

SAMOAN SOCIETY AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

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Abstract

Servant leadership is multifaceted, interpersonal and cross-cultural, a philosophy in which Samoan society is deeply rooted. The servant leadership is perceived as a paradigm shift from leadership at the helm to the leader that serves. It echoes Samoan theoretical viewpoint that the path to leadership is through service. Early beliefs of leadership in the traditional hierarchical structure have gradually been replaced by a more service-oriented leadership. In Samoan society the concept of service is embedded in all aspects of life that encompasses the family, church, community and nation. It includes *teu le va* or safeguarding relationships to maintain peace and harmony. Greenleaf's servant leadership concept guided the conceptual framework and the theoretical framework and understanding of servant leadership was linked to the socioculturalist and constructivist theories that focus on active and interactive experience which contribute to the enhancement of practice and communication. The ten characteristics of servant leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community were aligned to the indigenous, organic Samoan leadership approaches. This could be seen as a step towards coexistence in educational practice, connecting humanity and transcending physical borders and cultural orientations.

Keywords: servant leadership, indigenous organic Samoan leadership, western leadership, cultural values, collaborative, dominant, hierarchical structure

INTRODUCTION

As the world revolves in time and space so does theories of effective leadership. The servant leadership espoused by Greenleaf (1970) offered a changing leadership discourse to a global world that has witnessed monumental changes never seen before. Technological and other online platforms have inundated nations including small island countries like Samoa and this has changed the landscape in relation to people's perspectives, priorities, values, morals, and ethics. The servant leadership paradigm has proposed a marked shift from leadership at the apex to leadership that is transforming and revolutionizing.

This changing discourse facilitated the paradigm shift in the way leaders are perceived in organisations from the dominant perspective of the leader at the helm to the leader that serves. Servant leadership with its focus on a serving leader stands in contrast to early notions of leaders that predominately adhere to their role in the traditional hierarchical structure.

Defining servant leadership, the model and the two dimensions which form the basis of this leadership, its theoretical and conceptual frameworks, its foundation, development, and criticisms, servant leadership approaches will be compared and contrast to the indigenous organic Samoan leadership of Samoan society. The sociocultural, constructivist, and interpretive theories are the theoretical foundations for servant leadership and also forms the basis of organic Samoan leadership.

Historically Samoan culture is collaborative in nature and villages work together to plant the land, fish, build houses and boats, weave, and participate in cultural ceremonies. In Samoan society, families elect their *matais* or chiefs through patriarchal or matriarchal lineages (Holmes, 1980). Their functions as family leaders are to look after the affairs of the family which include family land, family titles, and the overall well-being of the family in relation to village governance, disciplinary actions, and

protocols. Mead (1928) claims “It is for its intricacy and complexity of social organization that Samoan culture is particularly conspicuous” (494).

In traditional Samoa service to the *matai* usually culminates with the selection of a new *matai* to replace a past or outgoing one. The concept of service as illustrated in the selection of the *matai* is the follower being rewarded by becoming the leader and this may be similar to Greenleaf’s concept. At present new *matais* are selected by *matais* of the family. Anyone who is kinship regardless of gender is eligible to be a *matai* (Holmes, 1980) and evidence of the servant leadership concept of consultation, collaboration, and equality of opportunity is evident.

Samoa society is based on the concept of service – service to family, church, community, and nation. The concept of service as embedded in the fabric of Samoan society includes service to parents, *matais*, elders, and those in authority and is sanctioned by tradition and culture. This is perceived as essential for the continuity of cultural values and relationships. The Samoa expression *teu le va* meaning take care of the relationship is an important concept that reflects the importance of maintaining peace and harmony especially during conflict negotiations (Duranti, 1997). People’s relationship at home as part of the extended family or institutions of society is an integral part of Samoa life. With the advent of education, leadership was a contrast to the leadership hierarchical structure of Samoan culture and tradition (Mead, 1928; Mageo, 1989). Inadvertently, the concept of servant leadership reinforces the traditional view of service to become a leader, not leader as servant first. As a perceived servant leadership society Samoa on giving and reciprocity it has the advantage of integrating servant leadership attributes. Grant (2013) argues that “Givers succeed in a way that creates a ripple effect, enhancing the success of people around them the difference lies in how the giver creates value, instead of just claiming it” (p. 10). Servant leadership principles articulated by Greenleaf are perceived to be similar to the teachings of Christianity that Samoa also embraces.

