A Beacon of Hope:

Assessing Servant Leadership among Intercollegiate Athletic Executives

DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Modern leadership styles such as transformational and transactional leadership are well documented and practiced within the intercollegiate athletic industry. Although the case, inequities and historic scandals have continued to negatively impact the industry. As a result, practitioners and scholars alike have advocated for a reexamination of various leadership styles and practices. Various scholars have proposed that servant leadership may be a solution to the inequities and scandals faced in the industry. While the benefits of servant leadership have been well documented in literature, no study has examined the antecedents within the context of intercollegiate athletics. The purpose of this study was to examine the characteristics, experiences, and practices of servant leadership among Athletic Directors and other senior level administrators. A two-part, mixed method approach was utilized in this study. The first phase included the utilization of the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ), and multiple regression analysis. The second phase include semi-structure interviewing of athletic directors and other senior level administrators. The results of this study indicated three main findings: First, senior level administrators exhibit servant leadership characteristics—people oriented, humility, authenticity, commitment to ethical behavior, providing direction, and wisdom. Secondly, childhood experiences, role models, religious experiences and professional development experiences influenced servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators. Thirdly, senior level administrators who exhibit servant leadership characteristics, implement various people-centric practices that demonstrate servant leadership

behaviors. The results, practical implications and potential for future studies were also discussed in this study.

Dedication

The completion of my dissertation is not solely of my doing. I want to thank my father, George William Lipsey, who is no longer with us. George, a local pastor, became a living and primary example of servant leadership to me, my family, and the rest of our community. I also want to thank Dovie Lipsey, my mother, for the endless love and care she shown me throughout my life. George and Dovie adopted me and my brother, JaCorey, when we were toddlers. Pushing for both salvation and education, they gave both gave us the support necessary to thrive in life. I would not be here today without their unconditional love.

To my track and field teammates at The University of North Carolina…Thank you for pushing me to be the best version of myself. And to all, who have shown me love, kindness, and encouragement along the way, I am forever indebted. Thank you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Origin of Leadership within Intercollegiate Athletics

The integration of higher education and college athletics emerged in the 1850's (Smith, 2011). Walter Camp, the founder of American football, noted that college athletics "is a structure that students unaided have builded [sic]" (p. 8). Notably, students were the first leaders of intercollegiate athletics, as they led all of the athletic-related processes; they organized their own sport teams, scheduled their own competitions, created and revised agreements/rules/policies. The earliest noting's of student-led intercollegiate competition existed between Harvard and Yale's men's Crew team in 1852, in which Harvard beat Yale (Lewis, 1967). Student-led reform regarding fairness of rules and policies followed just several years after the first Crew competition (Smith, 2011). In 1855, Yale challenged Harvard to a rematch and lost again. Of note, Harvard's former captain, Joseph Brown, had competed during the rematch even though he had graduated prior to the second competition. Reform efforts emerged immediately, as Yale did not view Joseph's participation, as a graduate of Harvard, fair in competition. In all, the earliest forms of leadership, and reform within intercollegiate athletic existed within a student-led environment (Smith, 2011).

While students initially were the first leaders and organizers within the intercollegiate athletic space, various other constituents became involved soon after (Smith, 2011). In fact, faculty members sought to gain influence, as they were most concerned with the negative impact that athletics could have on academic integrity. Specifically, faculty members believed that student-athletes were spending too much time away from their studies. These faculty-led concerns eventually led to the formation of the first faculty athletic council in 1881. Designed to

reduce the amount of time that student-athletes away from the classroom, faculty began to create rules and policies to meet this aim. In tangent with faculty member's push for sport regulation, university presidents began to take the lead over reform efforts in intercollegiate athletics. Soon emerging as the prime leaders of intercollegiate athletics, university presidents were not completely successful in addresses all the concerns that existed within this space. Most notably, significant amounts of brutality and death existed during the early years of American football. This hardship led to former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt demanding reform around the rules of football (Lewis, 1969). Ultimately, President Roosevelt's leadership and concerns for player safety led to the creation of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in 1906 (Smith, 2011).

Evolution of NCAA Leadership & Associated Challenges

President Theodore Roosevelt was among the earliest leadership efforts during the creation of the NCAA, as his aim was to address the severe level of brutality and deaths that were occurring in American football (Lewis, 1969). President Roosevelt gathered the university presidents of Harvard, Princeton, and Yale, along with their respective head football coaches, to instill an agreement that would curb the violent acts and injuries (Smith, 2011). Although President Roosevelt pushed for ethical practices in football, questions still arose about whether the culture of intercollegiate athletics would continue to be problematic. Smith (2011) noted that "sports as conducted in America was results oriented—victory was the one major objective, not the enjoyment of participation" (p. 45). Due to the overall commercialization of college sports— mainly the public image/reputation enhancing, and ticket sales generation aspects—leaders within the sport industry objectively emphasized hard work and dedication, rather than encouraging participation for fun or enjoyment of the games (Smith, 2011).

Most of the institutions that joined the NCAA in 1906 were smaller institutions (Smith, 2011). At first, Harvard, Yale and Princeton, and several larger institutional leaders refused to join the NCAA, as their leaders did not want to share their power. To garner participation of these larger institutions, the NCAA did not enforce any legislative authority/policies in the beginning. In the first half century, the leaders of the NCAA consisted mainly of faculty members who only debated and recommended legislations regarding amateurism. Seen as a "moral force for good", the NCAA became an organization that shed light on all challenges faced in the intercollegiate space (Smith, 2011, p. 59). In 1929, former president of Massachusetts Institution of Technology, Henry Pritche, helped lead a three-year study that addressed leaders of the NCAA about the unethical practices that existed. This study led to a 350-page document/report, called the Carnegie report on *American College Athletics* (Thelin, 1996). As noted by Smith (2011), this report is regarded as the most significant reform document in the history of intercollegiate athletics. The report addressed various issues such as lack of student-athlete involvement, financial greed/corruption of coaches, and recruiting and extra benefit violations of student-athletes, and more. In all, the document shed light and placed responsibility on university president and NCAA leadership to create radical reform in intercollegiate athletics (Smith, 2011; Thelin, 1996).

As the NCAA continued to evolve/expand throughout the 20th century, it formed three divisions of competition: Division I, Division II, and Division III (NCAA, 2020). Combined, these three divisions include over 1,100 membership institutions. Each of the divisions are composed of various conferences, in which member institutions compete. Despite the expansion of the NCAA and early advocacy efforts for reform, the modern day intercollegiate athletic industry has continued to be faced with a plethora of challenges, ranging from national scandals

to societal pushback against the NCAA's traditional amateur model (Burton & Peachey, 2017; McMenamin, 2018). Even notable members of society have publicly expressed their dissatisfaction for leadership within the intercollegiate model (McMenamin, 2018). For example, 4-time NBA Champion, Lebron James, called the NCAA "corrupt" in its practices (McMenamin, 2018). Another example occurred during *NCAA v. Alston et al.* This case resulted in the Supreme Court of the United States' (SCOTUS) decision to enforce the deregulation of athlete compensation. Supreme Court Justice, Brett Kavanaugh, pushed back on NCAA leadership by opining that "The NCAA cannot act above the Law." (*NCAA v. Alston et al.,* 2021, p.5). Given the societal pushback toward NCAA practices, scrutiny has arisen about whether current NCAA leadership behavior is most suitable for the future of intercollegiate athletics (Burton & Peachey, 2016). Some might argue that the behaviors or leadership practices of industry leaders have failed to prevent systematic corruption. This may be evidenced in the history of scandals that have plagued the industry. Of note, Penn State University was under criminal investigation in 2011 (Chappell, 2012). Consequently, former assistant football coach, Jerry Sandusky was sentenced to 30 years to life for involuntary deviant sexual intercourse, corruption of minors, endangering welfare of children indecent assault, and other related charges. It was found that university leaders such as the former Head Athletic Director, Timothy Curley, was responsible for covering up these criminal acts for years (Chappell, 2012). While this case stands among the most horrific incidences ever in college sport, there are several other unethical incidences also worthy of note. In 2019, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) discovered the largest admissions scandal in the history of intercollegiate athletics. Universities such as Yale and the University of Southern California (USC) were among a few institutions charged with racketeering, as parents such as television celebrity Lori Loughlin were bribing coaches' large

sums of money (between $500,000-$1.2M) to bypass the normal admissions process—recruiting children who had no experience in athletics. Consequently, this scandal resulted in 50 people being indited across six states (Winter et al., 2019). Scandals such as these, along with situations such as point shaving (Peachey & Burton, 2016), reveal a history of corruption within intercollegiate athletics. The question is, why have industry leaders failed to prevent this level of corruption within the industry? Given the history of these scandals and publicly scrutinized industry practices, scholars have begun to reassess the leadership styles within the industry (Burton & Peachey, 2017).

Servant Leadership

Robert Greenleaf (1970) originally coined the modern-day term "servant leadership". While never providing an exact definition, Greenleaf stated that servant leadership "…begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first"* (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 27). While various scholars have sought to further define and conceptualize servant leadership, this study will specifically look at the servant leadership theory as conceptualized by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) empirically defined servant leadership characteristics through the following five servant leadership dimensions:

Altruistic calling: Greenleaf (1970), the founder of modern servant leadership, noted that there must be an intentional or conscious decision to serve others. In addition, the conscious decision to serve others does not stem from any expectation of being served in return; rather, it is only out of the desire to help others, does servant leadership exist (Greenleaf, 1970). Altruistic calling is defined as "a desire to serve and willingness to sacrifice self-interest for the benefit of others" (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006, p. 305).

Emotional healing: Various scholars have noted that healing is one of the most critical aspects of effective leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dacher, 1999). In the context of servant leadership within organizational settings, scholars have suggested that it is the responsibility of leaders to create space/opportunity for people to express their emotions. This aspect of servant leadership is a distinctive/unique factor, not seen in most other leadership theories. Emotional healing is defined as "the ability to recognize when and how to foster the healing process" (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006, p. 306).

Persuasive mapping: Persuasive mapping is explaining "the extent in which leaders use sound reasoning and mental framework" (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006, p. 319). It requires a leader to have the ability to persuade followers into completing task and aligning their actions with that of achieving organizational vision/goals. Leaders that contain a high level of persuasive mapping possess the ability to identify and articulate organizational challenges and opportunities to various constituents (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

Wisdom: Philosophers have noted that wisdom is the ability to have a high level of awareness toward one's environment. It is also characterized by one's ability to predict or foresee/anticipate consequences within environments (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Kant, 1978; Plato, 1945).

Organizational stewardship: Servant leaders have a responsibility to make sure that their organization is making positive contributions to society (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006); they are focused on giving back. Organizational stewardship refers to the extent that a leader prepares an organization to make this positive contribution to the community. This can be materialized as program outreach programs, employee development programs, and various other community-oriented activities that promote a culture of serving others (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

In all, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) provide a basis for measuring servant leadership within the industry of intercollegiate athletic administration.

Statement of Problem

Traditionally, most research within the intercollegiate industry has examined transactional and transformational leadership (Burton &Peachey, 2009; Gomes, 2014; Kent & Chelladurai, 2001). Scholars have noted that these forms of leadership focus primarily on performance outcomes. While seemingly advantageous, both leadership forms fail to center their virtues around human ethics (Burton & Peachey, 2017). Scholars have argued that this lack of ethical consideration may perhaps contribute to the history and ongoing nature of sport scandals and massive inequities within the industry. Given these theoretical shortcomings of transactional and transformational leadership and need for a more ethical sport environment, a reexamination of leadership styles is necessary for the long-term health of the sport industry. Scholars have urged for a push in servant leadership research and practice in the sport industry due to its ethically focused considerations. Some have strongly argued that servant leadership's conceptual focus of serving others first could be a solution to the ethical issues/corruption that have plagued the industry (Burton & Peachey, 2017). While the benefits of servant leadership are well documented within in higher education and corporate settings, research pertaining to it within intercollegiate athletics is still in its infancy stages (Drury, 2004; Ehrhart, 2004; Hu & Liden, 2011; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Khole Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015; Noland & Richard, 2015; Schaubroeck, et al., 2011; Sendjaya & Perketi, 2010). This lack of empirical research in the intercollegiate athletics setting poses challenges for understanding servant leadership development, and the associated benefits that it may provide to the industry. Notably, not much is empirically known about the characteristics, experiences, and practices of servant leaders in

the intercollegiate sport industry. Moreover, no study has examined this phenomenon as it pertains to Athletic Directors, and other senior level administrators—leaders who possess the most influence and power within their athletic departments and the industry as a whole (Mossovitz, 2019). Not having this understanding about how life experiences have shaped these athletic leaders, prevents us from fully understanding how to identify, select, and develop more servant leaders within the industry—a task critically needed to curb the ethical corruption commonly noted in the industry. It is for this reason that scholars must begin to carefully examine the antecedents and practices of servant leadership among athletic department leaders. Ultimately, this brings us to the purpose of this study.

Purpose of Study

In effort to fill the gap in servant leadership literature, the purpose of this study was to gain a more holistic understanding about the characteristics, experiences, and strategies of servant leadership among intercollegiate athletic directors and other senior level administrators. Below are the following research questions:

Research Questions

1. Are there characteristics that predict servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators?

2. Are there strategies that senior level administrators use to practice servant leadership behaviors within intercollegiate athletic departments?

3. Are there life events, experiences, or resources, that influence servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators?

Conceptual Framework

The most cited definition of a conceptual framework was by Miles and Huberman (1984), who explained that a conceptual framework is "the current version of the researchers map of the territory being investigated" (p.33). Another definition states that a conceptual framework is "'a structure for organizing and supporting ideas; a mechanism for systematically arranging abstractions; sometimes revolutionary or original, and usually rigid' (Weaver-Hart, 1998, p. 11). Provided these definitions, I believe that the *Multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management*, created by Peachey et al. (2015), is the most appropriate framework for this study. Specifically, this framework serves as a basis for understanding the individual experiences/antecedents of servant leaders within the intercollegiate sport industry. This framework also allows for the exploration of lived experiences, moral identity, and sport participation of athletic directors and senior level administrations.

To start, the *Multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management* indicates that leadership itself is a multi-dimension concept, consisting of individual, group, and organizational dynamics. The framework created by Peachey et al. (2015) utilized the following understanding of leadership by Yammarino (2013):

> Leadership is a multilevel (person, dyad, group, collective) leader-follower interaction process that occurs in a particular situation (context) where a leader (e.g., superior, supervisor) and followers (e.g., subordinates, direct reports) share a purpose (vision, mission) and jointly accomplish things (e.g., goals, objectives, tasks) willingly (e.g., without coercion (p. 150).

At the nucleus of this framework lies the antecedents/lived experiences of leadership at the individual level. More specially, the antecedents of leadership have the following characteristics:

'**Darker' traits**: 'Darker Traits' embraces the reexamination of trait theory by suggesting that there can be negative traits within of leadership. In other words, it is considered in this model as a way to acknowledge the "dark-side" (Judge et al., 2009, p. 153) of leadership that is less commonly explored in sport management studies (Peachey et al., 2015). Scholars have noted that the 'darker' traits include narcissism, hubris, machiavellianism, and social supremacy (Judge et al., 2009; Peachey et al., 2015). It also acknowledges the notion that some followers serve leaders that have displayed these self-centered, power-hungry tendencies in the sport industry, as evidenced by massive financial disparities within the intercollegiate sport industry (Sagas & Wigley, 2014), hyper focus on performance outcomes, and overall commercialization of athletics (DeSensi, 2014).

Moral Identity: Moral identify lies within direct contrast of 'Darker' traits as it considers the ethical development of leaders. More specifically, it seeks to understand how the experiences of leaders have helped shaped/influence their moral identity in the sport industry (DeSensi, 2014; Peachey et al., 2015). It also explores how the moral identity of leaders could lead to positive impacts on a sport organization (Peachey et al., 2015). Further, moral identity acknowledges that external pressures such as the commercialization of sport have had an impact on moral identity development of leaders.

Lived experience: Sinclair (2010) argued that a critical part in understanding leadership is to understand lived experiences/history of individuals in leadership positions. Specifically, Sinclair (2010) encourages scholars to examine the histories of leaders, as this may add context to their ideologies, beliefs, opinions, and actions of leaders. As noted by Peachey et al. (2015), "Reflecting on identity includes recognition of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, physical ability, and physical characteristics because they form our overall identities, yet these identities

intersect, and no one identity is most salient" (p. 579). Given this notion, having an understanding about the histories and identity formation of leaders, provides us with concept that there is no singular leadership identity; rather, each leadership identity is shaped by their lived experiences, and inner identity.

Sport participation: Scholars have argued that a leader's participation in sport may have an impact on their development/behavior. In fact, research has found that those who participate in sport have the capacity to develop positive life skills (Gould & Carson, 2008). Given that participation in sport could have an impact on a leadership behavior, Peachey et al. (2015) examined this factor as an antecedent in the multi-level framework.

Not only does The *Multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management* take into account the leadership experiences at the individual level, but it also acknowledges how leadership is influenced by various factors of sport environments. Specifically, the model examines the following aspects:

External and Internal Stakeholders: This conceptual framework acknowledges that external pressures can influence a leader's behaviors/decisions. Moreover, this external pressure can derive from various stakeholders. As noted in stakeholder theory, an organization can become more successful in the long run if they are satisfying the desires of stakeholders. Peachey et al. (2015) explained that "stakeholder theory helps to identify and understand to what and to whom leaders need to listen by examining the power, legitimacy, and urgency of the claim that stakeholders possess" (p. 580). In all, understanding the external pressure and influence of stakeholder, can help researchers gain a better understanding about the factors that influence leadership behaviors and decisions.

Fans and Alumni: One unique aspect of the sport industry, in comparison to various other industries, is that its constituents consist of fans and alumni. These fans serve as key stakeholders and can possess a unique ability to influence the behaviors of leaders within the sport industry (Peachey et al., 2015). As noted by Peachey et al. (2015), the level of influence can be attributed to the identification and high passion levels of fans. Notably, many sport organizations would not thrive without this level of passion/emotional investment from their fans/customers. Given their level of passion and influence within sport organizations and leadership decisions, fans and alumni are included in this framework.

Governance Structure: The governance portion of the model acknowledges that the sport industry consists of various governance stakeholders. In terms of intercollegiate athletics, the NCAA serves as the governing body for all affiliated institutions. While the case, policies and regulations also exist among member conferences. As noted by Peachey et al. (2015), the sport industry space is unique in that it is an industry where constituents (athletic directors, conferences, etc.) both collaborate and compete against one another. While unique, this duality can cause challenges among institutions, as they compete for legitimacy and power (Peachey et al., 2015); subsequently, this dynamic can impact leadership behavior and decisions.

Athletes and coaches: Athletes and coaches within the sport industry are viewed as internal stakeholders (Peachey et al., 2015). Coaches and athletes have been known to voice their needs and wants to various to sport industry leaders (Calisso & Sanderson, 2019; Staurowsky, 2014). Given the commercialization of sport, various coaches and athletes have achieved high profiles in society and associated social power (Inoue et al., 2013). Provided their level of societal influence/power, the desires of high-profile coaches and athletes can influence leadership behaviors and decisions (Peachey et al., 2015).

Organizational culture: Organizational culture is considered in this framework, as it can impact the behaviors and decisions of leaders in sport. As noted by Schein (2010), organizational culture can influence, and be influenced by leadership. This is mainly due to the notion that sport industry leaders are essential in establishing structure with an organization, managing employees' expectations and performance, and making organizational decisions.

Stereotype constraints in sport leadership: Leadership in sport has historically been occupied by Caucasian, able-bodied, straight men (Fink et al., 2001). Provided this dynamic, stereotypes have negatively impacted the perceptions about who is qualified to be within leadership positions. For this reason, the framework by Peachey et al. (2015) seeks to address the impact that stereotypes have in sport leadership.

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Rationale

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This multi-level framework is the basis for the study for the following reasons: To start, this framework addresses the need for scholars to develop sport specific theories (Chalip, 2006). This need for sport specific theories stems from the notion that sport management has unique elements in comparison to other industries. For example, the model includes sport coaches, athletes, along with fans & alumni relations, which are all aspects unique to the sport industry (Peachey et al., 2015). Given that this study focuses specifically in assessing leadership experiences among intercollegiate sport organization administrators, I find this conceptual model appropriate, as it considers all sport constituents at the individual and organizational level within sport organizations.

Secondly, I used the *Multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management* due to its multi-level approach. Scholars have noted that the advancement of leadership in sport management was found through examining a multi-level approach to leadership (Chalip, 2006;

Peachey et al., 2015; Yammarino, 2013). Given that this study examined servant leadership at the individual level and the impact that it can have on organizational level practices, a multi-level framework to leadership was necessary. In alignment with the goals of this study, this multi-level framework considers the individual/lived experience of leadership. More specifically, this framework takes into account the antecedents to leadership within the sport management. I find the frameworks consideration of the antecedents to leadership critical, as it is directly aligned with the studies purpose of understanding the lived experiences and characteristics of servant leadership among athletic directors and others senior level administrators within intercollegiate athletics.

Definition of Terms

Athletic Director: An athletic director is defined as the most senior staff member of an athletic department. In most cases, the athletic director is responsible for overseeing all operations within an athletic department, and directly reports to the university president.

Power Five: The Power Five is composed of 65 institutions that compete in the following conferences: Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference Atlantic Coast Conference, Pac-12 Conference, and Southeastern Conference. Notably, the University of Notre Dame is an independent school that is recognized as a Power Five institution.

Senior level Administrators: Senior level administrators are defined as individuals with the following titles: Deputy Athletic Director (Deputy AD), Senior Associate Athletic Director (Senior Associate AD), and Associate Athletic Director (Associate AD), and Senior Woman Administrator (SWA).

Subordinates: Subordinates are defined as any employees that report to the senior level administrators that participate in this study.

Division I: The NCAA Division I level is recognized as highest level of competition within intercollegiate athletics. This division allows for student-athletes to receive multiyear cost-of attendance scholarships. There are about 350 member institutions (NCAA, 2020).

Football Bowl Division (FBS): It is a subdivision within NCAA Division I, that has the highest profile/level of football competition in the United States. It includes institutions within the American Athletic Conference, Atlantic Coast Conference, Big 12 Conference, Big Ten Conference, Conference USA, Mid-American Conference, Mountain West Conference, Pacific 12 Conference, Southeastern Conference and Sun Belt Conference, and several independent institutions (Brigham Young University, Liberty University, United States Military Academy, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the University of Notre Dame; NCAA, 2020).

Overview of Chapters

The next chapter of this study provides an in-depth literature review pertaining to the origins of leadership theory in higher education, corporate and sport environments. The third chapter discusses the methodology of the study, including method selection, sample selection and data collection procedures. The fourth chapter discusses the results of the study. Lastly, the fifth chapter is a discussion of the findings, practical implications of the research, and directions for future studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Origins of leadership theory

The earliest origins of leadership theory date back hundreds of years, as it was rooted in ancient Greek philosophy (Gumus et al., 2018). Since then, the discourse and expansion of leadership literature has spread globally; it has grown to be at the forefront of both scholarly and business discussions. Moreover, definitions of leadership and the ideologies revolving around its influence have evolved significantly over time. Both scholarly and non-scholarly authors have sought to define, measure, and create universal leadership definitions and principles (Allan et al., 2006; Burns, 2002). Discussions of leadership behaviors were first introduced through what is known as Scientific Management Theory (SMT) (Taylor, 2004). SMT originated from the field of business. Taylor (2004) noted that SMT main objective was to "secure maximum prosperity for the employer, created with the maximum prosperity for each employee" (p. 9). In other words, SMT was originally utilized to measure and improve the success of business outcomes (Taylor, 2004). In all, the notion of leadership has been associated as a critical component of success for individuals, organizations, and industries (Gumus et al., 2018).

The conceptualization of leadership proved no easy task during the early development of leadership literature (Bolden, 2004). Some scholars have argued that leadership should not be defined (Rowe, 2006), whereas others have found importance in defining leadership. Nonetheless, there has not been a uniform way to define it, as it has taken on many definitions (Cyert, 1990; Buell, 2012; Kruse, 2015; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). Kruse (2015) defined leadership as "a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal" (para. 11). On the other hand, Cyert (1990) defined leadership as the

"ability to get participants in an organization to focus their attention on the problems that the leaders consider significant" (p. 29). In tangent with these definitions, some authors have identified leadership with the ability to exercise influence and provide direction for the organization or people they are leading (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005). The overall complexity of defining leadership and its impact on environments led Bass and Stogdill (1990) to conduct research that contained over 3,000 empirical analysis of leadership concepts. Each of these concepts have varying ideals on how leadership is defined. As indicated by the number of definitions of leadership that have emerged, the concept of leadership is ever evolving.

Leadership theory has been developed and revised over the course of time (Khan et al., 2016). While some theories have been more popular than others, researchers have emphasized that each theory has its own relevance to this day. One of the earliest theories in leadership literature is the Great-Man Theory (Spector, 2016). This theory was founded and popularized by Thomas Carlyle in the 1840's. Thomas strongly believed that leaders are not made or developed, but rather, that they are naturally born leaders. Early concepts of leadership literature also suggested that leadership traits were heritable or innate qualities within a person (Zaccaro, 2007). Thomas argued that these traits were provided by God (Spector, 2016). Other researchers have even gone as far to suggest that acquiring certain qualities was not possible if one wasn't born with them (Galton, 1869; Gumus et al., 2018). Provided these inherent and God-ordained traits, it was believed that these leaders were able to display or portray innate heroic actions that led people and organizations to success. Moreover, Sidney Hook, an American philosopher, further developed the concept of the Great-Man Theory by suggesting that there were either eventful men or event-making men (Dobbins & Platz, 1986). Eventful men were described as men who participated in events in an impactful way but did not necessarily determine that course of the

events. However, event-making men were less defined by their actions. Rather, they were defined by their character, intellect, and dedication. It is important to note that the Great-Man theory had many discrepancies, as researchers were able to identify leaders that fit the description but had corrupt character. Examples include leaders such as Joseph Stalin, Adolph Hitler, and Osama Bin Laden (Bergen, 2006; Graham, 1991; Lepsius, 2006). All considered charismatic leaders by some, their leadership behavior was eventually labeled as counterproductive or unhealthy for organizations and society as a whole (McGregor, 2003; Khan et al., 2016). Due to these discrepancies, the Great-Man theory eventually became less popular. In turn, people then started to examine certain characteristics or qualities that are attributed effective leadership (Khan et al., 2016).

The developmental stages of leadership literature also discussed a concept called Trait Theory (Birnbaum et al.,1989). This theory is based on the premise that an individual's traits or characteristics contribute to their success within a particular leadership position. Trait Theory does not attribute leadership ability based on physical attributes or perceived genetical advantages (Khan et al., 2016). While this approach was prominent in the early decades of leadership literature, the concept started to evolve during the turn of the 20th century (Zaccaro, 2007). Instead of viewing traits as solely heredity attributes, the trait-based perspective evolved to suggest that leadership traits are more comprehensible and reveal consistencies or patterns in an individual's attributes (Zaccaro, 2007). These attributes consisted of qualities such as intellectual capacity and personality traits (Khan et al., 2016). Perspective eventually moved to comprise all enduring traits that differentiate leaders from followers (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Zaccaro, 2007). Notably, many scholars had varying ideas on which traits made for great leaders (Khan, 2013). Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) identified the following six main leadership traits:

confidence, integrity, drive, cognitive capability, task knowledge, and motivation. Other scholars identified traits such as decisiveness, sociable, adaptive, and persistent (Stodgill, 1974). The inconsistency among scholars in determining which traits make for great leaders has been cited as weakness in the trait-based perspective (Khan, 2013; Zaccaro, 2007). Trait Theory suggests that most leaders have the same attributes or characteristics (Zaccaro, 2007). This theoretical framework regarding Trait Theory did not leave much room for variability among leadership qualities and personalities. Theorist also lacked the ability to define or discover qualities or traits that every leader had. Another shortcoming of Trait Theory was that it does not account for the notion that leaders may exercise different traits depending on various circumstances (Khan, 2013). These incongruencies are the reason why Trait Theory became less accepted in leadership literature (Zaccaro, 2007). Ultimately, the theoretical inconsistencies in Trait Theory led to researchers to explore and adopt other leadership theories.

Aside from Trait Theory, early works also recognized a concept called Contingency Theory –otherwise referred to as Situational Theory (Khan et al., 2016). This concept was developed by Fiedler (1964), and accounted for situational variance, unlike Trait Theory. Contingency Theory suggests that there is not a single leadership style that exist without the inclusion of other leadership styles (Chemers, 2000). In other words, leaders exercise the ability to make decisions based on the situations that they are presented with. This theory suggests that there are a wide variety of ways to lead, and that context of the internal and external dynamics of a situation call for leaders to make decisions, and ultimately, adapt to their environments (Khan et al., 2016). Fiedler (1964) created a dimension of Contingency Theory called 'situational favorableness', which stemmed from the following several factors within an environment: The amount of formal authority, the group task structure, and the level of support for subordinates

(Fiedler, 1967). To continue, Contingency Theory also suggested that the changes in internal and external environments are not just inherent within the organizational; rather, it is also recognized that people within an organization also change (Khan et al., 2016). The ever-changing nature of the environments has led leaders to understand that they cannot act or lead in the same way for every circumstance; leaders understand that certain situations may call for certain leadership behaviors to be practiced over others (Khan et al., 2016). In 1957, psychologist at The Ohio State University identified other dimensions of contingency theory that applied to all different types of leaders (Stogdill, 1957). By sending out a leadership behavior questionnaire to study participants, these psychologists discovered a few orthogonal factors—Consideration and Initiating Structure (Kerr et al., 1974). Consideration refers to extent in which a leader expresses respect, genuine care, and support for their subordinates. Initiating structure refers to the extent in which a leader establishes and structures their role and the role of their followers, in order to achieve organizational success. While these two factors were used to classify leadership behaviors, various researchers labeled these categories differently. Some researchers labeled leadership behaviors by instrumental and supportive leadership (House, 1971; Yukl, 2012), employee-centered leadership and production-centered leadership (Likert, 1961; Yukl, 2012), maintenance and performance behavior (Misumi & Peterson, 1985; Yulk, 2012). In all, Contingency Theory has been given much consideration in leadership literature (Fiedler, 1994; House, 1971; Kerr et al., 1974; Misumi & Peterson, 1985).

In addition to Contingency Theory, Behavioral Theory has also been recognized in leadership literature (Yulk, 1971). Much of this leadership theory began to develop around the mid 1900's. Around this time, scholars were primarily seeking to examine how the performance and attitudes of followers is influenced by a leader's behavior. Yulk (1971) proposed the

Hierarchical Taxonomy, which was designed to highlight the leadership behaviors that have an impact on organizations—on an individual, unit, and company level. The four main areas identified were the following: (1) task orientation, (2) relations-orientation, (3) change orientation, and (4) external. Task orientation refers to a leader ability to make certain that the people in his charge have the resources they need to achieve individual and organizational success. (Henkel et al., 2019; Yukl, 2012). Relations-orientation is defined by a leader's ability to connect with subordinates and instill the skills needed to be successful on the job. This is achieved through three specific leadership behaviors—supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering others (Yulk, 2012). To continue, change orientation refers to a leader's ability to "increase innovation, collective learning, and adaptation to external changes" (Yukl, 2012, p. 72). The last dimension of Contingency Theory is external functionality, which refers to the objective of attaining resources and information necessary to help the organization thrive.

