

Comparing and Contrasting Followership and Servant Leadership

The concepts of followership and servant leadership are integral to achieving organizational success, and they are distinct and serve unique functions within the organizational context. Although there are some similarities, there are also discernible differences that distinguish them. The objective of this essay is to conduct a comparative analysis of followership and servant leadership, with an emphasis on identifying their commonalities and distinctions.

Followership

According to Taylor et al. (2007), followership is characterized by attaining a particular objective by demonstrating deference to those in positions of authority, a constructive outlook, ethical principles, and personal responsibility. The significance of followers in shaping the outcome of a mission and their indispensability for the triumph of a leader has been widely acknowledged (cf. "Followership Versus Leadership," 2021). According to Uhlir (2023), individuals are accountable for effectively following instructions, fulfilling designated duties, and ensuring their superiors are held responsible. According to Taylor et al. (2007), followership can be considered a component of leadership, given that there is always a person in a position of authority over others.

Servant Leadership

Robert Greenleaf's concept of servant leadership is characterized by a primary motivation to serve, recognizing that leadership is a conferred position that can be revoked (Webb, 2019). According to Dennis et al. (2010), servant leaders exhibit competencies such as attentive listening, mindfulness, and dedication to the development of their subordinates. According to Uhlir (2023), leaders establish meaningful connections with their subordinates and colleagues, offering them the requisite direction to foster their advancement and maturation. According to Dennis et al. (2010), servant leaders prioritize the needs of their subordinates and superiors over their own, focusing on promoting a positive environment by ensuring the well-being of their team members.

Similarities

Followership and servant leadership exhibit several overlapping characteristics, including but not limited to the dedication, subservience, ardor, adaptability, and adaptiveness. The significance of collaboration and communication, along with trust and mutual respect, are highlighted in both roles as per the findings of Smith et al. (2004). According to Dennis et al. (2010), there is a commonality in values such as loyalty, respect, and performance of duties among them. According to Taylor et al. (2007), in the military setting, subordinates and leaders who serve adhere to the Army values and warrior ethos.

Differences

Although there may be certain resemblances between followership and servant leadership, their respective roles and responsibilities exhibit notable distinctions.

According to Taylor et al. (2007), individuals who assume the role of servant leaders are tasked with a greater level of responsibility than their followers. This is because they are expected to possess heightened foresight, conceptualization, and task awareness to accomplish their mission effectively. According to Smith et al. (2004), servant leadership pertains to enabling individuals to achieve organizational objectives, whereas followership prioritizes compliance with authority. The primary distinction between the two positions pertains to the accountability and workload assigned to each role, as Dennis et al. (2010) noted.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the concepts of followership and servant leadership are intricately linked and serve as integral components in facilitating the triumph of an institution. Although they have similarities, such as the presence of commitment, trust, and mutual respect, their respective roles and responsibilities exhibit significant differences. Servant leadership is characterized by a focus on empowering subordinates and prioritizing their needs. At the same time, followers are expected to fulfill their responsibilities by taking direction and completing tasks assigned by their leaders. Comprehending the subtle distinctions between these two notions is imperative in constructing robust, unified teams and attaining triumph in an organizational setting.

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