

# **SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN SINGAPORE**

**Robert C. Liden, Ph.D., Professor of Management**

**Sandy J. Wayne, Ph.D., Professor of Management**

**Chenwei Liao, Doctoral Student**

**Junfeng Wu, Doctoral Student**

**University of Illinois at Chicago**

# Overview of the Feedback Report

- Overview of Servant Leadership
- Study Purpose
- Survey Background
- Participants
- Survey Results
- Recommendations
- Questions

# Creation of Servant Leadership by Robert Greenleaf

- Following a successful career at AT&T, Greenleaf wrote a seminal essay in 1970 introducing servant leadership (SL).
- According to Greenleaf, a servant leader:
  - is selflessly focused on serving others.
  - follows this “service orientation” extending beyond the workplace to the home and the community.
  - inspires followers to become servant leaders.

# Scientific Research on Servant Leadership

- Scientific research on servant leadership (SL) did not begin in earnest until research by Mark Ehrhart was published in 2004.
- What makes research scientific?
  - Strong theoretical basis; theory used to develop hypotheses
  - Reliable and valid measures
  - Control of extraneous variables
  - Tests of alternative hypotheses
  - Researcher control of sampling and data collection
- Journals vary in terms of the strength of the research designs used to test hypotheses. Our research on SL in Singapore utilized a scientific research design.

# Scientific Research on Servant Leadership

- For SL research to be sustained, a sound measure was needed. The first rigorously developed SL measure appeared in 2008.

# Servant Leadership Measure

Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008, *LQ*

- Exploratory factor analysis using student data followed by a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) based on employee data supported the emergence of 7 distinguishable factors:
  - **Creating Value for the Community**
  - **Conceptual Skills**
  - **Emotional Healing**
  - **Empowering**
  - **Helping Followers Grow and Succeed**
  - **Putting Followers First**
  - **Behaving Ethically**

# Study Purpose

- To understand levels of SL in Singaporean organizations
- To understand employees' desire for SL in Singapore
- To assess the gaps between actual SL level and employee desire for SL level
- To examine the outcomes of SL

# Study and Survey Background

- Surveys were obtained on-site from 409 full-time employees (response rate = 88% ) and their 78 direct supervisors (response rate = 94%) in 10 organizations in Singapore.
- A variety of industries were represented, including education, healthcare, and non-profit organizations.
- Employees responded to questions assessing SL, desire for SL, and their work experiences.
- Supervisors rated their employees' performance.



# 7 Key Practices of Servant Leadership



# Servant Leadership - Sample Questions

**My immediate supervisor...**

- 1. can tell if something work-related is going wrong.**
- 2. is interested in making sure that I achieve my career goals.**
- 3. gives me the responsibility to make important decisions about my job.**
- 4. makes my career development a priority.**
- 5. seems to care more about my success than his/her own.**
- 6. holds high ethical standards.**
- 7. emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.**

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

# Desire for Servant Leadership - Sample Questions

**Desire for servant leadership** refers to the extent to which employees would like to work for a servant leader.

**My ideal supervisor...**

- 1. would know if something work-related is going wrong.**
- 2. would give me the responsibility to make important decisions about my job.**
- 3. would make my career development a priority.**
- 4. would care more about my success than his/her own.**
- 5. would hold high ethical standards.**
- 6. would help me if I had a personal problem.**
- 7. would emphasize the importance of giving back to the community.**

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

# Influence on Subordinate Attitudes - Sample Questions

- **Belief in the leader as a role model** refers to subordinates' belief that the leader is a worthy role model.  
Sample question: My supervisor is a good role model for employees.
- **Identification with the leader** refers to the extent to which subordinates view themselves in terms of their relationships with the leader and desire to be like the leader.  
Sample question: When someone praises my supervisor, it feels like a personal compliment.
- **Trust in the leader** refers to the emotional bonds between subordinates and leaders.  
Sample question: I feel secure with my supervisor because of his/her sincerity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

# Influence on Subordinate Motivation

## - Sample Questions

- **Prosocial motivation** refers to the desire to benefit other people.  
Sample question: I like to work on tasks that have the potential to benefit others.
- **Task self-efficacy** refers to an individual's belief in his or her capability to perform jobs with skill.  
Sample question: I am confident about my ability to do my job.
- **Creative self-efficacy** refers to the belief one has the ability to produce creative outcomes.  
Sample question: I feel that I am good at generating novel ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

# Influence on Subordinate Behavior

## - Sample Questions

- **Follower servant leadership** refers to the servant leadership behaviors presented by the subordinates.  
Sample question: This employee puts the best interests of colleagues ahead of his/her own.
- **In-role performance** refers to employee performance on required duties and responsibilities  
Sample question: This employee has higher standards of work quality than the formal standards for this job.
- **Creativity** refers to the new and useful ideas generated by employees.  
Sample question: This employee is a good source of creative ideas.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

# Influence on Subordinate Behavior - Sample Questions (Continued)

- **Helping behaviors** refer to the discretionary behaviors that have the effect of helping a specific other person with an organizationally relevant task or problem.

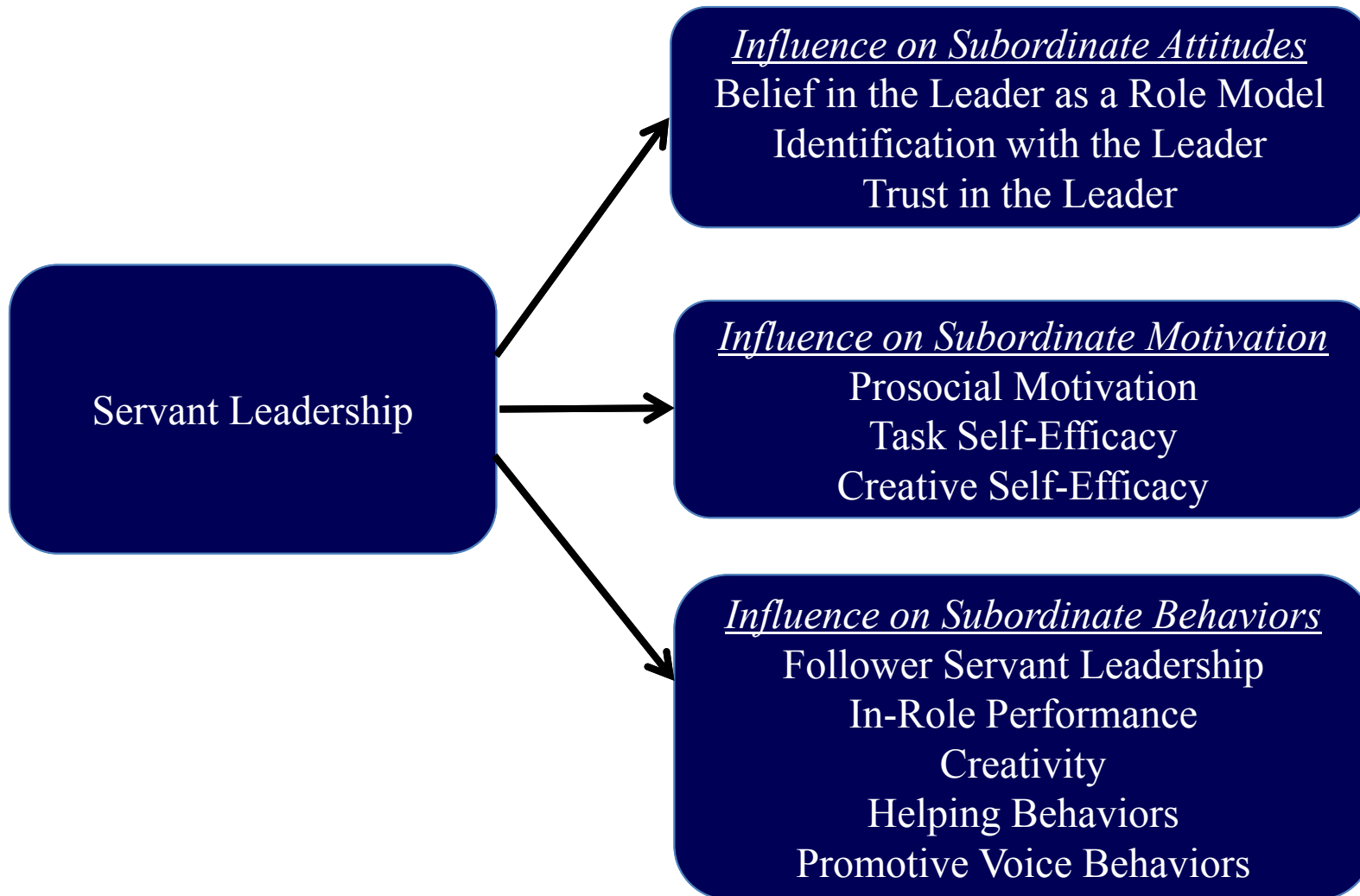
Sample question: This employee helps others who have been absent.