While Behavioral Theory has been developed, it is not without criticism. One of the main criticisms of Behavior Theory is that it lacks a strong theoretical foundation (Behrendt et al., 2017; van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). This has been attributed to the notion that most of the research in this area has utilized factor analysis questionnaires and interviews as the main method of measuring leadership behavior. For example, Stogdill and Coons (1957) established the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire. Stodgill and Coons (1957) established the Leadership opinion questionnaire, and the Supervisory Behavior Description questionnaire. While these tools are useful, research has indicated that interviews and questionnaires account for perceived leadership behavior, rather than actual leadership behavior. Notably, there can be differences between the perception of leadership behavior, and actual leadership behavior (Behrendt et al., 2017; Davis & Luthans, 1979; Hansbrough et al., 2015). Yukl (2012) noted that

much of questionnaires items have consisted of bias and preconceptions of about what it means to be an effective leader. Bias can also appear within questionnaire respondents and within a researcher's desire to find what they believe are effective measure of leadership behavior. To address this issue, Behrendt et al. (2017) developed the Integrative Model of Leadership Behavior (IMoLB). This model is categorized into two main dimensions—task orientation and relations-orientation. Task orientation refers to a leader's ability to facilitate and implement objectives that help reach organizational success, strengthen and motivate followers, and increase followers understand responsibilities and objectives. It is measured by the extent in which a leader conducts these behaviors routinely or practices levels of change. The second dimension is relations-orientation; it is the extent in which leaders promote and foster cooperation and activate resources. It is measured by the extent in which a leader conducts these behaviors internally and externally relative to the leader's team (Behrendt et al., 2017).

Modern organizational leadership theory has been categorized into two distinct forms of leadership – transactional and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). These leadership styles are discrete but not mutually exclusive (Bass, 1985). Transactional Leadership Theory, also known as Managerial Leadership Theory, deemed as the initial leadership theory and underscores the exchange between leaders and followers (Burns, 1978). This type of leadership has been identified through the presence of reciprocated relationships between leaders and their stakeholders (Birnbaum et al., 1989). It is distinguished by the exchange that focuses on the way leaders discuss their expectations, work conditions, and punitive and reward structures with their followers (Burns, 1978). Transactional leadership focuses more on the achievement of goals through a more contractual-based relationship between leaders and their followers (Burns, 1978). Moreover, it is characterized by the following three aspects: contingent rewards, management by

active exception and management by passive exception (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Contingent

rewards are defined by the degree in which transactional leaders establish constructive

interactions with their followers (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Management by active exception

refers to leaders that proactively manage their followers by anticipating problems and taking

corrective action prior to the escalation of those problems. Management by passive exception is

when leaders intentionally wait to take action until after the problem has been created (Judge &

Piccolo, 2004).

In comparison to transactional leadership, transformational leadership is deemed as a

modernized leadership style and is less complex of an exchange between leaders and followers

(Bass, 1985). This form of leadership has existed in literature since the 1990's and has been

illustrated as the inverse of transactional leadership (Avolio et al., 1999; Howell and Avolio,

1993; Gumus et al., 2018). Rather than a top-down or hierarchical approach, transformational

leadership theory takes a different approach. To begin, transformational leadership has been

defined as the "process of influencing major changes in attitudes and assumptions of

organizational members and building commitment for the organizations mission and objectives"

(Yukl, 1989, p. 204). This form of leadership primarily revolves around how leaders influence

their followers to achieve organizational objectives (Stone et al., 2004). Moreover,

transformational leaders are characterized by their ability to modify their actions or behaviors to

fit the needs and desires of a changing environment (Bass, 1985). Marks and Printy (2003)

describe transformational leaders as ones who inspire their followers to put aside their own

interest for the best interest of organizational achievement. This is a result of the leader

increasing their awareness about the significance of organizational goals (Gumus et al., 2018).

Their ability to achieve high-quality results is stemmed from exhibiting the following four

interconnected qualities: idealized influence or charisma, inspirational motivation, individual stimulation and individual consideration (Bass, 1985). To start, idealized influence characterizes transformational leaders as model examples by their followers; followers have deep admiration and reverence for transformational leaders that they identify with—often emulating their actions (Stewart, 2006). Inspirational motivation is when transformational leaders charismatically motivate and inspire their followers through the generation of enthusiasm and passion. This is often done when transformational leaders clearly articulate a shared vision and defined set of goals and expectations that align with the values of the employees within an organization or entity. Intellectual stimulation is defined when transformational leaders introduce novel or creative ideas/visions for their organization. Individual consideration is characterized when transformational leaders consider the needs and desires of individuals within the organization (Stewart, 2006); they have a great level of respect and awareness as it pertains to the varying concerns that individuals may have (Bass, 1998). Transformational leaders also focus on the growth of their followers. They often give attention to the high-ordered needs and overarching value-based principles of their followers (Bass, 1998); this encourages leaders to inspire others to lead as well (Birnbaum et al., 1993). Altogether, the four characteristics of transformational leaders allow followers the agency to create their own solutions to problems.

Scholars have examined the effectiveness of both transactional and transformational leadership within organizations. A meta-analysis conducted by researchers suggests that transactional leadership has had lower associations with positive organizational performance and outcomes in comparison to transformational leadership (DeGroot et al., 2000; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Transactional leadership has also been associated with lower levels of organizational commitment and lower levels of overall job satisfaction (Patiar & Mia, 2009). Notably,

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transformational leadership has received different results. A study conducted by Ascencio and

Mujkic (2016) indicated that transformational leaders have a greater ability to foster

interpersonal relationships, often creating greater levels of respect and trust with their followers

than transactional leaders. Meta-analyses have suggested that the components of

transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, individual stimulation

and individual consideration) are associated with higher levels of employee performance,

leadership effectiveness, and higher levels of employee attitude (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). When

compared to transactional leadership (Tse & Lam, 2008), studies have also found that

transformational leadership is associated with lower levels of voluntary turnover intention. In

summary, leadership theories have developed overtime—all having theoretical significance in

leadership literature.

Leadership Theory in Higher Education

Leadership theory and practice has developed over the course of time within higher

education (Allan et al., 2006). Through this evolution, some leadership discourses became

dominate. A study conducted by Allan et al. (2006) examined what discourses revolved around

leadership in higher education. The authors utilized discourse analysis to sample 74 articles and

29 opinion pieces from *The Chronicle of Higher Education* - one of the most popular higher

education journals in the United States. Ultimately, the results of the analysis revealed four

dominant discourses within *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that shaped the perceptions of

leadership. These four dominate discourses in include: masculinity, autonomy, relatedness, and

professionalism. The discourse around masculinity referred to the abstract characteristics of what

society perceives as traditional male behavior. In western culture (i.e., The United States of

America), masculinity is commonly attributed to qualities such as toughness, the ability to be in

control and endure hardship of pain (Allan et al., 2006). The analysis of masculinity within

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academic discourse from *The Chronical of Higher Education* portrayed masculine leaders as

"abusive", "disingenuous", "arrogant", and "unprincipled but powerful" (p. 51). To continue, the

discourse revolved around professionalism was related to the quality, productivity, and

excellence performed by a leader. Moreover, relatedness discourse referred to leaders that

situationally facilitate or delegate in a way that gives other group members power or autonomy.

Relatedness discourse contrasted with autonomy discourse, as it described leaders who are

independent, bold, and can single handedly create organizational changes. In all, the discourses

of masculinity, autonomy, relatedness, and professionalism by Allan et al.'s (2006) research

unveiled the dominant modes in which the discourse of modern leadership is portrayed within

higher education in the United States.

In the context of higher education, several leadership theories have historically dominated

academic discourse (Basham, 2012). The earliest discussions revolved around Trait Theory. The

trait-based perspective was used when individuals were aiming to identify whether another

person's traits or characteristics would lead to effectiveness and success within leadership

positions (e.g., such as University Presidents) in higher education (Fisher & Quehl, 1984).

Researchers have defined success and effective leadership by a leader's ability to influence

others in a way that creates collective efforts and pushes their group toward the intended

direction (Jacobs & Jaques, 1991; Zaccaro, 2001; Zaccaro, 2007). In search for qualities that are

deemed effective within leadership, many researchers have referenced several specific

characteristics or traits over the course of time. Several of the traits are categorized into either

management skills, intrapersonal and/or interpersonal qualities (Kaplowitz, 1986). Effective

traits pertaining to management skills include an individual's ability to manage and resolve

conflict, accuracy in work, being able to deliver results that ultimately lead to organizational goal

achievement (Gilley et al., 1986; Vaughn 1986; Stogdill, 1948; Zaccaro, 2007). In terms of intrapersonal qualities, literature suggests that effective leaders display the following: fairness, decisiveness, hardwork, have a sense of humor, effective communication, are risk-takers, and have the ability to delegate (Fisher & Quehl, 1984; Stogdill, 1948, Zaccaro, 2007). Interpersonal qualities include a leader's ability to be compassionate toward others, assemble groups/teams, and be transparent in terms of communication (Birnbaum et al., 1989). Of all these specific characteristics cited in prior literature, certain traits have been more prominently mentioned than others; these primarily include the abilities to respect other opinions, have self-confidence, display fairness and compassion toward others (Birnbaum et al., 1989). While certain traits have been associated more with positive leadership, it is also important to note that researchers have identified certain traits/behaviors that are associated with ineffective leadership. These attributes include characteristics such as conceit, emotional insecurity, self-absorbed, and soft spoken (Eble, 1978). In all, stakeholders within higher education used trait-based characteristic to assess the effectiveness of leaders within higher education.

While still prevalent to some extent, the concept of trait approach in higher education leadership is not as dominate of a theory as it once was (Birnbaum et al., 1989). This is mainly because it failed to address certain fundamental issues. To start, the trait-based approach can yield levels of ambiguity, as the identification of specific traits or characteristics can be highly subjective on how they are perceived (Birnbaum et al., 1989). While one person could perceive a leader as fair, another person may not. This inherent level of subjectivity in judgment of character has led to ambiguity or a lack of clear distinction about effective leadership traits. Along with this level of ambiguity, the trait-based perspective fails to address the situational or shifting behaviors of leaders based on their environment (Zaccaro, 2007). It also fails to provide

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a clear difference between the characteristics of non-leaders and leaders (Zaccaro, 2007). These fundamental issues ultimately resulted in the trait-based approach being deemed as insufficient in assessing effective leadership (Zaccaro, 2007; Baron & Byrne 1987; Blum & Naylor. 1956; Ghiselli & Brown, 1995; Muchinsky, 1983; Secord & Backman, 1974).

A study conducted by Bryman (2007) provided a literary analysis on what scholars have deemed effective leadership is within in higher education environments. Method-wise, 20 articles pertaining to leadership (mainly originating in the United States) were analyzed. The results of the study indicated that several leadership behaviors are effective in higher education settings. To start, it was effective for leaders to have a clear sense of direction, strategy and organizational vision (Bland et al., 2007; Clott & Fjortoft, 2000). It was also noted that people looked for leaders who can prepare and facilitate department arrangements (Lindholm, 2003; Bland et al., 2007). Next, it was effective for leaders to be considerate of others (Ambrose et al., 2005; Brown & Mashovai, 2002). In addition, the study indicated that leaders were expected to treat staff members with fairness and integrity (Bryman, 2007; Harris et al., 2004; Murry & Stauffacher, 2001; Trocchia & Andrus, 2003). Moreover, it was important for leaders to exercise personal integrity and be worthy of being trusted (Harris et al., 2004; Trocchia & Andrus, 2003). Leaders were also expected to allow members to have a voice in important decisions and to create an optimistic work environment (Bland et al., 2007; Bland et al., 2005b; Bland et al., 2007; Murry & Stauffacher, 2001; Harris et al., 2004). In addition, leaders within higher education were effective when serving as role models who clearly communicated the direction and vision of department, while providing resources and situationally adjusting workloads of group (Ambrose et al., 2005; Bland et al., 2007; Clott & Fjortoft, 2000; Harris et al., 2004; Trocchia & Andrus, 2003). Lastly, university leaders were viewed as effective when they made

academic appointments that advanced the prestige of the department and built respect among the university's constituents (Benoit & Graham, 2005; Bland et el., 2007; Bryman, 2007). Altogether, each the aforementioned leadership behaviors have shaped the discussion around effective leadership in higher educational settings (Bryman, 2007).

Transactional leadership has also been prevalent within higher education settings—both within and outside of classroom (Delener, 2013; Khan, 2017). Transactional leadership is often noted to exist between instructors and students, as instructors are responsible for creating and managing class expectations and assignments. In turn, students are graded on the quality of their work. This process is considered managerial in nature and involves reward systems, measurements of performance, and management of policy and expectations (Khan, 2017). It is also important to note that transactional leadership also exist outside of outside of classroom settings (Basham, 2012a). Given that the president or chancellor of a university serves as the Chief Executive officer (A term often utilized in the business field) and has the highest responsibility in overseeing university operations, scholars and practitioners have examined transactional leadership characteristics within this position (Basham, 2012a). A study conducted by Basham (2012a) indicated that university presidents exercise a wide variety of transactional leadership practices. According to this study, university presidents have noted the importance of holding stakeholders (i.e., students, faculty, and staff) accountable to their performance; They provide clear objectives and day-to-day task for various constituents. They are also responsible for information and resource creation and dissemination. In all, transactional leadership characteristics have been viewed as necessary for effective leadership within spaces of higher education (Basham, 2012a; Delener, 2013).

Although transactional leadership has its prevalence in higher education, transformational leadership has received the greatest attention within academic discourse (Basham, 2012b). Scholars and practitioners have associated many transformational leadership traits with effective leadership within university leadership positions (Basham, 2012a; Basham, 2012b; Balwant, 2016; Jyoti & Bhau, 2016). As mentioned earlier, transformational leaders are known for effectively articulating a clear vision and organizational mission to various stakeholders such as students, faculty, and alumni (Basham, 2012a). In the context of higher education, university presidents are responsible for creating, articulating, and implementing the universities vision in a charismatic way—characteristics associated with transformation leadership. Other transformational leadership traits have been identified as critical for university presidents as well. A study conducted by Basham (2012b) examined the transformational leadership traits that university presidents, who are considered transformational leaderships, believe to be critical in their role. The results of this study indicated that university presidents believe that they need to be authentic; this referred to them having their values and actions in alignment. The results also indicated that university presidents believed that being passionate and committed were essential in motivating their stakeholders toward gaining group cooperation and effort (Basham, 2012b). In all, transformational leadership has been perceived as critical in higher education leadership positions. The benefits of this leadership style have been noted within higher education (Balwant, 2016; Basham, 2012b; Jyoti & Bhau, 2016). Jyoti and Bhau (2016) conducted a study that examined the impact of transformational leadership on job performance in higher education. In this study, a population of university professors were examined to see if job performance was impacted by the head of academic department's transformation leadership style. The results of this study indicated that there is an indirect relationship between transformational leadership and

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job performance. Further, satisfaction with leaders mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and job performance (Jyoti & Bhau, 2016). Other studies have indicated that transformational leadership practiced by instructors was positively associated with student satisfaction, cognitive learning, and instructor credibility (Balwant, 2016). Ultimately, studies suggest that transformational leadership can have positive benefits within the higher education settings (Balwant, 2016; Basham, 2012; Jyoti & Bhau, 2016).

The Origins of Servant Leadership

The origins of servant leadership applied to everyday life, date as far back as biblical time—over 2,000 years ago (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Early evidence of servant leadership has also been noted in the practice of ancient monarchs (Nair, 1994; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002) more than a 1,000 years ago, as they emphasized that they were responsible for being of service to their country and citizens (Nair, 1994). Some scholars have cited the earliest practices of servant leadership through the story of Christianity (Agosto, 2012). In particular, the life of Jesus Christ, who preached and taught lessons of servant leadership to all that He encountered (Wilkes, 1996). Some of those teachings included "Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interest of others (*English Standard Version* [ESV] Bible, 2016, Philippians 2:3-4). Jesus also stated that "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13), and "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27). Debated as the ultimate servant leader, the story and life of Jesus Christ includes many other accounts of servant leadership in his teaching and practices. For example, Jesus highlighted the principles of servant leadership through the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Told by Jesus, the Good Samaritan was about a man that was traveling down from the city of Jerusalem to Jericho. In

route, the man was attacked by thieves. To much misfortune, the thieves stole the man's clothes and beat him up to the point where he was considered half dead. Traveling on that same road, a priest encountered the robbed man and continued traveling—offering no assistance. Similarly, a Levite—a member of the Hebrew tribe that is responsible for providing assistance to priests— passed the robbed man on that same road and also provided no assistance. Despite the priest and the Levite passing the robbed man, a Samaritan that was traveling down the same road took notice and pitied the man. He then took action by bandaging his wounds, placing the man on his donkey. He then took the man to an inn where he continued to help him. The following day, the Samaritan paid the innkeeper to continue looking after the robbed man. Jesus told this story and instructed others to "go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37), while also explaining to others that living a life of care for others was the way for them to achieve eternal life. Along with these teachings, Jesus notably practiced servant leadership himself. Jesus, regarded as the Son of God, was seen washing the feet of his disciples (John 13:14-17). To provide context, this act of washing feet was traditionally regarded as an act that only the lowliest of servants were to engage in (Ford, 1991). The act of Jesus washing the feet of his followers displayed his desire to put the needs of people before his own. In all, some scholars argue that the acts of Jesus's servant leadership are plentifully found in the Bible and offer the earliest signs of servant leadership as we know it today (Agosto, 2012; Ford, 1991; Wilkes, 1996; Wilkes, 2011).

'Modern' day servant leadership was originally founded by Robert Greenleaf, a former AT&T Communication executive, who had been with the company for 38 years (Greenleaf, 2002). Greenleaf's (2002) experience as a corporate executive was not where he began to conceptualize the notion of servant leadership. In fact, his first encounter with the notion of servant leadership was through *Journey of the East,* by Hermann Hesse. Greenleaf (2002) told a

fictional story about a group of men that partook on a mythological expedition. Leo, the main

character within this story, served in accompaniment for the group of men. As a servant, Leo was

responsible for many of the routine chores. Though the case, Leo possessed the ability to

encourage the group of men through his song and notable spirited nature. One day, Leo

disappears and none of the men in the group know where to find him. Consequently, the group of

men find themselves in a situation of peril and are unable to continue journey without Leo. One

of the men in the party wondered for years in search of Leo. The man eventually discovered

where Leo was, and then was taken to the Order, which supported the journey. There, the man

realized that Leo, the man he knew as the accompanied servant, was the head of the Order—an

honorable leader. Through this story, Greenleaf (2002) surmised that a great leader is first a

servant to their followers, and that the servant-first philosophy was mainly responsible for Leo's

substantial impact. Greenleaf (2002) concluded that Leo, while appearing as a servant, was the

leader of the group of men throughout their voyage; leadership was gifted to Leo through his

primary actions of serving. Greenleaf's (2002) reflections on *Journey of the East,* led to his

continued contemplation about servants and leaders. He pondered whether they both could

practically coexist within one person; in other words, is the notion of being a servant, and the

notion of being a leader mutually exclusive? Or could those characteristics be embodied in a

single person and serve as productive in the world today? Greenleaf's (2002) contemplation of

these philosophical questions led him on a journey to seek a deeper understand about whether it

was possible for servant leaders to exist; his intuition, and takeaways from *Journey of the East*,

led him to believe it was, in theory, possible (Greenleaf, 2002).

Greenleaf (1998) conceptualized servant leadership through three of his notable essays:

Trustee's and Servants (1972b), *The Servant as Leader (*1970), and *Institutions as Servant*

(1972a). Prior to Greenleaf's (1970) publication of *The Servant as Leader*, he lived through the Vietnam War, which has largely been regarded as a loss to the United States (Currier & Holland, 2012; Landry, 2008). The motivation behind seeking the possibilities of servant leadership was fueled by Greenleaf's (2002) conviction that the nation was in a leadership crisis, and that he had a civic responsibility to help change this. In search of solutions, Greenleaf (2002) idealized that a person could be a servant leader or a servant-follower, and that both were noble characteristics to possess. To him, either of these qualities suggested a person who is "always searching, listening, and expecting" to improve circumstances of their community, or society as whole (Spears, 2002, p. 21). Greenleaf (2002) further explained the following:

> Natural servants are trying to see clearly the world as it is and are listening carefully to prophetic voices that are speaking now. They are challenging the pervasive in Dovie with greater force and they are taking sharper issue with the wide disparity between the quality of society they know is reasonable and possible with available resources, and, on the other hand, the actual performance of the whole range of institutions that exist to serve society (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 9).

The notion of listening is emphasized greatly in Greenleaf's (2002) seminal work regarding servant leadership. He explains that "only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening *first.*" (p. 31). Greenleaf argued that it is paramount that a servant leader listens, as effective listening helps build strength in others (Greenleaf, 2002). He further explains that this servant leaderships skills can be developed by non-servant leaders through intentional acts of learning how to listen well. Greenleaf (2002) challenged people to reflect their attitudes as when entering conversations. He also advised that people themselves whether they are listening to others, to understand them first, rather than to be understood first. Through the

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following story, the importance of listening was highlighted, as Greenleaf (2002) anecdotally explained the benefits that listening yields:

> One of our very able leaders recently was made the head of a large, important, and difficult-to-administer public institution. After a short time, he realized that he was not happy with the way things were going. His approach to the problem was a bit unusual. For three months, he stopped reading newspapers and listening to news broadcast; and for this period, he relied wholly upon those he met in the course of his work to tell him what was going on. In three months, his administrative problems were resolved. No miracles were wrought, but out of sustained intentness of listening that was produced by this unusual decision, this able man learned and received the insights needed to set the course right. And he strengthened his team by doing so (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 30-31).

Greenleaf (1970) believed that the qualities of a servant leader could provide solutions to the hardships in the nation and that it would allow people to understand the world as it is—a nation filled with undeniable injustices, and inequalities among a vast range of institutions that were created to serve society. Through the current landscape of society, Greenleaf (1970) realized that society needed to reexamine leadership styles. He felt that it was time to move away from supporting authoritative and coercive leaders. He also noticed that society was starting to shift its attention to leaders that have a habit of putting others needs first. According to Greenleaf (1970), this shift in societies expectations will result in a society where people "…will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted as servants" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 11). Through this belief, Greenleaf (1970) prophesied that institutions that lead in coercive or authoritative manners will no longer exist, and servant-led institutions will be the only viable alternative to a healthier society. Greenleaf (1970) understood that this shift in

leadership style was not palatable to many people, and that there were other alternatives—such as individuals reducing involvement with institutions, or completely tearing down institutions and starting completely over; while these alternatives may seem more comfortable and easier in the minds of some people, Greenleaf (1970) boldly questions the reward in doing so. He argued that there are challenges with any new creation, and humbly admits that the notion of servant-leadership, as he knew it, was not inherently derived from logic, but based on his own intuition (Greenleaf, 2002).

It is important to note that Greenleaf (1970) never actually provided a definition of servant leadership (Smith et al., 2004). Instead, he conceptualized the notion of servant leadership through illustrating the qualities of those who servant lead. He also conceptualized it by describing the positive impact that their presence and service has for their followers (Smith et al., 2004). For example, Greenleaf (2002) fielding the following concepts to society:

> Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served become healthier, wiser, free, more autonomous, and more likely to become servants, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit, or at least not further be deprived?" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 27).

To continue, Greenleaf (2002) argued that servant leadership was a way of life. Moreover, he also stated that servant leadership "…begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 27). Servant leaders are distinguished as natural servants (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Servant leaders are oriented in a follower-leader process, rather than a leader-follower process. Greenleaf (2002) continued to express that a servant-leaders primary focus is on the highest priority needs, desires, and aspirations of their followers, and that the needs of their followers come before their own needs, desires, and aspirations.

Providing this support for their followers comes at no expectation of praise (Greenleaf, 2002). A servant leader also does not expect their followers to be servants to them (Graham, 1991). Rather, servant leaders focus on the development and empowerment of their followers (Smith et al., 2004); this type of leader facilitates the growth of their followers by striving to help followers become a better version of themselves and push toward their greatest potential (Greenleaf, 2002; Smith et al., 2004). In effect, servant leaders inspire their followers to also pass the act of serving on to one another (Graham, 1991).

Scholars note that the relationship between the servant leader and their followers is not authoritative in nature, as it does not reflect a supervisor-subordinate kind of relationship (Sendiaya & Sarros, 2002). In fact, Nair (1994) explained:

As long as power dominates our thinking about leadership, we cannot move toward a higher standard of leadership. We must place service at the core; for even though power will always be associated with leadership, it has only one legitimate use: service" (Nair, 1994, p. 59).

Rather than a supervisor-subordinate kind of relationship, servant leadership suggests a client-server relationship. In other words, Servant leaders may consider themselves stewards, rather than authoritative figures. This notion of stewardship is associated with a person that is responsible, through their acts of service, for the well-being of their community (Sendiaya & Sarros, 2002; Block, 1993). To continue, Greenleaf (1970) suggested that servant leadership is natural; it derives from a person's character, as opposed to a specific leadership skill set (Smith et al., 2004). In other words, the notion of being a servant is consciously embedded in their lifestyle, as part of their belief /value system. Moreover, an act of service does not qualify someone as a servant leader, but rather, servant leadership is a way of life. Servant leadership is

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parallel with one's self-concept—associated to self-awareness, self-image, self-esteem, and self-perception (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002).

It is important to note that misconceptions of servant leadership can exist (Foster, 2000; Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011). According to Sendjaya and Sarros (2002), the act and 'being' of a servant leader should not be mistaken for someone who has low amounts of self-esteem or self-image. Servant leadership also does not suggest that all power is given to the followers (Van Dierendonck, 2011). This line of thinking derives from the same premise that all people who forgive others, are not push overs. In terms of servant leaders, their self-esteem and self-image are secure; they are not compromised through their acts of service and service leading lifestyles. If anything, servant leaders are conscious of their self-image and self-esteem. They serve through moral conviction rather than from a place of insecurity. A servant leader desires to go beyond their own self-interest is credit to their humility and choice (van Dierendonck, 2011). To continue, servant leading increases the responsibility and autonomy provided to the followers, empowering them to become more independent thinkers and problem solvers (Bowie, 2000b; Van Dierendonck, 2011).

To continue, Greenleaf (2002) suggested that servant-first and leader-first mentalities are polar opposite of each other. He argued that people should not have leader-first mentalities, as the notion of leading before serving opens the door for less noble motives—such as power, political, or material gain (Greenleaf, 2002). Examples of when service motives of leaders are readily apparent within American society. One recent example pertained to former U.S. President Donald Trump's leadership during the Coronavirus-19 (Covid-19) pandemic (Sigalos, 2020). In December of 2020, much political discussion revolved around whether Americans would be aided by a stimulus check—potentially, the second check since the outbreak of the

Covid-19 outbreak in 2020. Moreover, both The U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate passed legislation that would aid many citizens with $600 (per person) to help offset the financial impact that Covid-19 has had on citizens. Although passed by the House and Senate, Donald Trump demanded that lawmakers raise the amount to $2,000, tweeting that the bill proposal was a "disgrace" (Sigalos, 2020, para. 3) and argued that many American citizens were in need of greater financial assistance. While this act may appear to be one where Donald Trump's main intent is to service American citizens at a higher level than mentioned in the proposed bill, several political leaders questioned whether his act of service was pure or for political gain. Chris Murphy, Democratic Senator from Connecticut tweeted that "Trump took no interest at all in the negotiations. None. It was his own party that insisted the checks be $600…. If you think he cares about the size of the checks, I've got a bridge to sell you. All this is a middle finger to American on his way out the door" (Murphy, 2020). In all, this example sheds light on how a seeming act of service does not inherently characterize someone as a servant leader; rather, the motive behind the service is what differentiates those that serve-first, and those that lead-first (Greenleaf, 2002).

Rather than a leader-first mentality, a servant leader operates under the assumption that they lead because they serve (Greenleaf, 2002). Greenleaf (1970) argued that a servant who leads *first* is dedicated to taking care of the needs of others. Further, the aspiration to servant lead is a conscious and deliberate effort, coming only after the natural desire to serve first (Greenleaf, 2002). Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) highlighted this by providing an illustrative example of a situation pertaining Max De Pree, former Chief Executive Officer of Herman Miller—a company that manufactures office furniture (Graham, 1991). De Pree traveled to a local tennis club and noticed that high school students left the locker rooms messy; towels were all over the floor. Instinctively, De Pree starts picking up the towels. Watching De Pree pick up the towels, a

friend of his asked him, "Do you pick up the towels because you are president, or are you president because you pick up the towels?" (Sendjaya & Sarros, p. 60). By premise, both questions operate under the assumption that his service was related to his leadership ability. The heart of the question was centered around a cause-and-effect analysis. In other words, De Pree's friend questioned whether De Pree was a servant-first or a leader-first. The intent behind De Pree's act of picking up the towels is what ultimately characterizes his actions (Graham, 1991). De Pree sought to put the needs of his followers before his own (Graham, 1991). In his book *Leadership is an Art* (1989), he pondered several questions "Are the followers reaching their potential? Are they learning? Serving?" (De Pree, 1989, p. 10). De Pree viewed leadership as an art that required a distinct level of intimacy and integrity. De Pree's questions focused on the needs and growth of his followers and is similar to Greenleaf's (1970) conceptual proposals of servant leadership. In all, the art of servant leading lies within the notion of serving the needs of other before oneself (Greenleaf, 2002).

While Greenleaf (2002) provided allegories and characteristics of servant leadership, he did not provide a scientifically tested definition of servant leadership (Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck, 2011). In fact, Greenleaf (2002) expressed that his seminal work was not intended to be of "scholarly treatise, nor how-to-do-it manual" (p. 62). Rather, he said that "it is more to suggest a context to a frame of dimensions of the problem for those who wish to make a determined effort to raise the servant nature of just one large institution" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 62). As illustrated, the early popularization of servant leadership only derived from anecdotal evidence. Early literature pertaining to servant leadership was mainly philosophical in nature. This lack of empirical research has been sighted as a short coming in servant leadership literature (Northouse, 2021). Due to the lack of empirical evidence, researchers have been unable to agree

on a definition and theoretical framework for its existence. This later caused a mixed bag of interpretations and confusion as to how servant leadership is operationalized (Northouse, 2021). In attempts to advance the field of leadership study, researchers and authors have sought to create their own definition and theoretical frameworks for servant leadership (Laub, 2004; Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck, 2011).

The most popular characterizations of servant leadership derive from Spears (1995), as he was regarded as someone who closely modeled after the work of Robert Greenleaf (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Spears served as a director of the Greenleaf Center for servant leadership and had part in editing volumes of Greenleaf's seminal writings, and other writings indirectly associated related to servant leaderships, such as *Insights on Leadership: Service, Stewardship, Spirit, and Servant-Leadership* (1998), *Leadership in a New Era* (1994), *On Becoming a Servant-Leader* (1996), and more (Frick & Spears, 1996). Based on the seminal works of Greenleaf (2002), Spears (2005) established 10 traits of servant leaders. These 10 traits include the following: (1) listening, (2) healing, (3) Stewardship, (4) empathy (5) building community, (6) commitment to the growth of others, (7) awareness, (8) persuasion, (9), conceptualization, and (10) foresight. Each have unique and important implications in servant leadership literature (Spears, 2005). To start, the characteristic of listening pertains to one's ability to critically hear and understand the needs of people. Healing pertains to the ability to nurture and aid, most likely a follower's emotional state. Stewardship involves being a servant to the needs of the community. Empathy is associated with the ability to understand and accept the feelings of others. Building community pertains to one's ability to center their life and values around helping their community. Commitment to the growth of others, is one's ability to invest in others personal, spiritual and career growth. Awareness pertains to one's ability to be conscious about

the habits, and thought process of themselves, and others. Further, Spears (2005) explained that persuasion pertains to once ability to effectively encourage others, in a non-coercive, or authoritative manner. Conceptualization is one's ability to have foresight and think past the current situations. Lastly, foresight pertains to one's ability to anticipate the outcomes and consequences future situations, and work around them (Spears, 2005). In all, Spears (2005) establishment of the 10 distinct traits provided the field of literature with a closer understanding about servant leadership qualities.

Notably, Spears (2005) never produced a conceptual model that distinguished which traits were interpersonal or intrapersonal in nature. He also did not explain how the existence of (or lack thereof) the 10 traits could lead to certain predicted outcomes (van Dierendonck, 2011). It is also important to note that the 10 characteristics that Spears (2005) described were not finite in nature and were not meant to describe all servant leadership characteristics (Russell & Stone, 2002). Because Spear's (2005) did not operationalize the aforementioned 10 characteristics, the empirical reliability of his assessments remained in question. In attempts to operationalize the qualities of servant leadership, scholars such as Russell and Stone (2002) and Laub (1999) produced variations and models based off of Spear's (2005) seminal work.