Practice of Servant Leadership

The practice of servant leadership has its historical roots in Eastern beliefs and Christianity. Although Greenleaf is coined the father of the servant leadership movement in academia, the concept is an ancient philosophy and can be traced to Lao-Tzu a Chinese philosopher in the sixth century B. C. The Bible also exemplifies in the persona of Jesus Christ, the embodiment of the servant leader.

Servant leadership is based on the desire to serve others (Anderson, 2008; Taleghani & Mehr, 2013), which is not equated to being servile. Service in Greenleaf’s view is a moral dimension, “the actions and attitudes of service can transform relations among real human beings...things get done by people serving one another” (Greenleaf & Spears, 1998, p. xii). As Neuschel (2005) iterates, “Always serve your troops first that you may command them better” (p. xiii). It is the leadership that up-ends the traditional hierarchical structure of the leader in the dominant and most powerful position (Waterman, 2011). From this perspective, the leader is a servant first because they put the needs of those they

want to develop first. They initiate action, provide opportunities, create endless possibilities, and take risks to promote and empower others. Through their efforts of serving others first, they provide a haven that instigates trust, confidence, and teamwork (Tate, 2003) which can propel institutions, organisations, and followers to become more and better entities for society.

Using Greenleaf’s framework, the characteristics exemplified by researchers across cultural organisations are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1
Authors and Servant Leadership characteristics

Authors	Servant Leadership Characteristics
Spears (1995)	Listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, building community. Values people, develop people, builds community, displays authenticity, provides leadership, shares leadership.
Laub (1999)	Functional attributes: vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modelling, pioneering, appreciation of others, empowerment.
Russell & Stone (2002)	Accompanying attributes: communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching, delegation. Performance orientation, future orientation, gender egalitarianism, assertiveness, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, power distance,
Hale & Fields (2007)	humane orientation, uncertainty avoidance. Modelling behaviour, stewardship, honesty, trust integrity, credibility, appreciation of others, concern for the growth of people, community building, delegation, teaching,
Melchar & Bosco (2010)	empowerment, encouragement, listening, communication. Empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, stewardship.
van Dierendonck (2011)	Service to others, facilitate the needs of others, foster problem solving and taking responsibility, promote emotional healing, means are essential as ends, keep one eye on the present and one on the future, embrace paradoxes and dilemmas,

Authors	Servant Leadership Characteristics
Wheeler (2012)	leave a legacy to society, model servant leadership, develop more servant leaders. Egalitarianism: service, consultative, putting subordinates' first. Moral integrity: moral courage, ethical behaviour. Empowering: empowering and developing people.
Mittal & Dorfman (2012)	Empathy: interpersonal acceptance and emotional healing. Humility: humility and modesty. Voluntary subordination: being a servant, acts of service. Authentic self: humility, integrity, accountability, security, vulnerability.
Sendjaya (2015)	Covenantal relationship: acceptance, availability, equality, collaboration. Responsible morality: moral actions, moral reasoning Transcended spirituality: religiousness, interconnectedness, sense of mission, wholeness. Transforming influence: vision, modelling, mentoring, trust, empowerment.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guides understanding of the concept of servant leadership and connects it to other theories such as the sociocultural theory and the constructivist theory. These are aligned to the indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches. Socioculturalists and constructivists believe members of a community construct knowledge and understanding at different levels of expertise (Wells & Claxton, 2008). While both acknowledge the diverse participatory mechanisms used, there is agreement that contextual factors play a significant role (Jonassen, 1994; Packer & Goicoechea, 2000).

Greenleaf's servant leadership provides the theoretical framework where he proposes a leader that is focused on service, "an application of the philosophy of service to the practice of leadership" (Greenleaf & Spears, 1998 p. xi). Service is a

relationship, supporting the moral imperative of leadership (Baron, 2010; Northouse, 2013; Robson, 2011; Wallace, 2007). Greenleaf and Spears (1998) further challenge leadership conceptions by postulating that a servant leader is not "What service can you render as a leader" but "What leadership can you exercise as a servant?" (p. 12). Leadership is inherently collaborative and aims at empowerment of individuals to serve institutions and the community (Bolden et al., 2011; Hickman, 2010a, 2010b; Humphrey, 2014; Johnson, 2009; Lewis & Nobel, 2008).

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provides guidance and direction to the overall research. It involves the formulation of research questions and ensures flexibility in the construction of the research design. The characteristics of servant leadership as effective leaders focus first and foremost on servants before leaders. The ten characteristics of servant leadership are caring and service-oriented, and servant leaders are committed to ensuring leaders serve their followers (Bjugstad et al., 2006; Blackshear, 2004; Block, 1996; Burns, 1978; Daft, 2015, 2008).