- **Promotive voice behaviors** refer to subordinates' expressions of ways to improve existing work practices and procedures to benefit the organization.

Sample question: This employee proactively speaks up with constructive suggestions that help the group reach its goals.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

# Study Model





# Response Scale

- Responses were categorized as unfavorable, neutral, or favorable after averaging individuals' responses on questions assessing each attitude.

Unfavorable

(1 – 2.5)

Neutral

(2.6 – 5.4)

Favorable

(5.5 – 7)

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

# Example: Belief in the Leader as a Role Model

1. My supervisor is a good role model for employees.(Response: 4)
2. My supervisor leads us by example. (Response: 3)
3. My supervisor acts as a role model worthy of imitation.(Response: 5)

$$(4 + 3 + 5) \div 3 = 4$$

**4 = Average Response for Belief in the Leader as a Role Model  
Categorized as Neutral**

**Unfavorable**

**(1 – 2.5)**

**Neutral**

**(2.6 – 5.4)**

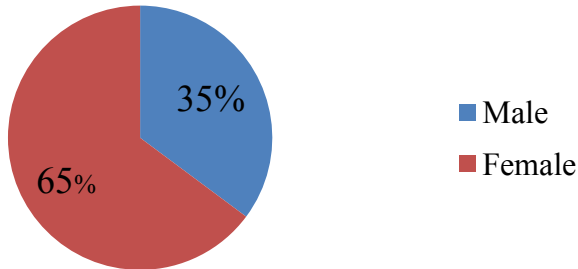
**Favorable**

**(5.5 – 7)**

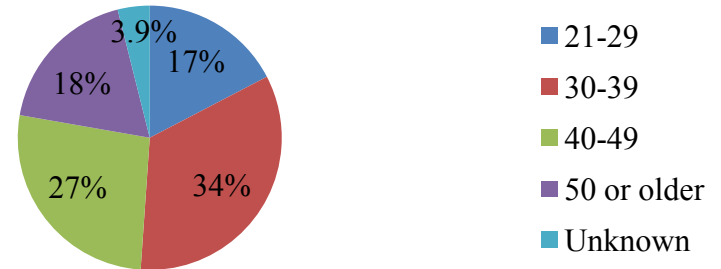
<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Slightly Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Slightly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

