

The University of Southern Mississippi  
**The Aquila Digital Community**

---

Dissertations

---

Fall 12-1-2015

**Academic Support Staff as Servant Leaders and the Relationship to Student Satisfaction**

Joan M. Arrington  
*University of Southern Mississippi*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations>



Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#)

---

**Recommended Citation**

Arrington, Joan M., "Academic Support Staff as Servant Leaders and the Relationship to Student Satisfaction" (2015). *Dissertations*. 181.  
<https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/181>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact [Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu](mailto:Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu).

The University of Southern Mississippi

ACADEMIC SUPPORT STAFF AS SERVANT LEADERS AND THE  
RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT SATISFACTION

by

Joan Michelle Arrington

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate School  
of The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2015

## ABSTRACT

### ACADEMIC SUPPORT STAFF AS SERVANT LEADERS AND THE RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT SATISFACTION

by Joan Michelle Arrington

December 2015

This study examined servant leadership practiced by academic support staff of academic departments within four-year, post-secondary institutions. These support staff include employees within academic departments such as secretaries, administrative assistants, and coordinators that do not have managerial responsibilities and are not instructional faculty. The target population for this study was all full-time and part-time students, both undergraduate and graduate, eighteen years of age or older, and enrolled at post-secondary four-year higher education institutions in Mississippi. Results based on the data collected suggested a majority of academic support staff rated at four of the seven institutions exhibited the characteristics of servant leaders. When grouped by enrollment, (a) small institutions, (b) medium institutions, and (b) large institutions, the majority of academic support staff rated at the small institutions were considered servant leaders while a majority of those at larger institutions were not. Not only did the results suggest a statistically significant relationship with institution size, but student ethnicity also indicated a relationship with servant leadership.

This study also evaluated the relationship between the level of servant leadership practiced by academic support staff and the student's satisfaction with their connection to the campus. Results indicated that as the servant leadership score of academic support

staff increased so did the student's satisfaction score. Institution size and student ethnicity were again unique predictors of student satisfaction.

COPYRIGHT BY  
JOAN MICHELLE ARRINGTON  
2015

ACADEMIC SUPPORT STAFF AS SERVANT LEADERS AND  
THE RELATIONSHIP TO STUDENT SATISFACTION

by

Joan Michelle Arrington

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School  
and the Department of Educational Studies and Research  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Approved:

---

Dr. Thomas V. O'Brien, Committee Chair  
Professor, Educational Studies and Research

---

Dr. Lilian H. Hill, Committee Member  
Professor, Educational Studies and Research

---

Dr. Richard S. Mohn, Committee Member  
Associate Professor, Educational Studies and Research

---

Dr. R. Eric Platt, Committee Member  
Assistant Professor, Educational Studies and Research

---

Dr. Karen S. Coats  
Dean of the Graduate School

December 2015

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Thomas V. O'Brien, for his time, encouragement and guidance throughout my doctoral study and dissertation research. I would also like to express my gratitude to my other committee members Dr. Richard Mohn, Dr. Lilian Hill, and Dr. Eric Platt for their advice, support, and insightful comments in lectures and throughout this research study.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	ix
CHAPTER	
I.    INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background	
Statement of the Problem	
Justification	
Definition of Terms	
Assumptions	
Delimitations	
II.   REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .....	19
Theoretical Framework	
Research on Servant Leadership	
Summary	
III.  METHODOLOGY .....	45
Purpose	
Participants	
Instrumentation	
Data Collection	
Data Analysis	
IV.  RESULTS .....	59
V.   DISCUSSION .....	86
Overview	
Implications	
Limitations	
Recommendations for Future Research	
Summary	



APPENDICES .....	97
REFERENCES .....	104

## LIST OF TABLES

### Table

1.	Ten Characteristics of Servant Leadership Identified by Spears .....	23
2.	Summary of Key Characteristics of Servant Leadership by Researcher .....	25
3.	Enrollment of Participating Institutions .....	47
4.	Items Clustered into Potential Subscales .....	49
5.	Servant Leadership Descriptors with Corresponding Survey Item.....	51
6.	Pilot Reliability Scores .....	54
7.	Academic Support Staff Servant Leadership Survey Responses .....	55
8.	Demographic Questions for the Current Research Study .....	56
9.	Participant Demographics (n = 1445) .....	60
10.	Correlations of the Default Model .....	63
11.	Raw Data Eigenvalues, Mean and Percentile Random Data Eigenvalues .....	66
12.	Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis Results (N = 650) .....	67
13.	Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Scores .....	68
14.	Mean and Standard Deviation of the Questions in the Resulting Model .....	71
15.	One-Sample T-Test for Each Institution When Compared to 4.00 Mean .....	72
16.	One-Sample T-Test by Institution Size When Compared to 4.00 Mean .....	73
17.	Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Results for Model Factors by Institution Size .....	74
18.	Effects of Demographics and Servant Leadership on Student Satisfaction .....	76
19.	Total Effects of Demographics and Servant Leadership on Student Satisfaction .....	77
20.	Effects of Demographics and Serving and Leading Subscales on Student Satisfaction .....	78

21.	Total Effects of Demographics and Subscales on Student Satisfaction .....	79
22.	Participant Demographics by Institution Size .....	80
23.	Descriptive Statistics of the Questions in the Resulting Model by Institution Size .....	82
24.	Descriptive Statistics of Calculated Scores by Institution Size .....	83
25.	Effects of Demographics and Servant Leadership on Student Satisfaction .....	84

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### Figure

1. Scree Plot used to determine the number of factors to consider.....64
2. Model of Serving and Leading .....70

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background

The importance and effect of student support outcomes to increase student retention and persistence to graduation is well documented. A depiction of this persistence issue is highlighted in a report by the Harvard Graduate School of Education (2011), *Pathways to Prosperity*, and indicates dropout rates in the United States are the highest among industrialized countries such as Australia, United Kingdom, Japan, France, and Spain. The literature also reported that efforts to make colleges accountable for these poor dropout rates are gaining ground. These efforts include state policy changes and incorporating retention and graduation rates into funding formulas.

There is evidence supporting the idea that student success involves more than academic skill. Many students withdraw from institutions for environmental reasons rather than intellectual difficulties (Pitkethly & Prosser, 2001; Tinto, 1995). These environmental reasons include lack of clearly defined goals, a mismatch between student and university culture, and feelings of isolation. Tinto's (1993) research on student success and persistence also indicated factors in addition to academics that affect persistence. These factors include student integration into the university community, interaction with other students, faculty, and staff, and building relationships outside the classroom. Students who do not connect to the institution through relationships with other students, faculty, and staff will have difficulty remaining enrolled (Tinto, 1993). Tinto (1993) explains that commitment on the student's part calls for a committed effort from faculty and staff on a daily basis. A part of this committed effort is through

informal advising. As a component of student success, Tinto (2008) defines informal advising as “the sharing of accumulated knowledge that goes on within a campus among and between faculty, staff, and students . . . The inability to obtain needed advice during the first year or at the point of changing majors can undermine motivation, [and] increase the likelihood of departure” (p. 3). For students transitioning from high school to college, higher education is a new obstacle course in which students need to learn how to navigate both the physical aspects as well as the bureaucratic facets to be successful (Attinasi, 1989).

An alternative idea under debate is treating students as customers as though the college is a business environment. According to available research, this can have a positive impact on student persistence (Oluseye, Tairat, & Emmanuel, 2014). One argument for this is that higher education institutions now have to operate more like a business that is competing for customers since funding has become dependent upon enrollment. Oluseye et al. (2014) found that students were more satisfied and willing to recommend the university to others if the university was well-managed, employing effective customer relationship management strategies. These strategies include determining the needs of the customer, understanding customer behavior, and utilizing quality communication strategies (Amoako, Arthur, Bando, & Katah, 2012). However, there are drawbacks to treating students as customers. Students that viewed themselves as customers usually felt entitled and viewed complaining as beneficial (Finney & Finney, 2010). Involvement at the institution could be predicted by their satisfaction with the institution, but involvement could not be predicted by the perception of being a

customer. Finney and Finney also found that students who viewed themselves as customers held attitudes and engaged in behaviors not conducive to success.

It is clear that institutional leadership must consider carefully their strategies to increase student persistence and satisfaction. While there is literature to suggest the potential of customer relationship management strategies (Oluseye et al., 2014; Amoako et al., 2012; Finney & Finney, 2010), this study will be viewed through the lens of servant leadership practices of academic support staff and how academic support staff as servant leaders can impact student outcomes.

#### *Contributions of Staff to Student Outcomes*

Knowledge and support can also be viewed as cultural capital, which consists of information that is important to students and useful in environments such as a university campus. Bourdieu (1973) states that in the case of higher education, cultural capital would include knowing whom to ask for help, where to go find help, and how to ask for help. Learning how to navigate the bureaucratic systems such as departmental secretaries, advisors, and student support staff to access resources is part of the cultural capital. According to Karp (2011), students from backgrounds that normally have little college experience can benefit from developing college know-how obtained from staff and faculty through informal advising.

Higher education staff—both academic and non-academic—interact with students on a daily basis. Some of these interactions occur in a more formal advising and teaching mode while others are less formal (Tinto, 2008). This study will focus on academic support, and for the purposes of this study, academic support staff are defined as those mid-level staff who work in academic departments such as nursing or management but

are not instructional staff. This includes administrative assistants, advising staff, and program support staff. Support staff also described as “institutional agents” by Bensimon (2007) can promote success by providing information, advice, motivation, and interaction. These institutional agents do not have to be an academic advisor or part of a formal support program to play an important role in students’ success. Interactions with support staff also benefit non-traditional and international students who may need special considerations such as language translations and convenient meeting times (Schmitt & Duggan, 2011; Bannister, 2009; Graham, 2010). Bannister (2009) also reported that students felt engaged at the college/University and satisfied with their role as a student after they had experienced a positive or helpful connection or interaction with a support staff member or faculty member.

Students feel empowered and engaged with the institution when they develop supporting relationships. Middleton (2006) reminds us that the student is on an academic journey, but the institution’s assistance is needed to help them arrive at their destination of a college degree. Student academic outcomes are enhanced when a series of conditions are met. First on Middleton’s list of conditions is the behavior of teaching and non-teaching staff towards the student and whether environments and processes are welcoming and efficient without shuffling students from one office to another. Students will perform better when “they are not mucked about, made to feel they are not a nuisance and get what they want when they want it” (p. 3). Middleton states that “while excellent teaching is necessary to achieve positive academic outcomes in a tertiary institution, it is in itself not sufficient” (p. 7). Academic support staff impact student success by leading, serving, and supporting students.



### *Servant Leadership*

Servant leadership is a leadership practice in which holding a position of authority is not a requirement (Page & Wong, 2000), and one can learn to be a servant leader (Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Page & Wong, 2000). In this study, academic support staff are the servant leaders being studied and students are considered to be the followers. Servant leaders both serve and lead their followers (Greenleaf, 1970). Followers are served when the servant leader creates conditions in which followers can empower themselves and when servant leaders help followers develop their full personal capacities (Northouse, 2013). Servant leaders do this by developing long-term relationships with their followers and learning the individual abilities, needs, and goals of followers by making it a priority to listen to the followers. Servant leaders put followers first and are concerned with the way leaders treat followers and the potential outcomes.

Although many relate servant leadership to church organizations, servant leadership is now being practiced in several different disciplines such as religion, business, health care, and education. The first and most common is within religious organizations such as churches, missions, and Christian-based institutions and businesses. Reportedly, Jesus was the first servant leader; unfortunately, ties to Christianity have served as a detractor for the adoption of servant leadership (Wong & Davey, 2007). Servant leadership is also being researched within the health care discipline. Because of the role of healthcare professionals in caring for patients, researchers have begun to study the influence of servant leadership between patients and different workgroups such as nurses and doctors. These types of studies help fulfill the need for leadership theory that focuses on patient care and collaboration between work groups within the work

environment (Garber, Madigan, Click, & Fitzpatrick, 2009). Business organizations have also discovered the merits of servant leadership. Wong and Davey (2007) list several Fortune 500 companies training employees in servant leadership such as Southwest Airlines, Synovus Financial Corporation, TD Industries, and Container Stores. Also noted in their report is that Toro and Men's Warehouse are being led by servant leaders, defined later in Chapter 1.

Researchers continue to study the different components of servant leadership to understand how this leadership theory influences followers and the work environment. For example, Chen, Chen, and Li (2013) studied the relationship between a supervisor's spiritual values and the follower's sense of well-being. Ruíz, Martínez, and Rodrigo (2010) studied the influence of servant leadership on the creation of social capital in a business work environment to understand the positive consequences of sociability and how non-monetary forms of incentives can be important sources of power and influence. Wong and Davey (2007) reported that followers are motivated by the creation of a caring and supportive workplace rather than individual incentives. Researchers have investigated whether servant leadership influences followers' motivation and work ethic to become more productive, creative, satisfied, and innovative.

Higher education has more recently begun to study the influence of servant leadership throughout the organization at all levels. Studies have suggested that higher education servant leaders generate engagement, trust, hope, and employee satisfaction. Wheeler (2012) writes that servant leadership has promise for higher education because it preserves the best practices of community building, empowerment, embracing curiosity and innovation, and making society better while also incorporating appropriate business

practices. According to Page (2003), servant leadership is the “most powerful theory of leadership that is supportive of a diverse culture” (p. 79). Servant leaders can impact the cultural development of an institution just by demonstrating the characteristics of servant leadership in conjunction with cultural awareness.

Servant leadership is not always present in higher education organizations (Hannigan, 2008). In some cases, instruments measuring the level of servant leadership indicated an institution as a whole was not a servant lead institution. Within an institution, studies have indicated that at some job levels servant leadership was thought to exist when in actuality it did not. In other words, a leader may have considered himself to be a servant leader, but his followers did not see servant leader characteristics within the leader (McDoughle, 2009; Padron, 2012), or alternatively, an employee did not recognize the characteristics of servant leadership within themselves. In studies such as McDoughle’s, job satisfaction of employees has also been linked to the level of servant leadership.

Studies of servant leadership in relation to students are fewer in number. These studies are important because they provide insight into the influence of servant leadership on student success. Student satisfaction and loyalty to the institution were studied by Padron (2012), but results indicated there was not a relationship between student satisfaction and servant leadership, as measured using Net Promoter Score. This score measures the willingness of a company’s customers to recommend their products or services to others (Medallia, n.d.).

Satisfaction measured by the Net Promoter Score could be measuring items other than student satisfaction with the level of service provided by institutional employees.

Boyum (2012) conducted a qualitative study to determine how students as followers eventually become servant leaders themselves, an important construct of servant leadership.

While some studies of servant leadership have been based on pre-determined or self-identified servant leaders, other studies sought to determine whether servant leadership existed within the organization. Recent studies have reported a positive relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction (Laub, 1999), job performance, and commitment to the organization (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). Since 1999, several studies have been conducted to define characteristics of servant leadership and develop instruments to measure servant leadership within an organization; while other studies have used these new instruments to measure the level of servant leadership within various types of organizations and work groups.

A desire for a change in leadership practices has spawned the rejuvenation of servant leadership over the past several years. Van Dierendonck (2011) says that “in view of the current demand for more ethical, people-centered management, leadership inspired by ideas from servant leadership theory may very well be what organizations need now” (p. 1228). There is now more significance placed on the key element of interaction between leader and follower (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009).

McCrimmon (2006) described this leadership as one that was not tied to official position or roles but leadership that could be practiced by any employee. Servant leadership research on higher education institutions has focused primarily on administrators and positions of authority rather than the staff that are working directly with students. The role of support staff and positions not normally considered in the area of leadership

deserve scrutiny to determine how servant leadership can influence and transform a student's experience and outcome and to further define the scope and depth of servant leadership within higher education institutions. Faculty, in non-administrative positions, can function as servant leaders, and servant leadership was recently proclaimed as "the best leadership mindset for the classroom" (Drury, 2005, p. 9). Studies of faculty and servant leadership have revealed "the teacher as servant leader functions as a trailblazer for those served by removing obstacles that stand in their path," "helping individuals discover latent, unformed interests" and "removing obstacles that thwart students' discovery and development of their talents" (Bowman, 2005, p. 258). A model of servant leadership is one that links faculty fulfillment to the fulfillment of the institution (Buchen, 1998). Through faculty interactions with students, servant leadership offers faculty the opportunity to transform higher education (Buchen, 1998; Bass, 2000).

Similar to faculty, support staff also have the opportunity to impact students. Support staff often create the student's first impression of the institution (Wheeler, 2012); yet, the contributions of staff within learning institutions are under-researched and undervalued (Szekeres, 2004). In a recent study, Graham (2010) found that support staff contribute to student success by responding to students' questions quickly, knowledgeably, efficiently, and in a welcoming, friendly manner. Within Graham's study, support staff held positions such as student advisor, professional officer, and mentor program manager. Support staff are uniquely positioned near students and may be able to see and help with the barriers that can impede student success. They are positioned to assist students with a range of needs, and while doing so, provide information to help students empower themselves, offer individual support, and hold

students accountable. Through interactions with students, these staff may be able to support the education process and experience personal satisfaction as a result (Schmitt & Duggan, 2011). Research is needed to understand better the role of servant leadership in these interactions with students and how it is modeled by staff. This would aid in the creation of staff development and training programs in higher education settings to increase persistence and success of students (Schmitt & Duggan, 2011; Graham, 2010). In 2013, the community college system in California developed initiatives for development and training for all faculty and staff to support student success through teaching and support services (California Community Colleges, 2013).

A few studies have included students as the followers in the creation of a servant leadership model (Anderson, 2009; Boyum, 2012; Liden et al., 2008; Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008; Murray, 2008). Anderson (2009) examined the difference between entering students and graduating students to determine if servant leader qualities could be developed in adult students. Student followers of faculty were included in the focus groups of a qualitative study conducted by Boyum (2012) to examine how followers transform into servant leaders themselves. Students currently employed or students with past work experience were included in a pilot study by Liden et al. (2008) as the first phase of scale development and in a pre-test by Sendjaya et al. (2008) in the development of an instrument to measure servant leadership of job supervisors. A qualitative study designed by Murray (2008) included a small number of students and examined opinions of servant leadership practices within the institution. The foci of these studies did not attend to the relationship between typical undergraduate students and academic support staff.

## Statement of the Problem

Student support is crucial to the success of students in higher education. Through formal and informal student support, academic support staff are positioned to have an impact on the success of students. Formal student support is support provided by initiatives designed for student support; while informal student support is provided through common interactions and activities. Academic departments are critical places where students with high priority needs can be served. These departments are the hub of the institution where curricula are created and delivered, students are taught, research is conducted, and services are provided (Wheeler, 2012). An increased focus on retention and graduation by institutional accrediting bodies and governing boards has pressed servant leadership forward as a promising agent of change. Organizations are moving towards leadership based on teamwork, community building, inclusion of others in the decision making process, and concern for the personal growth of followers to improve the quality of the institution (Spears, 2005). However, there is limited research available on servant leadership practices and outcomes in higher education.

According to van Dierendonck (2011), most of what has been written about servant leadership has focused on how it should be done and not how it is practiced. More research is needed to validate the theoretical models created with the actual practice of servant leadership. Available research to this point has predominantly focused on the creation of servant leadership models describing servant leadership characteristics and instruments to measure levels of servant leadership and job satisfaction. These models and measures were developed based on working environment relationships in different settings and not in reference to student academic relationships. Evidence of a

relationship between levels of servant leadership and job satisfaction has been established in higher education (Laub, 1999; Iken, 2005; Hannigan, 2008; McDougale, 2009; Padron, 2012); however, this has not been replicated for students and student satisfaction. Other research in higher education has informed us that levels of servant leadership within an institution can vary between different work groups such as faculty, administrators, and support staff (Buchen, 1998; Drury, 2005; Iken, 2005; Hannigan, 2008; Murray, 2008; McDougale, 2009; Padron, 2012; Boyum, 2012; Wheeler, 2012). However, the servant leadership relationship between these work groups and students has not been thoroughly investigated.