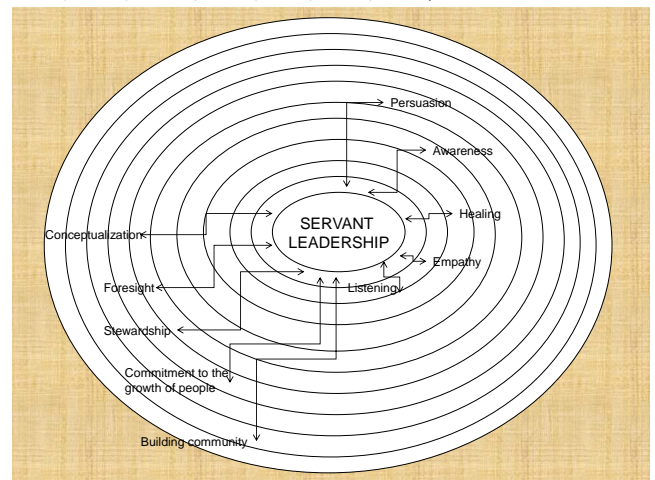


Figure 1. Concentric representation of servant leadership. Its circular movements begin with listening and end with community building. All the elements converge on the servant as leader.

The concentric representation illustrates the intricate, inimitable, and fiduciary nature of leadership. While listening may undergird all leadership attributes, there is flexibility and fluidity that intersects the caring and service boundaries.

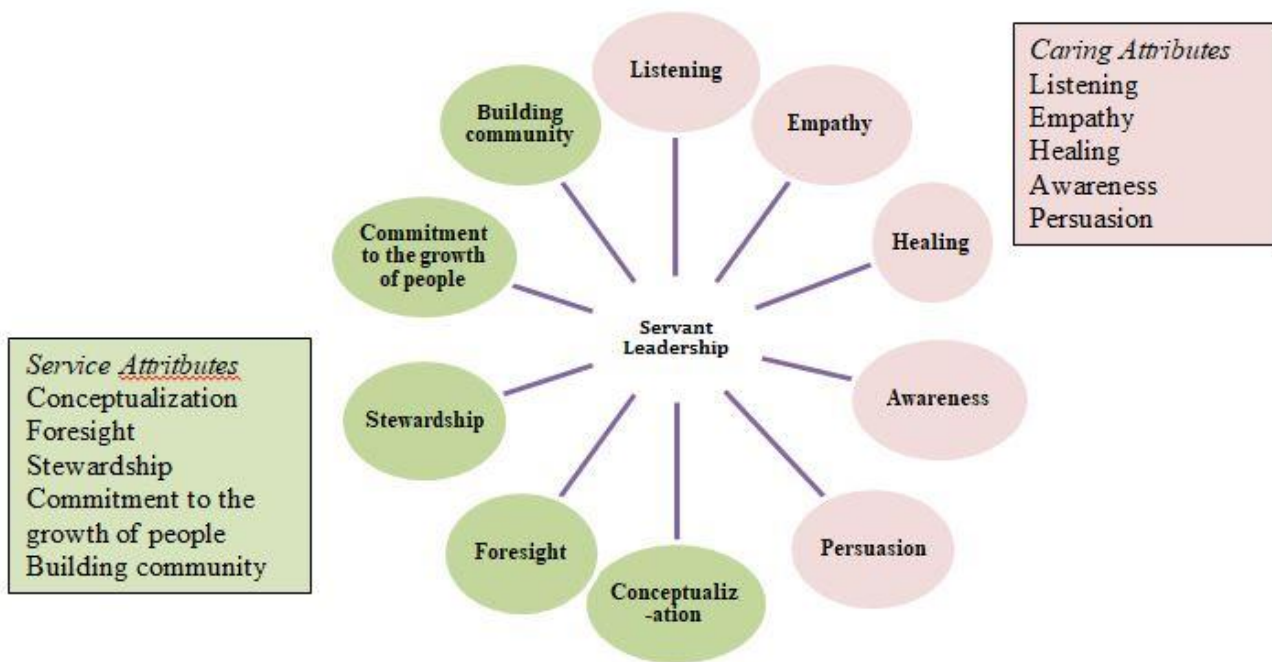


Figure 2. Conceptual model of servant leadership. The characteristics are classified into two groups the caring and service dimensions.

