

A CASE STUDY: THE SERVANT CALLED TO LEAD AS HEAD OF SCHOOL
OF A PK–12 PRIVATE FAITH-BASED SCHOOL IN NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA

by

Renee' Pleasant

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University

2021

A CASE STUDY: THE SERVANT CALLED TO LEAD AS HEAD OF SCHOOL
OF A PK–12 PRIVATE FAITH-BASED SCHOOL IN NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA

by Renee' Pleasant

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2021

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Justin Necessary, PhD, Committee Chair

Dr. James Arnold Fyock, EdD, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this single, holistic, instrumental case study was to understand the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida, influencing employee job satisfaction. For this study, servant leaders were defined as those who serve with a focus on the followers, whereby followers are the primary concern and the organizational matters are peripheral. Servant leadership theory guided this study and began with the writings of Greenleaf, who desired leaders to serve their followers first and then lead. The central research question guiding this study asked, What is the qualitative influence of servant leadership on stakeholders? The study took place at Chapel Academy (pseudonym). In this PK–12 private, faith-based school, a criterion-based sampling was selected from Chapel Academy stakeholders for both interviews and a focus group. Data collection included interviews, a focus group, and documentation analysis. All data were member-checked, analyzed, and coded for themes. Research revealed five key central themes of 1) Sensitive Servant, 2) Future-Focused, 3) Followers First, 4) Thorough Thinker, and 5) Christ-Centered. Results align with current research affirming servant leadership's influence on school climate.

Keywords: servant leadership, leader–follower relationship, employee satisfaction, empowered employees, teacher turnover, school climate, stakeholders

Copyright Page

© 2021 Renee' Pleasant

All rights reserved.

Dedication

Recognizing that all talents and gifts come from God, I give Him all the glory for leading and delivering me through the doctoral process. He has abundantly blessed the journey. He is repeatedly proving that His compassion and mercies are bestowed new every day (Lamentations 3:22-23). May this research glorify and praise Him.

This dissertation holds both personal and professional dedication. The personal dedication goes to the love of my life, my devoted husband, Paul. I appreciate you being by my side through this entire expedition – in the valleys, around the bends, and on the mountaintops. Thanks for helping to chase, frame, and obtain this ‘one-day’ dream. I am proud of all that you do. However, what I am most thankful for is the help in restoring my relationship with Christ. As a man of God who faithfully leads our family, protects, and provides for our household, this is the greatest act of love. *I love you to infinity and beyond.*

The professional dedication is for those called to serve who then find that God has placed them in a location to lead in the process. During your journey, meditate on Mark 9:35 (New International Version): “Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘Anyone who wants to be first, must be the very last, and the servant of all.’” It is for you that God called me to lead by writing this dissertation.

In Loving Memory of Diane Crites

(1949-2018)

She was more than ‘just a teacher’

Acknowledgments

In today's world where educators are sometimes degraded rather than regarded, I applaud every professor at Liberty during this course of study. More was learned from each of you than what the course syllabus promised, and more than any transcript can measure.

Proverbs 27:17 states, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." I was blessed to be sharpened by two committee members during this process: Dr. Justin Necessary, Committee Chair, and Dr. James Fyock, Committee Member. Their knowledge, advice, patience, and support during this development were encouraging, enriching, and enlightening. Neither gave the appearance of being weary of answering my never-ending questions. They balanced words of affirmation with words of accountability in godly love. In seasons of personal challenge and delays with the doctoral process, both reminded me to keep my eyes on God first, family next, and the dissertation last. It has been an honor to pray over these men daily over the years as we locked arms together. I am better for having walked alongside them.

Not a step of this trek could have occurred without the accountability, support, and covering of prayers from my church family. Special recognition goes to Lead Pastor Dr. David Tarkington and Pastor Dave Paxton for their mentoring in my professional and spiritual life and being a living example of servant leadership. Overall, a heartfelt thank you is sent to the First Family of Orange Park, Florida; it was their faithful love and prayers that sustained me.

A shout-out of gratitude goes to "My 3 and Me," a group of godly women who have been present in all seasons of life, offering inspiration, challenging me towards spiritual growth, and aiding in healing in both my career and daily life. Each day, I strive to be like each of them.

Appreciativeness goes to having my D-Group walking alongside during these last steps, which in some ways were the hardest. God paired two spiritual exhorters who encouraged me at

every turn. These girls exude 1 Thessalonian 5:11, “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.” Thank you, my Spiritual Sisters.

The family of a doctoral student deserves special thanks for their encouragement, support, and understanding. Mamacita and Daddy-O, it was not always easy to remember that the demands were for a temporary season. I offer much appreciation for your patience during the process as I brought research articles to read during family visits or declined travel trips to write papers. Thanks to my sister, Chérie, for always being a cheerleader in public and in private. Recognition goes to Macey for the honor of sharing semesterly college chats over lunch at Cracker Barrel. These have been some of our best memories to date. Family members of doctoral candidates are the real Rock Stars!

The timing of the dissertation writing and other life factors combined to create consuming stress in my life. Believing in Jeremiah 29:12, “Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you,” I prayed for a solution. God answered through my husband’s boss, Mr. Shane Boatright, in the form of moral support and financial blessing. Over the years and in this season, I have learned that Mr. Boatright is more than an astute businessman with a brilliant mind. He is a servant leader who cares deeply for his followers and their family, as evident as he strives to meet their individual and collective needs. He has the gift of making everyone feel special while working towards the collective goal (building community). Sir, our family will always remember the generous impact and influence made on our life. He is a noble leader to whom we are grateful for his support.

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	3
Copyright Page.....	4
Dedication.....	5
Acknowledgments.....	6
List of Tables	14
List of Figures.....	15
List of Abbreviations	16
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	17
Overview.....	17
Background.....	19
Historical Background	19
Social Context.....	20
Theoretical Context.....	22
Situation to Self.....	28
Problem Statement	30
Purpose Statement.....	31
Significance of the Study	31
Research Questions.....	33
Central Question	33
Sub-questions	34
Definitions.....	35
Summary.....	36

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	38
Overview	38
Theoretical Framework	39
Servant Leadership Theory	40
Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership	47
Examples of Servant Leadership	55
Related Literature	60
Biblical Foundation of Servant Leadership	61
Servant Leadership Influences School Climate	71
Servant Leadership Empowers Employees	71
Servant Leadership and Employee Job Satisfaction	72
Servant Leadership and Teacher Turnover	73
Servant Leadership Shortcomings and the Future of Servant Leadership	74
Summary	77
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	81
Overview	81
Design	81
Research Questions	83
Central Question	83
Sub-questions	83
Setting	83
Participants	85
Faculty and Staff	86

	10
Guardians	88
Procedures	88
The Researcher's Role.....	90
Data Collection	92
Data Collection Procedures.....	92
One-to-One Interviews.....	95
Focus Group.....	99
Documentation Analysis.....	103
Data Analysis	107
Trustworthiness.....	109
Credibility	110
Dependability and Confirmability	110
Transferability.....	111
Ethical Considerations	111
Approval	111
Confidentiality	112
Consent	112
Influence	113
Security	113
Sensitivity	114
Summary	114
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	116
Overview.....	116

Participants.....	119
Adam.....	120
Anna.....	120
Bethany.....	121
Crista.....	122
Isabella.....	124
Joanna.....	125
Katelyn.....	125
Kelly.....	126
Levi.....	127
Chapel Academy.....	127
Document Analysis.....	129
Results.....	132
Thematic Development.....	133
Themes.....	137
Theme 1: Sensitive Servant.....	137
Theme 2: Future-Focused.....	145
Theme 3: Followers First.....	153
Theme 4: Thorough Thinker.....	161
Theme 5: Christ-Centered.....	166
Research Questions.....	171
Central Research Question.....	171
Sub-question 1.....	172

Sub-question 2	173
Summary	174
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.....	176
Overview.....	176
Summary of Findings.....	177
Central Research Question.....	177
Sub-question 1	182
Sub-question 2	182
Discussion.....	183
Empirical.....	184
Theoretical	186
Servant Leadership Theory	187
Spears' 10 Characteristics of Servant Leadership	188
Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership	188
Implications.....	189
Theoretical Implications	193
Empirical Implications.....	193
Practical Implications.....	195
Delimitations and Limitations.....	197
Delimitations.....	198
Limitations	198
Recommendations for Future Research	200
Summary	202

REFERENCES	205
APPENDIX A: Permission to Conduct Study on Site.....	225
APPENDIX B: IRB Approval Letter.....	227
APPENDIX C: Participant Recruitment Letters.....	228
APPENDIX D: Consent Forms	232
APPENDIX E: Scheduling Emails	240
APPENDIX F: One-to-One Interview Open-Ended Questions.....	246
APPENDIX G: Focus Group Norms and Open-Ended Questions	247
APPENDIX H: Documentation Researcher Notes	248
APPENDIX I: Master List of Documentation Analyzed.....	250
APPENDIX J: IRB Modification Approval Letter	254
APPENDIX K: Descriptive Codes and Frequency.....	255

List of Tables

Table 1. Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership	49
Table 2. Chapel Academy Faculty and Staff	87
Table 3. Participant Demographics.....	119

List of Figures

Figure 1. Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership.....	48
Figure 2. Chapel Academy’s Leadership Structure	84
Figure 3. Codes and Frequency	135
Figure 4. Central Themes with Matching Coding Data.....	136
Figure 5. Central Themes Linked to Spears’ Servant Leadership Characteristics	137
Figure 6. Themes within This Study Compared to the Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership.....	189

List of Abbreviations

English Standard Version (ESV)

Head of School (HoS)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

New International Version (NIV)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Other than retirement, teachers leave the profession or schools for diverse reasons. Nationally, as many as 16% of American public school teachers move schools or leave the occupation permanently each year (Castro, Quinn, Fuller, & Barnes, 2018). The attrition rate was higher, 20%, in private and Christian schools (Jones & Watson, 2017; Torres, 2016). Retirement accounted for only one-third of the attrition (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019). At the current rate of exodus, an estimated 316,000 teachers per year will be needed annually by 2025 (Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Presently, an estimated six out of 10 newly hired teachers replace teachers who leave the profession before retirement (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). One reason contributing to the teacher turnover rate is the work environment, a climate notably influenced by its leader (Fuller, Waite, & Torres Iribarra, 2016; Ladd, 2011).

Teacher turnover rates create a ripple effect. A teacher's repositioning does not remain contained within the teacher's job classification; it spreads (Hanselman, Grigg, Bruch, & Gamoran, 2016). As faculty and staff transfer into new schools, a resetting of relationships threatens the existing relationships and norms in place while posing a risk for disrupting future development (Hanselman et al., 2016). Therefore, preserving the current instructional culture is imperative. Leaders create a community that influences employees' perceptions and behaviors (Panaccio, Henderson, Liden, Wayne, & Cao, 2015). Positive school climates reflects a trusting relationship between teachers and leadership (Canli & Demirtas, 2018). School administrators are influential; leadership style positively influences school climate (Canli & Demirtas, 2018;

Castro Silva, Amante, & Morgado, 2017; Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018). Finding satisfaction in the job setting leads to teacher retention (Tehseen & Hadi, 2015).

With more than 30 different named leadership styles, matching the correct leadership style to maximize employee satisfaction and retention is critical (Rubin, 2013). Multiple studies have found that servant leadership increases employee satisfaction and employee retention (Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Le Ng, Choi, & Soehod, 2016; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Servant leadership has been traced back to four decades of consistent usage in contemporary organizations as a recognized leadership style (Brown & Bryant, 2015). Despite the increase of servant leadership implementation, there is an empirical misrepresentation with quantitative research methodology outnumbering the qualitative studies (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck & Liden, 2019; Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). Quantitative studies provide a numerical form of data. Qualitative research allows for personal reporting of results as the lived experiences in a narrative form. It was vital to address the deficit of qualitative research within the research literature on servant leadership. Therefore, the goal of this single, holistic, instrumental case study was to fill the research gap by adding another qualitative study and increasing the understanding of servant leadership characteristics and the influence on employee satisfaction.

Chapter One consists of a background of servant leadership theory tracing deep biblical roots as an example of influential servant leaders leading up to Greenleaf's foundational works and ultimately extending to Spears' work. Next, the study's motivation, combined with researcher biases, is presented in the section entitled Situation to Self. The chapter continues with the problem and purpose statements, the study's significance, and research questions. Chapter One concludes with the definition of key terms and a concise chapter summary.

Background

Multiple factors contributed to teacher turnover rates. A topical summary of the literature follows a historical view highlighting teachers leaving the profession. School migration has a ripple effect which includes teacher transfers (minor change), and teacher turnover (major change) to include leaving behind-unresolved issues at their existing site. Furthermore, the research problem is stated in the context of the social impact on the educational community. Lastly, there is a discussion of how servant leadership theory is pivotal to solving this qualitative research problem.

Historical Background

Disagreements and conflicts have occurred between humans since Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). When a dispute arises, there are two choices: dealing with the issue or avoiding it. For years, teachers who find dissatisfaction in their work environment or their administrators may leave the profession rather than work towards a successful resolution (Conroy, 2018). Teachers leaving the field for reasons of salary or benefits may return to the job at a 97% rate, while only 64% of teachers that leave due to personal reasons, such as maternity leave, may return to teaching (Conroy, 2018). In addition, 33% of teachers who leave because of accountability demands may also return to education (Conroy, 2018). Nevertheless, only 14% of dissatisfied educators are likely to express an interest in returning to teaching (Conroy, 2018). As a result, teachers want to leave the profession or move to another school to create a better working environment or a new administrator (Fuller et al., 2016; Ladd, 2011). Dissatisfied teachers, 16% of public-school teachers and 20% of private and Christian school teachers are relocating or leaving the profession permanently each year (Castro et al., 2018; Jones & Watson, 2017; Torres, 2016). High-stakes testing and accountability have increased stress for teachers;

some may opt to transfer schools due to the testing pressure (Ryan et al., 2017). Another causative reason is that teachers feel powerless, contributing to rising teacher burnout (Rumschlag, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Charter school teachers carry a heavier workload, one-fifth of a standard deviation more substantial than public school teachers (Torres, 2016). Another reason for leaving the field is low evaluation scores. Teachers are three times more likely to transfer from one school to another upon receiving a low evaluation (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). A lack of connectedness and support are the leading factors adding to teacher turnover rates; servant leaders provide followers a sense of community, a team working together, and support (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Hodges, 2018; Jones & Watson, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Torres, 2016). The existing teacher shortage crisis is not because of a lack of supply; it results from an excessive turnover rate (Boe, Cook, & Sutherland, 2008). Therefore, the United States teacher shortage is an avoidable conflict with an offered solution being the implementation of servant leadership (Al-Mahdy, Al-Harhi, & Salah El-Din, 2016; Chang, Chiu, & Liu, 2017; Dapula & Castano, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Hung, Tsai & Wu, 2016; van Dierendonck, 2011).

Social Context

Teachers participating in school migration, moving from one educational site to another, add financial distress (Boe et al., 2008). Annual teacher migration is estimated to cost \$1,155,000 (Learning Policy Institute, 2017). However, finances are not the only cost accrued. There is also a bearing on social capital, as the educational setting's impact is also meaningful. To begin the social capital calculation, Hanselman et al. (2016) warned of colleague communities' changes with the influx of teachers who translocate. Staffing shift results in instability within the school setting:

It threatens the density of social connections in the school, since the recruit may know different (and likely fewer) colleagues than their predecessor. Second, it threatens the strength of specific relationships since the new recruit must initiate new relationships with her colleagues. (Hanselman et al., 2016, p. 8)

Depending on the existing school culture and the latest teacher(s) addition, the replacement(s) can be better or not. However, a change to the school's culture occurs. Changes in teachers impact students. As teachers transition into new roles in their new settings, their learning curve becomes steep, sometimes at the cost of children's learning curve. Teacher mobility impacts instruction (Hanushek, Rivkin, & Schiman, 2016). The same study indicates that teacher transfers may come with lower teaching quality, teacher turnover may lead to grade level reshuffling, and peer grouping affects productivity (Hanushek et al., 2016). In a research study conducted in New York City examining teacher mobility, an average of 41.5% of teachers switched in some form each year – whether in the same school, changing grades or subjects, swapping to a new school in the district, or leaving the profession (Atteberry, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2017). In the same study, researchers found that switching teacher assignments negatively impacted student achievement and most likely contributed to their unfamiliarity with the curriculum and newness to the school and/or setting in the grade or department (Atteberry et al., 2017). As teachers leave one school and transfer to another, there is a cost in addition to wages, benefits, recruitment, and training. These non-financial fees impact the scholarly society, or school culture, of the new setting. More than mere discretionary expenses, the social capital of rebuilding school culture also includes student achievement and quality instruction. Instead, when the servant leadership model was applied, stronger relationships between leaders and

followers were created, and there was a reduction in teacher mobility (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019).

Current research reveals a gap between qualitative servant leadership studies and the abundance of quantitative studies. Surveys were the most common data collection method in studies analyzed from 2000 to 2016, while factor analysis and correlation were conventional for data analysis – all of which indicate quantitative design (Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). Ghamrawi and Al-Jammal's (2014) quantitative research included a recommendation for future qualitative methodologies. While these studies reflect the governing quantitative studies producing numerical results, they do not share the participants' lived experiences, further emphasizing and increasing the literature research gap. Construct clarity is needed to close the gap in qualitative servant leadership research (Brown & Bryant, 2015). A “construct confusion” and “conceptual disunity” (Brown & Bryant, 2015, p. 11) have risen above the construct clarity of servant leadership in current research. Adding such will not only clarify the conceptual foundation but will offer a semantic reference for researchers alike. More research on servant leadership at multiple levels of analysis and multilevel models of servant leadership is needed (Brown & Bryant, 2015). Therefore, the goal of this study was to help to fill the existing qualitative gap by recording the participants' voices to discover how a servant leader's characteristics influence employee satisfaction, which impacts attrition (Patton, 2015).

Theoretical Context

Servant leadership theory supports this issue of teacher migration due to unresolved problems between leader and follower. The reintroduced servant leadership model gained popularity in the business world in the 1970s due to Greenleaf's writings (Greenleaf, 2008). Spears, a close work colleague of Greenleaf, reviewed, organized, and published the 10

characteristics recognized today as servant leadership characteristics (Spears Center, 2019). Spears' classification of the 10 characteristics remains well-respected by scholars and researchers and is referenced by many during empirical inquiries (Focht & Ponton, 2015).

The tenets of Servant leadership are recognized in the secular world and well known for their biblical roots, which predate Christ (Hannay, 2009). One can find servitude mentioned more frequently in the Bible than leading ("Leader," 2019; "Servant," 2019). Chapter Two presents a biblical model for leadership and specific attributes for one called to lead. Biblical servant leaders discussed in Chapter Two include Moses, David, Nehemiah, and Jesus himself.

Robert "Bob" K. Greenleaf, founder of servant leadership. The idea of servant leadership has existed for ages; however, the name's inspiration came after Greenleaf read Herman Hesse's *Journey to the East* (Hannay, 2009; Greenleaf, 2008). The main character, Leo, appeared as a servant who was jovial and lifted the spirits of everyone during a trip. Leo's character reveals his internal servitude spirit (Greenleaf & Keith, 2017). Leo disappeared, and the group struggled without Leo's guidance, wandering for years. Eventually, the traveling group reunited with Leo to discover he was not a servant; instead, his leadership position became revealed. Leo was a noble leader of the Order. While a leader's job may be appointed or taken away, a servant's heart remains (Greenleaf & Keith, 2017). Many have speculated that Hesse's writings, although fictional, held a thread of autobiographical accuracy (Greenleaf, 2008). Greenleaf chose to believe that Hesse was reminiscing over life lessons and took from the story that "great leaders (were) seen as servants first" (Greenleaf, 2008, p. 9).

During the post-war era, the United States was facing a leadership crisis (Greenleaf, 2008). Greenleaf felt that current leadership models were absorbed in dissecting the wrong things (profits at all costs) and sought instant perfection (Greenleaf, 2008). Instead, Greenleaf longed

for a leadership model that stood up for injustice and hypocrisy (Greenleaf, 2008). According to Greenleaf, the quintessential leader was one who, at the core of his/her nature, was a servant first and later emerged as the leader (Greenleaf, 2008). Pulling from his practical leadership experience and theory, Greenleaf combined the two to create a principle regarding effective methods for developing and influencing followers (Hannay, 2009). The highest priority of a servant leader is to take care of his/her followers' needs (Greenleaf, 2008). The core of servant leadership focuses on serving people first (Coetzer, Bussin, & Geldenhuys, 2017). Servant leaders make a deliberate choice to serve others, but such a decision does not equate with low self-esteem or low self-concept (Hannay, 2009). As Christ imitators, Christians are also called to submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21).

A servant leader's role is to build a better tomorrow, one follower at a time (Parris & Peachey, 2013). To do so, servant leaders inspire their followers to be servant leaders (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Through the leader's guidance, followers will ignite a spark of ownership in the organization and their community (Khatri & Dutta, 2018). A servant leader can self-check, or measure their effectiveness with a simple test: Do those served grow as persons and the effect on the least privileged in society? (Greenleaf, 2008). Servant leaders are aware that leadership is not about the results (profits) over relationships; instead, it is results and relationships (Blanchard & Miller, 2007).

There are 10 characteristics attached to Greenleaf's servant leadership theory (Spears, 2010). Below are those characteristics and a brief description of each.

- Listening: Servant leaders respond to problems by listening first. Most importantly, they listen without prejudging (Lee & Jackson, 2015). Leaders are not uncomfortable with silence; they consider if their speech will improve silence before speaking

(Greenleaf, 2008).

- Empathy: Without rejection, only acceptance, servant leaders strive to understand followers (Greenleaf, 2008). People have unique gifts, and servant leaders identify the need to be recognized (Lee & Jackson, 2015).
- Healing: Servant leaders attempt to make themselves and others whole through transformation (Greenleaf, 2008). Servant leaders need to be sensitive to any emotional turmoil and put in the effort to restore balance (Jit, Sharma, & Kawatra, 2017).
- Awareness: A heightened sensory experience that alerts a leader to risks posed to the organization frames their sense of awareness and strengthens the servant leader (Greenleaf, 2008). When viewing any situation, servant leaders consider the perspective of ethics, values, and power (Lee & Jackson, 2015).
- Persuasion: Persuasion is the art of gentle consensus-building (Greenleaf, 2008). Servant leaders avoid overt or covert coercion compliance and instead rely on building consensus (Lee & Jackson, 2015).
- Conceptualization: Servant leaders are not content with short-term goals or traditional thinking and will stretch boundaries to make their dreamed visions a reality (Lee & Jackson, 2015). The servant leader melds the organization's goals with the followers' interests into the best fit (Dean, 2016). When servant leaders dare to "dream great dreams" (Greenleaf, 2008, p. 18) and articulate those visions into a reality, they exhibit conceptualization.
- Foresight: Foresight is the ability to understand from past lessons while living in the present and simultaneously looking ahead to make the best decisions for the

- organization (Greenleaf, 2008). A servant leader is also preoccupied with the organization's future, with thoughts being future-driven (Buchen, 1998).
- **Stewardship:** Servant leaders are called to care and act to better their followers (Blanchard, Broadwell, & Maxwell, 2018). As they care for their followers, it has a ripple effect in society (Greenleaf, 2008). According to Greenleaf, stewardship's primary responsibility falls upon its CEO and trustees (Greenleaf, 2008).
 - **Commitment to the growth of people:** Servant leaders recognize that followers have a value far more significant than merely that of an employee (Lee & Jackson, 2015). Therefore, they are devoted to helping their followers grow professionally, personally, and spiritually (Greenleaf, 2008).
 - **Building community:** The creation of community occurs inside and outside the organization (Lee & Jackson, 2015). Servant leaders take care of their followers (the institution) so that when tested, they will take care of the least privileged in society (Greenleaf, 2008).

Seven pillars of servant leadership. Although Greenleaf did not mention the seven pillars of servant leadership, they offer a method of accountability for servant leaders by making the servant leadership characteristics tangible. Sipe and Frick expanded Spears' work on the 10 characteristics of a servant leader, creating the seven pillars of servant leadership (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Building upon an organization's existing culture, the 10 servant leadership characteristics funnel into seven pillars (Sipe & Frick, 2015). The seven pillars, containing three core competencies within each pillar, include (a) character, (b) putting people first, (c) skilled communicator, (d) compassionate collaborator, (e) foresight, (f) systems thinker, and (g) moral authority (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Biblical base of servant leadership. Servant leadership is distinct from other leadership models because it does not rely on authoritative mannerisms. A servant leader leads with persuasion, not coercion, which leans towards a biblical foundation (Greenleaf, 2008). An evangelical servant leader willingly “serves” and “follows” God following John 12:26, submitting to God first to serve those they lead. Servant leaders demonstrate their humility through servitude (Blanchard & Hodges, 2007). Within the Bible, countless examples document choices to serve others (Matthew 20:28). One such example includes Jesus’ washing of the disciples' feet (John 13:1-17). At that time, it was habitual in the Jewish culture to wash one's feet before the meal due to sitting at a low-level table close to one another. This act of hygiene, washing another’s feet, was most often performed by a servant. The disciples were shocked when Christ rose and began washing their feet. Therefore, such an act bore great significance, speaking volumes of Christ's humility. Upon completion, Christ informed his disciples that they were to go forth and “wash one another’s feet”(John 13:14 New International Version) – meaning to serve others. Christ affirmed serving others in John 13:15 (English Standard Version): "I have set you an example that you should do *as* I have done for you" (emphasis added). The verse states as done. Christ, a servant leader, modeled servitude; He expects believers to be servant leaders in turn. Christ was merely one example of a servant leader in the Bible, and many believers try to imitate him. Falling short of measuring His achievements on this side of heaven, there are plenty of examples of flawed individuals who exemplified servant leadership in the Bible. There are Moses, David, and Nehemiah, to name a few examples of biblical servant leaders who stand out as servant leadership models. With the Holy Spirit guiding leaders daily in servant leadership growth, they serve and lead others (Jensen, 2017).

Situation to Self

As a Christian, I proclaim Revelation 4:11(New International Version), “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” Intrinsicly, I know that the Creator uniquely designed me with the intent and purpose to be an educator. Life experiences taught me perseverance and brought me joy; as foretold in James 1:2, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds." My specific learning disabilities taught me compassion and patience. For as long as I can remember, I always wanted to be an educator. The most influential person in my childhood was my third-grade teacher, Mrs. Crites. She was more than a teacher; she was my mentor. She took an interest in my life outside of the classroom. She saw me as an academically struggling child who was more than the sum of the parts inside her classroom. However, my favorite childhood memories involved playing school with my stuffed animals despite my behavioral and academic struggles. To this day, I cannot resist shopping at back-to-school sales. Others knew I was to be an educator before I accepted the calling.

Education was my second career choice following a short time in law enforcement. After a detour from that career, I have now served the teaching profession for over two decades. In that time, I have served as a teacher and administrator in public, private, juvenile justice prevention, and Christian schools. Regardless of the diverse environments, I have never doubted either my role or my purpose. In each setting, I have worked alongside fellow administrators with assorted leadership styles. Each influenced me on the flight from becoming a teacher to an administrator. I took the attributes I admired the most from previous leaders and learned from the traits of the weaker leaders.

As a Christian, I am well acquainted with brokenness. Therefore, during my journey to become an administrator, I decided not to let any poor leadership incidents influence my leadership style. Instead, I have chosen to model my leadership style after Christ, which is servant leadership's epitome. As a social constructivist, I consciously choose to seek meaning and understanding of the world around me (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I do so by refraining from judgment, observing, and listening to individuals' multiple views in a situation while recognizing the contextual meaning for each person. This study will continue to expand on the existing research of servant leadership, influencing future leaders.

Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw once said, "What a man believes may be ascertained, not from his creed, but from the assumptions on which he habitually acts" (Shaw, 1903, line 84). As a researcher, I approached this study with a set of assumptions and biases. Ontological assumptions shape my view of reality. In this study, the view was through the opinions of the school stakeholders of Chapel Academy (pseudonym) as they discussed the servant leadership characteristics influencing and contributing to employee job satisfaction. The epistemological assumptions addressed come through my forming relationships in the field with and by the participants, allowing me to know the natural setting's reality. The rhetorical assumption was evident in my use of the pronoun *I*, rather than the third person, demonstrating a personal narrative. My values, or axiological assumptions, were revealed in the study as I strove to give stakeholders an equitable voice. As a qualitative researcher, I was the human instrument fully immersed in the environment studied. I collected the participants' views objectively without interjecting my interpretations (Patton, 2015).

Problem Statement

Through this case study, a close examination of servant leadership occurred via the stakeholders' shared lived experiences (teachers, staff, and guardians) to ascertain why Chapel Academy defied the annual attrition rate of 20% for Christian schools (Jones & Watson, 2017). There is a lack of empirical qualitative studies delineating how servant leadership influences employee satisfaction, ultimately impacting attrition. School leaders who are servant leaders can dramatically reduce the number of teachers leaving the profession or schools (Le Ng et al., 2016). As teachers leave a school or transfer to a new school, there is a break in faculty and staff cohesiveness. Educators are leaving the classroom due to teaching becoming more disempowering; burnout is on the rise and contributes to teachers voluntarily leaving the profession (Rumschlag, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016). Lack of support by school administrators also contributes to teacher turnover (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Hodges, 2018; Jones & Watson, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Torres, 2016). Private school teachers are laden with job dissatisfaction due to a heavier workload than public school teachers (Torres, 2016). Teachers with low observation scores (evaluations) are three times as likely to leave a school or turnover as teachers with higher observation scores (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019). These turnovers negatively impact their new schools' cohesiveness as faculty and staff reset (Hanselman et al., 2016). Buckingham and Coffman stated in their 2016 book, *First, Break All the Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers do Differently*, that “people leave managers, not companies” (p. 31). A leader’s style influences school climate, impacting employee job satisfaction (Canli & Demirtas, 2018; Castro Silva et al., 2017; Tehseen & Hadi, 2015; Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2018). Most of the existing empirical research is quantitative, leaving a qualitative gap and, therefore, a void in the experienced servant leaders’ voices. It was essential to conduct a

single, holistic, instrumental case study to understand servant leadership characteristics influencing employee job satisfaction.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this single, holistic, instrumental case study was to understand the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida, influencing employee job satisfaction. For this study, servant leaders were defined as those who serve with a focus on the followers, whereby followers were the primary concern, and the organizational matters were peripheral (Greenleaf, 2008; Patterson, 2003). Servant leadership theory guided this study and began with the writing of Greenleaf (2008), who desired leaders to serve their followers first and then lead.

Significance of the Study

This study of servant leadership characteristics influencing employee satisfaction can expand the professional knowledge of leaders. In education, an in-depth study of servant leadership characteristics influencing employee satisfaction can result in healthier principal–teacher relationships and reduced teacher turnovers. Although this study occurs in an educational setting, the principles may be applied to leaders regardless of industry or country. Interest in servant leadership has expanded outside of academia (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Examples of servant leaders and companies opting to lead through servant leadership have been found across various industries. Servant leadership is not just a management theory; it is a way of life (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

Empirical findings from this study may benefit leaders seeking to build strong, healthy relationships with their followers. Greenleaf (2008) defined a community as a group of individuals bound together by trust, respect, and ethical behavior. Ethical behavior, such as

building trusting relationships between leaders and followers, strengthens the overall employment relationship (Babyak, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Krog & Govender, 2015; Le Ng et al., 2016; Maak & Pless, 2006; Panaccio et al., 2015; Patterson, 2003). A servant leader using servant leadership traits can establish a sense of community that builds a healthy school culture (Black, 2013; Burton, Welty Peachey, & Wells, 2017; Hung et al., 2016; Price, 2012; Ryan et al., 2017; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). These combine to develop employee relationships, resulting in a healthy work climate and producing job satisfaction. Sharing this study's results will help others understand servant leadership theory and the benefits of collaborating to build a community for employee job satisfaction. Additionally, this study's results will contribute to Greenleaf's work of servant leadership characteristics impacting the leader-follower relationship, which builds a stronger community.

While leadership is a commonplace practice, servant leadership is not (Blanchard & Miller, 2007). All leaders have a vision (Blanchard & Miller, 2007). Leaders enlist support for their vision (Gemechu, 2018). Servant leaders commit to building leadership potential in their followers, empowering their employees (Melchar & Bosco, 2010). Burch, Swails, and Mills (2015) affirmed servant leaders to be the best fit for Christian university administrators due to the identified strengths of passionate commitment to purpose, strong values, and optimism. Therefore, this study empowers all leaders, especially Christian leaders, to embrace servant leadership as their adopted model to lead others. An analytical generalization of this study will allow this Christian leader's conclusions to be applied by all leaders, secular and Christian alike.

This study offers an empirical advantage, as well. Currently, quantitative research methodology relating to servant leadership dominates. From 2000 to 2016, one qualitative data analysis found 58.3% of studies quantitative, 27.1% studies theoretical, 8.3% studies qualitative,

and 6.3% studies mixed method (Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). Another meta-analysis, reviewing empirical research from 1998 to 2018, found the number of quantitative studies at 81% ($n = 156$), qualitative at 15% ($n = 28$), and mixed methods at less than one percent ($n = 8$; Eva et al., 2019). Quantitative studies currently lead in empirical research, leaving room for qualitative researchers to share participants' experiences. Therefore, to fill the gap, this study adds to existing qualitative studies allowing participants' voices heard, leading to an understanding of how servant leadership characteristics influence job satisfaction (Patton, 2015).

Lastly, this study strengthens the servant leadership base's qualitative empirical research with an additional case study (Eva et al., 2019). This study will further advance the existing theoretical framework by adding layers of clarity to the servant leadership construct, as suggested by Brown and Bryant (2015). Specifically, in this study, the narratives collected will exhibit stakeholders' shared experiences and the influential relationship between the leader and followers. This study and others' results will help the scientific community create a concise and precise definition of a servant leader and created a scope and parameters for conditions and constructs of servant leadership. Servant leadership is a model that has a biblical background that can effectively cross over into both secular and faith-based organizations.

Research Questions

Central Question

How do stakeholders describe their experiences of schools led by servant leader principals?

Since the early 1800s, principals have officially been leading public schools (Kafka, 2009). The Head of School (HoS), or principal, is the administrative link between the school and a governing body (Okendu, 2012). The term *principal* is often reserved for public school

administrators, whereas the *HoS* title is used in parochial settings. The terms are interchangeable in this study's research questions.

Another term used in this study to reflect multiple persons and roles is *guardians*. Inside this study, the term *guardians* indicates person(s) who have been appointed by the court as holding responsibilities over a minor. Whereas the label of guardians encompasses biological parents, foster parents, raised by an older sibling, and more, the parents' label is more restrictive.

A stakeholder is an internal or external individual or group committed to the school's mission, and in many educational settings, it comprises staff, students, guardians, and community members (Sustaining Reading First, 2009). Due to the complexity of the concept of servant leadership and the required conceptualization and identification of servant leadership characteristics needed for this qualitative inquiry, the stakeholders' scope has been limited to Chapel Academy teachers, staff, and guardians for the one-to-one interviews and the focus group. Transcripts from both interviews and the focus group and the documentation analysis reveal students reap the rewards of servant leadership even if they are unaware or cannot articulate for this study's rigor. A positive relationship between school principals and stakeholders is the catalyst for healthy relationships and goal accomplishment (Bartz & Karnes, 2018). Servant leaders who commit to a relational investment with their stakeholders build sustainable relationships and connect with their setting and conquer challenges (Maak & Pless, 2006). In addition to the central research question, this study posed two sub-questions to allow participants' multiple perspectives and meanings to be shared (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Sub-questions

SQ1: How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to faculty and staff?

All relationships between servant leaders and stakeholders must be grounded in trust (Maak &

Pless, 2006). The servant leader “weaves a web of inclusion” (Maak & Pless, 2006, p. 104) as he/she works alongside the workers as equals. Young faculty and staff, born between 1982 and 1999, are more likely to find the working environment and servant leadership supportive, meeting their needs and demands (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016).

SQ2: How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to guardians?

One of the servant leader's expectations is to build trustful relationships among all stakeholders (Maak & Pless, 2006). Servant leaders build relationships to combine diverse personalities working towards a shared vision (Bartz & Karnes, 2018; Maak & Pless, 2006). Millennial-aged guardians will find the servant leadership style agreeable (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016).

Definitions

1. *Altruistic calling* – A leader’s deeply rooted, intrinsic desire to make a positive difference in the lives of followers (Melchar & Bosco, 2010).
2. *Attrition* – Leaving teaching employment all together (Boe et al., 2008).
3. *Empowerment* – Occurs when leaders help release and focus the authentic power found in the followers’ knowledge, experience, and motivation. Followers are free to act and are accountable for their actions (Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph, 2001).
4. *Followers* – Those who voluntarily engage in the leadership process for achieving a shared vision with the leader and other followers (Irving, 2005).
5. *Job satisfaction* – A person’s attitude toward his or her work (Purpora & Blegen, 2015).
6. *School climate* – The school’s atmosphere as teachers and administrators experience it is known as the school climate (Black, 2013).

7. *Servant leader* – A servant leader serves with a primary focus on the followers, with the organizational concerns being peripheral (Patterson, 2003).
8. *School migration* – Teachers who migrate from one public school to a different school during the school year (Boe et al., 2008).
9. *Stakeholders* – An internal or external individual or group committed to the school’s mission and success through collaboration (Sustaining Reading First, 2009).
10. *Teacher transfer* – Continued teaching employment from one school year to the next in a different area; teachers are sometimes called *switchers* or *remainers* because they remain in the field (Boe et al., 2008).
11. *Teacher turnover* – Major changes in a teacher’s assignment from one school year to the next, including leaving employment, moving to a different school, and transferring teaching assignments such as a special education teacher switching to a general education assignment (Boe et al., 2008).
12. *Team* – Partnership of two or more people sharing a common objective or goal in which coordinated activity among team members is required to achieve the purpose (Irving, 2005).

Summary

Conflict has been a part of the human experience since the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). It is now rising to unsurmountable levels, causing teachers to leave the profession or change schools at alarming rates (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2019; Castro et al., 2018; Jones & Watson, 2017; Sutcher et al., 2016; Torres, 2016). Resolving unsatisfactory working conditions or principal–teacher relationships can occur without teacher mobility, racking up financial and social capital (Fuller et al., 2016; Ladd, 2011).

Teachers are leaving the profession or schools at an alarming rate; the educator exodus can be stopped with servant leaders' placement in school administrations (Le Ng et al., 2016). The purpose of this single, holistic, instrumental case study was to understand the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida, influencing employee job satisfaction. Among the existing empirical research on servant leadership, there is a substantial gap between qualitative and quantitative studies (Eva et al., 2019; Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). In this study, the goal was to close the qualitative gap while supporting the theoretical framework established by Greenleaf started in 1970 that continues to date. This inquiry provides a qualitative perspective that captures the participants' experiences of how a servant leader's characteristics influence employee satisfaction in a PK–12 faith-based school. In so doing, this research may help other leaders to understand how to serve their followers first and then lead an organization (Greenleaf, 2008).