# Sample Characteristics

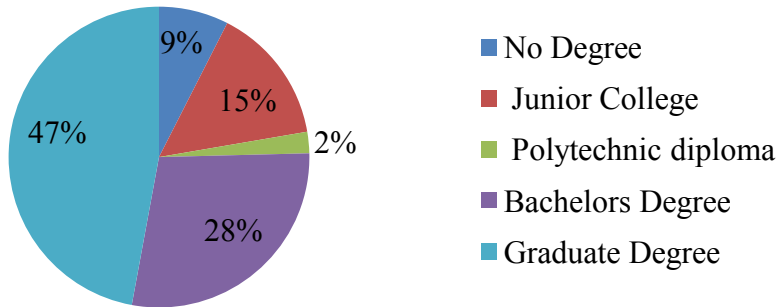
**Sex**



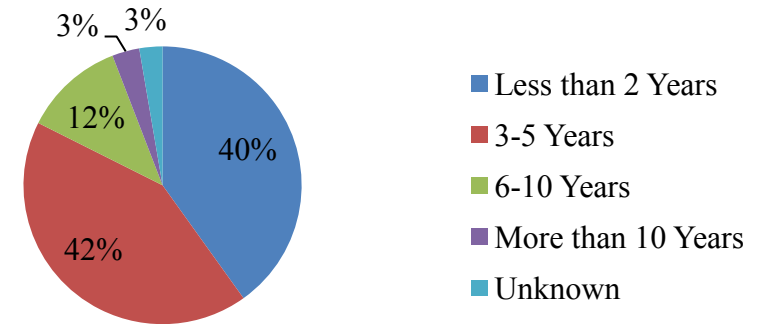
**Age**



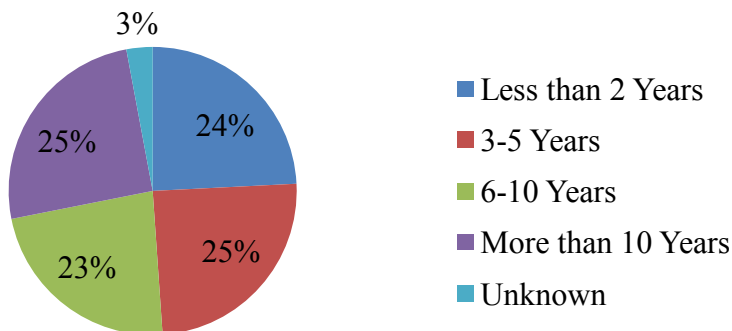
**Education**



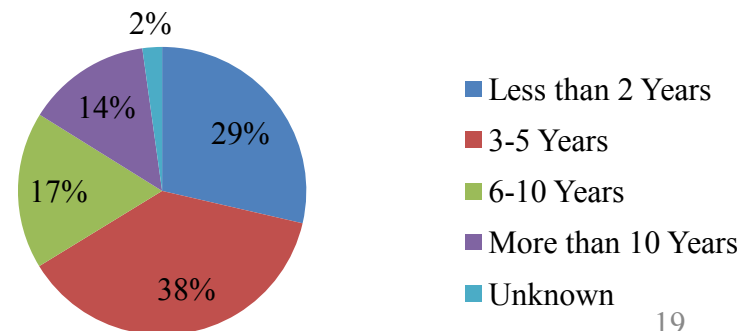
**Tenure with Manager**



**Tenure with Organization**



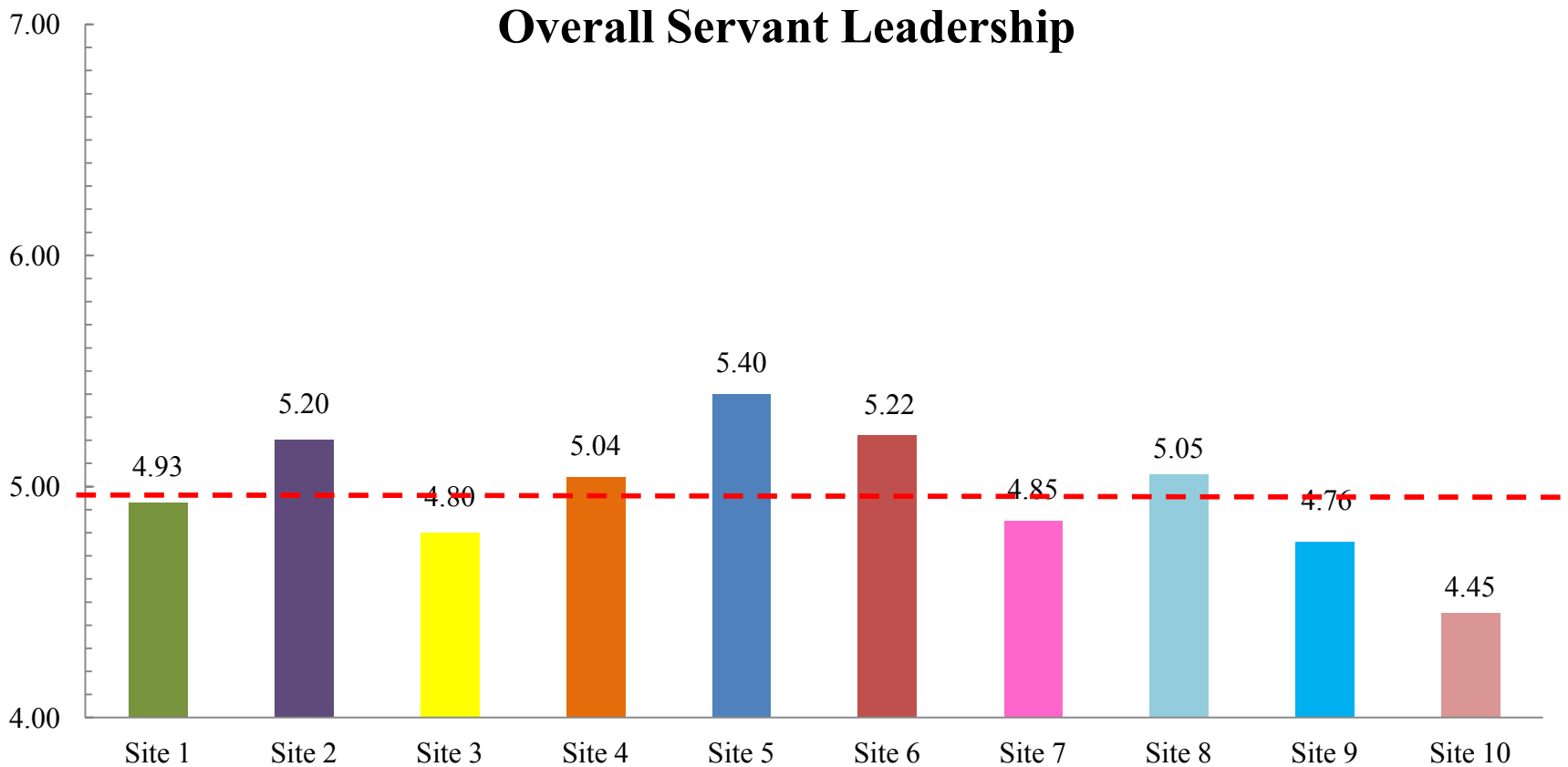
**Position Tenure**



# Sample Characteristics

Site	Industry	% Responses	% Male	% Bachelor's degree or more	Average Age (Years)	Average Tenure with manager (Years)	Average Tenure with Organization (Years)	Average Position Tenure (Years)
Site 1	Education	100	44.7	91.5	38.93	4.41	7.39	8.45
Site 2	Education	86	15.4	75.7	39.30	3.42	8.19	8.52
Site 3	Education	100	37.9	88.9	44.42	3.37	9.06	4.31
Site 4	Training	82	73.9	60.1	34.13	3.49	4.43	3.33
Site 5	Training	100	50.0	75.0	43.94	2.07	10.11	2.28
Site 6	Healthcare	73	29.0	62.7	33.07	3.06	5.47	3.28
Site 7	Healthcare	100	19.4	96.8	41.17	1.58	3.31	2.23
Site 8	Nonprofit	100	15.2	45.1	50.52	3.57	4.77	4.90
Site 9	Nonprofit	100	20.7	37.9	42.08	3.06	6.80	5.41
Site 10	Consulting	78	65.6	93.4	38.38	3.14	8.16	4.78

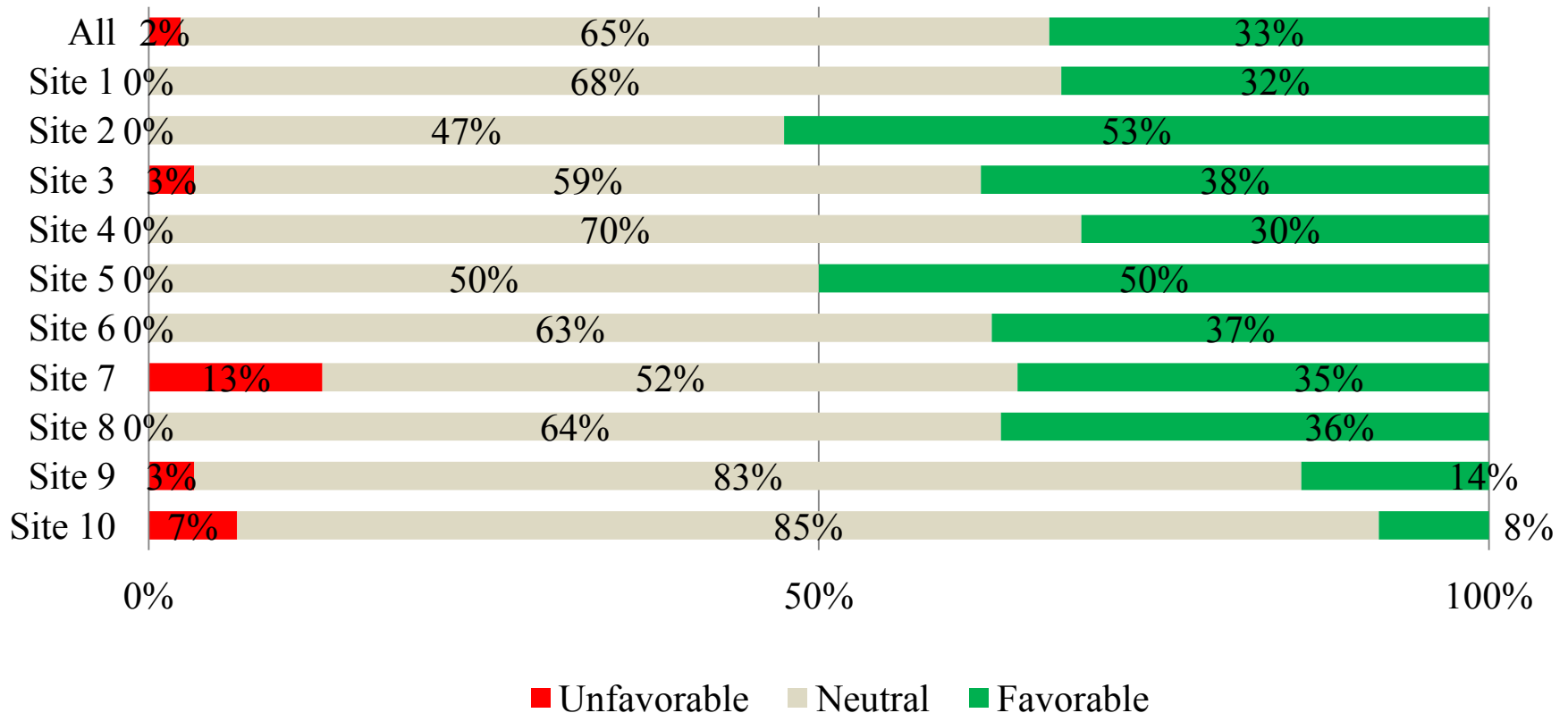
# Overall Servant Leadership



*Note.* The red dash line represents the average overall servant leadership level for the 10 sites at 4.96.

