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The role of servant leadership practices in human resource excellence: A case study in Algeria

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Abstract---This study aims to determine the role of servant leadership on human resource excellence through a case study of some organizations by distributing a questionnaire to a sample of 87 workers. The study found that there is a high level of servant leadership among workers, and this is due to the interest of the studied organizations in such behavioral practices among workers. There is a high level of excellence in human resources in the organization. There are no statistically significant differences in the study in the responses of the study sample on the level of servant leadership practices and excellence in human resources in the two study organizations due to gender, age, or nature of the organization. It was found that there is a statistically significant correlation between servant leadership (with its dimensions: Empowerment, Emotional processing, social responsibility, Individual development, Humility) and human resource excellence.

Keywords---human resource excellence, servant leadership, empowerment, emotional processing, social responsibility, development, humility.

Introduction

Recently, many theories have emerged that focus on the aspects of human relations at work and the interest of the employee as an entrance to the interest of the organization. One of these theories was the theory of servant leadership, which is based on the idea of “the servant leader is a servant first”, a leadership philosophy that works to satisfy the needs of organizations and promote the concept of human resource excellence among employees by empowering them, developing them, giving them powers and involving them in decision making, without seeking to achieve personal interests but to advance the goals of the organization and achieve the goals of the followers within the job in which they work, thus becoming an organization for followers not only to achieve financial goals.

The concept of servant leadership has given an additional impetus to the excellence of human resources in economic institutions in their various fields. Therefore, shopping centers have realized their need to support human resource excellence to improve customer service quality and its positive impact on their relationship with leaders. Among these economic institutions are Crestline Market and Assila Hypermarket in the state of Ouargla, Algeria, which will be the field of this study. Accordingly, to study the impact of servant leadership on human resource excellence, we pose the following question:

To what extent can the dimensions of servant leadership contribute to achieving human resource excellence?

Sub-Questions

- What is the level of practice of servant leadership with its dimensions in the two organizations?
- What is the human resource performance excellence level in the two organizations?
- Is there a correlation between servant leadership and human resource excellence in the two organizations?
- Are there statistically significant differences in the attitudes of the study sample members about the level of practice of servant leadership and human resource excellence in the two organizations under study due to (gender, experience, and nature of the organization).

Hypothesis

Main Hypothesis

The dimensions of servant leadership contribute significantly to achieving human resource excellence.

Sub-Hypotheses

H1: There is a high level of application of servant leadership in the two organizations under study.

H2: There is a high level of human resource excellence in the organizations under study.

H3: There is a statistically significant correlation between servant leadership with its dimensions adopted in the study and human resource excellence in the organizations under study.

H4: There are statistically significant differences in the responses of the study sample on the level of servant leadership practices and human resource excellence in the two study organizations due to the following factors (gender, experience, nature of the Market).

Significance of the Study

This study demonstrates the contribution of servant leadership to human resource excellence and seeks to know the extent of its existence in the two study organizations, as well as to help study and identify the dimensions of servant leadership affecting human resource excellence and examine the extent of its achievement in these two organizations, and the importance of the current study also comes from the importance of servant leadership, which constitutes one of the modern leadership styles that have received the attention of many researchers because it is considered one of the methods of developing the human resource continuously and raising its performance.

Model of the Study

The following figure shows a model of the study variables: servant leadership is the independent variable, while human resource excellence is the dependent variable.