Servant leaders serve employees (Greenleaf, 2008; Rubin, 2013). This study focused on interacting with Chapel Academy's stakeholders to understand the servant leadership characteristics used by the HoS. All data collection occurred through interviews, a focus group, and documentation analysis. Participants in this study were chosen through the criterion-based selection for one-on-one interviews, a six-member focus group consisting of a combination of faculty/staff, and guardians. While 12 was the targeted participants for each group, approximately 15 members were selected to allow for attrition: 14 participants for interviews and 16 total for focus groups (eight faculty/staff and eight guardians). Data were analyzed, and findings reported under Greenleaf's theoretical framework, filling the qualitative empirical research gap.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

The following literature review provides an understanding of the theory of servant leadership. Servant leadership is a theoretical concept cited by Greenleaf with the potential of annihilating toxic managerial and leadership practices (Russell, Maxfield, & Russell, 2017). It begins with a desire to serve, followed by an intent to lead and develop others (Coetzer et al., 2017; Greenleaf, 2008). Servant leaders focus on their followers (Greenleaf, 2008; Lane, 2016). Leadership is a relationship built upon influence (Wright, 2009). Studying and learning Greenleaf's essays, Spears organized and republished Greenleaf's 10 servant leadership characteristics (Spears Center, 2019). Servant leadership characteristics remain well respected and highly regarded (Focht & Ponton, 2015). Sipe and Frick (2015) reviewed and organized Greenleaf's writings into seven pillars of servant leadership, which adds to an organization's foundation (culture) to grow a stronger community that, in turn, serves others (Greenleaf, 2008; Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Leadership concepts repeatedly occur in the Bible (Ayers, 2006; Ben-Hur & Jonsen, 2012; Lett, 2014; Russell et al., 2017; Thompson, 2015; Wright, 2009). While Greenleaf is credited with this managerial theory, servant leadership has a biblical foundation (Bucci & Lewis, 2016; Choi, 2014; Irving, 2011; Khan, Khan, & Chaudhry, 2015; Russell, 2003; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2008; Thompson, 2015). Notwithstanding its religious roots, many secular leaders have successfully used the leadership model due to its ability to empower employees (Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Krog & Govender, 2015). Increased job satisfaction has been reported by employees when working with servant leaders (Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2017; Coetzer et al., 2017; Dapula & Castano, 2017; Dutta & Khatri,

2017; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Hung et al., 2016; van Dierendonck, 2011). Servant leadership also has a positive impact on school climate (Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Chang et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2016; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Price, 2012; Ryan et al., 2017; Russell, 2003; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Servant leadership empowers employees, offers job satisfaction, and impacts school climate; teacher turnover is reduced in the presence of servant leaders (Coetzer et al., 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Le Ng et al., 2016; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). However, several researchers have noted the more empirical research is needed to test the theory (Brown & Bryant, 2015; Duby, 2009; Greenleaf, 2008; Lett, 2014; Lynch & Friedman, 2013; Roach, 2016; Russell, 2003; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015, Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Models of traditional leadership hold the leader at the top in an authoritative role, being served by followers (Dambe & Moorad, 2008). Traditional leadership operates within the chain of command parameters and motivates with rewards and punishment (Tischler, Giambatista, McKeage, & McCormick, 2016). The traditional leadership models of a leader before employees are structured to place organizational success ahead of employee satisfaction (Tischler et al., 2016). Servant leadership theory essentially inverts this model, pairing two words that are usually at odds: *servant* and *leadership* together. These words, *servant* and *leader*, were often thought to be antonyms (Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2014). Gigliotti and Dwyer (2016) stated that service and leadership should be viewed as two interdependent areas of inquiry. With intentionality, Greenleaf brought the two terms together and created meaning (Dutta & Khatri, 2017). In this inverted methodology, leaders position themselves to meet their followers' needs – to serve (Lett, 2014). Organizations need leaders who appreciate and place importance on

employees' needs (Lee & Jackson, 2015). Servant leadership was a people-centered leadership theory rather than organization-centered (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Servant leaders do not seek acknowledgment merely to offer support and bring out the best in their followers (Black, 2013; Brown & Bryant, 2015; Duby, 2009; Greenleaf, 2008; Lett, 2014; Lynch & Friedman, 2013; Roach, 2016; Russell, 2003; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015; Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). Ultimately, leaders strive to build a legacy of future servants (Greenleaf, 2008; Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Servant Leadership Theory

Reflecting on Greenleaf's work, April, MacDonald, and Vriesendorp (2000) pulled apart two critical dimensions associated with servitude: (a) the desire to serve others and (b) the desire to serve something beyond ourselves (April et al., 2000; Greenleaf, 2008). One's job, or vocation—Latin meaning of “to call”—fulfills our unique purpose (April et al., 2000). The calling to be a servant leader begins as an internal desire to serve that cannot be ignored, allowing the answering without hesitation (Gemechu, 2018; Greenleaf, 2008; Heyler & Martin, 2017; Patterson, 2003). Greenleaf defines a servant leader as one who makes a conscious choice to serve first then lead, much like the character Leo in the compelling story *Journey to the East* by Herman Hesse (Greenleaf, 2008). Servant leaders were drawn to the position with a desire to serve others (Ertel, 2017; Hannay, 2009). This spirit of serving is not the traditional doing for others so much as it is about encouraging followers to become autonomous (Black, 2013).

The servant-leader is a servant first, beginning with a natural insight to serve, which brings one to lead (Greenleaf, 2008). The emphasis of servant leadership theory is for leaders to serve followers, which provides an opportunity to nurture followers to their fullest potential (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Servant leaders work and serve alongside workers, hearing,

seeing, knowing, and meeting their employees' daily needs, and thus, proving themselves trustworthy leaders (Greenleaf, 2008; Patterson, 2003). A relationship built on trust and ethical power strengthens the bond between a servant leader and follower (Dutta & Khatri, 2017). People want to be served and know they are cared about, which is the foundation of servant leadership (Ertel, 2017).

Servant leaders know that their greatest assets are their followers (Lett, 2014). Servant leaders do not solely focus on outcomes; they concentrate on said followers (Dutta & Khatri, 2017). Followers' needs are the primary focus of servant leaders; leaders' actions demonstrate the meeting of followers' needs (Jensen, 2017). A servant leader is one who endlessly shows love and compassion to others and seeks opportunities for their followers to grow (Coetzer et al., 2017; Jensen, 2017). One-on-one communication between leaders and followers fosters strong relationships that allow for nurturing desires and goals (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Spiritual growth is essential in servant leaders for the wellbeing of the followers, and the leader must seek spiritual growth to be a provoking leader (Jensen, 2017).

While leaders desire to meet their followers' needs, it is not their only objective (Greenleaf, 2008). For leaders, servant leadership's goal is the transference of servitude unto followers (Greenleaf, 2008). The immediate byproduct of being served is becoming "healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants" (Greenleaf, 2008, p. 15). In the process of leaders working on healing and committing to growing their followers, they model servitude behaviors, which builds the internal (the organization) and external community. Servant leaders strive to create a community growing their followers (Russell et al., 2017). Comprehensively, a servant leader works to promote a sense of community and shared decision making (Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Servant leaders serve their followers while

instilling the aspiration of servitude unto their followers to become future servant leaders (Heyler & Martin, 2018)

Inspiration for servant leadership theory. Inspiration occurs in an instant. Greenleaf produced the theory of servant leadership from reading Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East*. In Hesse's story, Leo, the lead character, is a joyful servant who becomes lost, causing the journey to end without Leo's environmental leadership. Later, Leo is seen as more than a servant; he is a noble leader (Greenleaf, 2008). In the story, Hesse teaches through Leo that the *servant* was the real individual, not the *leader*, and proves that authentic power comes through humility (Greenleaf, 2008). Humility is the premise of Greenleaf's theory of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2008).

Altruistic calling to become a servant leader. Filling the position of leadership does not make one a servant leader (Roach, 2016). As part of the altruistic calling, the leader puts the needs of followers ahead of his/her own (Melchar & Bosco, 2010; Peterson, DeSimone, Desmond, Zahn, & Morote, 2017). By answering the internal desire to serve others, the individual transforms and aspires to lead others (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Servant leadership, an example of altruism, is a calling for a leader who makes a positive difference in others' lives (Heyler & Martin, 2018; Peterson et al., 2017). Because leadership flows out of who one is, anyone who desires can become a servant leader (Parris & Peachey, 2013; Tey, 2006). One does not need to be religious, a saint, or a deity to be a servant leader (Lee & Jackson, 2015). Being a servant leader starts with an authentic desire to serve others for the sole purpose of enriching the lives of followers (Gigliotti & Dwyer, 2016).

Characteristics of a servant leader. The servant leader characteristics are embedded in autonomy and focus on the followers' moral growth (Mareus, Patterson, Firestone & Winston,

2019). In 1992, as part of Spears' work in servant leadership, a list of leadership traits was organized (Spears Center, 2019). The following 10 servant leadership characteristics emerged in Greenleaf's (2008) original writings and remain the most respected list of servant leadership characteristics (Focht & Ponton, 2015).

Servant leadership characteristic of listening. Servant leaders listen keenly to what is and is not said by others to identify the individual's will or the group (Blanchard et al., 2018). The ABCs of listening include *act* interested, *be* encouraging, and *clarify* (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Leaders then reflect on what has been shared (Spears, 2010). The servant-leader is committed to identifying and clarifying the group's will (Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Listening is also described as a respectful action that involves asking questions to gain knowledge and understanding (Coetzer et al., 2017). Leaders are encouraged to reflect before speaking to determine if their speech will improve upon the silence (Greenleaf, 2008).

Servant leadership characteristic of empathy. Servant leaders demonstrate empathy through acceptance and understanding (Spears, 2010). Greenleaf stated that the leader accepts (never rejects) the follower; however, poor performance and effort cannot be denied (Greenleaf, 2008). Leaders assume good intentions, even if forced to refuse to accept certain behaviors or performances (Blanchard et al., 2018). Each person possesses unique and unusual gifts and should be accepted and recognized for those gifts (Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Empathy, also known as compassion in some studies, is caring for others and forgiving mistakes (Coetzer et al., 2017). Becoming better listeners has benefited servant leaders in solidifying relationships with followers (Mareus et al., 2019).

Servant leadership characteristic of healing. The word healing means "to make whole" (Greenleaf, 2008, p. 37). A servant leader is aware that life tends to wound people; leaders also

recognize the opportunities to help followers (Chan, 2016). Healing the brokenness in others is one of a servant leader's gifts, allowing the brokenness to meld into a sense of wholeness (Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Emotional hurts result in broken spirits; it is part of human nature; servant leaders can facilitate emotional healing (Blanchard et al., 2018). Servant leaders can assist in healing, which propels transformation (Blanchard et al., 2018). Creating an environment where followers are safe to voice personal and professional issues is vital for servant leaders; therefore, servant leaders are prepared to hear followers with empathy (Melchar & Bosco, 2010).

Servant leadership characteristic of awareness. A servant leader's ability to stand aside, detached from the environment, seeing him/herself in the context of the situation, demonstrates awareness (Flanike, 2006). A leader must first spend time in solitude and reflection to develop awareness skills (Chan, 2016). Servant leaders possess general and self-awareness to understand issues relating to ethics, power, and values (Spears, 2010). Awareness allows a leader to prioritize the urgent from the non-important, viewing situations in an integrated, holistic manner (Blanchard et al., 2018; Flanike, 2006).

Servant leadership characteristic of persuasion. Servant leaders need not rely on positional authority; they have persuasion skills (Blanchard et al., 2018; Spears, 2010). Servant leaders show their followers dignity and respect when utilizing persuasion rather than coercion (Black, 2013). Persuading followers is best accomplished by leaders who are patient, persistent, and confident (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Servant leaders build consensus within groups rather than relying on coercion for compliance (Blanchard et al., 2018; Heyler & Martin, 2018; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Changes will endure since subordinates willingly comply rather than submit through force/coercion (Heyler & Martin, 2018).

Servant leadership characteristic of conceptualization. Servant leaders see past the day-to-day tasks and dare to dream the great dream (Spears, 2010). They balance daily short-term goals with visionary conceptual thinking (Blanchard et al., 2018). Conceptualization is seeing beyond the tangible in favor of looking at the big picture perspective (Mareus et al., 2019). The ability to see the future vision and share with others in a manner that is clearly understood while inciting excitement is a talent (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Conceptualization, a complex skill, requires practice and discipline from many leaders (Blanchard et al., 2018; Chan, 2016; Mareus et al., 2019).

Servant leadership characteristic of foresight. Servant leaders have learned from past experiences and consequences, seeing today for what it truly is while dreaming of tomorrow's potential (Black, 2013; Heyler & Martin, 2018; Spears, 2010). Leaders must effectively look at current situations and envision future solutions for an organization (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Without foresight, the leader is merely reacting (Greenleaf, 2008). Foresight is deeply rooted in the intuitive mind and linked to conceptualization (Blanchard et al., 2018). The absence of foresight makes for a leader in name only (Chan, 2016).

Servant leadership characteristic of stewardship. Stewardship is a commitment by servant leaders to serve the organization's needs and others for society's good (Babyak, 2017; Blanchard et al., 2018; Coetzer et al., 2017; Spears, 2010; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Servant leaders are known to go to great lengths to contribute to their followers' growth (Black, 2013). Not only are they to care for their people, but leaders are also trusted to be responsible for organizational resources (Babyak, 2017). Stewardship implies trust and is an expression of interdependence (April et al., 2000). Examples of organizational stewardship can include community development, programs, and outreach, and any activity that will prepare the

organization to make a positive contribution to society (Melchar & Bosco, 2010). Trust is built due to the leader's dedication to representing the followers' needs (Mareus et al., 2019). Caring enough to take full responsibility for the entire organization is the act of stewardship (Burton et al., 2017). One of the servant leader's roles is to weigh the organization's goals balanced with ethical and moral standing in the community (Melchar & Bosco, 2010). Stewardship also includes empowering others through service (Lett, 2014).

Servant leadership characteristic of commitment to the growth of people. Servant leaders' belief that everyone can gain new understanding and learn new skills sets them apart from other leaders (Chan, 2016). Thus, one of the most significant responsibilities of the servant leader is to nurture employee growth since each person has an intrinsic value to which the servant leader has an obligation (Heyler & Martin, 2018; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Development is a result of self-reflection (Lett, 2014). As a servant leader, this may include providing funds for personal or professional development, taking a personal interest in the ideas from everyone, encouraging involvement in decision making, or assisting employees in transitioning to their next employment (Blanchard et al., 2018).

Servant leadership characteristic of building community. "A community compromises people and how they interrelate" (April et al., 2000, p. 102). Humans are social by nature; leaders build a community to benefit the followers (Chan, 2016; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Leaders value community cohesiveness, which is accomplished through collaboration (Mareus et al., 2019). Followers see their leader physically working alongside them, contributing to the same goals, improving the environment together (Black, 2013). In the shift from small communities to large institutions, much has been lost (Greenleaf, 2008). Establishing a sense of

community is paramount for the servant leader within the organization (Spears, 2010).

Therefore, servant leaders work to re-created small communities (Spears & Lawrence, 2004).

The best test of servant leadership. Servant leadership goes beyond developing an individual for the organization's good; it tends to the whole individual's needs and their benefit to society (Greenleaf, 2008; Tischler et al., 2016). According to Greenleaf (2008), the ultimate achievement of a servant leader's work helps followers recognize their innate calling to serve. Servant leadership is about guiding people to a higher level of self-awareness (Serrat, 2017). The servant leader's role is to develop, enable, and support followers through that journey (Serrat, 2017). Unfortunately, the final assessment is complex for leaders to administer (Greenleaf, 2008). Greenleaf (2008) wrote:

The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons: do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society: will they benefit, or, at least, will they not be further deprived? (p. 6)

When leaders serve followers, taking care of their highest needs, leaders can prepare followers to be future servant leaders (Greenleaf, 2008).

Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership

One will not find any mention of the seven pillars of servant leadership in Greenleaf's original writings, nor is there mention within any of Spears' work. However, there are recognizable parallels between the 10 servant leadership characteristics and Sipe and Frick's seven pillars of servant leadership (Sipe & Frick, 2015). In the same way, there is a biblical connection in the model's imagery of the pillars. Authors Sipe and Frick draw upon King Solomon's reference of pillars found in Proverbs 9:1, "Wisdom has built her house; she has set

up its seven pillars” to serve as an illustration of servant leadership characteristics (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Similarly, Sipe and Frick (2015) use the number seven as a correlation to the number of pillars in this servant leadership model, whereas in the Bible, the number seven represents completeness (Sipe & Frick, 2015; Williams, 2017).

Expanding upon Greenleaf’s writings of servant leadership by using his work as a foundational base, Sipe and Frick (2015) analyzed and arranged the 10 servant leadership characteristics to formulate their seven pillars of servant leadership (see Figure 1), which include (a) Person of Character, (b) Puts People First, (c) Skilled Communicator, (d) Compassionate Collaborator, (e) Has Foresight, (f) Systems Thinker, and (g) Leads with Moral Authority.

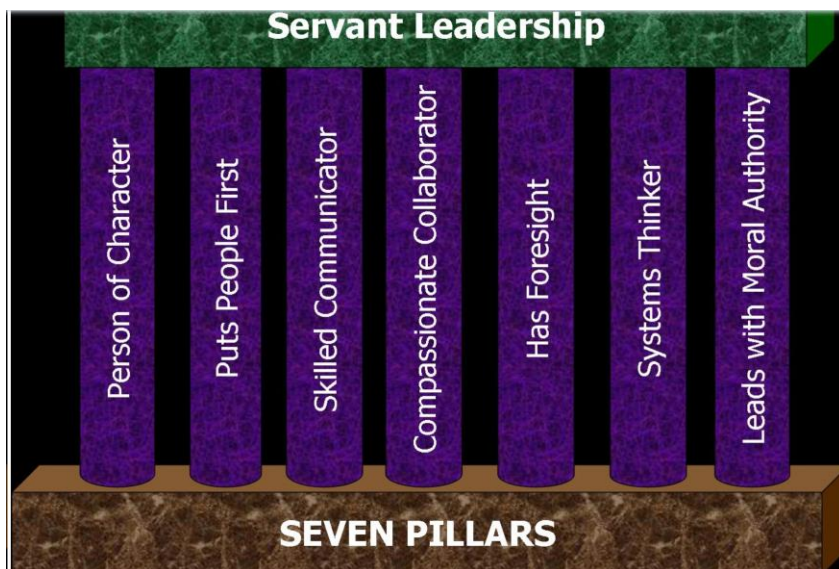


Figure 1. Sipe and Frick’s seven pillars of servant leadership. Adapted from *Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership* by S. Vasudev, 2015, <http://pm-powerconsulting.com/blog/seven-pillars-of-servant-leadership/>. Open access.

Each of Sipe and Frick’s seven pillars of servant leadership represents observable competencies that support the organization, employees, and the community (Hewitt & La Grange, 2017). Found under each of Sipe and Frick’s seven servant leadership pillars are three

core supporting leadership competencies. Servant leaders are not only *individuals of character*, but they *put people first*, are *skilled communicators* and *compassionate collaborators* who have *foresight* as *system thinkers* while applying *moral authority* (Du Plessis, Wakelin, & Nel, 2015; Sipe & Frick, 2015). As such, these seven pillars define the organization's cultural foundation and, when united, strengthen servant leadership's objectives, which are for leaders to serve followers and prepare followers to serve others (Greenleaf, 2008; Sipe & Frick, 2015). Found under each of Sipe and Frick's "Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership" are the three core supporting leadership competencies (see Table 1).

Table 1

Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership

Pillar	Core Competencies
One: Person of Character	Maintains Integrity Demonstrates Humility Serves a Higher Purpose
Two: Puts People First	Displays a Servant's Heart Is Mentor Minded Shows Care and Concern
Three: Skilled Communicator	Demonstrates Empathy Invites Feedback Communicates Persuasively
Four: Compassionate Collaborator	Expresses Appreciation Builds Team & Communities Negotiates Conflict
Five: Has Foresight	Visionary Displays Creativity Takes Courageous & Decisive Action

Six: Systems Thinker	Comfortable with Complexity Demonstrates Adaptability Considers the “Greater Good” (Sipe & Frick, 2015, p. 131)
Seven: Leads with Moral Authority	Accepts & Delegates Responsibility Shares Power & Control Creates a Culture of Accountability

Note. The above compilation is a summary of Sipe and Frick’s (2015) seven pillars of servant leadership.

Pillar One: Person of character. Pillar One addresses the leader being a person of character. In pillar one, a leader's character develops during moments of truth; however, in all moments, servant leaders will demonstrate three core competencies: they maintain integrity, show humility, and serve a higher purpose (Sipe & Frick, 2015). A leader’s character is formed in defining moments, many of which are unwitnessed by others (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Maintaining integrity is the first core competency of pillar one. Followers rank honesty as the most crucial characteristic of leaders (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Leaders who display integrity are valued by their followers (Melchar & Bosco, 2010). Decisive moments of truth increase a leader’s credibility, trust, and influence, whereas a negative moment of truth damages credibility, reduces confidence, and creates a strain in relationships (Sipe & Frick, 2015). In tandem with integrity, demonstrating humility follows as the second competency of servant leadership inside Pillar One. Humility was defined as being stable and modest while having self-awareness of one’s strengths and weaknesses (Coetzer et al., 2017). “As a humble leader, one will keep their accomplishments and talents in the shadow while spotlighting the success of others” (Dean, 2016, pp. 36–37). Servant leaders were humble leaders who value and activate their followers' talent (Coetzer et al., 2017). Humble leaders are more likely to make better decisions based on broader, more diverse information and analysis (Sipe & Frick, 2015). The final competency of Pillar One is serving a higher purpose. Recognizing that each person has a calling to fulfill in

life, servant leaders guide followers in identifying their passion and assisting them in their fulfillment (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Servant leadership relates to the character of the leader who has a heart for serving and ministering to the needs of others (Lee & Jackson, 2015)

Pillar Two: Puts people first. Serving, mentoring, and the authentic concern and care demonstrated through a leader's actions were the basis of Pillar Two (Sipe & Frick, 2015). The first competency in putting people first is to display a servant's heart. Servant leaders focus on serving others first (Coetzer et al., 2017). Southwest Airlines treats others with respect and dignity; it is part of their corporate culture (Blanchard et al., 2018). Leading with love is essential to display a servant's heart (Blanchard et al., 2018). The second competency within this pillar requires a partnership among employees as they merge through mentorships (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Through these unions, growth and development occur (Greenleaf, 2008; Sipe & Frick, 2015). Authenticity is a crossover trait listed by Sipe and Frick as well as one of Greenleaf's servant leadership characteristics (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Showing care and concern for others is the final competency in Pillar Two. Servant leaders express their genuine concern through actions (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Servant leaders not only accept but appreciate others for who they are, and as they are; servant leaders are compassionate (Coetzer et al., 2017). Caring for and serving others changes everything (Blanchard et al., 2018).

Pillar Three: Skilled communication. In Pillar Three, empathy, feedback, and communication lead to understanding, strengthening the leader–follower relationship. Skilled communication is the focus of Pillar Three. Skillful communication is how servant leaders influence followers (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Servant leaders possess enormous amounts of compassion, labeled as empathy in many studies, for their followers, accepting and appreciating them for who they are (Coetzer et al., 2017). The first servant leadership competency of Pillar

Three is demonstrating empathy. The definition of empathy is “keenly aware of another’s thoughts, feelings, and needs associated with an experience, and explicitly expressing to them a deep and caring understanding of their experience” (Sipe & Frick, 2015, p. 54). Servant leaders compassionately care for others (Coetzer et al., 2017). Empathy occurs through the difficult task of listening to one another (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Servant leaders express a deep commitment to their followers by engaging in active listening, showing respect, and asking questions to gain knowledge (Coetzer et al., 2017). Inviting feedback is the second competency under Pillar Three. It takes fortitude to solicit input; hearing praises comes easy but learning from one’s followers of areas needing improvement takes courage (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Persuasive communication is the final servant leadership competency of Pillar Three. A servant leader will convince, not coerce, others (Chan, 2016). One such way of persuasive leadership is when servant leaders lead by example (Eliff, 2014). Persuasion is the preferred mode of power for servant leaders (Greenleaf, 2008; Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Pillar Four: Compassionate collaborator. Pillar Four, the compassionate collaborator, encompasses leaders communicating feelings and offering feedback in a supportive, direct, precise manner (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Pillar Four’s overarching focus is for leaders to be compassionate collaborators. Collaboration between leader and follower is a mutually beneficial relationship centered around common goals (Sipe & Frick, 2015). The demise of collaboration occurs when the need for personal glory outweighs the shared vision (Sipe & Frick, 2015). An example of communicating is telling great stories that help foster community among followers (Sipe & Frick, 2015). The first competency under the fourth pillar is expressing appreciation. Employees desire to be shown appreciation by their leaders; when done effectively, not only does it create a positive culture, it increases an organization’s profit (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Building teams and communities is the second servant leadership competency of Pillar Four. Servant leaders collaborate with their followers through team building that allows followers to feel important (Sipe & Frick, 2015). The final competency in this pillar deals with negotiating conflict. When conflict occurs, identifying negative feelings and resolving a dispute in a peaceful manner that promotes collaboration is the best method to keep a healthy leader–follower relationship (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Pillar Five: Has foresight. Pillar Five, foresight, allows for assessment from the past, present, and the future, considering the known and unknown problems. Servant leaders' gift of foresight is recognized and celebrated as the focus of Pillar Five. All leaders can utilize foresight; servant leaders have mastered their usage into a gift (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Leaders' vision for their organization is the aim of Pillar Five, competency one. Leaders and followers are encouraged to display creativity – as discussed in servant leadership competency two. One of the servant leader's vital roles is offering creative solutions to align the posed vision while acting professionally (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Servant leaders do not fear to revise visions as needed (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Leaders are courageous and take decisive action, per competency three. Wearing the armor of confidence, servant leaders take decisive action regardless of opposition (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Pillar Six: Systems thinker. Pillar Six requires servant leaders to understand that decisions have a ripple effect that impacts more than themselves. The focus of Pillar Six is the leader as a systems thinker. Leaders are encouraged to look at each problem from multiple perspectives: events, strategies, cultures, and beliefs (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Competency one helps the leaders' level to be comfortable with complexity. Servant leaders recognize that everything is related and interconnected; nothing stands in seclusion (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Nothing is isolated; everything is intertwined. Therefore, solutions to problems need to be considered from multiple perspectives, embracing diversity (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Consequently, when approaching situations, the leader must be strategic and ethical during searching for answers (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Competency two reminds us that a leader demonstrates adaptability. As much as reality is fluid, leaders and followers must remain united in their shared vision and goals (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Lastly, competency three considers the greater good. Anyone can learn analytical skills and apply them effectively; a servant leader goes above and beyond (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Continuously, a servant leader asks what is best for the followers, the organization, and the community (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Pillar Seven: Leads with moral authority. Lastly, Pillar Seven determines that a servant leader is willing to share power and delegate tasks to followers. Moral authority was granted to a leader from followers, as a leader consistently demonstrates the behaviors seen in the first six pillars (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Servant leaders who have moral authority will be given too many responsibilities because they are trusted; therefore, they will need assistance (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Leaders know when to accept and delegate responsibilities, defining clear expectations individualized to the follower's capability (Coetzer et al., 2017). Sharing power for a servant leader is an easy task, as everyone is committed to the same common goal and vision (Sipe & Frisk, 2015). Accountability involves holding others accountable for their actions while monitoring performance, all the while exposing oneself to transparency (Coetzer et al., 2017). The leader creates accountability by relinquishing control (Sipe & Frisk, 2015). Servant leaders share their authority with fairness and integrity (Lett, 2014).

Examples of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is not a common practice; many are self-serving leaders rather than serving leaders (Blanchard & Miller, 2007). For that reason, when an individual leader or organization prioritizes the followers' needs first, they set themselves apart from others' norms that focus on the organization's needs (Greenleaf, 2008). Outstanding leadership begins with motivation toward those to be led (Blanchard & Miller, 2007). Successful leaders know that a combination of results and relationships is what matters (Blanchard & Miller, 2007). Servant leaders work alongside their followers (Khatri & Dutta, 2018).

Contemporary examples of servant leaders. Servant leaders have answered an intrinsic motivation, an internal call to serve that has placed them in a position of leadership (Gemechu, 2018; Greenleaf, 2008). Servant leaders' core function is placing others' interests before themselves (Gemechu, 2018). Creating feelings of shared organizational ownership in the followers is an objective of servant leaders (Khatri & Dutta, 2018). "One cannot know another completely until he or she starts ruling people" (Sobral, 2008, p. 153). Servant leaders value people and believe in their followers (Sobral, 2008).

Mahatma Gandhi as a servant leader. Gandhi may have started as a shy, below level student, but he became a well-known and respected leader (Barnabas & Clifford, 2012). Earning his law degree, yet unable to practice, he left South Africa and led India in a non-violent fight against racial discrimination (Barnabas & Clifford, 2012). Through collaboration, Gandhi made himself available and formed authentic relationships with his followers while addressing their needs (Barnabas & Clifford, 2012). He had a reputation for being "persuasive about his nonviolent strategy" (Keets & Abaldo, 2017, p. 55). Recognizing that people have intrinsic value and his capacity for caring for his followers allowed Gandhi to meet his followers' needs and

contributed to his success as a leader (Barnabas & Clifford, 2012; Blanchard et al., 2018). As a servant leader, Gandhi's life stirred others to greatness (Blanchard et al., 2018).

Nelson Mandela as a servant leader. Born into royalty, Nelson Mandela was the third generation of familial male leadership (Gemechu, 2018). Drawn to the law study was expected, given his sensitivity to injustices and exploitations (Gemechu, 2018). Servant leaders are empathetic and understanding of followers (Sobralnske, 2008). Mandela, a South African anti-apartheid activist, was incarcerated for 27 years as a political prisoner (Dumbleton, 2005; Gemechu, 2018; Sobralnske, 2008). During his imprisonment, Mandela was a source of encouragement and strength for the other inmates and focused on reforming the prison system (Sobralnske, 2008). Commitment to their community (in Mandela's case: prison), affirming values, and building followers' strengths are additional servant leaders' identifiers (Sobralnske, 2008). Nelson Mandela intentionally placed others' needs before his own; additionally, his focus was on service to others (Gini & Green, 2014).

Mother Teresa as a servant leader. On May 24, 1934, Mother Teresa took her vows of service as a Catholic nun (Gemechu, 2018; Toledano & Karanda, 2014). During her years as a nun, she displayed servant leadership by serving citizens and encouraging other nuns (Toledano & Karanda, 2014). Keets and Abaldo (2017) described Mother Teresa as “empathetic in helping the less fortunate” (p. 55). Founded by Mother Teresa, the Missionaries of Charity opened October 7, 1950, to care for leprosy victims, those diagnosed with tuberculosis, and other societal outcasts and, most recently, providing homes for HIV/AIDS patients (Gemechu, 2018; Toledano & Karanda, 2014). Focusing not on quantity, but quality, with a servant's heart, Mother Teresa had a single purpose of meeting her followers' needs by providing love, food, and

shelter (Gemechu, 2018). From early on, Mother Teresa recognized the deep sense of calling to be a nun, allowing her to serve first and then lead her followers (Gemechu, 2018).

Coach John R. Wooden as a servant leader. John Wooden was a famous coach elected to the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player and coach (Jenkins, 2014). He was known for an ingrained sense of habit and for being a virtuous person (Hamilton & Vaughan, 2014). A person's character was of great importance to Wooden; he even recruited college basketball players based upon character (Jenkins, 2014). Wooden instilled virtue into his basketball coaching to help build character within his players (Hamilton & Vaughan, 2014; Reid, 2014). A caring environment committed to trust-building, feeling of safety, where everyone felt cared for and loved, was Wooden's goal (Hammermeister, 2014). Wooden emphasized a serving attitude through modeling it to his players (Hammermeister, 2014). In all matters, Wooden put team goals ahead of his goals (Mielke, 2014). Through his actions, Coach Wooden demonstrated servant leadership. Conversely, Hamilton and Vaughan (2014) proposed that Wooden was both a servant leader and a paternal leader during different career stages.

Organizations leading with a servant leadership focus. Contemporary history shows that organizations have embraced servant leadership. In his 2004 book, *The World's Most Powerful Leadership Principle: How to Become a Servant Leader*, James Hunter recalled over 35 servant leader organizations that appeared on the Fortune magazine's list of the *100 Best Companies to Work For* prior to the book's publication. Many of those organizations, such as The Container Store, Starbucks, Marriott International, Men's Warehouse, to name a few, remain on the list years later. Influential leaders are important to an organization's success (Lee & Jackson, 2015). Matching leadership style to an organization for success requires considering a leader's personality, the organization's culture, followers' personality, and the organization's

overall state (Rubin, 2013). Establishing a climate where servant leadership is thoroughly ingrained takes time (Rubin, 2013). Organizations need to select leaders who truly appreciate followers as their most critical assets (Lee & Jackson, 2015). Servant leaders recognize that the process is continual because humans are infallible (Tey, 2006). “Adopting servant leadership into organizational leadership doctrine will improve the organization’s effectiveness, culture, and climate” (Hall, 2017, p. 49). The dividend for a servant leader’s investment is not only loyal employees but low turnover rates (Rubin, 2013).

Chick-Fil-A leading with servant leadership. Deemed the most profitable food chain in the United States in 2016, Chick-Fil-A is a company founded on biblical principles (Burton, 2017). Founder S. Truett Cathy christened the famous sandwich name by combining the words chicken, filet, and buffet, dropping letters and adding hyphens, then added the letter A to symbolize top-quality service (Burton, 2017). Despite the industry norm, Cathy followed his values and kept his company closed on Sundays so that employees could worship and rest (Exodus 20:10; Heyler & Martin, 2018; Kee, 2015; Mango, 2018). While competitors are open seven days a week, his profits did not fall one-seventh; his restaurants made more money than those that remained open daily (Mango, 2018)! Growing up poor, Cathy valued education and offered college scholarships to high school student workers who worked for two or more years with the company an average of 20 hours or more per week (Burton, 2017; Kee, 2015). Cathy’s philosophy was to have faith in God and work hard; in so doing, a leader’s faithfulness will yield financial success (Burton, 2017). Team members are Christians and have a shared vision in alignment with the founder, as it is a condition for employment (Kee, 2015). Anyone wishing to become a Chick-Fil-A franchise holder will face the lowest startup cost in the industry, \$5,000; however, the company is selective in awarding franchises, selecting persons of similar moral

character (Burton, 2017). A servant leader's role is to build a better tomorrow, one follower at a time (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

Marriott International leading with servant leadership. Marriott International is the second largest company in the hospitality industry (Kee, 2015). Contributing to the ranking is the modeling from the leadership team down and has been an essential element of organizational success (Cross, 2017). Demonstrating to associates how to anticipate guests' needs and exceeding expectations has become Marriott's signature service (Murphy & Patrick, 2016). Marriott is known within the hotel industry for its detailed procedures, recognizing the attention to detail in everything (Murphy & Patrick, 2016). Servant leadership empowers and develops employees (Melchar & Bosco, 2010; Reddy & Kamesh, 2016). Marriott's leadership values its employees and believes that a happy workforce is why the company has one of the lowest turnover rates in the industry (Chon & Zoltan, 2019).

Southwest Airlines leading with servant leadership. Southwest Airlines was founded in 1971 on Herb Kelleher's desire to serve others (Hall, 2017; Lee & Jackson, 2015). Serving is at the organization's center; each quarter, leaders serve one-day in-flight operations taking flight reservations or loading baggage (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Kelleher believed trust was built through integrity, and trust inspired ownership (Hall, 2017). At Southwest Airlines, people are more valuable than resources; it is an organization where employees come first (Hall, 2017). It is known as an employee-driven company (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Uniquely, Southwest Airlines chooses to hire employees who have a sense of humor (Hall, 2017). Employee retention is high due to the company's core values (Hall, 2017). They are recognized repeatedly as one of the most admired and most profitable companies (Lee & Jackson, 2015). Servant leadership creates a positive working environment for employees (Le Ng et al., 2016).

Starbucks leading with servant leadership. Starbucks is the largest coffeehouse and fastest-growing company in the world (Tikson, 2018). Established in 1971, it began with a slow growth then took off with a burst in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Tikson, 2018). In January 2005, *Fortune* magazine labeled Starbucks as the second-best company to work for due to a friendly employee policy and supportive work culture (Tikson, 2018). Starbucks deliberately selects the right employees to fit the company and continually strives to retain them (Tikson, 2018). It was estimated that 70% of the United States Starbucks employees are students or aspiring students (Lee & Jackson, 2015). The company invests in training all employees, including those who work part-time hours (Rubin, 2013; Tikson, 2018). Valuing education, Starbucks provides free college tuition assistance through Arizona State University online courses to associates working 20 or more hours per week (Lee & Jackson, 2015; Le Ng et al., 2016; Tikson, 2018). Employees also can formulate policies at each store, reinforcing that employees are an asset (Tikson, 2018). Servant leaders bring inspiration to an organization, making them valuable (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Starbucks employees are both motivated and committed; this means success for the company (Tikson, 2018). It is not just employees who are committed; on average, Starbucks keeps a customer for 20 years (Murphy & Patrick, 2016).

Related Literature

In Ecclesiastes 3, Solomon proclaims there is nothing new under the sun. The same is true with servant leadership as it is not a new managerial leadership concept. Some of the servant leadership characteristics associated with Greenleaf overlap many other leadership models (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2008). However, it is the heart of a servant leader that sets the leader apart from other leadership models. Servant leaders recognize that the focus is on people, not the organization, and that the goal is to serve (Ertel, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008). Servant leaders put

their followers' needs first (Greenleaf, 2008). Servant leaders are selfless; their authentic actions spring from a desire to do good for their followers (Dapula & Castano, 2017; Hannay, 2009). Servant leaders are humble and use persuasion, not coercion, to influence followers to grow (Greenleaf, 2008; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Servant leaders work at developing their followers within the organization's community, preparing them to discover their innate design to serve others (Greenleaf, 2008).

Biblical Foundation of Servant Leadership

Christians have an innate desire to emulate Christ by applying the servant leadership theory as a leadership model (Bucci & Lewis, 2016). A servant leader is set apart from other leaders. Effective leadership theory model construction includes biblical characteristics of servitude (Irving, 2011). Jesus warned of leaders who would hold their followers in oppression by using fear, force, or manipulation to sustain their power (Russell, 2003). Choosing to become a servant leader is honoring God; leaders choosing to serve are valuable in His sight (Choi, 2014). When leaders prioritize servitude over performance, it indicates that for some, a biblical worldview does exist among leaders (Choi, 2014.). Servant leaders set aside status and focus on serving the team (Thompson, 2015). Though Greenleaf was a Christian, servant leadership is not strictly a Christian tenet. Servant leadership is found to be a spiritually rewarding and motivating experience for non-Christians, too (Khan et al., 2015).

The word *leader* is found in the NIV Bible translation 78 times in 77 verses compared to the word *servant*, which is used 523 times in 481 verses ("Leader," 2019; "Servant," 2019). At a ratio of nearly 1:7, it is easy to recognize that we are meant to serve before leading. Matthew 20:20-28 and Mark 10:35-45 build a biblical foundation for servant leadership theory. The

connection appears in four nearly identical verses found between the two passages (Russell, 2003). The similarities in the four verses have been marked in bold for comparison.

Passage 1: **Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.** Not so with you. Instead, **whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, whoever wants to be first must be your slave** just as the **Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”**

(Matthew 20: 25–28)

Passage 2: **Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them,** and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, **whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,** and **whoever wants to be first must be slave** of all. For even **the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”** (Mark 10:42–45)

Within both passages, Jesus declares himself a servant leader; he continues to proclaim that anyone wishing to claim their eternal inheritance must be willing to humble themselves to serve others (Russell, 2003). Under the biblical worldview, every Christian is a servant and a leader (Choi, 2014). The love of God motivates influential leaders (Jensen, 2017).

The biblical theology of leadership. While the secular concept of leadership is man-centered, a biblical worldview of leadership constructs a meaning set apart from traditional understandings. One theme that spans secular and spiritual realms is that leadership is about relationships (Wright, 2009). Prominent leadership models share two standard components:

authoritarian leadership and hierarchal positions (Thompson, 2015). Neither is in alignment with God's desires.

Beliefs beget behavior as intentions reveal leaders' motivations for leading (Lett, 2014). Biblical leadership "begins in the heart of the leader and often dictates his or her actions" (Ayers, 2006, p. 16). Secular leadership models feature leaders motivated by power and ambition (Ben-Hur & Jonsen, 2012). These traditional models practice coercion and manipulation as extensions of their power (Thompson, 2015). In servant leadership, earned power comes through trust, gifted from the followers (Russell et al., 2017). Persuasive power is unconventional from most leadership positions where power is at the center of leadership roles. Christian leaders opt to influence their followers (Thompson, 2015). The leader exercising biblical leadership will use his/her power for good unto others (Ayers, 2006). Instead of seeking status, leaders following a biblical foundation recognize they are called to serve others (Thompson, 2015). One biblical example demonstrating leadership is in Mark 10:35–45: James and John make a request of Jesus in verses 35–37 and Jesus replies in verses 38–40. As such, in the leadership lesson seen in Mark 10:41–44, Jesus clarifies that the focus should not be in determining the position of where one sits "at my right or left" (v. 40). Instead, Jesus directs their attention to serve others: "Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43–44).

Jesus went against the societal grain and offered a humbler approach to demonstrating servant leadership (Thompson, 2015). In Mark 10:43, he promises greatness in exchange for humbleness. Another example of biblical leadership found in Jude's book was where the community warned of false teachers. This short book begins with Jude as author and narrator, declaring himself as "a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James" (Jude 1:1). Significantly,

in Jude's salutation, he chose to identify with his role as a servant to Christ rather than his half-brother. Jude knew he was deeply rooted in God's love (Wright, 2009). In Jude 1:2, "Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance" is the second leadership lesson exemplified. The first lesson Jude teaches is to have one's identity centered in Christ, and the second lesson is that one should then develop relationships with others (Wright, 2009). Servant leaders should remain faithful; only God can increase followers (Thompson, 2015). Those centered in Christ can then reach out and lead relationships with others (Wright, 2009). Leadership is about relationships.

Biblical traits of a servant leader. Submission to Christ is required to be an obedient servant (John 12:26). Greenleaf's (2008) premise of a servant leader began as an "intuitive insight" (p. 14) to serve. Multiple biblical traits combine to make up the character of a servant leader. A servant leader with a biblical foundation will have a heart Exalting God Only – E.G.O. (Blanchard & Hodges, 2007). Two primary workings make up the E.G.O. Heart: humility and confidence. Humility is thinking of oneself less and confidence in one's relationship with Christ. With humility, leaders know whose they are and who they are (Blanchard & Hodges, 2007). The gift of humility provides the servant leader a level of confidence centered in Christ, as stated in Philippians 4:7, "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." A servant leader's mind reveals his or her belief system and displays her or her vision and values (Blanchard & Hodges, 2007). A Christian servant leader's values will automatically align with two of God's greatest commandments: to love God and love others (Matthew 22:36–40). Servant leaders' vision is different from traditional leaders in that they chose to be responsive in addition to responding to the view set forth (Blanchard et al., 2018; Blanchard & Hodges, 2007). Lastly, a servant leader's hands can coach followers (Blanchard & Hodges, 2007). By coaching followers, leaders can assist in the transformational

process of those served growing into servants themselves (Greenleaf, 2008). Matthew 28:19–20 calls Christians to make disciples and to spread the gospel.

Greenleaf’s characteristics of servant leadership are rooted in the biblical principle of servitude. Leaders best serve their followers by investing time with their followers, understanding their needs and strengths, and seeking their input and opinions (Flanike, 2006). The biblical connection of serving others is the foundation for leadership prescribed in Mark 9:35, “Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, ‘Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.’” Greenleaf’s 10 characteristics of a servant leader as seen through a biblical lens are summarized in the following list.