# Overall Servant Leadership

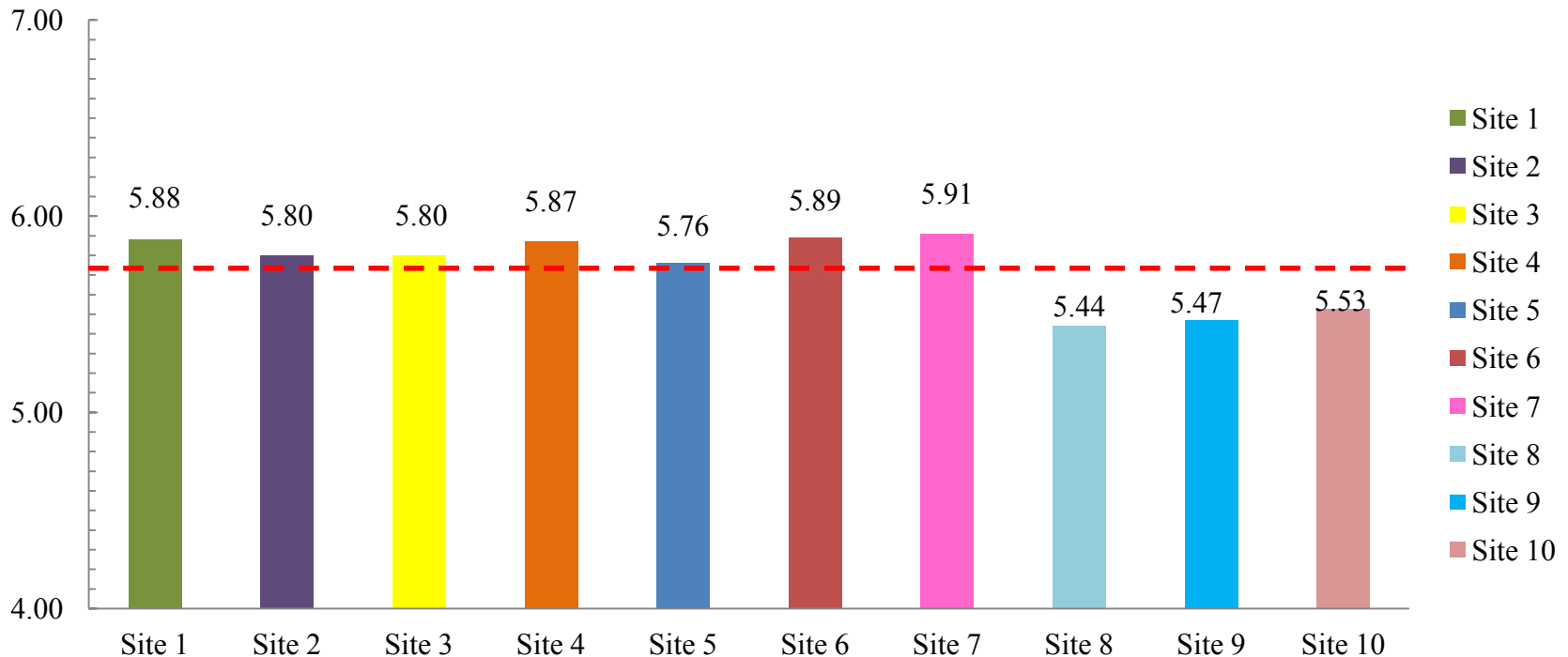
## Overall Servant Leadership



Note. "All" represents that the results are based on all of the 10 sites.

# Overall Desire for Servant Leadership

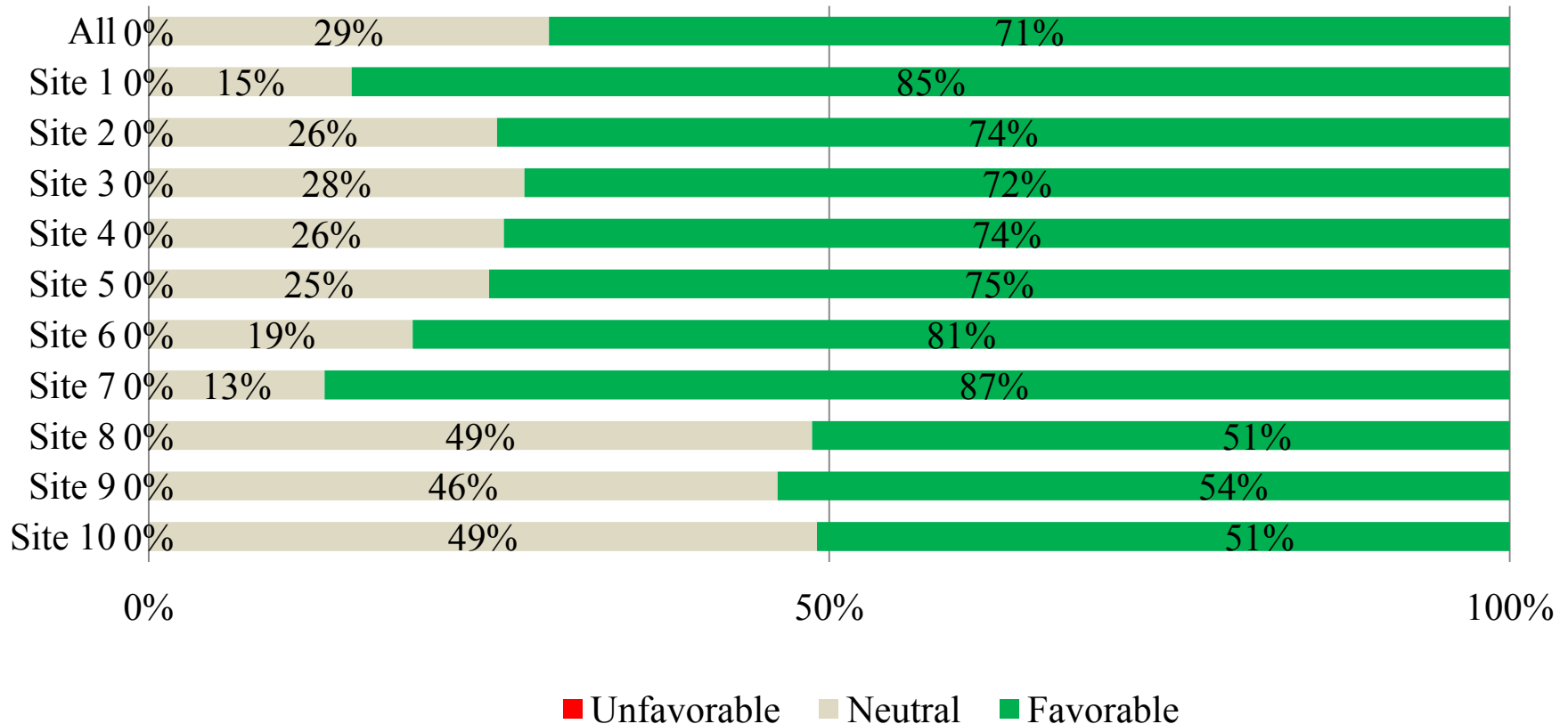
## Overall Desire for Servant Leadership



*Note.* The red dash line represents the average overall desire for servant leadership level for the 10 sites at 5.74.