Building off the work of Spears (2005), Russell and Stone (2002) created one of the first popularized models of servant leadership. This model included 20 characteristics of servant leadership (Russell & Stone, 2002). Nine of these characteristics were functional—distinct qualities that were operationalized and describe the characteristics and relationships a servant leader has with their followers. The other 11 characteristics were not operationalized, but were often found in servant leadership literature were created (Russell & Stone, 2002): Below are the eleven non-functional characteristics:

1) **Teaching** pertains to the notion of serving others (Fairholm, 1998). Servant leaders are regarded as teachers or coaches in the development of their followers (Fairholm, 1998).

2) **Stewardship** pertains to a person's ability to manage with humility (Liden et al., 1998). Spears (1998) regarded stewardship as an absolute essential element of servant leadership. Stewardship involves a servant leaders' ability to lead with their followers, in more of a partnership type manner, rather than an authoritative or patriarchal manner (De Pree, 1997; Fairholm, 1998; Liden et al., 2008: Liden et al., 2015; Spears, 1998; Spears, 2010).

3) **Influence** pertains to a person's ability to gain social credibility or power (Covey, 1990). This characteristic has been seen as critical for leaders (Covey, 1990). Yukl (1998) has noted that there are several different kinds of influencing behaviors, which include inspiration, personal appeals, bargaining, pressure, legitimatization, consultation, persuasion, ingratiation, and coalition-building. Unlike some traditional leadership styles, effective servant leaders focus on practicing non-manipulative forms of influence such as consultation, and inspiration (Covey, 1990; Greenleaf, 1970; Sendjaya et al., 2008; Yukl, 1998).

4) **Credibility** is related to the concept of gaining social respect (McKenna, 1989). Servant leaders are said to have credibility from the followers that have sought to take their direction (McKenna, 1989; Neuschel, 1998).

5) **Delegation** refers to a leader's ability to distribute responsibility to their followers. This distribution of responsibility is shared in an encouraging way and allows followers opportunities to expand their abilities (Covey, 1990; Liden et al., 2008; Liden et al.,

2015; Neuschel, 1998; Pollard, 1996). Delegation is seen as essential in the success of any leader (Sanders, 1994).

6) **Encouragement** is the act of showing support. Servant leaders work to encourage their followers to take responsibility, share authority and ownership in their work (Russell & Stone, 2002). According to Wilkes (1996), the act of encouraging others exponentially increases a leader's ability to lead (Pollard, 1996; Spears, 1998).

7) **Visibility** refers to the ability for a leader to have foresight and a level of predictability toward the future (Cedar, 1987; Melrose, 1995; Russel & Stone, 2002).

8) **Communication** refers to a leader's ability to articulate a vision in an inspiring way. (Melrose; 1995; Nix, 1997; Russell & Stone, 2002).

9) **Listening** refers to the ability to hear the needs and desires of followers. (Focht & Ponton, 2015; Greenleaf, 1970; Neuschel, 1998; Rennaker. 2008; Spears, 2010).

10) **Competence** refers to the necessity of being knowledgeable and possessing the skills and abilities in their respective field (De Pree, 1997; Fairholm, 1998; Greenleaf; 1970; van Dierendonck, 2011).

11) **Persuasion** refers to a leader's ability to influence others through convincing and inspiring methods (Covey, 1990; De Pree, 1997; Greenleaf, 2002; Rennaker, 2008; Spears, 2010).

Many of the functional attributes emerged characteristics were seen as highlighted consistently in servant leadership literature (Russell & Stone, 2002). The functional characteristics include the following definitions:

1. **Integrity** pertains to someone's ability to be trusted and honest (Covey, 1996; Focht & Ponton, 2015; Nair, 1994; Russell & Stone, 2002).

2. **Trust** is seen as one of the most paramount functional characteristics of leadership (Greenleaf, 2002); it pertains to one's ability to rely on their character and integrity (Covey,1990; De Pree, 1997; Focht & Ponton, 2015; Greenleaf 2002; Neuschel, 1998).

3. **Vision** pertains to a person's ability to foresee future obstacles (Greenleaf, 2002). Bennis (1997) stated that a servant leaders' vision is effective when it is inspirational, uplifting, and persuasive (Bennis, 1997; Covey, 1996; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Greenleaf, 2002; Laub, 1999; Neuschel, 1998; Spears, 1994).

4. **Pioneering** pertains to the act of facilitating or participating in the development of something. It is associated with innovation and creating new avenues/direction (Russell & Stone, 2002). Scholars have noted that pioneering is an absolute essential to being a servant leader (Covey, 1996; Greenleaf, 2002; Nair, 1994; Nesuchel, 1998; Russell & Stone, 2002).

5. **Service** pertains to doing or caring for others in the community. Greenleaf (1970) has stated that service is a primary aspect of servant leadership. Greenleaf (1970) suggested that service is the primary motive or antecedent behind a servant leadership lifestyle (Covey, 1990; De Pree, 1997; Focht & Ponton, 2015; Greenleaf, 2002).

6. **Modeling** pertains to a notion that servant leaders are honorable examples of the values that followers are inspired to have. Leaders can achieve modeling through consistently being a primary example (Covey, 1990; Kouzes and Posner, 1995; Miller, 1995; Pollard, 1996; Wong & Davey, 2007).

7. **Appreciation** for others pertains to the notion that servant leadership value their followers and are dedicated to showing care and love for them (Covey, 1990). Spears

(1996) associated servant leaders with the ability to heal and show admirable levels of empathy (Covey, 1990; Focht & Ponton, 2015; Greenleaf, 2002; Pollard, 1996).

8. **Honesty** is the act of truth-telling (Russell & Stone, 2002). Being honest is associated with trustworthiness, which is essential for gaining the respect of followers (Covey, 1996; Nair, 1994; Pollard, 1996; Russell & Stone, 2002).

9. **Empowerment** pertains to a servant leaders' ability to inspire and provide agency to their followers (Focht & Ponton, 2015; Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck et al., 2011; van Dierendonck et al., 2017).

Since the operationalization of servant leadership attributes by Russell and Stone (2002), researchers have continued to construct and clarify the dimensions of servant leadership (Lytle et al., 2008; Reed et al., 2011). Of note, several servant leaderships instruments have been created. One of the first scales to measure servant leadership was the Servant Leadership Subscale created by Lytle et al. (2008). It measured six characteristics of servant leadership. Since the creation of this model, various scholars created and modified servant leadership scales (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Ehrhart, 2004; Liden et al., 2008; Liden et al., 2015; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Many of the scales ranged significantly in the number of servant leadership characteristics measured. While the scale developed by Lytle et al. (2008) measured six items, Page and Wong (2000) developed a scale with 100 items. Some scales also differed in population targets. For instance, the scale conducted by Reed et al. (2011) was the first to implement a study specifically designed to measure servant leadership at the executive level. In all, various servant leadership questionnaires have been developed over time (Lytle et al., 2008; Page & Wong, 2000; Reed et al., 2011).

Servant Leadership in Higher Education

The concept of servant leadership has also been applicable in higher education settings. Greenleaf (1970), the founder of servant leadership, not only spoke on the importance of businesses adopting servant leader models, but he also spoke to the need for universities to adopt it as well. In Greenleaf's (1970) first edition of *The Servant as Leader***,** he addresses constituents at institutions of higher education—students, faculty, administration, and board members. Since then, authors such as Wheeler (2012) have provided additional context into the importance of servant leadership within higher education. According to Wheeler (2012), the practice of servant leadership is relevant to those who work in the education sector, as campuses have been noted as places of community where educators help foster the growth and wellbeing of students, faculty, alumni, and board members. Wheeler (2012) argued that the growth of these constituents should be the metric of success for institutions of higher education. Kent Keith, The CEO of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, expressed the importance of servant leadership in higher education by stating the following:

> It is time for servant leadership to make a difference in university governance and administration. We badly need leaders on campuses who are committed to fundamental values, demonstrate the importance of high ethical standards, and have the courage to raise questions about purpose, direction, and the means to each end. We need servant leaders whose decisions are grounded in the highest priority needs of those served, not the political preferences of individuals or groups jockeying for positions. We need servant leaders who know that it is not about them, but rather it is about the future of the entire campus community (Wheeler, 2012, p. x).

While Greenleaf (2002) believed that these institutions have the capability to have servant leader structures, he thought that this potential is stifled by the traditional university structure—a structure that provides a president with most of the autonomy (Greenleaf, 1970). For universities to reach a greater potential to servant lead, Greenleaf (1970) argued that trustees must help guide the decisions. Greenleaf (1970) stated, "It is the trustee role to question the assumption and penetrate the illusions, and too many trustees have failed to do this" (p. 86). This lack of accountability led Greenleaf (1970) to believe that college and universities have failed to develop and nurture young people into effective leaders in society. For this reason, he urged institutions to practice the servant leadership model, while expressing that there are many benefits to it. Greenleaf (20002) explained that "the reward [of servant leadership] …is much greater, as it can lead others to be "healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and most likely themselves to become servants" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 27). He also argued that servant leadership is not just a benefit for the privileged, but a benefit that also supports the less fortunate from being further marginalized (1970). While these benefits have been noted by Greenleaf (2002), he provided no empirical evidence of its benefits within higher education. The following paragraph provides empirically tested benefits conducted by various scholars within higher education.

Provided the importance of servant leadership within higher education, scholars such as Wheeler (2012) argued that deans, faculty members, and university administrators should practice servant leadership. Empirically, servant leadership within higher education has been found to have significant benefits (Aboramandan et al., 2020; Drury, 2004; Kohle Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015; Noland & Richards, 2015). A study conducted by Aboramandan et al. (2020) found that there was a positive relationship between servant leadership and affective commitment (having an affinity to the organization) among university employees. This study

also indicated that there was an indirect relationship between servant leadership and work engagement of university employees, as the relationship was mediated through job satisfaction (Aboramandan et al., 2020). Other studies have found that servant leadership has a direct and positive relationship with the job satisfaction of university employees (Drury, 2004). Scholars have also examined the impact of servant leadership within the classroom context (Noland & Richards, 2015). A study conducted by Noland and Richards (2015) found that there is a positive relationship between professors that practice servant leadership in the classroom, and student engagement. In other words, the practice of servant leadership by professors, helped improve student learning (Noland & Richards, 2015). Outside of classroom settings, students have also been found to benefit from servant leaders (Kohle Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015). For example, studies have shown that there is a positive relationship between student satisfaction with academic advising, when their advisors are practicing servant leadership (Kohle Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015). Given that student satisfaction is positively associated with first-year retention, the benefits of servant leadership become apparent (Kohle Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015). In all, the impact has proved evident within higher education settings.

Leadership Development within Corporate Organizations/Business

Robert Greenleaf founded the term 'servant leadership' (Greenleaf, 2002). He set out to further develop the concept after retiring as an executive of AT&T in 1964 (Greenleaf, 2002). Upon retirement, he spent 25 years further promoting servant leadership in academia and in the business world. He is known for his leadership institute, which he founded in 1964 —called the Center for Applied Ethics. In 1984, he renamed the institute to be The Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership. Institutions such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T) Sloan School of Management, the University of Virginia, R.K Mellon Foundation,

benefit from his guest lectures and consultant role. Ultimately, his aim was to help people widen their understanding and increase awareness about what servant leadership is and how it can apply to organizations, and individuals (Greenleaf, 2002).

Greenleaf (2002) was the first to apply the concept of servant leadership to organizational settings, as he recognized that the concept is not confined to just individuals. In his publication, *Institutions as Servant* (2002), he illustrates how servant leadership can exist among institutions and society as a whole. He further explained:

This is my thesis: caring for persons, the more able and the less able serving each other, is the rock upon which a good society is built. Whereas, until recently, caring was largely person to person, now most of it is mediated through institutions—often large, complex, powerful, impersonal, not always competent, sometimes corrupt. If a better society is to be built, one that is more just and more loving, one that provides greater creative opportunity for its people, then the most open course is to *raise both the capacity to serve and the very performance as servant* of existing major institutions by new regenerative forces operating within them (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 62).

Greenleaf (2002) primarily focused his essay *The institution as Servant* (2002) on the impact that servant leadership practices can have on universities, churches, and businesses. He suggested that servant leadership would be a critical component to all institutions and that it could lead to more effective organizations. Further, he believed that if just one institution focused and sustained servant leadership practices, that it would have a substantially positive impact on the quality of all institutions. When referring to institutions, Greenleaf (2002) placed attention on large institutions, as he believed that they in a better social position to communicate their experiences; he challenged the tradition perception within certain types of institutions,

whether non-profit or for-profit. He believed that both types of organizations had the ability to servant lead. In fact, Greenleaf (2002) argued that for-profit institutions, while socially perceived to be selfishly driven by capitalistic gain, are best positioned for self-service. This positioning comes from the notion that large for-profit businesses are widely exposed to social criticisms. Greenleaf (2002) sites social pressures such as environmental movements, changes in consumerism expectations, and a push for less autocratic business structures. For the sake of attaining legitimacy, it suits them well to take the interest of the public into consideration. Greenleaf (2002) also argued that people should expect for-profit businesses to serve quicker than other institutions because for-profit businesses have less government regulation than non-profit businesses. In effect, Greenleaf (2002) stated that businesses are more susceptible to adapting than most people know.

Expanding off Greenleaf's (2002) seminal work, van Dierendonck (2011) further advanced the early works of servant leadership in organizational settings. van Dierendonk (2011) stated the intentions in which servant leaders should operate in an organizational setting:

Caring for one's followers should not be purely an instrument of financial success. A servant-leader works toward building a learning organization where each individual can be of unique value. As such, using charisma or emotions to influence followers to act without giving them any room for participative thinking or decision making is far from what Greenleaf meant by the emphasis on increasing autonomy, personal growth, and well-being (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1231).

Researchers such as Ehrhart (2004) reiterated the sentiments of van Dierendonck (2011) and Greenleaf (1977) by stating that organizational leaders are "not only responsible for the success of the organization but also for his or her subordinates, the organizational customers, and

other organizational stakeholders" (Ehrhart, 2004, p. 68). To continue, scholars and practitioners have given much attention to leadership in the business sector (Bolden & Gosling, 2006; Reed et al., 2011). Reed et al. (2011) noted, "Organizational leaders possess tremendous power for harm—power that appears to be exercised with increasing disregard for its long-range impact on society as a whole" (p. 431). Sentiments of corruption are evident in the history of scandals (e.g., banking fraud) that have occurred in the business sector (Knights & O'Leary, 2005). Reasonably so, corruption has given reason for society to question and speculate the ethics (or lack thereof) within organizational leadership (Knights & O'Leary, 2005). In addition, questions of organizational leadership in the business sector have also been caused by societal challenges; economic crisis's such as the Great Recession in 2008 and more recently, the financial impact of the Coronavirus-19 have significantly tested organizations and their leadership (Mather; 2020; Walker et al., 2016). Given the changing needs of an evolving society, Reed et al. (2011) stated that societal challenges have caused "…organizational scholars to question deeply held assumptions about effective business strategy and to define new models of ethical leadership that can more adequately respond to the demands of a profoundly independent global society" (p. 415). In effect, organizational leaders are now looking beyond mere organizational performance, which has historically been noted to measure leadership effectiveness (Bolden & Gosling, 2006; Reed et al., 2011). Dimensions of well-being such as moral, emotional and relational support are now being considered as ways to measure leadership effectiveness (Reed et al., 2011). Given that servant leadership revolves around leaders placing the needs of the followers at the forefront of their values, it has been argued that servant leadership is an effective form of leadership within organizational settings (Greenleaf, 2002).

Within the context of organizations, one of the criticisms associated with servant leadership is that the early studies were anecdotal in nature and lacked an empirically tested instrument to validate certain findings (Melchar and Bosco, 2010; Northouse, 2021; Russell & Stone, 2002). Recognizing the lack of empirical research in the organizational setting, Melchar and Bosco (2010) developed a study that examined whether servant leaders can create corporate cultures that produce or inspire other people to servant lead. This was one of the first studies of its kind to develop an empirically valid instrument to assess servant leadership in for-profit environments. Through the use of a regression analysis, this study specifically assessed three automobile companies by examining whether strategic-level managers who practice servant leadership could create a culture that inspired their followers to also participate in servant leadership. Melchar and Bosco (2010) examined the following servant leadership traits/categories provided by study participant leaders:

      (1) Listening, communication

      (2) Integrity, honesty, trust, credibility

      (3) Modeling behavior, and stewardship

      (4) Appreciation of others

      (5) Encouragement and empowering of employees

      (6) Delegation, teaching, community building, and concern for growth of others

The regression analysis itself examined other eight variables—age, years of current employment, persuasive mapping, wisdom, organizational stewardship, emotional healing, altruistic calling, and highest level of education (Melchar & Bosco, 2010). The results of this study indicated that servant leadership by strategic level managers, can have a positive impact on organizational culture, as it can help develop a culture where lower-level managers also choose to servant lead.

The several servant leadership characteristics that contained the highest means were altruistic calling, wisdom and organizational stewardship. In addition, the study found that the perception of servant leadership did not alter based on age, educational pedigree, or years spent at the company; this suggest that servant leadership would serve effective for employees across all ages, educational statues, and experience levels at the company. The results of servant leadership served as further evidence that this style of servant leadership can be successful in organizational settings. It also provided evidence that it is also an effective option in organizational settings, when comparing it to other leadership styles such as transformational leadership, transactional leadership, or autocratic leadership. Overall, Melchar and Bosco (2010) produced one of the first studies to examine the impact that servant leadership could have on organizational culture in the for-profit market.

As servant leadership in organizational settings continued to be examined by scholars, several key findings emerged (Jaramillo et al., 2009). Jaramillo et al. (2009) examined how servant leadership from sales managers effected their subordinates. The results indicated that there was a positive relationship between servant leadership and organizational outcomes in the sales force. More specifically, it was found that the servant leadership provided by sales managers helped foster and maintain positive relationships with their subordinates. Servant leader managers were also found to improve the well-being of their subordinates through their ability to create positive work environments. This study also found that servant leadership practiced by sales managers had positively influenced the behavior that their subordinates had with their customers, as the subordinates concerned themselves more with the well-being of their customers. While no direct relationship was found between servant leadership and organizational performance, other positive outcomes were associated with servant leadership. Ultimately, this

study revealed that servant leadership was associated with lower levels of stress on the job, higher levels of job satisfaction, and organizational commitment from subordinates (Jaramillo et al. 2009).

Furthering empirical support for servant leadership in organizational settings, researchers have noted that servant leadership is positively associated with increasing leadership effectiveness (Hu & Liden, 2011; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Schaubroeck et al., 2011). Similarly, servant leadership has been positively associated with team effectiveness (Hu & Liden, 2011; McCuddy & Cavin, 2008; Taylor et al., 2007). To continue, Kool and van Dierendonck (2012) found that there was a positive relationship between servant leadership and commitment to organizational change from followers. Servant leadership has also been positively connected to increased levels of procedural justice (Chung et al., 2010; Ehrhart, 2004; Walumbwa et al., 2010). Indirectly, higher levels of procedural justice, led to higher levels of instilled trust for the servant leaders (Burton & Peachey, 2014; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Sendjaya & Perketi, 2010). In addition, human resource researchers have examined factors that impact organizational performance, such as employee engagement. Researchers have reported that servant leaders have the ability to positively impact employee engagement and enthusiasm. It has been found that increases in work engagement have resulted in higher levels of enthusiasm, and ultimately, higher levels of work performance (Aboramandan et al., 2020). This is due to the care that servant leaders provide, as they have been cited as responsible for cultivating positive emotions in the workplace. In addition, the results also indicated that subordinates to servant leaders have been reported to feel safe (Aboramandan et al., 2020). In all, servant leadership has been linked to many positive organizational outcomes (Burton & Peachey,

2014; Hu & Liden, 2011; Irving & Longbotham, 2007; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Schaubroeck et al., 2011; Sendjaya & Perketi, 2010).

While servant leadership has been proven to have various positive impacts within organizational settings, literature pertaining to servant leadership for corporate executives is sparse (Reed et al., 2011). It is for this reason that Reed et al. (2011) examined various instruments created by Ehrart (2004), Page and Wong (2000), Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), and Liden et al. (2008) to measure servant leadership. Through assessing the servant leadership dimensions of these instruments, Reed et al. (2011) identified 55 items that measured the different dimensions of servant leadership. Reed et al. (2011) then developed a model that specifically examines servant leadership within executive level administration. Utilizing an exploratory factor analysis, Reed et al. (2011) created a conceptual model of first and second order factors that contribute to servant leadership at the executive level within organizations. The first-order factors include the following: (1) interpersonal support, (2) building community, (3) altruism, (4) egalitarianism, (5) moral integrity. To start, interpersonal support, which refers to leaders that help subordinates achieve their greatest potential. It was seen as an aspect that helped cultivate a positive culture within an organization. This factor was operationalized through acts such as nurturing the needs of others, being an astute listener, including subordinates in decision making processes, displaying respect to subordinates and having the awareness to recognize when the moral of an organizational has been negatively impacted. The building community factor refers to a servant leaders' ability to cultivate a community-oriented environment— particularly external communities, as they are challenged with leading their organization/firm with making a larger societal impact (Reed et al., 2011). While top executive servant leaders are tasked with cultivating external communities, they also build internal communities as well. In

practicality, top executive servant leaders accomplish this by creating cultures that include respect for different perspectives/opinions, and garnering cooperation and unity (Reed et al., 2011). To continue, the altruism factor refers to the notion that top executive servant leaders place the needs of their followers above their own needs; they do so with no expectation of reward involved; rather, they do so for the pure intention of empowering and supporting their followers. This is most commonly cited as an attribute that Greenleaf (1977) described as a critical component of servant leadership. Next, the egalitarianism factor refers to the notion that top executive servant leaders do not view themselves as superior, or better than others within the organizations. It does not consist of a top-down, authoritative/dictator style form of leadership. As described by Reed et al. (2011), top executive servant leaders understand "learning and influence are multi-directional processes" (p. 425). Operationally, the egalitarianism factor suggests that top executive servant leaders are open to feedback and constructive criticism from their followers. In all, they welcome feedback, perspective, and ideas. They do so not just from members of the organization in equivalent leadership positions, but they also welcome and value feedback from lowers levels within the organization as well. To continue, moral integrity refers to the notion that executive servant leaders are honest in their behaviors and intentions, as they do not seek to manipulate or use their followers for their own personal gain or interest. Greenleaf (1977), in his early works, suggested that this a critical component of servant leadership. In all, these factors of servant leadership served as first-order variables that Reed et al. (2011) identified in his top executive level leadership model/scale for organizations.

Leaders vs. Managers

Concepts around leadership and management have been popular among societal discussion (Bolden, 2004). However, it has been evident that distinguishing the two from each

other has not been widely understood (Turk, 2007). Misunderstandings toward the two concepts have been caused by the terms being interchangeably used within work environments (Kotterman, 2006). Consequently, scholars and practitioners have sought to define and distinguish the two. (Bolden, 2004; Buchanan & Huczynski, 2004; Kotter, 1990; Zaleznik, 1977). It is important to note that while the leadership and management concepts have commonalities, they are two distinct terms (Kotter, 1990). According to Zaleznik (1977) "the difference between managers and leaders lies in the concepts they hold, deep in their psyches, of chaos and order" (p. 2). Kotter (1990), noted the following about the concept of leadership and management:

> Leadership is different from management but not for the reasons that most people think. Leadership isn't mystical and mysterious. It has nothing to do with having charisma or other exotic personality traits. It's not the province of a chosen few. Nor is leadership necessarily better than management or a replacement for it: rather, leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary activities. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile business environment (Kotter, 1990, p. 103).

In terms of similarities, leaders, and managers, alike, are involved with establishing, directing others, and executing the organizational mission (Kotterman, 2006). They both are also responsible for motivating their constituents (Kotterman, 2006). While these similarities exist between leaders and managers, scholars have also noted distinct differences (Kotterman, 2006). Building off the work of Kotter (1990), Buchanan and Huczynski (2004) theorized the following four functions to distinguish the differences between leadership and management: (1) establishing, (2) executing, (3) outcomes of visions, and the (4) overall development of people

within the organization. In terms of (1) establishing the organizations vision, leaders are responsible for creating the vision for the organization and providing a clear direction for that vision. This includes the creation the organization's strategic plan. They also are responsible for articulating the vision in a very positive and inspiring way. On the other hand, managers relay and reinforce the vision that has been set by the leaders. Managers concern themselves with creating procedures, plans, budgets, and establishing timelines and organizational goals. (2) Executing the organizations vision refers to the notion that leaders are mainly responsible for motivating, inspiring and meeting the needs of employees. Leaders are not risk-adverse—rather, they are willing to take on risk when working through organizational challenges. Zaleznik (1977) argued that leaders exercise a sense of artistic nature/creativity, while managers exercise logic and control when problem solving. In contrast, managers are responsible for controlling procedures and tracking results (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2004). Managers identify and solve organizational problems and are less likely to take risk when problem solving, as opposed to leaders. In terms of the (3) outcome of the organizations vision, leaders are responsible for creating and carrying out large organizational change. Conversely, managers are responsible for carrying out consistent procedures, and establishing a level of predictability within task. The last function that distinguished leaders and followers is the (4) development of people. Leaders seek to create, communicate, and strategize the vision of the organization in an inspiring way to employees. Conversely, managers seek to create structure, policies, and metrics around managing employees. Altogether, the similarities and differences among leaders and managers are distinguishable and central to understanding work environments (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2004).

Servant Leadership in Sport Organization Settings

Historically, the sport industry has had a track record of examining and adopting models found in other industries (Rieke et al., 2008). Scholars and sport practitioners alike have found elements within the fields of psychology, medicine, business, as applicable in sports settings. Of note, the expansion and commercialization of the sport industry has been closely compared to that of corporate environments, as the industry has adopted organizational theories from corporate settings. Rieke et al. (2008) noted several key characteristics between the corporate and sports settings: (1) there is organizational structure/division of labor, (2) defined organizational mission/objectives, and (3) organized events and activities. Due to the overlapping similarities among the corporate world and sport settings, space for further examination of similar connections emerged. Practitioners in the sports settings began to assess the leadership practices within corporate settings (Westre, 2003). In the early 2000's, corporate environments were challenged with finding effective leadership strategies, as more traditional leadership (such as transactional leadership or managerial leadership) frameworks were becoming insufficient at creating productive environments (Hammermeister et al., 2008). As a result, organizations were tasked with identifying modern forms of leadership within organizational settings. Consequently, this led to the examination and acceptance of servant leadership as a viable style of leadership within the business industry (Hammermeister et al., 2008). As indicated in research in corporate settings, servant leadership has proven to have a positive impact on organizational culture, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction (Jarmaillo et al. 2009). Given the examination and success of servant leadership in corporate settings, scholars began to examine the impact of servant leadership in sport organizations in the early 2000's (Westre, 2003).

Research regarding the impact of servant leadership first originated from scholars'

desires to examine leadership as it pertains to the coach – athlete relationship (DeSensi, 2014;

Hammermeister et al., 2008; Kim et al., 2018; Ooksang & Sungduck; 2014; Rieke et al., 2008).

Studies have indicated that athletes who perceived their coaches to have servant leadership

characteristics, displayed higher levels of mental toughness, athletic performance, satisfaction,

and motivation, when compared to coaches that were not perceived to have servant leadership

characteristics (Hammermeister et al., 2008; Ooksang & Sungduck; 2014). A study by

Hammermeister et al. (2008), indicated that athletes prefer to be coached by someone who

displays servant leadership, over having a coach with more traditional leadership styles. In

addition, it was also found that athletes prefer to have coaches that are cognizant of their

emotional needs, and that provide emotional support/positive encouragement and recognition

(Hammermeister et al., 2008). On a similar note, other research has indicated that athletes prefer

to have a coach who allows them to provide feedback—all qualities exemplified in servant

leadership (Westre, 2003). Notably, these preferences for servant leadership were found at both

the high-school and intercollegiate level of sport (Hammermeister et al., 2008; Hammermeister

& Chase, 2008).

While servant leadership first was examined through the lens of the coach-athlete

relationship, research has also examined the impact of servant leadership in various ways within

the administration side of sports (Parris & Peachey, 2012). Parris and Peachey (2012) assessed

the impact of servant leadership within sporting event settings. More specifically, this study

analyzed the impact that servant leadership has on volunteer motivations and retentions rates at

the National Kidney Foundation Surf Festival—an annual event. Results indicated that founder

of the event was perceived to have servant leadership characteristics, which ultimately, attributed

to the motivation, and long-term retention of volunteers (Parris & Peachey, 2012). This study also revealed that the display of servant leadership from the founder of the event, also resulted in volunteers being more likely to practice servant leadership (Parris & Peachey, 2012). On another note, servant leadership has also had a positive impact in other areas of sport development (Peachey et al., 2018). For example, scholars have also investigated how servant leadership has an impact on overall satisfaction of employees within Sport Development and Peace (SDP) organizations— sport organizations and governments around the world that leverage the development of sport to promote peace and social changes within society (Peachey et al., 2018). Results indicated that leaders who were perceived to display servant leadership within SDP organizations satisfied the needs for relatedness, autonomy, and competence of their followers (Peachey et al., 2018). Overall, servant leadership practices within sport organizations have led to direct and positive impacts within sport organizations (Parris & Peachey, 2012; Peachey et al., 2018).

Leadership, in general, plays a mediating role in improving organizational outcomes (Alagaraja et al., 2015; Canterino et al., 2020; Megherikouni, 2020; Seibert et al., 2017). This has proven applicable for servant leadership (Colquitt et al., 2013; Cropanzano, 2007; Greenberg, 1990; Locke & Schweigher, 1979; Magherikouni, 2020). In fact, Magherikouni (2020) noted that servant leadership fully mediated the relationship between employee job satisfaction (an employees and psychological contracts (unwritten work and social obligations that two parties mutually agree on) within nonprofit sport organizations. In addition, other research has indicated that there is a positive relationship between servant leadership and ethical climate within sport organizations (Dodd et al., 2018; Burton et al., 2017). Ethical climate refers to a work environment in which the psychological needs of employees are met and maintained

through ethical policies and protocols within an organization (Schneider, 1975). Izadi and Mahmoodian's (2005) study also indicated that servant leadership mediates the relationship between employee trust and organizational justice within sport organizations. Organizational trust refers to one's faith in the organization to negotiate fairly, maintain commitments and refrain from taking advantage of employees (Cummings & Bromiley,1996). Organizational justice refers to fairness within organization in terms of equitable pay, conflict resolution, and decision making (Colquitt et al., 2013; Cropanzano, 2007; Greenberg, 1990; Locke & Schweiger, 1979). In all, the impact of servant leadership has direct and indirect benefits within sport organizations (Colquitt et al., 2013; Cropanzano, 2007; Greenberg, 1990; Locke & Schweiger, 1979; Parris & Peachey, 2012; Peachey et al., 2018).

Leadership Development within Intercollegiate Athletic Departments

Research pertaining to organizational leadership in the sports industry has been developing since the 1970's (Burns, 1978). Ball (1975) proposed that sports teams had very similar characters to organizations, as they contain the following four similarities: (1) a cohesive identity (members that comprise of one team), (b) a finite number of athletes, and positions on a sports roster/team, (c) division of labor and team goals/objectives, and (4) processes for replacing and transferring athletes to and from team positions. After acknowledging that sports fit the profile of formal organizations, other scholars began to develop leadership literature in this area (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Lenk, 1977; Sage, 1975). The relationships between coaches-athletes were the first to be observed (Sage, 1973; Sage, 1975). Sage (1973) noted that coaches are the equivalent to managers, as they are noted to lead the team, schedule travel, recruit athletes, and do other administrative responsibilities (Sage, 1973). In terms of leadership, scholars observed mostly the personalities of each of the coaches and whether they were

autocratic or democratic in their management styles (Sage, 1975; Lenk, 1977). Chelladurai, a renowned scholar of organizational leadership and retired Ohio State professor, further advanced leadership literature in sports by creating the Multidimensional Model of Leadership (MML) in 1978 (Andrew, 2009). The MML proposed that the behavior of a leader can have an impact on group satisfaction and overall team performance. Renowned for his work, Chelladurai also created the Leadership Scale for Sports (LSS). The scale included the following five factors (1) social support (2) democratic behavior, (3) autocratic behavior, (4) training, and (5) behavioral rewards. These five different dimensions of the LSS were created to assess coaching effectiveness (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). Altogether, much of the early theoretical groundwork for leadership literature within athletics developed from the work of Chelladurai and was expanded by various scholars (Reimer & Toon, 2001; Westre & Weiss, 1991; Zang et al., 1977).