The biblical trait of listening. The choice to wait in responding holds significance. Proverbs 18:13 reinforces the significance of pausing: "To answer before listening - that was folly and shame." Another verse speaking to the importance of listening is found in Proverbs 12:15, "The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice." Lastly, a verse from the New Testament regarding listening can be found in James 1:19, “My dear brother and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” Leaders must listen to their followers; listening demonstrates value (Flanike, 2006). Valuing people is like loving and caring for them (Focht & Ponton, 2015).

The biblical trait of empathy. A servant leader demonstrates unconditional love towards their followers through acceptance (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003). Found in Micah 6:8, “He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But do to justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?” The Old Testament reference requires believers to show empathy through justice, love, and kindness to one another. Another scripture, found in Colossians 3:12, issues a command to believers: “So, as those who have been chosen of

God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.” In this New Testament verse, both the believer and servant leader are commissioned to extend empathy toward others through kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

The biblical trait of healing. How one sees people determines how one serves them (Blanchard et al., 2018). The first biblical example is found in Numbers 12:1–15 when Miriam and Aaron grumble about Moses. God rebukes Miriam, striking her with leprosy for opposing Moses; Aaron is surprised and shocked. Moses demonstrates healing by praying while she is out of the city, separated from the community for seven days. The next example is the parable of the good Samaritan found in Luke 10:25–37. A Jewish man is robbed and left on the side of the road. A traveling priest passes him, a Levite ignores him, and ultimately it is a despised Samaritan who stops to render aid and help him heal, literally. Through this parable, Jesus demonstrates the lesson to set aside prejudice and judgment in favor of service. As Christians, servant leaders identify with humanity's brokenness; as servant leaders, they are called to help heal one another's brokenness where able.

The biblical trait of awareness. Detached enough to develop a knowledge of the environment and discern urgent issues is the strength of a servant leader (Flanike, 2006). The sense of situational awareness first experienced by man occurred in the Garden of Eden, found in Genesis 3:7, “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.” Bringing awareness in this scenario is a result of sin and shame. Conversely, in John 8: 1–11, when the adulterous woman is brought before Jesus and the angry crowd is calling for her death by stoning, Jesus displays a keen awareness of the environment. Maintaining the appearance of composure as he writes on the ground, he refrains from judgment and extends forgiveness. Likewise, servant leaders need to

take a step back and look at the bigger picture (forgiveness) and not the smaller portion (the sin); to do so, they must have a sense of awareness of the entire environment (the whole picture).

The biblical trait of persuasion. Persuasion, not coercion, is the model of a servant leader (Sobralke, 2008). This leadership principle is also firmly rooted in biblical principles. For this reason, as both a Christian and a servant leader, one should practice persuasion, for Proverbs 28:16 states, "A tyrannical ruler practices extortion, but one who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a long reign." The gift of persuasion can assist servant leaders in healing followers, as is found in the reconciliation skill of 2 Corinthians 5:11, "Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we were is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience." Servant leaders do not seek to demean their followers (Flanike, 2006).

The biblical trait of conceptualization. Influential leaders have a vision for their organization and followers (Blanchard & Miller, 2007). Proverbs 29:18 (New American Standard Bible) states, "Where there is no vision, the people are unrestrained. But happy is he who keeps the law." Luke shares Christ's conceptualization for believers in Acts 1:8, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Servant leaders construct a clear, concise vision with action steps (Blanchard & Hodges, 2003).

The biblical trait of foresight. Through foresight, servant leaders provide support to help followers achieve optimal functioning, aligning with the organization's goals (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). A leader exercising foresight will be able to anticipate any potential problems and will preplan advanced solutions. Hebrews 12:15 states, "See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." Another example of foresight found in John 6:27 states, "Do not work for food that spoils, but

for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God, the Father has placed his seal of approval." Preset goals and shared goals allow leaders and followers to work in harmony.

The biblical trait of stewardship. Greenleaf (2008) believed that CEOs and trustees of organizations hold the responsibility of being stewards for society's greater good. Each person is called to be a good steward of that which is given as Colossians 3:23–24 states, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving," whereas the Old Testament Proverbs 13:11 reminds that "wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it." Christians, especially Christian leaders, are called to be responsible, trustworthy, and ethical stewards of the people in their care (Babyak, 2017).

The biblical trait of commitment to the growth of people. Working to unify people for a common cause is a gift held by servant leaders (Roach, 2016). Servant leaders realize that everyone needs nurturing and training to succeed (Bucci & Lewis, 2016). Additionally, servant leaders build leadership potential in followers (Melchar & Bosco, 2010). Leaders help their followers grow first internally; Proverbs 5:1–2 states, "My son, give attention to my wisdom, incline your ear to my understanding; that you may observe discretion and your lips may reserve knowledge." Also, Christians demonstrate their humble service in Christ via the talents given: Romans 12:7, "If it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach." The heart's desire of a servant leader is to nurture today's followers into future servant leaders (Greenleaf, 2008).

The biblical trait of building community. A community is comprised of shared relationships with the purpose of balance and mentorship (Wright, 2009). Servant leaders build a

group internally by identifying, connecting, equipping, empowering, and encouraging the right people (Reddy & Kamesh, 2016; Roach, 2016). Proverbs 27:17 reminds leaders to serve followers: “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” They should work to forge unity: “May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:5–6). Servant leaders build an internal community among their followers first and then extend outside the organization’s walls.

Biblical servant leaders. Followers of Jesus view servant leadership as a biblical ordinance (Blanchard et al., 2018). Many of the examples of servant leaders in the Bible are flawed individuals, yet they first seek to bring glory to Him by serving others (Maciariello, 2003). In humanity’s fallen state, the Holy Spirit must create in people’s hearts and minds a new perspective to provide energy to lead in a manner that glorifies God for the good of others (Russell, 2003). The Holy Spirit is essential for the growth of the servant leader (Jensen, 2017). Reading scripture also keeps a clear focus on pursuing God's will in a leader's life and others' lives (Jensen, 2017).

Moses as a biblical servant leader. Moses' call to leadership was not straightforward (Ben-Hur & Jonsen, 2012). It seemed more accidental from Moses' perspective but not God's (Jensen, 2017). Moses, declared the servant of God in Hebrews 3:5 and Revelation 15:3, was also called to be the leader of Israel upon leaving Egypt (Russell, 2003). Moses recognized that servant leadership ultimately centers on servitude to a community in which the leader meets their needs in a multitude of ways (Ben-Hur & Jonsen, 2012). Moses remained faithful and dedicated to his mission (Jensen, 2017). He was a servant leader to the Israelites for four decades in the wilderness, meeting their needs at every step (used by God), eventually passing on his leadership

legacy to Joshua (Ben-Hur & Jonsen, 2012; Deuteronomy 31:3). Moses remained humble throughout his life, offering all leaders a great example to emulate (Jensen, 2017).

David as a biblical servant leader. Luke 1:69 and Acts 4:25 identify David as a servant of God (Russell, 2003). David was faithful in words and action to God and consistently excelled in both (Lett, 2014). David demonstrated servant leadership characteristics against Achish and Philistine soldiers in 1 Samuel 27–29 by listening and understanding (Lett, 2014). In 1 Samuel 21:1-6, David used persuasion, foresight, and conceptualization to get bread from the priest to meet his followers' needs—his men (Lett, 2014).

Nehemiah as a biblical servant leader. Once a cupbearer for Artaxerxes, the King of Persia, Nehemiah was sent to rebuild the Jerusalem wall, where he displayed his servant leadership. Building the wall would provide protection and security for the people. Nehemiah spent three days surveying and collecting information and forming a bond with the people so that he could persuade them to complete the project rather than coerce them with the authority he already possessed from the king (Russell, 2003). When faced with opposition, Nehemiah did not abandon the project but continued to work alongside the people, choosing not to retaliate but to pray (Russell, 2003). Nehemiah dedicated himself to prayer (Jensen, 2017). Leaders assess and plan after due consideration (Jensen, 2017). Throughout the story, Nehemiah exemplifies a biblical example of servant leadership by giving God glory while working for others' good (Russell, 2003).

Jesus as a biblical servant leader. Jesus was a servant to his Father first (Roach, 2016). Dedicated prayer enabled Christ to serve others during his ministry (Roach, 2016). Through scripture, the life of Christ demonstrates servant leadership (Jensen, 2017). Jesus stated his vision for others to follow him into the ministry in Matthew 4:19 (ESV), “And he said to them, ‘Follow

me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Growing up a practicing craftsman, Jesus perfected problem-solving and vision casting, eventually utilizing these skills to assist others in becoming servant leaders (Blanchard et al., 2018). Servant leaders recognize and respect their followers’ capabilities (Hannay, 2009).

Servant Leadership Influences School Climate

Administrative servant leaders positively affected school climate (Black, 2013; Hung et al., 2016; Price, 2012; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Recognizing the need for both time and effort, servant leaders freely give each to improve their followers' environment (Black, 2013). Teachers who perceive their administrative servant leaders to be present and connected with staff mold a positive school climate (Black, 2013). A primary task of servant leaders is creating an open space for success to occur (Price, 2012). By establishing a trusting environment in conjunction with an ethical climate, followers know that leaders will execute justice when needed (Burton et al., 2017). Strong relationships between leaders and followers impact school climate (Burton et al., 2017; Price, 2012; Ryan et al., 2017). Servant leaders who model and set clear expectations for followers subsequently contribute to an affirming school climate (Black, 2013; Price, 2012). The servant leader will foster collaboration by bringing the followers together for the community (Black, 2013; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Price, 2012). Employees who view the school climate positively are more apt to remain, whereas employees who perceive the school climate negatively have a stronger turnover intention (Chang et al., 2017), and turnover intention is the leading cause of resignation (Turgut, Bekmezci, & Ateş, 2017).

Servant Leadership Empowers Employees

A significant servant leadership theme is empowering followers (Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Krog & Govender, 2015; Reddy & Kamesh, 2016). Empowerment is critical in

servant leadership; it puts an individual's interests first and elevates teammates' trust (Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Krog & Govender, 2015). When trust exists, the leader can motivate followers to accomplish the organization's mission and vision (Krog & Govender, 2015). A servant leader demonstrates support to followers by ensuring followers have the needed supplies and plenty of fiscal and human resources to execute their duties (Irving & Longbotham, 2007). Servant leaders also utilize clear communications, oral and written, while expressing appreciation and validation to their followers (Irving & Longbotham, 2007). At all times, a servant leader conducts an honest evaluation to determine if the environment has everything for employee growth as well as goal accomplishment (Irving & Longbotham, 2007). A servant leader works at recognizing the need for followers to have a voice in decision making; servant leaders invite followers into the process, increasing their confidence and reducing blame (von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). The natural leader will first listen to followers, build strength in other people, and learn the issues and concerns at hand (Greenleaf, 2008). While each employee shares power, there is accountability to provide balance. Empowering employees permits employees to assume roles and responsibilities previously held by management (Olesia, Namusonge, & Iravo, 2014). Examples of delivering accountability are envisioning the future, taking the initiative, and clarifying goals (Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Krog & Govender, 2015).

Servant Leadership and Employee Job Satisfaction

Higher employee satisfaction occurs under servant leadership (Tischler et al., 2016; Turgut et al., 2017). Being a people-centered model, servant leadership produces more satisfied employees (Dapula & Castano, 2017; Tischler et al., 2016; van Dierendonck, 2011). Job satisfaction influences an employee's commitment to remain with or leave an organization

(Chang et al., 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Turgut et al., 2017; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). There is a significant (positive) relationship between the servant leadership of administrators and teacher job satisfaction rate (Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Coetzer et al., 2017; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Turgut et al., 2017). A servant leader aids in employee satisfaction through serving and leading (Hung et al., 2016). Servant leaders help create and develop a positive self-concept within each follower (known as the healing characteristic), enhancing their job performance (Tischler et al., 2016). Due to developing their employees, servant leaders bring work value and job satisfaction to their followers (Greenleaf, 2008; Tischler et al., 2016; Turgut et al., 2017). Servant leadership links to self-actualization, positive job attitudes, and performance (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Servant Leadership and Teacher Turnover

While there is a wealth of research relating to teacher attrition, mobility, and turnover, there are a limited number of studies correlating servant leadership and teacher turnover (Le Ng et al., 2016). A leader's support is a crucial determinant in teacher attrition and a core characteristic of a servant leader (von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). After enough dissatisfying experiences, an employee reaches the proverbial separation threshold and must make a conscious choice to remain, transfer, or leave (Le Ng et al., 2016). The stronger an employee's search or turnover intention, the higher the likelihood they will leave their current setting (Jha, 2009; Le Ng et al., 2016). Organizations experience the apparent loss of faculty and staff through attrition; however, there is an additional loss to consider as the remaining employees are severely impacted (Dutta & Khatri, 2017). When employees trust their leaders and their organization, they are less likely to leave; servant leadership prioritizes followers and repeatedly shows their value (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Melchar & Bosco, 2010). Servant leadership reduces teacher

turnover, with research supporting a positive correlation (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Turgut et al., 2017). By putting the needs of followers first and serving others, servant leaders can create a positive work climate (Greenleaf, 2008; Le Ng et al., 2016).

Servant Leadership Shortcomings and the Future of Servant Leadership

Some people have mistaken servant leadership for laissez-faire leadership, but this is a misperception, and servant leadership's effectiveness has been misjudged. If placed on a spectrum, servant leadership would be at the opposite end of laissez-faire. Followers view their laissez-faire leaders as disengaged and do not trust them to show up in times of need (Singfiel, 2018). However, servant leadership is known for creating safe and positive work environments, earning employee trust, and achieving organizational goals (Wong, 2007). Laissez-faire leaders will provide their followers with resources but will not give interaction in the form of direction, feedback, or support (Singfiel, 2018). Servant leadership and laissez-faire are contrasting leadership styles.

One of the deficiencies stated throughout the empirical findings is the absence of construct clarity, including a concise definition of servant leadership, a definitive set of leadership characteristics, and a scope of leadership behaviors and conditions (Brown & Bryant, 2015). The disunity in scope conditions is illustrated within this literature review of limited current research linking servant leadership and school climate, servant leadership and empowering employees, and servant leadership and employee satisfaction. The phrase *servant leadership*, first coined by Greenleaf, leans on the motivation of a leader's position focusing on serving others more than leading (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). However, to date, researchers offer various working definitions for servant leadership, while leader motivation to serve remains the same.

Another limitation to be noted is the false allegation that servant leadership is comparatively new. Origins of servant leadership can be traced back to nearly 2500 years (Valeri, 2007). Although many leaders have not embraced its acceptance as an effective form of leadership, it does not discount its existence (Lett, 2014). From 2000–2016, 96 articles relating to servant leadership were reviewed and analyzed (Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). Critics argue that servant leadership lacks empirical support (Brown & Bryant, 2015). However, many empirical studies, an estimated 44% of a reviewed sample of 39 articles, were conducted in an educational setting (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Despite existing for over four decades, the servant leadership model has expanded slowly and in a scattered fashion (Brown & Bryant, 2015). For instance, a historical trace shows servant leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, and Coach John Wooden to be examples of servant leaders. Likewise, well-known organizations have successfully adopted the servant leadership model, including Chick-Fil-A, Marriott International, Southwest Airlines, and Starbucks. Both qualitative and quantitative studies can fill the gaps in servant leadership's theoretical constructs, adding depth to the empirical research, removing the empirical infancy that exists (Brown & Bryant, 2015).

Moreover, there remains a negative stigma attached to the word *servant*, conjuring associations of slavery and gender bias (Lett, 2014). For some, the word servant conjures passivity and indecision (Heyler & Martin, 2018). A few raise gender-related concerns of submission; such matters are unnecessary and unfounded as authentic servant leadership is ethical. Such behavior is neither in practice nor in alignment with servant leadership theoretical beliefs (McMahon, 2012). Leader integrity holds value by followers (Melchar & Bosco, 2010). Likewise, the negative connotation can be erased for Christians as they look at the Greek

derivative of the word meaning. In Greek, the word for servant, *diakonos*, is also the root word for deacon, an essential role in the church (Russell, 2003).

Also, with a servant leader's focus centered on followers, there is a perception that a leader will not consider the needs of society (Lynch & Friedman, 2013). This myopic perception is a false concern. While it is true that leaders focus on their followers, leaders do so to prepare a serving society (Duby, 2009; Greenleaf, 2008). Greenleaf (2008) proposed that servant leaders build lasting communities with followers through trust, respect, and ethical behavior. Only the community can offer healing love to one another (Greenleaf, 2008; John 13:35).

Another perceived shortcoming questions whether it is possible to implement servant leadership and experience without failure (Roach, 2016). Reasons contributing to fallen servant leaders include micromanagement, lack of trust, self-doubt, resistance to diversity, and fears (Roach, 2016). However, Spears would counterargue that there is no failure in servant leadership as humans are fallible beings (Tey, 2006). Failures do not have to be permanent; when leaders miss the mark, the best plan of attack is owning up, apologizing, and moving forward (Tey, 2006).

The core of servant leadership is to serve others (Greenleaf, 2008). Servant leaders are humble and are more concerned about their followers' well-being than their own (Heyler & Martin, 2018). Such concepts are found in many religious beliefs; there are no known religions that conflict with servant leadership (Tey, 2006). However, current research cautiously links scripture, usually Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45, to servant leadership theory (Bucci & Lewis, 2016). Of the existing research using scripture, many models use partial scripture and, as such, miss the crux of the biblical messages of ransom, redemption, and redeemer (Bucci & Lewis,

2016). As future Christian researchers continue to study servant leadership, they are encouraged to contribute in a manner that reveals rather than conceals fully (Bucci & Lewis, 2016).

Summary

Leadership comes from leading a group of people in society, and a good leader is a steward of the community he/she is leading (Hossain & Ebrahim, 2012). Unlike traditional leaders, servant leaders do not focus on an organization's external environment (Heyler & Martin, 2018). A servant leader, altruistic in nature, is primarily focused on the followers' needs (Greenleaf, 2008; Melchar & Bosco, 2010). Greenleaf (2008) posited that servant leaders respond to a “natural feeling to serve” (p. 15) others first, which then eventually “brings one to aspire to lead” (p. 15). Servant leaders care not about positional authority; instead, their priority is placed upon their followers (Greenleaf, 2008; Lane, 2016). Servant leadership is associated with an active ethical component (Hu & Liden, 2011). Demonstrating ethical behaviors through actions and decisions, servant leaders gain their followers' trust (Le Ng et al., 2016). Servant leaders strive to achieve the best for their followers, preparing them to become future leaders (Greenleaf, 2008; Heyler & Martin, 2018).

Sipe and Frick (2015) combined Greenleaf's theory and biblical principles to create a visual illustration of servant leadership, pulling firmly from Proverbs 9:1 regarding the pillars of wisdom. Using an organization's existing culture and embedding the servant leadership characteristics, a servant leader can empower followers to achieve shared goals (Greenleaf, 2008; Sipe & Frick, 2015). Using the 10 servant leadership characteristics as a guide, Sipe and Frick (2015) created seven fundamental pillars: (a) person of character, (b) putting people first, (c) skilled communicator, (d) compassionate collaborator, (e) having foresight, (f) systems thinker and (g) leading with moral authority. Sipe and Frick created an observable model with three

competencies within each of the seven pillars that leaders demonstrate. Sipe and Frick's servant leadership model is fully transparent to the follower. Servant leadership positively influences followers' trust (Coetzer et al., 2017). Followers must trust their leaders to be both knowledgeable and competent (Melchar & Bosco, 2010).

Spears (2010) pulled from Greenleaf's (2008) work, creating a list of 10 servant leader characteristics: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. These servant leadership characteristics also have a biblical foundation; thus, a moral comparison develops authentically (Choi, 2014; Duby, 2009; Irving, 2011; Khan et al., 2015; Russell, 2003). The biblical theology of leadership necessitates a relationship between leader and follower first, followed by service. Biblical examples of servant leaders mentioned in this study include Moses, David, Nehemiah, and Jesus. Using the 10 defining leadership servant leadership characteristics, leaders influence their followers to grow into autonomous servants (Black, 2013; Brown & Bryant, 2015; Greenleaf, 2008). This chapter discussed contemporary servant leaders—Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, and Coach John R. Wooden—who developed autonomous followers. Likewise, this chapter also provided examples of successful organizations with a servant leadership focus such as Chick-fil-A, Marriott International, Southwest Airlines, and Starbucks.

Research in the field of servant leadership is still emerging while revealing significant results. There is a positive correlation between servant leadership and school climate (Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Chang et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2016; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Price, 2012; Ryan et al., 2017; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Employees report feelings of empowerment when working with servant leaders (Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Irving &

Longbotham, 2007; Krog & Govender, 2015; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Likewise, employees are more satisfied when working with a servant leader (Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2017; Dapula & Castano, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015; Greenleaf, 2008; Hung et al., 2016; Tischler et al., 2016; van Dierendonck, 2011; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017), and lower teacher turnover rates are associated with servant leaders (Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016).

With servant leadership recognized over the past four decades, it is natural for there to be existing criticisms such as a lack of clarity in the constructs or concise definition of servant leadership (Berger, 2014; Brown & Bryant, 2015). Current research covers several theoretical constructs; narrowing these factors will also assist in future research (Berger, 2014; Brown & Bryan, 2015; Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). In early research on servant leadership, there was a negative stigma attached to the word *servant*; however, this trend appears to be waning (Berger, 2014; Heyler & Martin, 2018; Lett, 2014). Allegations that the servant leader is not concerned about society are unfounded, countering the theory itself (Greenleaf, 2008; Lynch & Friedman, 2013). Equally, servant leaders should not become paralyzed with fear of failure; instead, they should recognize it as part of the process of leading (Greenleaf, 2008; Roach, 2016; Tey, 2006).

This single, holistic, instrumental case study fills the qualitative research gap and provides researchers and leaders with an understanding of servant leadership characteristics that influence employee satisfaction. Servant leadership theory nurtures the well-being of stakeholders, specifically teachers and their job satisfaction (Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2017; Coetzer et al., 2017; Dapula & Castano, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Panaccio et al., 2015; Tischler et al., 2016; Turgut et al., 2017; van Dierendonck, 2011; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017).

This study may be beneficial for any leaders who desire to learn from this lived experience case study and apply servant leadership characteristics to improve their leadership style.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of my single, holistic, instrumental case study was to understand the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school, Chapel Academy (pseudonym), in North Central Florida, and his influence on employee job satisfaction. The current research aims to narrow the existing gap in the qualitative literature by increasing the understanding of servant leadership characteristics and the influence on employee satisfaction.

Principals exhibiting servant leadership behaviors produce a satisfied teaching team (von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Teachers hold a favorable perception of servant leaders and, as such, have a lower rate of attrition (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Teachers are not the only stakeholders influenced by servant leaders. School servant leaders positively impact school climate, culture, and other stakeholders (Peterson et al., 2017).

This chapter also offers a review of the research design, followed by research questions and a description of the setting. Also included are participant selection procedures, discussion of data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. Chapter Three closes with a final summary.

Design

The specific qualitative method of this inquiry consisted of a single, holistic instrumental case study. The central question propelling this inquiry asked, How would stakeholders describe their experience in schools led by servant leader principals? Quantitative studies measure items, whereas qualitative studies describe experiences (Patton, 2015). Qualitative was the methodology of choice to study the issue in-depth while preserving the participants' voices (Patton, 2015). I gathered data using one-to-one interviews, a focus group, and documentation

analysis inside the participants' natural environment of Chapel Academy; by utilizing these approaches, multiple participants' voices were represented (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Likewise, qualitative research has an emerging plan flow that favors both inductive and deductive reasoning, and analysis is dependent on context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The phenomenon of servant leadership characteristics was the focus of my in-depth qualitative investigation.

Research questions determine the specific design of a research inquiry; thus, the questions posed in this study demand an understanding of the *how* of the case's phenomenon (servant leadership characteristics). Therefore, a case study was the aligning research design (Yin, 2014).

To best answer the central research question, a case study design was selected as it allowed for the phenomenon (servant leadership characteristics) to be understood while in the real-world setting of Chapel Academy (Yin, 2014). The main subject of study, or the case per Yin (2014), concentrated on the HoS, Mark Carpenter (pseudonym). Inside a case study, multiple sophisticated participants' perspectives were observed and interpreted by myself, the researcher (Stake, 1995). I did so while offering a holistic, real-world view (Yin, 2014). A case study was an optimal design for this study to understand servant leadership characteristics' influence on employee job satisfaction.

This study focused on one bounded system centered on Chapel Academy's stakeholders; therefore, it was a single, rather than multiple, case study (Yin, 2014). An absence of subunit labels, per Yin (2014), makes this case holistic, rather than an embedded case study. Lastly, this research was instrumental rather than intrinsic. The research issue was not *right there* for the researcher and required a considerable amount of evidence collected and analyzed for understanding the research phenomenon (Stake, 1995). Findings from the study were measured and balanced with other empirical findings.

Research Questions

Central Question

How would stakeholders describe the experience of schools led by servant leader principals?

Sub-questions

SQ1: How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to faculty and staff?

SQ2: How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to guardians?

Setting

From the original donation of 25 acres from a veterinary farm, the land has grown over the decade, through much hard work and effort, into a church and a school (Document 36, Lines 68–69 – Principal Thoughts Chapel Academy Mission Statement). Opened in 1999, Chapel Academy was established as a PK–12 private, faith-based school located in North Central Florida (School History, n.d.). The school was a ministry of Chapel Church (pseudonym), which began by serving students through Grade 5 in its inaugural year (School History, n.d.). The school’s website shares the school’s growth over the years, noting that it expanded from elementary to junior high, and ultimately high school, with the first senior class graduating in 2018 (School History, n.d.). According to the local county assessor’s office, Chapel Academy sits on 51.58 acres, with the campus’s five buildings offering over 33,000 square feet of learning space for students.

Chapel Academy’s enrollment varies due to hosting year-round open enrollment, meaning students enroll at any time during the academic year. At the time of the study, student enrollment was 415 students. During the study, Chapel Academy served students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade and held certified instructional and non-instructional staff hired

to help students. Chapel Academy’s team was comprised of 26 teachers in grades PK–12, seven teaching assistants, nine specials teachers, four academic coaches/directors, and 13 office staff and administrators (Staff Search, n.d.). Further breaking down the faculty and staff makeup, the specials teachers were responsible for teaching physical education, computer science, music, art, drama, Spanish, and media (Staff Search, n.d.). Non-instructional staff included classroom assistants, academic coach, hot lunch coordinator, office assistants, guidance counselor, business manager, office manager, deans, and grounds supervisor (Staff Search, n.d.).

At the time of research, the lead administrator of Chapel Academy, Mark Carpenter, was in his ninth year of leadership as the HoS. Before arriving at Chapel Academy, he served at another private, faith-based school in southern Florida. He has served his faculty and staff in both settings and is known to be a leader who collaborates with and nurtures his faculty (S. Turner [pseudonym], personal communication, October 25, 2018). The school’s leadership team (see Figure 2) consists of the HoS, two Directors, and a Dean of Students (Staff Search, n.d.).

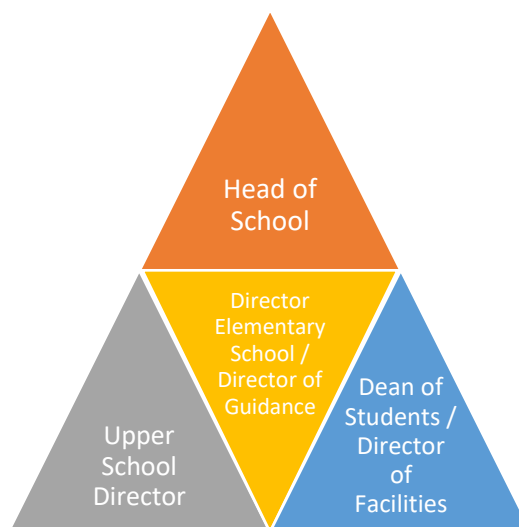


Figure 2. Chapel Academy’s leadership structure.

Chapel Academy is located in the heart of Mary County (pseudonym), Florida, and the county’s 2019 population was reported as 59,110 with a composite of 49% males and 51%

females (City Data, 2019). The median resident age in Mary County was 37.5 years, while the state's median age was 42.0 years (City Data, 2019). The same data source revealed that the median household income was \$42,458 compared to the state average of \$52,594 (City Data, 2019). In 2019, Mary County's reported ethnicity composition was as follows: 59% White, 22% Black, 13% Hispanic, 3% Asian, 2% two or more races, 0.05% American Indian, 0.09% another race, and 0.04% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander (City Data, 2019).

Participants

While Chapel Academy is a ministry of Chapel Church, which has governing authority over the school, for this study, the church deferred authority and permitted Chapel Academy to grant research approval. Upon approval from Chapel Academy (Appendix A) to utilize the site, participants' selection ensued. Participants for this study were made up of the Chapel Academy teachers and staff and Chapel Academy guardians. Both participant groupings were represented in the one-to-one interviews, the focus group, and documentation analysis. Data collection methods provided breadth and depth in the study's influence of servant leadership characteristics on employee satisfaction.

This study's faculty and staff participants were intentionally and purposefully selected using a criterion-based case selection for one-to-one interviews and a focus group. For uniformity, the criterion sampling method was used for all participants. Criterion based cases, such as this study, are designed to meet a compared standard implicitly or explicitly, whereas participants share a set of norms (Patton, 2015). The faculty and staff selection criterion included: (a) currently employed at Chapel Academy with either part-time or full-time status and (b) faculty and staff who have worked under the leadership of Mark Carpenter for a minimum of two years. The projected targeted sample size for one-to-one interviews was 12; therefore, I

intended to interview 14 participants to account for attrition. The guardian selection criterion included: (a) guardian of a full-time or part-time student in PK–12th grade during the 2020–2021 school year at Chapel Academy and (b) the 2020–2021 school year served as the third consecutive school year, or higher, a student within the household attended Chapel Academy. Chapel Academy defines part-time students as PK3 and PK4 students who opt to leave at noon and high school students with a course load of fewer than five classes on campus (M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 26, 2020).

In both participant dependent data collection methods of interviews and the focus group, the projected targeted number of participants was 12; however, I intended to recruit 14 to account for attrition (Morgan, 1997; Seidman, 2019). Additionally, the composite of each data collection participant grouping for interviews and focus groups was as close to the same makeup as possible with six Chapel Academy teachers or staff members and six guardians. This study consisted of a single focus group comprised of diverse faculty and staff members with guardians (Morgan, 1997). Participants received an email inviting them to sign up for the focus group session (Appendix E); the email included a link with available dates and times using the online scheduling organizer at www.SignUpGenius.com. Privacy settings offered through the scheduling software protected participants' personal information during sign up, ensuring confidentiality.

Faculty and Staff

Chapel Academy faculty includes both instructional and non-instructional staff working full and part-time as needed to fulfill students' needs. Per the Chapel Academy's webpage, during the 2020–2021 school year, the school employed 59 staff members ranging from PK teaching assistants to HoS (see Table 2; Staff Search, n.d.).

Table 2

Chapel Academy Faculty and Staff

Classifications	Pre-K	Elementary	Jr. & High	Specials	Office
Teacher	3	12	11	9	
Teaching Assistant	4	2		1	
Academic Coach/Director		2		2	
Office Personnel					7
Grounds Supervisor					1
Administrators / Dean					5
Total	7	16	11	12	13

Note. Total Faculty and Staff = 59

I requested access from Chapel Academy for faculty and staff email addresses to introduce and ease direct communications. Furthermore, a summary of faculty and staff hire dates was requested from the school to filter qualifying faculty and staff participants who have been employed at Chapel Academy for a minimum of two years under Mark Carpenter's leadership. Data regarding faculty and staff hire dates were compiled into an electronic spreadsheet and sorted to find faculty and staff meeting the two-year criteria. Like all electronic data relating to the study, this information was double password protected, with only myself having access to the files to ensure security (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Emails inviting faculty and staff to participate in the study (Appendix C) included an attachment with the consent form (Appendix D) for download and completion. Chapel Academy faculty and staff had the option of returning the form by email to the researcher or sending it to the school's front office, where consent forms were collected and mailed to me in a self-addressed stamped envelope left in advance with the HoS. The majority of participants elected to return their forms by email.

Guardians

There was no known database, current or outdated, to draw cursory data to gain a rudimentary knowledge of the parent participants. What was acknowledged was that the guardian participants have students at Chapel Academy, and my familiarity regarding this participant grouping increased as the study progressed.

An introductory cover letter with a consent form (Appendix C; Appendix D) was emailed to guardians meeting the selection criteria: (a) guardian of a full-time (or) part-time student in PK–12th grade during 2020–2021 at Chapel Academy, (b) 2020–2021 served as the third consecutive year, or higher, that a student in the guardian’s household was enrolled at the school. Chapel Academy reserves part-time status to PK3 and PK4 students departing at noon and high school students who opt to enroll in fewer than five classes on campus during the year (M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 26, 2020). Interested guardian participants then returned the signed consent forms to the Chapel Academy front office for collection and the HoS’s assistant mailed them to me via the self-addressed stamped envelope.

Procedures

The initial step was to secure permission to conduct the Chapel Academy research inquiry (Appendix A). Once approval was available from Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB; see Appendix B), participants were recruited for participation in the study (Appendix C). Both faculty and staff participants and guardian participants had initial contact for recruitment through email; participants choosing to volunteer for the study completed a consent form (Appendix D). The intent was to interview six Chapel Academy teachers and staff and six guardians; however, to account for attrition, 16 participants were selected. As participants met the criteria for selection for data collection, each received a pseudonym as a means of keeping

identities confidential. This study did not require a pilot study; therefore, one did not occur. This study's data collection sources came from multiple one-to-one interviews, two focus groups, and documentation analysis.

Interviewing participants allows the researcher to record their story (Seidman, 2019). Interviewing takes time as the researcher builds rapport, recording information, and giving the participant's experiences a voice (Seidman, 2019). Interview participants in this study met in a convenient, familiar, private, distraction-free setting for a 90-minute interview (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Seidman, 2019). Interviews offer the opportunity to understand others' lived experiences and the associated meaning they make of that experience (Seidman, 2019). As the researcher collecting information, I listened more than talked, asked clarifying questions to the participant's responses, and asked to hear more about topics that correlated to the research questions (Seidman, 2019). Interview questions were open-ended, and I did not probe into the participants' lives if they were unwilling to share (Seidman, 2019). Interviews occurred with the participants' consent for audio recording (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Focus group and one-to-one interviews were complementary data collection methods intended to strengthen an inquiry (Morgan, 1997). The advantages of using focus groups include concentrated amounts of data and the benefit of group interaction in producing data (Morgan, 1997). Focus group participants consisted of three members of Chapel Academy faculty and staff and three guardians. Two additional participants per group were recruited to account for attrition. A specific meeting place was requested on campus to conduct the focus group meeting, such as the media center, unused classroom, a conference room, or media center. The requested room was to include tables, preferably in a U-shape arrangement, that would comfortably seat the participants and the researcher. The researcher served as a moderator and provided enough room

for equipment such as free-standing audio and video recording needed for the group during the session (Morgan, 1997).

The Researcher's Role

I came to know Mark Carpenter through a private school accrediting agency. We had a casual professional relationship for two years interacting at conferences and sharing occasional work-related emails. At the annual meetings, he stood apart from a room full of other Christ-centered leaders, as one who appeared to put the needs of his team first. When selecting a servant leader to study, he immediately came to mind.

From the beginning, I looked forward to setting foot on the Chapel Academy campus and meeting his employees, students, and guardians, to learn from them and their stories on how he has influenced their lives. I was eager to walk each building's halls, meeting the Chapel Academy stakeholders, observing, and living their exclusive culture.

One of a qualitative study's unique traits is that the researcher inserts herself into the inquiry process and becomes a human instrument collecting data in the natural setting while being sensitive to the participants' story (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). The researcher collects rich data to preserve the participants' voices while, at the same time, being immersed in the study herself (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In some ways *human instrument*, like a *servant leader*, is a contradictory term, as it brings two challenging perceptions together: the subjective *human* and the objective *instrument* (Patton, 2015).

As a researcher, I entered this study with biases. Having served as an educator for over 20 years in the public sector, private schools, a juvenile justice prevention program, and Christian academies, I have worked in diverse environments. In each setting, I have worked alongside a multitude of leadership styles; some inspired me to be more, while some discouraged me from

being like them. Like many educators today, I have lived the experience of job dissatisfaction influenced by school leaders. As a Christian, I believe Christ models servant leadership and gives a perfect example to follow.

I sought to understand the participants entirely in the world they lived and worked for, for I am a social constructivist (Creswell & Poth, 2018). My values, or axiological assumptions, were evident in the weight given to each participant's input. I balance my bias with the objectivity as a researcher in seeing all the multiple perspectives. My epistemological assumption was apparent through the reality constructed between the servant leader (Mark Carpenter), myself, as the researcher, and each participant. The participants' voices are the primary voice in Chapter Four and account for my rhetorical assumption. Lastly, my methodological assumptions are transparent through one-to-one interviews, focus groups, and documentation analysis.

To avoid any biased perceptions, I allowed participants to review transcripts of the one-to-one interviews and the focus group to ensure accuracy. I also used bracketing, separating my perceptions and expectations from themes through the reflective memo. Likewise, the triangulation of multiple data sources was used to support findings. Similarly, having other peers review my study's conclusions, checking for gaps, and affirming findings eliminated any researcher biases.

I had courteous and professional interactions with all participants when communicating through electronic, written, and verbal means. There was no supervisory relationship between myself and any participants, as this was not a school I had worked at in the past two decades. Participation was voluntary, and there was no coercion by me in exchange for their assistance in

this study. Also, participants were permitted to withdraw from the study before the findings were reported.

Direct monetary compensation to participants did not occur in this study. Instead, those who participated in the one-to-one interviews and the focus group had a donation made in their honor to the Chapel Academy's building fund as the means of compensation for participation in the research study. An estimated 30 participants were anticipated for the overall study. On behalf of individuals for participation in the study, there was a \$10.00 donation as a means of compensation. Therefore, this study does not equate to a for-profit research study.

Data Collection

As a researcher, I am a human instrument in the research process collecting data in the natural environment studied (Patton, 2015). A study should have multiple data sources to address a broad range of issues (Yin, 2014). Data for this single, holistic, instrumental case study were collected through one-to-one interviews, focus groups, and document analysis. The merging of various data from numerous sources is known as triangulation (Yin, 2014). As interviews affect the social context of relationships between researchers and participants, they occurred first to solidify a positive impact between the researcher and participants (Seidman, 2019). The focus group was the next collection method used to obtain a concentrated amount of data (Morgan, 1997). Documentation analysis validated participants' information during the interviews and focus group and illustrated the servant leaders' legacy by the HoS.

Data Collection Procedures

Robust qualitative studies, such as this one, are created with multiple data collection sources such as interviews, focus groups, and document analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The access to data, rapport with participants when collecting data, forms of data to consider when

collected, and finally, the recording and storing data are all steps within the data collection process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The process for this study began with obtaining IRB approval from Liberty University (Appendix B). Once the IRB approval was received, the process to secure the research location occurred. I submitted a written request to the Chapel Church, the governing body of Chapel Academy, requesting permission to conduct the study (Appendix A). Chapel Academy was selected for this study as the annual teacher turnover rate averages .15% compared to the national average of 20% for Christian schools (Jones & Watson, 2017; M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 30, 2020). Chapel Church was the governing authority over Chapel Academy. However, for this study, the church surrendered approval of the study to the Academy. Chapel Academy gave written permission for the (a) researcher to be on campus for one-to-one interviews and conduct focus groups with stakeholders as part of collecting data for research, (b) faculty and staff email addresses to be used for ease of communication, (c) access to school's documents (from 2016–2017 SY to present) demonstrating servant leadership interaction with stakeholders (i.e., newsletters to guardians and staff, meeting agendas, climate survey results, rosters showing faculty and staff assignments over the years to express faculty and staff's desire to return, emails from Head of School to stakeholders [faculty, staff, guardians] communicating general messages about the school, etc.), and (d) necessary information relating to stakeholder demographics, employee status of part-time/full-time, faculty and staff organizational structure, school history, etc. (Appendix A).

Next was the recruitment of participants of Chapel Academy teachers, staff, and guardians. Chapel Academy teachers, staff, and guardians were invited by email to participate with a cover letter explaining the study with the consent form as an attachment (Appendix B;

Appendix C; Appendix D). The participants were intentionally and purposefully selected using criterion so that their shared experiences would contribute to understanding the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in influencing employee job satisfaction. The study intended to recruit 12 participants for both the interviews and a focus group. However, 14 were targeted for interviews and 16 for the focus group to account for attrition. Equal representation of staff and guardians' participation was the aim, or as close as possible. Participation in this study was voluntary; any person could choose to not partake without penalty. There was no monetary compensation for participants; instead, a contribution to the Chapel Academy's Building Fund was made by the researcher on behalf of participants by who took part in the interviews, focus group, or provided documents for analysis. Criterion-based selection of participants was employed. The criterion for teachers and staff included: (a) full-time (or) part-time employees of Chapel Academy, (b) having worked at least two years under the leadership of Mark Carpenter. The criterion for guardians included (a) guardian of a full-time or part-time student in PK–12th grade in Chapel Academy during the 2020–2021 school year, and (b) this school year serves as the third consecutive school year or higher as a guardian for a student within the household at Chapel Academy. Part-time enrollment was defined for PK3 and PK4 students who left at noon and for high school students enrolled in less than five courses (M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 26, 2020). The participants completed the consent form and returned it to the researcher by email or returned it to the school office. It was collected in the awaiting self-addressed stamped envelope and mailed to the researcher.

Scheduling of participants for either interviews or the focus group occurred in the same manner. Emails were sent to participants offering a choice of dates and times of convenience

from www.SignUpGenius.com. Before sending the emails, the researcher programmed the privacy settings on the website to protect participants' confidentiality amongst the other participants. The researcher also assigned pseudonyms to participants to protect their privacy further.