Servant leadership attributes as exemplified in the model illustrates the dual purpose of servant leadership in its two dimensions the caring and service attributes. The caring dimension: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, and persuasion are critical in Samoan indigenous practice. Its application and implementation activate and advance the service dimension: conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

The art of listening contributes to a better understanding of the people who either facilitate or hinder progress and development (Hunter, 2012; Pelletier, 2005; Wallace, 2009). Individuals feel the need to relate to someone (Cashman, 2008; Lidow, 2014; Rosen, 2014) and a leader’s attempt to see individuals equally and fairly provides metamorphosis that enhances healing (Culver, 2013; Prosser, 2007), cultivates self-awareness and persuasion. Leaders who care, imbue their members with dreams and visions that one fulfils through service (Anderson, 2008; Neill, 2007; Phipps, 2010). As Nohria and Khurana (2010) state effective leadership ensures “followers are convinced of a leader’s commitment to their success (not just their own), as well as how their success and the leaders’ are entwined” (p. 161). All service attributes culminate in building a community which is significant to the family, society, and the global world (Arvey, Zhang, Avolio & Krueger, 2007; Lewis & Noble, 2008).

Indigenous Organic Samoan Leadership Approaches and Servant Leadership Characteristics

Leadership in the Samoan context is hierarchical, collaborative, and empowering. It is a way of living associated with the concept of *tautua* (Anae, 2010a; Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009; Strachan, Akao, Kilavanwa, Warsal, 2010). *Matais* chosen serve not only the nuclear family but also the extended family and the village. In

Samoan society, members have a particular place, culturally designated even before the arrival of the Europeans (Holmes, 1980a).

Service is ingrained in children from very early in life even before they enter school. Children become aware of the responsibilities in the home, church, and the community. They learn that they could be sitting in the *fale fono* [meeting house] when they become adults. Keesing and Keesing (1956) refer to subtle assimilation of children as “sitting on the fringes of household, family, and village *fono* assemblies” (p. 48) where they “learn early to sit as quiet and respectful spectators if they want to be present, thus laying the groundwork for continuity” (p. 49). Mead (1928) conceives of children developing in *mafaufau* “an ability to exercise good judgment in personal and social matters” (p. 486) that starts at home.

Values that are an integral part of Samoan life are universal such as honesty, loyalty, discipline, care and respect for elders, and fear of God. Obedience and hospitality are also crucial in Samoa, but exposure to Western influence has contributed to changes. The rite of passage for Samoans into the culture and acceptance into the village’s decision-making body is being appointed a *matai* of the extended family.

In traditional Samoan society, there is no formal training for future leaders. However, axioms for leadership are taken from activities and duties that denote relationships with people, and the nature and art of doing (Thaman, 2013). These provide guidelines for the way people live, function, and perform.

Samoan culture and oratory provide numerous evidence of the importance of leadership and the processes leading to its achievement. The indigenous organic Samoan approaches: *tofa*

manino, *tofa mamao*, *tofa saili*, *tofa loloto*, *tofa fetala'i*, *tomanatu*, and *soalaupule* depict cultural leadership approaches practised. These are aligned to the servant leadership attributes and analogies are drawn from the relationship between the approaches.

Tofa Manino. *Tofa* is thought, and *manino* is clarity, clarity of thought. This term is often referred to the pursuit of cultural and genealogical knowledge, the wisdom and art of knowing and theorising and practice of applied knowledge. Barbuto Jr. and Wheeler (2006) cited Barbuto and Gifford (2010) "it is the height of knowledge and utility" (p. 7). It is characterised by listening, awareness, foresight, conceptualisation, and stewardship.

Listening is considered one of the most fundamental attributes of effective leadership. It is through critical listening that one can hear "diverse and respective messages" (Hays, 2008, p. 123). Awareness is also essential for a servant leader as it provides windows of opportunities for creative and fresh insights into dealing with a problem (Sinek, 2009; Taufu'ulungaki, 2004; Thaman, 2014). Greenleaf and Spears (2002) point out that awareness lends objectivity, critical to viewing events and experiences. Foresight utilises different lenses to hone one's ability to move beyond possible threats and dangers. For Maxwell (2007), it is "seeing the possibilities in a situation while others are seeing the limitations" (p. 297). Conceptualisation is the ability to think beyond the day-to-day realities, to dream of possibilities, and inspiring others to bring it to fruition (Ferch & Spears, 2011; Maxwell 2007). Stewardship and the commitment to the growth of others is more than achieving short-term goals. Thinking conceptually provides a clear, visionary approach to the future and stewardship ensures it is responsible and sustainable. Hays (2008) refers to the ability to "see the forest and the trees. They know the parts, and how they fit together to make the whole" (p. 127).