As leadership theory continued to develop in athletics, certain leadership styles became popularized in literature (Burton & Peachey, 2017; Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996; Kent & Chelladurai, 2001). Specifically, much of the leadership research within intercollegiate athletics has revolved around the concept of transformational leadership (Burton & Peachey, 2017; Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996; Kent & Chelladurai, 2001). Researchers have examined transformational leadership to better understand the relationships that student-athletes have with their coaches (Newland et al., 2015). For example, Newland et al. (2015) conducted a study that examined how transformational leadership plays a role at the intercollegiate level. Specifically, researchers of this study interviewed 11 former student-athletes about the experiences that they had with current or prior coaches. On a similar note, Donnelly et al. (2017) conducted a study that examined the impact that transformational leadership had on the psychological outcomes of socio-economically disadvantaged sport participants. This study, in particular, examined the

satisfaction levels that athletes had with their coaches. Not only have researchers examined how transformational leadership of coaches have impacted individual sport participant's satisfaction, but researchers have also investigated athletes' levels of transformational leadership (Galante & Ward, 2017). For example, a study conducted by Galante and Ward (2017) examined the levels of transformational leadership of NCAA Division I female athletes. Specifically, the researchers compared the levels of transformational leadership and self-esteem of female student-athletes with the female non-student-athletes. Ultimately, this study found that Division I female student-athletes had higher levels of transformational leadership and self-esteem than non-student-athletes (Galante & Ward, 2017). In the context of sport, transformational leadership has also been utilized to better understand the relationships that coaches have with administrators (Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996). For example, a study by Doherty and Danylchuk (1996) examined whether head coaches within an intercollegiate athletic department were satisfied with the leadership of their Athletic Director. The results of this study revealed that coaches positively associated transformational leadership qualities of Athletic Directors with overall leadership effectiveness (Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996). Moreover, transformational leadership has also been studied in the context of voluntary organizational turnover intentions of intercollegiate athletic coaches across genders differences (Galante & Ward, 2017; Wells et al., 2014). Wells et al. (2014) conducted a study that specifically examined this. Ultimately, this study revealed that there were no differences in how transformational leadership is perceived, based on gender. This study also indicated that gender profile moderated the impact that perceived leadership effectiveness had on voluntary turnover intentions (Wells et al., 2014). Overall, researchers have examined a wide variety of area's related to transformational leadership within the context of sport.

With a hyper focus on organizational objectives, transformational leadership fails to address ethical considerations (Peachey & Burton, 2017; Stone et al., 2004). Authors have noted that "transformational leaders can act in violation of ethical norms by focusing on overriding individual interest to fulfill organizational objectives" (Burton & Peachey, 2017, p. 355). Although the NCAA claims that it prioritizes that academic and personal wellbeing of student-athletes, society has questioned leadership within intercollegiate athletics, as the industry has been met and documented with skepticism toward violations of human rights practices, scandals, cheating, criminal activity, social irresponsibility on both person and corporate level, and other unethical practices/behaviors (DeSensi, 2014). For example, Penn State University was under investigation, as former Assistant Football Coach, Jerry Sandusky, was found guilty of a long history of sexual assault/abuse (Sanderson & Hambrick, 2012). It was found that university leadership such as the former Head Athletic Director, Timothy Curley, was responsible for covering up these criminal acts for years (Sanderson & Hambrick, 2012). While this case stands among the most horrific incidences ever in college sport, there are several unethical incidences also worthy of note. In 2019, the Federal Bureau of investigation (FBI) discovered the largest admissions scandal in the history of intercollegiate athletics (Lens, 2021). Universities such as Yale and the University of Southern California (USC) were among a few institutions charged with racketeering, as parents such as television celebrity Lori Loughlin, were bribing coaches' large sums of money to bypass the normal admissions process—recruiting children who had no experience in athletics (Lens, 2021). Consequently, this scandal resulted in 50 people being indited across six states. Scandals such as these are among a long history of unethical practices, as academic misconduct, cheating in competitions, and abuses to student-athletes have occurred

(Harper & Donner, 2017). Provided the history of scandals, it is reasonable to question whether the leadership behavior in the industry needs reassessment.

In addition to scandals, advocacy efforts within athletics have challenged leadership decisions, as various government officials, athletic administrators, and student's athletes have pushed for massive national reform (O'Brien, 2021; Gerace, 2021). Part of this reform was due to the challenges that athletic administrators faced in the workplace. In 2006, the NCAA created a task force to gauge the workplace climate within athletic departments (Achen et al., 2019). In this study they found that more than 50% of athletic department personnel were working over 55 hours in a given week and that the majority of administrators were either uncertain or in consideration of leaving the industry. Long work hours and high levels of stress in the intercollegiate work environment potentially contributed to higher employee turnovers rates, lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment levels. Ultimately, the results of this study in 2006 proved to be telling sign that organizational change was needed within the industry, as a greater focus on the well-being of people was concluded in the report (Achen et al., 2019).

Historically, dissatisfaction with aspects of intercollegiate athletic governance has caused various athletic department administrators, coaches, student-athletes to advocate for various NCAA policies and practices to be eliminated or revised (O'Brien, 2021; Gerace, 2021). For example, student-athletes have advocated for the ability to transfer schools without penalty (O'Brien, 2021). Historically, NCAA policy rendered student-athlete's ineligible to compete for one year if they transferred within the same conference. Given that the NCAA did not impose similar penalties toward coaches, and senior administrators for leaving for new institutions, questions of equitable procedures existed. Through these advocacy efforts, the NCAA passed legislation to approve of athlete's receiving a one-time transfer free of penalty (O'Brien, 2021).

It is important to note that reform toward a more student-athlete centric environment has been advocated for over other several issues within intercollegiate athletics. Another prime example would be recent advocacy around student-athlete' ability to be compensated for their name, image, and likeness—an act previously in violation of NCAA's amateurism requirement policy (Gerace, 2021). Provided much resistance, various lawsuits were filed against the NCAA regarding the matter (Maghamez, 2014). Ultimately, The Supreme Court of The United States (SCOTUS) voted 9-0 in favor of athlete compensation (*NCAA v. Alston*). Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh opined, "the NCAA's business model of using unpaid student-athletes to generate billions of dollars in revenue for the colleges raises serious questions under the antitrust laws." (*NCAA v. Alston,* p. 4). Kavanaugh also suggested that the NCAA was acting "above the law" (*NCAA v. Alston,* p. 5) in its decision to restrict compensation above the cost of attendance, by saying "nowhere else in America can businesses get away with agreeing not to pay their workers a fair market rate" (*NCAA v. Alston,* p. 5). Given the history of widely noted inequities within intercollegiate athletics, along with the scandals that have occurred, questions about the priorities and ethics of industry leadership inevitably exist. In effect, inequitable practices/policies, hyper focuses on economic profitability, and historic scandals have given rise for other forms of leadership to be examined (Burton & Peachey, 2017; Kent & Chelladurai, 2001; Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996).

In comparison to transformational leadership, scholars have begun to examine whether servant leadership would be more advantageous in creating a just environment for its constituents (Burton & Peachey, 2014; Cho & Kim, 2014; Westfield, 2015). Burton and Peachey (2014) noted that "adopting a servant leadership approach to leading within intercollegiate athletic departments would better serve the stated mission of athletics" (p. 357). The importance

and benefits of servant leadership have been apparent through various studies. One study that examined the influence of servant leadership among Division III Athletic Directors, indicated that there is a positive relationship between athletic directors that practice servant leadership characteristics, and the ethical climate within the athletic department (Dodd et al., 2018). Ethical climate refers to the way in which employees perceive their organizations as ethical/fair, as determined by the organization's polices, and practices, and culture (Dodd et al., 2018). Similar results were found at the Division I level, as Burton et al. (2017) found that there was a direct and positive relationship between athletic directors that practiced servant leadership and organizational trust among employees. Further, Burton et al. (2017) also noted that the practices of servant leadership by athletic directors mediated the relationship between organizational trust and ethical climate among athletic department personnel. In addition to positive impacts on organizational trust and ethical climate, servant leadership also has other positive impacts within the field of intercollegiate athletics. For example, a study conducted by Achen et al. (2019) examined how servant leadership practiced by athletic directors, impacted the outcomes of employees. Specifically, they examined how servant leadership impacted organizational trust, job satisfaction and turnover intention of employees. The results of this study indicated that servant leadership by athletic directors was directly associated with higher levels of satisfaction on the job and higher levels of organizational trust. Indirectly, this led to lower levels of voluntary turnover intention of employees.

It is important to note that scholars have also examined servant leadership, as it pertains to the coach-athlete relationship. Chelladurai was one of the first scholars to examine this relationship. In 1993, Chelladurai conducted a study that identified the following two findings: (1) student-athlete's preferred coaches who considered their perspectives and took into

consideration their feelings. In addition, (2) student-athletes increasingly preferred coaches that practiced democratic style. The results of this study contributed to various scholars examining the benefits of servant leadership. Westfield (2015) identified positive benefits that servant leadership has among intercollegiate coaches and student-athletes. Ultimately, the results of this study indicated that there was a positive relationship between the coach's servant leadership practices and the student-athletes exercise flow. This study also indicated that coach's servant leadership practices mediated the positive relationship between the student-athletes exercise flow and their athletic performance (Westfield, 2015). Furthermore, Worley et al. (2020) found that peer team cohesion was positively predicted by peer servant leadership, and that the relationship between peer servant leadership and team cohesion was mediated by social identity (social identity referred to the perception that athletes had a sense of belongings/community on the team). Other studies that have assessed servant leadership within the coach-athlete relationship have revealed other positive benefits. Hammermeister et al. (2008) conducted a study which revealed that coaches who practice servant leadership behaviors (focusing on service, trust, and humility) were associated with higher levels of task orientation. As defined by the study, task orientation refers to "…personal improvement and comparison against a self-referenced standard, whereas positive social comparison and outcome- based standards (e.g., winning) describe ego involvement" (Hammermeister, 2008, p.191). To continue, the results of the study also indicated that servant leadership behaviors exhibited by coaches did have an impact on an athlete's mental skill profiles. Servant leadership led to improvements in an athlete's coping skills. In all, the benefits of servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics have had positive benefits for student-athletes, coaches, and administrators (Burton & Peachey, 2014; Cho & Kim, 2014; Westfield, 2015; Worley et al., 2020).

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Barriers to Servant Leadership within Organizational Settings

While no empirical studies have examined the barriers specific to servant leadership within the intercollegiate athletic model, scholars have examined challenges to shifting leadership behaviors and practices within the field (Burton & Peachey, 2014). According to Burton and Peachey (2014), "any change to the leadership paradigm and philosophy of intercollegiate athletics would be transformational in nature, large in scope, revolutionary, and likely to spark resistance from many shareholders" (p. 364). Reasons of resistance lie within the concept of institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In the essay *The Iron Cage*, Di Maggio and Powell (1983) argued that rationalization and bureaucratization exist within competitive marketplaces (such as corporate settings), and government entities. These environments contain internal and external pressures have the ability to influence the way in which institutions or organizations conform and/or function (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983). This progression of conformity is referred to as isomorphism. This term refers to a process in which institutions or organizations conform to one another in order to adapt to their competitive environments. Isomorphism has been categorized into three main areas—normative isomorphism, coercive isomorphism, and mimetic isomorphism (Mizruchi & Fein, 1999). Normative isomorphism refers to common practices or procedures established within an organization or field. Mimetic isomorphism refers to when organizations model their practice and procedures after other organizations, due to a perceived advantage (Di Maggio & Powell, 1983). Coercive isomorphism refers to the conformity that organizations face due to political and social—both formal and informal—pressures. It is noted that organizations often have a level of dependence to another organization when facing these pressures. Burton and Peachey (2014) argued that athletic departments are susceptible to challenges in leadership change due to

isomorphic pressures. Specifically, internal, and external pressures exist from constituencies--coaches, donors, university administrators, student-athletes, community members—due the notion that stakeholders may resist change to certain leadership behaviors, principles, and philosophies. Given this resistance, transforming leadership within the intercollegiate model has been noted to be nothing short of a challenging task (Burton & Peachey, 2014). Due to a lack of empirical research conducted on the barriers of servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics, the next section will discuss the barriers of leadership that have existed within the business sector—a field that athletic departments have modeled much of their practices from.

While the organizational benefits of servant leadership within the business sector is well documented, it is also critical to understand that the organizational benefits to servant leadership are not inherently produced, as researchers have identified organizational barriers that have the ability to limit the effectiveness of servant leaders (Foster, 2000). In fact, Foster (2000) conducted a study that identified 181 organizational barriers that limit a servant leaders' effectiveness within organizational settings. These organizational barriers were broken down into both lower level and major level barriers. Of the major barriers, six main themes were identified: (1) embedded leadership model conflict, (2) distrust and unrealistic expectation for servant leaders, (3) lack of engagement and team-oriented behaviors, (4) poor communication, (5) underutilization of educational and development resources, and (6) self-service and reward conflicts. Embedded leadership model conflict occurred when followers would misunderstand the concept of servant leadership theory, as they perceived servant leaders to be soft spoken in matters that they felt required more assertiveness. Followers also viewed servant leaders as push overs and viewed their behaviors of empowering others as problematic in nature. These negative perceptions are in direct contradiction to the servant leaders' behaviors and mission that

Greenleaf (1977) described in his early works. Specifically, Greenleaf (1977) argued that servant leaders do not put other first out of insecurity, but rather out of a place of security within themselves. Ultimately, the misunderstanding that followers have has contributed to a perception that the servant leadership model is ineffective (Foster, 2000). Within the embedded leadership model conflict, it was also found that servant leadership was limited within the organization when there was organizational change—such as personnel changes, or a redirection of the organization's goals. This is due to the notion that some people within the organization were resisted organizational change and were less cooperative with servant leaders. The distrust and unrealistic expectation dimension referred to the notion that servant leadership can be limited when employees within an organization have a general distrust for the organization, and/or its leadership. Some employees may carry distrust as a form of self – protection, while others may have grown distrust due to what they consider previous betrayals or slights from the organization and/or its leaders. The lack of engagement and team-oriented behaviors refers to the notion that servant leadership can be limited when followers do not trust middle management, when there is micromanaging, or when there is competition within the organization for performance of job security. This dimension also suggests that servant leadership can be limited within an organization when servant leaders show favoritism, when there are inconsistent policies, procedures, words, and behaviors among leaders, when there are poor conflict resolutions skills, and lack diversity (e.g., gender, racial, and diversity in thought) (Foster, 2000). Servant leadership was also limited due to organizational time constraints, such as when servant leaders don't have enough time for followers, or when servant leaders provided too many tasks to their followers. To continue, the underutilized learning and development theme indicated that servant leadership within organizations can be limited when there is a lack of development within an

organization. This could include when servant leaders have not helped cultivate opportunities for followers to develop within their career, or even outside of their job. This lack of development can also occur when leaders display favoritism with the development opportunities provided, or when followers do not utilize the developmental resources that the organization does provide. In addition, lack of development is present when followers do not have access/communication with upper administration. Lack of listening, and unwillingness to learn were also cited as barriers to servant leadership within the organization (2010). Other research has supported the findings by Foster (2000), as Savage-Austin & Honeycutt (2011) also noted that resistance and fear toward organizational change, and a lack of understanding about the servant leadership model (embedded leadership conflict), were barriers to servant leadership practice. In all, barriers to servant leadership practice exist within organizational settings.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Scholars have argued the importance of further examining servant leadership within the intercollegiate athletics, as some believe that practicing this leadership model could potentially reduce the amount of unethical practices and injustices that have historically existed within the industry (Burton & Peachey, 2016). While the benefits of servant leadership have been apparent in various studies, no study (to my knowledge) has provided an understanding about the antecedents, experiences, and strategies of servant leaders within Division I FBS Power 5 intercollegiate administration. Increasing this understanding is critical, as it could help practitioners learn to identify and/or develop more servant leaders in the industry. For this reason, this study examined the antecedents, experiences, and strategies of servant leadership among senior level Division I FBS Power 5 administrators. The following research questions have been proposed:

Research Questions

1. Are there characteristics that predict servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators?

2. Are there strategies that senior level administrators use to practice servant leadership behaviors within intercollegiate athletic departments?

3. Are there life events, experiences, or resources, that influence servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators?

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Conceptual Model

Servant Level administrator Characteristics & Life Experiences	→	Servant Leadership Characteristics (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006) - Altruistic Calling - Emotional healing - Wisdom - Persuasive Mapping - Organizational Stewardship	→	Servant Leadership Strategies practiced by Senior Level Administrators
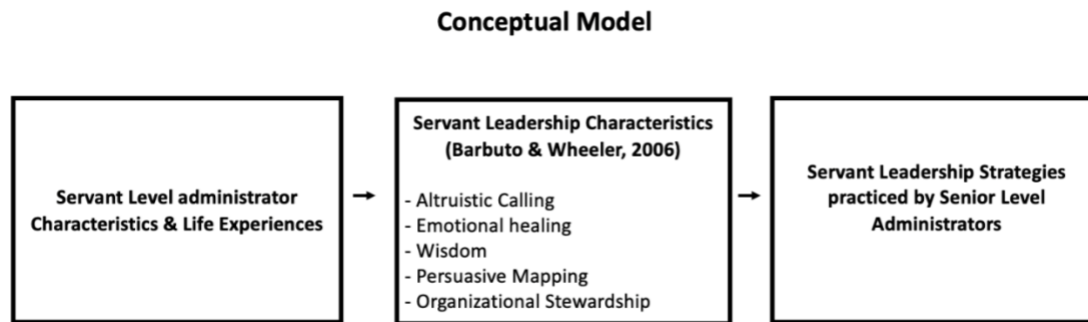
Epistemological and Ontological Perspective

In order to understand the full context of this study, it is crucial that I address my Ontological (an approach that addresses the existence of an objective and a "real" world) and Epistemological bases (an approach that addresses the possibilities of understanding the world and the ways in which we can approach understanding the world (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012)). From an ontological perspective, researchers have identified several ontologies: (1) Positivist—related to the notion of realism and objective truth, (2) Post-positivist – related to the notion of critical realism and objective truth, (3) Interpretivist—related to the notion that both the subjectivity and objectivity are inherently connected to one another, and (4) humanistic—related to the notion that there is no absolute objectivity, and that "reality does not exist beyond the (relative and partial) images the various actors have of it" (Della Porta & Keating, 2008, p. 25). In terms of these four unique ontologies, I take the interpretivist approach, as I believe that there is an inherent entwinement between objectivity and subjectivity. More specifically, I believe that there are limits to universal or mechanical laws (such as laws of attraction or vibration, laws of cause and effect, or any laws that have principles that seek to govern the actions or conduct of humans). Personally, my own life experiences have led me to believe that humans have the

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volition or free will to process, decide, and carry out a certain set of actions. I also believe that throughout the course of my life, I have practiced the agency to determine my behaviors and actions. I believe that some of my behaviors have defied or simply were not in direct alignment with certain universal or mechanical laws and constructs. While I believe that there is a level of objectivity in the world (reality can be knowable and understandable), I believe the main source of information or knowledge derives from subjectivity. In other words, rather than objective reality, the world can be understood through a succession of interpretations based on a human's positionality. I believe in the assumption that history itself has been characterized by the notion that there is not perfect knowledge or absolute objective truths, but that people, through social and environmental influences, have acted in a way that reflects multifaceted motivations, while also retaining a level of their own free will to process, decide, and carry out a certain set of actions. Under this perspective, I seek to understand or reveal the individual perspectives and subjectivity behind why humans are motivated or unmotivated to behave in a certain way—particularly as it pertains to servant leadership. Ultimately, I believe that my ontological and epistemological perspectives guide my framework for this study, and how I come to understand social phenomena and past events.

Positionality

The researcher is a current PhD candidate at a Division I Power 5 institution. He is also a former collegiate track and field athlete at a Division I Power 5 institution, and a former intercollegiate athletic administrator. The research does not identify as a current of former senior level administrator, like participants in the study. However, the researcher utilized his experiences as a former college athlete and former administrator to connect with many of the participants. Given the formal education/training, interest, and history of examining leadership

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within intercollegiate athletics, the researcher sought to utilize these experiences to examine servant leadership among intercollegiate athletic administrators. Beyond the context of sport management literature, the researcher hopes for servant leadership assessments and practices to be further examined and implemented within intercollegiate athletics departments.

Organizational Setting

The setting in which the study samples from is specific to collegiate athletic departments that are sponsored by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the largest governing body in the college athletics (NCAA, 2020). There are over 1,100 institutions that are members of the NCAA. The overwhelming majority of institutions are part of three major divisions of the NCAA—Division I, Division II, and Division III. Consisting of 350 institutions and 32% of the total membership of the NCAA, the Division I level is considered the highest level of athletic competition within the intercollegiate athletic industry (Haslam, 2011); this division is the only level to allow the majority of student-athletes to cover multi-year, athletic aid (including cost of attendance) to student-athletes (NCAA, 2020). To continue, Division II consists of 310 institutions, which account of 28% of the NCAA's membership. This division is recognized for providing partial athletic scholarships to student-athletes. Division III is the largest division in the NCAA, consisting of 438 institutions, but does not offer athletic aid for participation.

This study examined servant leadership at the Division I level (NCAA, 2020). The Division I level is classified into two major categories—Autonomy institutions and non-Autonomy institutions (NCAA, 2021). The autonomy institutions are a part of the five major Division I conferences: Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), South Eastern Conference (SEC), Big Ten, Big 12, and PAC 12. Moreover, non-autonomy institutions are schools affiliated with the

American Athletic Conference (AAC), Conference USA (C-USA), Mid-American Conference (MAC), Mountain West Conference (MW), and the Sun belt Conference (Sun Belt) (NCAA, 2021). It is important to note that this study specifically focuses on college athletic departments that are classified as Power 5 institutions. The decision to focus on servant leadership at the Power 5 level revolves around the notion that ethical leadership at this level has been brought to public concern due to history of scandals that have impacted this Division (Burton & Peachey, 2017). Given this, this study answers the call for servant leadership to be examined as a viable way form of leadership within Division I FBS Power 5 institutions.

Organizational Structure, Subject Description, and Demographics

The organizational structure of athletic departments has existed since the founding of the NCAA in 1906 (Stern, 1979). While the organizational structure and job titles of athletic departments may vary from institution to institution, they are established a structure for senior administrative leadership (NCAA, 2021a). To explain, senior leadership teams typically are comprised of personnel with the following titles: Head Athletic Director (AD) or variations of "Associate/Assistant Athletic Director" in their title (NCAA, 2021a). The Head Athletic Director is responsible for oversight of all department activities, athletic teams, and staff (NCAA, 2016). Each of the other senior level administrators may have various roles within the athletic department (NCAA Market, n.d.). While each of the roles may also vary among institution, common areas in which these senior level administrators oversee—compliance, administration, marketing, fundraising, and events and/or facilities operations Each of the senior level administrators manage a staff specific to that area, and generally have much oversight over their respective operations (NCAA Market, n.d.). As of 2020, the NCAA reported that there are 63 (59 male: 4 female) Division I FBS Power 5 Athletic Directors. To continue, the NCAA reported

that there are 2055 (1,386 male: 631 female) Associate/Assistant Athletic Directors at the Division I FBS Power 5 level (NCAA, 2021a).

According to the NCAA Database, the overwhelming majority of Head Athletic Director positions are held by males, as they account for 93% of the population in 2020 (NCAA, 2021a). This lack in gender diversity has been historic, as women have only attained between 4-9% of Athletic Director positions since 2012. It is important to note, that while the range has been 4-9%, it has not been an upward trend, but has experienced years of fluctuation. For example, only 7% of women accounted for Head Athletic Director Position in 2020, which was a 2% decrease from just three years before (NCAA, 2021a). The lack of gender diversity is as reflective at the senior level administrative positions, as men also hold the large majority of Associate/Assistant Athletic Director positions. In 2020, men accounted for 69.24% of the Associate/Assistant Athletic Director positions as well, while women held just 30.76% of the positions. It is important to note that gender diversity at the senior level has increased over the last decade, as women in these leadership positions has increased over 7% since 2012. However, there is a lack of gender diversity within these senior level positions historically, as women have held as little as 23% (in 2012) of these positions over the last decade (NCAA, 2021a).

Regarding racial/ethnic diversity, the majority of Head Athletic Directors positions are held by Caucasians, as they have accounted for 79.36% of the population in 2020 (NCAA, 2021a). Only 12% of the Head Athletic Director positions were held by African Americans. The Hispanic/Latino population held only 4.7% of the Head Athletic positions, while Asian Americans account for only 1.5% of the population in 2020. Although these are the most recent figures reported by the NCAA, it is important to note that the lack of racial diversity in Head Athletic Director positions has been historic, as Caucasians have always held most of these

positions (NCAA, 2021a). With societal pressures to promote racial diversity, there has been a slight increase in Non-whites in Head Athletic Director Positions over the last decade. Since 2012, only 11% of Head Athletic Director Positions were held by non-whites (8% - African American, 3% -Hispanic/Latino). Moreover, it is important to note that the lack in racial diversity is also reflective at the senior level administrative positions, as whites also account for most of these positions. In 2020, Caucasians accounted for 83.3% of Associate/Assistant Athletic Directors. African Americans accounted for only 10.4% of these positions, which is the second largest demographic (NCAA, 2021a).

Mixed Methods Approach and Rationality

Exploratory in nature, this study utilized a sequential mixed methods approach (i.e., a quantitative phase, then a qualitative phase) to gain a better understanding about servant leadership behavior within intercollegiate athletic department leadership. The quantitative phase of this study began with administering participants the *Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ)*) by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006)—an instrument designed to measure servant leadership characteristics. A regression analysis was then be conducted on the results of the SLQ to examine the relationship between servant leadership characteristics and demographic variables. To continue, the second phase of this study utilized qualitative measures to understand the antecedents and strategies behind servant leadership practices.

Given that one of the criticisms of servant leadership development is the lack of empirical analysis and sound objectivity (Brown & Bryant, 2015), it is paramount that empirical testing is conducted during this study, as it aided in understanding the functionality of servant leadership within intercollegiate athletics. While quantitative analysis is critical for this study, this approach is not without limitations (Queirós et al., 2017). To explain, some researchers have noted that

leadership studies that utilize quantitative-only methodology/data do not adequately address all the different aspect of leadership (Beck, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). In other words, due to the complexity of leadership, quantitative-only research may not reveal the entire illustration from the data collected. Researchers have also noted that quantitative research lacks the perspectives of those participating (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Provided the need for empirical research to be further conducted within in servant leadership literature, and acknowledging the limitations of quantitative research, a qualitative phase proceeded the quantitative phase for this study.

I believe that this study benefited from having a qualitative research phase. To explain, qualitative approaches allow for researchers to address the reasons behind why people act or behave in a certain way (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). This is backed by Rational Choice Theory, as it can explain the actions of people (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). Further, qualitative inquiry allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding about the motives, beliefs, and values of participants, in a way that operationalized variables cannot (Maxwell, 2012). For the sake of this study, qualitative research allows one to understand *why* participants in this study have servant leadership behaviors (i.e., antecedents; Maxwell, 2012)—a main objective of my research inquiry. Notably, there is reason why this study is not qualitative-only. As mentioned earlier, the servant leadership literature lacks a strong empirical foundation and therefore needs empirical inquiry (Brown & Bryant, 2015). In inquiring about the antecedents of servant leadership (RQ1), this study examined the relationships between demographic variables and servant leadership characteristics. The nature of a qualitative-only research design does not allow for this objective approach to research (Maxwell, 2013). Understanding both the advantages and

limitations of quantitative and qualitative design, the benefits of a mixed methods approach were explored. Venkatesh et al. (2013) highlighted the following seven uses for mixed method design:

(1) Complementary – allows researchers to gather data on mutual experiences of participants.

(2) Completeness – allows researchers to gain additional information to ensure accuracy of a participant's experiences.

(3) Developmental – to subsequently create questions based on the findings or implications of the previous method.

(4) Expansion – to gain clarification or further insight about the findings or implications of the previous method.

(5) Corroboration – to confirm the findings or inferences found in the previous method.

(6) Compensation – to supplement the previous method due to its weaknesses.

(7) Diversity – to gather data that may have opposing perspectives about a participant's experiences.

Many of the proposed uses for mixed methods design (Venkatesh et al., 2013), are applicable to the nature of this study. To start, I believe that having a qualitative research phase (after a quantitative phase), allowed for me to gather data that is potentially (1) complementary and/or diverse (7). Given that I sought to understand the antecedents of servant leadership (RQ1), having qualitative data that is either complimentary or diverse aided in my understanding. To continue, I used a mixed methods design to seek (2) completeness (4) expansion, and (5) corroboration within my quantitative findings. To explain, the empirical instruments utilized to understand the antecedents and strategies cannot provide *why* participants behave in servant leadership manner. Following up with a qualitative phase strengthened casual inferences (Andrew et al., 2011) and provided a deeper understanding of the findings. Further, I utilized a

mixed method design for (6) compensation—as it aided in the results being complimentary in strengths, rather than the interrelating weaknesses (Beck, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Ultimately, for the reasons presented, this study responded to the call for more mixed methods designs in field of sport management (Andrew et al., 2011).

Participants - Sample Selection

Part I – Quantitative

The sample for this study included both senior level administrators within NCAA Division I FBS Power 5 athletic departments throughout the United States. For the purposes of this study, senior level administrators were defined by the following job titles: Athletic Director (AD), Deputy Athletic Director (Deputy AD), Senior Associate Athletic Director (Senior Associate AD), Associate Athletic Director (Associate AD), and Senior Woman Administrator (SWA). To recruit participants, the researcher utilized his personal network to identify and contact (via phone and email) senior level administrators. In addition, the researcher asked these potential participants to identify and recruit other senior level administrators via email or phone.

The self-rater version of the SLQ was utilized for this study. The SLQ measures servant leadership through the following characteristics: community building, persuasion, healing, empathy, stewardship, conceptualization, calling, foresight, listening, growth, and awareness (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Senior level administrators were asked to take the self-rater version of the SQL, created by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006). Notably, the frame of reference is the only difference between the self-rater and leader-rater version of the SLQ.

Part II- Qualitative

The sample selection method for those participating in the qualitative phase of the study is identical to the methodology utilized by Beck (2014). To explain, senior level administrators

who have been identified as servant leaders (as measured by the SLQ) and had the highest composite scores on the SLQ (based on means scores) were asked to participate in the qualitative phase of this study.

<center>**Data Collection/Analyses Procedures**</center>

Part I – Quantitative

Through the utilization of my personal network and the use of athletic staff directories, an email was sent out to each senior level administrator. The email provided an invitation and weblink to take the SLQ via Qualtrics, a software management program and secure online survey tool, utilized to collect data. Prior to accessing the SLQ via Qualtrics, the questionnaire was prompted to ask for informed consent (yes/no format). To continue, the SLQ version that the senior level administrators participate in was the self-rater version of the study. This version examines the perception of their own ability to servant lead. Demographic information as it pertains to gender and race/ethnicity was also collected for the purposes of this study.

Once the surveys had been distributed to senior level I administrators, counted the number of returned surveys on Qualtrics and assessed how many of the surveys were filled to completion. The surveys that were not filled to completion were not utilized for this study. In other words, surveys with missing data were not utilized for this study. Once the data from the SLQ was collected, it was stored electronically on One Drive a secured file storage platform provided to students and faculty by The Ohio State University.

Next, SPSS, a statistical software platform, was utilized to analyze the data from the SLQ. Descriptive statistics were calculated from the SLQ results; measures of central tendency (mean and median) and measures of variance were assessed (standard deviation and

<center>85</center>

correlations). A Pearson correlation was also utilized to examine the relationships among the variables. All results were reported.