One-to-One Interviews

More than a data collection method, interviews are interactions that permit participants and researchers to authentically bond (Mason, 2002). In-depth interviewing helps understand the meaning of participants' lived experiences and allows a participant's story to be told (Seidman, 2019). Participants' sharing their experiences and stories while interviewing is essential. Therefore, as the researcher, I listened more than talked, asked clarifying questions, avoided interrupting, and asked open-ended questions (Seidman, 2019). The first step for compelling interviews is preparation. Interviews in this study required minimal preparation ahead of the meeting. Participants did not have an advance copy of the interview questions (Appendix F). However, a general guide on topics was emailed before the interview to participants.

Next, one-to-one interviews were made available through an email invitation with an embedded link to www.SignUpGenius.com, offering various dates and times in which participants could select a 90-minute time block that allowed the interview to work around their schedules. Interviews were anticipated to last upwards of an hour; however, 90-minutes were allotted to allow for more talkative participants and administrative tasks between meetings (Ranney et al., 2015). Interviews began with three demographic questions and then proceeded with 14 open-ended questions that aligned with the research question to determine the servant leadership characteristics of a PK-12 leader influencing employees' job satisfaction.

At all times, privacy protection was given to all participants, starting with a pseudonym upon returning a signed consent form. Additionally, participants' privacy was protected during interview sign-up by implementing website privacy settings that allowed participants' names to be restricted from public view; thus, participants could not see who had signed up, only which spots remained available. As a result, participants' privacy was protected as I was the only person who had access to the password-protected website account (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Adult participant interview questions. Interviews allow more control of a specific data target that aligns with posed research questions (Stake, 1995). The following open-ended interview questions were asked during the one-to-one interviews. The researcher used an interview guide (Appendix F) to ensure all participants could answer all questions equally; however, the order of items varied by participant depending on the natural discussion flow. Participant interviews continued until data triangulation was met (Seidman, 2019). Yin considers interviews or verbal reports to share their story as a platform for participants (Yin, 2014). These one-to-one interview questions were research-aligned (Yin, 2014).

Standardized Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. Please state your age.
2. Please state your gender.
3. Which of the following best represents your ethnic heritage (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020)?
 - a. White
 - b. Black (or) African American
 - c. American Indian (or) Alaska Native
 - d. Asian
 - e. Native Hawaiian (or) Pacific Islander

- f. Other
4. Share with me your current or last job held. What was the job title, duties you performed, and how long have you served in this role? Your relationship with your supervisor.
 5. As a stakeholder of this school, how many years have you been here?
 6. Why do you remain at this school? What about this Head of School sets him apart from principals at other schools?
 7. In what ways does the Head of School stay plugged into the day-to-day operations?
Please give at least two examples.
 8. How does the Head of School show that he does or does not value people? Please share examples or stories to illustrate your point.
 9. Imagine I am new to the area; how would you describe the school climate, the school's personality, to me? The more details you can give me would be helpful.
 10. In what ways does the Head of School demonstrate trustworthiness? Please explain your answer.
 11. Tell about a time when the Head of School exhibited a selfless act. Do you recall experiencing one? Please share the story.
 12. In what ways does the Head of School help stakeholders grow?
 13. How does the Head of School help stakeholders become healthier (physically, emotionally, and spiritually)?
 14. In what ways does the Head of School help stakeholders become wiser?
 15. In what ways does the Head of School help stakeholders become freer (more independent)?

16. In what ways does the Head of School help stakeholders become more autonomous (self-ruling)?
17. What, if anything else related to this topic, would you like to add? I would love to hear anything you would like to share.

Questions 1–4 were standard demographic questions used to collect data, alleviate participants' nerves, and build rapport (Mason, 2002; Seidman, 2019). The demographic questions were not included in data analysis and were intended for measuring fair participant sampling. Question 5 addressed to the employee retention rate and how this school defies the national averages (Castro et al., 2018; Jones & Watson, 2017; Torres, 2016). Although the targeted audience for this question was the faculty and staff, other stakeholders also provided insightful responses as they compose the entire school climate. As such, this question was available to all participants. During data analysis, a determination was made to not include this question in consideration of the study findings due to lack of participants. Question 6 allowed for the participants to share examples of modeling from Chapel Academy's leader. Leaders will consistently model expected organizational behavior rather than make their demands of their followers (Irving, 2011). Question 7 sought to document the impact of the relationship between stakeholders and school leaders on school climate (Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2016; Price, 2012). Question 8 examined the relationship between servant leadership and school climate because a positive school climate impacts employee satisfaction, which in turn increases employee retention (Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Chang et al., 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Hung et al., 2016; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Le Ng et al., 2016; Price, 2012; Russell, 2003; Ryan et al., 2017; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Question 9 used a technique in which participants speak as if the researcher were someone else

(Seidman, 2019). This specific question revealed more about the school's culture (Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2016; Price, 2012). Question 10 addressed trust in one's leader, an essential attribute of servant leadership and healthy climates (Burton et al., 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Price, 2012). Question 11 permitted the participant to share a story of the principal putting others first (Greenleaf, 2008; Spears, 2010). Question 12 linked servant leadership and empowerment (Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Krog & Govender, 2015; Reddy & Kamesh, 2016). Questions 12–16 referenced Greenleaf's (2008) best test by measuring the ability of the HoS to create servant leaders of his followers. Question 17 offered the participants one final chance for their voice to be heard by providing additional comments not asked by the researcher without probing (Seidman, 2019).

I reached data saturation after eight interviews. After interviewing, as the researcher, I recorded notes. Later, when reviewing the notes, I bracketed my feelings from the data during the reflective memoing process. At the end of each interview, I took a moment to make a written summary of the session, documenting any problems with procedures, data collection, or the interview guide (Ranney et al., 2015). While writing the summary, I offered any solutions as the summary served as an initial analysis (Ranney et al., 2015). The researcher's paper notes from the interviews were stored in a portable, fireproof locking safe and any electronic notes in a password protected electronic storage folder (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Focus Group

A complementary data gathering method, the focus group, occurred after the one-to-one interviews. I determined if the (interviewed) stakeholders shared a common perspective before engaging in the focus group (Morgan, 1997). Two benefits afforded to researchers when using focus groups are evidence of similarities and differences of opinions in participants' views and

the ability to gather a large quantity of data in a relatively small amount of time (Morgan, 1997). Thus, focus groups offer great flexibility to the researcher (Morgan, 1997). This study needed one focus group, constituted of an equal mixture of six Chapel Academy teachers or staff and guardians. The focus group occurred in real-time (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Scheduling of the focus group session was the first step in the meeting process. The online scheduling website, SignUpGenius, automatically sent participants a reminder two days in advance. I also followed up with confirmation, a list of topics to be discussed, and meeting reminders. Because there were more participants than the number of available focus group slots, the scheduling notice specified that the six slots filled on a first-come, first-filled basis, including the two additional slots accounting for attrition (Appendix E). Before beginning the focus group, the next logical step was to create a list of group norms or rules that were reviewed with the group members to guarantee a civil environment in which everyone had equal talk time (Morgan, 1997). The third step of the process involved moderating the focus group. Although Patton (2015) recommended a two-person research team to moderate and interview a focus group, I served as moderator and interviewer. As the moderator, before beginning the session, I shared with participants that my role and presence were that of a learner, one who was there to learn from their shared stories and experiences (Morgan, 1997). As the moderator, it was my responsibility to ensure that the group discussion flowed smoothly. Discussing the boundaries to ensure everyone participated equally was appropriate; the group norms fit into this moderation (Morgan, 1997). Additionally, as the moderator, it was my purpose to keep the discussion concentrated on the topic at hand, the posed question, and moving participant discussion to ensure equal participation.

Focus group norms. As a moderator tool, group norms help establish boundaries (Appendix G; Morgan, 1997). I reviewed the study's purpose, overview of the focus group session, norms with participants, and a reminder of the confidentiality statement participants signed before the start of the group gathering (Ranney et al., 2015). Below was a list of the norms used with the focus group members:

- One person speaks at a time (Morgan, 1997).
- There are to be no sidebar conversations among members (Morgan, 1997).
- Everyone participates; equally, no one dominates the conversation (Morgan, 1997).
- Per the consent form for the items discussed within the focus group, confidentiality must remain inside and outside the focus group (Appendix D).

Open-ended focus group questions. Focus groups offer an efficient method of gathering a considerable amount of data in a short amount of time while considering the unity of participants' opinions. The construction of the following list of open-ended prompts (Appendix G) was for the focus group members. An advance copy of the question topics and themes was made available to participants. A pilot study was deemed unnecessary for this study. In the moderator's role, I began by asking the icebreaker questions and continued being highly involved in the focus group, adding structure (Morgan, 1997).

1. Let us start with introductions and an icebreaker. State your name and tell the group what you think makes you different from anyone in the group. I will go first; I think I am the only person in the group today who does not know how to tread water when I swim. Who wants to go next?
2. Think of your daily interactions with the Head of School; what comes to mind? How would you describe him? Please share stories to illustrate your point.

3. Think about the communications (speech and written) between him and yourself?
How effective do you feel the communication you receive from the Head of School to be? Please give examples.
4. In what ways does the Head of School serve stakeholders?
5. How does the Head of School demonstrate the following characteristics: (a) listening, (b) empathy, (c) healing, (d) awareness, (e) persuasion, (f) conceptualization, (g) foresight, (h) stewardship, (i) commitment to the growth of others, and (j) building community?
6. Which of the above characteristics do you consider to be the Head of School's strengths? Name 3.
7. Which of the above characteristics do you consider to be the Head of School's weakness? Name 2.
8. If you talked to a prospective family about this school, how would you describe the school's climate and how the Head of School maintains the environment.
9. Tell about a time when the Head of School put another person's need(s) first.
10. How does the Head of School allow your voice to be heard in school matters?
11. What if anything else related to this topic would you like to add?

Question 1 was an icebreaker to set the mood at the beginning of the discussion while simultaneously abolishing the group-think mentality (Morgan, 1997). General focus group questions are meant to be non-threatening to put participants at ease, as the questions gradually become more probing (Morgan, 1997). Questions 2–4 addressed the relationships between the servant leader and stakeholders and the impact upon school climate (Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2016; Price, 2012). Questions 5–7 linked to the servant leadership

characteristics (Greenleaf, 2008; Spears, 2010). Question 8 pertained to school climate as impacted by the relationship between stakeholders and the servant leader (Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2016; Price, 2012). Question 9 spoke to a servant leader's unique characteristic that places followers' needs first (Greenleaf, 2008; Spears, 2010). Question 10 revealed the leader's ability to empower followers (stakeholders) by meeting their needs (Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Krog & Govender, 2015). Question 11 allowed focus group members to add anything else to the discussion they felt was pertinent (Morgan, 1997).

I recorded reflective memo notes while reviewing the meeting's video and audio recordings and bracketed my feelings from the data. Additionally, I made a written summary of the session, documenting any problems and offering any solutions; this summary served as an analysis of the group session (Ranney et al., 2015). Paper copies of the researcher's notes were scanned and stored in a portable, fireproof locked safe. All electronic notes were in a password-protected electronic storage folder (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Appendix D).

Privacy and confidentiality protection for participants were afforded throughout the study, beginning with pseudonyms assigned upon receipt of the study consent form for each participant. As participants accessed www.SignUpGenius.com for focus group appointments, their identities were further protected by the researcher's security settings input.

Documentation Analysis

Documentation was a supportive, not primary, data collection method; I used it as a means of corroborating data from the one-to-one interviews and the focus group (Yin, 2014). Documentation provides behind-the-scenes information not readily observable or shared by participants (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). Chapel Academy documents

were requested to be reviewed (Appendix A) as a means of data collection, aiming to provide data and insight that could not be directly observed (Patton, 2015).

It was anticipated that most documents examined would be the result of those supplied by Chapel Academy; however, participants were invited to share documents as well (Appendix C; Appendix E). Participants opting to share documents were instructed to schedule an appointment through www.SignUpGenius.com (Appendix E) to leave document(s) for the researcher's review and analysis using the Documentation Researcher Notes (Appendix H). After a thorough analysis by the researcher, the document(s) were securely sealed and given to the school's front office staff for pick up by participants after confirmed notification by email.

Pictorial and written documentation were examples of documentation I sought to examine to answer the research questions. Samples of documentation solicited for review at Chapel Academy included:

- Emails from HoS to stakeholders: In the emails, I looked for undertones relating to the school culture, references to school vision, communication between HoS and stakeholders, servant leadership characteristics, etc. (Relating to RQ1, SQ1, and SQ2.)
- Newsletters: This was another measurement of the HoS's communication with stakeholders and an opportunity to witness how he builds community. It was unknown if there were newsletters and if so, to which specific stakeholder groupings. (SQ1 and SQ2, if applicable.)
- Faculty and staff rosters (for the last five years): Staffing rosters can demonstrate employee retention at Chapel Academy, showing attrition rates and possibly speaking to employees' job satisfaction. (Relating to RQ1 and SQ1).

- Photographs: Not all documents were in written format. Some were pictorial and told or verified a story. Photos were requested, such as those found in yearbooks, for analysis and comparison to the servant leadership characteristics and participants' transcripts. (Relating to RQ1, SQ1, and SQ2.)
- Social media posts: Social media serves as a visual timeline of our lives today. In looking at the school's social media accounts, I was able to see into the school's climate affirming information from interviews, the focus group members' statements. (Relating to RQ1, SQ 1, and SQ2.)
- Notes or letters from stakeholders to the HoS: Informal and formal correspondence between stakeholders and HoS revealed a glimpse into Chapel Academy's daily lives, showing the issues (resolved and unresolved) and offered the researcher a glimpse into the stakeholders' relationships through these forms of written communications. (Relating to SQ1 and SQ2.)
- Climate surveys (for the last five years): Schools offer an annual climate survey to their stakeholders seeking feedback on the school's performance for a given year. I analyzed Chapel Academy's climate surveys from the 2015–2016 school year onward and looked for patterns in the stakeholders' voices regarding the school's culture. (Relating to RQ1, SQ1, and SQ2.)
- Other documents: I looked over any other materials which supported the research questions posed in this study.

Dedicated and adequate time was allotted to the document reviews and synthesis, just as given for the one-to-one interviews and the focus group (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These documents served to substantiate data collected in the one-to-one interviews and the focus group, further

strengthening the occurring data triangulation. Reviewing the documents, I brought to light discrepancies or strengthened claims in participant statements or program implementations; as the primary researcher, I used the materials to measure the organization's consistency (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). "Each artifact has a history of how it got there and a reason or meaning for its presence" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 61); it was my role to review and analyze each document to uncover the story awaiting as it related to Chapel Academy, the HoS, and the stakeholders. For ease of recordkeeping, I created a form (the Documentation Researcher's Notes recording sheet) and recorded notes of the documents reviewed and how the artifact answers the posed research questions (Appendix H). Where needed, and with consent from Chapel Academy, some of the organization's documents were scanned and electronically stored by me for further content analysis.

As I reviewed each document for analysis, I annotated the researcher's notes on the Documentation Researcher's Notes recording sheet (Appendix H). Bracketing of feelings occurred as needed. Any documents or researcher's notes were stored in a portable, fireproof locking safe, whereas any scanned documents or electronic files were in a password-protected electronic storage folder (Creswell & Poth, 2018). All researcher notes and recording sheet documents were securely filed and will be stored for three years, per record-keeping requirements (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Upon receipt from lending participants, all documents' cataloging into the Master List of Documents Analyzed occurred (Appendix I). The tracker served to inform when multiple copies contributed, as was the case with Document 32: Principal Thoughts 12 – End is Near; Document 50: Principal Thought – Start of Summer 2020; and Document 57: 2020–2021 School Reopening

Plan. One item was selected for coding to keep data pure and free from inflated counts in duplicate submissions.

Data Analysis

The analysis was the separation of observation while assigning meaning (Stake, 1995). In this study, the data collected through interviews, a focus group, and documentation analysis were collected and then analyzed for meaning, answering the posed research questions. Pseudonyms were assigned to protect participants' privacy upon their submission of consent forms. The first step of data analysis was to ensure the performance of transcript analysis. Once the interviews were completed, the audio files were electronically uploaded to the online transcription service Rev.com for transcription, then saved as a Word document for member checking. Focus group audio recordings were uploaded to the online transcription service, Rev.com for transcription and transferred to Word document. Focus group transcripts were available for group participants' review and to check for accuracy. Once verified by all participants, copies of transcripts were securely stored both physically and electronically by me, utilizing strict security standards (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Upon successfully transcribing interviews and the focus group, the destruction of both the audio and video recordings occurred. Secure transcription (interviews and focus group) storage will ensue for three years (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The second step in the data analysis process involved the writing and analysis of reflection memos. This step involves reading and memoing emerging ideas, which transpired when taking and summarizing the researcher's notes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Initially, the focus group was to be video recorded. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions and an IRB modification approval (Appendix J), the focus group was conducted through Skype teleconference. Both one-to-one interviews and the focus group were audio recorded. Then the

recordings were transcribed and member-checked for accuracy. The researcher reviewed the transcripts, the researcher's notes, and reflective notes, all taken while memoing. Researcher notes included bracketing, where I separated my feelings from the data.

Next was the data coding, which included a systematic review to resolve discrepancies known as thematic analysis. Following a holistic approach, each transcript was read as a whole to capture the participant's experience before identifying codes (Jit et al., 2017). As a researcher, I began to describe and classify codes into themes by working with words, identifying, applying codes, and paring down codes into themes (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data codes correspond to an idea or concept and reflect emerging ideas (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ranney et al., 2015). From this point, I utilized a computer program, ATLAS.ti v.9, to check for a more in-depth quantitative thematic analysis to assist in finding data patterns (central themes) that answered the posed research questions. Nearing the end of the data analysis process is the selection of a central theme. Afterward, I searched for themes aligned with the previous data collected and the transcripts, as documentation was meant to be unified (Yin, 2014).

Themes appear from the coded text in transcripts and texts (Ranney et al., 2015). This research utilized the ATLAS.ti v.9 program to find central themes within the data patterns and the mega themes between the transcripts (from interviews and focus group) combined with the documentation. The codes and themes described the case and its context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As coding discrepancies occurred regarding coding or thematic categorization, I would manually override or resolve issues as they arose. I developed and assessed interpretations of the themes by relating categories to literature (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Finally, I reported and published the data findings in Chapter Four and created a perspective while reporting the data in Chapter Five (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A variety of analytical steps (pattern matching, explanation building, logic model, or rival interpretation) applied for each collection method.

The analytical approach begins with pattern matching a study's collected data pattern with another defined pattern distinguished before the study (Yin, 2014). Pattern matching was an on-going approach throughout this study as data were collected and compared. The findings and literature were linked together from Chapter Two and the written report shared in Chapter Four through pattern matching.

Building the data within a case to explain an occurrence is known as explanation building (Yin, 2014). In this study, explanation building was a continuous process that occurred as each piece of data collected along the study continuum allowed for comparing empirically-based models with specific data collections (Yin, 2014).

Next, the logic model was applied as it pertained to the particular data found in Chapter Two's literature review and linked to this specific study and its findings. This is separate from pattern matching, which applies to pieces of data that form patterns. Under the guidance of the data analytical approach, the summary of rival servant leadership explanations was reviewed and found not to be suitable when interpreting the study's findings (Yin, 2014).

Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of a study assures that the findings are reliable (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Reliability is found within the consistency in both the research procedures and the degree of repeatability of the study's procedures (Yin, 2014). Within this qualitative study, three categories with specific strategies combined to ensure integrity: (a) credibility, (b) dependability

and confirmability, and (c) transferability. Trustworthiness was established in this study through the triangulation of three data collection methods: interviews, focus group, and documentation analysis.

Credibility

Credibility focuses on a study's truth-value and is equivalent to internal validity (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Credibility in research procedures yields confidence in the findings. Prolonged engagement in the form of the researcher spending time building relationships through interactions, interviewing, etc., allows participants to know and trust the researcher (Patton, 2015). Another approach to be used is through member checking in which participants review transcripts for "accuracy and palatability" (Stake, 1995, p. 115) and offer feedback to ensure that their voice is precisely reflected. Finally, data triangulation enhances the qualitative process showcasing multiple data collection methods used as the data points merge. Prolonged engagement, member checking, and data triangulation bind together, forming credibility within this study.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability requires consistency, and confirmability requires neutrality (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Audit trails are commonly used to illustrate dependability and confirmability. An audit trail left behind by the researcher ensures transference and repetition. This study was no different. The audit trail includes the chain of evidence and correlation of participant names with pseudonyms and added reflective notes that encompass my subjective responses to participant interactions and observations during the one-to-one interviews and the focus group. Researchers will achieve neutrality by balancing the role of the active observer (human instrument) and active

listener during interviews and focus groups by listening more than talking and asking open-ended questions, and seeking clarification when needed (Seidman, 2019).

Transferability

Transferability is the ability to replicate the study's results in another context (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Transferability requires that I include thick, expressive detail to encourage others to apply to other settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Sometimes, participants' shared experience using their quotes and stories was more impactful; this, too, was evidence of transferability (Patton, 2015).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues exist throughout a study, before, during, and after collecting data. As the researcher, I assessed the problems as they arose, being reflective and sensitive to the participants and the study without stereotyping (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Intending no harm to participants during the inquiry, I conducted due diligence before and during the research procedures. A sampling of due diligence exercised throughout this study include (a) IRB approval, (b) participant criteria for screening individuals, (c) member checking for both interviews and focus group transcripts, and (d) donation to the Chapel Academy building fund as compensation in honor of each interview participant, each focus group participant, and each participant loaning documents for analysis.

Approval

I first contacted Chapel Church to conduct the Chapel Academy study, as the Church was the governing body over the Academy. However, the Church deferred granting authority of consent to Chapel Academy. I procured permission to access Chapel Academy, perform the study (Appendix A), and obtain IRB approval (Appendix B; Appendix J). After receiving

approval from both the intended site and IRB, I then began participant recruitment. As the study progressed and modifications were required, the researcher obtained the necessary IRB approval (Appendix J).

Confidentiality

Protecting the privacy of participants was paramount. Confidentiality was obtained with the use of pseudonyms assigned to the school studied (Chapel Academy), the overseeing church (Chapel Church), the lead administrator (Mark Carpenter), and participants. I created an electronic spreadsheet tracking assigned pseudonyms with the interview and focus group participants, encrypting it with double password protection, which only I had access to guarantee its security. Per protocol, the file will be kept for five years before being destroyed by being overwritten and reformatted (Creswell & Poth, 2018; U.S. Department of Education, 2014).

Consent

Involvement in this study was voluntary; no one was coerced to participate. A participant was able to withdraw, without penalty, any time before findings were reported. Any interview participants who opted to withdrawal would not have their data included in the data analysis. However, any focus group participant's data would be included in the data analysis. Participants, Chapel Academy teachers, staff, and the guardians completed an informed consent form (Appendix D).

Informed consent forms were returned by email attachment directly to the researcher. Alternatively, participants returned signed consent forms to the HoS's assistant, who collected these forms and returned them via a self-addressed stamp envelope left for her. Guardians received a cover letter (Appendix C) and the consent form in their email with the same return options.

Influence

My role as the researcher was to gently insert myself into the participants' natural environment in a respectful manner with minimal disruption (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I held no supervisory or influential role with any participants in the study. As a researcher, I did not take from the participants, other than gathering data, without giving back to the site before leaving. Participants received no direct monetary compensation for participation in the study. Instead, a \$10.00 donation was made to the school's building fund based on each interview, focus group, and document lending participant.

Security

As the researcher, I was the only one who had unlimited access to all data; the dissertation committee had only limited access. Participants were given pseudonyms to protect their identities. A spreadsheet coordinating participants' identities to pseudonyms was kept locked under password protection. All testimonies, scanned documents, and coding data were encrypted with double password protection and stored in the researcher's files for three years, per record-keeping requirements (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Audio and video recordings were destroyed after successful transcription into word documents that were electronically saved. To avoid any negative impact from confidential information disclosure, this researcher attempted to destroy paper and electronic data. Paper records scheduled for destruction using cross-cut shredders and incineration (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). For maximum security protection, the password-protected electronic files were stored on an external storage device.

Additionally, all password-protected data remain on the disk, available for recovery to the researcher until the prescribed time of disposal. After three years, the storage device will be

overwritten and reformatted (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). All data items are available for future auditing purposes.

Sensitivity

I strove for neutrality, balancing professionalism while extending warmth to earn participants' trust. I avoided siding with participants, reporting multiple perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Regarding all shared information by interview and focus group participants, I was sensitive to any information shared or uncovered during the inquiry process that may be confidential or sensitive concerning the setting's relationships. I withheld my impressions and funneled personal opinions, where appropriate, into the reflective notes.

Summary

Chapter Three provided an overview of this single, holistic instrumental qualitative case study focused on the phenomenon (servant leadership characteristics) found in a private, faith-based school PK–12 examining a servant leader's influence on employee satisfaction. This study's guiding question asked, How would stakeholders describe the experience of schools led by servant leader principals? Participants for this study included Chapel Academy teachers/staff and guardians, and their shared experiences combined for a collective voice in this study (Patton, 2015). One-to-one interviews, a focus group, and document analysis were the instruments of a purposeful data sampling collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data were analyzed individually and collectively then intently compared to the posed research questions seeking data patterns and trends (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study demonstrated trustworthiness through credibility, dependability and confirmability, and transferability. Ethical considerations were shown by (a) protecting each participant's confidentiality and school location, (b) obtaining consent for research, (c) voluntary participation in the study, (d) security of all confidential information

through password-protected files, (e) and expressing sensitivity to participants as they shared their experiences and exposed thoughts and feelings overtly or inadvertently.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

This single, holistic, instrumental case study's purpose was to understand the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida and his influence on employee job satisfaction. These specific defining elements include the phenomenon as servant leadership characteristics and the case boundary as stakeholders. This qualitative study was centered on Greenleaf's (1970) theoretical framework of servant leadership, coupled with Spears' 10 servant leadership characteristics and the seven pillars of servant leadership by Sipe and Frick (Greenleaf, 2008; Sipe & Frick, 2015; Spears Center, 2019).

This chapter provides the study findings that examined the servant leadership characteristics and attributes as they contributed to employee job satisfaction and reduced teacher turnover. The following research questions guided the exploration of this servant leadership phenomenon:

Central question: “How would stakeholders describe the experience of schools led by servant leader principals?”

SQ1: “How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to faculty and staff?”

SQ2: “How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to guardians?”

On March 13, 2020, President Donald J. Trump issued a “Proclamation on Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak,” which proclaimed an outbreak in the United States beginning March 1st of the same year (Trump, 2020). The pandemic halted daily life in the United States and placed the nation in self-quarantine as a means of protection against the invisible enemy. With a shift to a new normal,

schools moved from brick and mortar to distance learning. The nation placed on quarantine caused life to halt abruptly. Tersely altered daily routines became redefined. The dividing of jobs into essential and non-essential working status escalated social issues. Doctoral candidates conducting research fell into the non-essential working category, resulting in prolonged delays and process pauses. One such delay occurred when on March 17, 2020, the Florida Department of Education's Commissioner Richard Corcoran closed all public and private K–12 schools along with all career and technical educational centers through April 15th, 2020 (Florida Department of Education, 2020a). Another delay arose; two weeks later, Commissioner Corcoran extended the public and private school closures until April 30th (Florida Department of Education, 2020b). Then school closure and distance learning in the state of Florida was further extended through June 3rd, the end of the 2019–2020 school year, at the request of the Commissioner of Education, resulting in a full stop in the recruitment of participants for this research (Florida Department of Education, 2020c). Focusing on protecting others and exercising social distancing, an IRB modification for this study was submitted (Appendix J), approved to change from in-person one-to-one interviews and focus groups to teleconferencing using Skype for interviews and the focus group.

Additionally, this study's progression experienced a delay due to COVID-19 when the Head of School requested a pause of several weeks before recruiting participants. After months of waiting, a mutual agreement between the researcher and HoS deemed it safe to resume research through email communications and teleconferencing (Skype). All Skype interviews and the focus group were conducted in this online format (Skype) and were audio and video recorded, thus creating a universal environment for all participants.

The researcher interviewed a total of eight participants (three faculty/staff and five guardians). One focus group session was held, composed of two members. The focus group members included one faculty/staff representative and one guardian representative. A total of 53 documents were reviewed and analyzed.

After every interview and the focus group session, the Skype recordings were transcribed. The researcher read transcripts line by line, making memo notes of issues, concerns, reoccurring ideas, or themes (Ranney et al., 2015). This researcher opted not to manually code all data due to time constraints and used ATLAS.ti v.9. After the initial researcher's review and memoing of each transcript, interview and focus group transcripts were subjected to computerized data indexing and theory building.

The researcher listened to participants' shared experiences from interviews and the focus group, allowing clarity in constructing connections between the detailed codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ranney et al., 2015). Once computer coding was completed, the researcher conducted a cross-review analysis, grouping data into categories and the final thematic themes (Yin, 2014). The thematic themes of servant leadership characteristics specific to this PK-12 leader of a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida influencing employee job satisfaction found present in this study include the following: (a) understanding, (b) considering the greater good, and (c) building team/community (d) spiritually healthy and (e) vision. Chapter Four includes a table presenting detailed participant information and a visualization of the top five thematic codes and their supporting codes streamlined from nearly 100 codes. Also included are participant vignettes from the one-to-one interviews, the focus group, and document analysis for the intentionality of emphasizing key themes relating to this study's research questions.

Participants

From the moment participants offered to contribute to the research, a pseudonym was assigned to protect their identities. All participants are Chapel Academy stakeholders as either faculty/staff or guardians of full-time or part-time students. Table 3 offers an overview of the nine research participants in this study. Two males and seven females ranging from 25 to 59 years of age made up the participants' criterion-based sampling. The table includes relevant participant information regarding stakeholder affiliation (faculty/staff or guardian), gender, age, ethnicity, years at Chapel Academy, employment (or) student's enrollment status (full-time or part-time), and whether they contributed to the interview and/or focus group.

Table 3

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Faculty or staff / Guardian	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Years at CA ^a	Employment / Enrollment status	Interview / Focus group
Adam	F	M	43	W	7	FT	FG
Anna	F	F	25	W	4	FT	I
Bethany	F	F	31	W	7	FT	I
Crista	F	F	59	W	17	FT	I
Isabella	G	F	57	W	4	FT	I, FG
Joanna	G	F	57	W	5	FT	I
Katelyn	G	F	39	W	7	FT	I
Kelly	G	F	48	W	5	FT	I
Levi	G	M	51	W	5	FT	I

Note. FT= Full-time; PT= Part-time; W= White

^a The number listed reflects years at Chapel Academy *during* the 2020–2021 school year.

Adam

Adam is one of Chapel Academy's male, full-time faculty members; he is a core teacher and an educational leader. He joined the Chapel Academy seven years ago, bringing a wealth of experience. Holding recognition as a regional subject matter expert in his core teaching field, Adam could be recruited by any educational leader as a welcome addition to their staff. Initially, he did not intend to seek employment at Chapel Academy to help Mark Carpenter hire qualified staff in the core content area. Through divine intervention, multiple conversations, and Mark's persuasive communication, Chapel Academy added Adam to their staffing roster.

I had no real plan of moving schools or anything, especially after getting such a prestigious award. And, but [Mark] really he continued to little by little just talk with me, and he was very patient with me. There was a lot of things that I wanted to take a look at before I took on the job and took on the responsibility of creating a scope and sequence for a middle and high school for [core content area]. And so he was very patient during that time, and he continued to pursue me, and I think pursue me in the correct fashion.

Adam, a married, 43-year-old father, was a valuable contributor to the research, sharing his experiences and stories through the focus group.

Anna

Anna, a 25-year-old White married female, contributed to the research through the faculty interview. The current school year marks her fifth year at Chapel Academy, where she currently serves as a full-time administrative assistant to one of the school's directors. Her job duties require her to assist the director, teachers, and students, and Anna enjoys helping others.

Anna began as a substitute at Chapel Academy; it was one of several schools she worked at as needed in the area. However, she felt drawn to Chapel Academy and its sense of family and home.

I was working at several different schools when I started out here. I was substituting at all of them, and I went to [child's name]. I said, "Whoever offers me the first full-time job, I'm going to have to take it. I need more hours, but this feels like home, and this is where I want to be," and he [Mark] created a job for me on staff here and it . . . anything that I ever need, I know that I can go to the administration.

Anna appreciates how staff come together to help one another (staff and students' families) in times of celebration or times of need. Even the COVID-19 quarantine did not squelch the compassion, generosity, or service of the Chapel Academy family.

Bethany

Bethany shared her experiences when she contributed to this research as an interview participant. She is a 31-year-old White female who is a wife and entering her seventh year as a full-time elementary teacher at Chapel Academy. Bethany appreciates Mark's intentional connection with the staff.

When I first came, he [Mark] met with teachers once a week, so he would meet with each one of us for 30 minutes during the week. Now he doesn't do that. There's a lot of staff members now, a lot more than before. So. I mean, he does spend a lot of time trying to meet with staff members. If he sees one of us out at lunch, he might come sit at lunch with us. And he . . . if he sees us in the hallway, he'll say . . . ask how things are going.

Over the years, the school has grown, and so has the administration team. Today, Bethany works under the Director of Elementary School, of whom Bethany states, "She usually

leaves me alone unless I have a question that I need answered that's . . . I don't know . . . I know the answer. I don't know the scope or whatever, but otherwise, we're pretty self-sufficient."

Bethany welcomes the freedom and autonomy she has as a teacher given to her by the administrative team.

Crista

With 19 years of service at Chapel Academy, this White, female, core subject and elective teacher offered a plethora of information in her interview as a faculty member. Crista provided a longitudinal view of the setting that was a unique perspective exclusive to this participant due to her years of service. It was invaluable to the study. Crista is a 59-year-old married woman who has worked with several administrators at Chapel Academy and has witnessed each of them grow the organization physically and spiritually over their tenure.

Well, the principal before Mark, [previous HoS], I mean, this is the way that I think of it. God has been at work at Chapel Academy, and [previous HoS] came in and really laid a wonderful spiritual foundation for us. And I think of [previous HoS] kind of as a Moses, he was very humble, he would pray, he got up at four in the morning he prayed for all of us. He was very much a servant's heart; as a teacher, he would just cheer you on that type of thing. And then I call Mark our Joshua it's like, no grass grows under his feet, he was full charge ahead and conqueror, he's kind of a conqueror in my mind, a builder so I feel God kind of laid a foundation through [previous HoS] and in Christ and then Mark was called upon by God to build on that foundation, and he's done that.

[doorbell interruption]

Researcher: So, we're saying that Mark was like the Joshua building upon the foundation by [previous HoS].

Crista: Right. I really feel Mark came to the school, had a very solid foundation when he arrived. We just had through eighth grade, but we were highly respected in the community. Our middle school is very, very well respected, and we were in a great period of growth, And so God did give him a good foundation on which to build, and then I think maybe after two years, he said he felt that God was calling us forward to a high school. And I said you're crazy. And I was very concerned about it, honestly, because it's a whole new thing and a lot of challenges with that, but he was right, and I'm so grateful that I think he had a lot of courage to do that. I didn't really agree that it was the right time at the time, but I supported him as he felt called to do that. I think we all did, but now I'm just so grateful.

Crista has helped to develop a foundational, challenging, and rigorous curriculum for the students still used in the core subject she teaches. She alters the curriculum in the elective course based upon the students every year to keep it relevant. Freedom to develop a foundational curriculum or alter it as needed is one of the pleasures Crista finds teaching at Chapel Academy. She feels that it is more than a job.

I feel very called to do this, it's very fruitful. I have the kids from year to year, I'm always in love with the next class I'm teaching. So how can you ever leave? It's a wonderful working environment. It really is.

Crista is one of many staff members who exemplify the low teacher turnover rate at Chapel Academy because of a strong leader–follower relationship (Babyak, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Krog & Govender, 2015; Le Ng et al., 2016; Maak & Pless, 2006; Panaccio et al., 2015; Patterson, 2003). She also appreciates the autonomy afforded her inside the classroom and in constructing the course curriculums.

Isabella

Isabella is a 57-year-old married female, the mother of a current full-time senior at Chapel Academy. She has been a Chapel Academy guardian on and off during the years; they had a five-year commitment during elementary school and transferred to a local private school for junior high before returning for high school. They returned to Chapel for the opportunities afforded in the high school years.

One of the reasons we returned, like I said, was because the curriculum and the great changes. We remained there because we've seen it. It's one thing about hearing about it; the other thing is experiencing it. They've added the AP classes, the honor classes, and I wanted [child's name] to have choices, and they were offered there. He remains there because he's happy; he was able to return back. I don't know if it was going to be good to come back, or maybe it wasn't going to be a good fit for him. I gave him the choice that he didn't have to stay, we could look at other options, but he feels very comfortable; he feels happy there. It's like family to him, and I'm happy with everyone that I've dealt with; I'm happy with all the solutions to problems with that along the journey—no reason to leave.

Valuing having opportunities and choices is understandable when considering her career choice; Isabella has worked for over 30 years in the health field. She currently works part-time working to help diagnose patients to give them opportunities and choices. Isabella willingly shared her experience and stories with the researcher. Isabella was the sole individual of the nine participants who took part in both the guardian interview and focus group as a guardian representative.

Joanna

Joanna participated in the research as a guardian interview participant. She is a self-employed psychologist, working in private practice for 24 years, dedicated to helping people. Joanna is a 57-year-old, White, widowed guardian of a full-time Junior High student; she describes Chapel Academy as “a very loving environment.” She continued, “That's the number one thing to me. Everyone's very friendly staff to my child. There's never a feeling of intimidation or, she [her daughter] loves it there.” The current year is their sixth year at Chapel Academy, and they remain because of the environment and because the HoS is approachable and transparent, “I just think he's easy to talk to, he's out there, and he doesn't hide in his office. He's more than willing to give you time if you need it.”

Katelyn

Katelyn is invested in Chapel Academy as a mother of three full-time elementary-aged children and one of the school's governing church members. She enjoys sending her children to the school, stating it “is absolutely wonderful.” The 2020–2021 school year marks the seventh year she has sent her children to Chapel Academy, and she appears to be satisfied with their school placement.

The main reason is the theology and the biblical worldview that is in all the teaching, in all of the policies and how the teachers and students interact, and how they're disciplined and everything. Academically, of course, that's very strong, and it's a very well rounded school. We've seen it grow a lot in our time. I think my son's first year was the first year they added the high school or maybe his second year. There's been a lot of growth and seeing how I mean, we would go to [Chapel Academy] just for those reasons, but knowing that there's athletics and music and the arts and all the things that you would

want for your child to have in kind of a fruitful childhood experience from preschool through 12th grade is what we intend to do with all three of our kids.

Having a safe learning environment is meaningful for this busy, 39-year-old, White, married mother. By day, Katelyn has a demanding career as a director in the health field responsible for over 1000 employees. She has worked for her organization for over 15 years and in her current role as director for approximately five years, with three employees reporting directly. She manages many responsibilities each day and is trusted to care for others (employees and clients) with each decision. Therefore, knowing that “students love it (the school) and they do well” is reassuring. Katelyn added to the research by contributing to the guardian interview.

Kelly

Mother to both an elementary and a junior high student at Chapel Academy, Kelly experiences the school from multiple perspectives through her children. Kelly is a married guardian of two full-time students, a proponent of her daughters’ educational setting at Chapel Academy. Kelly’s children are entering their fifth year at Chapel Academy and continue to be pleased with the education received and the friendships they have built.

My girls are still there because I feel like they have a good foundation as far as our spiritual beliefs, but I also feel like they provide a superior education. And then my girls honestly are with a good group of kids.

Kelly works full-time in the healthcare industry and understands the importance of the climate in which one is submerged and the relationships engaged in daily. The 48-year-old White female was fortunate enough to have her current supervisor serve as her Preceptor while in school, during which time she formed a friendship with him and his wife that began in school and continues. Today, she is happy working as his employee where there exists, “I would say

overall open communication and mutual respect and professionalism.” Kelly recognizes the importance of mutual respect and communication between leaders and followers. Kelly added to the research as an interview participant.

Levi

Levi is a 51-year-old, married, White male father of a full-time high school student in her fifth year at Chapel Academy. “Christian education is number one; it's very important to us. Academically, they are excellent, and they provide good athletic opportunities for my daughter (who) is in 11th grade this year. She started in the seventh grade with them.”

Levi is no stranger to Christian education and recently served six years in a neighboring Christian school, equivalent in size to Chapel Academy, in a combined role as science teacher, year-round athletic director, and bus driver. Levi is a hard worker. “It was not uncommon for me to work 90 to 100 hours a week during that six-year period.” He answered the calling into ministry in the mid-1990s and has continued to serve faithfully in the positions presented to him over the years, “so I stay connected with kids.” Today he joyfully serves as a realtor, and “I'm an adjunct teacher for a local Christian school that I just do every other day for a few hours a day; I do their very small, high school science class for them.” Levi contributed to the research as an interview participant.

Chapel Academy

One of the one-to-one interview questions was to describe Chapel Academy to a perspective family new to Mary County (pseudonym) considering private school placement. Of the eight participants, three used the word *family*, and two used the word *community*, all conveying a sense of togetherness and unity among the Chapel Academy members

(stakeholders). When asked how Anna would describe Chapel Academy to a prospective student and their family new to the community, she stated,

So, I would tell the prospective person that we're family, and no matter what, your family is going to have your back whether you're a Christian family who's gone to church their whole life and you have two perfect kids who never do anything wrong, and you're super involved, or you're a single mom who has a rough background or has struggled with addiction, and you have kids from different fathers maybe. We're going love you, and we're going to show Christ's love, and no matter what, we're going to bring you into our family.

