and distribution company. They used an adaptation of the AC scale in previous research to measure organizational commitment. These researchers found servant leadership has a positive relationship with
both subordinates’ community citizenship behaviors and organizational commitment. Liden et al. also claimed the process of interaction between leader and subordinate was the core of SL theory.

**Measurement Tools**

*Servant Leadership*

Reinke (2004) utilized a self-designed 14-question tool measuring openness, stewardship, and vision of servant leadership by reviewing attributes of servant leadership found in the literature. Parolini et al. (2009) used a self-designed questionnaire reviewed by a panel of experts to investigate the distinctions between transformational and servant leadership by studying employees from corporations, non-profit organizations, academic institutions and religious organizations. Page and Wong (2000) developed an original servant leadership instrument, later revised by Dennis and Winston (2003) to a 23-item servant leadership scale and used by Washington et al. (2006), to investigate employees’ perceptions of servant leadership. Ehrhart (2004) developed a 14-item servant leadership scale, later used by Walumbwa et al. (2010) and Hunter et al. (2013) to evaluate servant leadership behavior of both employees and supervisors. Liden et al. (2008) developed a 28-item servant leadership scale, based on several previous studies and divided servant leadership into seven dimensions: (1) emotional healing, (2) creating value for the community, (3) conceptual skills, (4) empowering, (5) helping subordinates grow and succeed, (6) behaving ethically and (7) placing subordinates first. Hu and Liden (2011) utilized this tool to evaluate servant leadership in the Chinese banking industry and Peterson et al. (2012) used it to survey chief executive officers in the U.S. technology industry.

*Affective Commitment*

Allen and Meyer (1990) developed the original version of an 8-item AC scale,
later used by Wong et al. (2002) and Alınaçık et al. (2012) to measure employees’ AC to organizations. Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) revised this scale and reduced it to a six-item AC scale. Many researchers have utilized this scale in different contexts, including the hotel industry (Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007), an airline company (Ko, Price, & Mueller, 1997), universities (Poon, 2012), logistic firms (Acar, 2012), health care organizations (Rousseau & Aubé, 2010), and service organizations (Leroy et al., 2012; Simosi & Xenikou, 2010).
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the methods used in the study of hotel employees’ perceptions about supervisors’ servant leadership (SL) behaviors and their relationships with employees’ affective commitment (AC). The participants, instruments, pilot study, data collection procedures, and analysis methods for four research questions are discussed. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis.

Use of Human Subjects

This researcher submitted the Iowa State University Human Subjects Exempt Form to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the initiation of this study to ensure the rights and safety of participants. The IRB reviewed and approved this study. The approval letter appears in Appendix A.

Participants

The target population for this study was hotel employees in the State of Iowa. This researcher sent a questionnaire through institutions to reach as many hotel employees in Iowa as possible. Therefore, the sample was limited to hotel members of the Iowa Lodging Association (ILA), including 145 properties (Iowa Lodging Association Member List) and hotels on the contact lists from the 19 Convention and Visitors Bureaus (CVBs) in the State of Iowa (Convention and Visitors Bureaus Dictionary).

Instruments

The survey consisted of three parts: (1) demographics information, (2) SL scale, and (3) AC.

Part I: Demographics Information

Hotel employees were asked to provide some basic demographics information,
such as age, gender, ethnicity, work department, length of working time in the hotel industry, length of working time with present supervisor, and hotel type. This information provides background information and data description of the participants for use in the analysis procedures. Placing the demographics questions at the beginning of the survey can make respondents feel more comfortable proceeding to the next part of the questionnaire (Andrew, Nonnecke, & Preece, 2003).

**Part II: Measurement of Servant Leadership**

This researcher selected the 28-item SL scale developed by Liden et al. (2008) to measure hotel employees’ perceived supervisors’ SL behaviors. Permission for using this scale was provided by the authors via email found in Appendix B. This scale consists of seven dimensions: (1) conceptual skills, (2) empowering, (3) helping subordinates grow and succeed, (4) creating value for the community, (5) behaving ethically, (6) emotional healing, and (7) putting subordinates first. For each dimension, four items were included. All items were measured with a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

This researcher used this scale because it was a multidimensional measurement of SL and proved reliable, with internal consistency reliability estimates ranged from .76 to .86 for the seven dimensions (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). This scale was used to measure employees’ perceived supervisors’ SL behaviors in several studies (Hu & Liden, 2011; Peterson et al., 2012; Liden et al., 2013). Liden et al. (2013) used this scale to measure restaurant employees’ perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors and found the overall internal consistency reliability estimate was .84.

**Part III: Measurement of Affective Commitment**

Employees’ AC to hotels was measured using Meyer, Allen and Smith’s (1993) six-item AC scale. Permission to use this questionnaire appears in Appendix C. The
questionnaire cannot be displayed due to copyright restrictions. In this part, employees were asked to rate each item on a seven-point Likert-type scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). A sample item was “I feel ‘emotionally attached’ to this organization.”

Many researchers have used the six-item revised AC scale developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) in different contexts, and have proven its reliability and validity (Ko et al., 1997; Namasivayam & Zhao, 2007; Rousseau & Aubé, 2010; Simosi & Xenikou, 2010; Acar, 2012; Leroy et al., 2012; Leroy et al., 2012; Poon, 2012). In a hotel setting, Namasivayam and Zhao (2007) used this scale to measure hotel employees’ AC (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .77$).