While the results of a study investigating servant leadership and student satisfaction indicated no relationship (Padron, 2012), student satisfaction was based on institutional services and not specific groups of employees that had interacted with students. One other study of the relationship between servant leadership and student outcomes yielded inconclusive results due to insufficient numbers of responses and the non-existence of servant leadership within the participating institutions.

Wheeler (2012) stated there is still so much to learn about servant leadership within higher education. Case studies of higher education servant leaders and controlled studies of the work of servant leaders in higher education are needed to fill the gaps in the literature. Northouse (2013) commented that organizational outcomes are the missing piece to the servant leadership equation. Servant leaders put followers first, create conditions in which followers can empower themselves, emphasize follower development, and help them reach their goals. However, studies related to the positive



influences of servant leadership on student outcomes such as student satisfaction, retention, and graduation have yet to be conducted.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether academic support staff of academic departments within post-secondary institutions exhibit the characteristics of servant leadership while interacting with students. Furthermore, this study seeks to evaluate the relationship between support staff servant leadership and student satisfaction.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

RQ<sub>1</sub>. Is the factor structure of Laub's (1999) Organizational Leadership Assessment model confirmed by the data collected?

RQ<sub>2</sub>. Is there a statistically significant level of servant leadership practiced among academic support staff when compared to the Organizational Leadership Assessment benchmark of  $\geq 4.0$  (Laub, 1999)?

RQ<sub>3</sub>. Is there a relationship between the level of servant leadership practiced by academic support staff and student satisfaction (defined later in Chapter I)?

#### Justification

As reported by several leadership researchers (Greenleaf, 1970; Trompenaars & Voerman, 2009; Wheeler, 2012; Wong & Davey, 2007) in the wake of corporate scandals, a new form of leadership is needed. "Power management may be on the way out as the bias changes from tough leadership to a more inclusive style" (Trompenaars & Voerman, 2009, p. 80). Farnsworth (2007), a community college president, also discusses issues with current forms of leadership used in higher education and the potential of servant leadership:

I personally find great comfort in my conviction that this great struggle can lead higher education in the direction most of us would choose to go anyway, given absolute choice toward great meaning in what we do, greater fulfillment in doing it and greater satisfaction in the result. And we do have that choice. We can recapture the vision and zeal that fired our early excitement about becoming servants in the field of education. We can extend that servant-first enthusiasm into building new leadership approaches that will transform our institutions, our profession and public confidence in what we do. (p. 21)

This study is relevant to the on-going process of understanding and using servant leadership to influence lives in several ways. Servant leadership has proven to be successful in advancing the effectiveness of business organizations (Spears, 1995; Wong & Davey, 2007; Trompenaars & Voerman, 2009), and models of servant leadership developed since the 1990s have mostly centered on business. However, its application in other disciplines such as higher education needs additional research (Laub, 1999; Iken, 2005). A study of the effects of servant leadership on one of the most important groups of higher education, the students, will be a valuable contribution to the leadership literature. Studies of higher education personnel as servant leaders would provide insight to the influence of leaders at alternative levels of leadership and, as a result, further inform the practice of servant leadership in higher education.

Mississippi was chosen for this study because the state has ranked very low in the persistence, progression, and graduation rates published by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (2014). According to the SREB, Mississippi ranked next to last out of sixteen states above West Virginia in first-year student persistence rates of public

four-year institutions and ranked last place for student progression rates. In 2010, the Education Achievement Council (EAC) was created by the Mississippi state legislature to bring Mississippi's educational attainment and skill levels of the working-age population to the national average by 2025 (Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, n.d.). The EAC report cards, created in 2012 by the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, show the enrollment, persistence, and progression progress that have been made toward educational goals for each public four-year institution. These reports are indicative of the need for deeper studies into ways in which institutions can improve persistence and satisfaction.

This study will address the need for further research on the outcomes of servant leadership. Further study is still needed to demonstrate how servant leadership is related to organizational performance (Page & Wong, 2000; Padron, 2012; Sendjaya et al., 2008). Greenleaf (1970) defined the goal of servant leadership as creating healthy organizations that nurture the growth of individuals within the organization, improving organizational performance, and producing a positive impact on society. More detail about servant leadership from the 1970s to the present is explained in Chapter 2. Prior research has indicated a positive relationship with employee satisfaction, caring for the safety of others, trust in the leader, trust in the organization (Joseph & Winston, 2005), and a commitment to the organization (Avolio et al., 2009). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) reported a strong relationship between servant leadership and positive outcomes of employees' extra effort and employees' satisfaction. There is very little research on the impact of leadership strategy on student outcomes such as satisfaction, persistence, and graduation. As the failing economy drives many students away from higher education

and lower birth rates indicate decreasing numbers of high school graduates (Kiley, 2013), it becomes fiscally important for an institution of higher education to work to retain the students already enrolled. As with the business sector, repeat business is an indicator of customer satisfaction. Student satisfaction, like customer satisfaction, can be used to gauge organizational outcomes. Tinto (1987) reported that student satisfaction represents a sense of belonging and loyalty by the student, and satisfaction is highly correlated with persistence.

#### Definition of Terms

The following definitions have been established to assist readers in a better understanding of the terms used in this dissertation.

*Academic Support Staff.* Those higher education employees within academic departments that do not have managerial responsibilities and are not instructional faculty. Examples of job titles include Administrative Assistant, Assistant to the Dean, Secretary, Clerical Specialist, Coordinator, and Office Manager.

*Administrators and Positions of Authority.* Those higher education employees that have managerial responsibilities such as directors, academic department chairs, and deans (Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs, & Thurston, 1987).

*Followers (Followership).* Role occupied by particular individuals in an organization. Specifically, it is the ability of an individual to follow a leader (Riggio, Chaleff, & Blumen-Lipman, 2008). For the purposes of this study, students are classified as the followers.

*Satisfaction.* A state felt by a person who has had an experience, performance or outcome that fulfills his or her expectation (Kotler & Clarke, 1987).

*Servant Leadership Operational Definition.* “An understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leaders. Servant leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led, and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization, and those served by the organization” (Laub, 1999, p. 83).

#### Assumptions

The major assumptions of this study by the researcher are first that students completing the survey will respond truthfully when selecting their level of agreement with each of the statements. Secondly, the researcher assumes students can fairly and accurately report whether academic support staff, with whom they come in contact, exhibit traits associated with servant leadership. And the last assumption is that academic support staff can have an impact on students. This can be achieved through a variety of ways such as responding to students’ questions quickly, knowledgeably, efficiently, and in a welcoming, friendly manner (Graham, 2010).

#### Delimitations

This study is restricted to one state within the South. Mississippi was chosen for this study for two reasons. The first because it is the home state of the researcher, but secondly, because of Mississippi’s rank amongst SREB states as already indicated. Samples will be drawn from students, age 18 or older, enrolled in public and private four-year post-secondary Mississippi colleges and universities. Among those colleges invited to participate were historically black colleges, Baptist colleges, and Methodist colleges. Mississippi community colleges were excluded from this research study because of the

difference in the missions of community colleges as compared to four-year institutions. Community colleges are charged with providing education for individuals within a small service region within Mississippi (American Association of Community Colleges, 2015). According to the results of the Community College Survey of Student Engagement directed by the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCCSE) (2014), when compared to four-year institutions, community colleges have a much higher percentage than four-year institutions of part-time students, a higher percentage of non-traditional aged students, and usually about one-half of the student enrollment needs remedial help. Community colleges appear to be making continued progress over the last ten years with student engagement as noted by the CCCSE (2014).

While there are several servant leadership instruments available to measure servant leadership, this research utilizes the model and definition developed by James Laub (1999). Unlike other available models, Laub included non-profit education organizations in the development of the model and instrument. The same is true for student satisfaction surveys. Of all the satisfaction surveys available, there were a small number found to include the questions of connection and campus climate. Surveys from one four-year institution, one community college institution, and a consulting firm were located. Permission was sought and granted by the four-year institution, Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science. Finally, reliability statistics were not available for the Student Satisfaction Survey created by Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in Chicago. These statistics would have provided some comparable data as to the reliability of the questions.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This literature review provides insight to the progression of servant leadership and research related to servant leadership. The chapter is divided into sections that include (a) history and theoretical framework, (b) servant leadership models, (c) servant leadership within higher education, (d) interactions between support staff and students, and (e) student satisfaction. As is evident through the review, researchers have attempted their own models of behaviors and defined characteristics associated with servant leadership.

The term servant leadership was first discussed as a leadership theory by Robert K. Greenleaf (1970). Greenleaf described servant leadership as the desire to be a servant to others first which develops into leadership through service. A servant leader focuses on the growth of the followers, helping them perform and grow to their fullest potential (Greenleaf, 1970). Greenleaf's writings were later analyzed by Spears (1995) from which he identified ten characteristics of a servant leader: (a) listening, (b) empathy, (c) healing, (d) awareness, (e) persuasion, (f) conceptualization, (g) foresight, (h) stewardship, (i) commitment to the growth of people, and (j) building community. According to Wong and Davey (2007), followers are motivated by a caring and supportive environment. If leaders demonstrate the ten characteristics originally defined by Greenleaf, the servant leadership theory, as demonstrated through the framework, holds that followers will respond in a positive manner.

## Theoretical Framework

Leadership is the process by which an individual uses his or her power of influence with a group of individuals to reach a common set of goals of the institution (Northouse, 2013). As Lewis (1994) noted, an individual does not have to be in a position of authority to be a leader. There are many definitions of leadership and beliefs about effective leaders. Leadership theories provide avenues to understanding tenets of effective leadership such as what type of person makes an effective leader, how effective leaders behave, how different situations require different leadership styles, and the effect of different types of power on effective leadership. Servant leadership is the evolution of leadership theories to focus on the follower.

In the 1950s, leadership theories grew to include behavioral theory that focused on the behavior of the leader and suggested that great leaders were not born. Leaders could be trained, and leadership could be learned. Since that time, theories such as servant leadership have evolved from the behavioral theory that place more focus on the relationship between leader and follower. Servant leadership is contradictory to prior beliefs of leadership in that the focus is on the follower, and the success of the follower is a priority (Northouse, 2013). The term servant leadership was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf. Greenleaf worked for American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) in management research, development, and education. After retirement, he began his second career of teaching and consulting at institutions, including Harvard Business School, The Ohio University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, The Ford Foundation, and others (Spears, 2005).



Greenleaf's first reported writings of servant leadership were in 1970. The first essays reflected Greenleaf's notion that a different form of leadership was needed, one that was not autocratic and hierarchical. Instead, a form of leadership that was based on working together, building relationships, involving others in the decision-making process, and enhancing the personal growth of followers while improving institutional quality seemed to be desirable (Spears, 2005). The concept of servant leadership came to Greenleaf after he read Hermann Hesse's novel, *Journey to the East* (Greenleaf, 1970). Greenleaf concluded that "true leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others" (Spears, 2005, p. 2). Greenleaf saw servant and leader as opposites; according to him, when one person was both servant and leader, a paradox occurs. Servant leadership was defined by Greenleaf as:

The servant-leader is servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He is sharply different from the person who is leader first . . . The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and most difficult to administer, is do those served grow as a person: do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely to become servants? (1970, p. 15)

Greenleaf (1977) also described the servant leadership approach as leaders helping followers in reaching their potential and achieving career success. Servant leadership is an approach that emphasizes how the leader responds to and interacts with followers, reiterates increased service to others, promotes a sense of community, and promotes

sharing in decision making. In a chapter on servant leadership, Northouse (2013) describes servant leaders as leaders that “put followers first, empower them, and help them develop their full personal capacities” (p. 219). Servant leaders focus on the development of their followers.

In Greenleaf’s (1970) first essay on the servant leader, he describes the characteristics of great servant leaders. One of these characteristics is the ability to put himself/herself in a position to lead others in the right direction. Listening and understanding are other characteristics described as necessary for a leader to learn and receive the information needed to go in the right direction. Greenleaf says that a “natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening first” (p. 18), and these characteristics will strengthen the team. The characteristics of acceptance and empathy of a servant-leader are defined as always accepting a person but not necessarily accepting the person’s effort as good enough. It requires a tolerance for imperfection. Greenleaf states that “men grow taller when those who lead them empathize and when they are accepted for what they are” (p. 22). Leaders build trust when they empathize with their followers. Leaders also need the characteristic of intuition, making generalizations about the future based on trends. This includes foresight in which the leader makes some projections based on past events. Other characteristics of servant leaders include awareness and perception. Awareness is more than just being conscious of an event. The more the leader is aware, the more the leader will be able to perceive. One of the last two characteristics discussed by Greenleaf is persuasion, which is better than leadership by coercion. The last servant leadership characteristic is conceptualization, in which the

servant leader has the ability to consider the surroundings and the needs of the followers and can draft a plan that benefits the followers and the organization (Greenleaf, 1970).

Building on Greenleaf’s ideas of servant leadership, Spears (1995) identified ten characteristics, shown in Table 1, from Greenleaf’s writings which resulted in the first model of servant leadership. These characteristics are generally associated with Greenleaf and serve as the basis for servant leadership. Spears notes that the list is not exhaustive but considers the ten characteristics to be essential.

Table 1

*Ten Characteristics of Servant Leadership Identified by Spears (1995)*

Characteristic	Description
Listening	Servant leaders have a commitment to listen intently to others and what is being said.
Empathy	Servant leaders strive to understand and empathize with others.
Healing	Servant leaders strive to heal emotional hurts by listening and empathizing.
Awareness	Servant leaders are aware of their surroundings and the environment.
Persuasion	Servant leaders seek to persuade others to doing something rather than demanding it be done. This is one of the clear distinctions between servant leadership and authoritarian models.
Conceptualization	Servant leaders are often thinking ahead.
Foresight	Servant leaders take information from the past and present to understand how decisions can impact the future.
Stewardship	Greenleaf uses this term to indicate a commitment to serve others.
Commitment to the Growth of People	Servant leaders are concerned with more than just the work a person can produce; they are also concerned with the personal and professional development of followers.
Building Community	Servant leaders understand the importance of building a sense of community among the followers within an institution.

Other researchers such as Laub (1999); Wong and Davey (2007); Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2008); Dennis and Bocarnea (2005); Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora (2008); and van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) have reported their research and interpretation of the servant leadership model. As shown in Table 2, each developed his or her list of characteristics and attributes that servant leaders would possess. Some of these characteristics were very similar, while others were quite different. Empowerment, for example, was included as a servant leadership characteristic by Spears (2005), Buchen (1998), Page and Wong (2000), Patterson (2003), Dennis and Bocarnea (2005), Liden et al. (2008), and Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). Other similar characteristics include developing others and vision. Characteristics, such as love, first mentioned by Patterson (2003), and transcendental spirituality, mentioned by Sendjaya et al. (2008), are much less common. Wong and Page (2003) even list the characteristics like abuse of power and egotistic pride that should not be present in a servant leader. Even though there is not a consensus on the characteristics, there is a refined servant leadership model.

James Laub (1999) is noted for developing the first assessment instrument to quantitatively measure the level of servant leadership. His research was based on a review of the literature and also the assembling of a team of experts to identify other potential characteristics. Laub's field study incorporated a number of organizations that included religious non-profit, secular non-profit, for-profit, and public organizations. The results of his study yielded six characteristics of servant leadership and the *Servant Organizational Leadership Assessment* instrument. According to Laub, this instrument can be used at any level within an organization.

Table 2

*Summary of Key Characteristics of Servant Leadership by Researcher*

Characteristics of Servant Leadership	
Spears (1995)	Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment, Community Building
Buchen (1998)	Identity, Empowering, Relationship Builders, Servant and Leader (Doubleness), Preoccupation with the Future
Laub (1999)	Values People, Develops People, Builds Community, Displays Authenticity, Provides Leadership, Shares Leadership
Page & Wong (2000)	Integrity, Humility, Servanthood, Caring for Others, Empowering Others, Developing Others, Visioning, Goal Setting, Leading, Modeling Team Building, Shared Decision-making
Barbuto & Wheeler (2002)	Calling, Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion, Conceptualization, Foresight, Stewardship, Growth, Building Community
Patterson (2003) Dissertation	Agapao Love, Humility, Altruism, Vision, Trust, Empowerment, Service
Wong & Page (2003)	Integrity, Servant Hood, Empowering Others, Developing Others, Visioning, Leading, Shared Decision-making, Abuse of Power, Egotistic Pride
Barbuto & Wheeler (2006)	Altruistic Calling, Emotional Healing, Wisdom, Persuasive Mapping, Organizational Stewardship
Dennis & Bocarnea (2005)	Empowerment, Love, Humility, Trust, Vision
Wong & Davey (2007)	Serving and Developing Others, Consulting and Involving Others, Humility and Selflessness, Modeling Integrity and Authenticity, Inspiring and Influencing Others

Table 2 (continued).

Characteristics of Servant Leadership	
Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora (2008)	Transforming Influence, Voluntary Subordination, Authentic Self, Transcendental Spirituality, Covenantal Relationship, Responsible Morality
Van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011)	Empowerment, Humility, Standing Back, Authenticity, Forgiveness, Courage, Accountability, Stewardship

Following the creation of the Servant Organizational Leadership Assessment instrument, other instruments continued to be developed. Based on seven factors, Wong and Page (2003) created an assessment instrument, the *Servant Leadership Profile - Revised*, which has been used by more than 100 organizations. More recently, this instrument has been further refined to a more stable five factors (Wong & Davey, 2007). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) created a Servant Leadership Questionnaire based on five factors. Liden et al. (2008) also created a Servant Leadership Questionnaire focusing on seven characteristics of servant leadership, and in 2011, van Dierendonck and Nuijten developed an instrument, the *Servant Leadership Survey*, which focused on the leader-follower relationship from the perspective of the follower. This is not an exhaustive list of instruments and attempts to define a servant leadership model.

#### Research on Servant Leadership

##### *Servant Leadership Models*

Seeking to more clearly define the characteristics set forth in Greenleaf's original writings, Laub (1999) assembled a team of experts to clarify the list of characteristics that described servant leadership and to develop a survey instrument that could be used to

determine if employees of an organization exhibit the characteristics of servant leadership. Laub defined servant leadership as:

An understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leaders. Servant leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization. (p. 83)

Employees of non-profit religious organizations, secular non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, and public agencies were selected for this study. As a result, six characteristics of servant leadership were identified: (a) developing people, (b) sharing leadership, (c) displaying authenticity, (d) valuing people, (e) providing leadership, and (f) building community. The *Servant Organizational Leadership Assessment* instrument was also developed to aid in quantitatively measuring an organization's level of servant leadership. Six job satisfaction items were added to the other servant leadership items to compare levels of servant leadership and job satisfaction. Laub's study provides the basis of the instrument that is used by many in servant leadership research. Laub's definition of servant leadership will be the operational definition for this study.