Bethany added that the Chapel family is not without flaws: “There are times when maybe students or staff members kind of get away with something that maybe they shouldn't.”

However, she continued:

There's certainly situations like that, but there are also situations where we have to be very direct and have to deal with like a family. And I feel like there's. . . if there's a family member that leaves or staff member that leaves for a lot of us, it's hurt because we've grown to be so close to them. We're the kind of people that, even though we see each other all week, we also hang out on the weekends together.

Katelyn did not use the term *family*; rather, she used *community* when describing Chapel Academy. When asked how she would describe Chapel to families considering a school placement, she replied, “It has a great sense of community with the other families and teachers, students love it, and they do well, and it creates quite a sense of community.”

Multiple participants described Chapel Academy's climate as inviting. Joanna confessed she has spoken to others with the intention of recruiting them to attend Chapel Academy. In

those conversations, she shared with the prospects how the school staff and students shepherd one another:

I've told them about the school in the sense of it's a warm and loving environment. It's small. All the kids pretty much have moved up together. There's new kids as well, but it's only like one or two new kids, which is good because then they're kind of joined into the herd. But all the teachers are very open and friendly. The rules, I don't think they're very strict. It's an open campus feeling the children pretty much they're guided.

Kelly is pleased with the spiritual foundation embedded in the academics presented at Chapel Academy: "I know that they're open even to those who don't believe, as long as they understand that that's what the school foundation is. Education-wise, I think it's incredible."

Isabella appreciates the unapologetic proselytizing.

[Chapel Academy is] friendly, definitely extending the ministry of Christ here on Earth. I would definitely let you know that if that's the atmosphere you're looking for, you can actually find it there. The ministry of Christ was healing, and there is many ways of healing, emotionally, not just physically. There is the extension of loving and providing needs, helping out those that are in need of whatever. I think that they [Chapel Academy] provide those needs; they provide them if they need more emotional.

Chapel Academy is a community of stakeholders with imperfections who love unconditionally and extend grace to one another. Just as Christ, they join together in love.

Document Analysis

Two staff participants and the Head of School provided documents for review and analysis as a means of corroborating information gleaned from interviews and the focus group (Yin, 2014). Additionally, documents serve as a behind-the-scenes glimpse into Chapel

Academy not accessible by participants (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). A total of 57 documents were submitted; only three were duplications. Appendix I includes a spreadsheet of the Master List of Documents Analyzed by document number, category grouping (Newsletter, Staff Communication, Leadership Team Meeting, Student Communication, HoS Blog, Operating Document, or Ceremony), and document name.

Chapel Academy has three core values embedded in its vision statement and its culture: excellence, grace, and community. These three values were mentioned by participants in the interviews and focus group and were referenced by the HoS in his blogs for the newsletter; they are at the core of the organization's DNA. Document 36, the Chapel Academy Mission Statement, includes a working definition of these three values.

Excellence. Chapel Academy strives for excellence in all endeavors:

We strive to improve, grow, succeed, and lead in every aspect of our school program: academics, athletics, arts, spiritual formation, relationships, personal and corporate virtues. Excellence is not measured simply by the outcome but also through the process. Our staff seeks excellence in everything we attempt and aims to inspire our students and families to do the same. Thus, we do not simply encourage good grades but homework done diligently. We do not simply desire to win championships but to practice passionately. We do not simply settle for a friendly community but long for a community of deep relationships. Leviticus 19:2; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Philippians 1:6; Philippians 4:8–9. (Document 36 – Chapel Academy Mission Statement)

Understanding that excellence is the goal and not achieved at every attempt, grace is given when excellence misses the mark.

Grace. Grace is the gift of something one has not earned or does not deserve:

As we strive with and for Excellence, we remember that we are growing, not grown, learning not learned. As we grow and learn, we will experience corporate and personal successes as well as failures. Success will lead us to praise God and rejoice in His good gifts. Failure will remind us of our utter need for Him and of His unmerited love for us. Through Grace, we will know both to be God’s kindness and to act out of our gratitude for all He has done, is doing, and will do in and through us. Matthew 11:28–30; Romans 2:4; Ephesians 2:1–9. (Document 36 – Chapel Academy Mission Statement)

Grace is freely given by another to us.

Community. Community is defined as “people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interest, social group or nationality” (“Community,” n.d.).

Chapel Academy exists not for itself but for its community. Therefore we strive to be a microcosm of the community we long to see. This means we care for each individual student, staff member, and parent to equip them for their specific role in our school community as well as their role in the greater community. Jeremiah 29:4–7; John 17:22–23; I Corinthians 12:12–31. (Document 36 – Chapel Academy Mission Statement)

Document 56 (Then & Now Chapel Academy staff development PowerPoint) declares community consists of “classrooms, grade and division levels, whole school, outside community, staff/faculty culture, and student culture.” Anna reflected on the Chapel Academy community and shared, “I think that’s a really beautiful testament to the community that we have here that people can come in and come on campus for an hour and a half, one day, and automatically be included in the family” (slide 7). Chapel Academy’s community extends beyond staff, students, guardians into Mary County business owners and residents' interactions.

Results

At the conception of this single, holistic case study, this researcher planned to conduct one-on-one interviews and host a face-to-face focus group in the natural environment as a means for understanding the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida. However, during March of the year of data collection, the nation faced an invisible enemy in the form of a health pandemic forcing mandatory quarantines for persons to stay home and not report to a school, and many professions and jobs were not allowed to resume for months (Trump, 2020). Not only was the data collection halted, but the method of data collection also changed from face-to-face to teleconferencing (Appendix J).

Many teachers who were teaching before COVID-19 experienced exhilarating exhaustion regularly. Since COVID-19, the exhaustion remains, with a sense of overwhelmed with the different COVID-19 procedures, policies, and protocols attached. Whalen's (2020) study found that teachers felt overwhelmed and unprepared at the start of teaching remotely, and Whalen advocated for more professional development. Another study conducted by Sokal, Trudel, and Babb (2020) noted that teachers' exhaustion and cynicism increased during remote teaching due to the extra pressures. Teacher stressors led to teacher burnout and reduce teacher retention rates.

Once this researcher's data collection resumed, obtaining the minimum number of faculty/staff participants for the study became another obstacle this researcher faced. The researcher made numerous attempts to meet the required minimum number of participants:

- Attempted spring participant recruitment at the onset of COVID-19
- Summer participant recruitment – with an abundance of email communications, resulting in not meeting the minimum requirement.
- Attempted (and failed) to recruit another school meeting same/similar study criteria

- Third participant recruitment in the fall attempted with email communications of written agreements, without signed research consent forms. Minimum participants' requirements were not met again.
- The researcher contacted HoS for an onsite campus visit to allow participants to visualize a face with the emails and put some “skin” to the research request. During the on-site campus visit by this researcher, many faculty members declined the invitation to participate, citing overcommitted schedules and fatigue. That final visit netted one faculty signed a consent form.

Therefore, a petition to Liberty University requesting a reduction in the minimum number of participants was requested and approved.

Thematic Development

The data collection process began with one-to-one interviews with eight participants: three faculty/staff and five guardians via Skype teleconferencing. Each participant was given an interview guide in advance with a brief overview of the 14 open-ended and three demographic questions. Ninety-minutes were allotted for each interview; however, actual time varied from 15 to 55 minutes for an average interview completion of 34 minutes. While each interview was conducted as a video conference call, it was also audio recorded, with the recording uploaded to Rev.com for transcription. Transcripts were converted to a Word document and member-checked and verified by each participant (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher read each transcript, memoing transcripts for emerging ideas, making notes, and summarizing ideas throughout the process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Bracketing of the researcher's feelings separate from data was ongoing throughout the process.

Following the interviews was the focus group with one faculty member and one guardian via Skype teleconferencing. A guide was offered in advance of the meeting to assist in recruiting participants. The meeting with participants involved reviewing the 10 open-ended, topical themed questions. However, the icebreaker question was not part of the advance reveal. Although I asked participants to commit up to two hours for the focus group meeting, the actual meeting lasted one hour and 25 minutes for participants. During the video conference call, the meeting was audio recorded as well. The audio recording was uploaded to Rev.com for transcription purposes. After a successful transcription was saved as a Word document, each transcript was member-checked and verified (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Reading and re-reading transcripts (interview and focus group) and documents by the researcher occurred to chunk significant words, phrases, and sentences into meaningful code groupings. The purpose of coding is to attach a descriptive tag to each data chunk to assist in categorization and analysis. Memoing the transcripts and documents for emerging ideas occurred authentically by recording the researcher's notes and summarizing ideas while separating the researcher's feelings from the data, known as bracketing (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Next, the researcher conducted a thematic analysis of the systematic review of the emerging ideas to code data. The analysis step allowed for a look across the data while simultaneously reflecting (being thoughtful) and being reflexive (being self-aware; Mountain & Marshall, 2019).

During the coding process, the assignment of 116 codes transpired with ATLAS.ti v.9 software. Some of the assigning of codes occurred to assist for categorization rather than for data description. For example, a code noting the source of data reviewed, such as operational document, photo, or staff communication, was assigned. Other categorical codes helped link data

with research questions or paired to specific participants; these were not tethered to the servant leadership characteristics analysis. Therefore, the number of active codes was then reduced from 116 (categorical and descriptive codes) to 90 (descriptive codes). Appendix K contains a comprehensive list of the 90 codes and their frequency found during this qualitative study's initial analysis.

As part of the analytical process, there was continuous working with, identifying, and paring down emerging ideas while applying corresponding themes from the numerous codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ranney et al., 2015). This process was conducted both manually and with the assistance of ATLAS.ti v.9. The software program ATLAS.ti v.9 assisted in rapidly identifying the data patterns, known as central themes. The researcher manually compared the computer-generated themes within the data patterns while matching them to the central themes found in the transcripts and the summary of documentation analyses completed, overriding and resolving any issues. Figure 3 shows the six codes that came in strongest: (a) Understanding, (b) Considering the greater good, (c) Building team/community, (d) Spiritually healthy, (e) Empathy, and (f) Vision. Due to the similarity of (a) Understanding and (e) Empathy, these codes combined.



Figure 3. Codes and frequency.

The next step was to join similar codes to the codes in Figure 3. From the analysis, the five highest frequency codes emerged: (a) Understanding, (b) Considering the greater good, (c) Building team/community, (d) Spiritually healthy, and (e) Vision. Considering the descriptive codes as they pattern together in likeness, themes emerged in the data. Figure 4 illustrates the five central themes, (a) Sensitive Servant, (b) Future-Focused, (c) Followers First, (d) Thorough Thinker, and (e) Christ-Centered, along with the supporting codes that emerged from the data analysis of the descriptive codes.

Sensitive Servant	Future-Focused	Followers First	Thorough Thinker	Christ-Centered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance • Compassion • Empathy • Invites Feedback • Persuasive Communication • Understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balances short-term goals with vision • Courageous • Creativity • Decision making • Decisive action • Learns from past/sees today/dreams of future • Vision • Walk & Talk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds team /community • Cohesiveness • Collaboration • Expresses appreciation • Leader– Follower relationship • Works alongside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability • Comfortable with complexity • Considers the greater good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays a servant's heart • Empowers others through service • Serves a higher purpose • Spiritually healthy • Shows care/concern

Figure 4. Central themes with matching coding data.

Sensitive Servant	Future-Focused	Followers First	Thorough Thinker	Christ-Centered
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Acceptance: Healing •Empathy: Empathy •Understanding: Healing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Balances short-term goals with vision: Conceptualization •Learns from past, sees today, dreams of future: Conceptualization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Builds team/community: Building Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No Matches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No Matches

Figure 5. Central themes linked to Spears' servant leadership characteristics.

Figure 5 shows the correlation of Spears' servant leadership characteristics (in red) matching with this study's central themes. Mark Carpenter's predominant servant leadership characteristics were observed and shared by his stakeholders, faculty/staff, and student guardians through their lived and shared experiences (interviews, focus group, and documentation analysis).

Themes

Results for this qualitative case study were reported in detail using a systematic approach, including an analysis of one-on-one interviews, the focus group, and documentation analysis. The five central themes which emerged from the data analysis are listed in the combined codes' cumulative frequency within each of the themes (see Figure 4). Cumulative frequency totals, from greatest to least, for each of them, were as follows: Sensitive Servant (1,094), Future-Focused (910), Followers First (906), Thorough Thinker (520), and Christ-Centered (468).

Theme 1: Sensitive Servant

According to Greenleaf (2008), a servant is one who "accepts the world as it is, part good, part bad, and who identifies with the good by adding a little island of serenity to it" (p. 45).

The Chapel Academy community was shocked after a neighboring school shooting. After the shooting, Mark wrote to parents in the weekly newsletter the meaning of community. He defined it to stakeholders as follows: “Community is characterized by a group of people committed to the relationship, often in spite of their differences” (Document 14 – Principal’s Thoughts, April 23, 2018). He further reminded his stakeholders of the examples in which they are committed to one another: “We need each other. We cannot live alone. Even when we are upset or frustrated with each other, it is then that I would argue we need each other most” (Document 14 – Principal’s Thoughts, April 23, 2018). A Sensitive Servant demonstrates (a) acceptance, (b) compassion, (c) empathy, (d) invites feedback, (e) persuasive communication, and (f) understanding.

Acceptance. While Chapel Academy is a faith-based school, one does not need to be a believer to attend; that is its most remarkable example of acceptance. Anna feels Chapel Academy is welcoming to prospective families:

No matter what sinful situation comes up . . . I would tell the prospective person that we're family, and no matter what, your family is going to have your back whether you're a Christian family who's gone to church their whole life and you have two perfect kids who never do anything wrong, and you're super involved, or you're a single mom who has a rough background or has struggled with addiction, and you have kids from different fathers maybe. We're going love you, and we're going to show Christ's love, and no matter what, we're going to bring you into our family.

Chapel Academy enrolls students of diverse backgrounds with a common goal of providing a high-performance academic education through a biblical lens.

Katelyn retold how her youngest child had experienced some behavioral problems in the PreK classroom. The teacher, administrative staff, Katelyn, and her husband were perplexed as

to the root cause. As a team, they worked closely to troubleshoot and problem-solve his behavior changes:

I think [Director of Elementary School] finally cracked it one day when he got sent to the office again, and she just went for a walk with him and talked to him and basically said, “I think he thinks he's supposed to be in K-4 since he turned four.”

The Director of Elementary School invested in Katelyn and her son—accepting his flawed behavior—and stood alongside them to find a solution. The Director of Elementary School reminded this family of the precious words found in Psalm 139:13–14, “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made: your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” The administrator’s tenacity to find a resolution with the family and not push it off on the family was meaningful to Katelyn.

Mark and his entire administrative team exemplify Sensitive Servants as they show acceptance to the Chapel Academy stakeholders collectively and one-on-one, in their daily actions or in times of need.

Compassion. “The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love,” says Psalm 145:8. Christians, educational leaders, and most especially Christian educational leaders are called to express compassion to one another through kindness and forgiveness.

Katelyn retold a compassionate story of Mark sitting with a student:

My son was playing flag football, and Mark was, I think, coaching soccer at the same time. There is a lot of activity going on at the campus outdoors. While I was watching the game, he's [Mark is] just sort of sitting there with one other student that he was coaching, whose mom had the schedule wrong in terms of pickup time. Mark was so just calm, just

hanging out with this student. It was no big deal and didn't make him [the student] feel uncomfortable. He [Mark] wasn't annoyed. He wasn't huffing or looking at the time or anything. He just sat down and waited for the mom to get there.

It would have been easy to have the waiting child sit alone and continue coaching his assigned group of students. That was not the choice Mark made at the moment; instead, he opted to continue to watch over his flock of athletes while tending to the single student who waited to be reunited. The single act of kindness allowed a lone child companionship while fostering the leader–follower relationship.

Some faith-based schools enroll students exclusive from their same denomination. Other faith-based schools enroll students regardless of denomination. Anna shared how the Chapel Academy staff exuded acceptance towards her:

I'm not actually religious. So, it's not that I'm not. It's just that I was brought up Jewish and Catholic, which will mess anybody up. So, I don't really go either way. And so I've never been made to feel awkward because I don't, if that makes sense. And I like that.

People are made to be relational. As humans engage in personal and professional relationships, eventually, they become messy as feelings become entangled and hurt over misguided words or actions. It is in those after moments of pain and how one deals with others that determines one's relationship quality—does it remain, can it be salvaged? Adam shared how he and Mark had one tender moment in their relationship, “There was a specific point in which he said something to me . . . and . . . it was wrong. And I said, ‘What you said is wrong.’ And he quickly saw it and sought my forgiveness right away.” Today not only do they have a strong work relationship, but they are also friends. Mark's administrative team follows his lead and

extends apologies when needed. Isabella shared when the administration team gave her forgiveness:

So . . . he [Isabella's son] got his schedule at school, and it just was so messed up because [son's name] is behind in math. So that put him in a situation where either he had two sciences the next year or two math . . . And I was just ugly. I went to talk to her [name of Administrator], and I was not being very nice or kind, or Christian like, and then Mr. Carpenter had to come and intervene. And also, they were very empathetic with me. They were very graceful with me, and they were kind. I didn't deserve it. And they just . . . When I went home and I thought of this horrible behavior that I had, and I apologize to both of them, but I still know that I carry that with me, but they showed me so much, love . . .

Servant leaders are aware of their stakeholders' emotional health and extend sympathy, kindness, or do what they can to alleviate their distress.

Empathy. Servant leaders like Mark empathize with their stakeholders and never reject them (Greenleaf, 2008). Mark eloquently expressed the Class of 2020's raw emotions, recognizing the historical year they endured (Document 6a – Yearbook Message: Last Word to the 2020 Seniors [attachment]). His heartfelt words on the memorable year include the following:

But this is not an average year. It is one that your children and grandchildren will study in history class one day in the distant future. Currently (in 2020), most of you are struggling to put the last nine weeks of your high school career into the proper context. That's OK because you are in good company. We are all struggling to wrap our minds and hearts

around this pandemic and the effects we are just now beginning to experience.

(Document 6a – Yearbook Message: Last Word to the 2020 Seniors [attachment])

Also, in Document 31 (Principal’s Thoughts: Grace speaks to the topic of forgiveness), Mark wrote, “If you are like me, you have sought such forgiveness and have felt the humbling but welcomed release when it is given.” He continues in his writing to remind stakeholders that it is not our place to withhold forgiveness, as is our tendency in anger. Regardless of the justifications, we attempt to convince ourselves when withholding, forgiving others in our guilt. In this Easter message to his stakeholders, Mark reminded them of how Christ forgave a sinner moments before his crucifixion as they hung on crosses, forgiving him of his sins. As HoS, Mark leads his followers to be empathetic towards others by teaching them the gift of forgiveness. Servant leaders always empathize and accept their followers. However, note that it is plausible to refuse or reject portions of a follower’s efforts or performance as not good enough (Greenleaf, 2008).

Invites feedback. Feedback fuels progress. Servant leaders needs to be open to feedback and solicit it and openly receive it from their stakeholders. Joanna mentioned that Mark is always soliciting input from stakeholders: “He always wants to know, ‘What would you do if we were to expand school?’ He even asked the kids, ‘What’s the main thing you want to see improved at our school?’” She continued, “And if you have a suggestion to make, I think everybody there [at Chapel Academy] is more than willing to hear it.”

Students invested in their school are active in their school setting. In Document 11 (Parent Communication: Summer 2019, Upper School Letter), the Upper School Director shared student suggestions: “They have approached me with ideas ranging from new clubs, a school

newspaper, a civics field trip, new trips, high school chapel, and additional service opportunities.”

Persuasive communication. Servant leaders do not coerce their followers; they use persuasive communication. They are skilled communicators who rely on ethical, emotional, and logical appeal (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Often leaders utilize their persuasive speech in innocent manners, such as combining opportunities for the school and a local business to form a partnership through a fundraiser benefiting the athletic department (Document 1 – Newsletter: Parent Newsletter, September 18, 2020).

However, not all persuasive communications by leaders are superficial. Some are more intentional and substantial. When asked if Mark was persuasive, Adam responded:

Sometimes persuasion can be one of those things. You can have a leader of an army who persuades his soldiers to go die. And that's a good thing. And then you can have a leader of a cold war who persuades people to die, and that's a bad thing. So, Mark is the good one. So, it is not a cold war. It is more of a . . . He is passionate about Christian education, and in the Christian education, there's no distinct difference between Christian and education. It is the education that is Christian.

In this example, Mark’s passion for Christian education is persuasive. It reflects Mark’s character and was a commonly held opinion by every stakeholder interviewed that this reflected Mark’s core.

During the focus group session, Isabella shared examples of how persuasive Mark has been in her son’s school life and hers over the years. Her first recollection of Mark’s persuasive communication was when she “toured with Mark. He was amazing, his energy, his positive energy, his focus on Christ at all times at his school. And it showed that he really loved the

school.” Over the years, as Mark and her son formed a relationship, she admits that it was because of Mark’s persuasive nature that her shy son tried new things:

But he [Mark] has a way of getting, he got him [her son] to go to the camp once because [son’s name] is again hard time for him to socialize and he's gotten him to go on to other dances. And then he had a great time.

Leaders utilize the art of persuasive communication while allowing followers to grasp free will firmly.

Understanding. Greenleaf (2008) suggested that leaders must first listen to understand. Being a parent is not a requirement for being a school leader, but Joanna thinks it helps Mark see situations individualistically:

I think he's very fair. I think he has a warm personality open. I don't think he has anything. . . . You know, he calls it as he sees it. But again, he has children of his own, so he's able to look at a situation independently. Again, it's not a cookie-cutter. Every situation is looked upon in its own little manner if that makes sense. I think that's him doing that. I don't think it's written in the rule book that way. I think that is just how he does it.

Regardless of a leader’s parenting status, approaching each situation with the intent to listen and to treat it as a unique situation, rather than a carbon copied event, is the valued approach.

Mark understands the importance of student and staff safety. Removing all personal bias and consulting experts in the field, Mark chose not to rely on the school’s leadership team or himself to singularly create the safety plan for Chapel Academy. Mark took the opportunity to strengthen community relations while making the campus secure for stakeholders. The HoS worked with the local county sheriff for a free security audit. He also consulted with another

private security expert to supplement the school's leadership team in creating the school's safety plan (Document 13 – Security Update: May 2018). Mark asked his teachers to pray for godly wisdom throughout the process.

Theme 2: Future-Focused

Leaders need to read and predict the future of their organization accurately. A servant leader with a vision can lead followers towards endless opportunities (Sipe & Frick, 2015). The absence of this skill, or poorly reading ahead, can cause great harm or cause leaders to not connect their actions to their future (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Leaders lacking foresight will fail (Greenleaf, 2008; Sipe & Frick, 2015). Future-focused leaders are known for (a) balancing short-term goals with vision, (b) being courageous, (c) creativity, (d) decision making, (e) decisive action, (f) learning from the past, seeing today, and dreaming of the future, (g) walking the talk, and (h) having a vision.

Balance short-term goals with vision. Greenleaf (2008) believed that leaders always have a goal for as long as leaders are leading. It is easy to lose sight of the big picture vision (long-term goal) while working (in short-term goals). Bethany explained how Mark keeps the staff motivated to work through the challenges in the short-term goals: “Every staff meeting, he's talking about the strength of our school is the teachers or our faculty.”

Document 10 (Parent Communication: Chapel Academy Elementary Summer Personnel Update 2018–19) shared the addition of resource classes (Spanish, art, PE, music, and computer) or a change in meeting location for elementary students. Document 24 (Principal's Thoughts: Volume #3) allowed Mark to share a touching story of his son sharing about his day at school (Chapel Academy). As Mark, in the role of a father, listened to the day's recount from his youngest child, he could not help but slip into HoS mode and reflect on his son's story and

compare it to the school's mission statement. As he made the comparison, pride filled him as the HoS and as a father. Mark shared the school's mission statement lived out through the lens of his son's day:

He [Mark's son] was being served by his teachers as they explained content and process.

He also had the opportunity to serve others in the cleaning. He is learning to live in community, not just his class, but the broader [Chapel] student body, through Book Buddies as well as plenty of informal contact with other students throughout the day.

Most of all, he is reflecting the work of his teachers as they train him to engage all of life through a biblical perspective.

A servant leader, along with stakeholders, has created the school's vision. Therefore, they work to fulfill the total vision by creating short-term goals and working towards them while simultaneously balancing the big picture vision. Should the vision need to be altered anytime based upon changing needs, the vision is flexible to accommodate.

Courageous. In reviewing the documents and the transcripts relating to this school, this researcher deems the most courageous individuals in the school's history to date to be the husband and wife team who were the first Chapel Academy leaders (Document 36 – Operating Document: Chapel Academy Mission Statement). In the subsection School History (a) they lived in a mobile home on campus, (b) brought their knowledge and experience to bear (had been Georgia teacher of the year and had served as a college administrator), and (c) personally sacrificed as they worked for no salary (Document 36 – Operating Document: Chapel Academy Mission Statement). This couple served for the first three years the school was in operation (Document 36 – Operating Document: Chapel Academy Mission Statement).

Courage may not be a word associated with leadership by most who do not fill the role. However, leaders must be courageous. Courage is needed when a leader stands alone, carries a silent burden, or needs encouragement to press on. For most building administrators, the school year's first day is exciting and a day of hope. For many, the first day of 2020–2021 was a day they needed courage; Mark was no different. As parents asked about the first day of school, he compared it to “I feel like [Chapel] is a Sherman tank, somewhere in France after D-Day, taking fire, returning fire, but not on fire” (Document 53 – Principal’s Thoughts: Rhythm, September 15, 2020). He continues to identify that the surrounding stressor(s) and distraction(s) are rooted in “against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

Courage requires strength to face that which others find uncomfortable. Understanding the definition of courage brings clarity to its linkage with leaders. Servant leaders have courage and confidence because of the followers they serve alongside.

Creativity. Educators are notorious for their creativity. Mark witnessed this very thing on one of his campus walks one afternoon when the power went out and observed, “Coach XXX and the 6th-grade boys were playing some volleyball game in the emergency lit gym” (Document 8a – Parent Newsletter: End of Year Thoughts, May 15, 2018).

The school’s art program opened to find many hidden talents among students lying in residence. Students entered the community art show, and the art teacher proudly announced, “Our school won ribbons for 1st place, 2nd place, 3rd place, 4th place, Honorable Mention and sold one painting!” (Document 29 – Newsletter: Art Update, January 2016). Collecting so many awards is validation that implementing an art program to the school’s elective courses was a wise decision.

A servant leader's creativity is often witnessed in the problem-solving realm of creating schedules. Selection of creative staff members or supporting creative community outreaches are also expressions of creativity for the servant leader. It is easy for others to overlook these creative actions. Servant leaders nurture creativity (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Decision making. A person makes approximately 35,000 decisions a day (Hoomans, 2015). A classroom teacher makes 1500 decisions during a day (Singer, 2019). One can infer that a principal makes between 1500–35,000 during a day (Hoomans, 2015; Singer, 2019). At the onset of COVID-19 quarantine, Spring 2020, the HoS balanced continuing to deliver quality education with meeting the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of stakeholders. While the surrounding public and private schools rushed into remote learning, Chapel Academy took the time to prayerfully and intentionally enter into the process of remote learning. HoS prepared his staff ahead with (a) Learning Management System (LMS) preparation, (b) the freedom of choice in communication platform between students and parents (text, website, email), (c) offered the campus open for last-minute visits to retrieve supplies and (d) reminded them to keep in contact with the school for updates through regular communication channels (Document 3 – Staff Communication: Remote Learning, March 22, 2020).

Mark Carpenter is a proponent of the shared-decision-making model. He approached his Leadership Team regarding the 2020–2021 school year planning for their input in creating policy and procedure aligned with COVID-19 protocol while maintaining alignment with Chapel Academy's mission and vision. The team worked to learn the recent distance learning to maximize the successes and minimize the weaknesses (Document 5, 5a, 5b – Leadership Team Meeting: 2020–2021 invite email, attachment [agenda], and Continuity of instruction email). Mark gave the leadership team the freedom to exercise sound judgment while following COVID-

19 protocol rather than the HoS sending out mandates without input, including strict requirements and mandates. By soliciting their input, he showed his trust in their judgment and allowed them autonomy.

Decisive action. New operational protocols and procedures were developed in response to COVID-19. Document 48 – The Chapel Academy Reopening Plan 2020, Revised July 29, 2020, opened by restating the school’s core values; this focused on its mission as the school adapted to the COVID-19 requirements and served to reflect new operating procedures for how the school could safely educate students in the middle of the pandemic. Inside this document was a detailed plan which included two phases (Document 48 – Chapel Academy’s Reopening Plan 2020 Revised July 29, 2020). Phase 1 pertained to Prevention with specific delineation of School Responsibilities and Parent Responsibilities (Document 48 – Chapel Academy’s Reopening Plan 2020 Revised July 29, 2020). Phase 2, Containment, was broken into Level 1, pulled from the handbook’s standard sickness policy and Level 2 (a) Identifying Possible COVID-19 Cases on Campus, (b) Employee and Student Screening and Protocols, and (c) Protocols for COVID-19 Positive Employees and Students and Close Contacts with Confirmed Positive Persons (Document 48 – Chapel Academy’s Reopening Plan 2020 Revised July 29, 2020).

All plans required action. From decision making comes decisive action, whether that is a result of input from the leadership team, shared input from stakeholders, or an immediate or critical decision needed by Mark by nature of his expertise or level of responsibility as HoS. 2020–2021 required extra preparation on top of scheduled facility enhancements. As the projected start of the school year approached, there were foreseeable delays: (a) construction delayed facility enhancements, (b) technology additions to the junior high and high school classrooms, (c) and staff needing uninterrupted training (Document 49 – Parent Communication:

A Note on Delaying the Opening of School). The HoS realized the school would not be ready to open on the scheduled date; therefore, he notified the parents that the new start date would occur a week later. In an email to parents, he wrote, “[We] are asking our community for grace, we appreciate that this may complicate schedules for some of our families and for that, we ask for your forbearance and understanding” (Document 49 – Parent Communication: A Note on Delaying the Opening of School). In so doing, Mark showed both humility and empathy.

Learn from the past, see today, dreams of the future. Foresight is a servant leader’s most essential function (Greenleaf, 2008; Sipe & Frick, 2015). In a weekly newsletter, Document 21 – Principal’s Thoughts: January 22, 2019, the HoS ruminated over the past 20 years of Chapel Academy’s existence. As he reflected on the past, realizing the growth made to date and looking ahead toward future milestones, he reminded readers to keep Christ in the center of all plans. Document 51– Operating Document: 2020–21 School Reopening Plan is a strong example of foresight of a school learning from the past, seeing today, and dreaming of the future. Within the document, the school outlined its values and the protocols in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Document 51 – Operating Document: 2020–21 School Reopening Plan).

Of the submitted documents from Chapel Academy for the past five years, a completed analysis ensued. Through this aerial view, it was easy to see the timeline of growth for the school. An example of expansion began with “the pile of dirt behind Lyall Hall” (Document 8a – End of Year Thoughts, May 15, 2018), which morphed into this: “The new building consists of new administrative and PE offices, nine new classrooms, a teacher’s lounge, an art pavilion, an assembly area for high school lunch, and even a weight room” (Document 11 – Parent Communication: Summer 2019: Upper School Letter).

Regardless if it is a reflection brought about through an anniversary or a campus expansion, servant leaders will utilize the valuable strategy of foresight to plan for their school. Foresight is a combination of intuition and logic which servant leaders employ in their strategic planning.

Walk and talk. Anna, a Chapel Academy teacher, mentioned that Mark is continually walking around campus and attributes this as his secret to connectedness with his stakeholders (faculty/staff, students, and parents/guardians). She shared:

He is constantly walking around campus. He's never just sitting in his office because that's where he belongs or anything. Obviously, he has times that he has things that he needs to do in his office, and that's just realistic life, I get that, but he's very good at just walking around campus. He'll just randomly pop into a classroom and check-in and see how people are doing and say, "Hey, is there anything I can do for you?" And sometimes teachers will say, "Yes. Lead this reading group." And he'll do it. It's amazing. I've never had that before. Sometimes he'll come and sit in the office, and he'll just say, "How's life?" And sometimes you . . . "It's going great, everything's fine," and sometimes you break down, and he's right there with you.

Isabella, a guardian, also notices Mark's daily walking and talking around campus. Mark's presence with students has gained a level of comfort and trust with the students as he engages in conversation with them. Daily interactions built teen trust and opened the door for teens to share issues with Mark. During Mark's walks, he sat and spoke with Isabella's son:

[Son's name], he one day, it was probably last year, Mark saw him in the lunch, and by himself he noticed him being a little down, so he got involved, come help me here and do this in the office and whatnot. He was concerned of what [Son's name] had expressed to

him, so he called me, but he asked [Son's name], "I really think I should talk to your mom about this, let her know what's going on." . . . Mark says, "I really think that it's important they know, let me talk to them." And son said, "Yeah," so Mark did call me. I think that he [Mark] wasn't going to betray [Son's name], [Son's name] can go to him in confidence, and he felt the need that I needed to know, but he was going to respect him that if he said no, don't talk to my parents about it, because it loses that. I respect that because if he loses [Son's name] respect, then [Son's name] has no one to talk to.

Walking the campus and talking to stakeholders is just another way to stay connected and learn their needs in an accurate informal information collecting method. Information gleaned alerts Mark when the vision and mission of a school steer off course or need revision.

Vision. A strong leader will remain focused on the mission and vision and will not be distracted and taken off course. The 2020–2021 school year opened with pandemic restrictions and extra procedures (distractions). However, Mark shared with the staff through a visual presentation to help stay focused on the purpose outlined in following God's purpose for the school (Document 56 – Then & Now, PowerPoint). Mark reminded the staff that the mission remains to teach students to live all aspects of their life through a biblical perspective, even during a pandemic. Additionally, hard work produces critical thinkers with confident spirits who pursue excellence and are not deterred by adversities. Document 36 – Operating Document: Chapel Academy Mission Statement is a well-written document that outlines the school's (a) Mission, (b) Vision, (c) Graduate Profile, (d) Core Values, (e) History of School, (f) Why is This Important? (g) What Will Help Us Achieve Our Vision? and (h) Strategic Plan. Document 36 has multiple functions; it serves as the servant leader's mission and vision. It is a commitment to his stakeholders. It also provides accountability for the expectations set forth.

Theme 3: Followers First

Servant leaders put the needs of their followers first (Coetzer et al., 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Patterson, 2003). Such action runs counter to a modern culture where the needs of the organization supersede its personnel. When teachers feel supported by servant leaders, a reduction in attrition occurs (von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Over the past five years, Chapel Academy's staff turnover rate averaged less than 1% (M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 30, 2020). Adam offered his thoughts on teacher retention:

As I worked in the public school for 10 years, there was other high schools that had constant influx of departments here and there. At the school that I was at for 10 years, it was very static. And why is that is you have a good boss. You have someone who is going to just serve you and serve the students and be part of the fight with you every day, is you're going to go to battle with them. And you're going to go to battle with them every day. And teachers end up becoming . . . There becomes long-term retention there. There becomes the freedom to go, "In my professional life, this is where I want to go." And I mean, in high school, we've had really almost zero teachers leaving. We've had to replace maybe a teacher here or there that wasn't up to par. But for the most part, in the core subjects, it's been very static. And teachers are allowed to grow and be creative and have freedom.

Putting followers first is one way in which to be a supportive servant leader. The servant leadership concept is not new, tracing back to deep biblical roots. Servant leaders who puts their followers first do so by (a) building a team/community, (b) promoting cohesiveness, (c) collaboration, (d) expressing appreciation, (e) fostering positive leader–follower relationships, and (f) working alongside followers.

Builds a team/community. Several participants commented on Mark's unique giftedness in hiring staff with diverse talents that mesh with the existing community and bring richness to the Chapel Academy family. Mark uses his time to select the right person for a given position, taking the time to know an individual. Jon shared his observation:

He [Mark] gets to know them. So, he kind of screens them out, and then he puts them in a position and completely empowers and supports them. There's no micromanaging going on, which is excellent because that is really a crushing thing when someone's committing so much effort and time. They have to have that hand on them like that, but he does an excellent job.

Mark is committed to recruiting, training, and retaining qualified teachers and staff at Chapel Academy. Recruiting and retaining qualified teachers is included in school's strategic plan and Mark's personal educational philosophy.

Mark intentionally selects employees who believe in the school's vision and mission and are willing to live it out daily (Document 16 – Parent Communication: 2016–17 Introduction to Staff). Additionally, the HoS seeks out Christians as employees to serve as role models for the students (Document 17 – Parent Communication: Welcome back Coach XXX, 2016-17 SY). During his fourth year as HoS, Mark hired his former principal to be an employee (Document 17 – Parent Communication Welcome back Coach XXX, 2016-17 SY). This is another example of Mark's humility as a servant leader.

Relationships matter at Chapel Academy. When written notices introduce staff, the announcements include personal vignettes and professional qualifications (Document 27 – Parent Communication: Introducing XXX, May 2016). Chapel Academy staff introductions are not a reposting of resumes; they are personal insights into the individual. Another example of Mark's

empowering his staff is found in Document 7 (Staff Communications: Emergency Drills - Week 3, August 28, 2020) which indicated that teachers had the choice of which day to conduct the required fire drill and shelter in place drills, within parameters, and report results to their respective building administrators. A choice of “drill day” allows teachers to schedule around their teaching. His treatment of them as professionals, trusting them to complete the required tasks, promotes loyalty.

Katelyn, a parent, noted that the Chapel Academy staff is consistently authentic. Whether she interacts with the faculty/staff on or off-campus, the same caliber of professionalism, politeness, and personality is assured – there is no bait and switch. She sees this from all staff:

It doesn't seem to be a very cliquy environment. At least in the younger grades. I don't know what's going to happen as my children grow, but they do a lot with it just being sort of one student body. The teachers all seem to get along very well. We go to church with a number of them, and so we get to see them in different contexts. That sort of, I think, plays into my level of trust in Mark and the school because I do interact with a lot of these people in a variety of different ways in our small group, and that kind of a thing.

As a follow-up, this researcher asked Katelyn if she thought this was a skill taught or caught from Mark. Giving due consideration to the question, she replied:

Yeah. Thinking about this, Mark's been there for a while. I'm not exactly sure how long. I think he was there a little bit before we started coming, but there's been such a consistent pattern of behavior. Mark's been there long enough that if he were doing something differently, that would feed into his teachers and his administrative staff. Because you don't see that, you know that he's modeling those behaviors; at least that's been my experience professionally.

Servant leaders work alongside their followers, modeling behaviors and forming cohesive bonds with shared expectations.

Once a staff member at Chapel Academy is hired, they become family. Like family, the individual is loved, cared about, and prayed over. When a staff member dies, the school family mourns deeply and honors the staff member with a memorial to show their love for ongoing years (Document 22 – Principal’s Thoughts: Parent Newsletter, October 12, 2018).

Cohesiveness. The 2021 senior picture epitomizes cohesiveness, even while snapped in the year of “the pandemic” (Document 42 – Class of 2021 Masked: August 21, 2020)! The photo taken on the first day of school commemorates a year they will not forget as it will be a placeholder marking history for years to come. While many in the world around them choose to panic, these 19 students’ faces (11 girls and eight boys) displayed joy as they joined in a unified and cohesive community. COVID-19 protocols required face coverings; however, they were not hiding from one another. They were known by each other and accepted. This photo radiated brotherly love that had grown between them over the last four years. Likewise, Document 44 (Photo: Class Trip with HS Bible Teacher) captured the cohesiveness and unity between the HoS, staff, and students. The body language of all persons in the photo revealed unbridled joy. The HoS positioned in the center of the students' huddle, and smiles were evident from ear to ear. Then, off to the left of the HoS’s shoulder stood the Bible teacher wearing a stoic face with only his left eyebrow raised. With that one expression it turned the entire photo into one that captured hilarity and exposed the comfort level between leader and follower. Even the teens (estimated junior high and high school age) showed authentic joy and were candid.

Anna feels connected with Chapel staff members, past and present. She shared the distinctiveness of Chapel staff:

I think [Chapel] has such a high retention rate because once you're a part of the family, you never want to leave! The staff here have such a unique bond, and personally, I know that not every school or business has that. Being on staff at [Chapel] has truly gifted me with lifelong friendships, even with the staff members who have left.

In summation, Mark hires quality staff who will bind together to create a stronger team, bringing out one another's strengths. The bonds made between staff (and stakeholders) extend beyond the campus perimeter.

Collaboration. Collaboration is seen in the construct of distance learning philosophy by the leadership team created in Document 5a- Leadership Team Meeting: 2020–21 Leadership Team Planning Meeting Invite (agenda). The Leadership Team came together with a focus to balance curriculum rigor and integrity between online and on campus. During the meeting, it was essential to stress the school and family connection:

Connection with families: We continue to teach in grace with relationships in mind, with both the student and families. Opportunities should abound in allowing students to reflect, parents to provide feedback, and teachers to minister to hearts. Whether on campus or through distance learning, our aim is to support our parents through our programs.

The balance of integrity and rigor between brick and mortar and virtual learning was maintained.