**Web-based survey**

A web-based survey is a method researchers use to take advantage of the rapid development of the Internet. Reasons for choosing the web-based survey over other traditional methods include (1) decreased response time, (2) reduced cost, (3) ease of data entry, and (4) flexibility and control over format (Braithwaite, Emery, de Lusignan, & Sutton, 2003; Granello & Wheaton, 2004). According to Dillman (2007), people who can access e-mail may be very likely to have access to web surveys.

This researcher used Qualtrics to administer the web-based survey. The questionnaire was designed with an informed consent on the first page of the survey, including a brief explanation of the research purpose, confidentiality, and privacy to the respondents. The consent form provided the respondents with choices of either proceeding on to the next page or stopping the survey voluntarily. As suggested by Dillman (2007), respondents could also track their progress of completion by checking the progress bar at the bottom of each page to discourage them from stopping when they were close to the end. Questions were set to prevent respondents from selecting more than
one item corresponding to each statement. In addition, this researcher selected the “prevent ballot box stuffing” in the survey protection setting to restrict respondents from taking this survey more than once.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot test was conducted before the online questionnaire was distributed, to examine the wording and design of the questionnaire. Eleven graduate students with work experience participated in the test and were asked to complete the online questionnaire, assuming they were working in a hotel and evaluating their supervisors’ SL behaviors. In addition, they were asked to provide feedback regarding the understandability, wording, clarity, and design of the questionnaire. Thesis committee members also reviewed the questionnaire. Based on feedback, this researcher changed a few words, dispersed items belonging to the same dimension thorough the questionnaire and modified some categories of the demographic questions to improve the quality of the questionnaire. For example, the researcher changed the word “can” to “is able to,” added the word “work-related” to make the item more specific, and added the category “not sure” to the demographic question of hotel type. The pilot testing questions form appears in Appendix D.

**Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher contacted the president of the ILA association and the 19 CVBs in the State of Iowa, asking if they were willing to forward an invitation e-mail of the web-based survey to the hotel general managers on their contact lists. Four CVBs in the State of Iowa and the ILA association agreed to forward, or provided contact information of their member hotels. Three of the 19 CVBs lacked contact information. Researcher then sent an e-mail invitation to each association, requesting them to forward the invitation e-mail for the web-based survey to their hotel general managers. The invitation e-mail
briefly explained the study and contained a survey link to the web-based questionnaire. If the managers agreed to have their employees participate, they would send the survey link to their employees. The e-mail contact script is located in Appendix E.

**Data Analysis**

The researcher used JMP Pro Version 10 (2012) to analyze data. The researcher analyzed and summarized the responses to demographics questions by using JMP software to provide basic information for the respondents surveyed. Descriptive statistics were analyzed for demographics including age, gender, ethnicity, working department, length of time working in the hotel, length of time working with current supervisor, and hotel type.

For research question one, to examine which dimensions of SL behaviors were most and least displayed by hotel supervisors as perceived by hotel employees, this researcher calculated the mean score and standard deviation for each item and each dimension of SL behaviors.

For research question two, to analyze which dimensions, if any, have high correlations assessing the hotel employees’ perceived supervisors’ SL behaviors, this researcher used the multivariate method and internal consistency reliability estimates, Cronbach’s alpha, to identify the reliability of the SL scale.

For research question three, to analyze if employees’ perceptions about SL behavior differ, based on employees’ demographic information, a multiple regression model was analyzed. The demographics variables (age, gender, ethnicity, work department, length of time working in the hotel industry, length of time working with present supervisor, and hotel type) were set as the explanatory variables; the mean score of SL behaviors was calculated as the response variable.

For research question four, to investigate which dimensions of the perceived SL
scale, if any, have significant relationships with employees’ AC, a multiple regression model was utilized. This researcher set the seven dimensions of the servant leadership scale as the explanatory variables. The average score of employees’ AC was the response variable.
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Iowa Lodging Association and four of 19 CVBs in the State of Iowa agreed to forward the survey link to their member hotels’ general managers, or provide contact information for their member hotels to the researcher. The remaining 15 CVBs in the State of Iowa did not respond to the contact e-mail. With less than 250 hotels receiving the survey link, this indicates the difficulty in getting commitment to participate in the research from association representatives, due to low interest in participating, incorrect contact information from the official websites, or the probability of e-mail spam filters stopping the survey’s transmission. Because the researcher did not have direct contact information to the hotel employees, it was impossible to know the number of employees who received the survey link. Therefore, this researcher was unable to calculate the response rate for this study.

Demographics

A total of 142 participants started the web-survey. There were four questionnaires completed with less than half of the questions responded and six questionnaires completed by managers, leaving 127 usable questionnaires for data analysis. Among these questionnaires, 63.8% of hotel employees were female and 36.2% were male. The most prevalent age range of participants was between 23 and 27 years (26.0%), followed by groups of 28-32 years (21.3%) and 48+ years (14.2%). The majority of the participants were White (63.8%), followed by Black/African-American (14.2%). Participants who worked in the Front Office department of the hotels were 39.4% and more than one-half of the participants were from chain hotels (71.7%). Hotel employees with 1-2 years of experience working in hotels were 39.4%, while employees with 5 years or more of hotel working experience were 35.4%. The most common length of time working with the present supervisor was 1-2 years (48.8%), followed by 3-4 years (17.6%) and 5 years or
more (17.6%). The demographics information for the survey participants is found in Table 1.