# Overall Desire for Servant Leadership

## Overall Desire for Servant Leadership

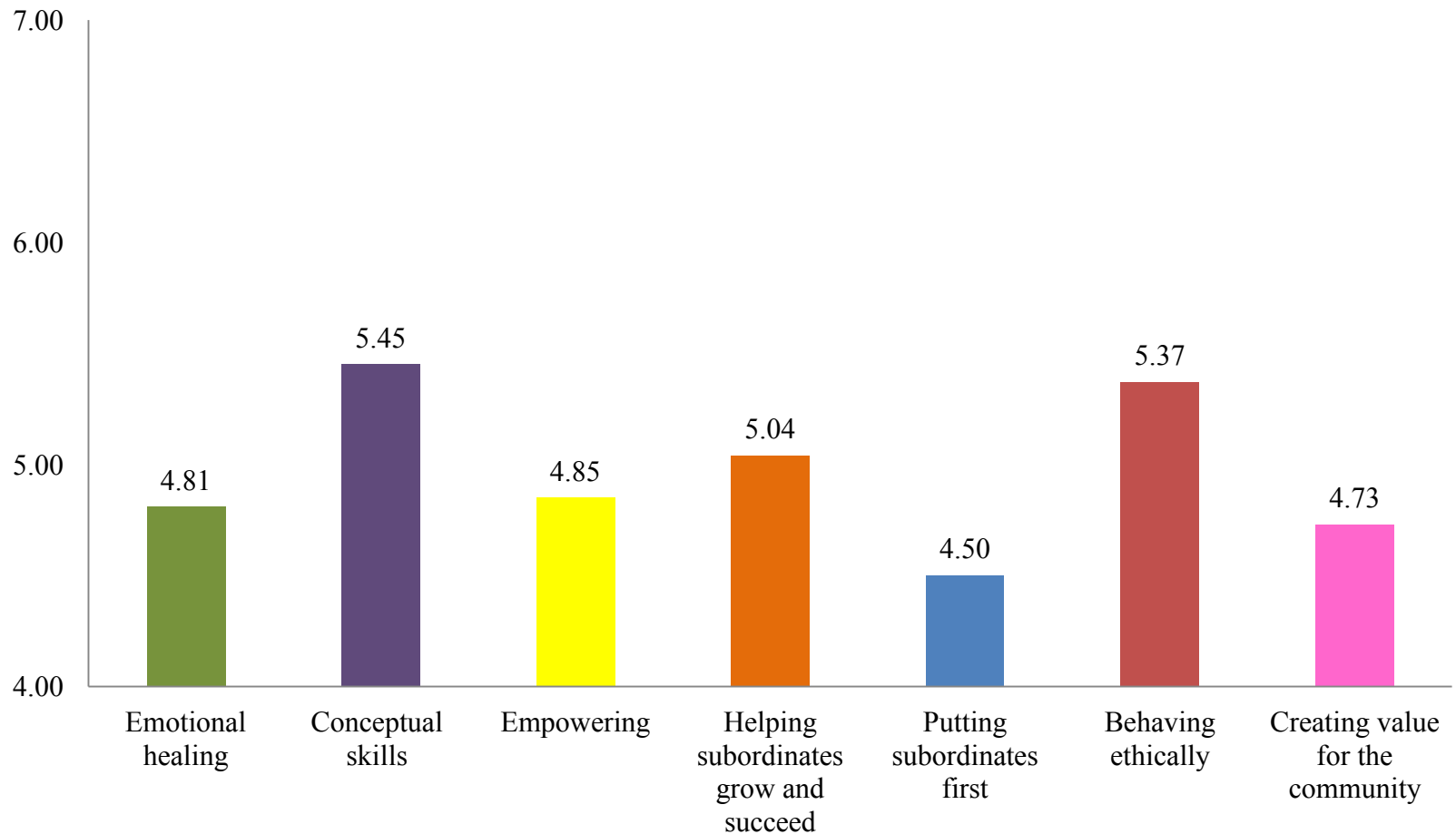


Note. "All" represents that the results are based on all of the 10 sites.



# 7 Key Practices of Servant Leadership

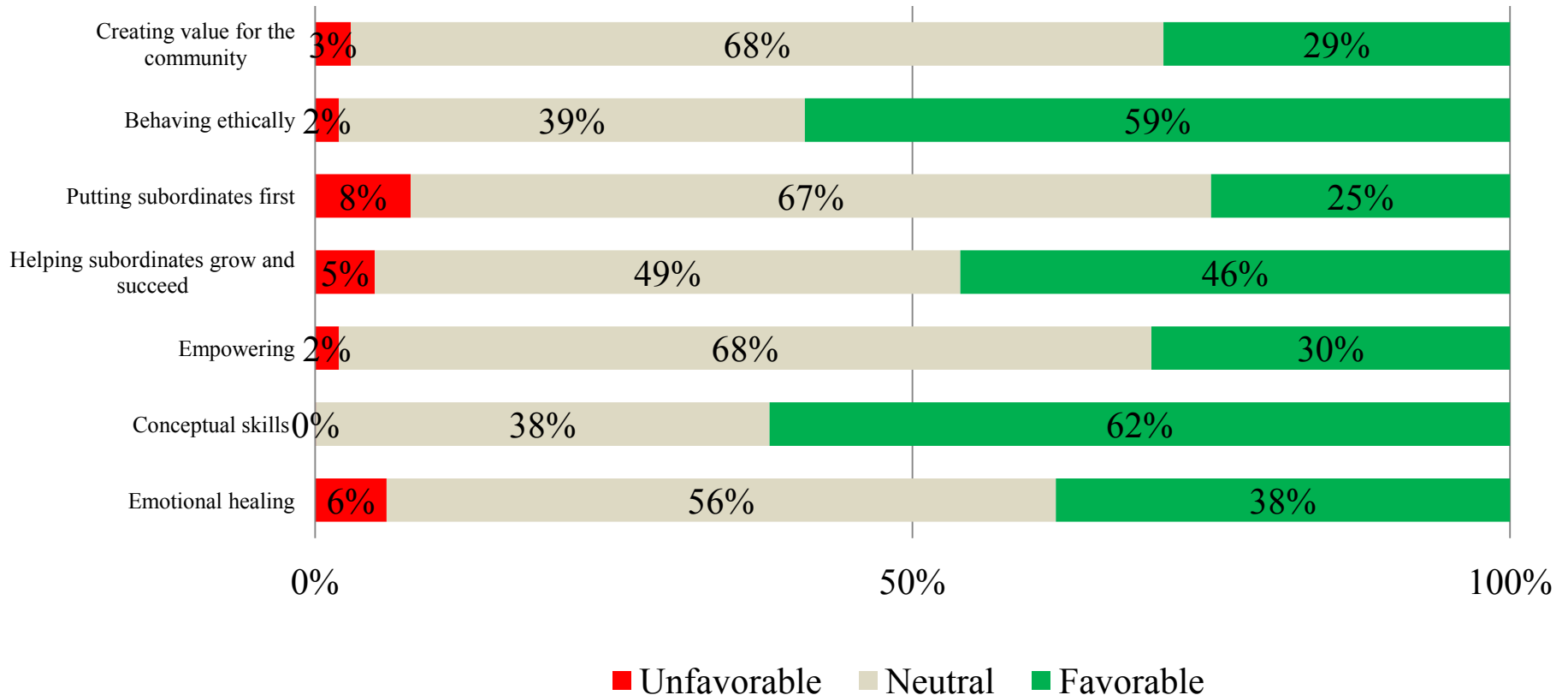
## 7 Key Practices of Servant Leadership



*Note.* Results are based on all of the 10 sites.