Another example of collaboration occurred when two coaches created, planned, and executed the first annual Elementary Field Day at Chapel Academy (Document 20 – Parent Communication: First Ever Elementary Field Day 2019). Vertical collaboration between administration and staff is observable by guardians. Katelyn stated:

One of the things, again, that I don't hear from the teachers or administrators is, I don't know, I have to check with Mark, or I don't think Mark would like that. Like, he's not this looming presence that I think the teachers are feeling pressured by or uncertain by, which says to me, again, based on my professional experience, he must be giving them framework. He must be giving them the principles by which Chapel operates, and then they're free to go within that to make independent decisions and to be autonomous.

The process of collaboration is more than exchanging and discussing ideas; it includes encouragement, feedback, and accountability, to name just a few of the skills encompassing the duties a servant leader undertakes while collaborating with stakeholders.

Express appreciation. Expressing appreciation does not fall solely on the leader's shoulders. Chapel Academy's guardians freely express their gratitude too! The lead parent of the Parent Prayer Group orchestrated an opportunity for fellow parents to show their appreciation for Chapel teachers at the end of the year combining Teacher Appreciation Week and end-of-the-year in a week-long dedicated week of showering teachers with notes and or gifts (Document 26 – Parent Communications: Teacher Appreciation Parent Volunteer, May 2016). The appreciation recognition was an optional activity to express gratitude to the staff and was orchestrated by a Chapel Academy parent to fellow parents.

The Chapel Academy guardians showed their generosity again in creating the band program. The Band director shared, “By the grace of God, people started donating instruments, . . . a few big-ticket items like chairs, stands, and a tuba” (Document 28 – Newsletter: Chapel Academy Band Update, January 2016). The band director expressed gratitude for the donations, and parents made donations to express appreciation for the band course in addition to the

electives program. Having band as an elective sparks interest and engagement while opening future doors for many students that academics may not.

Leader: Follower relationship. When asked if Katelyn felt Mark was trustworthy, she replied:

He definitely is a trustworthy person. I was trying to think of . . . I think it's just through a lot of little things, or maybe what's not there because I don't have a specific instance where we've had an issue with a child where we've had to go through something with him or anything like that. I know that if we did, I could. The environment and culture, there's not a lot of gossip. I think you know that what is said in confidence stays in confidence at Chapel. I do think of him as a very trustworthy leader there.

Document 43 (Photo: Math Class Outdoors, April 18, 2019) demonstrated teachers' autonomy as they can teach class outdoors and are not confined to the four walls inside a classroom – especially when they should be outside. The HoS hires qualified teachers proficient in their content area (noticed as an absence of a teacher's edition or notes). This teacher's happiness is visible in her face as measured by the smile, reaching up to the eyes, and relaxed posture. Adam shared an example of how Mark trusted him and empowered him:

He encouraged that from the very first day of . . . My website, my online curriculum that is right there for students. It was an easy transition for my students. My students went right from in-class to distance learning. No problem. They were ready to do it the next day. Why? Because he had already put into place those things, within even my contract, that said that I had the ability to do those things. He gave me the freedom to do that as a teacher, and he wrote that in my contract from day one that I had the freedom to be able to do that within my classroom; that was my own ingenuity.

Trust is at the root of a positive leader–follower relationship. Once successfully established, both are free to operate autonomously in their respective realms, leading to a multi-dimensional work option of synchronous collaboration and independence.

Work alongside. The HoS does not ask his staff to perform any task he is not willing to do himself. The HoS serves in a dual capacity as teacher and administrator, by choice. Mark teaches a class himself and runs the school (Document 19 – Principal’s Thoughts: Community Seniors and Fall Festival, October 11, 2018). He teaches a single history class to stay connected with students and walk alongside his teachers. Kelly, a parent, finds his dual duties commendable. She noted:

I think as far as students; he has them think outside the box. I think he encourages them to not follow blindly somebody else's thoughts or beliefs or feelings, but to really think about what's important to them and see every aspect before making a decision based on their own moral principles, values, et cetera. As far as the school, I think he certainly works to grow the school and to provide more for the students and more opportunity. And not just in the building, but in the growth of the student body. For parents, I just go back to the fact that he was available and certainly seemed to walk through it. So I'm sure he does it for everyone.

Crista, a Chapel Academy teacher, shared her respect for his undertaking of dual duties as administrator and teacher. Crista stated:

Well, I mean, you hear this, maybe it's even becoming cliché to have a ministry of presence where Mark's here early, he's in the classroom, he's got a class he teaches history. He coaches, so he's connected to the kids that way, and he's accessible, he's very present, sometimes I think too much, it's like Mark go home, but he's around a lot. I think

the fact that he's teaching and he's coaching says a lot because then, as a teacher, he's in the trenches with you, but he hasn't lost touch with what it's like to be a teacher, and that means a lot I think to all of us.

In addition to teaching a course during the school day, he also coaches a sport. Levi complimented Mark's dedication:

Also, he coaches the girls' soccer team, and someone who's coached for years and also been an athletic director, that is no small amount of time that he has to give to be committed to do something like that. And he's got a family. To me, that speaks more. It doesn't speak that he loves soccer. I know he loves soccer, but that goes beyond that. It's something that he's trying to enrich the school, he's trying to engage families by doing that, so it's a serious sacrifice that he makes doing that.

Mark is an all-in leader who leads by example, working alongside his staff. In addition to leading the school, he chooses to teach a class. He coaches a sport, handles most if not all prospective families, spends most of his day walking the campus and talking to stakeholders, including morning and afternoon duty. It is noticed, appreciated, and respected by faculty and guardians.

Theme 4: Thorough Thinker

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will” (Romans 12:2). This verse warns Christians not to be distracted by the worldly possessions, pleasures, and positional status found in the secular world. Instead, they should focus on discerning God's will in their lives. Mark surrenders himself daily to the position in which he has been placed, by God, to lead those at Chapel Academy. Adam credited Mark's foresight and specific thinking skills to the smooth transition to virtual learning in the spring of

2020. When public schools were panicking at the switch to an e-learning platform, Chapel made a move seamlessly. They could do so because of the existing groundwork Mark had previously laid: “the creativity, the freedom, and allowing to do those things so that they can be the best when nothing is working right around them” (Focus Group Transcript). Such creative precedence and permission to flourish reduced stress and allowed the teachers to soar individually while united as a school.

In his role as HoS, he leads as a Thorough Thinker who is prayerful and intentional to glorify God. His actions are visible through (a) adaptability, (b) being comfortable with complexity, and (c) considering the greater good.

Adaptability. Servant leaders orchestrate change through the development of their followers (Roach, 2016). Adaptable leaders respond to their followers’ needs and, therefore, must be flexible as leaders. Servant leaders remain focused on their followers while working towards the collective vision. Adaptive leaders must be flexible to change and willing to be change agents for their organization's greater good. Guardians, such as Katelyn, saw Mark walking about the campus. She shared:

I think one way when I thought of plugged in was that he's [Mark's] not afraid of change there. Isn't the way that we do it, that he's aware, receiving feedback, and making changes within the school that the student body or the faculty need. The specific example that came to mind most recently on this one is my oldest is now in fifth grade, and the school made a change this past year in how they run the fourth through sixth-grade department. They made the decision not to have sixth grade be fully in middle school, but to make it a little bit more of a transition period that they recognize that that fifth to sixth-grade jump was something that was a little bit difficult for some of the students. Seeing, I don't know

what it was like before, but I certainly have been very impressed with the level of responsibility and independence that it seems that that change has put on my son to prepare him for what more of a high school schedule would look like and taking responsibility and changing classrooms and things like that.

Through his stakeholders' relationships, Mark receives continuous feedback that allows him to make adjustments to policies and procedures to maximize productivity.

Not all input for change came directly from stakeholders. Sometimes input (feedback) was the result of community events. Another example of Mark's adaptability revolved around campus security after a neighboring school shooting. Levi shared how Mark communicated the campus changes:

One was when there was the school shootings and such, he had email sent out and talked about their plan to put a full-time sheriff on campus, and how that was going to be, they're going to raise the funds to make sure that it's covered and out to car line and things. But he talked about how they'd pray over the school and encouraged families to do that. And the safety steps that they make for that he talks to.

Servant leaders are always observing stakeholders and facilities for feedback to improve.

Comfortable with complexity. Sometimes, simple solutions solve complicated situations, and other times not. Regardless, a servant leader becomes comfortable dealing with complex situations, not because they have the solution but because they have formed relationships with persons who can brainstorm a solution or walk through the situation with them (Greenleaf, 2008). The Chapel Academy Leadership Team collaborated on student culture's complex topic to make a proactive plan to maintain the healthy student culture – not allowing it to slip away (Document 55 – Leadership Team: Administration Meeting Agenda & Notes,

October 27, 2020). In the same meeting, the Leadership Team addressed the ongoing topics of (a) reminder that discipline takes time, (b) building student relationships, and (c) accountability. These topics were reoccurring because of their complexity (vision) and required mention as the team works at them frequently (short-term goal).

Leaders cannot fear complex topics or tasks and must approach them head-on. There can be no avoidance of them. While teaching the students from a biblical lens, Chapel Academy does so in such a way to prepare students to enter a secular world—including Mark. In the departing message to Seniors, he reminisced over the year's memories:

Our more serious and weighty discussions centered on sex, dating, and divorce. In all, you nine have demonstrated a discerning and mature/maturing stance toward a culture that is complex, sometimes difficult, and often contrary to a gospel understanding of reality. You are prepared to enter into the broader culture afforded by adulthood, college life, and beyond. (Document 9 – Yearbook Message: 2018-19 Last Word to our Grads)

Part of preparing students for the transition after graduation is coping with issues they will face in life. Chapel Academy understands this and is equipping the students following Psalm 78: 1–7.

Leaders will face many situations that need resolution. Some will be effortless to resolve, and in others, it will be a struggle to find peace for anyone. It is the relationships that bring the leader comfort, not the solution (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Considers the greater good. Prepping the campus with COVID-19 sanctions before students return for the 2020–2021 school year, the HoS shared the campus changes:

We are working on installing several more water bottle filling stations on campus. These will allow every student improved access to drinking water throughout the day and will encourage good hydration for both students and staff. They will also replace current

drinking fountains, a layer to improving overall student health and safety. Added classroom and outdoor handwashing stations are in the works, providing students and staff with easy and ample ways to maintain healthy habits. Additionally, this will also cut down on transmission of allergens and common germs that can disrupt student learning even in a normal year. One of the signature facets of our student culture at Chapel Academy has been the blessing of eating lunch outside nearly every day of the year. With that in mind, some areas of our campus will be improved and made available as additional eating areas, allowing our students to enjoy God's creation as always. Playgrounds are also being serviced and made ready for students to utilize fully as well. (Document 2 – Parent Newsletter, June 8, 2020)

A primary task of school leaders is ensuring that the physical environment is conducive for learning. The learning environment includes protecting staff and students from physical threats of danger (safety) and keeping them physically safe from invisible threats (healthy). Servant leaders are continuously making adjustments to ensure the campus provides an emotionally, physically, and spiritually healthy environment that promotes learning for all students and staff. By doing so, servant leaders consider all stakeholders' greater good through every decision related to facilities.

Tasked with educating the whole child, Mark longs for students to gain wisdom through both knowledge and experience. Document 15 (Staff Communication: Chapel Academy Mission Statement, Part 1) is a brief email to the staff in which the HoS shared with teachers, highlighting the first portion of the Chapel Academy mission “to equip children to fulfill God’s purpose for their lives.” He reminded them equipping is a process that includes instances when “we give our

students a text, a problem, an idea to examine, to solve, to understand” (Document 15 – Staff Communication: Chapel Academy Mission Statement, Part 1).

Theme 5: Christ-Centered

Adam reflected, “I think Mark would tell you he's not the leader of the school. I think Mark would tell you that he is just an instrument used by Christ, who is the leader of the school.” Isabella feels that Mark “Listen also to the Holy Spirit . . . advising him.” When people humble themselves to God’s will and listen to the Holy Spirit, it is evident that they are personally Christ-centered. Mark has chosen to lead Chapel Academy in like fashion. Chapel Academy’s vision incorporates Christ's love in its core values, mission, and vision statements. As the HoS, Mark not only expects Christ in the center of all things but models it for all by (a) displaying a servant’s heart, (b) being spiritually healthy, (c) empowering others through service, (d) serving a higher purpose, and (e) showing care/concern.

Mark is not the only believer at Chapel Academy. He purposefully hires Christian staff whenever possible. Bethany cites her reason for remaining at Chapel: “So, I stay here because I am trusted to do my job and to do it well, and I get to live out my faith every day with my students. And so that's really powerful for me.”

In a faith-based school, an expectation of theology exists to influence and entwine in the curriculum. Therefore, theology matters: “The God we choose to follow—the belief that informs our theology—ultimately shapes the person we become” (Wright, 2009, p. 31). Katelyn explained why her family selected Chapel:

Chapel Academy isn't just a Christian school that you go to chapel one day a week. It is Christ in all things through all subjects, whether it's directly sort of articulated and spelled

out for the children when necessary or just sort of the backdrop of the framework of how we understand everything and what we do and why we do it.

Being a Christian and a servant leader is exclusive; however, a more influential leader emerges when the two combine.

Displays a servant’s heart. “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’” states Matthew 25: 40. Mark seizes any opportunity for the stakeholders to be the hands and feet of Christ in Mary County (pseudonym). Document 18 – Chapel Families Sweet Charity Announcement 2018 is one such opportunity to build relationships in their community and to provide for the “least of these” (Matthew 25:40). Bethany shared more examples of benevolence:

If we have a family in need, the first thing we're doing he's asking staff members, what can we do for this family? So, a few years ago, we had a family that . . . she was a staff member here who was pregnant and then lost her child. So, what can we do for that?

During COVID-19, we did a lot of . . . instead of \$50 take out of my salary, let's donate it to this family. So, there was a lot of that going on, and he was . . . sometimes he would be the one to initiate it. Sometimes he was the one that would just okay it, and yep let's do that. So that's where I think he does a pretty good job with that.

Chapel Academy is a generous school with a giving heart.

Spiritually healthy. Each of the logged 54 documents for analysis could have multiple pages submitted under an entry. For example Document 5 – Leadership Team Meeting is made up of three separate pages under the single heading of Document 5 (Appendix I). Therefore, under the documentation analysis, over 100 sheets were analyzed. Of the documents analyzed, 108 included the categorical code of guardian communication, ceremony, HoS blogs,

newsletters, parent communications, and photos. Of those 108 documents, 99 documents (92%) included a spiritual message. Examples included referencing the school's mission to provide a biblically-integrated instruction or for the faculty and staff to equip students for life through a biblical perspective (Document 36 – Chapel Academy Mission Statement). Putting into action the school's mission, the HoS encouraged his staff to pray before performing their civic duty of voting (Document 54 – A Bonus, an Election & a Full Moon Email from HoS). He also encouraged a Christian example in the middle of the political controversy (Document 54 – A Bonus, an Election & a Full Moon Email from HoS). Christianity is not a political party.

The staff teach a theologically-infused curriculum and use teachable moments to teach biblical life principles. Katelyn shared her observations:

When the teachers pull the students aside, they don't just say, "You have to be nice to her." They really explain from a biblical perspective, trying to instill that wisdom in them as to why we love our neighbor and why this behavior is not okay, and the full character development of the children.

Chapel Academy staff are committed to teaching the whole child, academically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Empowers others through service. Chapel Academy allows high school students to serve younger students through an elective course as Buddy readers or academic support.

Through the process of enriching lives, social and relational skills are expanded and enriched.

Rachel shared the impact:

Another thing that we've really liked about the program at Chapel is how the older students interact with the younger students. They have a book buddy program for the . . .
What is it? Fourth graders and K-4, where they buddy up. They read to them every

Friday. The book buddies become much more of a thing than I would've anticipated. Now that my kids have gone through it on both ends. They really connect with one another. Also, they have high school students that come down to the preschool classes. I think perhaps it's some form of an elective. That's another great way for the whole student body to come together that I've found to be interesting about Chapel and impressive.

Chapel Academy offered a community service opportunity for all stakeholders (students, guardians, and staff), which allowed them to be the hands and feet of Christ in Mary County (Document 18 – Chapel Families Sweet Charity Announcement 2019). Not only were community relationships built, but they also ministered “to the least of these” (Matthew 25:40).

Serves a higher purpose. In 2019, the HoS taught a group of seniors about culture and viewing the world around them from a biblical lens (Document 9 – Yearbook Message: 2018-19 Last Word to our Grads). Mark is not remiss in letting the graduates know that they have infused their legacy in the Chapel Academy’s DNA. As such, they are forever part of the school’s culture:

Culture is what we make of our world. That is the working definition we began with back in August as we embarked on a study of culture, dating, marriage, and family life. We have discussed ways in which we create culture, live in culture, accommodate culture, and run counter to it. Those of us who follow Christ are called to look at the world around us and to make it better through our work, our love, and our sacrifice. We are called to be, in short, culture makers. (Document 9 – Yearbook Message: 2018-19 Last Word to our Grads)

As Mark and his staff prepared seniors, and other students, for the world outside the walls of Chapel Academy, he reminded them to not only exist in the culture but of their role to be “culture makers” (Document 9 – Yearbook Message: 2018-19 Last Word to our Grads).

Chapel Academy boldly proclaims the gospel and does not shy away from sharing God’s Word. Mark utilizes every communication opportunity to point back to the school’s mission and vision (embedded in the school’s core values). In a heartfelt message to the 2020 seniors, Mark reminds the seniors of their legacy, leaving the staff with their non-academic achievements (Document 6, 6a – Yearbook Message: Last Word to the 2020 Seniors [email and attachment]). He spotlighted some of the memories and imprints they made and reminded them of their unique and collective tendency to change their surroundings. Mark sent them into their future with the desire that they continue to seek Christ first in all things.

Shows care/concern. Before expressing care or concern, leaders must first establish a relationship. As HoS, Mark chooses to conduct the school tours and initial meetings for prospective families. Joanna shared her memorable memory:

I think we ended up spending about three hours between sitting in the office and talking and then going on a tour. And then he walked me into a classroom, introduced us. You felt very welcome. You never felt like it was all about the money. I still don’t believe that it ever was. And I don’t think it is. But other places, you would feel that.

Subtle expressions of care are sometimes necessary when dealing with people. Kelly respects how Mark presents information without coercing and allows parents to choose the best for their family. Kelly retold her story:

I haven’t had a whole lot of interactions with administration with my girls, like I said, and my son, and that was ongoing for probably a year and a half. And we then met on more

than one occasion, talking about a need for counseling and trying to help me. And I could tell that he's (Mark) getting frustrated because I wasn't making a decision real quick, but I feel like sometimes if I just listened long enough, God would put me in right direction. But sometimes it's not my timing. And unfortunately, I don't think it was in the school's timing either, and I had to withdraw my son. But he (Mark) certainly was consistent in giving me input, but also allowing me that independence and not forcing my hand necessarily.

Servant leaders show their care and concern for stakeholders overtly and covertly through various ways as unique as the stakeholder.

Research Questions

The following three research questions guided this research study. This study included eight Skype interviews, a focus group with two participants, and 54 documents analyzed to answer the research questions. The interviews consisted of 17 open-ended questions, and 11 open-ended questions were posed to the focus group members to understand the servant leadership characteristics influencing employee job satisfaction.

Central Research Question

How do stakeholders describe their experiences of schools led by servant leader principals?

This study's data included Skype interviews, a Skype focus group, and document analysis in determining the servant leadership characteristics specific to the PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida, which influenced employee job satisfaction. A summation of the data collected revealed five key themes that comprised servant leadership characteristics. It included: (a) Sensitive Servant, (b) Future-Focused, (c) Followers First,

(d) Thorough Thinker, and (e) Christ-Centered. The researcher created these theme names to encompass the servant leadership characteristics demonstrated in this case study. The Sensitive Servant theme of servant leadership includes characteristics of acceptance, compassion, empathy, inviting feedback, persuasive communication, and understanding. Next is Future-Focused, which includes balancing short-term goals with vision, being courageous, creativity, decision making, decisive action, learning from past/seeing today/dreaming of the future, Walk & Talk, and vision. The Walk & Talk category is not a recognized servant leadership characteristic; however, it was repeated throughout the research by participants and attested to the leader's accessibility and approachability. The third theme is Followers First, which builds teams/community, cohesiveness, collaboration, expresses appreciation, leader-follower relationship, and works alongside. The leader-follower relationship was created based upon repeated participant references in this study. The fourth theme, Thorough Thinker, consisted of adaptability, being comfortable with complexity, and considering the greater good. The last theme, Christ-Centered, is made up of the following servant leadership characteristics: displays a servant's heart, empowers others through service, serves a higher purpose, shows care/concern, and spiritually healthy. This qualitative study examined stakeholder descriptions of their experiences at a school led by a servant leader principal.

Sub-question 1

How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to faculty and staff?

The analysis of interviews and focus group transcripts and the document analysis emphasized servant leadership characteristics between stakeholders revealed to this researcher. Patterns emerged within the codes as each stakeholder group (faculty/staff or guardian) pointed out the school principal's various servant leadership characteristics, often in a shared event. Of

the five primary servant leadership characteristics uncovered through data collection, three in the study were emphasized and related to faculty and staff: (a) Future-Focused, (b) Followers First, and (c) Thorough Thinker. The first theme of Future-Focused includes servant leadership characteristics as balancing short-term goals with vision, courageous, creativity, decision-making, decisive action, learns from past/sees today/dreams of future, Walk & Talk, and vision. All but the last two are recognizable servant leadership characteristics in empirical research. The last two were codes created from this study based upon participants' shared experiences. Thorough Thinker's final theme was adaptability, comfortable with complexity, and consider the greater good. Participants and analyzed documents offered insight into how the school principal demonstrated servant leadership to faculty and staff.

Sub-question 2

How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to guardians?

In this study, guardians consistently expressed the themes of Sensitive Servant and Christ-Centered, demonstrating servant leadership by the school principal. The two guardian themes came from the five overarching stakeholder themes: (a) Sensitive Servant, (b) Future-Focused, (c) Followers First, (d) Thorough Thinker, and (e) Christ-Centered. These five themes arose through the data collection methods of Skype interviews, a Skype focus group, and document analysis. The first theme, Sensitive Servant, consisted of servant leadership characteristics of acceptance, compassion, empathy, invites feedback, persuasive feedback, and understanding. The second and final theme, Christ-Centered, consists of the following: displays a servant's heart, empowers others through service, serves a higher purpose, shows care/concern, and spiritually healthy. This study showed how the school principal demonstrated servant leadership to guardians.

Summary

The purpose of Chapter Four was to present the result of the data analysis. The analytical process included assigning descriptive and categorical codes to chunks of data involving thematic coding. The codes were reduced from 116 preliminary codes (descriptive and categorical) to 90 (categorical) codes. Appendix K contains a comprehensive list of the codes. This researcher used both manual efforts and ATLAS.ti v.9 software in the analytic process by reducing and applying related themes from existing codes to capture emerging ideas (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Ranney et al., 2015).

Chapter Four focused on the findings as related to the posed research questions. Each research question was answered through the data collection methods of interviews, focus group, and documentation analysis. The first question, known as the Central Question, asked, “How do stakeholders describe their experience of schools led by servant leader principals?” This study revealed stakeholders describing five servant leadership characteristics in schools led by a servant leader: (a) understanding, (b) consider the greater good, (c) build team/community, (d) spiritually healthy, and (e) vision. The next question relates to the central question and is labeled SQ1: “How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to faculty and staff?” Faculty and staff seek principals demonstrating the servant leadership characteristics who (a) consider the greater good, (b) build team/community, and (c) vision. The final question, which also relates to the Central Question, is SQ2: “How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to guardians?” Understanding and spiritually healthier are the servant leadership characteristics sought after by guardians in their school administrators.

Likewise, this chapter provided profiles for participants’ who contributed to this study, the school's vignette, and an overview of the analyzed documents. The purpose of this single,

holistic, instrumental case study was to understand the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida and his influence on employee job satisfaction. Therefore, this chapter included the five themes that evolved from the coded data and responses from all data collection to the posed research questions. This chapter revealed Mark Carpenter’s five most robust servant leadership characteristics which contribute to his influence on employee job satisfaction: (a) Sensitive Servant, (b) Future-Focused, (c) Followers First, (d) Thorough Thinker, and (e) Christ-Centered. These are five central themes, derived from the data codes, which encompass multiple servant leadership characteristics within each theme and significantly contribute to his average 0.15% staff turnover rate over the past five years at Chapel Academy (M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 30, 2020).

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

Servant leaders put the needs of their followers ahead of the organization (Greenleaf, 2008; Patterson, 2003). Throughout this research study, the purpose of this single, holistic, instrumental case study was to understand the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida and his influence on employee job satisfaction. Mark Carpenter, HoS at Chapel Academy, has served for nine years and has a teacher (and staff) annual average turnover rate of 0.15% since the 2016–2017 school year (M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 30, 2020). As evidenced by their retention rate, Chapel Academy teachers feel supported and demonstrate connectedness and community (Grissom & Bartanen, 2019; Hodges, 2018; Jones & Watson, 2017; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Torres, 2016). Servant leaders like Mark Carpenter empower employees, impacting job satisfaction, positive school climate, and reduced teacher turnover rates (Coetzer et al., 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Le Ng et al., 2016; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). A qualitative methodology approach including data collection methods of Skype interviews, a Skype focus group, and documentation analysis occurred. ATLAS.ti v.9 computer software assisted with the data analysis, specifically with the coding process of assigning categorical and descriptive codes. A combination of computer and researcher completed the thematic analysis. Chapter Five's contents include a summary of the findings, a discussion of the findings, implications of the research, limitations, and future research recommendations.

Summary of Findings

A thematic analysis began with the data collected (interview transcripts, focus group transcripts, and documentation). Development of codes and themes emerged to understand the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida influencing employee job satisfaction. Upon review of the data collected in this study, five themes emerged: (a) Sensitive Servant, (b) Future-Focused, (c) Followers First, (d) Thorough Thinker, and (e) Christ-Centered. The theme names are not servant leadership characteristics; however, they reflect each theme's servant leadership characteristics. In some themes, this researcher created characteristic codes based upon the frequency of participant input. Correlating research questions include notations of the characteristic codes, where applicable.

Central Research Question

How do stakeholders describe their experiences of schools led by servant leader principals?

In this study, stakeholders determined five themes to describe their experience of schools led by servant leader principals: (a) Sensitive Servant, (b) Future-Focused, (c) Followers First, (d) Thorough Thinker, and (e) Christ-Centered. The first theme, Sensitive Servant, was comprised of the code categories of (a) acceptance, (b) compassion, (c) empathy, (d) invites feedback, (e) persuasive communication, and (f) understanding.

This study's data coding of the theme Sensitive Servant revealed Mark's strengths in descending order as understanding, empathy, invites feedback, compassion, persuasive communication, and acceptance. Repeatedly, participants commented upon and documents revealed Mark's understanding nature, citing his insight, judgment, tolerance, and acute

awareness of others' feelings and his ability to respond accurately. Paired with his sense of understanding is empathy, even in times of employee reprimand. Anna shared how she came apologetically to Mark when she erred, and he responded, "You're fine. It's fine. You just apologize, and you move on, and you just do what you can to not make the same mistake again." It is easy to build relationships during moments of peace. In the moments of correction, a relationship can continue to strengthen or it can crumble. A servant leader will preserve the relationship and ensure that growth results from the interaction. Being aware of another person's feelings fosters healing and help in times of need while strengthening social connections. Lastly, Mark consistently solicits the feedback of his stakeholders. He seeks their input for decision-making, improving the school, and improving as a leader. Mark weighs his words and does not rush to fill the silence in a conversation, and he gives due consideration if the words he speaks will improve the silence (Greenleaf, 2008).

The second theme, Future-Focused, consisted of code categories that included the following: (a) balance short-term goals with vision, (b) courageous, (c) creativity, (d) decision making, (e) decisive action, (f) learn from the past/see today/dream of the future, (g) Walk & Talk, and (h) vision. In this theme, the Walk & Talk code is unrecognized as a servant leadership characteristic. In Chapter Four, Mark begins each faculty meeting with the mission and vision statement to refocus staff on their collective purpose and function. During interviews and focus group interactions, participants repeatedly referenced key phrases of both the mission and vision statement, demonstrating that it is in the stakeholders' DNA. When the leader has successfully communicated the vision to followers, and there is ownership (evident through stakeholder's speech), collaboration for decision making and balancing short term goals with the organization's vision becomes less problematic. Keeping the school's vision at the center of all

decisions helps keep the school on the course and on track to achieving the outlined goals in alignment with the vision. Staying the course with the vision involves making multiple decisions throughout a day and over the years. Chapel Academy started as an elementary school and has grown to include a high school with its first graduating class in 2018 (School History, n.d.). Such achievements occur when the leader intentionally balances short-term goals with the vision. Leaders make many decisions throughout the day. Some decisions require immediate action, various decisions necessitate delegation, and other decisions involve input from others and can be shared decisions. Mark frequently solicited input from stakeholders and the Leadership Team to improve or establish policy and procedures for Chapel Academy. At the same time, he balanced each resolution scenario as an individual situation and refrained from duplicating any canned responses, as Joanna shared in Chapter Four.

The third theme, Followers First, included the following code categories: (a) building teams/community, (b) cohesiveness, (c) collaboration, (d) express appreciation, (f) leader–follower relationship, and (g) working alongside. In this theme, the researcher created the leader's sub-category of leader–follower relationship based on consistent participants' shared stories. Mark builds his teaching team and stakeholder community one leader–follower relationship at a time. He is intentional in the recruiting process and will take his time selecting the right person to add to the Chapel Academy. Human resources is a valuable investment for Mark as HoS and motivates him to avoid quick employment decisions, vetting each applicant with careful deliberation. Mark hires competent staff and trusts them to perform their tasks to the best of their ability. Once hired, he nurtures the leader–follower relationship through his Walk & Talk visits and check-ins. Mark makes an effort to show his appreciation by giving them the

freedom to be professionals and experts in their field. When necessary, he is their advocate, requesting a bonus or acting as an intercessory to a parent.

Theme 4, Thorough Thinker, consisted of the following code categories: (a) adaptability, (b) comfort with complexity, and (c) consider the greater good. It is expected that the leader will consider the good of the organization. However, a servant leader also considers the greater good of the stakeholders and community as well. As the HoS, Mark takes responsibility for shepherding the flock with grace and honor. In addition to protecting his stakeholders, Mark also took the initiative to care for them during COVID-19 quarantine with the campus's previously mentioned security screening. Bethany shared multiple stories and examples of how families and staff benefited from Chapel Academy's benevolence during the Spring of 2020 when they unexpectedly experienced reduced hours or job loss. The school family stepped in and offered food or supplemental income in their time of need. Possessing the ability to adjust and having flexibility are essential requirements for leaders, especially educational leaders. Adaptable leaders are curious and do not remain tethered to one system permanently; they are always seeking improvement. Leaders adapt in a variety of ways while performing their daily duties. Some examples of the adaptability of Mark as a leader included adapting to stakeholders' personalities or preferences for the greater good, delegating tasks, and sharing decision-making responsibilities.

However, before any of these actions can occur, leaders must first put themselves in a position of listening with the willingness to act. Mark demonstrated this sense of adaptability when he took the feedback from a teacher's input on his evaluation five years ago, reflecting he was doing too much. Upon reflection, Mark hired two positions a few months later to offer administrative assistance. He hired a Dean of Students and a Dean of Faculty. The following

school year, he added to the administrative team an Elementary School Coordinator who served dual duties as the school counselor, too.

Leaders are conflict negotiators. They mediate disputes, simplify the complex, and bring peace to disorder. Servant leaders must be comfortable with the complexity they face in their role as a leader. One of the most challenging jobs in Christian education is to prepare students to survive the world around them. Mark and his staff prepared the students for the world that awaited them outside the classroom walls and campus perimeter. Chapel faculty and staff prepared the students for secular world issues with a biblical perspective.

Finally, the fifth theme, Christ-Centered, consisted of the following code categories: (a) displaying a servant's heart; (b) empowering others through service; (c) serving for a higher purpose; (d) showing care/concern; and (e) sensitivity to an individual's spiritual health. Some students come from the governing church with families offering a robust biblical background, whereas other students become the household's spiritual leaders. Such progress can only occur with a spiritually healthy leader and staff. Mark cares about the whole school, from persons to operation. As Jon noted in Chapter Four, Mark is committed to the school as a teacher, HoS, and soccer coach. Mark's active engagement in the school and the people rooted in his care demonstrates his care and concern. Greenleaf's (2008) servant leadership theory strived towards the ultimate goal of "best test" when the leader unleashes the follower's innate desire to serve others. So, too, Mark works at discipling his flock so that they may disciple others. Anna shared that Mark offers dedicated staff prayer days: "Mondays, Tuesdays, and Fridays, we have staff prayers together, and we have a different theme for each day." In each written communication with stakeholders, he included a spiritual inspired message that reinforces its purpose. This study described stakeholders' experiences in a school led by a servant leader principal.

Sub-question 1

How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to faculty and staff?

Using thematic analysis, three of the five themes were specific to faculty and staff: Future-Focused, Followers First, and Thorough Thinker. One example of a school principal demonstrating the servant leadership of being Future-Focused would be anticipating growth. In Chapter Four, Cindy spoke to Mark's initial doubts adding the high school grades to the “highly respected in the community” middle school. Cindy continued in her interview to admit that Mark’s forward-thinking brought new challenges that were the right choice for the community to grow. She admits that such a move was courageous.

During the focus group, Adam spoke of how Mark has intentionally built a sense of community among all the stakeholders around the school’s core values. Adam adds, “And I think he's made that clear to the community, to the teachers, to the parents, to the students as well. And he's gotten people to believe it, to buy into it.” Lastly, the faculty and staff identified the Thorough Thinker theme. Mark’s preference is to hire Christian employees. Anna shared that Mark will check in with employees to see if they are still plugged in with their local church and satisfied or offer to assist them in finding another church. He does not coerce them to attend the governing church affiliated with the school. He is concerned with the greater good of the school as the school’s vision involves educating students to “govern their lives by Biblical principles, and train their minds to promote and defend the faith, all to the glory of God” (Document 36 – Operating Document: Chapel Academy Mission Statement). Through this study, faculty and staff revealed what characteristics they perceived their school principal demonstrated as a servant leader.

Sub-question 2

How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to guardians?

Data collection methods included individual interviews and a focus group via Skype, along with comprehensive documentation analysis. Through the analysis, five themes emerged, of which two were specific to the interests of guardians: Sensitive Servants and Christ-Centered. One example of the school principal demonstrating servant leadership, Sensitive Servants, is when Mark shared tips with parents relating to digital devices and usage. He shared the technology tips to help partner with parents in raising their children in the middle of the dark world filled with temptation (Document 41 – Principal’s Thoughts: Digital Communications Blog).

The second theme revealed through data collection was Christ-Centered. One parent, Kelly, felt assured knowing her children were receiving a solid Christ-centered foundation for future trials:

I do appreciate that cause I think that all of us, at some point in our life, hit a hard patch or a little bump in the road, and I think that the stronger your foundation and the stronger your faith, the easier it's going to be to try to walk through it.

This study revealed that guardians appreciate school principals that demonstrate servant leadership.

Discussion

The purpose of this single, holistic, instrumental case study was to understand the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida and how they influence employee satisfaction. Under Mark Carpenter’s leadership over the last five years, Chapel Academy’s employee turnover rate averaged 0.15% (M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 30, 2020). This study's data collection included teleconference interviews of eight participants (three faculty/staff and five guardians) along with a focus group

of two participants (one each from faculty/staff and guardian). Analyzing 54 documents submitted by Chapel Academy staff was the third data collection method (HoS, one administrator, and one teacher). The data were analyzed by a review of the data, reading, re-reading, and memoing along the way. The assignment of codes to meaningful chunks of data resulted. Some codes were categorical to assist in coding while others were descriptive codes aligned with servant leadership characteristics. Appendix K offers a listing of the descriptive codes with their frequencies (see also Figure 3). Next, the grouping of codes into themes using ATLAS.ti v.9 software ensued. The paring down of codes was developed as part of the thematic analysis. Next came the grouping of codes into likeness categories (Figure 4). In the mixtures of codes, themes emerged based upon data patterns, with five robust themes evolving from the data: a) Sensitive Servant, (b) Future-Focused, (c) Followers First, (d) Thorough Thinker, and (e) Christ-Centered. Chapter Five outlines and discusses the study's empirical and theoretical implications discussed in the following sections.

Empirical

A gap exists between quantitative and qualitative empirical research, and this study helps fill the existing gap in servant leadership inquiries available. For the past 16 years, 58% of all servant leadership studies were quantitative, and 8% were qualitative (Yigit & Bozkurt, 2017). In another meta-analysis study, Eva et al. (2019) emphasized an even wider gap with 81% quantitative and 15% qualitative studies. The gap is unbalanced, favoring quantitative at present. The need for participants' voices to be heard through additional qualitative studies was recommended by quantitative researchers Ghamrawi and Al-Jammal (2014). Therefore, completing this study attempts to restore an equilibrium using a qualitative empirical inquiry through a single, holistic, instrumental case study. Findings from this study will strengthen the

servant leadership platform and allow the participants' voices to be heard, leading to a greater understanding of how servant leadership characteristics influence job satisfaction (Eva et al., 2019; Patton, 2015). Their perspectives of a school led by a servant leader will help other leaders lead in the same way and strive to duplicate the same annual average turnover rate of 0.15% (M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 30, 2020).

This study's overarching goal focused on fostering strong, healthy relationships between leaders and followers. This research stands on the shoulders of empirical research, laying a foundation for trust-building between leader and follower and strengthening that relationship (Babyak, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Krog & Govender, 2015; Le Ng et al., 2016; Maak & Pless, 2006; Panaccio et al., 2015; Patterson, 2003). This qualitative study added to the empirical research foundation of faculty trust in their leader who builds a positive and healthy leader–follower relationship (a characteristic found within the Followers First theme in this study). This research also added to the empirical research, in a new dimension, that guardians also reciprocate a deep level of trust with the school principal. Greenleaf described a community as a group of people bound by trust, respect, and ethical behavior, and a healthy climate (Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Hung et al., 2016; Price, 2012; Ryan et al., 2017; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). In this study, building team/community (a characteristic found within the Followers First theme) was shared by faculty/staff participants, guardian participants, and evident in the documentation analysis. When a servant leader establishes community, it helps build a positive school culture (Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2016; Price, 2012; Ryan et al., 2017; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). This study's results contribute to Greenleaf, Spears, and Sipe & Frick's servant leadership work.

Lastly, servant leaders put their followers first and strive to empower them (Greenleaf, 2008; Melchar & Bosco, 2010). As the servant leader works alongside followers, serving their needs, the leader helps the follower grow. Ultimately, the leader's goal is for the follower to discover their innate desire to serve others themselves (Greenleaf, 2008). Greenleaf's "best test" is the last stage of servant leadership: the leader's development of their followers' discovery of servitude (Greenleaf, 2008).

It is the desire that this study's findings help to close the gap in the lack of qualitative research, contribute to existing empirical research relating to leader–follower relationships, and empower employees through an exploration of servant leadership characteristics. Data from this study revealed the following five themes: (a) Sensitive Servant, (b) Future-Focused, (c) Followers First, (d) Thorough Thinker, and (e) Christ-Centered. These will continue to encourage and supplement existing servant leadership research, demonstrating their importance in increasing employee satisfaction and reducing the teacher turnover rate.

Theoretical

Three theories created the fundamental basis for this research. This inquiry's foundation was based on the research and writing of Greenleaf (2008) on servant leadership theory. Following Greenleaf's work, and with Spears' help, was the creation of the renowned and commonly referenced 10 servant leadership characteristics. A third fundamental theoretical premise came from Sipe and Frick's (2015) work, outlined in *Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership: Practicing the Wisdom of Leading by Serving*. Working at the Greenleaf Center, their book's content aligns with the servant leadership theory.

Servant Leadership Theory

Servant leaders serve their followers first before the needs of the organization (Greenleaf, 2008). Through participants' feedback, this study found that stakeholders appreciate school principals who demonstrate the theme by the same name, Followers First. In the study's theme, the servant leadership characteristics included (a) builds team/community, (b) cohesiveness, (c) collaboration, (d) expresses appreciation, (e) leader–follower relationship, and (f) works alongside (see Figure 4). As a special note, when leaders work alongside their followers, they are nurtured to their fullest potential (Greenleaf, 2008; Patterson, 2003; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015).

Stakeholders, both staff and guardians, want the school principal to show care/concern (noted in this study under the theme of Christ-Centered). Ertel (2017) stated the platform of servant leadership was built upon people (followers) who want to be served and know they are cared about by their leaders. The greatest assets for leaders are followers (Lett, 2014). Within this study, under the theme of Followers First, the leader (principal) demonstrated expression of appreciation to stakeholders.

As servant leaders serve their followers, the followers become more autonomous. Sequentially, these followers are more likely to serve others (Greenleaf, 2008). The Chapel Academy faculty and staff reported high autonomy when describing the leader–follower relationship. The recording of high autonomy was under the Follower First theme. Additionally, servant leadership promotes community. This study was recorded under the theme as Followers First and shared decision-making under the Future-Focused theme (Spears & Lawrence, 2004). This study's results supported the theoretical works of Greenleaf's (2008) servant leadership theory. The “best test” of servant leadership, according to Greenleaf (2008), extends beyond the

individual and the organization. The ultimate achievement occurs when a servant leader helps followers recognize their innate calling to serve others (Greenleaf, 2008).

Spears' 10 Characteristics of Servant Leadership

In 1992, as part of Spears' work in servant leadership, he created a list of 10 notable servant leader characteristics that remain referenced and respected today (Focht & Ponton, 2015; Spears Center, 2019). Spears' list of 10 servant leadership characteristics emerged from Greenleaf's original writings and include the following: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Spears Center, 2019).