Table 1.

Demographics of Sample (N = 125-127)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18-22 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>23-27 years</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28-32 years</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-37 years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38-42 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43-47 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 years or older</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African-American</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>63.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work Department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting &amp; Finance</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Office</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource</td>
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<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>22.0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Length of time working in hotel industry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years or more</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time working with present supervisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years or more</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of hotel</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chain hotel</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>71.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent hotel</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Research Question One

The first research question was “assess which dimensions of servant leadership (SL) behaviors were most, and least, displayed by hotel supervisors as reported by hotel employees.” The means and standard deviations for each dimension and item of servant leadership (SL) behaviors of supervisors as perceived by hotel subordinates are provided in Table 2. The number of responses for each dimension ranged from 121 to 127, due to missing values. The means for each dimension ranged from the highest rated dimension, behaving ethically, 5.43 (SD = 1.02) to the lowest dimension, putting subordinates first, 4.09 (SD = 1.46). The range of means for the seven dimensions was similar with the study results conducted by Liden et al. (2008). In their study, the means ranged from the highest rated dimension, conceptual skills, 5.29 (SD = 1.11), to the lowest dimension, putting subordinates first, 3.97 (SD = 1.28).

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensiona</th>
<th>αb</th>
<th>Meanc</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behaving ethically</strong></td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor holds high ethical standards</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor is always honest</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor would not compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor values honesty more than profits</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conceptual skills</strong></td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor can tell if something work-related is going wrong</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor is able to effectively think through complex problems</td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor has a thorough understanding of our organization and its goals</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor is able to solve work problems with new or creative ideas</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empowering</strong></td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor makes my career development a priority</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor encourages me to handle important work decisions on my own</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>My supervisor gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best</strong></td>
<td>5.40</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When I have to make an important decision at work, I do not have to consult my supervisor first</strong></td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creating values for the community</strong></td>
<td>.94</td>
<td><strong>5.09</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.21</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor is always interested in helping people in our community</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor is involved in community activities</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor encourages me to volunteer in the community</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional healing</strong></td>
<td>.92</td>
<td><strong>4.87</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.34</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would seek help from my supervisor if I had a personal problem</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor cares about my personal well-being</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor takes time to talk to me on a personal level</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without asking me, my supervisor can recognize when I am down</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helping subordinates grow and succeed</strong></td>
<td>.92</td>
<td><strong>4.71</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.41</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor makes my career development a priority</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor is interested in making sure that I achieve my career goals</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor provides me with work experiences that enable me to develop new skills</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor wants to know my career goals</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Putting subordinates first</strong></td>
<td>.92</td>
<td><strong>4.09</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.46</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor seems to care about my success more than his/her own</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor puts my best interests ahead of his/her own</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor sacrifices his/her own interests to meet my needs</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor does whatever she/he can to make my job easier</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[^a\]Permission to use servant leadership dimensions and items is located in Appendix B.
\[^b\]Internal consistency calculated for each dimension of servant leadership.
\[^c\]A 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) was used for all items.

The highest mean score of dimensions was behaving ethically, with an average score of 5.43 (SD = 1.02). It included the highest rated item of the overall SL scale, “My supervisor is always honest,” with a mean score of 5.86 (SD = 1.07). The highest average
score showed hotel employees’ perceived their supervisors’ behaviors were ethical. As suggested by Huhtala et al. (2011), an ethical behaving leader can improve the ethical culture of the organization by acting as a good role model to their subordinates. Brownell (2010) also suggested the hospitality educator should continue fostering future leaders’ integrity and create an ethical organizational culture in the hospitality industry. If hotel supervisors behave ethically in the workplace, it could increase their subordinates’ perceptions of ethical behaviors and further create an ethical culture in the organization by having a trustworthy role model.

The second highest rated dimension of SL behaviors was conceptual skills, 5.26 ($SD = 1.25$). A representative item stated, “My supervisor has a thorough understanding of our organization and its goals,” with a mean score of 5.25 ($SD = 1.45$). As contended by Hu and Liden (2001), servant leaders possessing the knowledge of the organization and tasks could increase team members’ confidence in their cooperative ability, even when they were facing difficulty. If hotel employees perceived their supervisors possess sufficient conceptual skills of handling work tasks and can guide them to better solve work-related problems, they may feel more confidence and trust their supervisors as well as the organization.

The two lowest rated dimensions were helping subordinates grow and succeed and putting subordinates first, with average scores of 4.71 ($SD = 1.41$) and 4.09 ($SD = 1.46$), respectively. Representative items were, “My supervisor makes my career development a priority” and “My supervisor seems to care about my success more than his/her own.” These two dimensions are important, based on the definition of servant leaders, which emphasizes the need to place subordinates’ needs before their own, and focus on helping subordinates grow to fulfill their full potential as well as achieve their career success (Greenleaf, 1977). The relatively low average scores indicate either hotel employees’
perceptions about their present supervisors’ SL behaviors on these two dimensions were insufficient or their supervisors do not behave enough on these two dimensions.