# 7 Key Practices of Servant Leadership

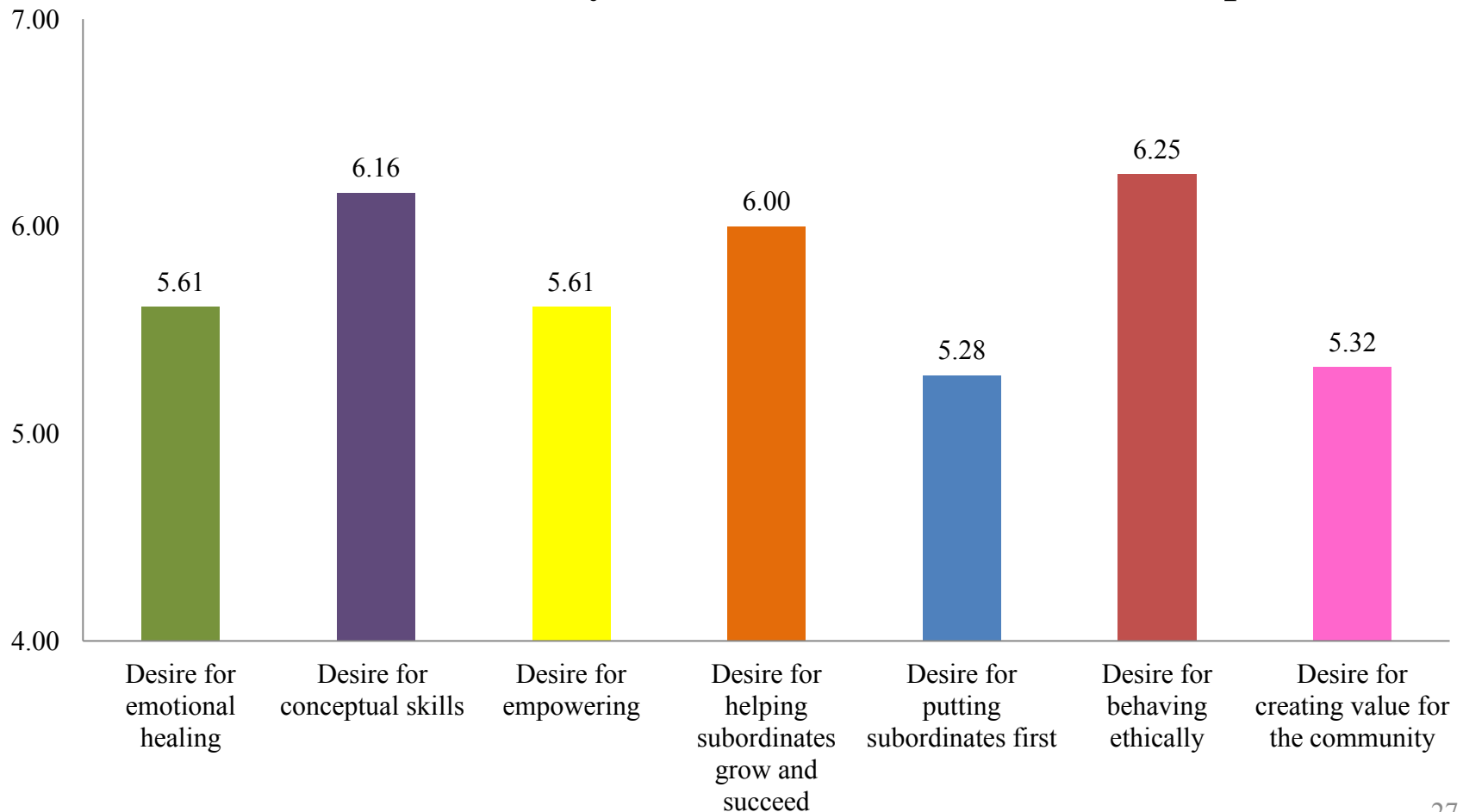
## 7 Servant Leadership Practices



Note. Results are based on all of the 10 sites.

# Desire for 7 Key Practices of Servant Leadership

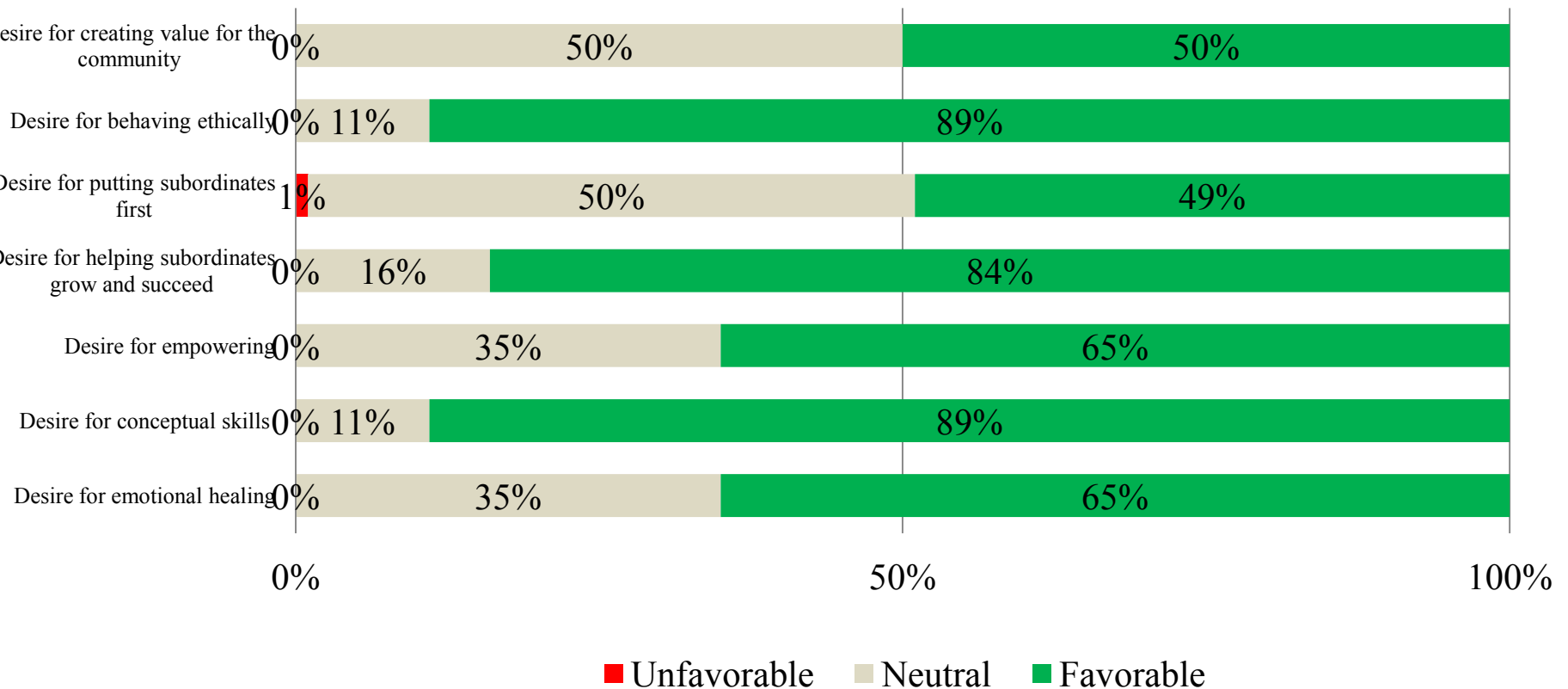
## Desire for 7 Key Practices of Servant Leadership



*Note.* Results are based on all of the 10 sites.