While Laub (1999) was creating the *Servant Organizational Leadership Assessment* instrument, Page and Wong (2000) were also working to create a self-assessment measure of servant leadership. Page and Wong define a servant leader as "a leader whose primary purpose for leading is to serve others by investing in their development and well-being for the benefit of accomplishing tasks and goals for the

common good” (p. 2). Servant leadership is distinguished from other types of leadership by the way in which they exercise their responsibility and how they include others in decision-making. Even though an instrument to measure servant-leadership was discouraged by some authors such as Don Frick of the Greenleaf Center, Page and Wong indicated that servant leadership could be measured by its impact on people. Knowledge of the way servant leadership is achieved and the positive outcomes of servant leadership are needed to prove its viability. Arguments against measuring servant leadership include: (a) the possibility of forgetting what servant leadership is when it is reduced to a “collection of admirable qualities and learned skills that are displayed in organizational settings” (p. 12) and (b) leaders may feel guilty or frustrated when they do not measure up to the checklist of attributes. However, a checklist can provide a means of evaluating one’s self to determine strengths and weaknesses and provide opportunities to correct any flaws and improve attributes. The instrument, *Self-Assessment of Servant Leadership Profile*, created by Page and Wong was based on a review of the literature and their personal experience with servant leadership. Twelve categories were identified: (a) integrity, (b) humility, (c) servant hood, (d) caring for others, (e) empowering others, (f) developing others, (g) visioning, (h) goal-setting, (i) leading, (j) modeling, (k) team-building, and (l) shared decision-making (Page & Wong, 2000).

Russell and Stone (2002) also described a lack of empirical research to support servant leadership and conducted a study to develop a model of servant leadership theory based on a review of the literature. There were 20 attributes identified, nine of which are classified as functional due to the number of times they appeared in the literature. Functional attributes are defined by Russell and Stone (p. 146) as those that are



“operative qualities, characteristics, and distinctive features” of servant leaders. These attributes include vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment. The remaining attributes are characterized by Russell and Stone as accompanying attributes that “supplement and augment” (p. 147) the functional attributes and could possibly be prerequisites. These eleven attributes include communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching, and delegation. Russell and Stone created two models of servant leadership from these 20 attributes. Model 1 includes values, core beliefs, and principles as independent variables that affect the dependent variable of servant leadership consisting of the nine functional attributes. The eleven accompanying attributes are depicted as moderating variables that have impact on the independent variables. The second model takes the first model and adds the influences and transformation of organizational culture, employee attitudes and work behaviors resulting in organizational performance. In Model 2, Russell and Stone used servant leadership as both a dependent variable and independent variable. Other studies (Padron, 2012; Hannigan, 2008; Black, 2010) analyzed servant leadership as the independent variable looking at the effect different levels of servant leadership had on dependent variable including satisfaction, school climate, and college performance (Russell & Stone, 2002).

In another effort to clarify servant leadership, Wong and Page (2003) worked on a revision of their previous model (Page & Wong, 2000) that would provide insight into the belief that one must give up power to practice servant leadership. This stems from the belief that servant leaders cannot be humble and yet exert power and make unpopular

decisions. According to the authors, good leaders, servant or otherwise, will use a variety of social powers to get the desired result. Servant leaders are often better at making tough decisions because they have consulted with others, present reasons for the decision, and will accept responsibility for negative consequences. Pride is also reported by the authors as a hindrance to servant leadership and was consequently added to the revised model, which now includes leading, servanthood, visioning, developing others, team-building, empowering others, shared decision making, integrity, abuse of power, and egotistic pride. The resulting model considers that servant leadership cannot exist if abuse of power and egotistic pride are present (Wong & Page, 2003).

In 2003, Patterson presented a model of servant leadership containing seven constructs identified from a review of literature: (a) love, (b) humility, (c) altruism, (d) vision, (e) trust, (f) empowerment, and (g) service. Researchers described love as the right thing done by the servant leaders for the right reasons (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2002). Humility is portrayed as being fair, humble (Patterson, 2003; Sandage & Wiens, 2001), and centering their attention on other people (Patterson, 2003). Patterson also found that servant leaders demonstrate altruism when they help others just for the sake of helping and vision when “the leader looks forward and sees the person as a viable and worthy person, believes in the future state for each individual, and seeks to assist each one in reaching that state” (p. 18). Trust, empowerment, and service are three important characteristics selected by Patterson. An environment of trust created by a servant leader can create a considerable impact (Patterson, 2003; Bennett, 2001). Empowerment is seen by many as the heart of servant leadership, and servant leaders and serving others are seen as the core. Only five of Patterson’s seven constructs were validated with an

instrument created by Dennis and Bocarnea (2005) to measure Patterson's constructs. The remaining constructs include love, humility, vision, trust, and empowerment.

The purpose of a study by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) was also to develop an instrument, the *Servant Leadership Questionnaire*, which identifies characteristics of servant leadership. Elected community leaders were the targeted servant leaders in which five factors were identified: (a) altruistic calling, (b) emotional healing, (c) wisdom, (e) persuasive mapping, and (f) organizational stewardship. Altruistic calling is the desire to make a difference in others' lives while emotional healing involves listening and creating an environment in which followers feel safe to voice concerns. Wisdom and persuasive mapping involve using past experiences and observations to anticipate outcomes of actions or decisions and using that information to influence followers to do what is best for them and the organization. Servant leaders demonstrate organizational stewardship as they motivate followers to further the organization by becoming involved in the organization and the community, leaving the organization better than they found it. The findings of this study support the servant leadership premise that servant leaders create servant leaders out of their followers.

Sendjaya et al. (2008) developed a new servant leadership model, *Servant Leadership Behavioral Scale*, which is different from others in its service orientation, holistic outlook, and moral-spiritual emphasis. Interviews with fifteen senior executives at for-profit and not-for-profit organizations in Australia were conducted. Six factors were identified: (a) voluntary subordination, (b) authentic self, (c) covenantal relationship, (d) responsible morality, (e) transcendental spirituality, and (f) transforming influence. This model includes two new behavioral dimensions, spirituality and

morality/ethics. When comparing servant leadership to other value-laden leadership theories, servant leaders are more likely to demonstrate the natural inclination to serve than transformational leaders. Servant leaders will also put followers first, and then the organization, then themselves. Just like authentic leaders, “servant leaders recognize the importance of positive moral perspective, self-awareness, self-regulation, positive modeling, and follower development” (p. 403). The difference between these two is spirituality as a motivating factor. When compared to spiritual leadership, both create a “sense of meaning, purpose, and interconnectedness in the workplace” through principled leadership and intrinsic motivation (p. 404).

More recently, Liden and colleagues (2008) concluded from their study of servant leadership behaviors with followers and the surrounding community that this servant leadership framework can explain “how leaders influence the attitudes and behaviors of their followers” (p. 174) and the culture of the organization. Seven dimensions of servant leadership were identified: (a) conceptualizing, (b) emotional healing, (c) putting followers first, (d) helping followers grow and succeed, (e) behaving ethically, (f) empowering, and (g) creating value for the community. Liden et al. (2008) suggests that it is the interaction between the leader and the follower that is fundamental to servant leadership in that servant leaders are unique in the way they support and care for followers. One very important finding of this study applicable to student persistence was that followers of servant leaders tended to have an increased commitment to the organization at both the individual and organizational level.

Similarly, van Dierendonck (2011) stated that the person-oriented attitude of serving followers “makes way for safe and strong relationships within the organization”

(p. 1230) which aligns servant leadership with Tinto's theories of the importance of building relationships for student persistence. Van Dierendonck identified six characteristic behavioral traits experienced by followers of servant leaders by comparing leadership models; comparing the antecedents, behaviors, mediating processes and outcomes, and reviewing the existing literature. These characteristics include (a) empowering and developing people, (b) humility, (c) authenticity, (d) interpersonal acceptance, (e) providing direction, and (f) stewardship.

Consequently, Northouse (2013) discussed a servant leadership model based on two previously mentioned studies, the works of Liden et al. (2008) and van Dierendonck (2011) and published in Liden, Panaccio, Hu, and Meuser (2014). There are three components to this model that are antecedent conditions, servant leader behaviors, and outcomes that were also discussed by van Dierendonck (2011). The antecedent conditions, which are conditions that affect servant leadership, consist of context and culture, leader attributes, and follower receptivity. The servant leader behaviors are those identified by Liden et al. (2008) and include (a) conceptualizing, (b) emotional healing, (c) putting followers first, (d) helping followers grow and succeed, (e) behaving ethically, (f) empowering, and (g) creating value for the community. Outcomes in this servant leadership model include follower performance and growth, organizational performance, and societal impact, which were also originally mentioned by Greenleaf (1970).

At this time, there is not an agreed-upon definition of servant leadership, which is the reason for the continued endeavors to create and refine instruments that measure servant leadership. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) and Leary and Hoyle (2009) acknowledge that multiple instruments may be needed to discover and operationalize

complicated constructs of theories such as servant leadership. The measures mentioned above were validated for content through literature review and expert panels.

### *Servant Leadership within Higher Education*

The practice of servant leadership principles at various levels of a university were studied by both Iken (2005) and McDougale (2009). Iken based the study on two groups at a private Christian institution: (a) faculty and administrations and (b) corporate, clerical/custodial staff; while McDougale conducted the study at public four-year and public two-year institutions using two groups: (a) top leadership/management and (b) the workforce. Laub's *Organizational Leadership Assessment* instrument (1999) was utilized for both studies to determine the level of servant leadership practiced for several different categories of employees within the institutions. Both studies found that all groups perceived that servant leadership principles were being practiced at the institutions; however, top leadership/management groups perceived servant leadership practices are occurring more often than the workforce/staff groups.

Amongst higher education staff, Iken (2005) found that the characteristic "develops people" was perceived as being the characteristic least often practiced, and there was also a need for the "sharing leadership" principle. Higher education staff also perceived a need to develop skills in certain areas of servant leadership characteristics. The perception of job satisfaction was also higher for staff than the faculty/administrator group, and within the staff group, it was higher for support staff than staff with implementation responsibilities. The faculty and administrators group indicated "displaying authenticity" as the least practiced characteristic, and like the staff group, they also indicated a lack of the "sharing leadership" principle.

The two-year and the four-year institutions in McDougle's (2009) study indicated that the top leadership/management group had a slightly different perception of servant-leadership practices than the workforce group. At both two-year and four-year institutions, the leadership/management group had similar perceptions of servant leadership practices, and the workforce group across both institutions had similar perceptions of servant leadership practices. Overall, there was a moderate to low perception of servant leadership practices and a moderate to low perception level of job satisfaction.

Employees of a university were once again studied by Padron (2012) when he conducted his study of the level of servant leadership at twelve different institutions within a university system and explored the relationship between servant leadership level and student satisfaction. University employees from all levels of the institutions were surveyed to research the level of servant leadership. At individual levels within the institutions, servant leadership scores varied between the levels. The middle manager assessment score did not indicate the institutions were servant leadership organizations; however, the university system scored high enough on the assessment to be considered a servant leader organization. Padron found no direct correlation between the level of servant leadership and student satisfaction, but there was evidence that employees at all levels reported high job satisfaction. In contrast, not all colleges will be classified as servant leadership organizations. Hannigan (2008) reported that servant leadership did not exist among employees at five California community colleges.

Based on Wheeler's (2012) research, interviews, and forty years of experience in higher education as a teacher, graduate advisor, department chair, and researcher, servant

leadership principles were developed to provide direction in leading and making decisions in higher education. These principles, described as actions based on values, include service to others as the highest priority. Administrators and department chairs described their service as going to meetings, doing paperwork, and solving problems so that faculty will encounter less frustration as they perform the work they enjoy most. In addition, servant leaders in higher education facilitate meeting the needs of others.

Wheeler says:

A servant leader is aware that there are other issues, not just academic capacity that will allow students to be successful in attaining their highest-priority needs. This includes the transition to a new environment with multiple opportunities for students to be enhanced and distracted by their experiences (college athletics, dating, and social groups) and using appropriate means to teach students. Servant institutions are committed to finding ways to facilitate this transition. (p. 49)

Servant leaders at all levels, including staff and faculty, take on the responsibility for solving a variety of problems. This includes involving people at various levels in decision making and keeping people informed. This also involves promoting emotional healing of followers and the organization when expectations may have been unrealistic or events did not go as planned. Servant leaders use professional development or other developmental resources and motivational tactics to encourage improvement and involvement of followers, but one has to remember that servant leaders respond differently to some tactics. Not only having vision for the future but also having a firm grasp of the present is important for servant leadership. Wheeler suggests measures such as strategic planning and professional development can be helpful. Servant leaders also



make sure they have listened and evaluated alternatives to issues to ensure effective decision making. These leaders continue to make servant contributions each day and live their values and principles, which in turn has an impact on the organization and develops more servant leaders (Wheeler, 2012).

Studies of faculty as servant leaders and student followers have revealed that servant leadership in the classroom is about inspiring students and colleagues to be creative. Bowman (2005) wrote that “the teacher as servant leader functions as a trailblazer for those served by removing obstacles that stand in their path” (p. 258). This includes “helping individuals discover latent, unformed interests” (p. 258). Another key role is “removing obstacles that thwart students’ discovery and development of their talents” (p. 258). The teacher as servant leader also establishes high standards for followers, models the skills and behaviors that they teach, and enhances students’ performance by helping them recognize their weaknesses and helping to correct them. A teacher as servant leader positions him/herself lower than those being served so as to listen to others so that he/she can lead by being led. Teachers that indicate the importance of listening also indicate that learning is as important as teaching. As stated by Bowman (2005), teachers as servant leaders “seize daily opportunities to make subtle differences in their students’ lives across time” (p. 259), and colleges will have to intentionally explore a vision of the school as servant to its students to achieve the ideals of servant leadership.

Drury (2005) also considered the impact of a servant leadership model of faculty by expanding the ideas of Buchen (1998) and suggesting that student learning could benefit from servant leadership characteristics. The study suggests that “servant

leadership values and behaviors may be the key to enabling effective faculty teaching methods, and thereby lead to more effective teaching and learning in the college classroom” (p. 6). Using Laub’s (1999) survey instrument of 18 servant leader characteristics, the study compared student’s perceptions of their most effective professor and their least effective professor. Results indicated that the most effective professors were more likely to exhibit servant leadership characteristics than the least effective professors. Effective instructors have a “servant leader’s mindset in the classroom” (p. 8). Ratings for the most effective faculty were twice as high for items concerning collaboration and sharing status and power as the scores for the least effective faculty. Ratings were also twice as high for items concerning building up the students and building strong relationships with students. Both effective and ineffective faculty received high ratings on maintaining integrity and trust which indicates faculty represented in the study were performing at their best in this behavior. “Teachers do function as leaders, and servant leadership is the best leadership mindset for the classroom” (p. 9). Higher education can be transformed by servant leadership (Bass, 2000; Drury, 2005).

Students of a historically black institution were also questioned by Hudspeth (2002) about the servant leadership qualities of mayors of different ethnicities to determine if ethnicity and gender of the mayors as well as the ethnicity and gender of the students rating the mayors were factors in the students’ leadership ratings. Thirty-five percent of the student body was African American, and the sample included 1,030 students. The study concluded that there was no interaction between the servant leadership rating and the ethnicity and gender of the students. However, there were some

significant interactions when the ethnicity of the mayors was evaluated in conjunction with ethnicity and gender of the students such as White males or African American males.

#### *Interactions between Support Staff and Students*

Other servant leadership characteristics enable support staff to be comfortable dealing with many different types of students. In Bannister's (2009) research on non-traditional students, research focused on how the experiences of non-traditional students were affected when they used the services of university student support staff. For this study, student support staff were defined as those within non-academic departments or offices providing support services. Results of this qualitative study indicated that students who developed a positive connection with a support staff member or faculty member experienced feelings of engagement with the university and were satisfied as students. Non-traditional students continue to have a need for contact through conversation whether it be face-to-face or over the phone. Students reported being frustrated and overwhelmed if they did not have a "solid relationship that supports and assists the student experience" (p. 91).

The contributions of general support staff to student outcomes, conducted by Graham (2010), were based on a prior study of Prebble et al. (2004) in which 13 institutional behaviors that support student outcomes were identified. Early feedback indicated that participants had difficulty responding to questions as general support staff, which were originally created for academic staff in Prebble's et al. study. This indicates the need to ensure questions apply to the intended participants. The range of responses was indicative of survey respondents' comments about general staff performing so many

different jobs. Items ranked in the top five for general staff contribution to student outcomes were: (a) institutional behaviors, environments, and processes are welcoming and efficient, (b) academic counseling and pre-enrollment advice are readily available to ensure students enroll in appropriate programs, (c) orientation and induction programs are provided to facilitate both social and academic integration, (d) a comprehensive range of institutional services and facilities is available, and (e) the institution ensures there is an absence of discrimination on campus, so students feel valued, fairly treated, and safe. While the study only considered undergraduate students, it did present the issue of how staff also have to consider different types of students such as graduate students and students of other cultures.

Schmitt and Duggan (2011) performed a very similar study to this study at a community college except that it was not based on the servant leadership theoretical framework. The case study explored the interactions of classified staff with students as a strategy for increasing student success. Classified staff: (a) address a range of student needs, (b) recognize students have personal barriers that hinder achieving their academic goals, (c) contribute to the educational process, (d) deal with barriers that impede their work with students, and (e) experience personal satisfaction as a result of student interactions. Schmitt and Duggan noted that classified staff “introduced specific life skills to students” and “acknowledged their helping roles” [and] “ability to empower students” (p. 183). All of these characteristics are very reminiscent of servant leadership characteristics.

### *Student Satisfaction*

Student satisfaction is often measured in higher education institutions to determine student needs and wants, guide strategic planning, inform about needed improvements in services and programs, and to identify gaps between student expectations and student perceptions (Fisk et al., 2008; Lawson & Burrows, 2012). A conceptual retention model developed by Schertzer and Schertzer (2004) illustrated a positive correlation between student satisfaction and institutional commitment and a positive correlation between institutional commitment and student retention. According to Lawson and Burrows, institutions strive to increase student satisfaction in the hopes of having an impact on student retention and success. Satisfaction surveys provide a mechanism for students to have input and make a difference. Students often feel empowered when given the opportunity to provide feedback, and this empowerment is enhanced if there is evidence of changes made as a result of satisfaction surveys. Results of student satisfaction measurements are often used to help potential students determine where they want to attend college. There are several popular tools designed for use in higher education such as SERVPERF and Noel Levitz's Student Satisfaction Instrument, but many institutions develop their own satisfaction instruments (Lawson & Burrows, 2012).

Once an institution's administration has decided to measure student success, there are several issues to consider. According to Lawson and Burrows (2012), since higher education is a service environment, student satisfaction is one of the measures that should be employed to determine success but should not be used as a single measure of success. It is difficult to measure success because of how differently each person can define

success. Universities should decide if determining the difference between expectations and perceptions is more beneficial than measuring perceptions only, and if a follow-up qualitative investigation to quantitative satisfaction surveys would be beneficial.

Student satisfaction has been the focus of many research projects. Bean and Bradley (1986) conducted a study of the effects of GPA on satisfaction and the effects of satisfaction on GPA. Results indicated that satisfaction did not seem to affect male students' GPA; however, satisfaction had more effect on GPA than GPA had on satisfaction. Student satisfaction was also a main component of Padron's (2012) study on the effect of servant leadership on student satisfaction. The results indicated that servant leadership did not have a significant impact on student satisfaction. However, Padron believes that the survey used, Net Promoter Score, was measuring student satisfaction with a number of aspects of the college and not necessarily the students' satisfaction with the service provided or level of engagement consistent with servant leader characteristics.

The relationship between student engagement and student satisfaction and the academic success of international and American students were the focus of a study conducted by Korobova (2012). International students and American students felt similarly about their education experiences, and their academic success was also similar. However, international students indicated that they had more enriching educational experiences and supportive campus environments than American students. International students also "feel more strongly than American students that their institutions emphasize helping them cope with their non-academic responsibilities and provide the support they need to thrive socially" (p. 126). Korobova found that student satisfaction and academic success increased for both international and American students as these students

increased their involvement in academic challenge, student/faculty interactions, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environments.