**Research Question Two**

The second research question was “investigate which dimensions, if any, were highly correlated when assessing hotel employees’ perceived present supervisors’ SL behaviors.” To analyze the correlations among these seven dimensions of SL, a correlation matrix was shown in Table 3. The correlations among these seven dimensions ranged from .37 to .91. The most highly correlated dimensions were putting subordinates first, and helping subordinates grow and succeed ($r = .91$). The next highest correlated dimensions were between emotional healing and putting subordinates first ($r = .90$), as well as helping subordinates grow and succeed, and emotional healing ($r = .90$).

Compared with results from Liden et al. (2008), correlations among these seven dimensions ranged from .16 to .83 were slightly lower than the current study. Because some dimensions of SL scale had high correlations, the researcher further examined the collinearity assumption in the following multiple regression analysis. In addition, the internal scale reliability estimate (Cronbach’s alpha) for the seven dimensions of SL ranged from .92 to .94 in this study. The overall Cronbach’s alpha of SL was 0.94, which is comparable to the results for Liden et al. (2013). They used this scale to measure restaurant employees’ perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors and found the overall internal consistency reliability estimate was .84. The slightly higher reliability estimate for the current study indicated this scale is a reliable measurement for the analysis of hotel employees’ perceived their supervisors’ SL behaviors.
Table 3.

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Between Dimensions of Servant Leadership and Affective Commitment (N= 121-127)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Conceptual skills</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Empowering</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Helping subordinates grow and succeed</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Putting subordinates first</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Behaving ethically</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Emotional healing</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Creating values for the community</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Affective Commitment</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. All correlations found to be significant at the .01 level.*

**Research Question Three**

The third research question was “examine if employees’ perceptions of their supervisor’s servant leadership behaviors are different according to employee demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, employee’s work department, length of time working in hotel industry, length of time working with present supervisor, and hotel type).” The researcher used a multiple regression model to analyze the relationships between the demographics and the employees’ perceptions of present supervisors’ SL behaviors. The average score for hotel employees’ perceived SL behaviors was analyzed as the response variable, and the employee’s age, gender, ethnicity, work department, length of time working in hotel industry, length of time working with present supervisor, as well as hotel type were set as explanatory variables. The regression analysis results appear in Table 4.
Table 4.

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Servant Leadership on Demographics (N = 111)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F Value</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.7222</td>
<td>3.3366</td>
<td>3.8698</td>
<td>.4143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>80.1869</td>
<td>.8622</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>136.9091</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>F Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>age</td>
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<td>.0016</td>
<td>.0018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gender</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.1357</td>
<td>.1573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ethnicity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.6298</td>
<td>.4725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work department</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.831</td>
<td>1.4884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>length of time working in hotel industry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.9687</td>
<td>13.8812**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>length of time working with present supervisor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2100</td>
<td>4.8827*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>type of hotel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.9602</td>
<td>2.2965</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* *p* < .05. **p** < .001.

Regression analysis showed employees’ perceptions of their supervisor’s servant leadership behaviors are different according to employee demographics, $F(17, 93) = 3.8698, p < .0001$. The results showed the relationship between length of time working in the hotel industry and their perceived SL behaviors was significant (slope = .51, $p = .003$). Length of time working with the present supervisor was also significant (slope = -.29, $p = .0296$). The other employee demographics variables had no significant relationships with perceived supervisors’ SL behaviors. Pearson correlations among the demographic variables ranged from -.20 to .63, which indicated the data might not violate the collinearity assumption. The positive relationship found between length of time working in hotel and employees’ perceived their supervisors’ SL behaviors showed as the length of time working in a hotel increases, employees’ perceptions of present supervisors’ SL behaviors also increase. This result may be due to supervisors displaying different SL behaviors according to employees’ experience within the hotel, or employees’ perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors are different according to their different work experience or participation in training programs. The negative relationship
found between length of time working with present supervisor and employees’ perceived SL behaviors showed as length of time working with present supervisor increases, employees’ perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors decrease. This result may be due to as length of time working with the same supervisor increases, employees are becoming more familiar with their supervisors’ SL behaviors, leading to their perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors decreased. In addition, as the length of time working with the same subordinate increases, supervisors may no longer need to pay as much attention to their subordinates, causing their employees’ perceptions of SL behaviors to decrease.

**Research Question Four**

The fourth research question was “investigate which dimensions of employee perceived SL scale, if any, have significant relationships with hotel employees’ AC.” The seven dimensions of supervisors’ SL score were used as independent variables; the average score for employee’s self-reported AC was utilized as a dependent variable. A multiple regression model was analyzed to determine the relationship between employees’ perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors and their AC. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.