To analyze the data, the following procedure from Beck (2014) were utilized:

To start, a One-Way ANOVA was conducted to measure the relationship between the characteristics of servant leadership (independent variables) and the demographic variables (dependent variables). Specifically, the ANOVA tested any statistical significance of the servant leadership subscale mean scores and overall SLQ scores. Following the ANOVA, a non-parametric test, called the Kruskal Wallis, was conducted to examine whether there is statistical significance between the groups.

Part II – Qualitative

For the second phase of this study, semi-structured open-ended interviews with participants were the main source of qualitative data collection. Participants (senior level administrators) in this portion of the study derived from the sample set identified through the SLQ ratings. Moreover, 12 participants were involved in the interview portion of study. I found this range appropriate, as this has been the range for various other studies pertaining to athletic department personnel (Kihl, 2007; Long et al., 2015; Murphy, 2018; Singer & Cunningham, 2018). Data saturation was reached within this range of interviews, as shown in various studies.

To continue, each of the senior level administrators chosen for the one-on-one in-depth interviews were asked to participate if they received a high rating on the SLQ (overall descriptive statistics were collected, analyzed and reported—measures of central tendencies and deviations). Specifically, those who received high ratings on the SLQ (above the mean SLQ scores reported) were asked to be participants of the interview process. Prior to the start of the interviews, each of the senior level administrators identified from the SLQ ratings were provided

a consent form (via email) that asked them to participate in the interview process (yes or no format, with participant requirement below it). The consent form stated that interview participation is completely voluntary. Further, only those who provided consent were interviewed. To continue, the interviews were conducted through video conferencing/virtual format, as an alternative to face-to-face interviews (this was necessary due to travel limitations of the researcher and participant). The platform utilized for this virtual format was Zoom, one of the modern leaders in video communication. Due to errors in technology, there is a possibility of virtual disruption. To reduce the risk of virtual disruption, the "waiting room feature" on Zoom was active, as it allows for participants and/or the researcher to log back in for the completion of the interview.

A degree of confidentiality is critical for the interview process. For this reason, several measures were taken. To ensure that only the participants and researcher were scheduled for that interview time frame are able to access the meeting, Zoom links were individually sent (via email) to each participant (as opposed to being sent via group email). In addition, each zoom meeting/session link was password protection. Further, the interview consent form included instructions that asked for participants to conduct the interviews in a private location. Audio and video recording was sought for analysis purposes (provided the consent of participant). To attain consent of audio and video Zoom recordings, permission was asked for both on the interview consent form (Yes/No, with signature requirement below it) and again at the beginning of the zoom session. Prior to the start of the interview questions, the whole consent form was read slowly to the participant, requiring verbal consent prior to the recording of the interview questions. In all, these measures helped provide a degree of confidentiality during the interview process.

To continue, the semi-structured open-ended interview questions were derived from Beck (2014). There was a total of nine open-ended questions. Notably, the focus was to provide the opportunity for participants to provide a first-hand account of *why* they practice servant leadership behavior. Non-directive neutral probing/prompts were utilized to gain additional information or further clarification/elaboration on answers that did not fully address the interview questions. These questions derived from Beck (2014) were not intended to be asked verbatim. Rather, the order of the questions and the phrasing were adjusted to fit the response of the participants. The neutrality of the probes is designed to decrease the elicitation, encouragement, discouragement, or influence certain answers (Price, 2002). Instead, probing provided an opportunity for participant responders to dig deeper into their own experiences and thoughts. In effect, probing encourages participants to be as detailed as possible when answering interview questions. Ultimately, this interview technique helped provide for more accurate data and interpretation. The following probing examples by Lavarkas (2008) were utilized in the study: (1) "Is there anything else you wanted to say about this? "Could you tell me a little bit more about…?" (2) "I'm not sure I understand what you mean by…, (3) "So why do you feel that way?". In all, neutrally prompted questions were in response to/came after a participant response and were based on the response of the participants, which provided room for small variation.

Once the interviews were conducted and recorded, the data was stored on One Drive. This platform was password protected and only accessible to the researcher and system administrators. Once the data was collected and stored, it was then be reviewed, transcribed, coded, and categorized into corresponding themes. This process required reducing a large data set into a smaller data set—a process commonly practiced in qualitative research (Beck, 2014; Creswell et al., 2003). To continue, data was reviewed, coded, and categorized into themes.

Identical to the procedure conducted by Beck (2014), excerpts/quotations from the interviews were presented in the results, as a way to highlight important findings or themes in the data. Lastly, the discussion section included the qualitative analysis from the interviews, along with quantitative data/evidence to help provide context or support for the findings.

Servant Leadership Questionnaire

One cited criticism during early servant leadership theory development was that it lacked empirical evidence (Brown & Bryant, 2015). In other words, there were not commonly agreed upon ways to operationalize/measure servant leadership. It is critical to utilize empirical instruments, as its operationalized servant leadership in a way that distinguishes it from other forms of leadership (Beck, 2014; Huckabee, 2008). Of note, servant leadership instruments were created by Burbuto and Wheeler (2006), Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011), Ehrart (2004), Liden et al. (2008), Page and Wong (2000), Reed et al. (2011), and Sendjaya et al. (2008). Although each of these instruments have established empirical evidence toward defining servant leadership, there has been no agreed upon or empirically consistent set of characteristics/items that operationalize servant leadership. For example, the instrument created by Reed et al. (2011) empirically validated five servant leader characteristics —interpersonal support, building community, altruism, egalitarianism, and moral integrity. On the other hand, Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) had empirically validated a set of seven different servant leadership characteristics—empowerment, accountability, standing back, humility, authenticity, courage, and forgiveness. Due to this variability in items within each of the servant leadership instruments, this study utilized the SLQ by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), as it is considered widely popular among servant leadership scholars and has been used in previous research to

assess the antecedents and outcomes of servant leadership—a primary objective of this study (Anderson, 2009; Beck, 2014; Huckabee, 2008; Melchar & Bosco, 2010).

Due to the fact that the SLQ is copyrighted by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I gained permission to use the instrument from Barbuto and Wheeler (2006). The self-rater version of the SLQ was utilized for this study.

Reliability, Validity, Credibility

Reliability and Validity of Servant Leadership Questionnaire (Phase 1)

The scale development of SLQ provided a means for researchers to conduct empirical research by identifying a set of dimensions that describe servant leadership behavior (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Through reviewing servant leadership literature, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) identified five to seven items per servant leadership characteristic—community building, persuasion, healing, empathy, stewardship, conceptualization, calling, foresight, listening, growth, and awareness. Each of the descriptions for the characteristics were taken from Spear's (1995) descriptions. In total, 56 items were initially identified to measure the 11 servant leadership characteristics for the SLQ (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). To eliminate grammatical or language confusion, about 10 to 15 items were revised as well. Each of the 56 items underwent face validity testing. To attain face validity of the 11 characteristics, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) had each of the 56 items reviewed by a panel of 11 judges, deriving from three universities (five of the judges were doctoral students, six were faculty members). The judges also reviewed for language confusion and grammatical issues for each of the items. The researchers retained only the items that 60% of the judges decided fit into one of the 11 servant leadership characteristics. Four of the items that did not meet face validity were rewritten and approved by the 60% of the judges. Finally, five of the judges (faculty members) reviewed each of the revised items again.

Each of the items received 80% of the approval from judges, which confirmed face validity (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

Next, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) tested the psychometric elements of the SLQ through sampling over 450 people from different counties across the Midwestern United States. There were 80 people in the sample that were elected community officials, while 388 of the people were raters (either subordinates or colleagues of the community officials). Utilizing the data collected from the raters, the authors conducted a series of exploratory factor analysis. With the purpose of identifying the strength of the each of the items and to help guide the reduction in the number of factors, the authors then utilized a varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization. Through a series of extractions, 23 items were identified as significant and unique (each of the items had a loading higher than .50, which met the criteria). Ultimately, this translated to 5 of the 11 characteristics/factors of servant leadership being identified— (1) Altruistic calling, (2) emotional healing, (3) organizational stewardship, (4) persuasive mapping, and (5) wisdom (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006).

To test the internal reliability of the leader and rater subscales, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) utilized the internal reliability function in SPSS. The authors noted that the self-version subscale had an internal reliability between .68 to .78, while the rater version had an internal reliability subscale between .82 and .92. Intercorrelations methods were also identified for each of the items; these ranged from $r=.47$ to $r = .71$. Next, the authors conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to confirm the factor structures of the subscales. To assess goodness of fit, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) utilized LISREL 8.54 max likelihood CFA on the 23 servant leadership items. The researchers reported that the non-normed fit index, comparative fit index,

and incremental fit index were all .96. Ultimately, the model that Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) collected supported the five servant leadership structures.

To continue, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) also tested for convergent and divergent validity of servant leadership. They did so by measuring transformational leadership and Leadership Member Exchange (LMX) subscales. Results indicated that there were some similarities between transformational leadership and servant leadership; however, it was reported that the small effect size confirmed that servant leadership and transformational leadership are two distinct concepts. LMX subscales indicated a stronger relationship with servant leadership, in comparison to transformational leadership. Ultimately, this confirmed divergent validity for the servant leadership subscale (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Lastly, predictive validity was also tested for the five subscales. This was done through measuring several dependent variables— perceptions of organizational effectiveness, motivation to carry out extra assignments, and overall satisfaction of employees. It was found that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between each of the five characteristics and the three criterion variables. Ultimately, the reliability and validity testing performed by Barbuto and Wheeler (2008) are sufficient for the purposes of this study.

Credibility within Interview Process (Phase 2)

The interview questions for this study were derived from the study *Antecedents of Servant Leadership* by Beck (2014). All nine questions crafted by Beck (2014) were utilized, as they helped explain why certain senior level administrators practice servant leadership behaviors. Notably, Beck (2014) ensured that each of the questions were pilot tested by graduate students who had expertise in qualitative research within their leadership study program.

Once the interviews were conducted, several measures were taken to enhance the credibility of the study. This process included a review of each of the twelve transcripts generated from Zoom. The transcripts were sent via email to each of the participants for review. Any language or representation that participants communicated should be removed or added, was executed. Given the approval of the transcripts from participants, the researcher then analyzed, and coded the data. This process required an assessment of each transcript one at a time. Once each individual transcript was reviewed in separately, the researcher reviewed the codes from all the interviews and analyzed for overlapping themes. Next, the researcher then asked several graduate students with experience in qualitative research to analyze, code, and categorize the data into themes. After receiving this feedback, the researcher compared the themes found by other graduate students with the themes associated with his own findings. Consistencies among the themes were noted and reported.

Threats to Credibility

While measures were taken to provide credibility, methodological limitations do exist. To start, the ratings of the SLQ are liable to be influenced. To explain, the self-rater version of the SLQ allows for participants to rate themselves. Inherently, there can be bias or disconnect between how they perceive themselves to be, and their actual actions (Beck, 2014). On a similar note, bias can also exist in the interview process when subjects are being asked about their own experiences, as it is possible for there to be a disconnect between how they perceive their experiences to be and a possible different reality (Beck, 2014). Notably, data triangulation was utilized to help improve credibility; but this strategy cannot completely eliminate biases. Lastly, I also recognize that self-selection bias occurred, given that the researcher was utilizing his

personnel network to identify potential senior level administrators to participate in the study. While unavoidable, limitations are acknowledged in this study.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to administering any information and collecting any data, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval through the Human Research Protection Program from The Ohio State University's Office of Research, was be attained. It is also important to note that subject participation of this study was completely voluntary.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the servant leadership characteristics, experiences, and strategies of senior level administrators within Power 5 intercollegiate athletic departments. The following questions guided the exploration of this study:

1. Are there characteristics that predict servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators?

2. Are there strategies that senior level administrators use to practice servant leadership behaviors within intercollegiate athletic departments?

3. Are there life events, experiences, or resources, that influence servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators?

To explore the research questions, a two-part mixed method approach was utilized. The first phase of the study was quantitative, as the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) was administered to senior level administrators. Those who scored above the median SLQ score were asked to participate in the second phase of the study. Demographic factors were also considered in participant selection. The second phase of the study was qualitative in nature and included semi structured interviews with 12 participants. The purpose of the interviews was to explore the lived experiences, antecedents and servant leadership strategies of senior level administrators in intercollegiate athletics. First, this chapter illustrates the quantitative results of the study. Then, an analysis of the qualitative phase of the study is presented.

Descriptive Statistics

An analysis of descriptive statistics was conducted for the demographic variables of all study participants ($N = 35$). Descriptive statistics were also reported for the results of the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ). In terms of conference affiliation, 31.4% of the participants worked at an institution in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). The Southeastern Conference (SEC) and the Big 10 Conference tied for the second largest amount of participation, as they both accounted for 25.7% of the population. The Big 12 Conference contributed for 11.4% of the sample set, while the Pac 12 Conference, which had the lowest participation numbers, accounted for 5.7% of the population. As illustrated in Table 1, the results of the descriptive analysis revealed that 71.4% of senior level administrators had more than 10 years of experience in their leadership role. Further, 54.3% of participants were male, while 45.7% of the participants were female. To continue, the most common age group that participated in the survey was between 40-49 years of age (38.2%), while the second most common age group was between 50-59 years of age (29.4%). In terms of ethnicity, 81.8% of participants identified as White or Caucasian, while only 18.2% were Black or African American. No other racial demographic was self-reported. Regarding marital status, most participants were currently married (69.7%). Moreover, 78.8% of participants had an advanced degree, with the highest portion (60.6%) having attained a master's degree. The results also indicated that most of the participants considered themselves either spiritual or religious (78.8%), as 42.4% self-identified as "somewhat spiritual or religious", and 36.4% of participants considered themselves "very spiritual or religious". Of those who did consider themselves religious, about 81.8% attended religious services, with the majority attending about once per week (39.4%). To continue, 48.5% lived

in a metropolitan area of at least 300,000 or more, while 36.4% reported that they lived in a City of First Class (5,001 to 100,000). The results indicated that 87.9% involved themselves in volunteer work on a weekly basis; of this group, 39.4% volunteered between one to five hours a week, while 45.5% volunteered less than an hour per week.

Descriptive statistics were also reported for the SLQ scores (as indicated in Table 2). Overall, the average SLQ score was about 93 ($M = 93.08$, $SD = 11.20$). The range of overall SLQ scores was 48, as the lowest score was 65 and the highest score was 113. The means were also reported for each of the five sublevels (1 = Not at all, 2 = once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = fairly often, 5 = frequently, if not always). The mean scores across the five various sublevels ranged between 14.57 and 21.34. Specifically, Altruistic Calling had a mean score of 16.74 ($M = 16.74$, $SD = 2.10$). Emotional Healing had the lowest mean value of 14.57 ($M = 14.57$, $SD = 2.88$). Wisdom had a mean score of 20.63 ($M = 20.63$, $SD = 2.58$). Persuasive Mapping had a mean score of 19.80 ($M = 19.80$, $SD = 3.50$). Organizational Stewardship had the highest mean score of 21.34 ($M = 21.34$, $SD = 2.54$). Identical to the findings of Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), Wisdom and Organizational stewardship were among the highest means scores. This pattern was also found in a study conducted by Beck (2014).

Utilizing Cronbach Alpha Coefficient, measures of internal consistency were also reported. This study found the SLQ overall reliability was .83. According to Nunnally and Berstein (1994) acceptable reliability is at or above .70, which was satisfied in this study. As indicated in Table 3, each of the subscales also met the internal consistency criteria of Nunnally and Berstein (1994)—Altruistic Calling (.76), Emotional Healing (.87), Wisdom (.83), Persuasive Mapping (.90), and Organizational Stewardship (.78).

Table 1
Demographic of Leaders (N = 35)

		Frequency	Percentage
Years in Leadership Role	Less than one year	1	2.9%
	One to five	2	5.7%
	Six to Ten	7	20.0%
	More than Ten	25	71.4%
Gender	Male	19	54.3%
	Female	16	45.7%
Age Group	30-39	7	20.6%
	40-49	13	38.2%
	50-59	10	29.4%
	60 or over	4	11.8%
Spiritual/Religious	Not at all spiritual or religious	3	9.1%
	Not very Spiritual or religious	4	12.1%
	Somewhat spiritual or religious	14	42.4%
	very spiritual or religious	12	36.4%
Attend Religious Service	Never	6	18.2%
	Occasionally	13	39.4%
	Once per week	13	39.4%
	More than once per week	1	3.0%
Nationality	White or Caucasian	27	81.8%
	Black or African American	6	18.2%
Marital Status	Single, never married	6	18.2%
	Married	23	69.7%
	Divorced	4	12.1%
Volunteer Hours	None	4	12.1%
	Less than one hour per week	13	39.4%
	One to five hours per week	15	45.5%
	Five to ten hours per week	1	3.0%
Education Level	4-year college degree (BA, BS)	7	21.2%
	Master's Degree (MA)	20	60.6%
	Doctoral Degree (EdD, PhD)	3	9.1%
	Professional Degree (JD, MD)	3	9.1%
Metropolitan Population	Metro Area (300,000 or more)	16	48.5%
	Primary City (100,001 to 299,000)	5	15.2%
	City of First Class (5,001 to 100,000)	12	36.4%

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Leaders (N=35)

	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	St. Deviation	Variance
Altruistic Calling (AC)	35	7	13	20	16.74	2.10	4.43
Emotional Healing (EH)	35	12	8	20	14.57	2.88	8.31
Persuasive Mapping (PM)	35	14	11	25	19.80	3.50	12.28
Wisdom (W)	35	10	15	25	20.63	2.58	6.65
Organizational Stewardship (OS)	35	10	15	25	21.34	2.54	6.47
Total SLQ Score	35	48	65	113	93.08	11.19	125.20

Indicated in Table 3, intercorrelations were also assessed among the five sublevels of SLQ. Intercorrelations ranged from $r = .54$ to $r = .68$. The lowest intercorrelation was between Persuasive Mapping and Organizational Stewardship ($r = .42$), while the highest was between Wisdom and Organizational Stewardship ($r = .68$). These findings differ from the intercorrelations found in a study conducted by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), as it was noted the lowest correlations were between Organizational Stewardship and Emotional Healing ($r = .31$), which had the highest correlation in this study ($r = .68$). The study conducted by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) noted that the highest intercorrelations were between Persuasive Mapping and Emotional Healing ($r = .53$), which was not the case in this study.

Table 3
Correlation Matrix of SLQ Scale (N= 35)

Variable	N	M	SD	AC	EH	PM	OS	W
Altruistic Calling (AC)	35	4.18	0.53	(.76)				
Emotional Healing (EH)	35	3.64	0.72	0.66**	(.87)			
Org. Stewardship (OS)	35	4.27	0.51	0.66**	0.68**	0.54**	(.78)	
Wisdom (W)	35	4.12	0.51	0.58**	0.68**	0.62**	0.63**	(.83)

Note. Reliability coefficient estimates (α) are in parenthesis along diagonals.
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Tests for normality were conducted on the dependent variables (SLQ sub-scores). To start, skewness and kurtosis values were assessed for each of the five sub scores. Each of the sub

scores had values between -2 and +2, indicating normality (Ross & Mallery, 2010): Altruistic

Calling (.06, -.83), Emotional Healing (-.18, -.35), Pervasive Mapping (-.56, .16), Organizational

Stewardship (-.46, -.13), and Wisdom (-.11, -.56). To continue, a Shapiro Wilk Test was also

conducted to test the assumption of normality. This test was utilized instead of the

Kolomogorov-Smirnov test, as it was deemed more suitable for sample sizes less than 50

(Zimmerman, 2003). Each of the five sub scales were approximately normally distributed:

Altruistic Calling ($W(35) = .94$, $p = .05$), Emotional Healing ($W(35) = .98$, $p = .66$), Pervasive

Mapping ($W(35) = .95$, $p = .17$), Organizational Stewardship ($W(35) = .95$, $p = .10$, and Wisdom

($W(35) = .96$, $p = .32$).

To determine whether there was statistical significance among the independent variables

(Demographic Variables), and the dependent variables (SLQ mean sub-scores), a One-Way

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The results revealed key findings. To start, there

was not statistical significance among four of the sub scales—Emotional Healing, Pervasive

Mapping, Altruistic Calling, and Wisdom—and any of the demographic variables. However,

there was statistically significant findings between Organizational Stewardship and volunteer

hours. Tukey Post Hoc Tests were utilized to examine the relationship among these statistically

significant variables:

Volunteer Hours was found to be statistically significant with organizational stewardship

($F(2,29) = [6.14]$, $p < .01$). Participants who volunteered between "one to five hours a week"

scored significantly higher in organizational stewardship than participants who did not regularly

devote any time to volunteering ($p = .02$). Participants who volunteered "between one to five

hours per week" scored significantly higher in organizational stewardship than participants who

devoted less than one hour of a week to volunteering, $p = .02$. There was no statistical difference

among participants who volunteered less than one hour a week, and those who did not volunteer

in a given week (p=.66).

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations by Volunteer Hours

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
None	4	3.85	0.50
Less than on hour per week	13	4.07	0.54
One to five hours per week	15	4.57	0.36
Total	32	4.28	0.53

Qualitative Phase

Data for the qualitative portion of the study took place over the course of one month. Out

of the 35 participants that completed the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ), 12 individuals

were selected for the qualitative portion of the study. The 12 individuals were selected based on

their SLQ scores (mainly those who scored above the median SLQ score), and a diversity of

demographic factors (i.e., race, gender, religious status, conference affiliation).

Table 5
Conference Affiliation (N =12)

Conference Affiliation	N	Percentage
ACC	6	50.0%
Big 12	2	16.7%
Big 10	2	16.7%
SEC	2	16.7%

The following portion of chapter 4 describes the participant population. In order to maintain

anonymity, this study did not use the real names of participants, as pseudonyms were used:

George

George is a Caucasian man in his 40s. He is a senior level administrator for an institution

in the southern region of the U.S. George was a very active kid, as he enjoyed playing soccer.

Education-wise, George has both a bachelor's and a master's degree.

Alex

      Alex is an African American woman in her 40s. She is a senior level administrator for an institution in the southern region of the U.S. Alex ran track and field growing up. Education-wise, Alex has attained bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degree.

Creg

      Creg is a Caucasian man in his 50s. He is a senior level administrator for an institution in the southern region of the U.S. Creg enjoys playing golf. Education-wise, Creg has both a bachelor's and master's degree.

Dovie

      Dovie is a Caucasian woman in her 40s. She is a senior level administrator for an institution in the eastern region of the U.S. Growing up, Dovie was an avid volleyball player. Education-wise, Dovie has both a bachelor's and master's degree.

Ryan

      Ryan is a Caucasian woman (age was not provided). She is a senior level administrator for an institution in the Mid-West region of the U.S. Growing up. Education-wise, Ryan has both a bachelor's and master's degree.

Jaylen

      Jaylen is a Caucasian woman in 60 years or over in age. She is a senior level administrator for an institution in the southern region of the U.S. Jaylen enjoyed playing basketball in her youth. Education-wise, Jaylen has attained a bachelor's degree.

Jeremiah

Jeremiah is a Caucasian man in his 50s. He is a senior level administrator for an institution in the Mid-West region of the U.S. Growing up, Jeremiah is a fan of baseball. Education-wise, Jeremiah has attained a bachelor's degree.

Deborah

Deborah is a Caucasian woman in 60 years or over in age. She is a senior level administrator for an institution in the southern region of the U.S. Deborah is an avid fan of basketball. Education-wise, Deborah has attained a bachelor's degree and two master's degrees.

JaCorey

JaCorey is a Caucasian man in his 30s. He is a senior level administrator for an institution in the southern region of the U.S. He enjoys exercise. Education-wise, JaCorey has attained a bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees.

Jakayla

Jakayla is an African American woman in her 30s. She is a senior level administrator for an institution in the Mid-West region of the U.S. Education-wise, Jakayla has attained a bachelor's and a master's degree.

Karen

Karen is an African American woman in her 40s. She is a senior level administrator for an institution in the Mid-West region of the U.S. Education-wise, Karen has attained a bachelor's and a master's degree.

Tara

  Tara is an African American woman in her 50s. She is a senior level administrator for an institution in the south region of the U.S. Education-wise, Tara has attained a bachelor's and a professional degree.

Table 6 - Demographics of Leaders Interviewed (N = 12)

		Frequency	Percentage
Years in Leadership Role	One to five	1	8.3%
	Six to Ten	2	16.7%
	More than Ten	9	75.0%
Gender	Male	4	33.3%
	Female	8	66.7%
Age Group	30-39	1	9.1%
	40-49	5	45.5%
	50-59	3	27.3%
	60 or over	2	18.2%
Spiritual/Religious	Not at all spiritual or religious	1	9.1%
	Not very Spiritual or religious	1	9.1%
	Somewhat spiritual or religious	3	27.3%
	very spiritual or religious	6	54.5%
Attend Religious Service	Never	3	27.3%
	Occasionally	1	9.1%
	Once per week	6	54.5%
	More than once per week	1	9.1%
Nationality	White or Caucasian	7	63.6%
	Black or African American	4	36.4%
Marital Status	Single, never married	4	36.4%
	Married	6	54.5%
	Divorced	1	9.1%
Volunteer Hours	None	2	18.2%
	Less than one hour per week	2	18.2%
	One to five hours per week	6	54.5%
	Five to ten hours per week	1	9.1%
Education Level	4-year college degree (BA, BS)	2	18.2%
	Master's degree (MA)	6	54.5%
	Doctoral Degree (EdD, PhD)	1	9.1%
	Professional Degree (JD, MD)	2	18.2%
Metropolitan Population	Metro Area (300,000 or more)	7	63.6%
	Primary City (100,001 to 299,000)	1	9.1%
	City of First Class (5,001 to 100,000)	3	27.3%

After conducting the semi-structured interviews with each of the 12 participants, the data collected was analyzed, coded, and categorized into themes. Answering RQ1, the next portion of this chapter reveals the antecedents of servant leadership. This portion also answers RQ2, by revealing the various strategies utilized to practice servant leadership behavior.

People Centric Mindset

Each of the participants (100%) interviewed emphasized the importance of being people-driven. This means that they centered their leadership around valuing and investing in the relationships that they have with their co-workers (other administrators, coaches, fans) and surrounding community. Alex went on to emphasize that in intercollegiate athletic leadership, it is important to be people-oriented because "you are leaving a legacy of who you are by the people that you've touched." The importance of leaving a positive impact or influence on others, as opposed to merely being skill oriented, was found to be consistent within the data. To continue, the people-centric mindset theme had the following four subthemes: (1) Interpersonal support, (2) Empowering Others, (3) Individual Consideration, and (4) Provide Direction. Each of these four sub-themes provided both antecedents and strategies within servant leadership.

Interpersonal Support

Senior level administrators focused on providing interpersonal support to others. Interpersonal support refers to investing in the emotional/psychological wellbeing of people. Karen explained, "The best way to lead is by helping others grow and really caring about their wellbeing." Participants noted that they strive to serve *all* people. Dovie explained her mindset/approach towards new hires by sharing, "I want them to feel loved and wanted, and you are *the* person. She also explained that she lets new hires know that she is there for them wholistically. Dovie also highlighted the idea that she wants others to feel valued, appreciated,

and special. She often asks others around her "how can I help you?". Similarly, Alex explained that she values "pouring into people". To her, this is about investing in the personal and professional lives of others. Similarly, Deborah often ponders "How can I be a blessing to others?". In all, each of the participants placed significant emphasis on prioritizing the emotional and psychological needs of others.

Notably, each of the participants discussed various strategies for providing interpersonal support to those around them. To start, one practice that senior level administrators emphasized was investing in the personal lives of others. Karen explained that she will ask about the wellbeing of others *first* when interacting with coworkers. She explained:

> …you don't always talk about work. You ask them about their lives, you ask them how they're doing, you check in on them. I think that's important that I do have a genuine interest in people's lives…and not just walk in and say, "hey, can you do this and that".

Karen exemplifies the mindset of placing the emotional needs of others before any work-related responsibilities are addressed. To continue, Senior level administrators highlighted that investing in others wellbeing also meant spending quality time with them. Creg spoke to this notion by saying, "it's hard to develop a relationship through Internet, it's hard to develop a relationship by just sending them a note, you have to spend time with them to really appreciate everything about them." Many participants had a similar thought process as Creg, as they mentioned that they would invest quality time in others by inviting people to lunches, happy hours, and sporting events to create informal opportunities to bond with others. Dovie described her though process for recent hires:

I'm going to bend over backwards, for the first, however much of time, for them to feel like *I am here with whatever you need.* Let's go to lunch one time, I'm not a lunch person, but…let's go to lunch one time.

Notably, Dovie's willingness to support new hires came above her own preferences, as she extends lunch opportunities, even though she does not enjoy lunch that often. Other participants also used informal social gatherings as opportunities to support others as well. Karen stated that she used social events to ask others about the wellbeing of them and their families. Tara also used social events for social bonding. She explained:

I have this event, three times a year over at my house where I invite all the women in the department and the female spouses…we play games, we have drinks, and we you know we're in a relaxed setting to just kind of get to know each other, and you know be silly.

In order to show this level of support, senior level administrators emphasized that they had to make themselves available timewise. Regardless of their busy schedules and wide-ranging responsibilities, many senior level administrators placed emphasis on being accessible for those around them. JaCorey stated, "For me, it's [being supportive] is about spending as much time as I can with them [his coworkers]". Participants explained that only through being available, can they truly provide support and nurture relationships. Jakayla described times that she spent time with her staff unrelated to task/work:

We just have these moments…with just one or two of us…then the whole department comes in…I mean at one point, we started talking about something that was going on, and then they were talking about a song. Another person comes in and then they're talking about their song, and we literally stayed in the office for probably two hours talking about music…it was late at night.

Notably, Jakayla made herself available to her coworkers even though they were not discussing task related assignments. Participants understand that making themselves accessible, in both formal and informal ways, allows people to feel comfortable in coming to them. Similar to Jakayla, JaCorey explained that during the Covid-19 pandemic he made himself very accessible. He explained the following:

> Over the last two years, I've been pretty much in charge of like managing all the folks up here in our athletic department…talk about having a being bound to service 24/7. I think that was obviously something where I…set aside like my own personal or professional life goals, and just tried to help people manage through [the pandemic].

JaCorey felt a responsibility to make himself available even outside of normal work hours. To continue, participants used several strategies for making themselves available to others. One of the main strategies leaders used was stopping by the offices of their coworkers at informal times. Karen said, "I just try to make sure I was around and pop into offices and say, 'hi.'" Karen expressed that it is important for her to go to where people are. When she does this, she would do mental check-ins by asking how her coworkers were doing. She would ask about the wellbeing of their children, and other family members. The theme of going to the offices of others remained consistently in the data. JaCorey explained that he would roam around the hallways outside of meetings times, and just pop into people offices at well. There seemed to be a particular emphasis on this strategy, as Deborah candidly expressed:

> You have to get out of your office. You can't sit in your office all day… sometimes I am guilty of that because I'm trying to get stuff done, but you know you have to go out and kind of see where people are.

In all, office "pop-ins" was a main strategy for senior level administrators to be accessible to others for interpersonal support.

In addition to "office pop-ins", senior level administrators used a few other strategies to provide accessibility as well. Karen explained that she would hand her personal cell phone number to co-workers. She did this so that others could reach her at any time. Another main strategy used was to attend socials. Senior level administrators would go to sporting events, happy hours, lunches, and coffee spots to be accessible for interpersonal support to coworkers, student-athletes, and coaches. Another strategy used was giving others words of affirmation. Jeremiah explained that he gives credits and open acknowledgement to his coworkers for their work accomplishments. Deborah explained that she often sent birthday cards to student-athletes, coaches, and other administrators. She would also write letters to congratulate student-athletes on their athletic accomplishments. Senior level administrators also mentioned attending graduations, weddings, and other special moments for their constituents, as ways to show support. Alex explained how she used a wedding invitation to help facilitate personal growth for others:

> … it's inviting them to my wedding so they can see a healthy marriage and other healthy marriages from the other people [at the wedding] … because they came from a broken home and don't understand how this [marriage] could be a good thing.

In all, senior level administrators had various strategies for providing interpersonal support to others.