### Summary

Servant leadership is a fairly new leadership theory that has become more popular as leaders search for approaches to retaining employees while increasing the performance of the organization. A number of researchers have worked to create a model of Servant leadership using Greenleaf's (1970) theory as the groundwork. Since Greenleaf's original writings, researchers are looking to clearly define the characteristics and behaviors of servant leaders and their interactions with followers. While some of these studies looked to identify characteristics, others went a step further and created instruments to measure the level or existence of servant leadership within an individual or organization. Some of these instruments were created as self-assessments while others were created to assess servant leadership characteristics of supervisors. Servant leadership is being studied and practiced in a number of different countries and organizations around the world. Most research has been based on business profit and non-profit organizations, as well as religious organizations. More recently, research has begun to be published on servant leadership practices within healthcare organizations and educational institutions, both secondary and post-secondary.

As with other types of organizations, administrators have been the primary focus of servant leadership research within higher education. Research has identified ways in which department chairs serve as servant leaders with both faculty and support staff and also the impact of servant leader behaviors of faculty inside and outside of the classroom. As found in the review of the literature, leadership can be learned, and one does not have

to be in a position of authority to be a leader. A review of the literature based on servant leadership within higher education institutions has revealed a lack of research on academic support staff as leaders, and students as followers of academic support staff. Academic support staff offer a level of assistance and support to students that has mostly gone unnoticed. The relationship between job satisfaction and the practice of servant leadership has been established; however, the relationship between servant leadership and student satisfaction has yet to be established. It is hoped that this can be corrected with an instrument devoted to satisfaction of the follower with the servant leader. A study of the level and impact of servant leadership behaviors of academic support staff on students and student satisfaction as an outcome will provide very useful information for university administrators.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology used to create an instrument based on Laub's (1999) servant leadership definition and model to collect data to assist in analyzing whether servant leadership is practiced by academic support staff with undergraduate and graduate students at higher education institutions. This chapter includes a description of the sample population, data collection and procedures used. The general methodology for this study was quantitative exploratory research that utilizes a cross-sectional survey design (Creswell, 2012) to assess the level of servant leadership and student satisfaction. Multiple regression among other statistical analyses were used to correlate and describe the survey instrument data.

#### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if servant leadership is practiced by academic support staff of academic departments within four-year post-secondary institutions. These support staff include employees within academic departments such as administrative assistants and coordinators that do not have managerial responsibilities and are not instructional faculty. This study also evaluated the relationship between the level of servant leadership practiced by academic support staff and the student's satisfaction with the connection to the campus.

#### Participants

The target population for this study was full-time and part-time students, both undergraduate and graduate, eighteen or older, and enrolled at post-secondary four-year higher education institutions in Mississippi. Fifteen institutions were invited to

participate. Six public and one private institution accepted the invitation and approved the research through their respective institutional review boards. This constitutes half of the four-year academic institutions in the state. There is one historically black institution (HBCU) represented and one institution that is Christian based. A majority of the institutions offer both undergraduate and graduate degree programs. The researcher had hoped to study differences among HBCU institutions, private institutions, and public institutions, but there was an inadequate number of participants from HBCU and private institutions. This study is restricted to one state within the South. Mississippi was chosen for this study for two reasons, first, because it is the home state of the researcher, but secondly, because of Mississippi's rank amongst SREB states and the recent efforts of the state legislature, as already mentioned. The varied demographics of the state's public and private four-year institutions provide an opportunity to collect a variety of perspectives. As explained earlier, Mississippi community colleges were excluded from this research study because of the difference in the missions of community colleges as compared to four-year institutions.

Students participating in this study were categorized as undergraduate and graduate as well as by institution and institution type; however, the identity of each institution will not be revealed. A priori power analysis was run using G\*Power. The minimum number of responses needed to achieve adequate power with an effect size of .3 and given a  $p$  value of .05 is 243 undergraduate and graduate students. The enrollment at each participating institution is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

*Enrollment of Participating Institutions*

Institutions	Total
Institution 1	3,848
Institution 2	4,785
Institution 3	804
Institution 4	20,161
Institution 5	2,629
Institution 6	22,291
Institution 7	15,249

Instrumentation

*Servant Leadership*

This study makes use of two instruments, one developed by Laub (1999) named *The Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA)* and an institutional satisfaction survey developed by Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in Chicago. Laub created the OLA so that anyone, at any level, within the organization, workgroup or team could take the survey; Accordingly, Laub’s definition of servant leadership is the operational definition for this study. Educational institutions, along with other types of institutions, were also included as participants of Laub’s original research and creation of the OLA instrument. Even though educational institutions were included in Laub’s study, the OLA survey items were designed and worded for organizational employees and not students. The researcher received permission from Laub to use the OLA model and eighteen components of the OLA. Laub’s instrument was not used because the questions did not reflect the student’s situation within the organization. The questions were reworded to reflect the eighteen components (shown in Table 4) so that it can be

completed by college students. Laub indicated the OLA had a Cronbach's alpha of .98, and prior studies utilizing the OLA instrument also demonstrated high levels of reliability. Permission was sought and received from Laub to use the key components of the OLA as the basis for the survey for this study. These components are informed and drawn from knowledge from a literature review and Delphi study undertaken by Laub (1999).

To create the OLA, Laub (1999) first identified characteristics of servant leaders from the literature. Fourteen experts were then selected to participate in a Delphi survey. The Delphi is a research method used to obtain an opinion based on the consensus of a group of experts through a systematic process (Guglielmino, 1977). The first phase of the Delphi involved a questionnaire of open-ended questions to an expert panel to gather a wide range of responses. During the second phase, the responses of the first questionnaire were summarized into another questionnaire and distributed again to the expert panel for rating. The final phase included distributing the results of phase two and rating the final set of items. Items that were rated as necessary or essential for describing the servant leader formed the basis for the *Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA)* instrument (see Table 4). These items were then categorized and grouped into potential subscales.

Table 4

*Items Clustered into Potential Subscales*

Subscales	Items
Values People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect others</li> <li>• Believe in the unlimited potential of each person</li> <li>• Accept people as they are</li> <li>• Trust others</li> <li>• Are perceptive concerning the needs of others</li> <li>• Enjoy people</li> <li>• Show appreciation to others</li> <li>• Put the needs of others ahead of their own</li> <li>• Show love and compassion toward others</li> <li>• Are receptive listeners</li> </ul>
Develops People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for people to develop to their full potential</li> <li>• Leaders use their power and authority to benefit others</li> <li>• Provide mentor relationships in order to help people grow professionally</li> <li>• View conflict as an opportunity to learn and grow</li> <li>• Create an environment that encourages learning</li> <li>• Lead by example by modeling appropriate behavior</li> <li>• Models a balance of life and work and encourages others to do so</li> <li>• Build people up through encouragement and affirmation</li> </ul>
Builds Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relate well to others</li> <li>• Work to bring healing to hurting relationships</li> <li>• Facilitate the building of community and team</li> <li>• Work with others instead of apart from them</li> <li>• Value differences in people</li> <li>• Allow for individuality of style and expression</li> </ul>
Displays Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admit personal limitations and mistakes</li> <li>• Are open to being known by others</li> <li>• Promote open communication and sharing of information</li> <li>• Are accountable and responsible to others</li> <li>• Are non-judgmental – keep an open mind</li> <li>• Are open to learning from others</li> <li>• Are flexible – willing to compromise</li> <li>• Evaluate themselves before blaming others</li> <li>• Are open to receiving criticism and challenge from others</li> <li>• Are trustworthy</li> <li>• Demonstrate high integrity and honesty</li> <li>• Maintain high ethical standards</li> </ul>

Table 4 (continued).

Subscales	Items
Provides Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a vision of the future</li> <li>• Uses intuition and foresight to see the unforeseeable</li> <li>• Provides hope to others</li> <li>• Encourages risk-taking</li> <li>• Exhibits courage</li> <li>• Has healthy self-esteem</li> <li>• Initiates action by moving out ahead</li> <li>• Is competent – has the knowledge and skills to get things done</li> <li>• Is clear on goals and good at pointing the direction</li> <li>• Is able to turn negatives into positives (threats to opportunities)</li> </ul>
Shares Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowers others by sharing power</li> <li>• Is low in control of others</li> <li>• Uses persuasion to influence others instead of coercion</li> <li>• Is humble – does not promote him or herself</li> <li>• Leads from personal influence rather than positional authority</li> <li>• Does not demand or expect honor and awe for being the leader</li> <li>• Does not seek after special status or perks of leadership</li> </ul>

Laub, J. A. (1999). *Assessing the servant organization: development of the organizational leadership assessment (OLA) instrument*. Dissertation, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL. (p. 46-48).

Likert items were constructed for each of the characteristics in addition to six items for job satisfaction and seven demographic questions. These were reviewed by six judges. Analysis of the six subscales revealed high Cronbach's Alpha scores and high correlations between the subscales. Revisions were once again made to the instrument after Laub (1999) conducted a pre-field test with 22 participants. Cronbach-alpha coefficient, item-to-test correlations, and item-total correlation using Pearson correlation were used to determine if the instrument was ready for the field test. This version of the instrument which included seventy-four Likert items, six job satisfaction Likert items, and seven demographic questions was then field tested with 828 participants from 41

different organizations representing religious non-profit, secular non-profit, for profit, and public agencies. Education participants represented approximately 18% of the total.

Item-to-test correlations revealed each item had a strong correlation with the entire instrument with .41 as the lowest and .77 as the highest. The final results were Laub’s (1999) definition of servant leadership, eighteen descriptors, and six characteristics. The final OLA consists of sixty items with a Cronbach’s alpha of .98 and item-test correlations of .41 as the lowest and .79 as the highest.

The instrument for this study consisted of eighteen Likert items, shown in Table 5, created from Laub’s (1999) eighteen descriptors, five student satisfaction questions and eight demographic questions (see Appendix A). Laub’s OLA instrument was not used for this study because the wording of the questions did not reflect a student’s environment on a college campus (Harkness, Villar, & Edwards; 2010). There was a six point scale for these items: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree, and (6) do not wish to respond.

Table 5

*Servant Leadership Descriptors with Corresponding Survey Item*

Laub’s 6 Characteristics	Laub’s 18 Descriptors	Corresponding Item for Current Survey
Values People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By believing in people</li> <li>• By serving other’s needs before his or her own</li> <li>• By receptive, non-judgmental listening</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Really believes in the students</li> <li>• Is interested in serving student’s needs before his or her own needs</li> <li>• Is a good listener, receptive and non-judgmental</li> </ul>

Table 5 (continued).

Laub's 6 Characteristics	Laub's 18 Descriptors	Corresponding Item for Current Survey
Develops People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By providing opportunities for learning and growth</li> <li>• By modeling appropriate behavior</li> <li>• By building up others through encouragement and affirmation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides or informs students of opportunities for learning and growth</li> <li>• Models the kind of behavior he or she desires to see in the students</li> <li>• Builds students up through encouragement and affirmation</li> </ul>
Builds Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By building strong personal relationships</li> <li>• By working collaboratively with others</li> <li>• By valuing differences of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds strong relationships with students and others</li> <li>• Works collaboratively with students and others</li> <li>• Values differences among students</li> </ul>
Displays Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By being open and accountable to others</li> <li>• By a willingness to learn from others</li> <li>• By maintaining integrity and trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes open communication and accountability with students</li> <li>• Is willing to learn from others, including students</li> <li>• Maintains integrity and trust</li> </ul>
Provides Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By envisioning the future</li> <li>• By taking initiative</li> <li>• By clarifying goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses intuition and foresight to provide direction to students for educational goals</li> <li>• Takes initiative to help guide our education experience</li> <li>• Is able to clarify the goals of the department</li> </ul>
Shares Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By facilitating a shared vision</li> <li>• By sharing power and releasing control</li> <li>• By sharing status and promoting others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps students understand the vision or plan of their educational program</li> <li>• Empowers students in the decision-making process by guiding versus directing</li> <li>• Leads students by personal influence and does not expect special recognition.</li> </ul>



### *Student Satisfaction*

Once permission was granted by the Vice-President of Strategic Enrollment Management at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, student satisfaction questions were collected from an existing instrument, the Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) (Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science, 2013), and included as a separate section of the instrument along with the servant leadership items. This institutional survey was selected because of the satisfaction questions related to interactions with staff and institutional climate. The same six point scale was used for these items: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) undecided, (4) agree, (5) strongly agree, and (6) do not wish to respond.

The items selected from the SSS include:

- I enjoy being a student on this campus.
- I feel a sense of belonging to this institution.
- Staff care about me as an individual.
- The University environment is inclusive of students with different backgrounds and beliefs.
- Staff are helpful, responsive, and approachable.

### *Pilot Testing*

A pilot test is used to “determine whether the individuals in the sample are capable of completing the survey [and] . . . understand the questions” (Creswell, 2012, p. 390). The researcher can then make changes to the instrument based on the feedback from the pilot group (Creswell, 2012). A pilot test of the Academic Support Staff Survey instrument was conducted to ensure the readability, reliability and validity of the

instrument. The servant leadership questions, satisfaction questions, and demographic questions were entered into an online survey as three separate sections utilizing Qualtrics software. An email inviting students to participate in the study was created and included a link to the survey. Six hundred participants were randomly selected from the test population to participate in the pilot. These participants were later removed from the list of students to receive the final instrument. In addition to the items, pilot recipients were asked: 1) did you clearly understand all of the instructions? and 2) did you understand the questions that were being asked? The instrument was sent out in March of the spring semester. One pilot recipient responded with a suggestion for clarification, and the instrument was modified based on the feedback. Thirty-one pilot participants completed the survey for a 5% response rate. Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ), shown in Table 6, and Pearson’s correlation were used to assess the reliability of the items. Item-to-total correlations were run utilizing Pearson correlation to determine the level of correlation of each item with the total instrument. Based on these measurement results, the study proceeded to data collection. The final version of the survey is shown in Appendix A.

Table 6

*Pilot Reliability Scores*

Factors	Laub’s Reliability Scores	Pilot Reliability Scores
Values people	.91	.77
Develops people	.90	.81
Builds community	.90	.78
Displays authenticity	.93	.84
Provides leadership	.91	.83
Shares leadership	.93	.83

## Data Collection

After pilot test revisions were made to the instrument in the Qualtrics survey software, the instrument was administered to study participants via campus email utilizing email addresses obtained from each institution after Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. Five institutions provided email addresses for all students, eighteen or older, currently enrolled the spring semester, and two institutions elected to send out the invitation by email instead of providing student email addresses to the researcher. This prevented the sending of reminder emails. The invitation email, as shown in Appendix B, included a brief summary of the study, required IRB statements of intent, researcher contact information, and a hyperlink to the online survey. Participants were given one week to respond to the invitation. Generally, most responses were received within three days. The number of institutional responses are indicated in Table 7.

Table 7

### *Academic Support Staff Servant Leadership Survey Responses*

Institutions	Number of Responses
Institution 1	182
Institution 2	92
Institution 3	34
Institution 4	320
Institution 5	44
Institution 6	384
Institution 7	395
Total	1451

## Data Analysis

Data gathered for this study were analyzed with IBM SPSS and AMOS software. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, Pearson's correlations, one-sample t-test, and multiple regression. The instrument used a Likert-

type scale, and the data were treated as interval-level data. Responses of 6, did not wish to respond, were coded as missing values. Average servant leadership scores, average subscale scores and average satisfaction scores were calculated for each student to be used in analysis instead of using total scores.

Descriptive statistics, Pearson’s correlations, and analysis of variance (ANOVAs) were generated to get a general overview of the data and the demographics of the students that responded to the instrument. Table 8 lists each of the demographic variables and possible responses.

Table 8

*Demographic Questions for the Current Research Study*

Question	Possible Responses
1. What is your classification?	Undergraduate Graduate
2. Number of years you have been enrolled at this institution?	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 or more
3. What is your gender?	Female Male Transgender
4. What is your citizenship status?	U. S. Citizen International Student
5. What is your ethnic background?	White - not Hispanic Black - not Hispanic Hispanic Asian or Pacific Islander American Indian or Alaskan Native Two or more races Other

Table 8 (continued).

Question	Possible Responses
6. Are you primarily a full-time or primarily a part-time student?	Primarily full-time Primarily part-time
7. How many semesters/quarters have you been enrolled at this institution?	1-2 3-4 5-6 7 or more
8. What is your age?	21 or younger 22 to 24 25 to 30 Over 30

*Confirming the Factor Structure*

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to respond to the first hypothesis to confirm the presence of the factor structure originally noted by Laub (1999). The first hypothesis is stated as:

H<sub>1</sub>: The factor structure of Laub's (1999) Organizational Leadership

Assessment model will be validated by the research data.

IBM SPSS Amos software was utilized to run the CFA and produce the model fit statistics. Factor correlations, chi square ( $X^2$ ), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), comparative fit index (CFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) are the tests of model fit used to determine if the data matched the theoretical model. Cronbach's alpha was utilized to obtain a reliability estimate on the factor items and an additional reliability estimate for the student satisfaction items. An item to total correlation was run on the data to determine the level of correlation of each item to the total instrument, as well as correlations between the subscales.

### *Level of Servant Leadership*

To determine if there is a significant level of servant leadership practiced among academic support staff, a one-sample t-test was run to compare individual scores to the OLA benchmark of  $\geq 4.0$ . The second hypothesis is stated as:

H2<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant level of servant leadership among academic support staff when compared to the Organizational Leadership Assessment benchmark of  $\geq 4.0$  (Laub, 1999).

One-sample t-tests were also run to compare institutional mean servant leadership scores to the OLA benchmark of  $\geq 4.0$  and institutions grouped according to number of students. Regression analysis was utilized to determine significant correlations and effects of student demographics, the dependent variable, and servant leadership score.

### *Student Satisfaction*

The third research question considers if there is a relationship between the level of servant leadership exhibited by academic support staff and student satisfaction. The third hypothesis is stated as:

H3<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between the level of servant leadership among academic support staff and student satisfaction.

Student demographics and the average servant leadership response are the independent variables and student satisfaction is the dependent variable. Sequential multiple regression was used to examine the relationship between servant leadership and student satisfaction.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this exploratory study was to gain a broader knowledge of servant leadership practices of academic support staff and the relationship between the level of servant leadership of academic support staff and student satisfaction in higher education in Mississippi. This chapter provides the results of the statistical analysis and begins with characteristics of the study participants. This is followed by the results of each of the following research questions.

Is the factor structure of Laub's (1999) Organizational Leadership Assessment model confirmed by the data collected?

Is there a statistically significant level of servant leadership practiced among academic support staff when compared to the Organizational Leadership Assessment benchmark of  $\geq 4.0$  (Laub, 1999)?

Is there a relationship between the level of servant leadership among academic support staff and student satisfaction?

#### *Sample Characteristics*

Fifteen four-year public and private institutions in the state of Mississippi were invited to participate in this research. Seven institutions accepted the invitation. Emails were sent to all eligible participants at each of the seven institutions. The institutions were located across the state. One institution was a religious, private institution, and another was a historically black institution. The original number of participants was 1451; however, once data screening had taken place, six cases were identified as outliers through the use of Mahalanobis distances, DFFit, and Studentized residual reducing the

number of cases to 1445. As shown in Table 9, 69% of the participants were undergraduates, 68.1% were female, 61.9% were white non-Hispanic, 25.1% were African American, and 85.9% were full-time. Over half (54.3%) had been at the institution one to two years, and over half (60.6%) were 24 or younger. International students only represented 4.2% of the participants. American Indian students represented a very small number and consequently were included with the Other Race category. Transgender students (n=2) were recoded to missing. After reviewing the number of cases received from each institution, the decision was made to group the institutions by institutional enrollment based on the small, medium, and large classification system used by Collegedata.com and referenced by other researchers grouping institutions: (0) Large - More than 15,000, and (1) Small - Fewer than 5,000. There were not any institutions in the medium size category of between 5,000 to 15,000 students.