Tofa Mamao. *Tofa* is thought, and *mamao* is visionary, which implies seeing beyond the obvious and are aware that changes in society can change the order of things. Hesselbein and Johnston (2002) refer to changes as moving "beyond strategy to purpose" (p. 106), "beyond structure to process" (p. 107), and "beyond systems to people" (p. 109). Visionary leaders take the role of stewardship as a custodian function ensuring what is essential to retain is passed on for future generations. Listening, foresight, conceptualisation, stewardship, and commitment to the growth of others are components of the *tofa mamao*.

Listening is an essential aspect of the *tofa mamao* as planning for war, a *malaga* [voyage], or ceremonial activities require "listening to the tone of the other, the body language of the other" (Grogan, 2013, p. 56). Sensitivity to others is a visionary approach that plans protects and safeguards against the loss of what is valuable and unique in a society (Crossley, Luteru & Teasdale, 1993; Thaman, 1991). Foresight is a servant-leadership characteristic that Lueneburger (2014) refers to as "building a culture of purpose...strategic thinking" (p. x). An understanding of the whole spectrum past, present, and future events impact institutional strategies and decision-making (Greenleaf & Spears, 2002).

Conceptualisation for Ferch and Spears (2011) convey that "Behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams" (p.

xxx) and Senge (2006) believed commitment to the growth of people in "building shared visions fosters a commitment to the long term" (p. 12). Stewardship is a sense of ownership and responsibility (Block, 1996) and giving back to the community (Barbuto & Gifford, 2010). Hays (2008) agreed it is "acceptance of responsibility for protecting...and acting with the best intentions" (p. 128).

Tofa Saili. *Tofa* is thought, and *saili* refers to the never-ending quest for truth, knowledge, patriotism, nationalism, and self-rule. It is pertinent to ideas of What is life? What is freedom? Also, what is essential? It is man's search for the essence of life. It is tied to ideas of freedom, independence, human rights, ascertaining the truth, voices from the past and beyond, the supernatural, and the discovery of the what, the why, and our existence. *Tofa saili* encapsulates listening, persuasion, healing, awareness, and building community.

Tofa saili encourages people sharing a collective identity and goal to listen and listen critically in the fight for a common cause. In Samoa *tofa sailimalo* is the quest to overcome obstacles, conquer, and achieve victory to become politically independent, leading to emotional healing. It is also connected to beliefs that there are more than one truth and more than one reality. Attentive listening can distinguish the difference mainly in Samoan society where families and villages often contest genealogy, titles, and land. Servant leadership characteristics of listening, persuasion, healing, awareness, and building community are integrated into the *tofa saili*.

It is the nature of humanity to be heard (Graham, 1995; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010) acknowledging the vision, the pursuit of truth, autonomy, and legitimacy are accessed when leaders listen. Hays (2008) advanced that "only through listening with an open mind and open heart can one come to understand people" (p. 123).

Persuasion focuses on initiating concurrence among members to support a system's vision or mission. Barbuto and Gifford (2010) agreed that persuasion "offers compelling reasons to get followers to engage" (p. 7). This is based on people being listened to, understanding they have identified mutual goals and justification for specific courses of action. In servant leadership members are not coerced; the leader assists followers to unanimously make decisions and compromises that will benefit the group. They are drawn, presented, requested, and encouraged not manipulated (Hays, 2008).

The characteristic of healing has a recuperative effect on people who have been heard. Allowing members to participate in forums that influence their lives and well-being can contribute to emotional healing. Hays (2008) concurred "people cannot move forward when paralysed by excess stress, exhaustion, and distrust" (p. 124). Evans and Foster (2014) echoed this sentiment "people simply do not grow in a fearful environment ...people working under conditions of fear or stress fall back on what is heuristic reasoning; relying solely on experience and failing to use their intellect to solve new problems" (p. 179). Also, the art of persuasion plays an influential role in healing, as members are

allowed to be guided and shown the pros and cons of an idea without undue pressure to conform to a leader's expectations. Healing provides members with feelings of completeness that they can share meaningful and positive relationships with others (Culver, 2013; Hunter, 2012; Wallace, 2009). Through persuasion and healing, self-awareness is set in motion. Faculties are more receptive to environmental cues and awareness is heightened through "a transformative process of aligning actions with intentions" (Ferch & Spears, 2011, p. 160).

