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Service Before Self: Towards a Theory of Servant-Leadership

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This article explores the relationship between perceptions of leadership and the level of trust between employees and supervisors. More specifically, this article seeks to begin a theoretical discussion of a particular leadership approach, servant leadership, introduces an instrument for measuring servant leadership, and presents the result of its initial use in a survey of 651 employees in a suburban Georgia county. While the results are preliminary, they show that one component of servant leadership, stewardship, is a determinant of trust level, indicating that “service before self” is not just a slogan, but a powerful reality that builds trust between employees and supervisors.

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