Table 9

*Participant Demographics (n = 1445)*

Variable	Demographic	N	%
Institution	Institution 1	181	12.5
	Institution 2	90	6.2
	Institution 3	34	2.4
	Institution 4	319	22.1
	Institution 5	44	3.0
	Institution 6	382	26.4
	Institution 7	395	27.3
Classification	Undergraduate	997	69.0
	Graduate	448	31.0



Table 9 (continued).

Variable	Demographic	N	%
Number of Years Enrolled	1 Year	400	27.7
	2 Years	384	26.6
	3 Years	238	16.5
	4 Years	215	14.9
	5 Years	76	5.3
	6 Years	40	2.8
	7 or More Years	64	4.4
	Missing Values	28	1.9
Gender	Female	984	68.1
	Male	450	31.1
	Missing Values	11	.8
Citizenship Status	U. S. Citizen	1373	95.0
	International Student	61	4.2
	Missing Values	11	.8
Ethnic Background	White – not Hispanic	895	61.9
	Black – not Hispanic	362	25.1
	Hispanic	25	1.7
	Asian or Pacific Islander	49	3.4
	2 or More Races	49	3.4
	Other	22	1.5
	Missing Values	43	3.0
Primarily a Full-time or Part-time Student	Primarily Full-time	1241	85.9
	Primarily Part-time	194	13.4
	Missing Values	10	.7
Age	21 or Younger	538	37.2
	22 to 24	338	23.4
	25 to 30	193	13.4
	Over 30	360	24.9
	Missing Values	16	1.1

### *Confirming the Factor Structure*

The first hypothesis addresses the need to validate the model fit to Laub's original model:

H1<sub>1</sub>: The factor structure of Laub's (1999) Organizational Leadership

Assessment model will be validated by the research data.

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was run to determine if Laub's factor structure was validated for students assessing servant leadership characteristics of academic support staff. Each factor consisted of three questions. Questions assigned to each factor are (instrument available in Appendix A):

Values People: Q9, Q20, Q21

Develops People: Q10, Q19, Q22

Builds Community: Q11, Q18, Q23

Displays Authenticity: Q12, Q17, Q24

Provides Leadership: Q13, Q16, Q25

Shares Leadership: Q14, Q 15, Q26

The model was assessed by IBM SPSS AMOS version 21 software. The correlations for seven out of fifteen tests were over 1.00, shown in Table 10, indicating an inadmissible solution. The factor structure of Laub's (1999) Organizational Leadership Assessment model was not validated.

Table 10

*Correlations of the Default Model*

		Estimate
Values_People	← → Develops_People	1.014
Values_People	← → Builds_Community	1.000
Values_People	← → Displays_Authenticity	1.005
Values_People	← → Provides_Leadership	.936
Values_People	← → Shares_Leadership	.951
Develops_People	← → Builds_Community	1.020
Develops_People	← → Displays_Authenticity	1.018
Develops_People	← → Provides_Leadership	.964
Develops_People	← → Shares_Leadership	.972
Builds_Community	← → Displays_Authenticity	1.028
Builds_Community	← → Provides_Leadership	.973
Builds_Community	← → Shares_Leadership	.975
Displays_Authenticity	← → Provides_Leadership	.982
Displays_Authenticity	← → Shares_Leadership	.982
Provides_Leadership	← → Shares_Leadership	1.027

Since the original model was not validated for students assessing academic support staff, the data was split in half, and an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was run with one half of the data to determine the factor loadings. A principle axis factoring analysis (PAF) was conducted on the 18 items using the promax method of oblique rotation extracting eigenvalues over 1. Promax rotation method is designed for large data sets (Field, 2009). Coefficient display format was set to suppress absolute values less than .30. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin (KMO) was .979, which exceeds the cutoff of .7, and is viewed as superb (Field, 2009). The KMO also indicates the sample size is adequate for the EFA and suitable for principal axis factoring analysis. Bartlett's test of sphericity was  $\chi^2(153) = 12957.70, p < .001$ , and tells us the correlations between items were

sufficiently large for PAF. The initial eigenvalues indicated only one factor with an eigenvalue  $> 1$  with an explained variance of 71.0%; however the scree plot (Figure 1) indicated two factors and communalities were greater than .64. To ensure the proper number of factors was selected, a parallel analysis (Monte Carlo Simulation) was also run. As shown in Table 11, factor 1 and factor 2 have raw data values greater than the ninety percentile values; therefore, two factors were used for the EFA.

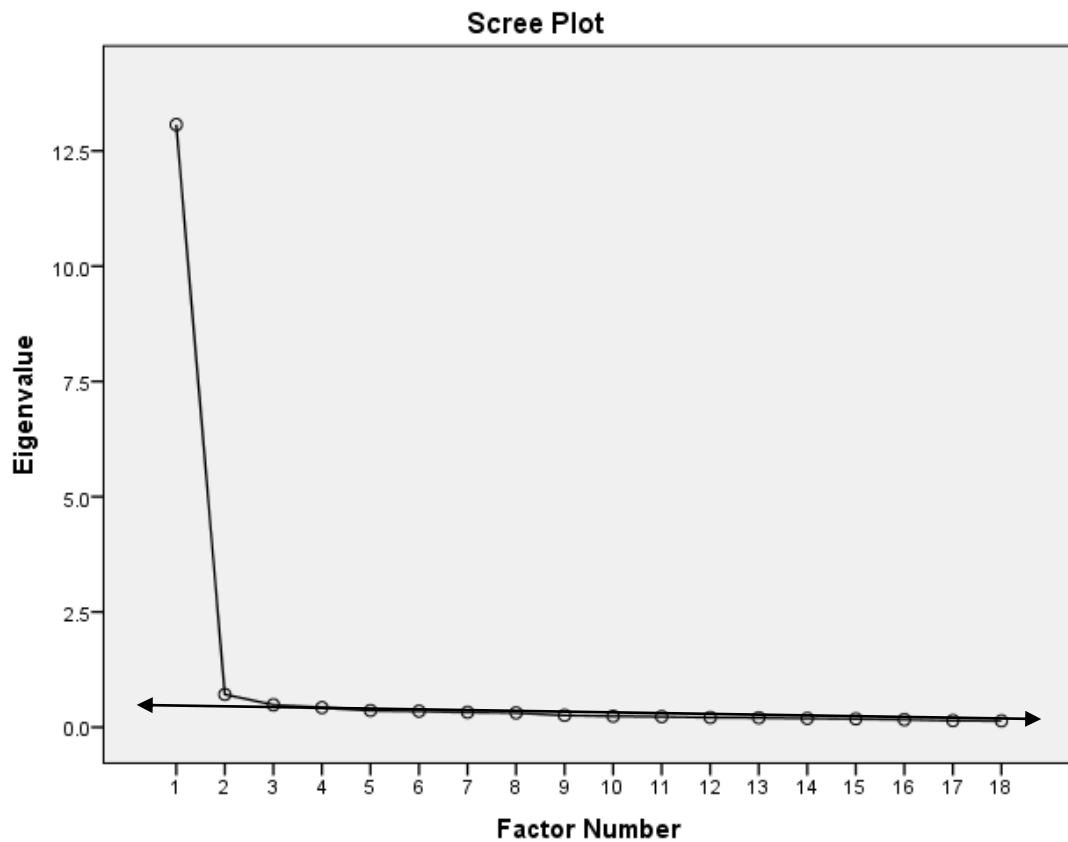


Figure 1. Scree Plot used to determine the number of factors to consider.

The next iteration of the EFA was run after changing the extraction to factors = 2. The cumulative percent of total variance explained increased to 73.86%. In the iterations that followed, questions 25, 9, 17, 11, 12, and 10 were removed one at a time to achieve a simple structure pattern matrix. Question 25 was removed because of double loadings and the factors were measuring close to the same (factor 1 = .402, factor 2 = .448). The cumulative percent of the total variance explained increased to 74.30%. Q9 was removed because of double loadings (factor 1 = .441, factor 2 = .391), and the cumulative percent of the total variance explained increased to 74.99%. Q17 was then removed due to double loadings (factor 1 = .522, factor 2 = .345), and the cumulative percent of the total variance explained increased to 75.39%. Q11 had double loadings of .361 for factor 1 and .520 for factor 2. After the question was removed, the cumulative percent of the total variance explained increased to 75.74%. Q10 was the next question removed due to loadings of .322 for factor 1 and .518 for factor 2. The cumulative percent of the total variance explained increased to 76.61%. Q12 had double loadings of .420 and .480 for factors 1 and 2, respectively. After these questions were removed, the cumulative percent of total variance explained increased to 76.86%. Table 12 shows the factor loadings after rotation. Factor 1 (eigenvalue = 8.99) accounted for 73% of the variance with eight items, and factor 2 (eigenvalue = .678) accounted for 4% of the variance with four items. Factor 1 was highly correlated with factor 2 at .818. The items that clustered on factor 1 indicate serving, and items that clustered on factor 2 indicate leading.

Table 11

*Raw Data Eigenvalues, Mean and Percentile Random Data Eigenvalues*

Root	Raw Data	Means	Percentile
1.000000	12.809549	.329526	.389113
2.000000	.470944	.270059	.313517
<b>3.000000</b>	<b>.195434</b>	<b>.227022</b>	<b>.264430</b>
4.000000	.150659	.188019	.221098
5.000000	.072654	.152123	.181820
6.000000	.065904	.120627	.149011
7.000000	.042487	.087874	.114324
8.000000	.038153	.057465	.082736
9.000000	-.008614	.028892	.054085
10.000000	-.014689	.001406	.023238
11.000000	-.025301	-.025202	-.001940
12.000000	-.043362	-.052604	-.031877
13.000000	-.053554	-.079479	-.057793
14.000000	-.055605	-.106786	-.085108
15.000000	-.071960	-.134397	-.112896
16.000000	-.086008	-.163884	-.140525
17.000000	-.091374	-.195003	-.167968
18.000000	-.104275	-.235545	-.204515

Table 12

*Summary of Exploratory Factor Analysis Results (N = 650)*

Item	Rotated Factor Loadings	
	Serving	Leading
Q13 Uses intuition and foresight to provide direction to students for educational goals.		.727
Q14 Helps students understand the vision or plan of their educational program.		.931
Q15 Empowers students in the decision-making process by guiding versus directing.		.743
Q16 Takes initiative to help guide our education experience.		.764
Q18 Works collaboratively with students and others.	.676	
Q19 Models the kind of behavior he or she desires to see in the students.	.810	
Q20 Is interested in serving student's needs before his or her own needs.	.759	
Q21 Is a good listener - receptive and non-judgmental.	.862	
Q22 Builds students up through encouragement and affirmation.	.737	
Q23 Values differences among students.	.727	
Q24 Maintains integrity and trust.	.838	
Q26 Leads students by personal influence and does not expect special recognition.	.759	

Note: Factor loadings less than .300 have been suppressed.

The reliability of the scale was then checked with Cronbach's  $\alpha$ . A value of .8 is seen as a good value (Field, 2009). Both factors had high reliabilities. The serving factor had a Cronbach's  $\alpha = .961$ , and the leading factor had Cronbach's  $\alpha = .937$ . Also helpful in assessing the reliability of the scale is Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) if the item was deleted from the scale and the corrected item-total correlation statistics, as shown in Table 13. The  $\alpha$  would decline from the overall serving  $\alpha$  of .961 if any of the items were deleted; therefore, it would not help to remove any of the items. The same applies to leading when compared to the overall leading Cronbach's alpha of .937. The corrected item-total correlations, which indicate the correlation excluding the item, are all above .3 which is good. The Cronbach's alpha and corrected item-total correlation indicate good subscale reliability.

Table 13

*Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Scores*

Factors	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Serving		
Q18	.837	.956
Q19	.859	.955
Q20	.854	.955
Q21	.877	.954
Q22	.878	.954
Q23	.806	.958
Q24	.845	.956
Q26	.840	.956
Leading		
Q13	.840	.922
Q14	.870	.912
Q15	.833	.923
Q16	.862	.914



A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then run with the remaining 617 participants. The model was assessed by IBM SPSS AMOS version 21 maximum likelihood factor analysis. Standardized regression weights, or loadings, for all items were between .861 and .920. Serving and leading were correlated with  $r = .905$ , and the standardized residual covariances were between -3.0 and +3.0. The model was evaluated by four fit measures: (a) the chi square, (b) the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), (c) the comparative fit index (CFI), and (d) the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The chi-square for this model had a value of  $X^2(53, N = 617) = 203.965, p < .001$ . The chi-square was significant indicating there is not a close fit between the predicted and the observed relationships; however, Jöreskog and Sörbom (1989) and Bentler (1990) warned against decision making based on this statistic when the sample size is large which is the reason for considering other model fit measures. The TLI also known as the nonnormed fit index (NNFI) was .978 which falls above the minimum threshold of .90 recommended by Tucker and Lewis (1973). The CFI baseline comparison was .983 when comparing the actual and proposed models, indicating a good fit based on the guidelines developed by Knight, Virdin, Ocampo, and Roosa (1994). The RMSEA measures the average difference between the covariances of the actual and proposed models. RMSEA for this model was .068, 90% CI [.058, .078] indicating a good fit when compared to the criteria proposed by Loehlin (2004). The resulting default model is shown in Figure 2, and the means and standard deviations of the questions representing the model are shown in Table 14.

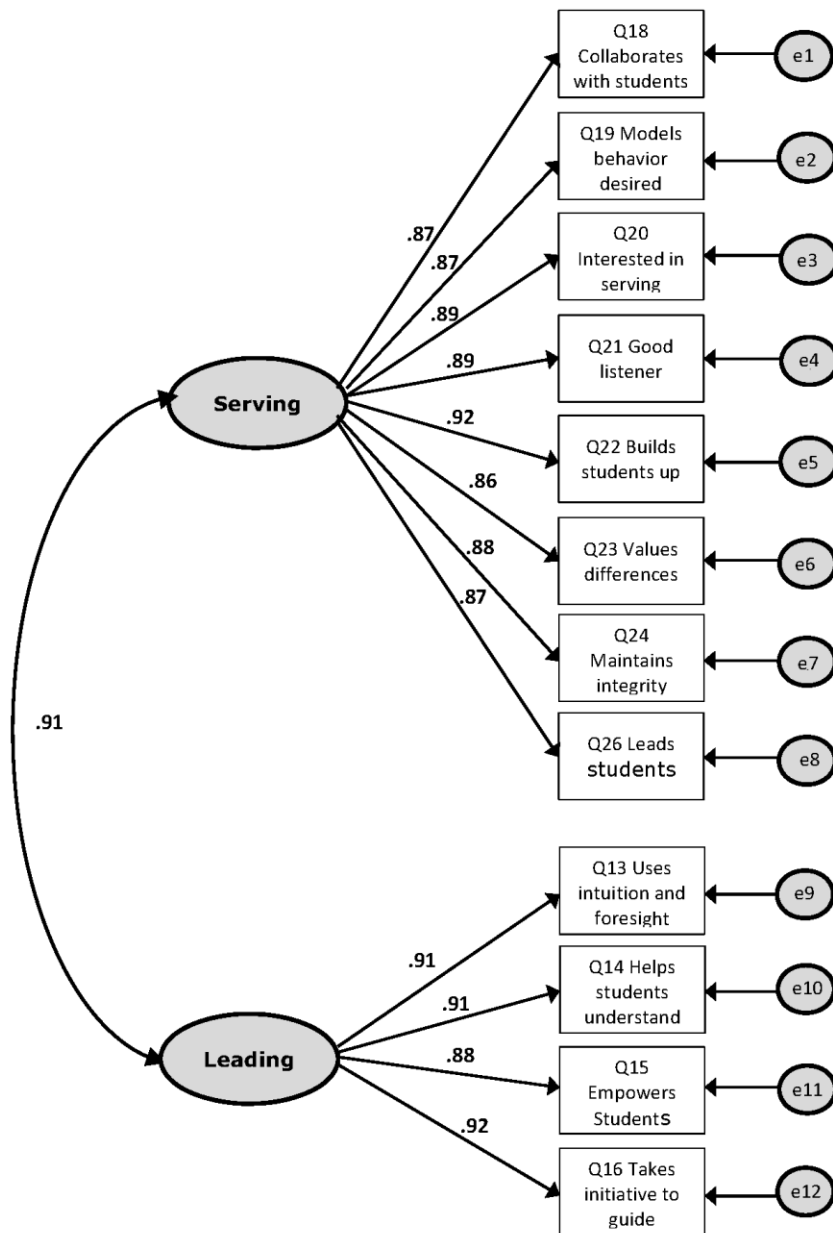


Figure 2. Model of Serving and Leading

Table 14

*Mean and Standard Deviation of the Questions in the Resulting Model*

Question	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q13. Uses intuition and foresight to provide direction to students for educational goals.	1391	3.70	1.189
Q14. Helps students understand the vision or plan of their educational program.	1388	3.65	1.245
Q15. Empowers students in the decision-making process by guiding versus directing.	1389	3.66	1.222
Q16. Takes initiative to help guide our education experience.	1384	3.60	1.258
Q18. Works collaboratively with students and others.	1382	3.83	1.151
Q19. Models the kind of behavior he or she desires to see in the students.	1383	3.86	1.127
Q20. Is interested in serving student's needs before his or her own needs.	1387	3.64	1.224
Q21. Is a good listener - receptive and non-judgmental.	1384	3.87	1.149
Q22. Builds students up through encouragement and affirmation.	1386	3.81	1.167
Q23. Values differences among students.	1376	3.85	1.079
Q24. Maintains integrity and trust.	1379	4.03	1.038
Q26. Leads students by personal influence and does not expect special recognition.	1375	3.90	1.097
Q27. Most students feel a sense of belonging here.	1406	3.93	1.016
Q28. The campus staff are caring and helpful.	1405	3.94	1.056
Q29. It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.	1394	4.07	1.055
Q30. Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	1402	4.10	1.005
Q31. This institution shows concern for students as individuals.	1399	3.80	1.176

*Level of Servant Leadership*

The second hypothesis examined the servant leadership qualities of academic support staff in the Mississippi four-year institutions to determine if these staff were

servant leaders based upon the Academic Support Staff Servant Leadership instrument average score. Laub (2003) stated that the average OLA score was 3.64 on a 5 point scale and is below that of Servant which is indicated by a breakpoint score of 4.0.

H2<sub>1</sub>: There is a statistically significant level of servant leadership among academic support staff of Mississippi four-year institutions when compared to the Organizational Leadership Assessment benchmark of  $\geq 4.0$  (Laub, 1999).