During this study, key phrases were used as code identifiers, such as Spears' 10 servant leadership characteristics which also supported Greenleaf's servant leadership theory. Both Spears and Greenleaf's theories are part of the theoretical foundation framework for this study. Findings from this study provided consistent support for Spears' characteristics.

Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership

Sipe and Frick's (2015) writing parallels Greenleaf's original writings and Spears' supporting work relating to servant leadership. Like Spears, Sipe and Frick grouped Spears' 10 servant leadership characteristics into Sipe and Frick's (2015) seven pillars of servant leadership, which include: (a) Person of Character, (b) Puts People First, (c) Skilled Communicator, (d) Compassionate Collaborator, (e) Has Foresight, (f) Systems Thinker, and (g) Leads with Moral Authority. Each of the seven pillars offers three observable, supportive competencies.

There are similarities and familiarities between this study's themes and Sipe and Frick's (2015) seven pillars of servant leadership, as used in this study's theoretical foundation. Many of the initial names used during coding came from Greenleaf, and Sipe and Frick's theoretical

foundations. Figure 6 compares the themes found within this study to the seven pillars of servant leadership.

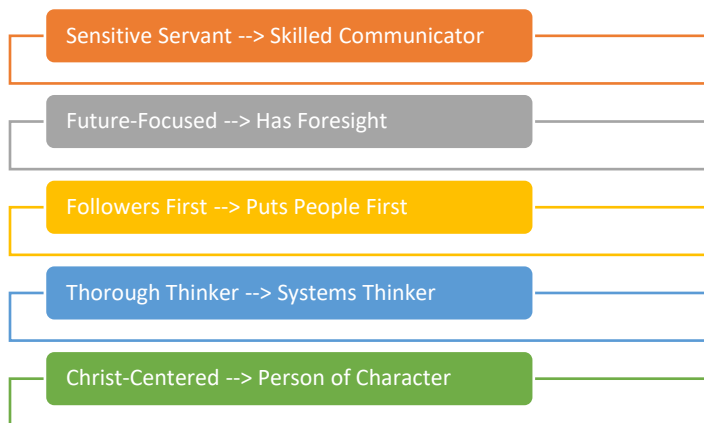


Figure 6. Themes within this study compared to the seven pillars of servant leadership.

This study's results offered continued support of the theoretical works of Sipe and Frick's servant leadership.

Implications

Three research questions guided this single, holistic, instrumental, qualitative case study for the PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida which sought to understand how servant leadership characteristics influence employee satisfaction. As a result of the data collected (interviews, a focus group, and documentation analysis), this study revealed five themes supporting servant leadership characteristics that impact employee satisfaction.

Those five theme findings include the following: (a) Theme 1: Sensitive Servant, (b) Theme 2: Future-Focused, (c) Theme 3: Followers First, (d) Theme 4: Thorough Thinker, (e) Theme 5: Christ-Centered. Five themes, consisting of 28 categories, emerged from the data within this study. While this conducted study was in an educational setting, both themes and the supporting categories bring positive implications to servant leaders, regardless of the industry: (a) stronger leader–follower relationship, (b) reduced employee turnover rate, (c) improved climate,

(d) employee satisfaction, and (e) empowered employees (Black, 2013; Chang et al., 2017; Dapula & Castano, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Krog & Govender, 2015; Le Ng et al., 2016; Price, 2012; Tischler et al., 2016; Turgut et al., 2017; van Dierendonck, 2011; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017).

Firstly, Theme 1, called Sensitive Servant, comprises six categories of acceptance, compassion, empathy, invites feedback, persuasive communication, and understanding (see Figure 4). Of these categories, two overlapped with Spears' servant leadership characteristics. The Sensitive Servant categories of *acceptance* and *understanding* linked with Spears' fundamental theoretical servant leader characteristic of *healing* (see Figure 5). Additionally, the Sensitive Servant's empathy category aligned with Spears' characteristic of the same name (see Figure 5). The Sensitive Servant leader is rooted in humility, practices active listening, and puts the needs of followers first (Greenleaf, 2008; Le Ng et al., 2016). Leaders who choose servant leadership as their management style, practicing the six characteristics of a Sensitive Servant, will strengthen leader–follower relationships (Greenleaf, 2008; Le Ng et al., 2016). In so doing, employee satisfaction increases, which reduces employee turnover, and a positive working climate is a byproduct (Black, 2013; Chang et al., 2017; Dapula & Castano, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Price, 2012; Tischler et al., 2016; Turgut et al., 2017; van Dierendonck, 2011).

Secondly, Theme 2, Future-Focused, comprised the eight categories of balancing short-term goals with vision, courage, creativity, decision making, decisive action, learn from past/see today/dream of the future, vision, and Walk & Talk (see Figure 4). From this study there are two categories (*balance short-term goals* and *learn from past/see today/dream of the future*) linked with Spears' servant leadership characteristic of *conceptualization* (Figure 5). Future-focused

leaders are visionaries with creativity and foresight. They are bold and decisive and stay in tune with their organization by walking among their followers and holding communications flow channels. Leaders who are active in the field can see the vision's implementation firsthand and call for adjustments as needed. Likewise, they hear the concerns of followers and see potential problems before they arise. Servant leaders who exercise future-focused characteristics will build trust with their followers with a clear vision and active engagement in overseeing that vision (Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Maak & Pless, 2006; Mareus et al., 2019; Patterson, 2003; Russell et al., 2017). In the trenches with the followers, a future-focused leader is diligent in working the vision and is decisive in accomplishing the vision. Leaders who implement the categories of a future-focused leader will yield empowered and satisfied employees (Chang et al., 2017; Dapula & Castano, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Krog & Govender, 2015; Tischler et al., 2016; van Dierendonck, 2011; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017).

Thirdly, Theme 3, Followers First, was made from the following six categories: builds team/community, cohesiveness, collaboration, expresses appreciation, leader–follower relationship, and works alongside (see Figure 4). This theme's category *builds team/community* links with Spears' theoretical fundamental servant leadership characteristic of *building community* (see Figure 5). Just as the name implies, the follower-first leader puts his/her followers' needs above the organization's needs (Greenleaf, 2008; Spears, 2010). The followers-first leaders utilize their giftedness of team building and collaboration skills to foster the leader–follower relationship. When needed, these leaders work alongside their followers. As a result of their participation and modeling of teamwork, followers-first leaders (a)strengthen leader–follower relationships, (b) increase employee satisfaction, (c) which reduces employee turnover,

and (d) as a byproduct create a positive working climate (Black, 2013; Chang et al., 2017; Dapula & Castano, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Le Ng et al., 2016; Price, 2012; Tischler et al., 2016; van Dierendonck, 2011).

Next, Theme 4, Thorough Thinker, encompassed the three categories of adaptability, comfortable with complexity, and considers the greater good (see Figure 4). There was no overlapping of Spears' servant leadership characteristics in the categories of this theme. The leader who is a thorough thinker is wise and seeks the organization's and followers' needs before him/herself. With every decision, simple and complex, thorough thinkers allow their followers to perform their job and invite them to participate in the shared decision-making process. Employees feel empowered when working with a thorough thinker leader (Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Krog & Govender, 2015; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017).

Finally, Theme 5, Christ-Centered, comprises the four categories of displaying a servant's heart, empowering others through service, serves a higher purpose, and spiritually healthy (Figure 4). There was no overlapping of Spears' servant leadership characteristics in the categories of this theme. As the label implies, the leader who is Christ-centered is Spirit-filled. While this study focused on the servant leadership of a Christian school leader, not all servant leaders need to be Christians. Non-Christians will execute some of the Christ-centered theme categories; however, the categories of *serving a higher purpose* and *spiritually healthy* would be unfilled in their entirety. The Christ-centered leader will cultivate a positive and healthy leader–follower relationship (Greenleaf, 2008; Le Ng et al., 2016). Through serving their followers, the Christ-centered leader will increase employee job satisfaction and create a positive work climate (Black, 2013; Chang et al., 2017; Dapula & Castano, 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Price, 2012; Tischler et al., 2016; van Dierendonck, 2011).

Theoretical Implications

This single, holistic, instrumental case study of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based leader embodies Greenleaf’s theory of strong leader and follower relationships (Greenleaf, 2008; Patterson, 2003). The publication of this study expands upon the theoretical foundation of Greenleaf’s (2008) servant leadership theory. This research also strongly supports Greenleaf’s belief in community and substantiates Greenleaf’s theoretical work. Findings within this study also supply consistent support for Spears’ 10 servant leadership characteristics (Spears, 2010). These traits are an extension of Greenleaf’s work and remain a recognized and reliable reference. Lastly, this research supports the collaborative work of Sipe and Frick’s (2015) seven pillars of servant leadership. This study's findings substantiate the seven servant leadership pillars (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

This study's findings offer to strengthen, support, and corroborate all three of Greenleaf’s, Spears’, and Sipe and Frick's theoretical foundations. This case study strengthens servant leadership research by adding to the qualitative empirical research database (Eva et al., 2019). This study also adds clarity to the servant leadership definition, add to the servant leadership theory constructs, and continues to help identify servant leadership traits for leaders (Brown & Bryant, 2015). This study's results can be added to other qualitative studies to create a scope and parameters for conditions and constructs for servant leadership.

Empirical Implications

Currently, there is a dominance of quantitative empirical research compared to qualitative. At the time of this study, there was a disproportionate number of published quantitative studies. This study provides a qualitative empirical inquiry, where there is currently a deficiency. Specifically, this study strengthens the servant leadership platform with an

additional single instrumental case study (Eva et al., 2019). Additionally, this study adds to existing qualitative studies allowing participants' voices to be heard, leading to a greater understanding of how servant leadership characteristics influence job satisfaction (Patton, 2015). While quantitative studies offer relevant data, they are still lacking. Qualitative studies fill the valuable chasm of lost information from the participants' perspectives. So great is the need for qualitative inquiries, even quantitative researchers Ghamrawi and Al-Jammal (2014) recommended additional qualitative studies. Chapter Four of this study allowed the Chapel Academy faculty/staff and guardians to share their experience of a school led by a servant leader principal. Their perspectives of a school led by a servant leader may help other leaders lead in the same way and strive to duplicate the same annual average turnover rate of 0.15% (M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 30, 2020).

This study will continue to educate leaders on building strong leader–follower relationships through servant leadership. Servant leaders value community, from creation to maintaining the community. Greenleaf (2008) defined community as a group of individuals bound together by trust, respect, and ethical behavior, as the means for communicating and collaborating. Servant leaders using servant leadership traits build trust in their community, creating a healthy climate (Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2016; Price, 2012; Ryan et al., 2017; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Additionally, this study's results contribute to Greenleaf's, Spears', and Sipe and Frick's servant leadership work.

Finally, servant leaders commit to building leadership potential in their followers, thereby empowering their employees (Melchar & Bosco, 2010). Greenleaf (2008) deemed the ultimate achievement for a servant leader was when a leader helped his/her followers to discover their innate desire to serve others. Greenleaf's "best test" was determined when followers prepared

themselves for serving others. Burch et al. (2015) proposed that a servant leader was the preferred choice for Christian university administrators. This empirical study supports that Christian servant leaders are committed to biblical values while pursuing their purpose with optimism. This study may also empower non-Christian leaders to embrace servant leadership, embrace the leadership model, and lead others.

Practical Implications

According to Parris and Peachey (2013), servant leadership is more than a management theory; it is a way of life. Interest in servant leadership has expanded outside of academia, with successful examples noted in this study (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). While this study occurred in an educational setting, the findings are applicable across any industry. Likewise, the five themes (Sensitive Servant, Future-Focused, Followers First, Thorough Thinker, Christ-Centered) can train any administrative team (leaders) on how to interact with their employees (followers) to foster healthy relationships, stable work environments, increase productivity, and reduce turnover rates.

Traditional leadership models focus on the organization's success more than employee satisfaction (Tischler et al., 2016). Servant leadership theory flips traditional leadership models and puts followers' needs, including their satisfaction, first (Greenleaf, 2008). As such, servant leadership increases employee satisfaction, and in turn, employee retention rates increase (Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Le Ng et al., 2016; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). Leaders in or out of the field of academia who desire to decrease turnover rate and increase employee satisfaction need to embrace servant leadership management (Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Le Ng et al., 2016; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017).

The most substantial impact of this study was discovering the positive relationships between leaders and followers. Building community was a key component to establishing the relationship and building a community, or a group of individuals bound together by trust, respect, and ethical behavior (Greenleaf, 2008). Empirical findings from this study would benefit leaders seeking to build strong, healthy relationships with their followers. Building trusting leader–follower relationships strengthens the overall employment relationship and climate (Babyak, 2017; Burton et al., 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Hung et al., 2016; Krog & Govender, 2015; Le Ng et al., 2016; Maak & Pless, 2006; Panaccio et al., 2015; Patterson, 2003; Price, 2012; Ryan et al., 2017; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017).

With a stronger leader–follower relationship, there is a decrease in teacher turnover rates. Public school teachers leave the profession at an annual rate of 16%, while Christian and private school teachers leave at a rate of 20% (Castro et al., 2018; Jones & Watson, 2017; Torres, 2016). By improving the leader–follower relationship (see overarching theme of Followers First in this study), employee satisfaction increases, and teacher turnover decreases. Again, the same results can occur outside the academic field, as reported in Chapter Two, when the leader first invests in the employee.

Servant leadership is a way of life for anyone and is not limited to academia or Christians (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Chapter Two shared examples of non-academic servant leaders and successful businesses that exemplified the servant leadership model in corporate America. A servant leader will put the needs of followers above the needs of the organization, and as a result, employee satisfaction will soar (Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Le Ng et al., 2016; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). The servant leader will seek to establish a healthy and strong leader–follower relationship through establishing a

community as a top priority (Babyak, 2017; Burton et al., 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Hung et al., 2016; Krog & Govender, 2015; Le Ng et al., 2016; Maak & Pless, 2006; Panaccio et al., 2015; Patterson, 2003; Price, 2012; Ryan et al., 2017; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). When a servant leader increases employee satisfaction, creates a healthy leader–follower relationships and a positive work climate, a reduction in the turnover rate occurs (Babyak, 2017; Black, 2013; Burton et al., 2017; Dutta & Khatri, 2017; Greenleaf, 2008; Hu & Liden, 2011; Hung et al., 2016; Kashyap & Rangnekar, 2016; Krog & Govender, 2015; Le Ng et al., 2016; Maak & Pless, 2006; Panaccio et al., 2015; Patterson, 2003; Price, 2012; Ryan et al., 2017; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017). This study helps leaders increase the understanding of servant leadership theory and contributes and collaborates corroborate the servant leadership works of Greenleaf, Spears, and Sipe and Frick. This study also helps future servant leaders know the benefits of collaborating to build a community to increase employee job satisfaction and understand the servant leadership characteristics impacting leader–follower relationships that build a stronger community. As a whole, this study of servant leadership characteristics influencing employee satisfaction can expand the professional knowledge of all leaders inside academia or other industries.

Delimitations and Limitations

The purpose of this single, holistic, instrumental case study was to understand the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida and their influence on employee job satisfaction. This study contributes to qualitative scholarly literature primarily for servant leadership. However, the content in this study is worthy of inclusion related to Christian education as well.

Delimitations

The study's first delimitation includes participants' affiliation with Chapel Academy. Faculty/staff were required to be full-time or part-time employees during the 2020–2021 academic year, the year of the conducted research. Guardians needed to have a full-time or part-time student in PK–12 during the 2020–2021 school year. The second delimitation for participants was an established relationship with the HoS. Faculty and staff needed to work under the direct administration of the HoS for a minimum of two years. The 2020–2021 school year would serve as the third consecutive year, or higher, a student in the guardian's household has attended Chapel Academy.

Students, as participants, were another delimitation in this study. Students are a critical component in the stakeholder strand. At the time of this study, Chapel Academy had a student enrollment of 415 students. With a total enrollment of 415 students, 22.4% in high school, it was estimated that up to 77.6% could not fully conceptualize servant leadership, identify servant leadership characteristics, or have enough personal experiences needed for this qualitative inquiry. As such, this researcher opted to delimit students.

The above-stated delimitations of criterion-specific participants, including having a working relationship with the HoS and excluding students in this study, were intentional. These selected delimitations were for focusing on established leader-to-follower relationships.

Limitations

At the onset, the study was considered a micro-study focused on a single, small Christian school. During data collection, the sample size became a challenge, and the study's most significant limitation was reducing the sample size granted by Liberty University due to COVID-19. The study's initial plans consisted of a minimum of five faculty/staff interview participants

and a minimum of six faculty/staff focus group participants. The targeted number of faculty/staff was not met, despite multiple attempts at participant recruitment. A possible reason for the lack of participation in this study could be the extra pressure teachers experienced with the combined on-campus and online teaching brought on by the pandemic. During the initial COVID-19 quarantine, teacher's exhaustion increased due to the extra teaching pressures (Sokal et al., 2020).

Another limitation of the study for consideration is the demographic representation. Because participation in this study was voluntary, demographic representation is a limitation. There is an overrepresentation of ethnicity, with 100% of participants reporting White ethnicity. Thus, there is an underrepresentation of all other groups. The participants in this study do not reflect the ethnic make-up of this school.

As always, when conducting indirect questions (interviews and the focus group), there is the risk of social desirability bias (Fisher, 1993). When the participants reveal what the researcher wants to hear, this is known as social desirability bias (Fisher, 1993). According to Fisher (1993), the stronger the social norms surrounding the topic, the more likely participants will demonstrate social desirability bias. Social desirability bias was a limitation of the study.

The last limitation to this study was that the servant leadership theoretical framework needs more current empirical studies. Many of the existing studies have been published more than five years ago. In contrast, servant leadership trade books are published more frequently. A majority of the existing empirical studies are quantitative and limit readers' insight of a lived experience from the leader-follower relationship (Eva et al., 2019; Yiğit & Bozkurt, 2017). It was easy to find materials, non-empirical, or empirical but not current, for this study. It was more challenging to find current, empirical material that was specific to the study's topic.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study examined the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida. Data collection occurred using Skype for stakeholder interviews and a focus group. Each of the eight interview participants and two focus group participants offered rich, detailed information via transcripts and document analysis. More qualitative research on servant leadership characteristics' influence on employee job satisfaction is still needed. However, this study raises issues which warrant recommendations for future research. Suggested issues from this study that would benefit from future research include expanding the servant leadership theoretical framework, more qualitative inquiries to offset the quantitative imbalance, and stakeholders' studies that focus on guardians' and students' perspectives.

While preparing for this inquiry, finding servant leadership material for the theoretical framework was a challenge as some refute Greenleaf's theory outright. Some researchers propose servant leadership is part of transformational leadership. Still, others argue servant leadership is an emerging theory coming into its own. This would be another reason for more significant qualitative research on the theory, perhaps a study that could differentiate between servant leader characteristics and traditional transformational leadership theory. There are many published books on the topic of servant leadership; however, they are not empirical research. Despite all the publications, there is room for more current empirical research. With over four decades of research devoted to servant leadership, the field requires a focused and tailored topical research in the future that will continue in developing a strong theory that will (a) draft a uniform and concise definition, (b) refine servant leadership concepts, understandings, and (c) create theory constructs for servant leadership (Berger, 2014). Future research should focus on

creating and rallying researcher agreement on a concise servant leadership definition. In conjunction with a more refined definition, a servant leader theory construct and servant leadership concepts should be researched to build a uniform and refined servant leader theory.

As stated before and again here, it is recommended for the future that more qualitative research be conducted. To date, quantitative inquiry dominates the research field, which does not allow the lived experiences and voices of leaders and followers to be heard on servant leadership's effectiveness and efficacy in an academic setting, untold stories and experiences of leaders and followers alike. It is the future leaders who miss the opportunity to learn from these shared experiences. Quantitative studies can offer great insight into servant leadership; however, qualitative studies share insightful perspectives from the participants that cannot be tallied or calculated through nominal or ordinal scales and checked through validity and reliability tests. Participants share their experiences drawing in the researcher and the reader, revealing the depth of servant leadership. Participants offer an “empathetic understanding” (Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2014, p. 219), not available through quantitative research, to the servant leadership concept. More qualitative research in the area of servant leadership would be beneficial.

This study, being qualitative, looked at the stakeholders' (faculty/staff and guardians) perspective. Initially, students were considered but later dismissed when the question of complexity ratio to the eligible number of students was too low due to the small high school population that could comprehend the posed questions. However, during the research of articles relating to students as participants, few empirical research articles focused on either students or guardians (as stakeholders) as the primary participant of a study relating to servant leadership during the literature review. Therefore, it is recommended that future research relating to servant leadership focus on the primary participants being the stakeholders (staff, students, guardians,

and community). Future research recommendations include servant leadership research focusing on all stakeholders, including guardians and students alike.

Summary

This study brought an understanding of how the servant leadership characteristics of a PK–12 leader from a private, faith-based school in North Central Florida influenced employee job satisfaction. Through the process of data collection and analysis, five themes and their supporting servant leadership characteristics revealed how the school principal demonstrated servant leadership to stakeholders. Data analysis revealed five central themes. The first theme, Sensitive Servant, included the categories of acceptance, compassion, empathy, invites feedback, persuasive communication, and understanding. Next was the theme of Future-Focused and included balancing short-term goals with vision, courageous, creativity, decision-making, learning from past/see today/dream of future, Walk & Talk, and vision.

Additionally, Theme 3 was Followers First and included building team/community, cohesiveness, collaboration, express appreciation, leader–follower relationship, and work alongside. After that was Theme 4, Thorough Thinker, with the categories of adaptability, comfortable with complexity, and considers the greater good. Lastly is Theme 5, called Christ-Centered, which consists of the following: displays a servant’s heart, empowers others through service, serves a higher purpose, shows care/concern, and is spiritually healthy. Mark Carpenter has shown a servant leader's characteristics by leading the staff of Chapel Academy using the servant leadership model. His average staff turnover rate was 0.15% (M. Carpenter, personal communication, October 30, 2020).

The practical impacts that can arise from this study hold great potential for existing and future leaders. Current leaders can take this study and use Mark Carpenter as a mirror to hold

themselves accountable as leaders. He has set the bar high for others to emulate. For future leaders, this research can serve as a manual to guide in the leadership pathway. Teams and organizations can use this study as a training tool for administrative teams to nurture leader–follower relationships.

After thousands of hours invested in this study, a few things do not fit neatly into a data code or under a theme heading. Of the wholeness of the study, three key observations were noted by the researcher, including (a) Invest in Relationships, (b) Take the Time to Build, and (c) Work is Never Wasted. The first takeaway from reflecting on all the data input from Chapel Academy and its participants was the reminder to invest in relationships. Of course, the leader–follower relationship was crucial and addressed. However, other relationships on campus like a PreK student with the custodian, a high school teen with the front office secretary, or even a guest on campus with the security officer offered additional insight to this researcher. Each one of these relationships observed was brief but visibly demonstrated other school relationships that were filled with unconditional affection. The value of relationships became especially poignant to many during COVID-19 quarantine, separated from friends and family. Investing in relationships with others, whether for a brief interaction or a committed fellowship, was visible through the interactions observed on this campus.

The next revelation, *Take Time to Build*, pertains to the literal and the metaphorical meanings of those involved in the study. This inspirational concept came from Chapel Academy's expansion of their high school building: they prayed, planned, prepared, and produced! A building project does not need to be a literal facility, but it could be anything at all. It could be something as small as a leader building time into a schedule to meet with a team of followers. The principle of building equates to praying, planning, preparing, and producing.

The third and final takeaway from this study was that *Work is Never Wasted*. Like many doctoral researchers, COVID-19 adjusted the timeline for this study, creating delays. There were months when the completed research work felt equivalent to spinning wheels as little progress was visible. Continued trust in God's timing and support of family and friends sustained when the doubt would rise. Finally, towards the end, progress could be seen. In those days, the seemingly futile work from the earlier days propelled the effort to the finish line. By remaining focused on the vision, our work is never wasted.

It was an honor and a pleasure to share the story of this servant leader, Mark Carpenter, and Chapel Academy. Mark serves an amazing teaching team.

I desire that this work glorifies God.

REFERENCES

- Al-Mahdy, Y. F., Al-Harhi, A. S., & Salah El-Din, N. S. (2016). Perceptions of school principals' servant leadership and their teachers' job satisfaction in Oman. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 15*(4), 543–566.
- April, K. A., MacDonald, R., & Vriesendorp, S. (2000). *Rethinking leadership*. Lansdowne, South Africa: UCT Press.
- Atteberry, A., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2017). Teacher churning: Reassignment rates and implications for student achievement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 39*(1), 3–30.
- Ayers, M. (2006). Toward a theology of leadership. *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership, 1*(1), 3–27.
- Babiyak, A. T. (2017). Biblical leadership at work scale development. *Christian Business Academy Review, 12*.
- Barbuto, J. E., Jr., & Gottfredson, R. K. (2016). Human capital, the millennial's reign, and the need for servant leadership. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 10*(2), 59–63.
- Barnabas, A., & Clifford, P.S. (2012). Mahatma Gandhi – An Indian model of servant leadership. *International Journal of Leadership Studies, 7*(2), 132–150.
- Bartz, D. E., & Karnes, C. (2018). School administrators: Establishing positive relationships with stakeholders. *American International Journal of Social Science, 7*(2), 1–12.
- Ben-Hur, S., & Jonsen, K. (2012). Ethical leadership: lessons from Moses. *Journal of Management Development, 31*(9), 962–973.
- Berger, T. A. (2014). Servant leadership 2.0: A call for strong theory. *Sociological Viewpoints, 30*(1), 146.

- Black, G. L. (2013). Correlational analysis of servant leadership and school climate. *Journal of Catholic Education, 13*(4), 437–466.
- Blanchard, K. H., Broadwell, R. & Maxwell, J.C. (Eds.). (2018). *Servant leadership in action: How you can achieve great relationships and results*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Blanchard, K. H., Carlos, J. P., & Randolph, W. A. (2001). *Empowerment takes more than a minute* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Blanchard, K., & Hodges, P. (2003). *The servant leader: Transforming your heart, head, hands & heart*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Blanchard, K., & Hodges, P. (2007). *Lead like Jesus*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.
- Blanchard, K., & Miller, M. (2007). The higher plane of leadership. *Leader to Leader, 2007*(46), 25–30.
- Boe, E. E., Cook, L. H., & Sunderland, R. J. (2008). Teacher turnover: Examining exit attrition, teaching area transfer, and school migration. *Exceptional Children, 75*(1), 7–31.
- Brown, S., & Bryant, P. (2015). Getting to know the elephant: A call to advance servant leadership through construct consensus, empirical evidence, and multilevel theoretical development. *Servant Leadership: Theory and Practice, 2*(1), 10–35.
- Bucci, J., & Lewis, P. W. (2016). The case for inclusion of redemptive managerial dimensions in servant leadership theory. *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business, 19*(1).
- Buchen, I. H. (1998). Servant leadership: A model for future faculty and future institutions. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 5*(1), 125–134.
- Buckingham, M., & Coffman, C. (2016). *First, break all the rules: What the world's greatest managers do differently*. Washington, DC: Gallup Press.

- Burch, M. J., Swails, P., & Mills, R. (2015). Perceptions of administrators' servant leadership qualities at a Christian university: A descriptive study. *Education, 135*(4), 399–404.
- Burton, L. J., Welty Peachey, J., & Wells, J. E. (2017). The role of servant leadership in developing an ethical climate in sport organizations. *Journal of Sport Management, 31*(3), 229–240.
- Burton, Z. T. (2017). *Servants to the lender: The history of faith-based business in four case studies* (Master's thesis, Bowling Green State University). Retrieved from <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/>
- Canli, S., & Demirtas, H. (2018). The effects of school principals' trust in teachers on school climate. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences, 10*(1).
- Carver-Thomas, D., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). The trouble with teacher turnover: How teacher attrition affects students and schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 27*, 36.
- Castro, A., Quinn, D. J., Fuller, E., & Barnes, M. (2018). Addressing the importance and scale of the US teacher shortage (UCEA Policy Brief 2018-1). Retrieved from <http://www.ucea.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Addressing-the-Importance-and-Scale-of-the-US-Teacher-Shortage.pdf>
- Castro Silva, J., Amante, L., & Morgado, J. (2017). School climate, principal support and collaboration among Portuguese teachers. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 40*(4), 505–520.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2018, November 19). *Data collection methods for evaluation: Document review* (Evaluation Brief No. 18). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/evaluation/pdf/brief18.pdf>
- Chan, K. W. C. (2016). Servant leadership cultivates grit and growth mindset in learners. *Servant*

- Leadership: Theory & Practices*, 3(2), 12–22.
- Chang, C.P., Chiu, L. Y., & Liu, J. (2017). A study on the relationship between well-being and turnover intentions among rural school teachers: School organizational climate as a moderating variable. *Creative Education*, 8(4), 523.
- Choi, G. (2014). The leading servant. *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 8(1), 8–16.
- Chon, K. K., & Zoltan, J. (2019). Role of servant leadership in contemporary hospitality. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(8), 3371–3394.
- City Data. (2019). Retrieved from [REDACTED]
- Coetzer, M., Bussin, M., & Geldenhuys, M. (2017). The functions of a servant leader. *Administrative Sciences*, 7(1), 20–32.
- Community. (n.d.). In Cambridge English Dictionary online. Retrieved November 16, 2020, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/community>
- Conroy, J. (2018). *The relationship between reasons for leaving teaching and intention to return* (Master's thesis, State University of New York). Retrieved from https://ubir.buffalo.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10477/77984/Conroy_buffalo_0656M_15695.pdf?sequence=1
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cross, S. (2017, September). Applying a research university's leadership model in a regional innovation ecosystem. In *12th European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship ECIE 2017* (pp. 193–202).
- Dambe, M., & Moorad, F. (2008). From power to empowerment: A paradigm shift in leadership. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 22(3), 575–587.

- Dapula, G. F., & Castano, M. C. N. (2017). Core self-evaluations, job satisfaction, transformational and servant leadership model in the Roman Catholic education system. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 13(2), 1–14.
- Dean, D. (2016). A correlation study of employee engagement and servant leadership. *Journal of Strategic and International Studies*, 11(2), 32–43.
- Duby, D. (2009). The greatest commandment: The foundation for biblical servant leadership (Liberty University, Faculty Publications and Presentations, 11). Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/busi_fac_pubs/11
- Dumbleton, S. (2005). Leadership in darkness and light: Gender considerations. *Vincentian Heritage Journal*, 26(1), 9.
- Du Plessis, M., Wakelin, Z., & Nel, P. (2015). The influence of emotional intelligence and trust on servant leadership. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 41(1), 1–9.
- Dutta, S., & Khatri, P. (2017). Servant leadership and positive organizational behaviour: The road ahead to reduce employees' turnover intentions. *On the Horizon*, 25(1), 60–82.
- Eliff, D. R. (2014). *Servant leadership as a predictor of student academic growth, faculty/staff attendance and job satisfaction, and organizational health of the middle school* (Doctoral dissertation, Union University).
- Erkutlu, H., & Chafra, J. (2015). The effects of empowerment role identity and creative role identity on servant leadership and employees' innovation implementation behavior. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 181, 3–11.
- Ertel, S. (2017). Why servant leadership? *Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice*, 4(2), 12.

- Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., van Dierendonck, D., & Liden, R. C. (2019). Servant leadership: A systematic review and call for future research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *30*(1), 111–132.
- Fisher, R. J. (1993). Social desirability bias and the validity of indirect questioning. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *20*(2), 303–315.
- Flanike, F. (2006). Is the Bible relevant to servant-leadership? *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, *1*(1), 32–39.
- Florida Department of Education. (2020a, March 17). Florida department of education announces additional guidance for the 2019-20 school year [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://www.fldoe.org/newsroom/latest-news/florida-department-of-education-announces-additional-guidance-for-the-2019-20-school-year.shtml>
- Florida Department of Education. (2020b, March 31). Florida extends school campus closure through May 1 [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://www.fldoe.org/newsroom/latest-news/florida-extends-school-campus-closures-through-may-1.shtml>
- Florida Department of Education. (2020c, April 18). Florida extends distance learning through remainder of academic year [Press Release]. Retrieved from <http://www.fldoe.org/newsroom/latest-news/florida-extends-distance-learning-through-remainder-of-academic-year.shtml>.
- Focht, A., & Ponton, M. (2015). Identifying primary characteristics of servant leadership: Delphi study. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, *9*(1).
- Fuller, B., Waite, A., & Torres Iribarra, D (2016). Explaining teacher turnover: School cohesion and intrinsic motivation in Los Angeles. *American Journal of Education*, *122*(4), 537–567.

- Gemechu, T. F (2018). The making of organizational leaders: Case study of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, Mother Teresa, and William Carey. *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*, 8(1), 37–50.
- Ghamrawi, N., & Al-Jammal, K. (2014). Leaders and servants: Antonyms or synonyms? Investigating servant leadership in Lebanese schools. *Asia Pacific Journal of Research*, 1(14).
- Gigliotti, R.A., & Dwyer, B. (2016). Cultivating dialogue: A central imperative for the study and practice of servant leadership. *Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice*, 3(1), 4.
- Gini, A., & Green, R. M. (2014). Three critical characteristics of leadership: Character, stewardship, experience. *Business and Society Review*, 119(4), 435–446.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (2008). *The servant as leader*. Atlanta, GA: The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. (Original work published 1970)
- Greenleaf, R., & Keith, K. (2017, June 6). He was a servant first, a servant at heart. Retrieved from <https://www.greenleaf.org/servant-first-servant-heart/>
- Grissom, J. A., & Bartanen, B. (2019). Strategic retention: Principal effectiveness and teacher turnover in multiple-measure teacher evaluation systems. *American Educational Research Journal*, 56(2), 514–555.
- Hall, C. N. (2017). *Improve organizational effectiveness, culture, and climate through servant leadership* (Master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS). Retrieved from <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/1038728.pdf>
- Hamilton, M., & Vaughan, W. (2014). John R. Wooden, Stephen R. Covey and servant leadership. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 9(1), 25–28.

- Hammermeister, J. (2014). John R. Wooden, Stephen R. Covey and servant leadership: A commentary. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 9(1), 65–68.
- Hannay, M. (2009). The cross-cultural leader: The application of servant leadership theory in the international context. *Journal of International Business and Cultural Studies*, 1, 1.
- Hanselman, P., Grigg, J., K. Bruch, S., & Gamoran, A. (2016). The consequences of principal and teacher turnover for school social resources. In G. Kao & H. Park (Eds.), *Family Environments, School Resources, and Educational Outcomes* (pp. 49–89). United Kingdom: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Hanushek, E. A., Rivkin, S. G., & Schiman, J. C. (2016). Dynamic effects of teacher turnover on the quality of instruction. *Economics of Education Review*, 55, 132–148.
- Hewitt, L. M., & La Grange, F. (2017). Servant as leader: Critical requirements for the appointment and training of retirement fund trustees. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 15(1), 1–12.
- Heyler, S. G., & Martin, J. A. (2018). Servant leadership theory: Opportunities for additional theoretical integration. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, 30(2), 230–243.
- Hodges, B. M. (2018). *The role supervisory leadership behavior plays on teacher attrition in private Christian schools*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://dspace.creighton.edu:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10504/118690/Hodges_B_2018_EdD.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Hoomans, D. (2015, March 20). 35,000 Decisions: The Great Choices of Strategic Leaders. Retrieved December 02, 2020, from <https://go.roberts.edu/leadingedge/the-great-choices-of-strategic-leaders>.

- Hossain, M. S., & Ebrahim, U. S. M. (2012,). Servant leadership: A new paradigm of leadership in Bangladesh. *International Journal of Research in Commerce & Management*, 3, 20–25. Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/neete/Downloads/Servant_Leadership_A_new_paradigm_of_lea.pdf
- Hu, J., & Liden, R. C. (2011). Antecedents of team potency and team effectiveness: An examination of goal and process clarity and servant leadership. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(4), 851.
- Hung, W. S., Tsai, S. S., & Wu, H. T. (2016). Relationship among principal servant leadership, school organizational climate and teachers' job involvement of elementary school. *European Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 4(7).
- Hunter, J. C. (2004). *The world's most powerful leadership principle: How to become a servant leader*. New York, NY: Crown Business.
- Irving, J. A. (2005). *Servant leadership and the effectiveness of teams* (Doctoral dissertation, Regent University). Retrieved from <https://www.servantleaderperformance.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/2005-Irving-Dissertation.pdf>
- Irving, J. A. (2011). Leadership reflection: A model for effective servant leadership practice: A biblically consistent and research-based approach to leadership. *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*, 3(2), 118–128.
- Irving, J. A., & Longbotham, G. J. (2007). Team effectiveness and six essential servant leadership themes: A regression model based on items in the organizational leadership assessment. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 2(2), 98–113.
- Jenkins, S. (2014). John R. Wooden, Stephen R. Covey and servant leadership. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 9(1), 1–24.

- Jensen, F. (2017). *An examination of the necessity for servant leadership in the pastoral role: Biblical principles will be explored* (Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/doctoral/1604/>
- Jha, S. (2009). Determinants of employee turnover intentions: A review. *Management Today*, 9(2).
- Jit, R., Sharma, C. S., & Kawatra, M. (2017). Healing a broken spirit: Role of servant leadership. *The Journal for Decision Makers*, 42(2), 80–94.
- Jones, D., & Watson, S. B. (2017). The relationship between administrative leadership behaviors and teacher retention in Christian schools. *Journal of Research on Christian Education*, 26(1), 44–55.
- Kafka, J. (2009). The principalship in historical perspective. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 84(3), 318–330.
- Kashyap, V., & Rangnekar, S. (2016). Servant leadership, employer brand perception, trust in leaders and turnover intentions: A sequential mediation model. *Review of Managerial Science*, 10(3), 437–461.
- Kee, D. (2015). *Ascetic entrepreneurship: How the Christian work ethic creates long-term value for business and society*. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.harding.edu/belden-monographs/1>
- Keets, J., & Abaldo, A. (2017). Servant leadership: Learning from servant leaders of the past and their impact to the future. *International Journal of Management Sciences and Business Research*, 6(1).

- Khan, K. E., Khan, S. E., & Chaudhry, A. G. (2015). Impact of servant leadership on workplace spirituality: Moderating role of involvement culture. *Pakistan Journal of Science*, 67(1), 109.
- Khatri, P., & Dutta, S. (2018). Servant leadership and psychological ownership: Curtailing resistance to change. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 20(3), 5–12.
- Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2018). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, 24(1), 120–124.
- Krog, C. L., & Govender, K. (2015). The relationship between servant leadership and employee empowerment, commitment, trust and innovative behaviour: A project management perspective. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 13(1), 12.
- Ladd, H. F. (2011). Teachers' perceptions of their working conditions: How predictive of planned and actual teacher movement? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 33(2), 235–261.
- Lane, E. S. (2016). *Examining the relationship between principal leadership and school climate* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.du.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2094&context=etd>
- Leader. (2019). In *Blue Letter Bible online biblical reference*. Retrieved from https://www.blueletterbible.org//search/search.cfm?Criteria=leader&t=NIV#s=s_primary_0_1
- Learning Policy Institute. (2017, September 13). What's the cost of teacher turnover? Retrieved from <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/the-cost-of-teacher-turnover>
- Le Ng, X., Choi, S. L., & Soehod, K. (2016). The effects of servant leadership on employee's job withdrawal intention. *Asian Social Science*, 12(2), 99–106.

- Lee, P. C., & Jackson, S. O. (2015). Leadership for the 21st century: Creating a culture of serving and giving through core values. *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, *11*(1), 277-306.
- Lett, T. D. (2014). *Biblical lessons for educational leaders: The servant leadership of King David, Apostle Paul* (Doctoral dissertation, Loyola University Chicago). Retrieved from https://ecommons.luc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1900&context=luc_diss
- Lynch, J., & Friedman, H. H. (2013). Servant leader, spiritual leader: The case for convergence. *Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Ethics*, *10*(2), 87–95.
- Maak, T., & Pless, N. M. (2006). Responsible leadership in a stakeholder society - a relational perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *66*(1), 99–115.
- Maciariello, J. (2003). Lessons in leadership and management from Nehemiah. *Theology Today*, *60*(3), 397–407.
- Mango, E. (2018). Beyond leadership. *Open Journal of Leadership*, *7*(1), 117.
- Mareus, R., Patterson, K., Firestone, S., & Winston, B. E. (2019). Exploring servant leadership in a top-down environment. *Servant Leadership Theory & Practice*, *6*(1), 53–74.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McMahon, M. (2012). Servant leadership as a teachable ethical concept. *American Journal of Business Education*, *5*(3), 339–346.
- Melchar, D.E., & Bosco, S. M. (2010). Achieving high organization performance through servant leadership. *The Journal of Business Inquiry*, *9*(1), 74–88.
- Mielke, D. (2014). John R. Wooden, Stephen R. Covey and servant leadership. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, *9*(1), 33–36.

- Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Mountain, A., & Marshall, H. (2019, April 11). Thematic coding. Retrieved December 1, 2020, from <https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/thematiccoding>
- Murphy, C. M., & Patrick, J. (2016). Hospitality in the manner of St. Vincent de Paul. *Vincentian Heritage Journal*, 33(1), 12.
- Okendu, J. (2012). The role of school boards, school heads and parents-teacher association in effective management of public schools. *Journal of Education and Practice (Online)*, 3(8), 2012.
- Olesia, W. S., Namusonge, G. S., & Iravo, M. A. (2014). Servant leadership: The exemplifying behaviors. *IOSR Journal of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 19, 75–80.
- Panaccio, A., Henderson, D. J., Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., & Cao, X. (2015). Toward an understanding of when and why servant leadership accounts for employee extra-role behaviors. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 30(4), 657–675.
- Parris, D. L., & Peachey, J. W. (2013). Encouraging servant leadership: A qualitative study of how a cause-related sporting event inspires participants to serve. *Leadership*, 9(4), 486–512.
- Patterson, K. A. (2003, August). Servant leadership: A theoretical model. A paper presented at the Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Regent University. Retrieved from https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2003/patterson_servant_leadership.pdf
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Peterson, C., DeSimone Jr, P. J., Desmond, T. J., Zahn, B., & Morote, E. S. (2017). Elementary principal wisdom: Teacher perceptions of leadership. *Journal for Leadership and Instruction, 16*(1), 44–48.
- Price, H. E. (2012). Principal–teacher interactions: How affective relationships shape principal and teacher attitudes. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 48*(1), 39–85.
- Purpora, C., & Blegen, M. A. (2015). Job satisfaction and horizontal violence in hospital staff registered nurses: the mediating role of peer relationships. *Journal of Clinical Nursing, 24*(15-16), 2286–2294.
- Ranney, M. L., Meisel, Z. F., Choo, E. K., Garro, A. C., Sasson, C., & Morrow Guthrie, K. (2015). Interview-based qualitative research in emergency care part II: Data collection, analysis and results reporting. *Academic Emergency Medicine, 22*(9), 1103–1112.
- Reddy, A.V. & Kamesh, A.V. S. (2016). Integrating servant leadership and ethical leadership. In *Ethical leadership* (pp. 107–124). London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Reid, H. L. (2014). John R. Wooden, Stephen R. Covey and servant leadership. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, 9*(1), 49–52.
- Roach, D. (2016). *The servant-leadership style of Jesus: A biblical strategy for leadership development*. Bloomington, IN: West Bow Press.
- Rubin, E. N. (2013). Assessing your leadership style to achieve organizational objectives. *Global Business and Organizational Excellence, 32*(6), 55–66.
- Rumschlag, K. E. (2017). Teacher burnout: A quantitative analysis of emotional exhaustion, personal accomplishment, and depersonalization. *International Management Review, 13*(1), 22–36.

- Russell, E., Maxfield, R. J., & Russell, J. (2017). Discovering the self-interest of servant leadership: A grounded theory. *Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice*, 4(1), 5.
- Russell, R. (2003, August). A practical theology of servant leadership. In *Proceedings of the Servant Leadership Research Roundtable* (pp. 1–9). Virginia: Regent University.
- Ryan, S. V., Nathaniel, P., Pendergast, L. L., Saeki, E., Segool, N., & Schwing, S. (2017). Leaving the teaching profession: The role of teacher stress and educational accountability policies on turnover intent. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 66, 1–11.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- School History. (n.d.) URL withheld to protect confidentiality.
- Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as qualitative research* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Sendjaya, S., & Sarros, J. C. (2008). Defining and measuring servant leadership behavior in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies*, 45(2), 402–424.
- Serrat, O. (2017). *Knowledge solutions*. Singapore: Asian Development Bank.
- Servant. (2019) In *Blue Letter Bible online biblical reference*. Retrieved from https://www.blueletterbible.org//search/search.cfm?Criteria=servant&t=NIV#s=s_primary_0_1
- Shaw, B. (1903). *Man and superman*. Retrieved from <https://www.bartleby.com/br/157.html>
- Shaw, J., & Newton, J. (2014). Teacher retention and satisfaction with a servant leader as principal. *Education*, 135(1), 101–106.

- Singer, S. M. (2019, January 5). How many decisions do teachers make every day? [Web log post]. Retrieved December 2, 2020, from <https://gadflyonthewallblog.com/2019/01/05/how-many-decisions-do-teachers-make-every-day/>
- Singiel, J. (2018). When servant leaders appear laissez-faire: The effect of social identity prototypes on Christian leaders. *The Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 12(1), 64–77.
- Sipe, J. W., & Frick, D. M. (2015). *Seven pillars of servant leadership: Practicing the wisdom of leading by serving*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2016). Teacher stress and teacher self-efficacy as predictors of engagement, emotional exhaustion, and motivation to leave the teaching profession. *Creative Education*, 7(13), 1785–1799.
- Sobral, M. C. (2008). Xhosa tribal culture and its influence on the servant leadership of Nelson Mandela. *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, 4(1), 141–157.
- Sokal, L., Trudel, L. E., & Babb, J. (2020). Canadian teachers' attitudes toward change, efficacy, and burnout during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Educational Research Open*, 1.
- Spears, L. C. (2010). Character and servant leadership: Ten characteristics of effective, caring leaders. *The Journal of Virtues & Leadership*, 1(1), 25–30.
- Spears, L. C., & Lawrence, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Practicing servant leadership: Succeeding through trust, bravery, and forgiveness*. Indianapolis, IN: Greenleaf Center.
- Spears Center. (2019). Larry C. Spears and Robert K. Greenleaf. Retrieved from <http://www.spearscenter.org/about-larry/larry-a-robert-greenleaf>

- Staff Search. (n.d.) URL withheld to protect confidentiality.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Sustaining Reading First. (2009). *Engaging stakeholders: Including parents and the community to sustain improved reading outcomes*. Arlington, VA: RMC Research Corporation.
- Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016, September 15). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U. S.* Washington, DC: Learning Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/coming-crisis-teaching>
- Tehseen, S., & Hadi, N. U. (2015). Factors influencing teachers' performance and retention. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1), 233.
- Tey, B. (2006). Dare to be a servant-leader: An interview with Larry Spears. *The International Journal of Servant-Leadership*, 2(1), 45–53.
- Thomas, K. W., & Velthouse, B. A. (1990). Cognitive elements of empowerment: An “interpretive” model of intrinsic task motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 15(4), 666–681.
- Thompson, B. (2015). Servant, leader, or both? A fresh look at Mark 10: 35–45. *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership*, 9(2), 54–65.
- Tikson, S. D. S. (2018). Human resource policies and work culture: A case of Starbucks. *Jurnal Bisnis, Manajemen dan Informatika*, 14(1), 1–12.
- Tischler, L., Giambattista, R., McKeage, R., & McCormick, D. (2016). Servant leadership and its relationships with core self-evaluation and job satisfaction. *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership*, 9(1), 8.

- Toledano, N., & Karanda, C. (2014). Leading self, teams and organizations from a female perspective: An exploration of the women leaders' journey. *African Journal of Business Management*, 8(20), 972–980.
- Torres, A. C. (2016). Is this work sustainable? Teacher turnover and perceptions of workload in charter management organizations. *Urban Education*, 51(8), 891–914.
- Trump, D. J. (March 13, 2020). Proclamation on declaring a national emergency concerning the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak. Retrieved from <https://it.usembassy.gov/proclamation-on-declaring-a-national-emergency-concerning-the-novel-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-outbreak/>
- Turgut, H., Bekmezci, M., & Ateş, M. F. (2017). The moderating role of job satisfaction on the relationship between servant leadership and turnover intention. *Journal of Business Research Turk*, 9(2), 300–314.
- Turkoglu, M. E., & Cansoy, R. (2018). Instructional leadership behaviors according to perceptions of school principals in Turkey. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 10(5).
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2020, April 22). About race. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2014, May). *Best practices for data destruction* (PTAC-IB-5). Washington, DC: Privacy Technical Assistance Center.
- Valeri, D. P. (2007). *The origins of servant leadership* (Doctoral dissertation, Greenleaf University). Retrieved from http://greenleaf.edu/pdf/donald_valeri.pdf
- van Dierendonck, D. (2011). Servant leadership: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Management*, 37(4), 1228–1261.

- van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. (2015). Compassionate love as a cornerstone of servant leadership: An integration of previous theorizing and research. *Journal of Business Ethics, 128*(1), 119–131.
- Vasudev, S. (2015, July 24). Seven pillars of servant leadership [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://pm-powerconsulting.com/blog/seven-pillars-of-servant-leadership/>
- von Fischer, P., & De Jong, D. (2017). The relationship between teacher perception of principal servant leadership behavior and teacher job satisfaction. *Servant Leadership: Theory & Practice, 4*(2), 14.
- Whalen, J. (2020). Should teachers be trained in emergency remote teaching? Lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education, 28*(2), 189–199.
- Williams, T. (2017). Is globalization a fulfillment of Christian biblical prophecy?. *American Journal of Management, 17*(3).
- Wong, P. T. P. (2007, July). Best practices in servant leadership. Paper presented at Servant Leadership Research Roundtable, Regent University. Retrieved from <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.714.7080&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Wright, W. C. (2009). The theology of servant leadership. In A. Sloan, K. Larson, & D. Carrington (Eds.). *Relational leadership: A biblical model for influence and service* (pp. 7–35). Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books.
- Yiğit, B., & Bozkurt, S. (2017). A content analysis of servant leadership studies. *International Journal of Organizational Leadership, 6*, 190–196.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A: Permission to Conduct Study on Site

January 6, 2020

[REDACTED]
Senior Pastor
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

As a graduate student in the Educational Leadership department of the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. My research project title is A Case Study: The Servant Called To Lead As Head Of School Of A PK-12 Private Faith-Based School In North Central Florida. The purpose of my research is to understand the servant leadership characteristics influencing employee job satisfaction.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research in/at [REDACTED]
I am writing to request your permission to utilize your school membership list to recruit participants for my research. Additionally, I request permission to contact members of your school staff to invite them to participate in my research study. And lastly, I am seeking access to utilize student/staff data/records within the last five years pertaining to school climate, such as annual climate surveys, newsletters, staff rosters, yearbooks, social media posts, photographs, communications between Head of School and stakeholders demonstrating servant leadership characteristics.

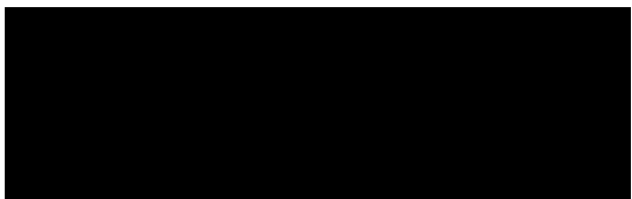
Participants will be asked, via email, to go to www.SignUpGenius and click on the link provided to schedule a One-to-One interview or Focus Group session. The data collected will be used to share the participants' experience of working with a servant leader. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, a permission letter document is attached for your convenience with a stamp-addressed envelope.

Sincerely,

Renee' Pleasant

Renee' Pleasant, M.Ed.



February 3, 2020

Renee' Pleasant
Liberty University Graduate Student



Dear Mrs. Pleasant:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled A Case Study: The Servant Called to Lead as Head of School of a PK-12 Private, Faith-based School in North Central Florida, I/we have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at [REDACTED] grant you access our school membership list, permit you to contact our faculty/staff and invite them to participate in your study, and offer access and utilize the archival data for the past five years (student/staff data/records within the last five years pertaining to school climate such as annual climate surveys, newsletters, staff rosters, yearbooks, social media posts, photographs, communications between Head of School and stakeholders demonstrating servant leadership characteristics) for your research study.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

- The requested data WILL BE STRIPPED of all identifying information before it is provided to the researcher.
- The requested data WILL NOT BE STRIPPED of identifying information before it is provided to the researcher.
- I/We are requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Head of School



APPENDIX B: IRB Approval Letter**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY**
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 25, 2020
Renee Pleasant
Justin Necessary

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY19-20-107 A Case Study: The Servant Called To Lead As Head Of School Of A PK-12 Private Faith- Based School In North Central Florida

Dear Renee Pleasant, Justin Necessary:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46: 101(b):

Category 2. (iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA,
CIP Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX C: Participant Recruitment Letters

Faculty/Staff Participants Recruitment

Sent via Email
September 21, 2020

Dear [REDACTED] Faculty and Staff:

Greetings, my name is Renee' Pleasant, and I am a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University; I am conducting research as part of the doctoral degree requirements. My dissertation will consist of a case study on how stakeholders describe the experience of schools led by servant leader principals. Your Head of School was identified as a servant leader. [REDACTED] has a significantly lower teacher turnover rate than the national average of both public and private schools. The purpose of my research is to understand the servant leadership characteristics influencing employee job satisfaction, and I am writing to invite you to participate in this research study.

You were selected as a potential research participant because you are: (a) a part-time or full-time employee of [REDACTED] and (b) have worked under the leadership of [REDACTED] for a minimum of two years. Please consider agreeing to participate.

If you decide to participate and are selected, you will be given the option of participating in any of the following: a videoconference (Skype) interview, an online focus group using Skype video chat, and/or loan documents for review and analysis. Both Skype video interview meetings and Skype online focus group sessions are available on a first-come, first-served basis and will be limited to six participants each.

Please allow approximately 90-minutes for online interviews to answer questions thoroughly. There will be two online videoconferences focus groups (one for faculty/staff and one for guardians) consisting of six members answering a shortlist of questions. Each online focus group could take up to two hours, depending on the length of member responses.

Both individual interviews and focus groups will be audio and video recorded to ensure data collection accuracy. Recordings will then be electronically transferred into transcripts. You will be permitted to review transcripts from the interview and focus groups to ensure that your statements were recorded accurately. Your name and other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential.

There is no direct compensation for participating in this study. Instead, for each participant in the videoconference interview and the online focus groups, I will make a monetary donation of \$10.00 per participant to the school's capital (building) campaign known as [REDACTED]. Participation is voluntary; you may withdraw before findings are reported.

Attached to this email is the consent form. To participate, you may return the consent form via email [REDACTED] or via mail at: R. Pleasant, ATTN: PLEASANT, [REDACTED]. Space is limited, so please respond quickly. Once I receive your signed consent form, I will email you with information on how to participate in your chosen procedure(s).

If you have any questions before agreeing to participate, please contact me at [REDACTED]

In Him,

Renee' Pleasant

Renee' Pleasant, M.Ed.

Guardian Participants Recruitment

Sent via Email
September 21, 2020

Dear [Guardian]:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to determine how stakeholders describe the experience of schools lead by servant leader principals, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

You were selected as a potential research participant. You have met the following criteria for the study: (a) guardian of a full-time (or) part-time student in PK-12th grade during 2020-2021 school year at [REDACTED], (b) enrollment during 2020-2021 serves as the third consecutive school year, or higher, a student in your household has attended this school. Please consider agreeing to participate.

If you decide to participate and are selected, you will be given the option of participating in any of the following: a videoconference (Skype) interview, an online focus group using Skype video chat, and/or loaning documents for review and analysis. Both Skype video interview meetings and Skype online focus group sessions are available on a first-come, first-served basis and will be limited to six participants each.

Please allow approximately 90-minutes to answer questions thoroughly. There will be two online videoconferences focus groups (one for faculty/staff and one for guardians) consisting of six members answering a shortlist of questions. Each online focus group could take up to two hours, depending on member responses.

Both individual interviews and focus groups will be audio and video recorded to ensure data collection accuracy. Recordings will then be electronically transferred into transcripts. You will be permitted to review transcripts from the interview and focus groups to ensure that your statements were recorded accurately. Your name and other identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, but the information will remain confidential.

There is no direct compensation for participating in this study. Instead, for each participant in the videoconference interview and the online focus groups, I will make a monetary donation of \$10.00 per participant to the school's capital (building) campaign known as [REDACTED]. Participation is voluntary; you may refuse to participate up until results are reported.

Attached to this email is the consent form. To participate, you may return the consent form via email: [REDACTED] or via mail at R. Pleasant, ATTN: PLEASANT, [REDACTED]. Space is limited, so please respond quickly. Once I receive your signed consent form, I will email you with information on how to participate in your chosen procedure(s).

If you have any questions before agreeing to participate, please contact me at

[REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Renee' Pleasant

Renee' Pleasant, M.Ed.

APPENDIX D: Consent Forms

CONSENT FORM - Faculty and Staff

A Case Study: The Servant Called to Lead as Head of School of a PK-12 Private Faith-Based
School in North Central Florida

Renee' Pleasant
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of servant leadership characteristics on stakeholders. This study will determine the influence of servant leadership characteristics on the faculty of [REDACTED]. You were selected as a possible participant because you are (a) a full-time or part-time employee of [REDACTED], and (b) have worked at least two years under the leadership of [REDACTED]. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Renee' Pleasant, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to determine the qualitative influence of servant leadership on the employee job satisfaction of the faculty and staff of [REDACTED].

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to please check the procedures(s) in which you desire to participate:

Participate in a one-to-one interview with the researcher. There are six faculty/staff positions available on a first-come, first-serve basis for participants upon completing the secure, online scheduling for interview appointments through SignUpGenius.

Interviews will occur through videoconferencing using Skype. Skype offers a live two-way audio and video method of communication. Participants will be required to create their own Skype account for participation. Others can see Skype profiles. To protect yourself, keep personal information out of your public profile.

The interview will last approximately 90 minutes and will be audio recorded. Each participant will be given a chance to review, edit, and approve the transcripts for accuracy before usage in the study.

And/or participate in a focus group discussion. Six focus group slots are available on a first-come, first-served basis through SignUpGenius.

The faculty/staff focus group will occur through videoconferencing using Skype. Skype offers a live two-way audio and video method of communication. Participants will be required to create their own Skype account for participation

The group discussion will last approximately two hours and will be both audio and video recorded. Each participant will be given a chance to review, edit, and approve the group transcript for accuracy before its usage in the study.

□ And/or share any documents that describe the school's climate or demonstrate the Head of School's servant leadership among stakeholders with the researcher. Examples of the document(s) you can loan for review and analysis include but are not limited to: written communications between Head of School and stakeholders, newsletters, photographs, formal or informal emails, yearbooks, or anything else you feel worthy of sharing.

Please note all documents must be from the 2015-2016 school year through 2020-2021.

The focus of this research study is on the leadership attributes of the Head of School, [REDACTED], and not the students of [REDACTED]. Before submitting any documents for review, take a moment, and remove through redaction any identifying information (i.e., school name, date of birth, etc.) in alignment with school procedures.

Participants wishing to share materials will be asked to share items by email with the researcher at [REDACTED]. Emailed items are not considered to be on loan and will be destroyed after three years. If the items are to be returned, they may be mailed to R. Pleasant [REDACTED]; each person will share the mailing expense.*Please redact any identifying or confidential information per your school's policy before sharing information!*

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

The researcher cannot guarantee the privacy or security being sent over the internet, and there is a potential the videoconference session can be intercepted or experience technical difficulties as the internet is not 100% secure. To learn more about Skype security, click here: <https://support.skype.com/en/faq/FA34649/protecting-your-online-safety-security-and-privacy>

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not be directly compensated for participating in this study. Instead, the researcher will make a \$10.00 donation for each interview participant and each focus group participant to the [REDACTED] capital (building) campaign fund for participating in the study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants. Research records will be stored securely, with the researcher and the dissertation committee having access to the files. Data storage on a password-locked computer will occur, and data may be available for use in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records deleted. I will conduct the interviews in a location

where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Interviews held through videoconferencing are audio and video recorded, transcribed, and stored on a password-locked computer for three years before being erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings. The videoconference focus groups will also be audio and video recorded to assist the researcher in the transcription of both verbal and nonverbal data. As the focus group moderator, I will communicate group norms and courtesies and address the importance of maintaining confidentiality. However, I cannot assure participants that other group members will not share discussed matters with persons outside of the group.

In any report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in the study is voluntary. Your decision about whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or [REDACTED]. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw before findings are reported without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from the focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Renee' Pleasant. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Justin Necessary, at [REDACTED].

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED].

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Best email for communications: _____@_____. _____

Signature of Investigator

The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Best email for communications: _____@_____. _____

Signature of Investigator

Liberty University
IRB-FY19-20-107
Approved on 9-11-2020

CONSENT FORM–Guardian

A Case Study: The Servant Called to Lead as Head of School of a PK-12 Private Faith-Based School in North Central Florida
Renee' Pleasant
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of servant leadership characteristics on stakeholders. This study will determine the influence of servant leadership characteristics on the faculty of [REDACTED]. You were selected as a possible participant because you are (a) the guardian of a full-time or part-time student in PK-12th grade at [REDACTED] during the 2020-2021 school year and (b) this school year serves as your third consecutive school year or higher as a guardian, for a student in your household, at [REDACTED]. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Renee' Pleasant, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to determine the qualitative influence of servant leadership on the employee job satisfaction of the faculty and staff of [REDACTED].

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to please check the procedures(s) in which you desire to participate:

Participate in a one-to-one interview with the researcher. There are six guardian positions available on a first-come, first serve basis for participants upon completing the secure, online scheduling for interview appointments through SignUpGenius.

Interviews will occur through videoconferencing using Skype. Skype offers a live two-way audio and video method of communication. Participants will be required to create their own Skype account for participation.

The interview will last approximately 90 minutes and will be audio recorded. Each participant will be given a chance to review, edit, and approve the transcripts for accuracy before their usage in the study.

And/or participate in a guardian focus group session. Six focus group slots are available on a first-come, first-served basis through SignUpGenius.

The guardian focus group will occur through videoconferencing using Skype. Skype offers a live two-way audio and video method of communication. Participants will be required to create their own Skype account for participation.

The group discussion will last approximately two hours and will be both audio and video recorded. Each participant will be given a chance to review, edit, and approve the group transcript for accuracy before its usage in the study.

And/or share any documents that describe the school's climate or demonstrate the Head of School's servant leadership among stakeholders with the researcher. Examples of document(s) you can loan for review and analysis include but are not limited to: written communications between Head of School and stakeholders, newsletters, photographs, formal or informal emails, yearbooks, or anything else you feel worthy of sharing. ***Please note all documents must be from the 2015-2016 school year through 2020-2021.***

The focus of this research study is on the leadership attributes of the Head of School, [REDACTED], and not the students of [REDACTED]. Before submitting any documents for review, take a moment and remove through redaction any identifying information (i.e. school name, date of birth, etc.) in alignment with school procedures.

Participants wishing to share materials will be asked to share items by email with the researcher at [REDACTED]. Emailed items are not considered to be on loan and will be destroyed after three years. If the items are to be returned, they may be mailed to R. Pleasant [REDACTED]; each person will share the mailing expense. ***Please redact any identifying or confidential information before sharing information! ***

Risks: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. Skype profiles can be seen by others. To protect yourself, keep personal information out of your public profile.

The researcher cannot guarantee the privacy or security being sent over the internet, and there is potential the videoconference session can be intercepted or experience technical difficulties as the internet is not 100% secure. To learn more about Skype security, click here: <https://support.skype.com/en/faq/FA34649/protecting-your-online-safety-security-and-privacy>

Benefits: Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not be directly compensated for participating in this study. Instead, the researcher will make a \$10.00 donation for each interview participant and each focus group participant, to the [REDACTED] capital (building) campaign fund for their participation in the study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all participants. Research records will be stored securely, with the researcher and the dissertation committee having access to the files. Data storage on a password-locked computer will occur, and data may be available for use in future presentations.

After three years, all electronic records deleted. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation. Interviews held through videoconferencing are audio and video recorded, transcribed, and stored on a password-locked computer for three years before being erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings. The videoconference focus groups will also be audio and video recorded to assist the researcher in the transcription of both verbal and nonverbal data. As the focus group moderator, I will communicate group norms and courtesies and address the importance of maintaining confidentiality. However, I cannot assure participants that other group members will not share discussed matters with persons outside of the group.

In any report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. I may share the data I collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers; if I share the data that I collect about you, I will remove any information that could identify you, if applicable, before I share the data.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision about whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or [REDACTED]. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw before findings are reported without affecting those relationships.

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Renee' Pleasant. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at [REDACTED], or [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair, Dr. Justin Necessary, at [REDACTED]. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study. You would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED].

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record/video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant
Date _____
Best email for communications: _____@_____. _____

Sign

ature of Investigator

Liberty University
IRB-FY19-20-107
Approved on 9-11-2020

APPENDIX E: Scheduling Emails

Interview Scheduling

Sent via Email

[Insert Date]

Dear [Recipient]:

Thank you for returning the signed consent form and expressing an interest in participating in a video conferencing (Skype) interview session to further my research as part of the doctoral degree requirements at Liberty University. The interview will consist of four demographic questions, followed by 13 open-ended questions designed to understand a servant leader's servant leadership characteristics influencing employee satisfaction.

Answering the questions should take 60-90 minutes, depending on the participant's depth of response. Each interview will be both video and audio recorded to aid the researcher for accuracy. Each participant will be allowed to review the session's transcript for accuracy. While some identifying information will be requested as part of your participation, this information will remain confidential.

Five participants are needed from each participant group (Faculty/Staff and Guardians); however, seven slots are solicited to ensure coverage. Slots are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. To sign up for your interview, go to [insert link] and select the interview date and time that is most convenient for you.

All interviews will occur via videoconferencing using Skype. Skype offers a live two-way audio and video method of communication. A separate email will be sent to guide you on how to connect with the researcher via Skype. Participants will be required to create their own FREE Skype account for participation if an account is not already setup.

Sincerely,

Renee' Pleasant

Renee' Pleasant, M.Ed.

Skype Interview Information

Sent via Email

[Insert Date]

Dear [Recipient]:

As a reminder, each participant must create their own FREE Skype account for participation if an account is not already setup. Attached to this email (“How to Use Skype” document) is information you will need to participate in the video conferencing interview session via Skype. For your convenience, the key steps (installation, adding a contact, and answering a video call) have been marked with a black checkmark [the pink “X” is for Focus Group participants].

If you do not already have a Skype account, after installation, you are asked to add to your contacts me (the researcher). Add my contact information to your account and send a request to be accepted so that I may initiate the phone call to you on the date/time of your scheduled appointment. I will delete all research participants from my Skype contacts upon my doctoral degree conferred. My Skype account information is as follows:



Renee' Pleasant

[Redacted]
[My Microsoft account](#)



Please alert me if you have any trouble connecting or if you would like to conduct a “practice” videoconference call before your interview date/time.

Sincerely,

Renee' Pleasant

Renee' Pleasant, M.Ed.

Focus Group Scheduling

Sent via Email

[Insert Date]

Dear [Recipient]:

Thank you for returning the signed consent form and expressing an interest in participating in one of the videoconferencing (Skype) focus group sessions to further my research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree at Liberty University. There will be two focus groups, one comprised of faculty and staff, and one made up of guardians of [REDACTED] students. Each group will be asked the same 11 open-ended questions.

Answering the questions should take up to two hours, depending on the participants' depth of response. The sessions will be audio and video recorded to ensure the researcher accurately records dialogue. Each participant will be allowed to review the session's transcript for accuracy.

Six participants are needed for each videoconference focus group (Faculty/Staff and Guardian); however, eight slots are solicited to ensure coverage. It is anticipated that more participants will be interested than are available slots so that positions will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. To have your voice heard in this forum, log into the provided link and scan for the participant grouping in which you meet the criterion:

Teachers/Staff: (a) full-time or part-time employee of [REDACTED] (b) having worked at least two years under the leadership of Head of School, [REDACTED]

Guardians: (a) guardian of a student of a full-time (or) part-time student in PK-12th grade in [REDACTED] during the 2019-2020 school year and (b) this school year serves as the third year or higher as a guardian at [REDACTED].

Participants may register for vacant slots until all positions are filled. To participate, go to [insert link] and select the focus group date and time found within the sign-up specific to your participant group: Faculty/Staff (or) Guardian. SignUpGenius and I will send you reminders of the Focus Group session.

A separate email will be sent inviting you to join the appropriate Skype group (Faculty/Staff or Guardian) so that on the day of the videoconference, everyone will be in one grouping (like a video conference call). Both focus groups will occur via videoconferencing using Skype. Interviews will occur through videoconferencing using Skype. Skype offers a live two-way audio and video method of communication. Participants will be required to create their own Skype account for participation.

Sincerely,

Renee' Pleasant

Renee' Pleasant, M.Ed.

Skype Focus Group Information

Sent via Email

[Insert Date]

Dear [Recipient]:

As a reminder, each participant must create their own FREE Skype account for participation if an account is not already setup. Attached to this email is information (“How to Use Skype” document) you will need to participate in the video conferencing Focus Group session via Skype. For your convenience, the key steps (installation and answering a video call) have been marked with a pink “X” [the black checkmark is for interview participants].

If you do not already have a Skype account, please follow the directions for the Skype installation. There are two focus groups; each group has a specific invitational link for joining. Please click on the appropriate link that correlates to your group; I have included the group icon's image to guide you.

Faculty/Staff members: Use this link to join the Focus Group - Faculty/Staff
[https://join.skype.com/\[redacted\]](https://join.skype.com/[redacted]) Your icon image looks like this:



Guardian members: Use this link to join the Focus Group – Guardians
[https://join.skype.com/\[redacted\]](https://join.skype.com/[redacted])



As you join the Skype Chat room, it will appear much like a ‘text’ message and show who has joined the group. It is necessary to join the group before the scheduled date/time of the focus group appointment so that I (the researcher) can make the conference call to the group collectively. As participants “login” on the day of the meeting, the feed will look like a group text with greetings as everyone enters the ‘chat room.’ Once everyone is present, I will announce that we will switch from “chat-to-video call,” I will make the group conference call to everyone (see directions #7- for answering video calls). All participants will need to keep both video and audio feed “on” during the Focus Group session as questions are asked.

Responses will be transcribed into a single transcript shared with each participant for review to check for accuracy. I will delete all research participants from my Skype contacts upon my doctoral degree conferred.

Please alert me if you have any trouble linking to your appropriate Focus Group or if you would like to conduct a “practice” videoconference call before your Focus Group session appointment.

Sincerely,

Renee' Pleasant

Renee' Pleasant, M.Ed.

Document Lender Scheduling

Sent via Email

[Insert Date]

Dear [Recipient]:

Thank you for returning the signed consent form and expressing an interest in loaning documents to further my research as part of the doctoral degree requirements at Liberty University. [REDACTED] your Head of School, has been supportive of this study thus far and has granted permission to release email exchanges for stakeholder communications, provide access to school climate surveys, in addition to participation in the research and access to the campus. At this time, I am asking if you have any supplemental materials that illustrate the servant leadership demonstrated by [REDACTED] to use as evidence in my research study.

Documents that describe the school's climate show that the Head of School's servant leadership is welcome. Examples of materials that are helpful to the study include but are not limited to: written communications between the Head of School and stakeholders, newsletters, photographs, formal or informal emails, yearbooks, or anything else you feel worthy of sharing. ***Please note all documents must be from the 2015-2016 school year through 2020-2021.** * As a reminder, this study's focus is on your Head of School's leadership and not on the students of [REDACTED]

Therefore, before submitting any documents for review, I ask that you redact (blackout) any identifying information or confidential information on students (i.e., school name, student name, date of birth, etc.). Please follow your school's policy regarding sharing information.

To participate, you may send items to me through the following methods:

1. Scan and email any items to me at [REDACTED] In the RE: line, please add the following [REDACTED] Any emailed items are not considered on loan and will be destroyed after three years, as noted on the consent form.
2. Mail items to me at R. Pleasant, ATTN: PLEASANT, [REDACTED] Any materials provided through the mail are on loan and will be returned to you once reviewed and analyzed. Each person will share the postage cost.

Sincerely,

Renee' Pleasant

Renee' Pleasant, M.Ed.

APPENDIX F: One-to-One Interview Open-Ended Questions

1. Please state your age.
2. Please state your gender.
3. Which of the following best represents your ethnic heritage (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020)?
 - a. White
 - b. Black (or) African American
 - c. American Indian (or) Alaska Native
 - d. Asian
 - e. Native Hawaiian (or) Pacific Islander
 - f. Other
4. Share with me your current or last job held. What was the job title, duties you performed, and how long have you served in this role? Your relationship with your supervisor.
5. As a stakeholder of this school, how many years have you been here?
6. Why do you remain at this school? What about this Head of School sets him apart from principals at other schools?
7. In what ways does the Head of School stay plugged into the day-to-day operations? Please give at least two examples.
8. How does the Head of School show that he does or does not value people? Please share examples or stories to illustrate your point.
9. Imagine I am new to the area; how would you describe the school climate, the school's personality, to me? The more details you can give me would be helpful.
10. In what ways does the Head of School demonstrate trustworthiness? Please explain your answer.
11. Tell about a time when the Head of School exhibited a selfless act. Do you recall experiencing one? Please share the story.
12. In what ways does the Head of School help stakeholders grow?
13. How does the Head of School help stakeholders become healthier (physically, emotionally, and spiritually)?
14. In what ways does the Head of School help stakeholders become wiser?
15. In what ways does the Head of School help stakeholders become freer (more independent)?
16. In what ways does the Head of School help stakeholders become more autonomous (self-ruling)?
17. What, if anything else related to this topic, would you like to add? I would love to hear anything you would like to share.

APPENDIX G: Focus Group Norms and Open-Ended Questions

Focus group norms

- One person speaks at a time (Morgan, 1997).
- There are to be no sidebar conversations among members (Morgan, 1997).
- Everyone participates; equally, no one dominates the conversation (Morgan, 1997).
- Per the consent form for the items discussed within the focus group, confidentiality must remain inside and outside the focus group (Appendix D).

Focus Group Open-Ended Questions

1. Let us start with introductions and an icebreaker. State your name and tell the group what you think makes you different from anyone in the group. I will go first; I think I am the only person in the group today who does not know how to tread water when I swim. Who wants to go next?
2. Think of your daily interactions with the Head of School; what comes to mind? How would you describe him? Please share stories to illustrate your point.
3. Think about the communications (speech and written) between him and yourself? How effective do you feel the communication you receive from the Head of School to be? Please give examples.
4. In what ways does the Head of School serve stakeholders?
5. How does the Head of School demonstrate the following characteristics: (a) listening, (b) empathy, (c) healing, (d) awareness, (e) persuasion, (f) conceptualization, (g) foresight, (h) stewardship, (i) commitment to the growth of others, and (j) building community?
6. Which of the above characteristics do you consider to be the Head of School's strengths? Name 3.
7. Which of the above characteristics do you consider to be the Head of School's weakness? Name 2.
8. If you talked to a prospective family about this school, how would you describe the school's climate and how the Head of School maintains the environment.
9. Tell about a time when the Head of School put another person's need(s) first.
10. How does the Head of School allow your voice to be heard in school matters?
11. What if anything else related to this topic would you like to add?

APPENDIX H: Documentation Researcher Notes

Document # _____

Scanned: YES No

Document Name: _____

Describe the artifact							
What story does the artifact tell about the school?							
How does this artifact promote stakeholder satisfaction?							
What does this artifact say about the school climate? Cite supporting evidence.							
Linking to Research Question	<p>Central Question: How would <i>STAKEHOLDERS</i> describe the experience of schools led by servant leader principals?</p> <p>SQ1: How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to <i>FACULTY/STAFF</i>?</p> <p>SQ2: How does the school principal demonstrate servant leadership to <i>GUARDIANS</i>?</p>						
Greenleaf's Servant Leadership Characteristics	Listening	Empathy	Healing	Awareness	Persuasion		
	Conceptualization	Foresight	Stewardship	Commitment to the growth of people	Building community		
Seven Pillars of Servant Leadership	Character	Putting People First	Skilled Communicator	Compassionate Collaborator	Foresight	Systems Thinker	Moral Authority

(accountability of SL)							
Greenleaf's Best Test	Grow	Healthier	Wiser	Freer	Autonomy		
Researcher's Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • • • 						
Researcher's Reflective Notes							

APPENDIX I: Master List of Documentation Analyzed

Document #	Type of Document	Document Name
1	Newsletter	Parent Newsletter - September 18, 2020
2	Newsletter	Parent Newsletter - June 8, 2020
3	Staff Communication	Remote Learning_ March 22, 2020
4	Staff Communication	2020_11 Commandments
5	Leadership Team Meeting	2020–21 Leadership Team Planning Meeting invite email
5a		2020–21 Leadership Team Planning Meeting attachment (agenda)
5b		Continuity of instruction email
6	Student Communication	Last word to the 2020 Seniors - email
6a		Last word to the 2020 Seniors - attachment
7	Staff Communication	Emergency Drills - Week 3 (August 28, 2020)
8	HoS Blog	Parent Newsletter - End of Year Thoughts email - May 15, 2018
8a		End of Year Thoughts - May 15, 2018
9	Student Communication	2018-19 Last word to our Grads YB
10	Parent Communication	Chapel Academy - summer personnel update 2018-19
11	Parent Communication	Summer 2019- Upper School Letter
12	DUPLICATED - same as Doc #8	Principal's Thoughts 12 - End is Near

13	Staff Communication	Security Update May 2018
14	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts April 23, 2018
15	Staff Communication	Chapel Academy Mission Statement - part 1
16	Parent Communication	2016-17 Introduction to staff
17	Parent Communication	Welcome back Coach XXX (2016-17)
18	Parent Communication	Chapel Families Sweet Charity Announcement 2019
19	HoS Blog	Community Seniors and Fall Festival October 11, 2018
20	Parent Communication	First Ever Elementary Field Day 2019
21	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts January 22, 2019
22	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts October 12, 2018
23	Ceremony	A Note to Rising 9th Grade Students
24	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts Volume 3
25	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts #2
26	Parent Communication	Teacher Appreciation - Parent Volunteer- May 2016
27	Parent Communication	Introducing XXXX XXXXXX May 2016
28	Newsletter	Chapel Academy band update January 2016
29	Newsletter	Art Update January 2016
30	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts 11 Community
31	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts 10 Grace
32	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts 12 Excellence
33	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts End of the Year Message 2016-17
34	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts Volume 8 Core Values

35	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts Reenrollment 2017
36	Parent Communication	Chapel Academy Mission Statement
	Operating Document	
37	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts Volume 7
38	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts, Volume 6
39	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts Volume 5 (Calendar Blog)
40	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts Fiddler blog May 9 th , 2016
41	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts Digital Communication Blog
42	Photo	Class of 2021 Masked (August 17, 2020)
43	Photo	Math class outdoors (April 18, 2019)
44	Photo	Class trip with HS Bible teacher making a funny face (September 4, 2014)
45	Ceremony	Theology of Awards 2020
46	Ceremony	Final Note to the Seniors
47	Staff Communication	Chapel Academy Annual Report 2015-16
	Parent Communication	
	Operating Document	
48	Operating Document	Chapel Academy Reopening Plan 2020-Revised July 29 th
49	Parent Communication	A Note on Delaying the Opening of School
50	DUPLICATED - same as Doc #2	Start of Summer 2020
51	Operating Document	2020–2021 School Reopening Plan

52	Staff Communication	2020 Start of the Year Essentials
	Parent Communication	
53	HoS Blog	Principal's Thoughts Rhythm 9-15-20
54	Staff Communication	A Bonus, an Election & a Full Moon Email from HoS
55	Leadership Team Meeting	Administration Meeting Agenda & Notes: 10/27/2020
56	Ceremony	Then & Now PowerPoint
57	DUPLICATED same as Doc #51	2020 -2021 School Reopening Plan

APPENDIX J: IRB Modification Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

April 14, 2020

Renee Pleasant
Justin Necessary

Re: Modification - IRB-FY19-20-107 A Case Study: The Servant Leader Called to Lead as Head of School of PK-12 Private Faith-Based School in North Central Florida

Dear Renee Pleasant, Justin Necessary:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has rendered the decision below for IRB-FY19-20-107 A Case Study: The Servant Leader Called to Lead as Head of School of PK-12 Private Faith-Based School in North Central Florida.

Decision: Approved

Your stamped consent forms can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. These forms should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent documents should be made available without alteration.

Sincerely,
G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX K: Descriptive Codes and Frequency

Descriptive Code	Frequency	Descriptive Code	Frequency
Ability to prioritize urgent from non-urgent	111	HoS Strength	4
Accept responsibility	54	HoS weakness	6
Acceptance	69	Humility	60
Adaptability	73	Integrity	68
Approachable	67	Invites feedback	88
Authentic	99	Leader - Follower Relationship	142
Awareness	77	Leadership Team Meeting	9
Balance short-term goals with vision	162	Learn from past, sees today, dreams of future	124
Become more independent	76	Learn new skills	116
Builds team _Community	393	Listens	40
Care for organizational resources	99	Mentor minded	94
Clarifying	12	Mentor_Negative	3
Cohesiveness	112	More control over own decisions	156
Collaboration	97	Negotiate conflict	168
Collaboration_Negative	6	Not rely on positional authority	50
Comfortable with complexity	25	Personally grow as an individual	70
Community development	25	Persuasion	20
Compassion	81	Persuasive communication	71
Consider greater good	422	Persuasive communication_Negative	3
Courageous	27	Physically healthier	30
Creativity	71	Professional development	51
Culture of accountability	71	Professional grow as an individual	71
Decision making	145	Program outreach	7
Decisive action	137	Reflective	91

Delegate	71	Remain at school	14
Delegate_Negative	2	Safe to voice issue	19
Displays a servant's heart	14	Sees past day-to-day	70
Does not coerce	69	Selflessness	24
Emotionally healthier	70	Self-ruling	20
Empathy	274	Serves a higher purpose	61
Empower others through service	29	Shows care_Concern	123
Empowered individuals	119	Shares control_Power	77
Engagement	189	Shows dignity and respect	93
Engagement_Negative	3	Spiritually healthier	241
Exclusion	4	Stewardship_Finances	51
Expresses appreciation	115	Stewardship_Personnel	99
Gain experience	125	Stewardship_Resources	106
Gain good judgement	92	Transition to employment	35
Gain knowledge	132	Trustworthy	70
Genuine interest	123	Understanding	511
Gifted at hiring	96	Unmet needs	10
Healing	22	Vision	219
Higher academic achievement	84	Walk & Talk	26
Higher academic achievement_Negative	4	Why attend	16
HoS set apart	16	Work alongside	47