Building a community is the culmination of the *tofa saili* whether it is nation-building, institutional or the family. This is manifested through building people capabilities that can be translated into improving society (Kirtman & Fullan, 2016; Lidow, 2014).

Tofa Loloto. *Tofa* is thought, and *loloto* refers to depth. The term implies there is more to ideas and beliefs than what lies on the surface. A cohesive society is underpinned by the accumulation of knowledge, history, and culture. A Samoan saying *e malu luga ae vilivili lalo* refers to the waters that look calm and serene, yet below is a whirlpool. This captures the nature of Samoan discourses and interactions. It implies delving into the recesses of one's consciousness to understand the dynamics embraced in the thought processes that are voiced during chiefly meetings and special occasions. Listening, empathy, awareness, and building community are an integral component of the *tofa loloto*.

The leader that understands the essence of *tofa loloto* identifies and relates to people, accepts contributions, experiences, expertise, and concerns that surpasses the generation gap. Servant leadership characteristics of empathy, awareness, and building community are features of the *tofa loloto*.

Listening is integral to the *tofa loloto*, as leaders listen to the inner voice, the voice of conscience that acknowledges the contribution of others in the search for answers (Prosser, 2007). It is centred on the mind reaching out during profound, reflective moments to deliberate decisions and a course of action (Cashman, 2008; Kirtman & Fullan, 2016). Farbman (2014) forewarned, "incredibly powerful message tends to skate right over the heads of people who aren't really listening" (p. 103). Furthermore, the concept suggests deep listening, which sometimes takes place in solitude and silence.

Empathy is the ability to put oneself in someone else's place whether they are thoughts, emotions, or consciousness. It profoundly reflects the concept of being in tune and being connected at a spiritual level with others. Empathetic servant leaders have a deeper connection with people that may not be visible at surface level. Hays (2008) described this as:

Coming to see the world around oneself and the people in it as more salient, and the self as just one aspect of a larger system...to increasing tolerance and breadth of view, while reducing ego-centric narrow mindedness and self-centeredness. (p. 124)

Empathetic leaders can earn people's trust because they can discern their needs, dreams, and motivations, and they release others' potentials, ideas, and drive (Maxwell, 2007; Robson, 2011).

People who feel safe become aware of what is happening around them and contribute to positive changes (Ferch & Spears, 2011).

Fostering awareness is critical for building community and is considered transformative (Cashman, 2008). It moves the leader from centring on self to others and the surrounding environment (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010). Grogan (2013) noted, "Awareness brings with it the responsibility to take constructive action for change" (p. 51). This involves an in-depth understanding of the interactions, discussions, and relationships that affect motivation, practice, and performance.

The ability to build a community is related to the *tofa loloto*. This focuses on the adequate knowledge of communities changing, but their history and culture embrace institutional cohesiveness, cooperation, collaboration, and teamwork. Hays (2008) argued, "It is how challenges are dealt with and the shared commitment to ownership for resolving them that mark a community's effectiveness" (p. 129). Olatunji et al. (2012) supported the view that "leaders should see followers as partners in progress" (p. 127) emphasising leadership action that gives the power to empower others.

Tofa Fetala'i. *Tofa* is thought, and *fetala'i* is open-minded, liberal, and progressive and refers to eloquent, persuasive speakers, who listen to others, are unbiased and undogmatic. *Tofa fetala'i* advances flexibility compromises to keep the peace and ensuring unity and harmony in the community. Orators are renowned for balancing listening, thoughts, and action with astuteness to end debates. Cashman (2008) warned, "Your purpose may be calling, but your lack of listening creates vagueness" (p. 75). The leadership is concerned with listening, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

Listening attentively plays an essential role in *tofa fetala'i* as Samoan oratory requires listening critically to the language of idioms, axioms, innuendoes, and familial affiliations that can elude even the most experienced orator. Lidow (2014) highlighted "good listening because it leads to the most accurate and timely exchange of information" (73). Rosen (2014) posed that a leader "focuses on listening and understanding what motivates others and where their vulnerabilities and strengths lie" (p. 67).

Tofa fetala'i is also related to the growth of others as servant leaders. It is awareness that the development of members is achieved through opportunities where they learn the art of listening and speaking. The Samoan proverb *ia seu le manu ae silasila i le galu* is apt, meaning catch the bird, but watch the breakers. This reflects the *tofa fetala'i* leadership that is obligated to personal growth despite obstacles.