A one sample t-test was used to compare the overall mean score and institutional mean scores on the Academic Support Staff Servant Leadership instrument to the OLA benchmark score of 4.0. If mean scores were not significantly different from 4.00 or were significantly greater than 4.00 then academic support staff of these organizations were servant leaders. As shown in Table 15, the majority of academic support staff at four-year Mississippi institutions as a group scored significantly lower from the 4.00 breakpoint and would not be considered servant leaders, ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ),  $t(1400) = -8.00$ ,  $p < .001$ . Therefore, we were unable to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 15

*One-Sample T-Test for Each Institution When Compared to 4.00 Mean*

Test Value = 4.0	N	M	SD	t	df	p	CI <sub>L</sub>	CI <sub>U</sub>
All Institutions	1401	3.78	1.00	-8.008	1400	<.001	-.27	-.16
Institution 1	170	3.89	1.08	-1.229	169	.221	-.27	.06
Institution 2	87	4.04	.92	.400	86	.690	-.16	.23
Institution 3	32	4.29	.98	1.687	31	.102	-.06	.64
Institution 4	316	3.71	1.02	-4.987	315	.000	-.40	-.17
Institution 5	43	4.01	.90	.077	42	.939	-.27	.29
Institution 6	377	3.66	.96	-6.840	376	<.001	-.44	-.24
Institution 7	376	3.79	1.00	-4.049	375	<.001	-.31	-.11

When examining academic support staff at each institution individually, academic support staff at institutions 1, 2, 3, and 5 could be considered servant leaders; however, the number of responses was small. Therefore, the institutions were grouped according to size. Institutions with more than 15,000 students were coded as 0, and institutions with fewer than 5,000 students were coded as 1 based on the classification system used by Collegedata.com. There were not any medium sized institutions participating in the study. Even though results may be stated that academic support staff were not servant leaders, it is noted that this does not mean that none of the staff at these institutions were servant leaders. There were servant leader academic support staff found at all of the institutions. Results, shown in Table 16, indicated that larger institutions were significantly lower than the breakpoint score of 4.00 suggesting that academic support staff at larger Mississippi institutions were not servant leaders. The mean servant leadership score for institutions with fewer than 5,000 students was not significantly different from 4.00 suggesting the academic support staff at smaller Mississippi institutions were servant leaders. Descriptive statistics and univariate ANOVA results for each of the factors of servant leadership by institution size are shown in Table 17.

Table 16

*One-Sample T-Test by Institution Size When Compared to 4.00 Mean*

Test Value = 4.0	N	M	SD	t	df	p	CI <sub>L</sub>	CI <sub>U</sub>
Fewer than 5,000	332	3.99	1.02	-.227	331	.820	-.12	.10
More than 15,000	1069	3.72	.99	-9.133	1068	<.001	-.34	-.22

Table 17

*Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Results for Model Factors by Institution Size*

Factor	<u>More than 15,000</u>		<u>Fewer than 5,000</u>		<i>F</i>	$\rho$
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation		
Serving	3.80	.99	4.01	1.02	11.003	.001
Leading	3.56	1.13	3.95	1.09	30.354	<.001

Initial analysis of variance indicated institution size and ethnicity were good predictors of servant leadership. Demographic variables not included in the constant were recoded to dummy variables. A linear multiple regression model was generated to determine if any of the demographic variables help to predict servant leadership. The average servant leadership score was the dependent variable and all of the demographic variables were entered as the independent variables. The results indicated that the model was statistically significant, ( $F(19, 1297) = 1.968, \rho = .008$ ). The percent of variability explained by the model ( $R^2$ ) was very low at 2.8%, with an adjusted  $R^2$  of 1.4%. A review of the correlations indicated a statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and institution size ( $\rho < .001, r = .111$ ), Black Non-Hispanic ( $\rho = .010, r = .064$ ), and Asian or Pacific Islander ( $\rho = .032, r = .051$ ). An inspection of the coefficients indicated only two of the demographics contributed significantly to the prediction of servant leadership, institution size ( $\rho = .001$ ) and Asian or Pacific Islander ( $\rho = .042$ ). Institution size had the greatest impact with standardized beta of .097. White Non-Hispanic ethnicity was part of the constant.

*Relationship between Servant Leadership and Student Satisfaction*

The third hypothesis seeks to determine whether academic support staff servant leadership characteristics have an effect on student satisfaction. As the mean score of the

Academic Support Staff Servant Leadership instrument increases, does the mean satisfaction score also increase? Is servant leadership a significant unique contributor to the prediction of student satisfaction?

H3<sub>1</sub>: There is a relationship between the level of servant leadership among academic support staff of Mississippi four-year institutions and student satisfaction.

Sequential regression, also called hierarchical regression, was the statistical process chosen because it can provide information as to whether servant leadership adds a significant amount of explained variability above and beyond what already contributes to it. Sequential regression can also be used for prediction to determine variables that are significant predictors of an outcome. The researcher controls the regression process by determining the order variables are entered and which are suggested as covariates (Keith, 2006).

The dependent variable for this analysis is student satisfaction, and the independent variables are servant leadership and all the demographic variables. A review of the correlations table indicated a positive significant correlation between satisfaction and servant leadership,  $r = .644, \rho < .001$ . Other variables correlating significantly with satisfaction included 6 Years at the Institution ( $r = -.049, \rho = .038$ ), Black ( $r = -.086, \rho = .001$ ), and Age 25 to 30 ( $r = -.056, \rho = .021$ ). Each of these had a negative correlation.

To determine if servant leadership had an effect even after controlling for demographic variables, demographics were loaded into the first block, and the mean servant leadership score was loaded into the second block of the SPSS regression procedure. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 18. The demographic variables entered in the regression resulted in a statistically significant increase of 2.3% in

explained variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .023$ ,  $\Delta F [19,1294] = 1.631$ ,  $\rho = .042$ ). More importantly, the predictor variable, servant leadership score, entered in model 2 of the regression did contribute to the overall relationship with the dependent variable, student satisfaction. There was a statistically significant increase of 41.9% in the variance of student satisfaction ( $\Delta R^2 = .419$ ,  $\Delta F [1,1293] = 970.846$ ,  $\rho < .001$ ) above the demographic variables. The initial model significantly improved our ability to predict student satisfaction; however, the new model which includes servant leadership was better ( $R^2 = .442$ ,  $F [20,1293] = 51.253$ ,  $\rho < .001$ ).

Table 18

*Effects of Demographics and Servant Leadership on Student Satisfaction*

Block	$\Delta R^2$	Probability
1 Demographics	.023	.042
2 Servant Leadership Score	.419	< .001

In addition, the individual contributions of each predictor to the model were reviewed. Table 19 contains the *b*-values, standard error, and standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ) of each of the predictors for Model 2. From these results, we can see that there are both positive and negative relationships represented. Statistically significant predictors identified were a negative relationship with institutions of fewer than 5,000 ( $b = -.137$ ), negative relationship with Black Non-Hispanic students ( $b = -.237$ ), and a negative relationship with students of other races ( $b = -.348$ ). Servant leadership score was also identified as a positive significant unique incremental predictor of student satisfaction ( $b = .601$ ). The results indicate: (1) students from smaller institutions are less satisfied than students at larger institutions, controlling for all other variables, (2) Black non-Hispanic



students are less satisfied than white students, controlling for all other variables, (3) students of other races are less satisfied than white students, controlling for all other variables, and (4) for every one unit increase in the servant leadership average score there is a .601 increase in student satisfaction, controlling for all other variables. The other variables shown in the table were not statistically significant contributors to the model.

Table 19

*Total Effects of Demographics and Servant Leadership on Student Satisfaction*

Model	Variable	<i>b</i> ( <i>SE<sub>b</sub></i> )	$\beta$	$\rho$
2	Constant	1.807 (.085)		< .001
	< 5,000 Institution	-.137 (.050)	-.064	.006
	Graduate	.029 (.056)	.015	.602
	2 Years at Institution	.064 (.051)	.031	.208
	3 Years at Institution	.071 (.059)	.029	.231
	4 Years at Institution	.076 (.063)	.030	.229
	5 Years at Institution	.069 (.094)	.017	.461
	6 Years at Institution	-.015 (.125)	-.003	.904
	7 or More Years at Institution	.083 (.105)	.018	.431
	Male	-.006 (.041)	-.003	.888
	International Student	.046 (.122)	.010	.707
	Black Non-Hispanic	-.237 (.049)	-.112	< .001
	Hispanic	-.099 (.143)	-.015	.490
	Asian or Pacific Islander	-.073 (.132)	-.015	.580
	Two or More Races	-.205 (.106)	-.041	.052
	Other Race	-.348 (.154)	-.049	.024
	Part-time	-.060 (.068)	-.022	.375
	Age 22 to 24	-.082 (.055)	-.038	.139
	Age 25 to 30	-.111 (.070)	-.042	.113
	Over 30	-.027 (.064)	-.013	.669
	Servant Leadership	.601 (.019)	.657	< .001

The servant leadership subscales, serving and leading, then needed to be regressed as the primary variable of interest. To determine if serving and leading had an effect after controlling for demographic variables, demographics were loaded into block 1 and the mean serving and leading scores was loaded into block 2. The results of the analysis

are shown in Table 20. As expected, the amount of variability explained by model 1 containing only the demographic variables was 2.3%. The amount of change in  $F$  was statistically significant ( $\Delta R^2 = .023$ ,  $\Delta F [19, 1290] = 1.621$ ,  $\rho = .044$ ). After the two factors, serving and leading, were added through block 2, the amount of additional variance in student satisfaction explained by the two factors over and above the demographic variables was 41.8% ( $\Delta R^2 = .418$ ,  $\Delta F [2, 1288] = 482.121$ ,  $\rho < .001$ ). The initial model significantly improved our ability to predict student satisfaction; however, the new model which includes the subscales of serving and leading explained a total of 44.1% of the variability in student satisfaction ( $R^2 = .441$ ,  $F [21, 1288] = 48.477$ ,  $\rho < .001$ ).

Table 20

*Effects of Demographics and Serving and Leading Subscales on Student Satisfaction*

Block	$\Delta R^2$	Probability
1 Demographics	.023	.044
2 Serving and Leading Subscales	.418	< .001

As hypothesized, significant predictors identified for the model containing the average total servant leadership score were also significant predictors for model 2 (shown in Table 21). There is a negative relationship with institutions of fewer than 5,000 students ( $b = -.137$ ), Black Non-Hispanic students ( $b = -.237$ ), and students of other races ( $b = -.349$ ). Serving ( $b = .392$ ) and leading ( $b = .208$ ) subscales were significant unique incremental predictors of student satisfaction. The results indicate: (1) students from smaller institutions are less satisfied than students at larger institutions, controlling for all other variables, (2) black non-Hispanic students are less satisfied than white students, controlling for all other variables, (3) students of other races are less satisfied than white

students, controlling for all other variables, (4) for every one unit increase in the serving subscale there is a .392 increase in student satisfaction, controlling for all other variables, and (5) for every one unit increase in the leading subscale there is a .208 increase in student satisfaction, controlling for all other variables. The other variables shown in the table were not statistically significant contributors to the model.

Table 21

*Total Effects of Demographics and Subscales on Student Satisfaction*

Model	Variable	<i>b</i> ( <i>SE<sub>b</sub></i> )	$\beta$	$\rho$
2	Constant	1.810 (.087)		
	< 5,000 Institution	-.137 (.050)	-.063	.006
	Graduate	.027 (.056)	.014	.629
	2 Years at Institution	.065 (.051)	.032	.202
	3 Years at Institution	.074 (.059)	.030	.215
	4 Years at Institution	.076 (.064)	.030	.234
	5 Years at Institution	.068 (.094)	.017	.468
	6 Years at Institution	-.013 (.125)	-.002	.918
	7 or More Years at Institution	.086 (.105)	.019	.414
	Male	-.007 (.042)	-.004	.862
	International Student	.044 (.122)	.010	.718
	Black Non-Hispanic	-.237 (.050)	-.112	< .001
	Hispanic	-.099 (.143)	-.015	.491
	Asian or Pacific Islander	-.069 (.132)	-.014	.601
	Two or More Races	-.206 (.106)	-.041	.051
	Other Race	-.349 (.155)	-.049	.024
	Part-time	-.060 (.068)	-.023	.374
	Age 22 to 24	-.081 (.056)	-.038	.145
	Age 25 to 30	-.108 (.070)	-.041	.123
	Over 30	-.025 (.064)	-.012	.700
	Serving	.392 (.037)	.425	< .001
	Leading	.208 (.033)	.256	< .001

*Additional Analysis on Institution Size*

Additional analyses were run on study data by institutional size because there was a large difference in the number of cases of larger institutions (n = 1069) and smaller

institutions (n = 332). Prior analysis had already indicated that academic support staff at smaller institutions were servant leaders, and there was a positive relationship between servant leadership score and student satisfaction. However, students at smaller institutions were not as satisfied as students at larger institutions. A review of the demographics of the two different sets of data, shown in Table 22, reveals the major difference between the two subsets. A majority of the students at smaller institutions responding to the study were minority, with 56.4% being Black not Hispanic, and the majority of students at larger institutions in Mississippi responding to the study were White not Hispanic (71.4%). Table 23 indicates the mean test statistic and standard deviation of each of the questions in the model broken out by institution size, and Table 24 provides the mean and standard deviation of each of the calculated scores within the study by institution size.

Table 22

*Participant Demographics by Institution Size*

Variable	Demographic	<u>Fewer Than 5,000</u>		<u>More than 15,000</u>	
		N	%	N	%
Institution Size	< 5,000	349			
	>15,000			1096	
Classification	Undergraduate	252	72.2	745	68.0
	Graduate	97	27.8	351	32.0
Number of Years Enrolled	1 Year	108	30.9	292	26.6
	2 Years	90	25.8	294	26.8
	3 Years	53	15.2	185	16.9
	4 Years	45	12.9	170	15.5
	5 Years	17	4.9	59	5.4
	6 Years	10	2.9	30	2.7
	7 or More Years	15	4.3	49	4.5
	Missing Values	11	3.2	17	1.6

Table 22 (continued).

Variable	Demographic	<u>Fewer Than 5,000</u>		<u>More than 15,000</u>	
		N	%	N	%
Gender	Female	254	72.8	730	66.6
	Male	92	26.4	358	32.7
	Missing Values	3	.9	8	.7
Citizenship Status	U. S. Citizen	327	93.7	1046	95.4
	International Student	17	4.9	44	4.0
	Missing Values	5	1.4	6	.5
Ethnic Background	White – not Hispanic	113	32.4	782	71.4
	Black – not Hispanic	197	56.4	165	15.1
	Hispanic	6	1.7	19	1.7
	Asian or Pacific Islander	6	1.7	43	3.9
	2 or More Races	9	2.6	40	3.6
	Other	7	2.0	15	1.4
	Missing Values	11	3.2	32	2.9
	Primarily a Full-time or Part-time Student	Primarily Full-time	303	86.8	938
Primarily Part-time		44	12.6	150	13.7
Missing Values		2	.6	10	.7
Age	21 or Younger	141	40.4	397	36.2
	22 to 24	76	21.8	262	23.9
	25 to 30	41	11.7	152	13.9
	Over 30	87	24.9	273	24.9
	Missing Values	4	1.1	12	1.1

Table 23

*Descriptive Statistics of the Questions in the Resulting Model by Institution Size*

Question	<u>Fewer Than 5,000</u>		<u>More than 15,000</u>	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b><u>Leading</u></b>				
Q13. Uses intuition and foresight to provide direction to students for educational goals.	3.95	1.147	3.62	1.191
Q14. Helps students understand the vision or plan of their educational program.	3.95	1.157	3.55	1.258
Q15. Empowers students in the decision-making process by guiding versus directing.	3.95	1.183	3.58	1.221
Q16. Takes initiative to help guide our education experience.	3.95	1.168	3.49	1.266
<b><u>Serving</u></b>				
Q18. Works collaboratively with students and others.	4.03	1.115	3.77	1.155
Q19. Models the kind of behavior he or she desires to see in the students.	4.02	1.097	3.80	1.131
Q20. Is interested in serving student's needs before his or her own needs.	3.83	1.213	3.58	1.222
Q21. Is a good listener - receptive and non-judgmental.	4.02	1.119	3.82	1.155
Q22. Builds students up through encouragement and affirmation.	4.02	1.104	3.75	1.179
Q23. Values differences among students.	4.04	1.089	3.80	1.070
Q24. Maintains integrity and trust.	4.10	1.031	4.01	1.039
Q26. Leads students by personal influence and does not expect special recognition.	4.02	1.132	3.86	1.084

Table 23 (continued).

Question	<u>Fewer Than 5,000</u>		<u>More than 15,000</u>	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b><u>Satisfaction</u></b>				
Q27. Most students feel a sense of belonging here.	3.92	1.027	3.93	1.013
Q28. The campus staff are caring and helpful.	3.88	1.155	3.96	1.023
Q29. It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.	3.96	1.061	4.10	1.051
Q30. Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	4.07	.995	4.11	1.008
Q31. This institution shows concern for students as individuals.	3.78	1.215	3.81	1.165

Table 24

*Descriptive Statistics of Calculated Scores by Institution Size*

	<u>Fewer Than 5,000</u>		<u>More than 15,000</u>	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Servant Leadership Score	3.99	1.015	3.72	.998
Serving Subscale	4.01	1.017	3.80	.991
Leading Subscale	3.95	1.093	3.56	1.126
Satisfaction Score	3.92	.959	3.98	.912

The data was split between institution size, and sequential regression analysis was run on each set of data. Student satisfaction was the dependent variable and the independent variables were demographics and servant leadership. Servant leadership was loaded into the second block for the second model. The results of the analysis are shown

in Table 25 for both institution sizes. For students at larger institutions, there was a statistically significant increase of 40.8% in the variance of student satisfaction ( $\Delta R^2 = .408$ ,  $\Delta F[1,990] = 722.176$ ,  $\rho < .001$ ) above the demographic variables, and there was a statistically significant increase of 40.3% in the variance of student satisfaction of students at smaller institutions ( $\Delta R^2 = .403$ ,  $\Delta F[1,284] = 225.246$ ,  $\rho < .001$ ). The predictor variable, servant leadership score, entered in model 2 of the regression did contribute to the overall relationship with the dependent variable, student satisfaction of larger institutions ( $b = .588$ ,  $\rho < .001$ ) and student satisfaction of smaller institutions ( $b = .638$ ,  $\rho < .001$ ).

Table 25

*Effects of Demographics and Servant Leadership on Student Satisfaction*

Block	<u>Fewer than 5,000</u>		<u>More than 15,000</u>	
	$\Delta R^2$	Probability	$\Delta R^2$	Probability
1 Demographics	.088	.079	.033	.015
2 Servant Leadership	.403	<.001	.408	<.001

Summary of the Major Findings

The factor structure of Laub's (1999) model was not validated when tested with the data gathered for this study. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were run revealing two factors: (a) serving and (b) leading. Model fit analysis indicated a good model fit. The second research question tested the level of servant leadership amongst academic support staff of Mississippi four-year institutions. The results revealed a majority of the academic support staff were weak on their servant leadership skills.



However, a closer review of the data by institution indicated that the academic staff at some institutions were servant leaders, and when grouped by institution size, a majority of academic support staff at smaller institutions demonstrate servant leadership characteristics. The third hypothesis tested the relationship between servant leadership and student satisfaction. The results indicated that servant leadership was a unique predictor of student satisfaction. As servant leadership increases, student satisfaction will also increase.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

This study was designed to address three research questions:

1. Can Laub's (1999) OLA factor structure be applied to students' assessment of academic support staff?
2. Are academic support staff of Mississippi four-year institutions viewed as servant leaders by students?
3. Is there a relationship between servant leadership and student satisfaction?

This chapter will provide an overview of the significant findings of the study and examination of the findings in light of existing research, implications of the study, limitations of the study and recommendations for further research.

#### Overview

The data for this study of servant leadership and student satisfaction were drawn from students at Mississippi four-year institutions and therefore, from a student's perspective. The study also evaluated whether student satisfaction might be an organizational outcome of servant leadership.