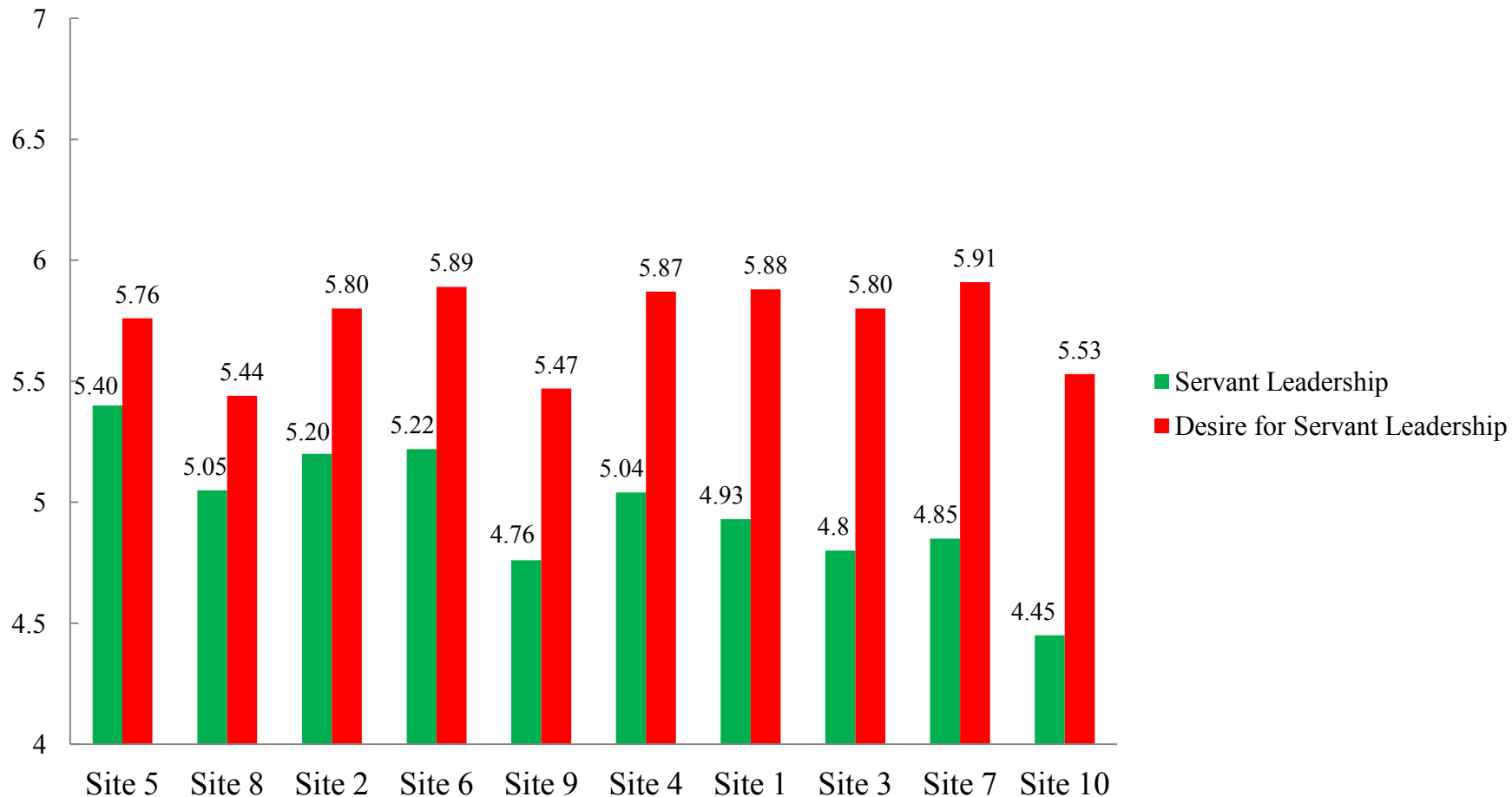
# Desire for 7 Key Practices of Servant Leadership

## 7 Desire for Servant Leadership Practices



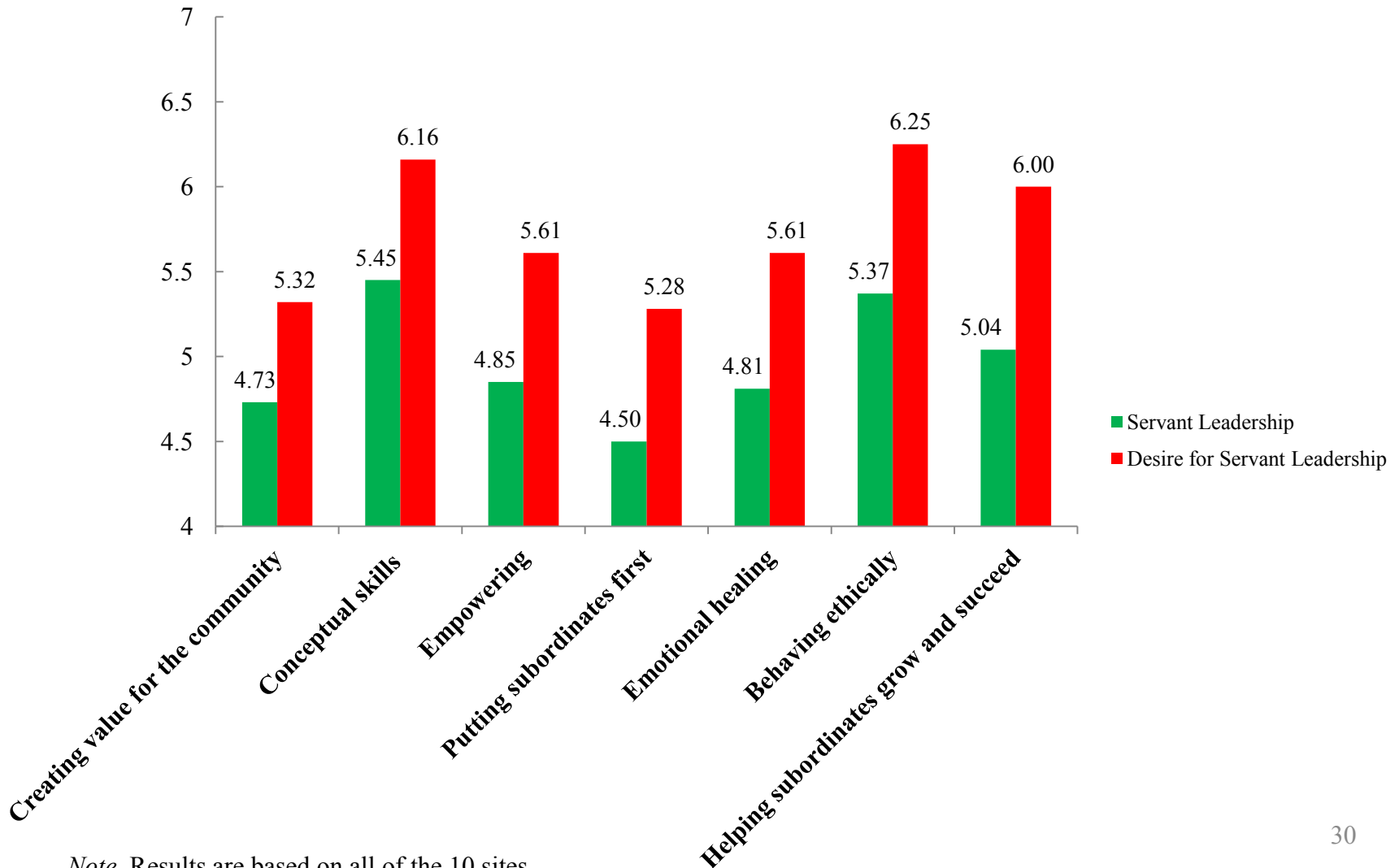
Note. Results are based on all of the 10 sites.

# Discrepancies between Servant Leadership and Desire for Servant Leadership in the 10 sites



*Note.* The sites are ordered from the smallest gap to the biggest gap.

# Discrepancies between Servant Leadership and Desire for Servant Leadership across the 7 Key Practices



Note. Results are based on all of the 10 sites.

# Outcomes of Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership

```
graph LR; A[Servant Leadership] --> B["Influence on Subordinate Attitudes  
Belief in the Leader as a Role Model (.84**)  
Identification with the Leader (.62**)  
Trust in the Leader (.87**)"]; style A fill:#002060,color:#fff; style B fill:#800000,color:#fff; linkStyle 0 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px;
```

*Influence on Subordinate Attitudes*  
Belief in the Leader as a Role Model (.84\*\*)  
Identification with the Leader (.62\*\*)  
Trust in the Leader (.87\*\*)

Analyses based on all of the 10 sites show that servant leadership is *significantly and positively* related to subordinate positive attitudes.