*Multiple Regression Analysis of Employees’ Affective Commitment on Independent Variables (N = 111)*

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<td>.21</td>
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<td>Empowering</td>
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<td>.11</td>
<td>2.04*</td>
<td>.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping subordinates grow and succeed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>4.52**</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting subordinates first</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.48</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>-3.34**</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaving ethically</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>3.56**</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional healing</td>
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<td>-.31</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>-1.84</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating value for the community</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Note. *p < .05. **p < .001.*
The regression analysis showed a significant relationship between hotel employees’ perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors and employees’ AC to the organization, $F(7, 103) = 14.63, p < .0001$. Consistent with previous research on the relationship between SL behaviors and organizational commitment conducted, Liden et al. (2008) found a positive effect of SL behaviors on employees’ organizational commitment. Kim and Brymer (2011) discovered hotel managers’ AC has a positive relationship with their executives’ ethical leadership behaviors. Researchers also found transformational leadership has a positive relationship with employees’ AC (Simosi & Xenikou, 2010). Acar (2012) found two dimensions of transactional leadership have positive effects on employees’ AC.

As for the seven dimensions of SL behaviors, regression analysis showed four dimensions had significant relationships with employees’ AC. The four dimensions included empowering (slope = .22, $p = .0440$), helping subordinates grow and succeed (slope = .68, $p < .0001$), putting subordinates first (slope = -.48, $p = .0012$), and behaving ethically (slope = .47, $p = .0006$). The relationship between the other three dimensions of SL (conceptual skills, emotional healing, and creating value for the community) and employees’ AC was not statistically significant.

However, regression analysis indicated the coefficient of putting subordinates first dimension was negative related to employees’ AC, which is opposite to the positive correlation between these two variables, as shown in Table 3. The change in sign between the correlation and regression coefficient likely occurred, due to multicollinearity and the highest correlation between dimensions of putting subordinates first and helping subordinates grow and succeed. Therefore, instead of using the regression results, the researcher analyzed the relationship among the seven dimensions of SL behaviors and employees’ AC based on the correlation results.
Results showed employees’ perceptions of helping subordinates grow and succeed dimension were positively correlated to employees’ AC ($r = .63, p < .01$). When hotel supervisors focused on mentoring and supporting subordinates’ career growth and development, the subordinates may be more committed to the organization. However, the average score for this dimension rated by hotel employees was low compared with the other dimensions. This indicated the hotel supervisors might not exhibit sufficient concern for their subordinates’ career development, so employees’ perceptions on this dimension were inadequate.

Results also showed the behaving ethically dimension of SL was highly correlated to employees’ AC ($r = .62, p < .01$). Previous researchers found organizational ethical culture has a positive relationship with employees’ AC, job satisfaction, and intention to stay (Ruiz-Palomino, Martínez-Cañas, & Fontrodona, 2013). Researchers also found an ethical work environment indirectly increased employees’ AC and decreased turnover intentions (DeConinck, 2011). Additionally, research showed corporate ethical values composed of employees’ perceptions of the extent to which the manager acts ethically in their organization had an indirect positive influence on employees’ AC (Baker, Hunt, & Andrews, 2006). Therefore, if supervisors show ethical behaviors in the workplace, employees may feel a high level of commitment and satisfaction to the organization, and may be more willing to stay within the organization.

Results indicated a positive correlation between empowering dimension of SL and hotel employees’ AC to the organization ($r = .53, p < .01$). In previous results of this study, the third highest rated dimension of SL perceived by employees was empowering. Previous research indicated empowerment has a significant effect on employees’ AC to the organization (Albrecht & Andreetta, 2010). Researchers also found leadership empowerment behaviors have significant effects on employees’ AC and job satisfaction
(Dewettinck & Van Ameijde, 2010). As indicated by Brownell (2010), servant leaders’ motivation was to serve and empower employees, respect and place trust on them. Therefore, if employees perceive their supervisors empowering them to make a decision and solve problems themselves, feelings of empowerment would lead them to be emotionally attached and feel a sense of belonging to the organization.

Correlation analysis showed employees’ perceptions of their supervisors’ emotional healing behaviors are positively correlated with employees’ AC ($r = .53$, $p < .01$). This result may be due to when supervisors show concern about employees’ feelings and personal well being, employees may believe their supervisors sincerely care about them, not only due to business issues, and, therefore, be more committed to the organization. In addition, if supervisors behave well on this dimension, it may help their subordinates better adjust their emotions and develop employees’ AC to the organization.

Results also showed a significantly positive correlation between putting subordinates first and employees’ AC to the organization ($r = .49$, $p < .01$). This indicated that when supervisors behave placing subordinates first, employees may have a higher level of commitment to the organization. This might be also due to employees who are put first may be involved in more career development activities or training programs, leading to a high level of commitment as a result. In the previous results of the current study, the average score for this dimension was the lowest perceived by hotel employees, which indicated hotels could pay more attention to putting their subordinates first to develop employees’ AC to the organizations.

This researcher found a positive correlation between creating values for the community and employees’ AC ($r = .46$, $p < .01$). As Liden et al. (2008) indicated, by showing genuine concern for all team members, supervisors could help the community in which the organization operates by building trust and long-term relationships among its
team members. In addition, Wong, Ngo, and Wong’s (2002) study showed there is a positive effect of employees’ trust on employees’ affective commitment (AC) to the organization. Therefore, if employees’ perceived their supervisors could create value for the community, it is likely to increase employees’ trust to their supervisors as well as the organizations, and further improve employees’ AC to the organization.