Laub's (1999) Organizational Leadership Assessment model and scales were used as the basis to evaluate academic support staff servant leadership characteristics. There were six subscales, or factors, in Laub's model: (a) values people, (b) develops people, (c) builds community, (d) display authenticity, (e) provides leadership, and (f) shares leadership. Laub's OLA instrument has been used by higher education staff to evaluate other groups of staff, but academic support staff had not been evaluated by students utilizing the OLA instrument. The data collected from students in this study did not

validate the factor structure of Laub's model. Only two subscales were identified from the data collected from the students: (a) serving and (b) leading. Leading contained a subset of the items representing Laub's subscales of provides leadership and shares leadership, and the items representing the serving subscale were distributed primarily throughout Laub's other four subscales. This suggests that the design and implementation of a servant leadership model and assessment instrument should consider students as followers of staff and faculty of higher education institutions. Other instrument development found to include students, Liden, et al. (2008) and Sendjaya, et al. (2008), were rating their employers and not university personnel. Those who design future assessment instruments measuring servant leadership should consider wording of questions and instructions (Graham, 2010) if creating instruments for multiple audiences and environments and in this case appropriate for students evaluating higher education personnel as leaders. The length or time to complete the instrument should be carefully considered. Crawford, Couper, and Lamias (2001) found that students who abandoned web based surveys did so after an average of 9.12 minutes, and there was a lower non-response rate for an instrument that indicated it would take 8-10 minutes versus an instrument that would take 20 minutes.

The demographic data gathered for this study indicated there was not a difference in how undergraduates and graduates viewed servant leadership characteristics of academic support staff. Nor was there a difference between males and females, different age groups, citizenship status, or years at the institution. Initially, ethnicity was the only factor that indicated some difference in student perceptions. Specifically, there is a

significant difference in servant leadership reported by White Non-Hispanics compared to Asian Pacific Islanders.

Based on the data collected from the refined model, a majority of academic support staff from Mississippi four-year public higher education institutions as a whole were not servant leaders. However, when institutions were evaluated individually, a majority of the academic support staff at four of the seven institutions were rated as servant leaders. When grouped by enrollment, (a) large - institutions with more than 15,000 students and (b) small - institutions with fewer than 5,000 students, a majority of the academic support staff rated at the smaller institutions were considered servant leaders while a majority of those rated at larger institutions were not. This does not mean that servant leaders do not exist at the larger institutions. The results of this study are consistent with Ethington's (1997) research on the college effects on student success, which indicated that the larger the institution, the less likely a student would be involved in the institutional social environment. These findings conflict with Rozeboom's (2008) findings that leadership practices of student affairs officers of larger institutions were not different from those at smaller institutions. However, Rozeboom's research subjects were not rated by students.

Not only did the results suggest that institution size was a significant predictor, but student ethnicity also indicated a strong relationship with servant leadership. Correlations indicated a significant relationship between servant leadership score and ethnicity, specifically White Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, and Asian Pacific Islanders. Students at smaller institutions scored academic support staff .228 points higher on servant leadership characteristics than academic support staff at larger

institutions were scored. Asian and Pacific Islander students scored academic support staff .386 points higher on servant leadership characteristics than White Non-Hispanic students, and Black Non-Hispanic students scored academic support staff .075 points higher on servant leadership characteristics than White Non-Hispanics. When the demographic data by institution size are reviewed, it is evident that there is a larger percentage of ethnic minorities at the smaller institutions and a larger percentage of White Non-Hispanic at large institutions. Ethnic minorities rated academic support staff higher than White Non-Hispanic students, hence the reason the academic support staff at smaller institutions were rated as servant leaders. While these findings are preliminary, they suggest that a student's ethnicity makes a difference in how they rate servant leadership characteristics of academic support staff. These results are inconsistent with Hudspeth's (2002) findings when students rated servant leadership qualities of mayors. Results indicated no significant relationship between level of servant leadership and ethnicity; however, students were not in contact with the mayors being evaluated.

Outcomes of servant leadership are important to measure because of the difference a servant leader can make at an institution. Students who are more satisfied with their college experience and feel a part of their institution are more likely to be successful (Tinto, 1993). This study considered whether servant leadership had a relationship with student satisfaction. Were students that scored their academic support staff as servant leaders also more satisfied? The results of this study indicated there was a positive relationship. Students that scored academic support staff higher in servant leadership characteristics were also more satisfied. This was also true for the individual subscales of serving and leading. Students at smaller institutions were less satisfied than

students at larger institutions even though academic support staff at smaller institutions were servant leaders. The results also suggested that students within the ethnic groups of Black non-Hispanic and other race were less satisfied than White Non-Hispanic students. Again, it should be noted that the majority of students at the small institutions were ethnic minority. The findings that ethnic minorities are less satisfied is supported by the findings of Sir Howard Newby, chief executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Shepard (2005) reported Newby's results of a national student satisfaction survey with 180,000 responses which indicated overall, ethnic minorities were less satisfied with their institution. Ethnic minorities rated academic support staff higher for servant leadership, but in general, they are less satisfied with their institution. This indicates what one would expect, that there is more to student satisfaction than just support, but servant leadership can have a positive impact on student satisfaction. Larger institutions have so many more activities and facilities such as division one sports, symphonies, concerts, and more variety in academic programs.

### Implications

As the number of Mississippi high school graduates have continued to decline since 2009 (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2012) and the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (2013) are basing formula funding on student credit hours, student progression, and degrees awarded, Mississippi higher education four-year institutions will need to use every available resource to positively impact student success and persistence as they compete to get and retain available students. Tinto (2008) and other researchers have reported the importance of student engagement and integration into the campus community, and Prebble, et al. (2004), Graham (2010),

and others have informed us of the contributions and influence support staff can have on student success and satisfaction. The question becomes how can we as higher education administrators take advantage of a valuable resource in support staff and leverage it to increase student success?

This study was the first to address servant leadership research based on the student's view of academic support staff as servant leaders. Since academic support staff impact student success by serving, leading, and supporting students (Bannister, 2009; Graham, 2010), a study along these lines seemed warranted. In the past, institutions have used student satisfaction surveys to gauge how well the institution was doing (Fisk et al., 2008; Lawson & Burrows, 2012). Servant leadership assessment by students provides an opportunity for the institution to have a more individualized assessment of how well students are being supported by staff and faculty. These assessments identify strengths and opportunities to correct weaknesses (Page & Wong, 2000).

This study has provided new information for the growing knowledge base about servant leadership in higher education. Specifically, this study found that academic support staff can exhibit the characteristics of servant leaders as they interact with students as followers. This contributes to policy by informing higher education administration of the impact academic support staff can have on a student's support and connection to the university leading to student success. This knowledge can inform funding and policy decisions to create or modify staff development to train academic support staff to be servant leaders and prepare them to transform a student's higher education experience (Wheeler, 2012; Prebble et al., 2004; Graham, 2010; Bowman, 2005). Servant leadership is not tied to positions of authority (McCrimmon, 2006).

Clark and Clark (1992) concluded that leadership behaviors are transferable and that the effects of training tend to persist. If we are able to better understand the characteristics and components of servant leadership then those skills can be taught and transferred from one person to another. The findings of this study related to the hypothesis suggest a need for a model and assessment instrument for higher education staff and faculty that considers and represents servant leadership characteristics as experienced by students.

Academic support staff at smaller institutions in Mississippi were rated as servant leaders, while the majority of those rated at larger institutions in Mississippi were not. While these findings are preliminary, they suggest that the size of an organization makes a difference. Tinto (1987) tells us that students who are less involved in the social and academic environments of college are more likely to drop out. Perhaps indirectly, the size of an institution has a negative impact on servant leadership ratings. Smaller institutions have smaller class sizes and numbers of students to support per academic department. There are more opportunities for one-on-one interactions between staff and students. When students are making their college choices, many will consider the size of the institution that is the best fit for them. Institutions considering taking advantage of academic support staff for student success might consider a staff-to-student ratio much like the faculty-to-student ratio, or as McDonald (2013) found with faculty-to-student ratios, sometimes it is more about the quality of the interactions. Institutions should ensure there is enough support staff to engage and support students, but more important is servant leadership staff development to maximize the effectiveness of available staff.

This study also found that student ethnic minorities ranked academic support staff higher in servant leadership qualities than their White Non-Hispanic counterparts.



Likewise, while these findings are preliminary, they suggest that a student's ethnicity makes a difference in how they rate servant leadership characteristics of academic support staff. Unlike this study, when students rated servant leadership qualities of mayors (Hudspeth, 2002), results indicated no significant relationship between level of servant leadership and ethnicity; however, students were not in contact with the mayors being evaluated. According to Tinto (2008), universities can sometimes have different expectations for different groups of students, and these expectations can validate their presence on campus. These results indicate that minority students may be treated differently from White Non-Hispanic students. The recent emphasis on increasing cultural awareness and acceptance of others could have had an impact on this research finding.

This study also informs the academic community of the contribution servant leadership practices can have on student satisfaction, specifically, as servant leadership increases so does student satisfaction. There are many factors that contribute to a student's satisfaction with their connection to their institution (Schertzer & Schertzer, 2004), but these research findings suggest an emphasis on staff development to promote a servant leadership culture within the university can help to improve student satisfaction. Students are the main concern of higher education institutions, and their satisfaction and success now defines the institution's success.

#### Limitations

There were several limitations associated with this study. One limitation involved the use of Noel Levitz student satisfaction questions that comprise the student centeredness component of their Student Satisfaction Inventory. A request was made to

Noel Levitz to utilize the questions from their student centeredness scale to measure satisfaction which included national scores and reliability statistics. Noel Levitz denied the request. It was difficult to locate another existing survey that contained satisfaction questions related to the student's satisfaction with the institution and the culture of the institution in addition to the reliability and validity scores needed for comparison.

The small number of responses or lack of participation from some individual institutions was also a limitation. This limited the opportunity to research the relationships between different types of institutions such as religious based, historically black, and historically white institutions. Only seven of fifteen state four-year institutions responded to the IRB application submitted and agreed to participate. One provided notification of refusal, and the remaining seven did not respond to the IRB application. A separate IRB process was required by each institution instead of a central state IRB process which made the process more arduous.

Another limitation was that some institutions did not provide student contact information. Instead, they distributed the instrument through their campus email system which restricted the opportunity to send email reminders and increase the number of responses. However, the researcher was contacted by some students who were wondering how their contact information was obtained.

Many students are not going to complete a long survey. Most do not start the survey, and many that do start will just stop in the middle before completing the survey. As Crawford et al. (2001) found, over half did not start the survey, and those that abandoned the survey did so after eight to nine minutes. This instrument was intentionally shortened from Laub's original instrument to a number of questions that

would allow students to complete the survey quickly and could be completed with their cell phones.

### Recommendations for Future Research

Prior peer reviewed research on servant leadership in higher education has focused on employees evaluating administration or performing self-evaluations. It is evident from this study that additional research is needed to understand better the students' assessment of servant leadership characteristics of higher education staff and faculty at all levels, and how servant leadership is modeled by these staff. This includes students at different types of institutions such as religion based and for-profit institutions.

Additional research is also needed to understand how student support and engagement differ between smaller institutions and larger institutions. This research could include information on the numbers of students served per academic support staff member, staff development that may have been provided, and the campus climates of the different sized institutions.

Also evident from this research is a relationship between student ethnicity and servant leadership. Qualitative research on the differences in the servant leadership scores of each of the ethnic groups could possibly shed light on the questions: why do ethnic groups view servant leadership characteristics of academic support staff differently? And do these differences extend to other levels of administration at the institutions?

Organizational outcomes help to gauge how servant leadership has changed the lives of those involved. In higher education, student satisfaction is one of many outcomes that need to be continually researched. Other student outcomes include

persistence, progression, servant leadership tendencies of students at servant leadership organizations, graduates of these institutions and job satisfaction of servant leaders.

### Summary

This chapter presented a summary and discussion of the findings of the study. Even though this study was limited to Mississippi, some of these findings could be applicable to institutions outside the state. The study suggests that academic support staff can be servant leaders even though they are not in positions of authority. It also suggests that as academic support staff rated higher on servant leadership characteristics, the student was more satisfied with the institution. Other findings suggest a relationship between servant leadership and the size of the institution, as well as ethnicity. It is hoped that the researcher has provided a valid argument for the continued research on servant leadership in higher education and the potential influence for student engagement and success.

APPENDIX A

ACADEMIC SUPPORT STAFF SURVEY

**Section 1:**

1. Indicate your institution:

- Institution 1
- Institution 2
- Institution 3
- Institution 4
- Institution 5
- Institution 6
- Institution 7

2. What is your classification?

- Undergraduate
- Graduate

3. Number of years you have been enrolled at this institution?

- 1       5
- 2       6
- 3       7 or more
- 4

4. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Transgender

5. What is your citizenship status?

- U.S. Citizen
- International Student

6. What is your ethnic background?

- White – not Hispanic
- Black – not Hispanic
- Hispanic
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- 2 or more races
- Other

7. Are you primarily a full-time or primarily a part-time student?  
\_\_\_ Primarily full-time  
\_\_\_ Primarily part-time

8. What is your age?  
\_\_\_ 21 or younger  
\_\_\_ 22 to 24  
\_\_\_ 25 to 30  
\_\_\_ Over 30

## Section 2:

Academic support staff are defined as those general staff that work in academic departments but are not instructional staff. This includes administrative assistants, advising staff, and program support staff. Please respond to each statement as you believe it describes the academic support staff member that assists you in your major department. You may refuse to answer any specific question that may be asked. Select one number before each descriptor below.

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree,  
6 = Do not wish to respond

9. Really believes in the students.
10. Provides or informs students of opportunities for learning and growth.
11. Builds strong relationships with students and others.
12. Promotes open communication and accountability with students.
13. Uses intuition and foresight to provide direction to students for educational goals.
14. Helps students understand the vision or plan of their educational program.
15. Empowers students in the decision-making process by guiding versus directing.
16. Takes initiative to help guide our education experience.
17. Is willing to learn from others, including students.
18. Works collaboratively with students and others.
19. Models the kind of behavior he or she desires to see in the students.
20. Is interested in serving student's needs before his or her own needs.
21. Is a good listener - receptive and non-judgmental.
22. Builds students up through encouragement and affirmation.
23. Values differences among students.
24. Maintains integrity and trust.
25. Is able to clarify the goals of the department.
26. Leads students by personal influence and does not expect special recognition.

**Section 3:**

Please respond to each statement as you believe it describes how you feel. You may refuse to answer any specific question that may be asked.

**SD D U A SA**

- 27. Most students feel a sense of belonging here.
- 28. The campus staff are caring and helpful.
- 29. It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.
- 30. Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
- 31. This institution shows concern for students as individuals.

By completing and submitting this survey, you are indicating your consent to participate in the study.

Submit

## APPENDIX B

### INVITATION EMAIL

Please take a few minutes to participate in this multi-institutional study of academic support staff and student satisfaction. This study is part of my dissertation research in Higher Education Administration and seeks to determine whether academic support staff of academic departments exhibit the characteristics of servant leadership while interacting with students on a daily basis. While there may be no direct benefits provided to you for participating in this study, it is hoped that the information obtained can be used to better understand the need and desire for staff development that will prepare professional and support staff to engage with students and become a vital component of student success and retention.

You will be asked to complete a short online survey. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. The survey should take only 10 minutes or less to complete.

By completing and submitting this survey, you are indicating your consent to participate in the study.

**Follow this link to the Survey:**

Take the Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

<survey link>

This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of The University of Southern Mississippi which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. There are no risks associated with participating in this study. The survey collects no identifying information of any respondent. All of the responses in the survey will be recorded anonymously.

If you have any questions regarding the survey or this research project in general, please contact Michelle Arrington at 601-266-6698. Any questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, (601) 266-5997. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Michelle Arrington  
Doctoral Candidate  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
"Academic Support Staff as Servant Leaders and the Relationship to Student Satisfaction"



## APPENDIX C

### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

---

#### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | [www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board](http://www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board)

#### NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.  
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 14111203

PROJECT TITLE: Academic Support Staff as Servant Leaders and the Relationship to Student Satisfaction

PROJECT TYPE: New Project

RESEARCHER(S): Michelle Arrington

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology

DEPARTMENT: Educational Studies and Research

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 03/05/2015 to 03/04/2016

**Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.**  
**Institutional Review Board**

**Michelle Arrington**

---

**From:** JIM LAUB [[mailto:JIM\\_Laub@pba.edu](mailto:JIM_Laub@pba.edu)]  
**Sent:** Monday, September 15, 2014 8:03 AM  
**To:** Michelle Arrington  
**Cc:** [olagroup@comcast.net](mailto:olagroup@comcast.net)  
**Subject:** Michelle Arrington OLA for research

Michelle: You can certainly make use of the OLA model for your study. I assume that you are not planning on using the OLA instrument for your study, but just the conceptual model. Yes, you have permission to use it. I wish you well with your study.

Jim Laub, Ed.D.  
Dean of The MacArthur School of Leadership  
Palm Beach Atlantic University  
901 South Flagler Drive  
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4708  
561-803-2318  
[Jim\\_laub@pba.edu](mailto:Jim_laub@pba.edu)

**From:** Michelle Arrington [<mailto:michelle.arrington@usm.edu>]  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 14, 2014 6:26 PM  
**To:** [olagroup@comcast.net](mailto:olagroup@comcast.net)  
**Cc:** Michelle Arrington  
**Subject:** Servant Leadership Dissertation Research

Dr. Jim Laub,

I am a doctoral student from The University of Southern Mississippi writing my dissertation tentatively titled *Servant Leadership of Academic Support Staff and the Effect on Student Satisfaction* under the direction of my dissertation committee chaired by Dr. Thomas O'Brien.

I would like your permission to use your six constructs and eighteen characteristics/key components as part of my research study. Students will be questioned about their interactions with academic support staff to determine if academic support staff practice servant leadership and how this may impact student satisfaction.

Please contact me if you need additional information before granting permission.

Sincerely,

Michelle Arrington  
Doctoral Candidate

Michelle Arrington, M.S.  
Director, Institutional Research  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
118 College Dr. #5167

**Michelle Arrington**

---

**From:** Patrick Knott [<mailto:patrickknott@mac.com>]  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 05, 2014 5:06 PM  
**To:** Michelle Arrington  
**Subject:** Re: Rosalind Franklin Student Satisfaction Survey

I approve.  
Good luck with your research!

Patrick Knott, PhD, PA-C  
Professor and Vice President of Strategic Enrollment Management  
Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science  
(847) 578-8689 office  
[patrick.knott@rosalindfranklin.edu](mailto:patrick.knott@rosalindfranklin.edu)

On Oct 5, 2014, at 11:45 AM, Michelle Arrington <[michelle.arrington@usm.edu](mailto:michelle.arrington@usm.edu)> wrote:

October 5, 2014

Dr. Patrick Knott  
Professor and Vice President  
Strategic Enrollment Management

Dr. Knott,

I am a PhD student at The University of Southern Mississippi writing my dissertation on Servant Leadership and Student Satisfaction under the direction of Dr. Thomas O'Brien. I was examining student satisfaction questionnaires for several different universities and your institutional student satisfaction questionnaire has five questions that I would like to include as part of my dissertation research. I would like to request your permission to use these questions in my dissertation research to survey higher education institutions in Mississippi:

1. I enjoy being a student on this campus.
2. I feel a sense of belonging to this institution.
3. Staff care about me as an individual.
4. The University environment is inclusive of students with different backgrounds and beliefs.
5. The University demonstrates a commitment to meeting the needs of a diverse student population on campus.