Empowering Others

Empowering others was a sub theme that all 12 (100%) of the participants highlighted. Empowerment refers to the notion of emboldening others. Participants wanted the people around them to know that they are there to support/help them. They sought to find ways to empower

others regularly. Each of the participants highlighted the notion that they are *constantly* seeking to help others. The notion of constantly helping others represents an ongoing facilitation of growth, where they help people develop significantly over time. This may suggest that constantly helping others serves as a means for them to help people reach their *fullest* potential. Deborah emphasized that she wants people to the best they can be. Similarly, Ryan explained that she desires to help others *maximize* their potential.

Notably, many participants felt an altruistic calling to help empower others. Creg stated, "I feel like that's our obligation to serve and help others reach their goals." Participants explained that the act of constantly seeking to help others is driven by the desire to "pay it forward" to others or give back time and effort others have invested into their development. Deborah asks herself "…you've been given these blessings, how can you help bless other people?" She believes that her purpose is "…to make impact on people's lives and help them have better you know better experiences, and…maximize the time we have here on earth…". To Deborah, part of helping people have better experiences meant reflecting on how she can show others overcome their challenges or obstacles. On the same note, Alex explained that she pours into all the people that she comes into contact with who become part of her sphere/circle. She calls this notion the "Hallo Effect". Jakayla explained that she tries to "…be more of a strategist and visionary" where she can "…help people see themselves in that space [intercollegiate athletics], and how they can grow and continue." She tries "…to take the skill set [of others] and show others that Hey…you are here because you have capacity. You may not have tapped all of that yet and that's fine...". Jakayla wanted people not to doubt their belongingness in the industry, so she dedicates her time to ensuring people see their own potential. Instilling belief and confidence in others remained a prominent part of discussion throughout the interview process.

The second research question was centered around understanding the strategies used by senior level administrators who practice servant leadership within their roles. One way that participants sought to provide empower others was through offering their staff resources. Dovie mentioned that she has helped others hire an additional member to the team, particularly when her staff felt shorthanded. In addition, she has also provided new office spaces for her staff members. Some participants provide professional development resources for their staff. For example, JaCorey explained that he works to develop professional programming for his staff:

> …one of the projects I'm working on now is creating a professional development ladder so that people will have key points or milestones to try to accomplish to… sharpen their clinical skills and sharpen their administrative skills and sharpen… public speaking or educational opportunities.

Not only did JaCorey create this resource for his staff, but he also provided financial resources/incentives by attaching monetary compensation to the program participation. In addition to creating organizational resources, participants offered themselves as a resource to their staff members. They review resumes, help them network by introducing them with other professionals, and write letter of recommendations for others. Jakayla stated, "I'm calling a job on their behalf…and submitting their names to search firms for a job." The most frequently mentioned method that participants used to offer themselves as support was through providing guidance or advice. For example, George explained a time where one of his subordinates was looking to become a sport administrator for women's soccer. George shared that he was unable to provide that formal role to his coworker, but that he did provide professional advice by expressing to them that "…one of the things you can do is just be more engaged to that program." He explained that she followed this advice and it led to her gaining experience:

…they [soccer team] went to the College Cup in 2019. She [his coworker] got invited to

go to California…she essentially [is] serving as a sport administrator and…it's one of

those things where she wasn't [a sport administrator] by name [title], but she was by

organization [culturally].

Ultimately, George helped his co-worker find innovative ways to gain the experience they were

looking for, even though he was unable to formally place them into the sport administration role.

Another strategy that participants used to display support for their staff was through

strategically empowering them to make decisions and take on higher levels of responsibilities

within their roles. George explained:

… as a leader…I don't want people to fail, I don't want to put them in situations where

they are not equipped, but I do want to stretch them and challenge them… so [he]

continues to give them opportunities, making sure they have the foundation, the training

and knowledge and skills experiences to do that.

George views providing greater levels of responsibilities as an educational experience.

He provides autonomy in ways where staff members can learn from failures. George later

explained that he empowers his staff members in a way where they can learn and "fail safely" at

times. In other words, he places his staff members in situations where they can fail without it

having major consequences. George explained that "I like providing [his staff] the ability or

opportunity to fail…without the organization failing." Similarly, Tara, who oversees internal

athletic department operations, explained that she provides autonomy to her staff in areas where

they can "fail safely". She provided the following example:

They [her staff] have a personnel issue and we sort of talk it through. I think we need to

make a change [in personnel] …I don't think this person is going to be able to sort of

rehabilitate themselves and get where we need them to be. The co-directors feel otherwise and think we can really make this work… they weren't going to put anybody in danger by letting this happen [letting the staff member stay employed]... so, I said "okay you guys, that's your department you run with it. And so, eventually…we all ended up on the same page, in that we needed to make a [employment] change. They didn't believe it [in the beginning conversations], but if I would have made it [the decision for them], it would have broken a trust between us. It would have undermined their leadership... So, we talked it through, I understood where they were coming from. I disagreed with them…but the [learning] process for them to go through that was really good.

This example suggests that Tara seeks to empower others, as a way to foster learning.

Another strategy used to empower others was through advocating for their co-workers. As mentioned earlier, Jeremiah defended his co-workers from having to take on more responsibilities, as he knows they could potentially face employee burnout. He emphasized the importance of advocating by saying "you've got to be willing to stick your nose in, and just stick up for them and say, 'hey we just can't accommodate this right now'." Similarly, Jakayla also mentioned that she would speak on behalf of those around her, and advocate for them as they faced challenges. Luis stated that he created the employee career ladder program to advocate for his co-workers. Overall, participants understood that advocating on behalf of their coworkers led to greater team cohesion. They supported their staff by empowering others to make decisions and take on greater levels of responsibilities in a way that allowed them to learn and develop in their work capacities. In all, senior level administrators practiced a variety of strategies for empowering those around them.

Individual Consideration

Each of the twelve participants (100%) placed an emphasis on serving the unique needs of their staff members. They understood that every person that they interact with has unique experiences, diverse personalities, and different needs or desires. Participants also highlighted that it was paramount that they were invested in their staff members feelings. This section expands on the unique considerations that senior level administrators provided to others. To begin, participants noted that they paid particular attention to the varying personalities of those around them. Alex reflected on how she conceptualizes other personalities in the workplace:

…people have different roles within the department, some people are the brain, some people are the nerves. Some are the tissue… and so all of those things coming together… so, when I started a new job or started a new place, I start to look and see how people are. I say … okay that's a brain person. …okay that's connectivity person.

Alex placed effort into conceptualizing and categorizing people by their personalities. She develops a "profile" of a person based on their personality, behavior, and desires. Similar to Alex, other senior level administrators spoke to the notion of giving consideration to differences among the people they work with. For example, George acknowledged the personality differences within some of his staff members, noting that some were more ambitious than others, and that some need support in different ways:

In my unit… [Person A] was an amazing person who had a lot of desire and ambition and was given every opportunity because she acted differently. [Person B] is different, [Person C] is different that's all okay…you want to maximize their performance…but also their own personal development right, so you try to support their different needs.

Given that each of George's staff members have different personalities, he does not take a "one size fits all approach." Rather, he sought to work at the pace and capacity of their personal development of each of his unique staff members. Other participants also seemed to adjust their behaviors based on different personalities of people that they interact with. Dovie describes this very notion "…I'm like a chameleon, I can have a relationship with a lot of different types of people." Dovie recognizes the differences of others and is able to build individual relationships with people of various personalities.

In terms of providing unique consideration to the needs of people, other participants echoed the similar sentiments. For instance, when JaCorey spoke to creating the leadership development ladder program, he gave consideration to the differences among his staff members. In fact, he explained that one of his main motivations behind creating the program was to consider the experience differences among his staff:

> I think for me…I'm a self-starter, but I think for others, especially the younger staff, they may lack direction in terms of how to work their way up [into higher positions], so by being a little bit more like overt… it gives staff members something to look at, something to strive.

Notably, JaCorey considered the notion that his younger staff may want more direction with upwards career mobility, in comparison to other staff members who may be further along in their career. JaCorey recognized that not all staff members were motivated solely by career guidance activities, so he also attached monetary compensation to the programming to incentives others.

Providing unique consideration to the differences of others remained a consistent theme among participants. Deborah explained that she seeks "to meet people where *they* are in life." She embraced the idea that her staff members each have different levels of experiences, different

aspirations, and different needs. Deborah then expressed that she seeks to meets those individual needs so that each person can feel valued, happy and ultimately enjoy their time in the workplace. Each of the other participants spoke to paying attention to the *individual* needs of others. Jakayla explained "I don't treat people how I want to be treated; I treat people how *they* want to be treated." Ryan added that she aspires to help others "become the best version of *themselves.*" In each case, participants placed particular focus on understanding the individual needs of others.

The second research question explored the strategies used to carry out servant leadership within the workplace. In terms of providing individual consideration to others, senior level administrators implemented several strategies worthy of note. To start, participants stated the *first* and most important strategy was listening to others. They placed particular interest into being an effective listener. Alex highlighted the following quote that she adapted from her grandfather "First you listen to understand, then you listen to comprehend, then you listen to execute." This notion of listening was highlighted among each of the participants. Jeremiah emphasized the importance of being an "intentional" listener. To Jeremiah, intentional listening meant that he provided his undivided attention to others. He explained that part of providing his undivided attention is by choosing not to multi-task while people are talking to him:

> …You need to be focused and dialed in [to listening]. We're all busy, and sometimes it's not easy... somebody will come to my door, and I may be doing two things and I'll just say, 'Give me one, second. Let me finish this [task] and I'll get to you.' …I do this just so that I can focus on you when you walk in.

Jeremiah later added that providing his undivided attention is a way that he shows respect to others. Further, Jeremiah explained that by multitasking while others are speaking "…I'm

disrespecting you, and I'm probably not keyed in on what you really want to know about, and then I'm not the best position to help you…" It is apparent in Jeremiah's expressions that the concept of listening takes priority in his leadership. This theme was highlighted by other participants, as they stressed the importance of effective listening. Similar to Jeremiah, Jakayla explained strategies she uses to listen effectively:

> … so, I have a bunch of seats and stuff in my office…I try to position myself next to a person when I'm listening, especially if it's a sensitive subject. I try to position myself so that we're like talking *to* each other, not *at* each other. I also make sure that my phones and electronics or not in the way, so that you have my total presence, I'm focused on you.

Jakayla added that there are certain questions that she will ask others that she is listening to... "do you want advice? do you want me to just listen? where do you want this conversation to go?". She explained that she asks these questions to make sure she has a full understanding of a person's needs. She stated, "sometimes people just want to talk, and when they talk it out, it kind of comes together right, or some people want feedback…" In all, intentional listening was a main strategy used by senior level administrators to give consideration to the individual needs, wants, and desires of others.

After placing an emphasis on listening, senior level administrators focused on shifting their behavior to meet the needs of others. One way that senior level administrators made work accommodations as a way to consider the needs of others. In other words, each participant tailored their behaviors to meet the needs of different individuals in the workplace. For example, Ryan mentioned that she uses different strategies for working with coaches during her touch base meetings. For some coaches she will attend meetings and work through a detailed agenda that

they created. For other coaches who preferred a less structured approach to meetings, she chose not to use meetings notes. She explained her reasoning:

> …You can't expect them to always deliver things the way you want them. That's putting them into a box that may not be the best way that they work, because your goal is to try to get them to operate at their highest levels, and everybody's framework may be a little bit different.

Similar to Ryan, Jeremiah also spoke to providing work accommodations to meet the needs of others. One strategy that Jeremiah used is to align department resources with the needs and desires of the people he works with. In some cases, that meant eliminating department programming that his constituents found not useful. In one situation, he explained that he worked to eliminate the production of coaches' podcast/radio shows, as various coaches deemed the shows as an inefficient way to use their time. Jeremiah added that his aim is to "redirect all of those energies and resources to other things that are really making a difference." Similar to Jeremiah, Alex also paid particular attention to when some of her constituents desired change. One strategy that Alex used was to help create career plans for others. She illustrated her thought process for doing so by saying "So [if] you tell me that you're not happy in your current role, well let's game plan to see how can help you find your happy place." In summary, senior level administrators practiced various ways to meet the individual needs of others.

Humility

I care about their success more than my own success - Deborah

Each of the 12 (100%) senior level administrators displayed humility within their leadership. Humility refers to one's willingness to help and serve others. Participants explained that, while good favors may be returned to them at times for helping others, they operate with no

expectation for others to return the support that they provide. Creg expressed this notion by saying, "You have to be confident enough, and generous enough, that if you help people get what they want, you know good things will happen to you as well, but *it's not a quid pro quo*." Creg understands that her actions of helping others are purely for the sake of helping others.

Notably, participants did not solely help those who have the same level of authority or power as them. Rather, they concerned themselves with helping *everyone*, including those who were in lesser positions of formal authority. They extend care, grace, and love to everyone they interact with. In essence, they see the humanity in all people around them. Deborah explained "treatment is everything … it comes down to that for me, in dealing with people, showing grace is important." Tara echoed similar sentiments by saying "I genuinely care about the people I work with, and I take joy in them being successful." Noticeably, each of the participants placed an emphasis on others, rather than themselves. They are not self-seeking; they are freely giving and investing in the well-being of others.

Senior level administrators displayed humility in several keyways. To start, they took on jobs or task that they were not within their job responsibilities, mainly, by engaging in task that those often in less senior positions were responsible for. Participants' ultimate objective is to help the organization, as a whole, succeed, rather than completing task for their own personal gain. For example, George explained that sometimes he would participate as a ticket scanner during sporting events. This is a role that he knows is often associated with entry level positions. The notion of doing task outside of job responsibilities remained consistent among participants. Dovie describes her mindset toward helping the organization succeed, "I'll work at night. I'll do whatever it takes…" Dovie is not only willing to do task that are "beneath her" but she is also

willing to spend her personal time completing them without expecting additional compensation or job promotion. She provided the following example:

The department had a bunch of turnovers happen at the same time. And the work still needed to get done, and so I sat down with the head of marketing and said "put me in coach…give me men's basketball marketing. I did it, and I've been there before. I put the pride away, I know I'm a senior administrator, but I'm single and available to work.

In all, senior level administrators have expressed their willingness to engage in work that is beyond their job responsibilities, because they want to see the organization succeed, more than themselves.

Another way that senior level administrators displayed humility was through investing in *all* people, regardless of job positionality. While each of the participants have extremely demanding schedules that are not within the purview of entry level workers, they place effort and importance in investing in those who have less formal power. Ryan explained the following:

It's important to be seen, I will go over to them [those at ground level] in their environment. I spend time chatting with them, asking about life… They want to see you as a person, you want to see them as a person.

The notion of investing and caring for the lives of all people remained consistent among participants. In all, senior level administrators, showed humility by supporting and assisting others regardless of title. They did so because they acknowledge that we are all human and deserving of care and attention.

Authenticity

Another main theme indicated in the findings was that servant leaders were authentic**.** Authenticity refers to a person that is their truest self. Karen emphasized the importance of

authenticity by stating, "for me personally, part of servant leadership is about really caring about people authentically. It's about being authentic. It's about being kind and being nice… that just goes a really long way." Notably, participants treated others with the upmost care because that is who they are. They served to others with no expectation in return. Alex spends a significant amount of time helping others. She explained "no one is giving me a promotion because I've had four people get assistant ad jobs in the last two year." Alex acknowledged that she does not seek financial or career-related benefits from helping others. She does so because that is the type of person she chooses to be. Creg also emphasized this notion by expressing that giving to others is not a "quid pro quo". He helps others because he simply believes it is the right thing to do. Each of the participants emphasized that serving others is not a means to any objectives, it is simply *the* objective. In addition to selflessly serving others, senior level administrators wanted others to see them outside of their professional identities. They wanted others to see them as human. Dovie explained that he she establishes a level of friendship with many of her subordinates. She explained that she views the day-to-day work environment as organizationally "flat" where everyone is treated fairly, and all voices are equally heard. Alex explained that she even maintains relationships and helps people that have been terminated from their jobs. By doing this, she reinforces the notion that she is there to support others unconditionally. She does this because that is part of being her true self. Evidenced by their willingness to help all unconditionally and practice humility, senior level administrators placed emphasis on being their authentic selves at all times.

Commitment to Ethical Behavior

Commitment to personal values was a main theme revealed in the study. All (100%) of the senior level administrators communicated that they focus on operating out of their value

system. Several values continued to emerge within this conversation. Karen expressed the importance of extending grace, empathy, and forgiveness to others. Each one of the administrators placed emphasis on respecting others. George said that he values organizational equity and fairness as well. The notion of being principle-driven remained consistent in the data. George explained his logic on why he stays committed to his personal values:

> Loyalty is important as a leader…you need to be loyal to leaders. It's part of our fundamental, seemingly conventional wisdoms about organizations...but I've always questioned the limitations of that because we're fallible as human beings. I don't think you should be loyal to the person; you should be loyal to principle.

Notably, George chooses to operate from a principle-driven perspective as a way to staying loyal to his values. To all participants, staying loyal to values meant defending them at times. George explained "over the years, I've had some really tough discussions with others" about the importance of staying true to his values. The notion of sticking to personal values even when environments challenged them, remained a consistent them. Jaylen explained that she was taught to "hold the line" when others did not. In other words, she still decided to operate out of her values of respect, care, and honesty, even when others that she interacted with did not. Other participants echoed the importance of consistency in values as well. Creg simply stated, "it's all about the consistency of your values… and will situations require different communication… the foundation should be the same." Further, participants seemed to express a level of self-obligation and self-accountability when it came to sticking to their principles. Jaylen reflected on this notion by rhetorically ask "how do we expect our young people to figure it out, or have somebody to emulate? It's about consistency". Jaylen focused on making sure she is consistent with her values. She also emphasized that consistency also means doing what she believes is

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right even when no one is watching. Jeremiah also expressed this same sentiment by saying, "...you've got to really demonstrate the right behavior at all times." In all, each participant believed in staying committed to their values in both their words and actions.

Senior level administrators explained that the main strategy used to stay committed to values was to surround themselves or and model themselves after people who also value the same principles as they have. Jaylen expressed that she really appreciates coaches that are principle-driven. She reflected on this by saying:

I watch great coaches…everybody from Darryl Royal to Fred Acres to…Terry Crawford, Mack Brown, Rick Barnes…. just people who were brilliant, the best in their profession and know how to manage their young people well. You learn a lot from coaches.

On a similar note, other administrators also surrounded themselves and emulated people that they believed aligned with their values, whether that be from family members, bosses, or other people in the profession. In all, emulating people who have the same values as them, as has helped senior level administrators stay true to their value system.

Wisdom

A main theme evident in the findings was that senior level administrators contained wisdom. In fact, wisdom had the second highest mean score among the SLQ sub scales. Wisdom refers to one's awareness of their environment, and ability to anticipate consequences within their environment (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Seventy-five percent (9 of 12) of the senior level administrators highlighted that an important part of their leadership is being aware of their environments and the people within them. Participants placed focus on tuning into the different

personalities and environment circumstances that they interacted with. Alex exemplified her awareness of others in her reflections about organizational dynamics:

> …People have different roles within the department, some people are the brain, some people are the nerves. Some are the tissue… and so all of those things coming together… so, when I started a new job or started a new place, I start to look and see how people are. I say… "okay that's a brain person." …okay that's connectivity person."

This example reveals that Alex practiced a level of environmental discernment, as she exercised her ability to take information, create personality profiles of others and understand how they culturally fit into the department. Alex later added that part of being aware is tuning into a person's words, intentions, and desires. She explained, "I try to make certain that I really understand what a person is saying and doing… and discern what's real and what's not by what people say." The notion of exercising environmental discernment or awareness was consistent among participants. Senior level administrators took in information about people and their environments frequently. Jaylen described how she tunes into environmental circumstances at work:

> I sit back and absorb…the first time I have an issue come in front of me, I ask who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?... I'm not doing a thing until I get somebody to tell me all those things…Then I feel like I've had enough data to at least take the next step…

As indicated in Jaylen's thought process, she prioritizes being aware of what is going on around her *before* she chooses to act or respond to situations within her environment. On a similar note, Ryan also spoke to the importance of environmental awareness, as she reflected on her time in the medical field:

…when you go into people's homes, you have to get really good at reading the

environment, you have to understand who are going to be the people in that environment

that are really going to be helpful, and who are going to be the people in that environment

that may be a barrier to this person getting better, so you had to get pretty good at reading

the environment.

Ryan further explained that she learned to read environments through her experiences in the

medical field and uses these lessons on her job as a senior level administrator. She emphasized

that she uses this skill to understand student-athletes, coaches, administrators, and others within

the community.

Senior level administrators highlighted several key strategies for reading people and their

environments. To start, participants relied on their natural instinct to help them understand their

environments. Alex referred to this as "listening to your heart". She illustrated this notion

through the following example:

Your body gives you certain senses…It's your sensory perception…When I know that a

coach is lying to me about something, I can sense it. Or if I'm not getting all the

information, and maybe they're not lying, but they're just not providing me with all of the

information, then my sense helps me do what call "guided discovery" where I ask more

questions… I'm listening with my heart to feel how my body is reacting to the

information that I'm being given.

Similar to Alex, Karen explained that she relies on her natural instinct to understand her

environment. She explains how she relies on her natural instinct in her environment:

I think it's [cueing into the environment] a God given talent [that she has] …I'm very

empathetic, I feel how people are feeling at that time…so it allows me to adjust my

response or my reaction and my decision making.

Similar to Karen, Jeremiah also alluded to natural instinct by expressing that reading

environmental is about listening to "intuition and instinct". In all, leaning toward their natural

instinct and intuition has been a successful way for them to gain awareness toward their

environments.

Senior level administrators also mentioned that they use the act of observation as a main

way to gain awareness of their environments. Alex emphasized the importance of observation by

saying:

…You watch people from afar or distance that matter, or you watch them up

close…And then you kind of try to develop a profile of who they are… and anticipate

what they may want…I have been doing that for a long time.

Participants described both formal and informal methods of making observations. Jeremiah

explained that when he has transitioned into new work environments, he dedicates time and

effort toward "a window of observation", where he focuses on learning the needs of people and

his overall work environment. Jeremiah explained that he spends the first six to eight months on

a job observing his environment and people. Other participants such as Alex also mentioned the

notion of 90 days of observation.

Notably, senior level administrators made observations in both formal and informal

settings. Observations in formal settings mainly occurred when they were participating in

meetings/appointments, or in their offices. While necessary, participants emphasized that

observations in formal settings only were a portion of their efforts to observe. In fact, they placed

large emphasis on making observations emphasized that in informal settings. Informal settings included lunches, happy hours, sporting events, and other socials. In all, a combination of observations in both formal and informal spaces, helped senior level administrators be in tune with people, and their environment as a whole.

When asked *how* to make observations within their environments, participants emphasized the importance of understanding verbal and nonverbal communication from others. JaCorey explained "you read people's nonverbal and try to match those up with their verbal's. verbal communication seemed to be a clearer indicator, in comparison to non-verbal." Verbal communication. Tara explained, "If you *listen*, most often, people are going to tell you what they need…" Each member placed emphasis on listening to others. Jeremiah expressed that he listens *intentionally* to the needs, desires, and wants of others. Jaylen follows similar sentiments by saying "not being about talking only, it's about listening, sensing, and reading others." Jakayla furthers this notion by mentioning that it is important to listen to understand, rather than listen to respond. She described her approach towards this:

> Maybe your response is delayed…You don't have to be so fast to respond. Make sure you're listening because perhaps the person is a slower talker. So rather than you just cutting them off, you're listening, to make sure you have the pause there. Rather than waiting to speak because you're already coming up with your own answer, hear everything that they have to say to you make sure you get all the points.

In all, listening to verbal communication was a main way that participants observed others.

Notably, listening to the words of others was not the only method of observation; participants also paid particular attention to non-verbal cues as well. JaCorey explained that observation is about reading "people's nonverbal and try to match those up with their verbal's".

Similarly, Jakayla explained, "I see if somebody is actively engaged, or they are off doing something else. I observe if somebody's really not feeling what someone else is so saying." On a similar note, Jeremiah places effort into observing the energy levels of his staff members. He pays attention to employee burnout signs and protects their workloads when necessary. In all, each of the participants observed through a combination of observing both verbal and nonverbal communication, as a way to be aware of their environment. In summary, participants focused on listening to verbal and non-verbal ques, and observing their environments, as ways to gain awareness of their surroundings.

Provide Direction

A main theme that emerged was senior level administrators' ability to provide organizational and moral direction for themselves and for those around them. Ten of twelve (83%) of participants mentioned directiveness. In terms of self-direction, participants had a level of surety about their own standards and placed effort into setting moral and organizational standards/direction with their co-workers. For example, before George accepted the senior level job position that he is in now, he wrote down 10 principles that he wanted to live by. He used these principles on a daily basis throughout his work life. The act of formulating these principles provides him, and his followers with guidelines and expectations of behavior. Similar to George, Jakayla also used principles to guide her followers as well. She explained:

> I use a strategic plan…When we start our meetings, we go over them [the principles]
> and talk about how we're seeing people in implement them in their work. I ask, "Did
> you see somebody being kind? Did you see somebody being accurate?" Sometimes, it
> just makes all the difference in a work environment.

Jakayla acknowledges that communicating those principles in every meeting has been helpful in her attempts to guide others. On a similar note, Creg explained the importance of strategic planning, and guiding others towards goals and expectations:

> I think that's the goal of a great leader…to take complex issues, simplify it, and then try to get everybody on the same page to move toward a goal. Trying to break down the larger goal into smaller achievable goals and then watch your progress towards the degree. That starts with the with the planning process. It's important to include people in the planning. I know it's not too exciting but strategic planning is very good to say "Okay, this is where we are, this is where we'd like to be." Then, we focus on building a path to get there.

Creg facilitated group collaboration, and placed effort into setting a direction that his co-workers understand. Similarly, JaCorey also spoke to creating clear standards/provide direction. He explained, "I'm very blunt and very transparent. I think people appreciate that because I'm not trying to hide anything from them. I make my intentions known either through discussion, or through action". JaCorey's candidness enables him to set direction and standards with his staff. For example, he illustrated an example of how he communicates standards with new or potential hires:

> I communicate the role and what the expectations are so that people don't feel like they're getting blindsided once they walk in because this is a very complex environment. Before I would extend an offer to someone, I think it's important from a vetting standpoint, that the expectations are already kind of set forth and that there's agreement and alignment between us that on.

Notably, JaCorey makes sure that those within his purview, have an understanding about the expectations he sets forth. Like JaCorey, several other senior administrators placed emphasis on Creating direction for those around them. Alex, much like JaCorey, has a very candid way of communicating with those around her. She described her communication style as "I gave it to you straight, no chaser." Dovie had a similar approach, as she explained, "I am not afraid to be vocal and share my opinion." This candid approach helped provide clear guidance and direction to those around her. In all, senior level administrators emphasized the importance of setting clear standards and direction for those around them.

In term of strategies for providing direction, senior level administrators had a variety of ways for doing so. To start, they created and utilized the athletic departments strategic plan. As mentioned earlier, Jakayla expressed that she refers to it during meetings daily. Other participants also echoed that they refer back to the departments strategic plan regularly as well. Another key strategy used for providing direction is through providing clear and consistent communication. As JaCorey put it, "…clear *clear* [sic] communication of expectations and rules is key." Jaylen acknowledged that communication is necessary, and not always easy at times. She shared, "it takes hard communication sometimes, you know, tough love, as they call it... it also takes consistent communication." Ultimately, clear communication allowed for senior level administrators set the direction and standards for those who worked within their purview. Another main strategy used was the use of the strategic plan, as Creg and Jakayla mentioned earlier, the strategic plan allowed for them to establish the standards and expectations for those around them.

Participants fostered a team-centric environment in order to help provide direction.

Part of creating a team-centric environment meant fostering collaboration among various constituents. Tara said, "I really, really, really value that collaboration and the sharing of ideas." Jeremiah emphasized that collaboration is the key to organizational success and providing direction. Similarly, Creg spoke to his philosophy behind collaboration:

> It's important to be collaborative and get people to buy into the vision. You set and create vision together, so you know where you're going, and you may at times disagree on how to get there, but the idea is to try to get there together.

Notably, participants place effort into facilitating feedback. Creg explained his thought process:

> You have to have a familiarity with each other and have some informal structure…You want feedback, *so you want to make people comfortable* in providing that feedback, so you can improve and get better.

Creg placed effort in facilitating feedback by ensuring that people feel like their opinions and voice matters. In all, the use collaborative efforts to help foster a team-oriented environment and set the direction of the organization. In summary, both clear communication of principles and expectations, fostering a team-oriented environment, along with the use of strategic planning help senior level administrators, helped provide direction for others.

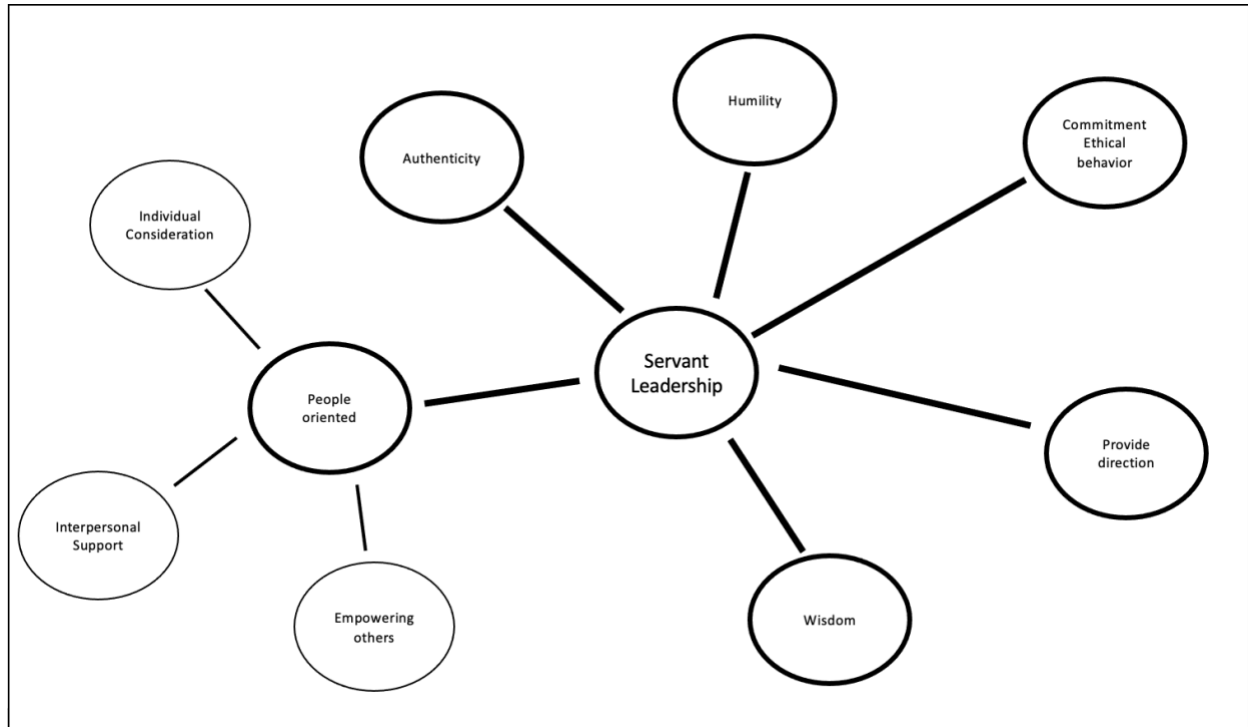**Figure 2: Summary of Characteristics**

Table 7: Summary of strategies Implemented

People Centric

People Centric

- Invest in the personal lives of others
- Ask about their wellbeing *first*
- Spend quality time through activities such as lunches, happy hours, sporting events and other informal events
- Provide words of affirmation through birthday cards, kind notes,
- Give credit and acknowledgement to others
- Invest in the work needs and aspirations of others (financial, professional development opportunities)
- Listen to the needs, desires of others *First…*First you listen to understand, then you listen to comprehend, then you listen to execute."
- Find ways to accommodate individual preferences of others
- Willingness to stand up or advocate for employees/team over challenging issues
- Be accessible to others: open door policy, office "pop-ins", ability for others to reach you via cell phone

Humility & Authenticity

- Help department needs, even if it's not within your job responsibility
- Willingness to engage in tasks that are often associated with less senior positions
- Provide attention and invest in needs of a*ll* people, regardless of their formal authority

Commitment to Personal value/Ethics

- Surround yourself by others who have same value system
- Write down your personal value's/principles
- Always carry out your values. consistent is key.