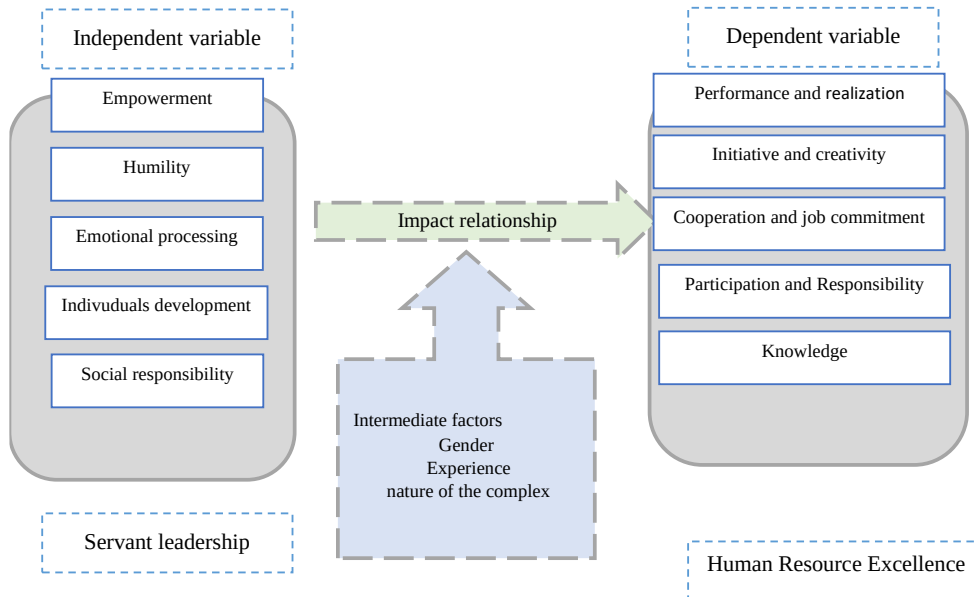


Figure 1. Study model
Source: Prepared by researchers

Theoretical Background Human Resource Excellence

Excellence is generally defined as a high quality that a person possesses in a specific field, and this quality is recognized by people around him and imprinted in their memory that he is a particular person. This means that excellence in work is the ability of a person to be better than others in performing and doing work, as well as recognizing his skills and using them as a model to be followed by others. The concept of human resource: According to Peter Drucker, any organization has one natural resource, which is the human being, as well as those groups of individuals who are capable and willing to perform the work seriously and committed, and this requires that the interaction of the ability with the desire in a harmonious framework to increase the chances of benefiting from this resource when training, education, and development systems are available.

The excellence of human resources refers to its ability to achieve unprecedented results and outperform itself and others and to avoid as much as possible exposure to error or deviation by relying on clarity of vision, setting goals, proper planning and continuous evaluation, and of course, commitment to this concept will lead to success, whether in his work or life (Gharbi & Salatania, 2007), and therefore: Based on the previous definitions, we can define human resource excellence as “Effective practices and efforts to achieve results with a creative edge.”

Servant Leadership

The definitions and concepts of the researchers of leadership varied according to their difference in defining the tasks of the leader in addition to the development of scientific research on the concept of leadership over time, as Jawad defined it that leadership is not a single act, but rather actions that combine leadership and subordination, as the effective leader works with subordinates and other workers to create the vision and strategies and adopt them to achieve goals" (Al-Ghanzi, 2014, p. 15). Black and Mouton defined it as "administrative activity to maximize productivity, stimulate innovation in solving problems, and raise morale and satisfaction" (Hubal, 2015, p. 206). Koontz O dommel defined it as "the art or process of influencing others in such a way that they voluntarily devote all their efforts to achieving common goals" (Ziani, 2013, 32). Drucker defines it as "not the process of making an agenda and influencing people like salesmen, but leadership is raising one's vision to higher levels, raising one's performance to higher standards, and building one's personality beyond its normal limits" (Baraka, 2022, p. 23).

The theory of servant leadership, developed by Greenleaf in 1970, includes practical implications that support anyone who wants to serve people to lead them as groups and organizations. Peter Drucker defines it as "not the process of making an agenda and influencing individuals like salesmen, but leadership is the elevation of the individual's vision to higher levels, raising the individual's performance to higher standards, and building the individual's personality beyond its normal limits" (Ghanam, 2016, p. 4).

Through the previous definitions, we conclude that leadership is any social activity or art that includes the leader's influence on subordinates by taking care of their interests and motivating them to cooperate to create a vision and strategies to achieve the organization's goals.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The study population comprises subordinate employees at Crestline Market and Asilah Hypermarket in Ouargla, Algeria. The two complexes have a total of 241 employees. The study sample was estimated at 90 employees and calculated using a statistical program (SPSS). Where 90 questionnaires were distributed, and 87 valid questionnaires were retrieved.