Please let me know if any other information is needed for approval or if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Michelle Arrington  
Doctoral Candidate

Michelle Arrington, MS  
Director, Office of Institutional Research  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
118 College Dr. #5167  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406

## REFERENCES

- Aitken, N. D. (1982). College student performance, satisfaction and retention: Specification and estimation of a structural model. *The Journal of Higher Education, 53*(1), 32-50.
- American Association of Community Colleges. (2015). *Community college mission*. Retrieved from <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/Pages/default.aspx>
- Amoako, G. K., Arthur, E., Bandoh, C., & Katah, R. K. (2012). The impact of effective customer relationship management (CRM) on repurchase: A case study of (GOLDEN TULIP) hotel (ACCRA-GHANA). *African Journal of Marketing Management, 4*(1), 17-29.
- Anderson, A. R. (2009). *Servant-leader development in an adult accelerated degree completion program: A mixed-methods study*. (Doctoral dissertation) Regent University. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3383863)
- Attinasi, L. C., Jr. (1989). Getting in: Mexican Americans' perceptions of university attendance and the implications for freshman year persistence. *Journal of Higher Education, 60*(3), 247-277.
- Avolio, B. J., Walumbwa, F.O., & Weber, T.J. (2009). Leadership: Current theories, research, and future directions. *Annual Review of Psychology, 60*(1), 421-449. doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.60.110707.163621
- Bannister, S. J. (2009). *The experiences of non-traditional students utilizing student support services: A qualitative study* (Doctoral dissertation). Kansas State University. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3358772)

- Barbuto, J. E., & Wheeler, D. W. (2002). Becoming a servant leader: Do you have what it takes? NebGuide G02-1481-A. Lincoln: University of Nebraska, Nebraska Cooperative Extension.
- Barbuto, J. E., & Wheeler, D. W. (2006). Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership. Faculty Publications: Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communication Department. Paper 51. Retrieved from [http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1050&context=aglecfa\\_cpub](http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1050&context=aglecfa_cpub)
- Bass, B. M. (2000). The future of leadership in learning organizations. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 7(3), 18.
- Bean, J. P., & Bradley, R. K. (1986). Untangling the satisfaction-performance relationship for college students. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 57(4), 393-412.
- Bennett, J. L. (2001). Trainers as leaders of learning. *Training and Development*, 55(3), 42-45.
- Bensimon, E. M. (2007). The underestimated significance of practitioner knowledge in the scholarship on student success. *Review of Higher Education*, 30(4), 441-469.
- Bentler, P. M. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural models. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107, 238-246.
- Black, G. (2010). Correlational analysis of servant leadership and school climate. *Catholic Education: A Journal Of Inquiry & Practice*, 13(4), 437-466.

- Bourdieu, P. (1973). Cultural reproduction and social reproduction. In R. Brown (Ed.), *Knowledge, education and cultural change: Papers in the sociology of education* (pp. 71–112). London, England: Tavistock Publications Limited.
- Bowman, R. F. (2005). Teacher as servant leader. *Clearing House*, 78(6), 257-259.
- Boyum, V. S. (2012). *A model of servant leadership in higher education. (Doctoral dissertation)* University of Minnesota. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3503142)
- Buchen, I. H. (1998). Servant leadership: A model for future faculty and future institutions. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 5(1), 125-134. doi: 10.1177/107179199800500111
- California Community Colleges. (2013). Report on the California community colleges student success initiative professional development committee recommendations. Retrieved from [http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/ExecutiveOffice/Board/2013\\_agendas/september/4\\_3\\_attach\\_report\\_prof\\_dev.pdf](http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/ExecutiveOffice/Board/2013_agendas/september/4_3_attach_report_prof_dev.pdf)
- Center for Community College Student Engagement. (2015). *Engagement rising: A decade of CCSSE data shows improvements across the board*. Austin, TX: The University of Texas at Austin, Program in Higher Education Leadership. Retrieved from [https://www.ccsse.org/docs/Engagement\\_Rising.pdf](https://www.ccsse.org/docs/Engagement_Rising.pdf)
- Chen, C., Chen, C., & Li, C. (2013). The Influence of Leader's Spiritual Values of Servant Leadership on Employee Motivational Autonomy and Eudaemonic Well-Being. *Journal Of Religion & Health*, 52(2), 418-438. doi:10.1007/s10943-011-9479-3

- Clark, K. E. & Clark, M. D. (1992). Introduction. In K. E. Clark, M. B. Clark, and D. P. Campbell (Ed.), *Impact of Leadership*. (pp. 1-10). Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.
- Crawford, S. D., Couper, M. P., & Lamias, M. J. (2001). Web surveys: Perceptions of burden. *Social Science Computer Review*, 19(2).
- Creswell, J.W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (Fourth ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Dennis, R. S., & Bocarnea, M. (2005). Development of the servant leadership assessment instrument. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 26(8), 600-615.  
doi: 10.1108/01437730510633692
- Drury, S. (2005). Teacher as servant leader: A faculty model for effectiveness with students. Paper presented at the Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA. Retrieved from [https://www.regent.edu/acad/sls/publications/conference\\_proceedings/servant\\_leadership\\_roundtable/2005/pdf/drury\\_teacher\\_servant.pdf](https://www.regent.edu/acad/sls/publications/conference_proceedings/servant_leadership_roundtable/2005/pdf/drury_teacher_servant.pdf)
- Ethington, C. (1997). A hierarchical linear modeling approach to studying college effects. In J. Smart (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (Vol. 12, pp. 165-194). New York: Agathon.
- Farnsworth, K. A. (2007). *Leadership as service: A new model for higher education in a new century*. Westport, CT: ACE-Praeger.
- Finney, T. G., & Finney, R. Z. (2010). Are students their universities' customers? An exploratory study. *Education & Training*, 52(4), 276-291.

- Fisk, R. P., John, J., & Grove, S. J. (2008). *Interactive services marketing* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Garber, J., Madigan, E. A., Click, E. R., & Fitzpatrick, J. J. (2009). Attitudes towards collaboration and servant leadership among nurses, physicians and residents. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 23(4), 331-340.  
doi:10.1080/13561820902886253
- Goritz, A. (2008). The long-term effect of material incentives on participation in online panels. *Field Methods*, 20(3), 211-225. Retrieved from [http://www.goeritz.net/Field\\_Methods.pdf](http://www.goeritz.net/Field_Methods.pdf)
- Graham, C. (2010). Hearing the voices of general staff: A delphi study of the contributions of general staff to student outcomes. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 32(3), 213-223.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). *The servant as leader*. Westfield, IN: The Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. Retrieved from <http://www.leadershiparlington.org/pdf/TheServantasLeader.pdf>
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Greenleaf, R. K., Beazley, H., Beggs, J., & Spears, L. C. (2003). *The servant-leader within: A transformative path*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Guglielmino, L.M. (1977). *Development of the self-directed learning readiness scale* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Georgia. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 302856217)



- Hannigan, J. B. (2008). *Leadership in higher education: An investigation of servant leadership as a predictor of college performance* (Doctoral dissertation). Capella University. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3296726)
- Harkness, J. A., Villar, A., & Edwards, B. (2010). Translation, adaptation, and design. In J. A. Harkness, M. Braun, B. Edwards, T. P. Johnson, L. Lyberg, P. Ph. Mohler, B.E. Pennell & T. W. Smith (Eds.), *Survey methods in multinational, multicultural and multiregional contexts* (pp.117-140). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Harvard Graduate School of Education. (2011). Pathways to Prosperity. Cambridge, MA: Author. Retrieved June 20, 2013 from [http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news\\_events/features/2011/Pathways\\_to\\_Prosperty\\_Feb2011.pdf](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news_events/features/2011/Pathways_to_Prosperty_Feb2011.pdf)
- Hasan, H. F. A., Ilias, A., Rahman, R. A., & Razak, M. Z. A. (2008). Service quality and student satisfaction: A case study at private higher education institutions. *International Business Research*, 1(3), 163-175.
- Hudspeth, G. C. (2002). *A quantitative analysis of college students' perception of political servant leadership of a mayor as it relates to ethnicity and gender* (Doctoral dissertation). Our Lady of the Lake University. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3068433)
- Iken, S. L. (2005). *Servant leadership in higher education: Exploring perceptions of educators and staff employed in a university setting* (Doctoral dissertation). University of North Dakota. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3199527)

- Inside Higher Education. <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/01/11/wiche-report-highlights-decline-high-school-graduates-and-growing-diversity>
- Jöreskog, K. G., & Sörbom, D. (1989). LISREL 7: A guide to the program and application (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Chicago: Scientific Software.
- Joseph, E., & Winston B. (2005). A correlation of servant leadership, leader trust, and organizational trust. *Leadership Organization Development Journal*, 26(1), 6-22.
- Karp, M. M. (2011). Toward a new understanding of non-academic student support: Four mechanisms encouraging positive student outcomes in the community college. (CCRC Working Paper No. 28). Retrieved from Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University website:  
<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/publications/non-academic-student-support-mechanisms.html>
- Keith, T. Z. (2006). *Multiple Regression and Beyond*. Boston: Pearson.
- Kiley, K. (2013, January 11). The pupil cliff. *Inside Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/01/11/wiche-report-highlights-decline-high-school-graduates-and-growing-diversity>
- Koring, H.(2005). *Adviser Training & Development*. Retrieved from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Adviser-Training--Development.aspx>
- Knight, G. P., Virdin, L. M., Ocampo, K. A., & Roosa, M. (1994). An examination of the cross-ethnic equivalence of measures of negative life events and the mental health among Hispanic and Anglo American children. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 22, 767-783.

- Korobova, N. (2012). *A comparative study of student engagement, satisfaction, and academic success among international and American students* (Doctoral dissertation). Iowa State University. Retrieved from Digital Repository at Iowa State University. (Paper 12367)
- Kotler, P., & Clarke, R. N. (1987). *Marketing for health care organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (1995). *The leadership challenge: How to keep getting extraordinary things done in organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Laub, J. A. (1999). *Assessing the servant organization: Development of the servant organizational leadership assessment (OLA) instrument* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL.
- Laub, J. A. (2003). From paternalism to the servant organization: Expanding the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) model. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the Servant Leadership Research Roundtable. Retrieved from [https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl\\_proceedings/2003/laub\\_from\\_paternalism.pdf](https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2003/laub_from_paternalism.pdf)
- Lawson, A., Leach, M., & Burrows, S. (2012). The implications for learners, teachers and institutions of using student satisfaction as a measure of success: A review of the literature. *Education Journal*, (138), 7-11.
- Leary, M. R., & Hoyle, R. H. (2009). *Handbook of individual differences in social behavior*. New York: The Guilford Press.

- Lewis, P. H. (1994). Creating a culture of leadership. *New Directions For Higher Education*, (87), 5.
- Liden, R. C., Panaccio, A., Hu, J., & Meuser, J. D. (2014). Servant leadership: Antecedents, consequences, and contextual moderators. In D. V. Day (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of leadership and organizations* (pp. 357-379). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Zhao, H., & Henderson, D. (2008). Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment. *Leadership Quarterly*, 19(2), 161-177.
- Loehlin, J. C. (2004). *Latent variable models: An introduction to factor, path, and structural analysis* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.), Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- McCrimmon, M. (2006). *Burn! Leadership myths in flames*. Toronto, On & London, UK: Self Renewal Group.
- McDonald, G. (2013). Does size matter? The impact of student–staff ratios. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management*, 35(6), 652-667.  
doi:10.1080/1360080X.2013.844668
- McDougle, L. R. (2009). *Servant leadership in higher education: An analysis of the perceptions of higher education employees regarding servant leadership practices at varying types of institutions* (Doctoral dissertation). The University of Texas at San Antonio. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3387783)
- Medallia. (n.d.). Net promoter score. Retrieved from <http://www.medallia.com/net-promoter-score/>

- Middleton, S. (2006). The divided house in tertiary: The importance of service departments in positive academic outcomes. Paper presented at the 2006 TEM Conference, Manukau Institute of Technology, Sydney, Australia.
- Mavondo, F., Tsarenko, Y., & Gabbott, M. (2004). International and local student satisfaction: Resources and capabilities perspective. *Journal of Marketing For Higher Education*, 14(1), 41-60. doi:10.1300/J050v14n01\_03
- Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. (n.d.). *EAC report card*. Retrieved from <http://www.mississippi.edu/research/stats.html>
- Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning. (2013). Board of trustees approves new allocation model for university system [Press release]. Retrieved from <http://www.mississippi.edu/newsarchive/newsstory.asp?ID=1013>
- Murray, C. (2008). The transformative essence of servant-leadership in the higher education environment: A case study (Doctoral dissertation). Capella University. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3310701)
- National Survey of Student Engagement. (2014). *Bringing the Institution into Focus—Annual Results 2014*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.
- Noel Levitz. (2013). Satisfaction-Priorities Surveys Interpretive Guide. Retrieved from [http://www.noellevitz.com/student-retention-solutions/satisfaction-priorities-assessments/interpretive-guides-for-satisfaction-priorities-surveys?utm\\_source=SSI%20e-mail&utm\\_campaign=Products](http://www.noellevitz.com/student-retention-solutions/satisfaction-priorities-assessments/interpretive-guides-for-satisfaction-priorities-surveys?utm_source=SSI%20e-mail&utm_campaign=Products)
- Northouse, P. G. (2013). *Leadership: Theory and practice (6<sup>th</sup> ed.)*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Oluseye, O. O., Tairat, B. T., & Emmanuel, J. O. (2014). Customer Relationship Management Approach and Student Satisfaction in Higher Education Marketing. *Journal of Competitiveness*, 6(3), 49-62. doi:10.7441/joc.2014.03.04
- Padron, J. (2012). *Higher education leadership: Servant leadership and the effects on student satisfaction* (Doctoral dissertation). Argosy University Sarasota. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3532040)
- Page, D., & Wong, P. T. (2000). A conceptual framework for measuring servant-leadership. Retrieved from <http://hci2010mmp.wiki.hci.edu.sg/file/view/Conceptual%20Framework.pdf/152616231/Conceptual%20Framework.pdf>
- Page, O. C. (2003). Promoting diversity in academic leadership. *New Directions For Higher Education*, (124), 79-86.
- Patterson, K. A. (2003). *Servant leadership: A theoretical model* (Doctoral dissertation). Regent University. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI 3082719) (prod.academic\_MSTAR\_305234239).
- Pearson, J., Levine, R. E., & Krosnick, J. A. (2010). The impact of lottery incentives: Increasing response rates can decrease survey accuracy. *Research in Higher Education*, 44(4), 389-407. Retrieved from <http://www.stanford.edu/~jpearson/lottery%20incentives.pdf>
- Prebble, T., Hargreaves, H., Leach, L., Naidoo, K., Suddaby, G., & Zepoke, N. (2004). The impact of student support services and academic development programmes on student outcomes in undergraduate tertiary study: A synthesis of the research.

Retrieved from

[http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/tertiary\\_education/5519](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/tertiary_education/5519)

Pitkethly, A., & Prosser, M. (2001). The first year experience project: A model for university-wide change. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 20(2), 185-198. Doi/abs/10.1080/758483470

Porter, S. R., & Whitcomb, M. E. (2003). The impact of lottery incentives on student survey response rates. *Research In Higher Education*, 44(4), 389-407.

Riggio, R.E., Chaleff I., & Blumen-Lipman, J. (2008). *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science. (2013). Student Satisfaction Survey. Retrieved September 15, 2014 from

<http://www.rosalindfranklin.edu/campuslife/SAI/StudentSatisfactionSurvey.aspx>

Rozeboom, D. J. (2008). *Self-report and direct observer's perceived leadership practices of chief student affairs officers in selected institutions of higher education in the United States* (Doctoral dissertation). Texas A&M University. Retrieved from <http://oaktrust.library.tamu.edu/bitstream/handle/1969.1/ETD-TAMU-2936/ROZEBOOM-DISSERTATION.pdf>

Ruíz, P., Martínez, R., & Rodrigo, J. (2010). Intra-organizational social capital in business organizations: A theoretical model with a focus on servant leadership as antecedent. *Ramon Llull Journal of Applied Ethics*, (1), 43-59.

- Russell, R. F., & Stone, A. G. (2002). A review of servant leadership attributes: Developing a practical model. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 23(3), 145-157.
- Sandage, S. J., & Wiens, T. (2001). Contextualizing models of humility and forgiveness: A reply to Gassin. *Journal of Psychology & Theology*, 29(3), 201-211.
- Schertzer, C., & Schertzer, S. (2004). Student satisfaction and retention: A conceptual model. *Journal of Marketing For Higher Education*, 14(1), 79-91.  
doi:10.1300/J050v14n01\_05
- Schmitt, M., & Duggan, M. H. (2011). Exploring the impact of classified staff interactions on student retention: A multiple case study approach. *Community College Journal of Research & Practice*, 35(3), 179-190.  
doi:10.1080/10668926.2011.525191
- Sendjaya, S., Sarros, J. C., & Santora, J. C. (2008). Defining and measuring servant leadership behaviour in Organizations. *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(2), 402-424. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00761
- Sergiovanni, T. J., Burlingame, M., Coombs, F. S., & Thurston, P. W. (1987). *Educational governance and administration* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Shepard, J. (2005, September 23). Males are most likely to be critical. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*. Retrieved from <https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/males-are-most-likely-to-be-critical/198559.article>



- Southern Regional Education Board. (2014). *Student first year persistence rates, graduation rates and progression rates, by college 2000 to 2011 cohorts*. Retrieved from <http://info.sreb.org/DataLibrary/tables/StudentProgression13.xlsx>
- Spears, L. C. (1995). *Reflections on leadership: How Robert K. Greenleaf's theory of servant-leadership influenced today's top management thinkers*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Spears, L. C. (2005). The understanding and practice of servant-leadership. Paper presented at Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA. Retrieved from [https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl\\_proceedings/2005/spears\\_practice.pdf](https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2005/spears_practice.pdf)
- Surridge, P. (2009). The National Student Survey three years on: What have we learned? Higher Education Academy. Retrieved from [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/nss/NSS\\_three\\_years\\_on\\_surridge\\_02.06.09.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/nss/NSS_three_years_on_surridge_02.06.09.pdf)
- Szekeres, J. (2004). The invisible workers. *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management*, 26(1), 7-22. doi:10.1080/1360080042000182500
- Tinto, V. (1987). *Leaving College: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Tinto, V. (1995). Educational communities and student success in the first year of university. Paper presented at the Conference on the Transition from Secondary School to University, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.
- Tinto, V. (2008). Taking student success seriously: Rethinking the first year of college. Retrieved from <http://fdc.fullerton.edu/events/archives/2005/05-01/acadforum/Taking%20Success%20Seriously.pdf>
- Trompenaars, F. F., & Voerman, E. E. (2009). Power to the people [personnel management]. *Engineering & Technology (17509637)*, 4(6), 80-81. doi:10.1049/et.2009.0618
- Umbach, P. D., & Porter, S. R. (April 2002). How do academic departments impact student satisfaction? Understanding the contextual effects of departments. *Research in Higher Education*, 43(2), 209-234.
- Tucker, L. R., & Lewis, C. (1973). A reliability coefficient for maximum likelihood factor analysis. *Psychometrika*, 38, 1-10.
- Van Dierendonck, D. (2011). Servant leadership: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1228-1261. Doi: 10.1177/0149206310380462
- Van Dierendonck, D., & Nuijten, I. (2011). The servant leadership survey: Development and validation of a multidimensional measure. *Journal of Business & Psychology*, 26(3), 249-267. doi:10.1007/s10869-010-9194-1
- Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education. (2012). Knocking at the college door: Projections of high school graduates, Mississippi. Retrieved from <http://www.wiche.edu/info/knocking-8th/profiles/ms.pdf>

- Wheeler, D. (2012). *Servant leadership for higher education: Principles and practices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Winston, B. E. (2002). Be a leader for God's sake. Retrieved from <http://www.bealeaderforgodssake.org/docs/BeaLeaderForGodsSake05-22-2004.pdf>
- Wong, P. T., & Davey, D. (2007). Best practices in servant leadership. Paper presented at the Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA.
- Wong, P. T., & Page, D. (2003). Servant leadership: An opponent-process model and the revised servant leadership profile. Paper presented at the Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Regent University, Virginia Beach, VA.