# Outcomes of Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership



```
graph LR; A[Servant Leadership] --> B["Influence on Subordinate Motivation  
Prosocial Motivation (.23**)  
Task Self-Efficacy (.16**)  
Creative Self-Efficacy (.10*)"]; style A fill:#001a4a,color:#fff; style B fill:#800000,color:#fff
```

## Influence on Subordinate Motivation

Prosocial Motivation (.23\*\*)

Task Self-Efficacy (.16\*\*)

Creative Self-Efficacy (.10\*)

Analyses based on all of the 10 sites show that servant leadership is *significantly and positively* related to subordinate positive motivation.



# Outcomes of Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership

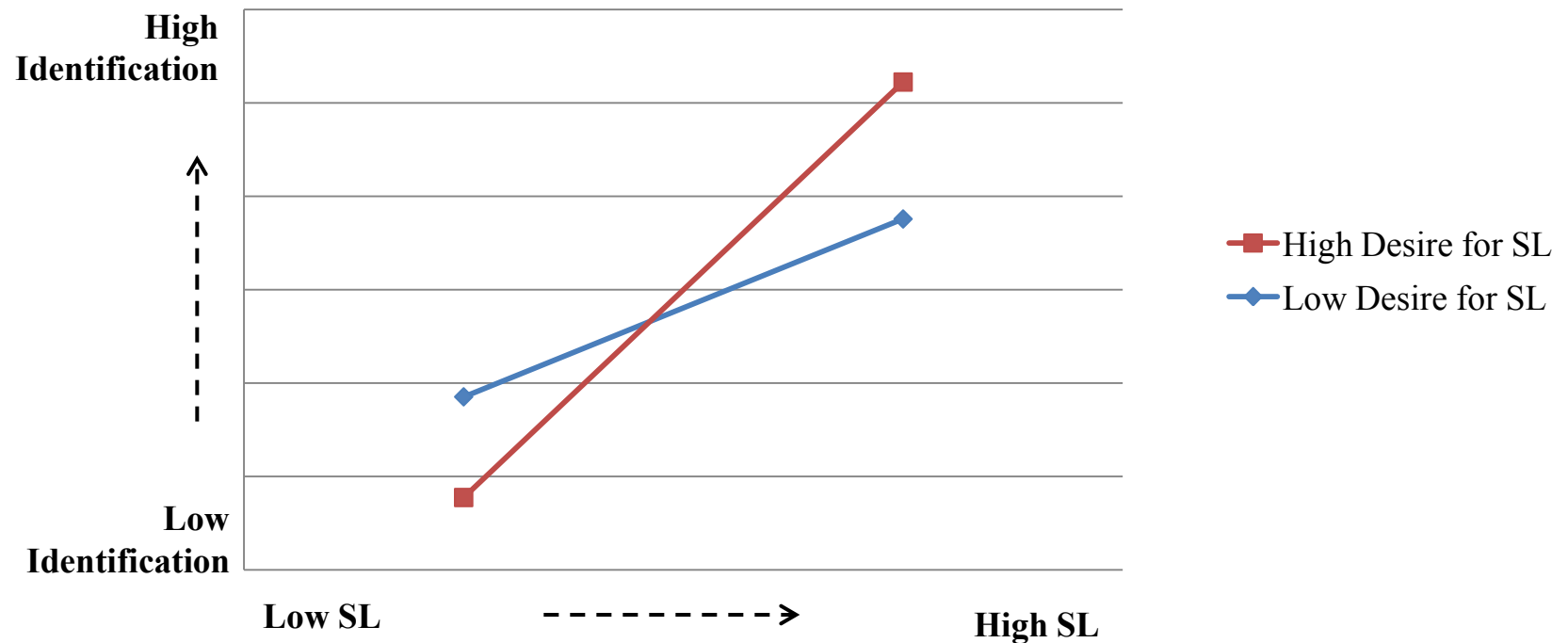


```
graph LR; A[Servant Leadership] --> B["Influence on Subordinate Behaviors  
Follower Servant Leadership (.25**)  
In-Role Performance (.17**)  
Creativity (.12*)  
Helping Behaviors (.22**)  
Promotive Voice Behaviors (.18**)"]; style A fill:#002060,color:#fff; style B fill:#800000,color:#fff; linkStyle 0 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 1 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 2 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 3 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 4 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 5 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 6 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 7 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 8 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 9 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 10 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 11 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 12 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 13 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 14 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 15 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 16 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 17 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 18 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 19 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 20 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 21 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 22 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 23 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 24 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 25 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 26 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 27 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 28 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 29 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 30 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 31 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 32 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 33 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 34 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 35 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 36 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 37 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 38 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 39 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 40 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 41 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 42 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 43 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 44 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 45 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 46 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 47 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 48 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 49 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 50 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 51 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 52 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 53 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 54 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 55 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 56 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 57 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 58 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 59 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 60 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 61 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 62 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 63 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 64 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 65 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 66 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 67 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 68 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 69 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 70 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 71 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 72 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 73 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 74 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 75 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 76 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 77 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 78 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 79 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 80 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 81 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 82 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 83 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 84 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 85 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 86 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 87 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 88 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 89 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 90 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 91 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 92 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 93 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 94 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 95 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 96 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 97 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 98 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px; linkStyle 99 stroke:#000,stroke-width:2px;
```

Influence on Subordinate Behaviors  
Follower Servant Leadership (.25\*\*)  
In-Role Performance (.17\*\*)  
Creativity (.12\*)  
Helping Behaviors (.22\*\*)  
Promotive Voice Behaviors (.18\*\*)

Analyses based on all of the 10 sites show that servant leadership is *significantly and positively* related subordinate positive work behaviors.

# The Effect of Desire for Servant Leadership



Analyses based on all of the 10 sites show that there is *a stronger relationship* between servant leadership and follower identification with the leader for individuals who show a high desire for a servant leader.

# Summary of Key Findings

- In general, employees perceived a moderate level of overall servant leadership in all of the 10 organizations.
- On the contrary, employees reported a strong desire for servant leadership in 7 organizations and a moderate to strong desire for servant leadership in 3 of the 10 organizations.
- The biggest discrepancies between servant leadership and desire for servant leadership are “Helping subordinates grow and succeed” and “Behaving ethically.”

# Summary of Key Findings

- Servant leadership is positively related to a number of positive outcomes in Singaporean organizations, including...
  - **Positive employee attitudes:** employees were more likely to identify with and trust in servant leaders and see servant leaders as role models.
  - **Positive employee motivation:** servant leaders enhanced followers' prosocial motivation and confidence in completing the job creatively.
  - **Positive employee work behaviors:** employees imitated servant leadership behaviors; employees were more likely to improve their job performance, become creative and helpful, and speak up to voice ideas for improvement.
- Subordinates are more likely to identify with a servant leader when they have stronger desire for servant leadership.

# Recommendation #1

- Create awareness among top management of benefits of servant leadership.
  - Servant leadership plays a key role in enhancing important and favorable employee attitudes, motivation, and behaviors.
- Employ servant leadership training programs in your organization and emphasize the practices regarding:
  - Creating value for community;
  - Putting subordinates first;
  - Empowering.

# Recommendation #2

- To minimize the gap between actual servant leadership practices and employees' desire for servant leadership, managers should focus on:
  - Helping subordinates grow and succeed;
  - Behaving ethically.
- Regularly assess levels of servant leadership within your organization.

# Thank you!

*A special thank you to:*

- The Greenleaf Centre for Servant-Leadership (Asia)
- 10 participating organizations
- All the managers and employees who completed surveys

*Please contact us if you wish to participate in a follow-up survey*

[bobliden@uic.edu](mailto:bobliden@uic.edu) or [sjwayne@uic.edu](mailto:sjwayne@uic.edu)