Tools Used

The questionnaire will be heavily relied on to collect data for the study, as well as scientific observations and company official documents.

Table 1
Field of weighted arithmetic mean for each level (Likert scale)

Mean corresponding level	Domain of the weighted arithmetic mean
Strongly Disagree	1 to 1.8
Disagree	1.8 to 2.6
Neutral	2.6 to 3.4
Agree	3.4 to 4.2
Strongly Agree	4.2 to 5

Source: Abdul Fattah (2008)

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

The validity of the arbitrators: To determine the clarity of the questionnaire questions, they were presented to professors specialized in this field. Then, the phrases were formulated appropriately and clearly and appeared in their final form.

Stability of the questionnaire: The phrases of the questionnaire were examined through Cronbach's alpha, shown in the table below, to calculate the stability of the scale as follows:

Table 2
Stability coefficients for the two study variables using Cronbach's alpha

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Number of paragraphs
Servant Leadership	% 93.70	20
Human Resource Excellence	% 90.20	22

Source: SPSS outputs

The alpha coefficient for the independent variable (servant leadership) reaches 93.70%, which is considered a very high level of stability and reliability, and also the same for the dependent variable (human resource excellence), where the stability rate reached (90.20%), which is a very high value.

Results and Discussion

Analyzing the paragraphs of the servant leadership variable

We analyze each of the paragraphs of the variable as follows:

Dimension of empowering individuals

Table 3
Analyzing the paragraphs of the servant leadership variable (empowering individuals dimension)

Paragraph number	Frequencies	strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Average	Standard deviation	Percentage	Sample trend	rank
01	Ni	04	66	05	08	04	3.67	0.88	73.40	Agree	01
	Fi%	4.60	75.90	5.70	9.20	4.60					
02	Ni	08	35	12	16	16	3.03	1.31	60.60	Neutral	03
	Fi%	9.20	40.20	13.80	18.40	18.40					
03	Ni	08	31	17	20	11	3.06	1.21	61.20	Neutral	02
	Fi%	9.20	35.60	19.50	23	12.60					
04	Ni	07	28	19	17	16	2.92	1.26	58.40	Neutral	04
	Fi%	08	32.20	21.80	19.50	18.40					
Dimension							3.96	12.68	63.40	Neutral	/

Source: SPSS outputs

The table shows that paragraph No. 01 (The manager delegates some powers to get the work done) ranked first with an arithmetic mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 0.88, where we see that 73.40% of the study sample members answered that they agree that the manager delegates some powers to get the work done.

Emotional humility dimension

Table 4
Analyzing the paragraphs of the servant leadership variable (humility dimension)

Paragraph number	Frequencies	strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Average	Standard deviation	Percentage	Sample trend	rank
05	Ni	08	45	20	06	08	3.45	1.06	69	Agree	02
	Fi%	9.20	51.70	23	6.90	9.20					
06	Ni	07	44	23	04	09	3.41	1.06	68.20	Agree	03
	Fi%	08	50.60	26.40	4.60	10.30					
07	Ni	18	46	11	04	08	2.71	1.13	45.20	Neutral	04
	Fi%	20.70	52.90	12.60	4.60	9.20					
08	Ni	27	43	09	05	03	3.99	0.98	79.80	Agree	01
	Fi%	31	49.40	10.30	5.70	3.40					
Dimension							14.56	3.26	72.80	Agree	/

Source: SPSS outputs

Paragraph No. 08 (I consider my success in my work a stepping stone to progress and an opportunity to lend a helping hand) ranked 01 with a mean of 3.99 and a standard deviation of 0.98. 79.80% of the study sample members agreed that their success in their work is a stepping stone to progress and an opportunity to help.