Additionally, this researcher also found a positive correlation between conceptual skills dimension of SL and employees’ AC ($r = .45, p < .01$). When supervisors possess sufficient knowledge for handling work tasks and can guide their employees to solve work-related tasks, employees may be more confident and trust their supervisors, and, therefore, be more committed to their organization.

Researchers found employees’ AC towards organizations could increase employees’ job satisfaction and decrease employees’ turnover intentions (Wong, Ngo, & Wong, 2002). Schmidt (2007) also found employees’ AC directly decreases employees’ burnout and moderates the relationship between work stress and related outcomes. In the current study, the researcher found hotel employees’ perceptions about their supervisors’ SL behaviors had a significant relationship with their AC towards the organization. Therefore, if hotel employees’ perceptions about SL behaviors are significantly correlated with their AC to the organizations, it may also have important effects on the employees’ job satisfaction and turnover intentions.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

This conclusion consists of three parts: (1) a summary of the research presented, (2) the limitations of this study discussed, and (3) recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

This conclusion summarizes the findings of four research questions related to how hotel employees’ perceived their present supervisors’ servant leadership (SL) behaviors and their relationships with employees’ affective commitment (AC) to the organization. A total of 127 usable responses from hotel employees working in the State of Iowa were used for this current study. Results indicated the average means for each dimension of employees’ perceived supervisors’ SL ranged from 4.09 ($SD = 1.46$) to 5.43 ($SD = 1.02$). Correlations among the seven dimensions of SL ranged from .31 to .91. Analyses of the current study indicated hotel employees’ perceptions of present supervisors’ SL behaviors were different, according to some of their demographics. In addition, employees’ perceptions of SL behaviors were positively correlated with their AC to the organization.

Findings indicated the most displayed dimensions of employees’ perceived supervisors’ SL are behaving ethically and conceptual skills. The least displayed dimensions are helping subordinates grow and succeed, and putting subordinates first. Findings also indicated that correlations between putting subordinates first, and helping subordinates grow and succeed were the highest ($r = .91$). In addition, results from the current study indicated hotel employees’ perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors were different, based on their length of time working in the hotel industry and length of time working with the present supervisor. This researcher explored hotel employees’ AC were positively correlated with their perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors, especially with the dimensions of helping subordinates grow and succeed ($r = .63$), and behaving ethically ($r = .62$).
Limitations of Study

This study was subjected to certain limitations. Because the participants of this survey were hotel employees working in a Midwest State, the results may be different from other industries or in another areas. In addition, the survey used a self-reported online questionnaire. If the questions were unclear to the participants, there was no researcher to explain. The findings were also limited by the accuracy of the responses reported by hotel employees themselves. Because hotel general managers forwarded the survey link, the employees may have felt uncomfortable reporting towards their present supervisor’s leadership behaviors, even though the researcher assured the survey’s confidentiality and anonymity. Therefore, hotel employees’ interest in the study and their willingness to participate in the survey may have also affected their responses to the questionnaire. Additionally, this survey was conducted through a website; some hotel general managers may not have their employees’ e-mail contact information, leading to a limited number of responses to the survey. The research may have different results when the sample size is increased.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies may examine employees’ perceptions of supervisors’ SL behaviors in different organizations within the hospitality area, based on a larger sample size. Researchers can provide incentives to increase employees’ willingness and interest in participation. Because of a lack of employees’ e-mail contact information, researchers may conduct a survey based on paper questionnaires and distribute them through mail or hand delivered to increase sample size. Researchers can conduct more empirical studies to investigate relationships between SL behaviors and their relevant outcomes in the hospitality industry, or to explore SL behaviors as a moderator of the relationship between employees’ AC and other outcomes. In addition, due to the interactions of leadership
between supervisors and subordinates, SL behaviors may be assessed from perceptions of both supervisors and subordinates.
REFERENCES


Iowa Lodging Association Member List. Retrieved on August 8, 2013, from [http://www.iowalodgingassociation.org/AbouttheILA/MemberList.aspx](http://www.iowalodgingassociation.org/AbouttheILA/MemberList.aspx)


APPENDIX A. HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Date: 10/29/2013
To: Ruya Han
56 Schilling Village, Apt A
Ames, IA 50010

CC: Dr. Eric A Brown
18B MacKay Hall

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: Hotel Employees' Perceptions of Supervisors' Servant Leadership Behaviors and Relationships with Employees' Affective Commitment

IRB ID: 13-461

Study Review Date: 10/29/2013

The project referenced above has been declared exempt from the requirements of the human subject protection regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b) because it meets the following federal requirements for exemption:

- (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey or interview procedures with adults or observation of public behavior where
  - Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; or
  - Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, or reputation.

The determination of exemption means that:
- You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.
- You must carry out the research as described in the IRB application. Review by IRB staff is required prior to implementing modifications that may change the exempt status of the research. In general, review is required for any modifications to the research procedures (e.g., method of data collection, nature or scope of information to be collected, changes in confidentiality measures, etc.), modifications that result in the inclusion of participants from vulnerable populations, and/or any change that may increase the risk or discomfort to participants. Changes to key personnel must also be approved. The purpose of review is to determine if the project still meets the federal criteria for exemption.
- Non-exempt research is subject to many regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to implementation of the study. Conducting non-exempt research without IRB review and approval may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct according to ISU policy.
- Detailed information about requirements for submission of modifications can be found on the Exempt Study Modification Form. A Personnel Change Form may be submitted when the only modification involves changes in study staff. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans Form will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review. Only the IRB or designees may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.