Hays (2008) asserted that growth "exemplify the leader as a learner; someone committed to the continuing expansion of his or her conscience and efficacy, and to that of others" (p. 127). Practical application is enhanced through active participation in village meetings and functions that provide real-life opportunities for growth and development. Greenleaf and Spears (2002) espoused leadership that supports teaching and mentoring to facilitate the entry of the so-called like-mind to service.

Capacity building refers to the development of service for progress to be made in the education, economic, social and political spheres. Global intrusions into communities that have survived outside onslaught for years face a new world order. The exogenic forces at work require human resources to juxtapose the old and new world to ensure the survival of the past in the present. Servant leadership characteristics of listening, commitment to the growth of people, and building community are assimilated in the *tofa fetala'i*.

Tomanatu. It is a reflective practice that provides leaders, elders, and chiefs time to mull throughout the action. At critical times and especially during periods of conflicts, *tomanatu* is a handy tool. The *tomanatu* leader integrates active listening to critical decision-making, which includes the ability to listen to the inner voice and one's conscience. In acrimonious issues such as village conflicts, events that disrupt the social order, or a change in protocol, leadership resort to a Samoan maxim, *se'i moe le toa* meaning the warrior needs to rest. It offers respite from making rash decisions that need careful thought, ample time, and exhaustive discussion. Leadership utilises reflective practice and delays decisions that require more consultation, collaboration, and reflection. Avolio (2005) articulated "If you do not step back to reflect on significant events, you will certainly never achieve your full potential as a leader" (p. xv). *Tomanatu* incorporates the servant leadership characteristics of listening, awareness, and conceptualisation.

It also involves reflective thinking and practices a critical aspect of generating solutions, problem-solving, and decision-making (Kouzes & Posner, 2010, 2011). This space reclaims reasoning powers by listening to the inner voice and the objective balancing of actions and consequences.

Ferch and Spears (2011) referred to reflective practice as "an increasing awareness of thoughts and feelings that allows a person to see things in a new light and a complete light" (p. 99). Critical issues that leaders face should balance openness to feedback and information against reflective practice and self-awareness. This would lead "to an attempt to clarify what is going on and what is at stake in the situation" (Grogan, 2013, p. 64).

Tomanatu also incorporates conceptualisation, the ability to think beyond the present as an integral part of the future (Buchen, 1999). Servant leaders are visionaries, and their reflective practice provides clarity for leading the way forward. Maxwell (2007) referred to leadership as having an open mind and allowing for many possibilities during precarious times.

Soalaupule. The term *soa* means to distribute, *lau* is your and *pule* is power referring to the distribution of power. *Soalaupule* refers

to the kind of decision-making that involves all. Culturally, *soalaupule* involves decision-making at the highest level, a form of democracy undertaken by the *matais* that make the decisions for the family. As Wander (2013) postulated "the individual is important but never the focus. It is about the production of many, not the few" (p. 130). This type of decision-making is deemed appropriate for listening, persuasion, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

Those in the *soalaupule* relationship understand what Cashman (2008) postulated "At the heart of service is the principle of interdependence" (p. 69). It highlights how effective relationships are formed when people are willing to share power in the decision-making process (Leithwood & Duke, 1998). According to Cashman (2008), it is listening "that speaks to you through feelings, inspirations, intuitions and possibilities" (p. xxxvi). The relationship is nurtured through people's willingness to listen to others and is defined by covenantal relationships and transforming influences (Sendjaya, 2015).

The approach also involves persuasion, as Grogan (2013) claimed, "effective persuasion, then, is the capacity to listen to the perspectives of others" (p. 35). The process of *soalaupule* is an avenue to be heard, and one has the legitimacy to speak freely to convince others. Although the process may be lengthy, persuading and convincing people are integral to the consultation and collaboration process. As Grogan suggested, "Moral authority relies heavily on persuasion" (p. 387) and not coercion.

Soalaupule involves the delegation of authority and is characterised by the servant leadership attribute that focuses on a commitment to the growth of people. Servant leaders encourage members to engage in decision-making as well as recognising that there are avenues for personal and professional development in the deliverance of service (Radcliffe, 2010; Cashman, 2012). It also confers respect on others, acknowledging that what they say matters (Pelletier, 2005). Servant leadership characteristics of listening, persuasion, commitment to the growth of people, and building community are integrated in the *soalaupule*.

Soalaupule imbues members with a strong sense of responsibility and involvement in community decision-making. The approach is empowering, supports investment in the growth of people, and caters for community needs. Members, who share and discuss similar experiences and goals, are not only professionally fulfilled, but they also become members that augment community building (Bennis & Nanus, 2003).