Emotional processing dimension

Table 5
Analyzing the paragraphs of the servant leadership variable (emotional processing)

Paragraph number	Frequencies	strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Average	Standard deviation	Percentage	Sample trend	rank
09	Ni	15	34	03	13	22	3.08	1.50	61.60	Neutral	03
	Fi%	17.20	39.10	3.40	14.90	25.30					
10	Ni	14	34	13	08	18	3.21	1.39	64.20	Neutral	01
	Fi%	16.10	39.10	14.90	9.20	20.70					
11	Ni	09	31	19	14	14	3.08	1.26	61.60	Neutral	02
	Fi%	10.30	35.60	21.80	16.10	16.10					
12	Ni	03	32	15	21	16	2.83	1.21	56.60	Neutral	04
	Fi%	3.40	36.80	17.20	24.10	18.40					
Dimension							12.20	6.63	61	Neutral	/

Source: SPSS outputs

Paragraph No. 10 (The official listens to us regardless of our psychological state and tries to find a solution with me to the issue at hand) ranked 01 with an arithmetic mean of 3.21 and a standard deviation of 1.39. 64.20% of the study sample members took a neutral position regarding the fact that the official listens to them regardless of their psychological state and tries to find a solution to the issue at hand.

Developing individuals dimension

Table 6
Analyzing the paragraphs of the servant leadership variable (developing individuals)

Paragraph number	Frequencies	strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Average	Standard deviation	Percentage	Sample trend	rank
13	Ni	06	45	16	10	10	3.31	1.13	66.20	Neutral	03
	Fi%	6.90	51.70	18.40	11.50	11.50					
14	Ni	08	34	10	15	20	2.94	1.37	58.80	Neutral	04
	Fi%	9.20	39.10	11.50	17.20	23					
15	Ni	08	53	10	10	06	3.54	1.04	70.80	Agree	01
	Fi%	9.20	60.90	11.50	11.50	6.90					
16	Ni	16	37	10	12	12	3.38	1.31	67.60	Neutral	02
	Fi%	18.40	42.50	11.50	13.80	13.80					
Dimension							13.17	3.99	65.85	Neutral	/

Source: SPSS outputs

Paragraph No. 15 (My direct supervisor provides me with the necessary work experiences that enable me to perform the tasks assigned to me) ranked first with an arithmetic mean of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 1.04, where we see that 70.80% of the study sample members answered that they agree that their direct supervisor provides them with the necessary work experiences that enable them to perform the tasks assigned to them. The respondents have a neutral attitude towards management, providing a suitable work environment in which to accomplish their assigned tasks under favorable conditions.

Social responsibility dimension

Table 7
Analyzing the paragraphs of the servant leadership variable (Social responsibility)

Paragraph number	Frequencies	strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Weighted Average	Standard deviation	Percentage	Sample trend	rank
17	Ni	15	43	17	05	07	3.62	1.09	72.40	Agree	01
	Fi%	17.20	49.40	19.50	5.70	08					
18	Ni	09	32	20	14	12	3.14	1.22	62.80	Neutral	04
	Fi%	10.30	36.80	23	16.10	13.80					
19	Ni	13	39	22	05	08	3.51	1.11	70.20	Agree	02
	Fi%	14.90	44.80	25.30	5.70	9.20					
20	Ni	10	42	17	11	07	3.43	1.11	68.60	Agree	03
	Fi%	11.50	48.30	19.50	12.60	08					
Dimension							13.69	3.60	68.45	Agree	/

Source: SPSS outputs

Paragraph No. 15 (My direct supervisor provides me with the necessary work experiences that enable me to perform the tasks assigned to me) ranked first with an arithmetic mean of 3.54 and a standard deviation of 1.04, where we see that 70.80% of the study sample members answered that they agree that their direct supervisor provides them with the necessary work experiences that enable them to perform the tasks assigned to them. The respondents have a neutral attitude towards management, providing a suitable work environment in which to accomplish their assigned tasks under favorable conditions.

Dimensions of Servant Leadership

Table 7
Arithmetic means and standard deviations of the dimensions of the servant leadership variable

N	Dimensions	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Trend	Rank
01	Empowering people	12.68	3.96	Neutral	04
02	Humility	14.56	3.26	Agree	01
03	Emotional processing	12.20	4.63	Neutral	05
04	Individual development	13.17	3.99	Neutral	03
05	Social Responsibility	13.69	3.60	Agree	02

Source: SPSS outputs

From the table above, we can see that the dimension of humility ranked first at a high level with an arithmetic mean of 14.56 and a standard deviation of 3.26, followed by the dimension of social and cultural responsibility in the second place at a high level with an arithmetic mean of 13.69 and a standard deviation of 3.60, followed by the dimension of developing individuals in the third place at a medium level with an arithmetic mean of 13.17 and a standard deviation of 3.99, followed by empowering individuals in the fourth place at a medium level.