Wisdom
- Trust your natural instinct
- Dedicate time to "window of observation" for new environments
- Observe your environment and people from close and afar
- Make observations of others in both formal and informal environments
- Read peoples verbal and non-verbal que's
- Listen to others with *intention*
- Adjust to needs and desires of others

Provide Direction

- Clearly communicate job expectations and rules
- Willingness to have hard communication, tough love when needed
- Use departments strategic plan in day-to-day operations
- Facilitate group collaboration

The third research question pertained to the experiences that have shaped the servant leadership behaviors of senior level administrators. Through the interview process, it was clear that senior level administrators learned their behaviors through a wide variety of experiences. This included lessons from their childhood, mentors, religious practices, and professional development opportunities. While each of the participants learned from different experiences, they emphasized the importance of constantly learning. As Jakayla put it "everything is a learning experience." Other senior level administrators voiced the same concept, as they all sought to learn. In a humorous tone, Jaylen noted, "I can't run full court anymore and play basketball, but I'm still coachable." Her light banter was indication that she values being coached, even as a senior level capacity. The remainder chapter discusses ways in which Jaylen, and other participants, have learned/been influenced to emulate servant leadership behaviors.

Childhood Experiences

One of the main influences of servant leadership behavior for senior level administrators was through the childhood experiences. George illustrated an experience that has resonated with him for over 30 years:

> In sixth grade, I had my favorite teacher, who was a *really* strong presence, very demanding. He had profound influence on me 30 years later in my life…our class had done something good, and had we got some extra recess. It's the end of the year, I remember being warm, and we play kickball. There was some extra urgency to this game… I kick the ball far. I stretch a double into a home run. I'm out, but I'm fighting and arguing, "I want to win". I'm competitive so the next inning… a kid kicks it far; I am the picture… I get the guy who was "safe", but I call him "out." And I argued enough, and people didn't question me enough, that they let me get my way. My teacher didn't

say anything on the way in, but there were bickering back and forth like 12-year-old boys

and girls. So, we get into class and my teacher had this golden ruler… it would make

such a racket when it when he was he wanted our attention. And he didn't call me out, but he

just said how disappointed, he was, I mean he was really angry that an individual used his

platform for selfish means; to give myself the feeling of winning, even though I didn't

win…I was unethical and immoral in getting this empty victory to make me feel good at

the time. I was using my platform to help myself, and not be honest with the experience.

That has resonated with me today…it's resonated self-multiple times...

Ryan goes on to explain that this experience in sixth grade taught him the importance of being

loyal to principles, and not to defer all judgement to leaders; this is because he understands

people are flawed by nature and can make poor ethical decisions—like he did during the kickball

game. In all, Ryan looks back on this moment of character correction from his teacher as an

experience that shaped his ethical maturity.

Jaylen reflected on how her parents influenced her behaviors as a child:

I love sports and that was okay with my parents…I affectionately call my dad a Title IX

Dad…my mom was going to be supportive no matter what but for my dad to get behind

you know girl sports, he would go booster club meetings at the high school and say "why

are they wearing the same uniforms for all three sports softball, volleyball,

baseball…can't we spend some money and get them softball uniforms? That was my

dad... I was proud. So, I watched how may were as people, they were always

respectful…they taught us how to be selfless and non-selfish in giving, and tolerant. For

example, there was one black family in our small community in Ohio, wasn't a very big

city. No one had to tell me that that family was. experiencing something different than all

of us. My parents would explain that to us. So just every everything was a lesson. We

were one of those families that sat around the table talked about things. That's how I

learned… The values that I have today about the simplest things were learned there over

time. There was an expectation that when you leave the House, graduated, and get a job, I

was going to carry those [lessons/principles] on…That's the way things should happen.

Jaylen's reflection on her childhood experiences provide evidence that early childhood influence

can have an impact on leadership behavior. Similar findings were revealed through discussion

with other participants. Jakayla reflected on childhood lessons she's learned from her mother's

behaviors:

I was always just doing random things as a kid. In church, I was always told well black

people don't do this, we can't do that, and my mom would get some adults and get kids in

the vans and drive them so they could do things that they thought they couldn't do. So,

one time we went ice skating. And just watching them see an obstacle, or something that

they couldn't do you know, be at their disposal, they had a great time doing it. it's things

like that…I was exposed to my mom's leadership. Something else that she would do was

at work, she would tell people "If you have family obligations, those come first. You

know what you need to do to meet the expectations and the goals at work, but you've got

to take care of home." My mom was a single parent. I learned to apply these lessons to

the way that I lead my team.

On a similar note, Dovie spoke to how she learned to emulate the servant leadership behaviors of

her parents:

My father is definitely a servant leader. He was a top executive. I don't know the behind

the scenes look at my father at work, but when I look at my father in retirement, he's

dedicated his whole retirement, and really before that, in his free time to helping kids. He

helped them gain skills and experiences within the middle school and high school, aged

particularly men, because he feels like that will make them better. I just feel like he

doesn't have to do that in retirement. He could be just on vacation. My mom always said,

"your father's working harder in retirement than he did when he was not." He really just

like helping others and he's in a leadership role, so I would just attach it to like kind of

servant leadership … it was the hands-on things that he's doing with kids… he's teaching

them how to tie a knot, or like go in the wilderness… he's does outdoor education.

Not only did Dovie learn to help others through watching her father be a servant leader, but she

also learned much from her mother as well. She explained:

I have memories of her [mom] as a kid…I was a pretty good student…I was the one

that was going to stay up till 2AM to do a paper and my mom would come in and sit.

She would help me. She'd say "I'll type you talk" or if I had a test, my mom would come

in and say "let me quiz you" ….my mom also coached my team's growing up, she

started a volleyball club for me… she did a lot of helping happened.

While the previous examples mentioned the influence of both fathers, and mothers, it was also

noted that grandparents played a role for some participants as well. For example, Alex mentioned

that she learned the art of listening through the words of her grandfather. She explained, "My

granddad used to say... "You first listen to understand, then you listen to comprehend, and then

you listen to execute." Alex has taken this lesson and applied it closely to her leadership

behaviors in her current work life. She goes on to explain:

I need to see what you say in written form, and then and I comprehend what you say.

then, I can execute what you say. I need go to those three levels to make certain that I

really understanding in get what a person is saying and doing.

In all, childhood influence was a large factor in the servant leadership development of many of

the participant, as they learned values, and formative lessons.

Role Models

Outside of childhood experiences, senior level administrators were also influenced to practice

servant leadership behavior through various role models. Creg reflected on his mentee

experience that encouraged him to serve others:

I worked in the alumni association, and I worked for an incredible individual that

basically, told me from day one "Alumni don't interrupt our business, alumni are our

business." Now, I think "students don't interrupt my business, students are my business",

so the students take the top priority to anything that I do.

On a similar note, JaCorey also reflected on the impact that mentors have served as a modeling

example of leadership behaviors:

I've had some good mentors in graduate school and in the department of athletics….

early on, I was a teaching assistant, and had a mentor in physical therapy. Ultimately, he

would allow me to teach certain class days. He'd provide feedback on my performance.

And about five or six years after, he handed over the entire course to me. Being able to

speak to students and have them try to understand what you're trying to impart on them,

and then seeing the product of your work kind of come to light…it's something that had a

big impact on me with respect to trying to lead a group of other teaching assistant, and 55

students in all. I have the same kind of end goal in mind [that his mentor had].

In this example, JaCorey learned to empower others through experiencing the way that his mentor empowered him. He practiced the concept of "paying it forward".

Notably, other senior level administrators mentioned times/experiences that had a profound impact on their servant leadership development. Ryan reflected on how the actions of someone she worked with provided a model example of servant leadership, that still resonates with her today:

> It was after the game, the team was in showering, and so the coaches and some other folks are on the bus, but we're waiting for them [the athletes] to come back. So, the food gets delivered, and there's this big box of chips, all kinds of the sort of chips. I remember the one assistant coach said, "everybody, grab what you want it, because the kids are going to come back out". I'll never forget…This athletic trainer said, "Nope, I'm going to wait. I'll let them have what they want, and I'll take whatever is left." That told me volumes about that person, and how he views his role, and how he supports people.

For Ryan, that situation stood as a vivid example of how to place the needs of others *before* the needs of oneself. In summary, role models influenced the servant leadership behaviors of senior level administrators.

Religion

Many (78.8%) of the participants mentioned that their servant leadership behavior has been influenced by their religious practices. Jeremiah considers himself of the Christian faith, and explained that he seeks to serve the way that Jesus Christ did:

> One of the greatest servant leaders in the history of the world was Jesus. He obviously provides a great example of how to serve others. I'm far *far* [sic] from perfect, without

question, but I think that's an example for me about "how do I help others? how do I empower them? How do I prepare my assistants to lead one day?

Similarly, George provided an example, inspiring him, of one of Jesus's behaviors. He shared, "I have been exposed to the scriptures and the leadership of what Jesus Christ. He washed his disciple's feet. That resonates with me It makes sense to my brain, but then also resonates with my heart." He then humorously added, "I haven't washed my staff's feet, but I do try to make sure they have what they need to have positive experiences." As indicated by George's words, he strives to emulate the examples that he learned from his biblical teachings. To continue, the concept of religious influence was consistent among several of the senior level administrators. Alex, who grew up in a religious household explained how she has been influenced by her faith by saying "My dad is a pastor and has pastored folks for over 30 some years. His statement to me was always that "You know you're ready to lead when you're ready to bear the burden of leading". She went on to explains the main responsibility that she takes from her religious principles:

The main thing is…You help others first before yourself. Your blessings come when you give to others. My window [of blessings] is open the more I give back to the people around me. Trying to find all of the nuance ways within this industry that you can bring your faith into it, has worked for me.

Alex later explained that helping others within the intercollegiate athletic industry is her "ministry". Similar to Alex, other senior level administrators referred back to their religious teachings. JaCorey said that he learns from both the old and new testaments of the Bible. Ryan, who does volunteer a portion of her time in a parish to counsel married couples, said that her

religious teaching has taught her to be a "servant of the earth". Jakayla also reflected on how her biblical teaching have influenced her servant leadership behavior. She explained:

> I go back to my brother's keeper, which is the story of Canaan. It comes from the story of Cain and Abel in the Book of Genesis, and that's really guides me particularly now, when we're talking about just student-athlete welfare, staff welfare, and making sure that people are not burned out. Being real, insightful, listening, and being my brother's keeper.

In all, many of the senior level administrators developed their behaviors based off of their religious teachings.

Professional Development Opportunities and Resources

The majority (10 of 12, or 83%) of senior level administrators highlighted the fact that they have learned significantly from professional development opportunities, and other resources. For example, JaCorey mentioned that he attended professional trainings from The Disney Institute. He also mentioned attending a Dean Smith Leadership training in North Carolina as well. JaCorey shared the benefits of attending these trainings:

> I was exposed to those programs and took bits and pieces of those lessons. I learned to read people's nonverbal and try to match those up with their verbal's, which has helped me. I learned to navigate conversations or navigate negotiation as well.

A few senior level administrators mentioned other professional development organizations as well. She has attended institutes for ethnic minorities and is an active member of Women Leaders in Collegiate Sport, a leadership organization "that develops, connects, and advances women working in college sports and beyond." Karen also highlighted that she has attended

many institutes at previous institutions that she worked for, and that she has also been a part of leadership cohorts. According to Karen:

> They [leadership trainings] do teach you a lot, but what I get the most out of them is the connection and the network. I am a people person, so I like to be able to draw from other people. That's personally what I've gotten the most out of those the Institutes/organizations.

Karen remained very close with the people that she did the leadership trainings with. She explained, "Those people within your cohort become your family. I did it in 2012 and to this day, we still talk all the time. We're still very close." In all, Karen has attended many institutes that have ultimately helped her develop professionally.

While some senior level administrators learned from leadership institutes, many of them learned through formal education. Jaylen, who majored in journalism, explained "My journalism background really helps me, because I when I have an issue in front of me "I go who, what, when, where, why, how?" Dovie picked this method up from journalism, as it was essential for her to generate stories in her field. On a similar note, Jakayla, who majored in cultural anthropology, also used her knowledge in how she interacts with people. She explained:

> I ended up studying in anthropology, which was amazing I loved it…one of the things we talked about in cultural anthropology was space…based on your relationship with someone, if you step too close, you are in someone's personal space. But it depends on your relationship with them and the context. I also learned how to position myself when I am talking *to* someone; you position yourself Infront of them… versus when you're talking *with,* where you position yourself leaned in.

Jakayla's example provided context as to how she uses her formal education to meet the emotional needs of others. On a similar note, Dovie took psychology courses and uses her knowledge from her studies in her interactions with people. She explained, "I was a psych major for like a hot second, I didn't end up majoring in that in the end, but it taught me how people tick and like what makes them work." Notably, while Dovie did not major in psychology, taking several courses helped her understand how to interact with people.

Other senior level administrators mentioned that books have also been a great resource from their development as servant leaders. Alex explained:

> In 2009, I was given a book called *Too Many Bosses, Too Few Leaders*. I read that every year. It truly helped codify how I do what I do. Like people care about their RED (Role, Environment, and Development). That came from that book. That is how I operate. That is, I do performance evaluations.

Similar to Alex, Ryan also reads as a way to enhance her leadership development. She said,

> I'm a reader... I read a pretty wide range of things from fiction to nonfiction to spiritual books to leadership books. I'm always trying to look at a *Harvard Business Review*, *New York Times*. I find intersectionality…trying to figure out how this applies in this situation…is really helpful, gives me more depth to my foundation.

Notably, Ryan was not mainly focused on reading leadership books, but they did influence her leadership behavior, as she learned how to apply concepts into her daily life. This notion of learning through the intersectionality of different disciplines and experiences, was also mentioned by Jaylen. Jaylen reflected on her reading habits:

> Right now, I have more time to study the history of the state. With our politics right now, you can probably understand why I'm more curious about it than ever before. I read

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everything from the anti-abortion movement to Covid-19 pandemic. There's a lot of

history, so I've been reading a lot of really good books about our state. I used to read

because it helped me improve my vocabulary, which I needed for writing.

In all, many of the senior level administrator's servant leadership behaviors were influenced by

their development through their formal education, book reading, and professional opportunities

such as leadership institutes, and career advancement organizations. Ultimately, the findings

reveal that there are several key factors—childhood experiences, religion, role models, and

professional development opportunities—that have influenced the servant leadership behavior of

senior level administrators. The next chapter provides further discussion to each of these themes.

Figure 3: Key Experiences
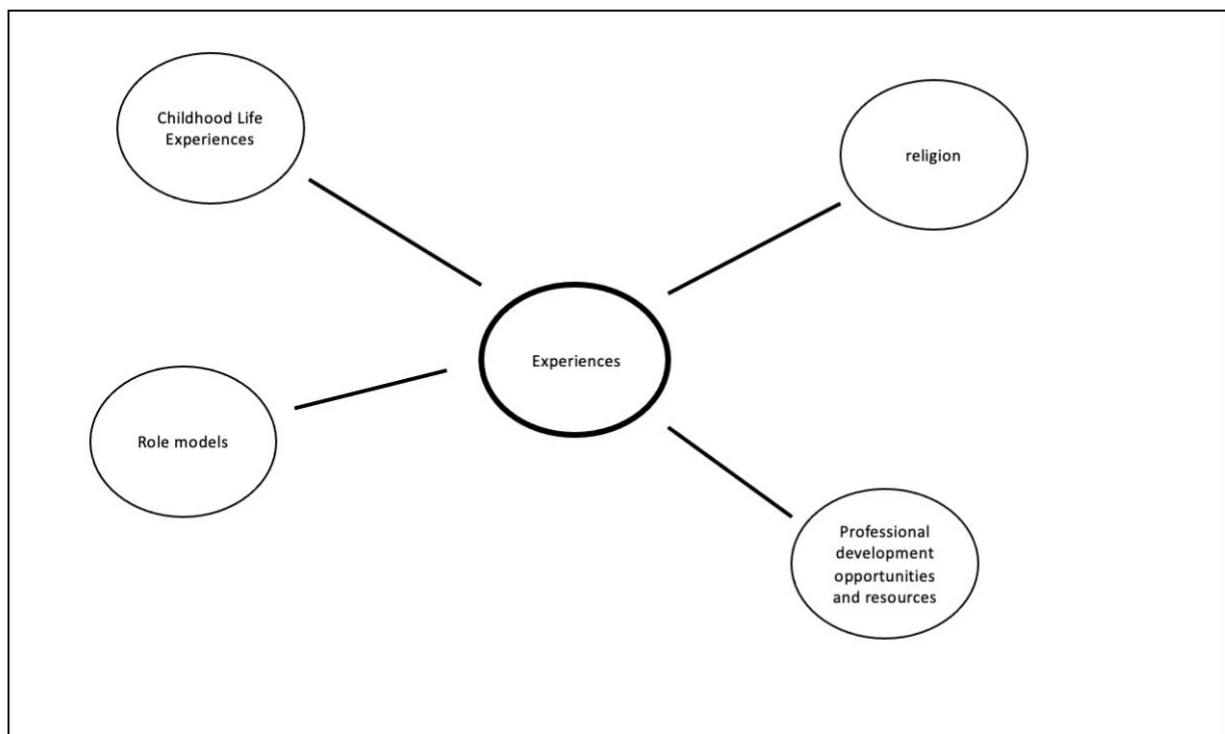
Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter provides a summary of the study—including background, purpose, research questions, methodology and findings. Further, an in-depth discussion about the research findings, and its contribution to existing servant leadership literature, was provided in this chapter. The chapter ends with a detailed look at the study's practical implications, limitations, and areas for future research.

Summary

Historic scandals such as the Operations Varsity Blue's and Penn State's Sexual Assault Scandal have occurred at the highest level of college athletics and have triggered national concern and desire for leadership change (Burton & Peachey, 2017; Chappell, 2012; Winter et al., 2019). Academics and practitioners alike have called for a reexamination of leadership styles and behaviors in the industry. In "The Call for Servant Leadership in Intercollegiate Athletics", Burton and Peachey (2013) advocated for the exploration of servant leadership within administration/leadership as a means to curb the history of scandals that have existed within the industry. Still, knowledge pertaining servant leadership behaviors of intercollegiate athletic administrative (non-coaching) roles in the NCAA is sparse (Reed et al., 2011). Even less is known about this servant leadership behavior at the Division I FBS Autonomy Five level. This research, exploratory in nature, answers the call to gain a better understanding about if/how servant leadership currently exist and operates within intercollegiate athletic administration leadership. Specifically, this study assessed the characteristics, experiences, and strategies of servant leadership behaviors among Division I FBS Autonomy Five senior level administrators. The following research questions guided this exploratory study:

1. Are there characteristics that predict servant leadership behavior among NCAA Division I FBS Power 5 Athletic Directors, and senior level administrators?

2. Are there strategies that senior level administrators use to practice servant leadership behaviors within intercollegiate athletic departments?

3. Are there life events, experiences, or resources, that influence servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators?

The conceptual framework used for this study is the *Multilevel conceptual model of leadership in sport management* by Peachey et al. (2015). This framework provided a basis for understanding the antecedents and experiences of servant leadership in the intercollegiate sport space. Ultimately, this framework explained that leadership is a multi-dimensional concept that involves individual, group and organizational dynamics.

Methodology-wise, a two-part mixed method approach was taken to explore the research questions. A quantitative approach was utilized for the first portion of the study. Specifically, the collected data through the distribution of the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Further descriptive statistics, correlation procedures, and regression analysis were utilized through statistics software SPSS. To continue, the second portion of the study was qualitative in nature. A total of 12 senior level administrators participated in a semi-structured, open-ended interview process. The data collected from the interview process helped provide an in-depth analysis of the life experiences, and events that influence servant leadership behavior. In addition, the interviews also provided meaningful data pertaining to the strategies that senior level administrators implement to practice servant leadership within their leadership capacities. Central to answering the study's research questions, the findings emerged from the data:

1. The servant leadership behaviors of senior level administrators are characterized by (1) people oriented, (2) Humility, (3) Authenticity, (4) Commitment to ethical behavior, (5) Providing direction, and (6) Wisdom.

2. Childhood experiences, role models, religious experiences and professional development experiences influenced servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators.

3. Senior level administrators who exhibit servant leadership characteristics, implement various people-centric practices that demonstrate servant leadership behaviors.

Discussion of Findings

RQ1: Are there characteristics that predict servant leadership behavior among NCAA Division I FBS Power 5 Athletic Directors, and senior level administrators?

Given the series of historical scandals that have occurred at the Division I level of athletics, scholars have urged senior level administrators to consider servant leadership over transformational leadership within their practices (Burton & Peachey, 2013). They have highlighted that transformation leadership's hyper focus on organizational performance and objectives led to ethical failures in the industry, as evidenced by the history of scandals (Burton & Peachey, 2017; Stone et al., 2004). While there has been a push for practitioners to consider servant leadership, literature pertaining to the existence of servant leadership is sparse. Burton and Peachey (2013) noted that "future research should examine if leaders in intercollegiate sport identify with characteristics and/or behaviors described as servant leadership" (p. 367). The findings of this study contribute to the field of knowledge by providing evidence that there are leadership within intercollegiate athletics that do embody the characteristics found in existing servant leadership literature. Specifically, senior level administrators exhibited several key servant leadership characteristics— (1) People-oriented, (2) Humility, (3) Authenticity, (4)

Commitment to ethical behavior, (5), Providing Direction, and (6) Wisdom. The remainder of this section discusses each of these characteristics, as it relates to previous servant leadership literature.

To begin, the findings of this study suggests that senior level administrators are highly people-oriented. People-oriented is defined as a person who is "skilled at or focused on interaction with people" (Oxford Lexico, 2022). This finding supports previous literature, as the notion of being people oriented has long been understood as a characteristic of servant leadership (Aij & Rapsaniotis, 2017; Beck, 2014; Burton et al., 2017; van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Kumar (2018) explained that servant leadership, at the organizational level, is about envisioning or creating a "sustainable, people centric, and growth oriented" environment (p.48). In alignment with this definition, the results of the study indicated that senior level administrators were found to place emphasis on caring for others above themselves; they strived to make a difference in the lives of others.

Several people-oriented sub themes—empowerment, interpersonal support, and individual consideration—emerged from the data, and have relevance to existing servant leadership literature. The findings revealed that senior level administrators placed significant emphasis on empowering others. This finding supports prior literature, as the empowerment of others has been identified as a servant leadership characteristic or antecedent by various scholars (Bennis; 1997; Conger, 2000; Dennis & Bocrnea, 2005; Liden et al., 2008; Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). In fact, scholars have viewed the notion of empowerment as one of the functional or main attributes of servant leadership (Russell & Stone, 2002). Notably, empowerment has been defined in various ways throughout servant leadership literature. According to Russel and Stone (2002), empowerment pertains to

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one's ability to inspire or entrust others with authority, agency, or power. Empowerment also pertains to whether an employee feels like they have autonomy within the workplace (Spreitzer, 2008). Moreover, empowerment does not solely concern the process of providing formal authority or power, as it is also about helping others feel more confident and more capable within themselves. (Oxford Lexico, 2022). Thomas and Venthouse (1990) highlighted that empowerment is about helping others feel intrinsically motivated to improve. Van Dierendonck and Nuijen (2011) noted that "Empowering leadership behavior includes aspects like encouraging self-directed decision making, information sharing, and coaching for innovative performance" (p.251). In alignment with these definitions, the findings of this study support existing literature, as servant leaders placed significant emphasis on their desire and ability to empower those around them; they sought to provide their followers with the teaching/coaching, formal trainings and experiences necessary to stretch and grow their professional abilities. Participants also emphasized that they strive to help others become the best version of themselves, not just professionally, but also personally. In essence, they concern themselves with developing people wholistically. This finding embodies the sentiments of Sullivan (2019) who expressed:

> …it is my hope that coaches and administrators consider a servant leadership philosophy as ultimately, athletes will benefit in many ways, but most of all in having the chance to experience well-being, to become motivated, fully functioning, and the best version of themselves (p.24).

Another people-oriented sub-theme that emerged from the data was the individual consideration. This finding supports existing servant leadership literature, as many scholars have noted that servant leaders focus primarily on the needs and interest of individuals (Greenleaf,

1970; Liden et al., 2014; Mahon, 2020; Parolini et al., 2009; Van Dierendonck & Nuijen, 2011).

The findings of this study revealed that servant leader's highest priority is focusing on the needs of others (Greenleaf, 1970), above their own needs, and above organizational objectives. Notably, individual consideration is not unique to servant leadership, as it has also been identified as an attribute of transformational leadership as well (Bass, 1985). However, scholars have noted that servant leaders focus more on the individual needs and desires of others, in comparison to transformational leaders (Parolini et al., 2009; van Dierendonck & Nuijen, 2011). Burton and Peachey (2017) confirm this notion by indicating that "transformational leaders can act in violation of ethical norms by…overriding individual interest to fulfill organizational objectives" (p. 355). The findings of this study support that found in a study conducted by Dodd et al. (2018), which revealed that employees have perceived athletic directors to place the individual needs of their employees over organizational objectives.

One of the sub-themes revealed in the data is interpersonal support. Interpersonal support refers to when leaders provide assistance or help to individuals, so that they may succeed and grow (Bennett, 2021; Jit et al., 2016). Within servant leadership literature, interpersonal support has been identified as a component of servant leadership (Bennett, 2021; Jit et al., 2016, Reed et al., 2011). Robert Greenleaf (1970), the founder of modern-day servant leadership, famously says that servant leaders provide interpersonal support by helping people… ''grow as persons", so that they can "…more likely to become servants themselves" (p. 7). The findings of this study support existing literature, as servant leaders prioritize their efforts into providing both emotional, professional, and personal support to those both within, and outside of their work environments/formal responsibilities. In terms of helping others outside of the work environment, this study found that senior level administrators who volunteered at least 1 hour per

week were more likely to exhibit servant leadership behavior, in comparison to those who volunteered less than one hour per week. This supports the finding by Beck (2014), who conducted a study among community leaders and found that community leaders came to the same conclusion. In all, this finding seems to suggest that a servant leaders' motivations for serving others is intrinsic in nature, rather than being driven by personal or professional gain. This supports previous literature, as this concept of servant leaders being intrinsically motivated is widely noted in servant leadership literature (Beck, 2014; Bande et al., 2016; Hammermesiter et al., 2008). The benefits/outcomes of providing interpersonal support are widely noted, as Reed et al. (2011) explained that "Interpersonal support offered by top executives can not only help organizational members develop their full potential, but can also foster an organizational culture conducive to growth and service" (p. 425).

Another major theme revealed in this study is that servant leaders provide direction to their followers. This supports previous findings, as various scholars have noted that providing direction is a key characteristic of servant leadership (DeSensi, 2014; Miller, 1995; Peachey et al., 2018; van Dierendonck, 2011). Providing direction refers to a leader's ability to communicate expectations and vision to their followers; this also includes their ability to provide accountability for standards. Consistent with existing literature, senior level administrators who scored high on the SLQ seemed to prioritize providing clear vision/direction of roles, job responsibilities and expectations to those around them. A study conducted by Dodd et al. (2018) found that accountability was the highest characteristics that athletic directors had in the perception of their employees. The findings this study support the notion that athletic directors prioritize providing direction and accountability. While no other studies have examined this concept as it pertains to senior level administrators, various studies note that athletic directors

place effort into creating vision and direction for the athletic department through the development and implementation of a strategic plan (Kriemadis, 1997; Singer & Cunningham, 2018; Starsia, 2010). Ultimately, this study provides additional evidence that senior level administrators, who practice servant leadership, provide direction for their followers.

One of the main characteristics identified in this study was that servant leaders exhibit commitment to ethical behavior. It refers to one's dedication to adhering to ethical values. This characteristic is identified as central to servant leadership (Burton & Peachey, 2013; Greenleaf, 1970; Liden et al., 2008, Miao et al., 2021; Schaubroeck et al., 2011; Sendjaya et al., 2008; Spears, 2010). In fact, scholars have noted that ethical behavior is a distinguishing feature/characteristic of servant leadership, when comparing it to authentic or transformational leadership (Sendjaya et al., 2008; Burton & Peachey, 2013). Notably, transformational leadership has been widely studied and implemented in the field of athletics. Given that transformational leadership's places more focus on organizational objectives than ethical morality (Peachey & Burton, 2017; Stone et al., 2004), scholars have called for industry leaders adopt servant leadership as a means to curb the unethical practices that have been widely publicized across the nation (Achen et al., 2019; Burton & Peachey, 2013; Burton & Peachey, 2017; Dodd et al., 2018). The findings of this study should instill hope in the future of athletics, as it suggests that there are senior level administrators, at the highest level of competition, that prioritize their commitment to ethics above organizational objectives.

Humility was an emerging servant leadership characteristic identified in this study. Specifically, this study found that senior level administrators who practices servant leadership exercise humility regularly. Consistent with the findings of previous studies, humility is a central component of servant leadership behavior (Russell, 2001; Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017).

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DeSensi (2014) explained that "Leaders demonstrating humility place followers first, offer support, assist with followers' performance, and listen to their contributions" (p. 62). Van Dierendonck (2011) provided three components of humility within his servant leadership construct: (1) the ability to place the successes of oneself into perspective, (2) the ability to acknowledge one's one mistakes and limitations, and (3) the awareness to recognizes one's strengths and weaknesses. The findings of this study seem to suggest that senior level administrators practiced these aforementioned components, as they acknowledged their limitations, and placed emphasis on a "flat" organizational environment, where they can both learn and teach from those who have less formal authority as them. This finding also supports the findings of Reed et al. (2011). While Reed et al. (2011) did not use the exact word of "humility", he did use a similar term called egalitarianism; he explained that egalitarianism "rejects the notion that leaders are inherently superior to other organizational members and understanding that learning and influence are multi-directional processes" (p.425). In the context of intercollegiate athletics, athletic directors have been perceived to exercise humility within their roles (Dodd et al., 2018). The findings of this study support that notion.

Another main theme indicated in the findings was that servant leaders were authentic. As defined by Van Dierendonck (2011), authenticity is about being one's true self. An authentic leader chooses to be themselves over, expressing their professional role/identify. Burton et al. (2017) explained that "Authenticity is about expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner feelings and thoughts. A servant leader's authenticity is demonstrated by doing what is promised, being visible within the organization and leading with honesty" (p.231). The finding authenticity as antecedent of servant leaders is parallel with existing servant leadership literature (Laub, 1999; Sendjaya et al., 2008: Van, Dierendonck, 2011; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten,

2011). In terms of the field of intercollegiate athletics, athletic directors have been shown to display authenticity within their leadership (Dodd et al., 2018). The findings of this study support that claim. In addition, this study provides novel insight that athletic directors, are not the only leaders exercising authenticity—other senior level administrators seem to model this characteristic as well.

Lastly, the findings of this study reveal wisdom as an antecedent of servant leadership. wisdom refers to one's astuteness and ability to anticipate the consequences within an environmental (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Beck, 2014). Servant leaders, have a keen awareness of their environment, as they pay close attention to their surroundings and comprehend and anticipate the impact of environmental factors within their line of work. The findings of wisdom as an antecedent are in alignment with various servant leadership studies (Barbuto & Gifford, 2010; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Beck, 2014). In the context of intercollegiate athletics, no study, to my knowledge, has examined wisdom as an antecedent of servant leadership among senior level administrators. In this study, wisdom had the highest sub scores on the SLQ scale. A study by Beck (2014), which examined community leaders, also found wisdom as ranked among the highest sub scores. Given its capacity to predict servant leadership, it can be argued that academics and practitioners evaluate the wisdom levels of intercollegiate leaders, as it could lead to organizational benefits. Specifically, wisdom has been associated with employee satisfaction (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). In all, the antecedents identified— (1) people-oriented, (2) humility, (3) authenticity (4) commitment to ethical behavior (5) providing direction, and (6) wisdom— add novel insights to the antecedents of servant leadership within Division I Power 5 intercollegiate athletic leadership.