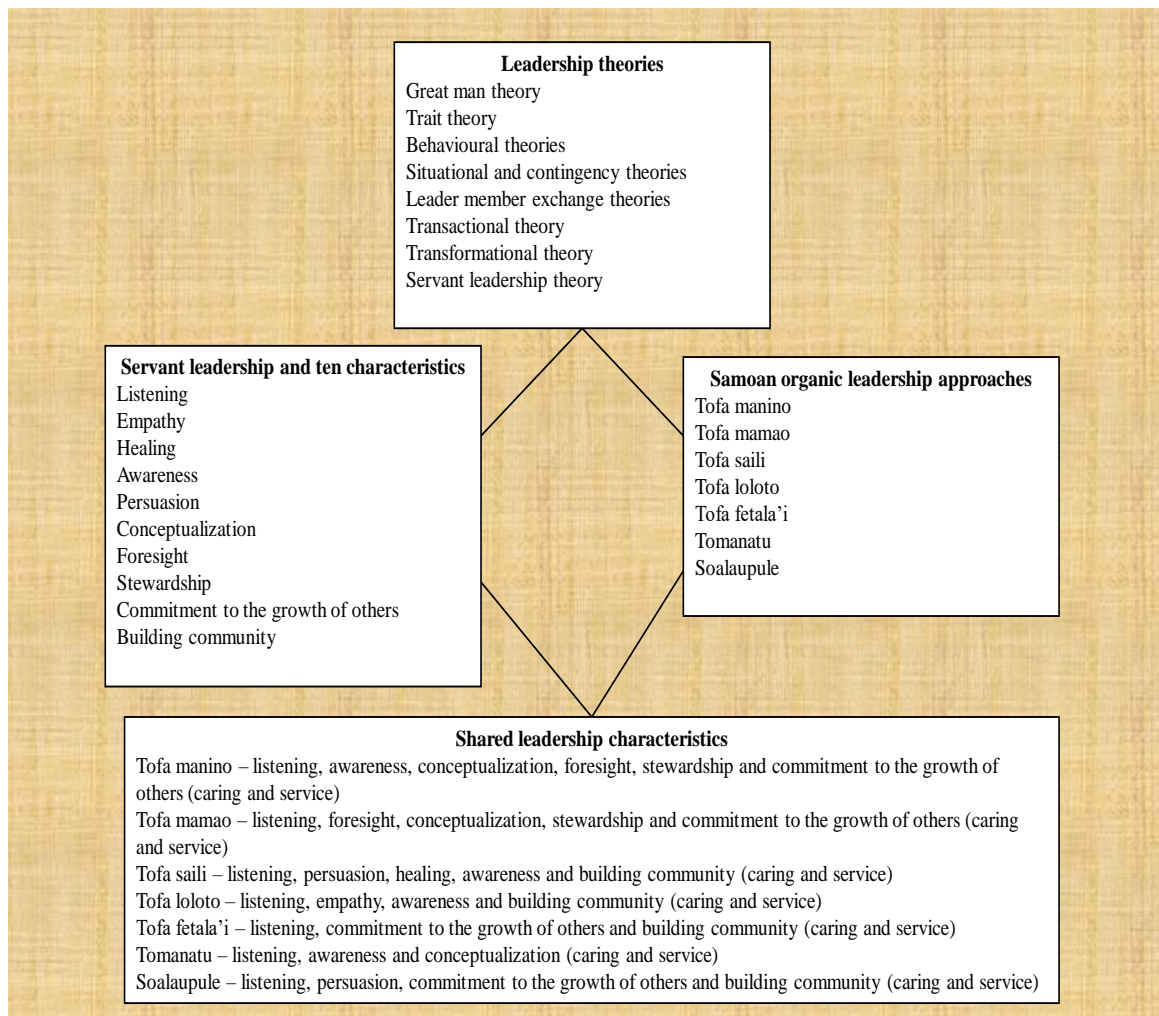


Figure 3. Integrated leadership model of Western and indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches. The model illustrates coexistence as the way forward.

Conclusion

Servant leadership indicated a strong alignment to the indigenous organic Samoan leadership approaches. The servant leadership two-fold attributes of the caring and service dimensions elucidated the relationship between the two leadership styles. In Samoa, the caring dimension: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, and persuasion are critical in Samoan indigenous practice. Listening is present in all the Samoan indigenous organic approaches and attest to a traditional oral society. Conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building community are also evident in the organic Samoan indigenous approaches. All the approaches incorporate both the caring and service dimensions.

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