Hypotheses Testing

H1: There is a high level of application of servant leadership in the organizations under study.

To test the hypothesis, we set and test the null hypothesis (H0): The level of implementation of servant leadership in my organization does not differ from the mean at the 0.05 significance level.

Table 8
Testing the first hypothesis

T	Significance value	Hypothetical mean	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom
3.648	0.05	60	66.30	16.11	86

Source: SPSS outputs

Since the significant value (Sig) of the one-sample t-test equal to 0.000 is less than the significance level of $0.05 = \alpha$, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, from which we conclude that the level of application of servant leadership in my organization is high and therefore the first hypothesis is true.

H2: There is a high level of human resource excellence in the organizations under study (Crestline Mall, Asilah Hypermarket, Ouargla, Algeria).

For this, the null hypothesis (H0) will be tested: The level of human resource excellence in the organizations under study does not differ from the mean at a significance level of 0.05:

Table 9
Testing the second hypothesis

T	Significance value	Hypothetical mean	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Degree of Freedom
18.905	0.000	66	88.22	10.96	86

Source: SPSS outputs

The table shows that the significant value (Sig) of the one-sample t-test equal to 0.000 is less than the significance level of $0.05 = \alpha$, so we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, thus concluding the validity of the second hypothesis: The level of human resource excellence in my organization is high.

H3: There is a statistically significant correlation between servant leadership with its dimensions adopted in the study and human resource excellence in the two organizations under study (Crestline Mall, Assila Hypermarket, Ouargla, Algeria). The following table represents the correlation coefficient between the dimensions of servant leadership and human resource excellence.

Table 10
Correlations between the dimensions of servant leadership and human resource excellence

		Human resource excellence
Empowering	Pearson Correlation	0,407**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	87
Humility	Pearson Correlation	0,462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	87
Emotional processing	Pearson Correlation	0,435**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	87
Individual development	Pearson Correlation	0,522**

Social Responsibility	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	87
	Pearson Correlation	0,478**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	87

Source: SPSS outputs

The correlation between people development and human resource excellence is 0.522, which shows a moderate direct correlation between the two variables, which is statistically significant because the significant value (Sig) of the Pearson correlation coefficient is equal to 0.000 less than the significance level of $0.05 = \alpha$

The correlation between social responsibility and human resource excellence is 0.478, which shows a moderate positive correlation between the two variables, which is statistically significant because the Sig value of the Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.000 less than the significance level of $0.05 = \alpha$

The correlation between humility and human resource excellence is 0.462, which shows a moderate direct correlation between the two variables. This is statistically significant because the Sig value of the Pearson correlation coefficient equals 0.000 less than the significance level of $0.05 = \alpha$.

H4: There are statistically significant differences in the responses of the study sample on the level of servant leadership practices and human resource excellence in the two study organizations due to the following factors (gender, experience, nature of the Market).

Gender

Table 11
Means and standard deviations of the level of human resource excellence by gender

gender	N	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T	Sig	Significance level	Degree of freedom	Decision
Male	59	87.31	11.90	1.130	0.262	0.05	85	Not significant
Female	28	90.14	8.55					

Source: SPSS outputs

Since the significant value (Sig) of the t-test for two independent samples is 0.262, more significant than the significance level of $0.05 = \alpha$, we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis, which concludes that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of human resource excellence in the two organizations under study due to the gender variable.

Experience

Table 11
Means and standard deviations of human resource excellence by age

Source	Sum Of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Of Squares	F	Sig
Between groups	190.883	03	63.628	0.521	0.669
Within groups	10143.968	83	122.216		
Total variance	10334.851	86			

Source: SPSS outputs

Since the significant value (Sig) of the one-way analysis of variance test is 0.669 greater than the significance level of $0.05 = \alpha$, we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis, thus concluding that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of human resource excellence in the two organizations under study, due to the variable of age.