Please be aware that approval from other entities may also be needed. For example, access to data from private records (e.g., student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. An IRB determination of exemption in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4986 or IRB@iastate.edu.
APPENDIX B. SERVANT LEADERSHIP SCALE PERMISSION FORM

Email was sent to request permission of using servant leadership questionnaire. Below is the response from Dr. Liden:

Dear Ruya,
You are most welcome to use our scale. I have attached it as well as two in-press papers that may be of use to you. Best of luck with your research.

Best Regards,
Bob Liden

Robert C. Liden
Professor of Management
Director of CBA Doctoral Programs; Coordinator of the OB/HR Doctoral Program
Department of Managerial Studies (M/C 243) Room 2232
University of Illinois at Chicago
601 S. Morgan Street
Chicago, IL 60607-7123
http://business.uic.edu/liden

From: Ruya Han [mailto:hanruya@iastate.edu] Sent: Monday, February 10, 2014 3:23 PM To: bobliden@uic.edu Subject: Permission to use servant leadership questionnaire

Hello Robert,
My name is Ruya Han, and I am a graduate student in the Hospitality Management program at Iowa State University. I am working on my thesis focusing on hotel employee's perception of supervisor's servant leadership behaviors and its relationship with employees' affective commitment. I am now requesting your permission of using the 28-item servant leadership scale to conduct my study. Thank you for your time and consideration.
Look forward to your reply!
--
Ruya Han
Master Student
Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management
College of Human Science Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011
515-817-3933
APPENDIX C. AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE PERMISSION FORM

- **Academic Package**
  The Academic Package includes the survey, instructions for using, scoring, and interpreting the survey results as well as additional sources for more information about the commitment scales and employee commitment. The license provides proper permission notice for use of the scales for academic purposes.

  The license for the Academic Package is limited to the use of the TCM Employee Commitment Survey in a single research project. Subsequent uses of the Survey require a renewal licence. The license agreement for the Academic Package stipulates that the scales will be used for academic purposes only, and that the user will not charge clients for administering/interpreting the scales or use the scales as part of a proprietary organizational survey.

- **Academic Licenses**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Academic Researcher (single research project)</th>
<th>FREE*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student (single research project)</td>
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“Inventors” indicate the authors, Dr. John Meyer and Dr. Natalie Allen, in the faculty of Social Science at UWO.

“Questionnaire” indicates the TCM Employee Commitment Survey, Academic Version 2004 developed by the Inventors. The Questionnaire includes the Users Guide and the Organizational Commitment Survey which is available in two versions; the “Original” which contains 24 questions and the “Revised” which contains 18 questions. The license granted under this Agreement includes both versions of the survey and the Users Guide and can be downloaded from this website as a single PDF file.

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9. GOVERNMENT END USERS: US Government end users are not authorized to use the Questionnaire under this Agreement.

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(b) USE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE OR THE WEBSOFT DOWNLOAD SERVICE IS PROHIBITED IN ANY JURISDICTION WHICH DOES NOT GIVE EFFECT TO THE TERMS OF THIS AGREEMENT.

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(e) No modification of this Agreement shall be binding, unless in writing and accepted by an authorized representative of each party.

(f) The provisions of this Agreement are severable in that if any provision in the
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(h) YOU should print out or download a copy of this Agreement and retain it for your records.

(i) YOU consent to the use of the English language in this Agreement.
APPENDIX D. PILOT TEST QUESTIONS

This pilot test is intended to test the reliability, wording, and design of the web-based questionnaire. Please take the online survey about employee’s perception on their present supervisor’s servant leadership behaviors and their self-reported affective commitment. Feel free to make comments on the questionnaire by responding to the following questions:

1. Were the questions understandable?
   - Yes
   - No. Please indicate the question number and why it was difficult to understand:

2. Were the rating scales (rankings) understandable?
   - Yes
   - No. Please indicate what you feel could be done to make the scale easier to understand:

3. Was the format of the web-based survey easy to go through?
   - Yes
   - No. Please indicate which part of the questionnaire and what you feel could be done to make the format easier to read:

4. Overall, what suggestions do you have to improve the questionnaire?

Thank you for your time and help with this pilot test, your suggestions are valuable and greatly appreciated.
APPENDIX E. E-MAIL SCRIPT USED FOR CONTACT HOTEL GENERAL MANAGERS

Dear Hotel Manager,

My name is Ruya Han and I am a graduate student in the Hospitality Management program at Iowa State University. I am conducting a study to investigate how hotel employees perceive their supervisors’ servant leadership behaviors and its relationship with their affective commitment. The purpose of this letter is to briefly explain the research procedures and to seek your assistance.

Employees’ affective commitment represents employees’ feelings about the organization where they work. Affective commitment could improve employees’ job satisfaction and a hotel’s overall performance. Servant leadership represents leadership behaviors in which someone cares about benefits to followers. The results of this research may provide suggestions for hotel practitioners about the benefits and methods of fostering servant leaders in the future and has the potential to increase employees’ affective commitment.

I would like to get your permission to include your employees in this research. If you are willing to let your employees participate, you could send an email to your employees with a link to my online survey. I would ensure no identification would be linked to you or your organization.

Your permission for allowing your employees to participate in my research is crucial and greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me or my major professor, Dr. Eric Brown, at phone numbers or emails listed below. If you would like a summary of findings at the completion of this research, please contact me as well.

If you agree to include your employees in this study, please forward the following link to your employees:

https://iastate.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_0vSqlgCWHQuJkK9

Sincerely,
Ruya Han
Graduate Student
Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management
Iowa State University
515-817-3933
hanruya@iastate.edu

Eric A. Brown, Ph.D., CHE
Assistant Professor
Apparel, Events, and Hospitality Management
Iowa State University
515-294-8474
ebrown@iastate.edu
APPENDIX F. HOTEL EMPLOYEE INFORMED CONSENT AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Hotel Employee,

I am a graduate student in the Hospitality Management program at Iowa State University. I would like to invite you to participate in an anonymous study about perceptions of supervisors’ servant leadership behaviors and its relationships with employees’ affective commitment.

Affective commitment represents feelings about the company for which you are working. Servant leadership theory emphasizes the importance of caring about followers’ benefits more than the leader’s own. The results of this study may provide suggestions to hotel practitioners about the benefits and methods of fostering servant leaders in the future and has the potential to increase employees’ affective commitment.

The survey will take around 10 minutes to complete and your participation is completely voluntary. Completing the survey is not a work requirement, and there is no foreseeable risk associated with participating in this survey. You can leave the study at any time without any penalty and your responses will be strictly confidential.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Your participation is crucial and greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please do not hesitate to contact Ruya Han, hanruya@iastate.edu, 515-817-3933, or Dr. Eric A. Brown, ebrown@iastate.edu, 515-294-8474. If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact the IRB Administrator, IRB@iastate.edu, 515-294-4566.

Sincerely,

Ruya Han
Master Student
Iowa State University
hanruya@iastate.edu

Eric A. Brown, PhD., CHE
Assistant Professor
Iowa State University
ebrown@iastate.edu

If you agree to participate in this study, please select "yes" below and proceed to next page. Otherwise, please select "no" and proceed to quit this survey.

☐ Yes
☐ No
Part 1. The following questions are for classification purpose only. No identifying information will be linked directly to you.

1. What is your age?
   - 18-22 years
   - 23-27 years
   - 28-32 years
   - 33-37 years
   - 38-42 years
   - 43-47 years
   - 48 years or older

2. What is your gender?
   - Male
   - Female
3. What is your ethnicity?

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African-American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other. Please specify: 

4. In which department are you working now?

- Accounting & Finance
- Food & Beverage
- Front Office
- Housekeeping
- Human Resources
- Maintenance & Engineering
- Sales & Marketing
- Other. Please specify: 

5. How long have you worked in the hotel industry?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5 years or more
6. How long have you worked with your present supervisor?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5 years or more

7. To which type does this hotel belong?

- Chain hotel
- Independent hotel
- Not sure
- Other. Please specify: 

  [Textbox]
Part 2. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your perception of the leadership behaviors of your immediate supervisor, that is, the person to whom you report directly and who rates your performance.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My supervisor can tell if something work-related is going wrong.</td>
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<td>2. My supervisor gives me the responsibility to make important decisions about my job.</td>
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<td>3. My supervisor makes my career development a priority.</td>
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<td>4. My supervisor seems to care about my success more than his/her own.</td>
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<td>5. My supervisor holds high ethical standards.</td>
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<td>6. I would seek help from my supervisor if I had a personal problem.</td>
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<td>7. My supervisor emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.</td>
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<td>8. My supervisor is able to effectively think through complex problems.</td>
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<td>9. My supervisor encourages me to handle important work decisions on my own.</td>
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<td>10. My supervisor is interested in making sure that I achieve my career goals.</td>
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<td>11. My supervisor puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.</td>
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<td>12. My supervisor is always honest.</td>
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<td>13. My supervisor cares about my personal well-being.</td>
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<td>14. My supervisor is always interested in helping people in our community.</td>
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<td>15. My supervisor has a thorough understanding of our organization and its goals.</td>
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<td>16. My supervisor gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way that I feel is best.</td>
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<td>17. My supervisor provides me with work experiences that enable me to develop new skills.</td>
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<td>18. My supervisor sacrifices his/her own interests to meet my needs.</td>
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<td>19. My supervisor would not compromise ethical principles in order to achieve success.</td>
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<td>20. My supervisor takes time to talk to me on a personal level.</td>
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<td>21. My supervisor is involved in community activities.</td>
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<td>22. My supervisor is able to solve work problems with new or creative ideas.</td>
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<td>23. When I have to make an important decision at work, I do not have to consult my supervisor first.</td>
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<td>24. My supervisor wants to know my career goals.</td>
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<td>25. My supervisor does whatever she/he can to make my job easier.</td>
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<td>26. My supervisor values honesty more than profits.</td>
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<td>27. Without asking me, my supervisor can recognize when I am down.</td>
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<td>28. My supervisor encourages me to volunteer in the community.</td>
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Part 3. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about your affective commitment, that is, feelings about the hotel for which you are now working.

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