Nature of the Market

Table 12
Means and standard deviations of the level of human resource excellence by type of Market

gender	N	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T	Sig	Significance level	Degree of freedom	Decision
Crestline	38	89.32	9.93	0.82	0.41	0.05	85	Not significant
Asila	49	87.37	11.73	1	4			

Source: SPSS outputs

Since the significant value (Sig) of the t-test for two independent samples is 0.414 greater than the significance level of $0.05 = \alpha$, we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis, thus concluding that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of human resource excellence in the two organizations under study due to the complex variable.

Conclusion

This study aimed to identify the concepts of servant leadership and human resource excellence, to highlight the importance of servant leadership in Crestline Market and Asila Hypermarket, and the requirements to promote excellence in human resource, and through the field study of a sample of workers from Crestline Market and Asila Hypermarket, and the field study of a sample of workers from Crestline Market and Asila Hypermarket. In order to know the role of servant leadership practices in human resource excellence, we projected what came in the theoretical and applied literature for the study variables in the study organization and the extent to which it provides the requirements to achieve human resource excellence; we reached a set of results and suggestions:

Results of the Study

- There is a high level of servant leadership among workers, and this is due to the study organization's interest in such behavioral practices among the workers of the two complexes and its importance in promoting excellence in human resources.
- The organization prevalingly has a high level and sense of human resource excellence through servant leadership.
- There are no statistically significant differences in the study sample's responses on the level of servant leadership practices and human resource excellence in the two study organizations due to the following factors (gender, age, and nature of the market).
- There is a statistically significant direct correlation between servant leadership with its dimensions adopted in the study and human resource excellence in the two organizations.

Servant leadership is vital in achieving human resource excellence by fostering a positive organizational culture, enhancing employee performance, and promoting job satisfaction. The results of this study are similar to previous studies that demonstrated that servant leadership significantly influences employee performance and organizational citizenship behavior, which are essential for competitive advantage in the knowledge-based economy of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Rahmadani et al., 2023). In addition, servant leadership promotes emotional commitment and work motivation, which further contributes to improved employee performance (2023, Syahputra). Furthermore, integrating servant leadership with team-based HRM practices can mitigate deviant behaviors within teams, fostering a more collaborative and effective work environment (Ren et al., 2023). Aligning HR practices with servant leadership ensures that organizations prioritize people-oriented strategies, vital to addressing contemporary organizational challenges (van Dierendonck, 2018). Finally, HR practices mediate the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of effective HR strategies in enhancing employee satisfaction (Rozika et al., 2018). In short, servant leadership is an integral part of HR excellence, performance leadership, commitment, and satisfaction within organizations.

Suggestions

Based on the findings, the following suggestions can be made:

- Training courses should be held to benefit the staff of the two complexes and consolidate and activate servant leadership (its concept, importance, and how to practice it).
- Intensifying studies on servant leadership in public and private organizations due to the urgent need for such a study in light of the requirements of our reality, as a prelude to researching ways to rehabilitate Algerian institutions.
- A comparative study will identify the compatibility between servant leadership in both the public and private sectors.
- Relying on the Ministry's training programs to help improve performance

and raise competencies is necessary.

- Relations between senior management and workers in the organization need to be consolidated, and workers must be given opportunities to participate in decision-making to unify goals and improve human resource excellence.
- Adopting the method of discussion and dialogue with workers to raise their aspirations and career hopes.

Research Prospects

After this study and after reaching the previous results of the research, our study opened new horizons for the study that can be addressed in the future to continue the research, for example, in the following areas:

- The impact of servant leadership in achieving outstanding performance of human resources in economic organizations.
- The role of servant leadership in enhancing organizational communication.
- The reality of servant leadership in Algerian public organizations.
- The impact of personal and job factors on human resource excellence in public and private organizations.
- Applying the study to other sectors (governmental sector, public economic sector, private industrial sector).
- We recommend the application of other studies that test servant leadership as a mediating or dependent variable.

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