RQ2: Are there life events, experiences, or resources, that influence servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators?

Prior to this study, not much has been known about how servant leadership functions within intercollegiate athletics (Burton & Peachey, 2013). This study contributed to the field of knowledge by identifying if and how senior level executives in intercollegiate athletics have been influenced to learn and adopt servant leadership characteristics.

Literature suggests that genetic disposition accounts for only 30% of leadership role occupancy (Arvey et al., 2006; Arvey et al., 2007, Li et al., 2017), which means that 70% of leadership occupancy is a result of environmental factors. The findings of this study support this notion, as it reveals that there are environmental factors that influence servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators. Specifically, this study found several environmental themes emerged in the data: (1) Religious experiences, (2) childhood experiences, (3) professional development resources/opportunities, and (4) role model experiences.

In terms of religious experiences, the level of religious/spirituality identity did not statically predict servant leadership behavior on the SLQ scale. This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Beck (2014) that also found that religious/spiritual affiliation did not predict servant leadership behaviors. While religious identity is not quantitatively associated with servant leadership behavior levels, this qualitative data does find that many of the participants modeled their behaviors after religious teachings. In fact, 78.8% of the senior level administrators (*N*=35) that participated in the SLQ survey identified as "somewhat religious/spiritual" or "very religious/spiritual. Further, 81.8% of the senior level administrators who scored in the top quartile of servant leadership behavior (and participated in the interview process) identified as "somewhat religious/spiritual" or "very religious/spiritual". The qualitative

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interviews suggested that religious experiences did have an influence on their leadership behavior of participants. In fact, several of the participants mentioned that they seek to model their behaviors after biblical teachings. In support of this study's findings, scholars popularly note that many biblical teachings/principles are relevant to servant leadership principles (Crowther, 2018; Echols, 2009; Lanctot & Irving, 2010; Leahy, 2010). Boyum (2008) noted "that Judeo Christian and biblical teaching are foundational to servant leadership as ontology and thus inform and direct the act of servant leadership" (p. 6). In fact, many believe that Jesus was recognized as the ultimate servant leader (Crowther, 2018; Echols, 2009; Lanctot & Irving, 2010; Leahy, 2010). In relation, many of the participants of this study cited Jesus' teaching of stewardship, humility, and service, as a model example for their leadership behaviors. In the context of intercollegiate athletics, no study has examined the religious influences of senior level administrators at Division I FBS institutions. The findings of this study provide evidence that religious affiliations, may serve as a function for influences their servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators in intercollegiate athletics.

In the context of intercollegiate athletics, this is the first study to examine the experiences that have helped shape servant leadership behaviors among intercollegiate athletic administrators. The findings of this study indicated that childhood experiences had an influence on servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators. Some administrators noted that childhood experiences were formative in developing their servant leadership behaviors. This supports the finding that leadership role occupancy is 30% genetic dispositioned and 70% environmental influences (Arvey et al., 2006). Further, this study's finding is also congruent with past literature, as scholars have noted that childhood experiences can have a profound impact leadership development (San Juan, 2005; Sendjaya, 2015). In fact, Zhang et al. (2009) found that

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children who receive higher levels of parental support are more likely to be influenced by environmental factors than genetic disposition. This supports the findings of my study, as participants noted that positive relationships with their family have taught them to serve others, to express humility, and love—all characteristics of servant leadership (DeSensi, 2014; Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2001; Sousa & Van Dierendonck, 2017; van Dierendonk & Patterson, 2015). The finding of this study emphasized the importance of positive childhood experiences, as it can have a profound influence on leadership development. In summary, this finding fills a gap in servant leadership literature in sport by providing evidence that childhood experiences influence servant leadership behavior among senior level administrators in intercollegiate athletic departments.

The findings of this study also revealed that the servant leadership behaviors of senior level administrators have been influenced/inspired by role-models; in essence, they have modeled their behaviors after people who they perceive to exhibited servant leadership characteristics. The concept of role modeling has been seen as a powerful way to influence followers (Bennis & Nanus, 1997; DePree, 1992; Kouzes & Posner, 1993; Melrose, 1995; Page & Wong, 2000; Russell & Stone, 2002). Olesia et al. (2014) noted that "Modeling provides an example and demonstrates the behaviour that the leader is seeking from others. Servant leaders model examples that can be emulated by others" (p. 78). One study found that ethical role model positively influences the ethical leadership of others (Brown & Trevino, 2014). In alignment with exiting literature, the findings of this study suggest that senior level administrators developed their servant leadership behaviors through the model example of their mentors (bosses, coaches, student-athletes, and others they have admired). Notably, participants did not merely model the examples of those in more powerful positions as them, as they were also found

to model examples from peers and administrators who had less formal authority than they did. This suggests that role modeling can be a multi-directional process and does not solely exist in organizational hierarchical structures. This finding aligns with existing literature that speaks to how servant leadership embraces the notion that learning, and influence as a multi-directional process within organizations (Reed et al., 2011). In all, this finding provides novel evidence that role-modeling functions as a learning mechanism for senior level administrators in intercollegiate athletic departments.

While senior level administrators have spoken publicly about the importance of servant leadership (Parker Executive Search, 2022), there is no existing literature as to what resources are available, and if those resources influence servant leadership development in athletic administration. Achen et al. (2019) found that athletic directors could benefit from attending servant leadership workshops and reading books pertaining to the matter. The findings of this study provide evidence that senior level administrators do utilize workshops, books, and other resources. It also suggests that these resources influence their servant leadership behavior. To begin, senior level administrators mentioned that there were experiences through professional organizations that have influenced their leadership behaviors/practices. These organizations include Women Leaders in Sport, the Disney Institute, Minority Opportunities Athletics Association (MOAA), and the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA). Administrators further explained that these various organizations, through workshops and events, have taught them skills such as the art of effective listening and how to increase environmental awareness—which are critical aspects to servant leadership behavior (Reinke, 2004; Rennaker, 2008; Russell & Stone, 2002). Research does support the notion that listening and environmental awareness skills can be taught (Beall et al., 2008; Cetin & Nisanci, 2010;

Funk & Funk, 1989). It also provides evidence that there are industry-specific resources available that senior level administrators use, that ultimately influence their servant leadership behavior.

The findings of this study also revealed that senior level administrators learned to adopt servant leadership characteristics through formal education. Several administrators mentioned that they learned to be people-oriented through taking courses in anthropology and psychology. Notably, servant leadership has origins within anthropological theory (Jones, 2005; Niewold, 2007; Wells, 2004). Psychology has also been viewed as central to the practice of servant leadership as well (Chughtai, 2016; Fields et al., 2015; Parris & Peachey, 2013). Given the relevance between servant leadership and both psychology and anthropology, the finding of this study suggests that formal resources (courses, books, trainings) in anthropology and psychology may be a means of adopting servant leadership behavior.

Prior to this study, not much has been known about how servant leadership functions within intercollegiate athletics (Burton & Peachey, 2013). This study contributes to the field of knowledge by providing evidence that there are environmental factors—religious experiences, childhood experiences, role model experiences, and professional development resources/opportunities—that influence servant leadership behavior. This can prove important to the field of study, as it may provide a greater understanding of how other administrators may learn and adopt servant leadership within intercollegiate athletic departments.

RQ3: Are there strategies that senior level administrators use to practice servant leadership behaviors within intercollegiate athletic departments?

In an attempt to encourage the advancement of servant leadership practices in intercollegiate athletics, scholars in sport management have emphasized that there needs to be a

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greater knowledge about how servant leadership functions within intercollegiate athletics (Burton & Peachey, 2013). Scholars have even provided suggestions/practices as to how it could be implemented within intercollegiate athletics (Dodd et al., 2018; Russell & Stone, 2002), but no research has indicated what servant leadership practices are actually implemented within the field. Answering this call to research, the findings of this study indicate ways/strategies in which senior level administrators practice servant leadership within the Division I Power 5 intercollegiate athletics departments.

People Oriented

This study found that senior level administrators practiced several key people-oriented strategies to support, empower, and show value to others in the workplace. One strategy used was to ask and promote the well-being of others before they carried on with business objectives; their main objective is to serve first. Inquiring about their wellbeing first suggests that the leader prioritizes the emotions, needs, and desires of others before their own needs, and before business objectives. This study revealed that senior administrators do this by adjusting or redelegating workloads when their followers are dealing with personal challenges. This strategy aligns with Greenleaf's (1970) conceptualization that servant leaders serve first. This action is also in alignment with the suggestions by Dodd et al. (2018), that expressed that athletic directors could show stewardship by making work accommodations to fit the needs of others. To continue, another behavior that senior level administrators used was placing effort into intentional and empathic listening. Laub (1999) expressed that listening is a way showing respect and value toward authors. Greenleaf (1977) highlighted the importance of listening by explaining the following:

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Most of us at one time or another, some of us a good deal of the time, would really like to communicate, really get through to a significant level of meaning in the hearer's experience. It can be terribly important. The best test of whether we are communicating at this depth is to ask ourselves first: Are we really listening? Are we listening to the one with whom we want to communicate? Is our basic attitude, as we approach the confrontation, one of wanting to understand? (p. 31).

In alignment with existing servant leadership literature, participants conveyed that they listen first, with the desire to understand the thoughts, needs, and emotions of others. This practice aligns with Covey's (1989) emphasis that true listening is about listening so that deeply so that one understands the emotional and intellectual needs of another person. Research suggests that listening to understand others results in gained respect, mutual comprehension, and openness (McClellan, 2006). In all, the skill of listening has been proven as a servant leadership strategy among senior level administrators. Another strategy that senior level administrators used was making themselves available to invest in and help others. They did this by having a "open door policy", roaming the hallways of their workplace, inviting others to lunches, happy hours, and other informal events. These habits are congruent with those practices mentioned in literature, as Pollard (1997) blatantly stated, "servant leaders should make themselves available. Their door should always be open. They should be out and about talking and listening to people at all levels of the organization" (p. 10). This study found that senior level administrators did just that.

To continue, senior level administrators found several ways to express appreciation and provide encouragement to others. Scholars have popularly associated the notion of encouraging others with the concept of servant leadership (Latif & Marimon, 2019; Liden et al., 2014; Russell & Stone, 2002; Smith et al., 2004). It has been noted that one way to do this is by providing

recognition to others (Russell & Stone, 2002). In alignment with these suggestions of Russel and Stone (2002), participants voiced that they often provide recognition to others by either writing handwritten letters of acknowledgement, providing verbal recognition during meetings, and letters of appreciation, and writing personal birth cards. Notably, some of these habits have been practiced in the general business world. Boone and Makhani (2012) notes that verbal recognition has been critical in servant leadership. The writing of letters/birthday cards is also not novel to the general busines world. For example, Balfor CEO Sheldon Yellen, writes birthday cards to 7,000 employees as means of letting them know he values them first (Ward, 2016). In all, the people-oriented strategies revealed in this study provide a glimpse of how senior level administrators, who identify as servant leaders, show they value others.

Humility

Servant leadership literature suggests that there are various ways to express humility. Patterson (2003) believed that "humility is evidenced in the servant leader, who is a willing listener, feels accountable to those served, and who openly receives criticism and advice, seeing it as a gift or a welcomed opportunity to better serve" (p. 15). In the context of sport management, Dodd et al. (2018) suggested that athletic directors can express humility through being "…honest and open about their weaknesses… and trusting in and delegating tasks to athletic staff, instead of attempting to control everything" (p. 14). In alignment with scholarly suggestions, this study found that athletic directors and other senior level administrators prioritize honesty, use information sharing, and acknowledge their own limitations, as keyways to express humility. It was also found that senior level administrators actively sought opportunities to interact with lower-level staff members. Morris et al. (2020) identified this behavior as an example of humility. He (2020) further explained that engaging and developing lower-level staff "rather than

bringing attention to themselves and having glory reflected on them, servant leaders choose to remain in the background and strive to have credit given to followers" (p. 98). In alignment with the findings of Morris et al. (2020), I found that senior level administrators practiced these behaviors. In all, this study provides novel evidence of how senior level administrators in intercollegiate athletics express humility.

Authenticity

Dodd et al. (2018) suggested that athletic directors can display authenticity by having an open-door policy, where people can freely come and express themselves, speak about challenges and ideas. He also added that listening to others and keeping communication opportunities open is relevant to expressing authenticity. Avoilio and Gardner (2005) noted that authentic leaders communicate their intentions, values, and beliefs, openly. In alignment with existing literature, participants displayed authenticity through listening intently to others, having open-door policies, doing office "pop-ins", and openly communicating their values and intentions to others. Given that no study has examined how athletic directors and senior level administrators practice authentic habits, this study provides a meaningful contribution, as to *how* other leaders within intercollegiate athletics may practice authenticity.

Wisdom

In the context of servant leadership, wisdom pertains to a leader's environmental awareness and anticipation of consequences within their surroundings (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Beck, 2014). Given that this study found that leaders exhibit wisdom, habits used to gain awareness of their surroundings, and to anticipate consequences of decisions were also noted. This study found that senior level administrators placed effort into being environmentally aware. Notably, scholars have been identified awareness as a main attribute of wisdom (Barbuto &

Wheeler, 2006; Kant, 1978; Plato, 1945). In terms of strategies to gaining awareness, participants voiced that they observed their environments (and people within them) from close and afar—in the workplace, at sporting events, and at socials. They typically created a "window of observation" or a period of time in which they dedicate time to observing their environment, as a way to gain a sense of their surroundings. This supports the finding of McKenna et al. (2009), who stated that wise leaders practice careful observation. To continue, this study also found that senior level administrators listened to others intently and paid attention to the verbal and non-verbal cues of others in order to gain awareness of their environments. These habits align with existing literature, as Sternberg (2005) noted that listening is associated with levels of wisdom. In all, these habits provide evidence of how senior level administrators have acquired wisdom in intercollegiate athletic administration.

Commitment to Ethical Behavior

Central to servant leadership, servant leaders display a commitment to ethical behavior (Burton & Peachey, 2013; Greenleaf, 1970; Sendjaya et al., 2008). It pertains to staying true to ethical/personal values. The findings of this study suggest that there are several ways that senior level administrators displayed their commitment to ethics. One of the main strategies used was to write down/reflect on their personal values. Scholars have noted that clarification of personal values is beneficial to people—regardless of age or career position (Marsh, 2007). In fact, it has been cited as an "important requisite for effective functioning" and helps one's values be in congruence with their behaviors (Marsh, 2007, p. 2). In alignment with this, participants noted that writing down their values was a way to hold themselves committed to their values. Notably, this strategy supports the findings of Steele (2016) who found that there are Division I athletic directors that practice this strategy to help manifest their values and goals. To continue, senior

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level administrators were strategic about surrounding themselves with others who prioritized ethical behavior. Given their formal authority, they often hire, reward, and promote ethic-oriented people. This strategy aligns with research that found that employees learn ethical principles/culture by who Athletic directors choose to hire, reward, and promote (Dodd et al., 2018).

Dodd et al. (2018) explained that "Because individuals learn by paying attention to and emulating attitudes, values, and behaviors of credible role models, athletic directors must be explicit and consistent in communicating values-based messages" (p. 16). This study found that there are athletic directors that do place significant emphasis on communicating values to others. By doing so, they hold themselves and others to the organizational values of the organization. In alignment with previous findings, scholars have noted that athletic directors and senior level administrators have been known to communicate organizational values (Lumpkin & Doty, 2014). This communication of values has been known to influence organizational culture (Lumpkin & Doty, 2014). This finding also supports the finding of Steele (2016), who found that athletic directors reiterate organizational core values in meetings as a way to provide continued awareness and commitment. Altogether, strategies utilized by athletic directors' support the findings of existing sport management literature.

Provide Direction

One of the primary aspects of servant leadership is the ability to provide direction (DeSensi, 2014; Miller, 1995; Peachey et al., 2018; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Proving direction refers to a leader's ability to set expectations, vision, and accountability among their followers (DeSensi, 2014). This study found that senior level administrators utilized a few main strategies for doing so. First, they utilized and communicated the athletic department's strategic plan

regularly. This strategy supports previous literature that indicates that athletic directors create and implement the strategic plan is designed to provide direction to the athletic departments (Kriemadis, 1997; Singer & Cunningham, 2018 Yow et al., 2000). Another strategy used was to create or inspire a team-centric environment. Participants noted that taking a team-oriented approach helps everyone understand organizational objectives, and creates group buy in. This approach aligns with existing literature, as scholars note that servant leaders create team-oriented dynamics (Covey, 2005; Finley, 2012; Spears, 1996). To create team-oriented environments, participants were noted to be mindful of the pronouns they used. Specifically, they focused on using "we" instead of "I". Research indicates that using "we" instead of "I" when referring to organizational goals is often associated with leadership ability (Chrobot-Mason et al., 2016). Further, participants also referred to others a "teammate" as a way to emphasize team dynamics. In all, these findings provide insights into how senior level administrators implements strategies to foster direction among their constituents.

Practical Implications of Study

The results of this study suggest that there are certain experiences and characteristics that contribute to servant leaders' behaviors within intercollegiate athletic administration. Being able to understand which experiences, characteristics and behaviors predict servant leadership can help practitioners and human resource personnel identify and select servant leaders more accurately, given greater empirical and theoretical evidence. This could be done if human resource personnel developed and distributed servant leadership-oriented questionnaires and analyzed potential hires during job searches. In effect, this ability to identify and select more accurately, could lead to organizational benefits, as evidence suggests that servant leadership practices has been positively associated with leadership effectiveness, team effectiveness,

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organizational commitment, and employee engagement (Hu & Linden, 2011; Kool & van

Dierendonck, 2012). Servant leadership has also been indirectly associated with work

performance (through increased employee engagement and enthusiasm) (Aboramandan et al.,

2020). In essence, the ability to identify, select, and/or promote servant leaders, based on the

antecedents that could be provided from this study, could potentially lead to organizational

improvements within athletic departments.

In addition, the findings of this study yielded several other benefits. To explain,

understanding the antecedents of servant leadership could also help practitioners further

demystify the long-held debate about whether leaders are born or made—particularly in the field

of athletics. In other words, it provides an understanding about if, how, and/or why certain

experiences and environments have helped shape servant leaders. Because environmental

circumstances or experiences play a role in servant leadership development, practitioners may be

able to create or improve programs (such as mentor programs or professional development

conferences/organizations) or trainings that help foster servant leadership development in others.

Conversely, having an understanding about servant leadership antecedents may also help

scholars and practitioners understand which behaviors or characteristics of servant leadership are

not as teachable as others. In essence, understanding the antecedents of servant leadership can

create more effective servant leadership programs and help practitioners better identify and select

servant leaders for hire within the intercollegiate industry.

Limitations

Several limitations existed within this study. To start, the sample set ($N = 35$) for the

Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) is not fully representative of all senior level

administrators within intercollegiate athletics, as this study only contained a portion of

participants from the NCAA FBS Division, I Power Five conferences. It does not include

Division I senior level administrators from non-autonomy institutions, or administrators from

Division II and Division III institutions. The sample set for the interview process (*N*=12), did not

have representation from all five autonomy conferences, as it did not contain representation from

the PAC-12 conference; this lack of representation is simply due to low participation. To

continue, limitations also existed within the SLQ, as only the self-rater version of the instrument

was utilized. There was an attempt to collect data from the other-rater version, however,

participation for the other-rater version was almost non-existent. Given that only the self-rater

version of the SLQ was used, self-bias limitations exist. To explain, inherent bias exists, as there

is the possibility of a cognitive disconnect between how participants perceive themselves, and

their experiences to be, and the reality of their experiences. In all, limitations existed within the

study.

Future Research

The examination of servant leadership research and knowledge within athletics must

continue to grow. In terms of future research, there are several directions that would

expand/contribute to the field of knowledge. First, research should be conducted to include non-

autonomous institutions, as this study only examined participants at the autonomy five level.

Second, I would encourage researchers to conduct an empirical analysis that includes both a self-

rater and other-rather perception of servant leadership, as this study only examined those who

rated their own behaviors. Third, it would be beneficial to the field of knowledge to examine

servant leadership behaviors and practices among administrators that are not senior level

executives, as these behaviors can exist at different levels of the department (Beck, 2014).

Lastly, an empirical examination of outcomes of servant leadership practices should be

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considered, as little is known about how servant leadership practices impact factors such as

organizational effectiveness and organizational climate within intercollegiate athletic

administration.

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APPENDIX:

Appendix A. Email communication with participants
Appendix B. Consent Forms
Appendix C. Servant Leadership Questionnaire – self-rater version
Appendix D. Interview Protocols and Questions

Appendix A. Email communication with participants

E-mail Message Protocol: Sample Invitation Letter to Senior level Administrators

Dear (Participate Name),

I am a doctoral student at the Ohio State University, and my dissertation research topic involves the study of the leadership behaviors among senior level administrators within intercollegiate athletics departments. This study provides the opportunity for me to understand how/what experiences have led people to developed into servant leadership practices. Understanding the antecedents of servant leadership can create more effective servant leadership programs and may also help practitioners better identify and select servant leaders for hire within the intercollegiate industry.

You have been identified as a senior level administrator and I hope you will consider participating in this study by completing the online survey that is available using the following weblink: [Link]. The survey will require approximately 15 to 20 minutes.

When accessing the weblink, you will be directed to review an online consent form prior to beginning the survey. Any information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept strictly confidential.

This study is looking to recruit other senior-level administrators that you may identify as servant leaders in your workplace. At the end of the survey you will also be asked to provide the names and email addresses of one or two other senior level administrators would recommend for this study. Senior level administrators are defined as individuals with the following titles: Deputy Athletic Director (Deputy AD), Senior Associate Athletic Director (Senior Associate AD), and Associate Athletic Director (Associate AD), Senior Woman Administrator (SWA). Provided this information, the researcher will email the potential participants directly to ask for their participation in the servant leadership questionnaire.

Based on the results of this survey, you may be asked to volunteer to participate in a 45 to 60 minute interview. The interview asks about events or experiences in your life that have impacted your leadership development and what is something you feel deeply about in terms of serving others. It also asks you questions about your experiences as an athletic department leader that may influence your behaviors as a servant leader.

Participants may interview through their own computer, tablet, or mobile device. The interview must take place in a private location/setting of the participants choosing.

With participant permission, audio and video recorded interviews will be conducted and stored on OSU Zoom Account. It is only accessible to the investigators for the purposes of data analysis. Recordings will be destroyed after transcription.

The automated transcription function in Zoom will be utilized to transcribe the recorded interviews. The transcript from interviews will be placed on a password-protected Microsoft

Word document and stored on Ohio State One Drive. The researchers will have access to the data through the Ohio State Account. The researcher will be the sole reviewer of the transcriptions.

Upon completion of the study, all interview recordings, transcripts, and survey data will be erased and destroyed from the aforementioned folder in their entirety.

The total time commitment between both the survey and the interview is between 60-80 minutes.

Thank you in advance for your participation. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments by email at lipsey.25@osu.edu or by phone at 269-910-8375.

You may reply to lipsey.25@osu.edu and ask to be removed from future emails if you are not interested in participating, and I will not contact you again.

Best,

Javonte U. Lipsey, M.S.
3rd year PhD student – Sport Management
The Ohio State University

E-mail Message Protocol: Sample Reminder 1 to Senior level Administrators

Dear (Participate Name),

Recently, I contacted you by email about participating in a research survey on the leadership characteristics of intercollegiate athletics senior level administrators. Our records indicate you have not completed the survey yet, and we wanted to remind you that the deadline for completion is _____ (Date not yet specified).

This research is part of my dissertation studies at The Ohio State University. Several intercollegiate athletic department personnel have agreed to participate in this study.

The survey will require approximately 15 to 20 minutes and the information you provide is indispensable to the success of understanding more about servant leadership in intercollegiate athletics. Please click on the following weblink to complete the survey [Link].

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. When accessing the weblink, you will be directed to review the online consent form prior to beginning the survey. All information obtained during this study will be kept strictly confidential.

This study is looking to recruit other senior-level administrators that you may identify as servant leaders in your workplace. At the end of the survey you will also be asked to provide the names and email addresses of one or two other senior level administrators would recommend for this study. Senior level administrators are defined as individuals with the following titles: Deputy Athletic Director (Deputy AD), Senior Associate Athletic Director (Senior Associate AD), and Associate Athletic Director (Associate AD), Senior Woman Administrator (SWA). Provided this information, the researcher will email the potential participants directly to ask for their participation in a version of the servant leadership questionnaire.

Based on the results of this survey, you may also be asked to volunteer to participate in a 45 to 60 minute interview. The interview asks about events or experiences in your life that have impacted your leadership development and what is something you feel deeply about in terms of serving others. It also asks you questions about your experiences as an athletic department leader that may influence your behaviors as a servant leader.

The interviews will be conducted via Zoom. Participants may interview through their own computer, tablet, or mobile device. The interview must take place in a private location/setting of the participants choosing.

With participant permission, audio and video recorded interviews will be conducted and stored on OSU Zoom Account. It is only accessible to the investigators for the purposes of data analysis. Recordings will be destroyed after transcription.

The automated transcription function in Zoom will be utilized to transcribe the recorded interviews. The transcript from interviews will be placed on a password-protected Microsoft Word document and stored on Ohio State One Drive. The researchers will have access to the

data through the Ohio State Account. The researcher will be the sole reviewer of the transcriptions.

Upon completion of the study, all interview recordings, transcripts, and survey data will be erased and destroyed from the aforementioned folder in their entirety.

The total time commitment between both the survey and the interview is between 60-80 minutes.

Thank you in advance for your participation. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments by email at lipsey.25@osu.edu or by phone at 269-910-8375.

You may reply to lipsey.25@osu.edu and ask to be removed from future emails if you are not interested in participating, and I will not contact you again.

Best,

Javonte U. Lipsey, M.S.
3rd year PhD student – Sport Management
The Ohio State University

E-mail Message Protocol: Sample Reminder 2 to Senior level Administrators

Dear (Participate Name),

During the month of _____, I contacted you via email about participating in a research survey on the leadership characteristics of intercollegiate athletics senior level administrators We have not received a response from you yet, and we understand the survey came in a typically busy season of the year.

We have received over XX responses from intercollegiate athletic administrators from several leadership programs and are grateful for this response. If you have not responded and wish to be included in this research, we look forward to having your participation. We will extend the survey window until the end of business day, (Date not yet specified)

This research is part of my dissertation studies at The Ohio State University. This survey will require approximately 15 to 20 minutes and requires the completion of an on-line survey that is posted at the following website: [link].

When accessing the weblink, you will be directed to review an online consent form prior to beginning the survey. The information you provide is indispensable to the success of this project. Participation in this study is voluntary. All information obtained during this study will be kept strictly confidential.

This study is looking to recruit other senior-level administrators that you may identify as servant leaders in your workplace. At the end of the survey, you will also be asked to provide the names and email addresses of one or two other senior level administrators would recommend for this study. Senior level administrators are defined as individuals with the following titles: Deputy Athletic Director (Deputy AD), Senior Associate Athletic Director (Senior Associate AD), and Associate Athletic Director (Associate AD), Senior Woman Administrator (SWA). Provided this information, the researcher will email the potential participants directly to ask for their participation in a version of the servant leadership questionnaire.

Based on the results of this survey, you may be asked to volunteer to participate in a 45 to 60 minute interview. The interview asks about events or experiences in your life that have impacted your leadership development and what is something you feel deeply about in terms of serving others. It also asks you questions about your experiences as an athletic department leader that may influence your behaviors as a servant leader.

The interviews will be conducted via Zoom. Participants may interview through their own computer, tablet, or mobile device. The interview must take place in a private location/setting of the participants choosing.

With participant permission, audio and video recorded interviews will be conducted and stored on OSU Zoom Account. It is only accessible to the investigators for the purposes of data analysis. Recordings will be destroyed after transcription.

The automated transcription function in Zoom will be utilized to transcribe the recorded interviews. The transcript from interviews will be placed on a password-protected Microsoft Word document and stored on Ohio State One Drive. The researchers will have access to the data through the Ohio State Account. The researcher will be the sole reviewer of the transcriptions.

Upon completion of the study, all interview recordings, transcripts, and survey data will be erased and destroyed from the aforementioned folder in their entirety.

The total time commitment between both the survey and the interview is between 60-80 minutes.

Thank you in advance for your participation. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments by email at lipsey.25@osu.edu or by phone at 269-910-8375

You may reply to lipsey.25@osu.edu and ask to be removed from future emails if you are not interested in participating, and I will not contact you again.

Best,

Javonte U. Lipsey, M.S.
3rd year PhD student – Sport Management
The Ohio State University

E-mail Message Protocol: Sample Leader Participants Selected for Interview

Dear (Participate Name),

I am a doctoral student at the Ohio State University. You recently completed an on-line survey for my dissertation research. This study provides the opportunity for me to understand how/what experiences have led people to developed into servant leadership practices. Understanding the antecedents of servant leadership can create more effective servant leadership programs and may also help practitioners better identify and select servant leaders for hire within the intercollegiate industry.

Based on the results of that survey, you have scored high in servant leadership characteristics. I am hoping that you would be willing to consider participating in an 45 to 60 minute interview, via Zoom, to further explore why you demonstrated servant leadership characteristics. I would like to ask you about events or experiences in your life that have impacted your leadership development and what is something you feel deeply about in terms of serving others. I would also ask you questions about your experiences as an athletic department leader that may influence your behaviors as a servant leader.

You are welcome to ask any questions regarding the focus of the interview. Click the following weblink to review and complete consent form [link]. Consent will need to be provided prior to commencing the interview.

Upon completing consent form, I would like to schedule a time to interview with you. What day/time would be most convenient for you to meet for about 45 to 60 minutes?

Participants may interview through their own computer, tablet, or mobile device. The interview must take place in a private location/setting of the participants choosing.

With participant permission, audio and video recorded interviews will be conducted and stored on OSU Zoom Account. It is only accessible to the investigators for the purposes of data analysis. Recordings will be destroyed after transcription.

The automated transcription function in Zoom will be utilized to transcribe the recorded interviews. The transcript from interviews will be placed on a password-protected Microsoft Word document and stored on Ohio State One Drive. The researchers will have access to the data through the Ohio State Account. The researcher will be the sole reviewer of the transcriptions.

Upon completion of the study, all interview recordings, transcripts, and survey data will be erased and destroyed from the aforementioned folder in their entirety.

I look forward to your response within the next 3-5 days if you are interested in participating in this interview. If I do not hear from you, I will assume you are no longer interested.

Please complete the online consent form prior to our interview. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments by email at lipsey.25@osu.edu or by phone at 269-910-8375.

You may reply to lipsey.25@osu.edu and ask to be removed from future emails if you are not interested in participating, and I will not contact you again.

Best,

Javonte U. Lipsey, M.S.
3rd year PhD student – Sport Management
The Ohio State University

E-mail Message Protocol: Sample Interview Scheduling Follow up

Dear (Participate Name),

Thank you for taking the time to complete the online consent form and provide your availability for a 45 to 60 minute Zoom interview. Based on the availability that you provided, our interview will be at _____(date and time). Please see below for Zoom link:

(Located here will be Zoom link, and passcode)

Participants may interview through their own computer, tablet, or mobile device. The interview must take place in a private location/setting of the participants choosing.

Provided participant permission, audio and video recorded interviews will be conducted and stored on OSU Zoom Account. It is only accessible to the investigators for the purposes of data analysis. Recordings will be destroyed after transcription.

The automated transcription function in Zoom will be utilized to transcribe the recorded interviews. The transcript from interviews will be placed on a password-protected Microsoft Word document and stored on Ohio State One Drive. The researchers will have access to the data through the Ohio State Account. The researcher will be the sole reviewer of the transcriptions.

Upon completion of the study, all interview recordings, transcripts, and survey data will be erased and destroyed from the aforementioned folder in their entirety.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments by email at lipsey.25@osu.edu or by phone at 269-910-8375.

You may reply to lipsey.25@osu.edu and ask to be removed from future emails if you are not interested in participating, and I will not contact you again.

Best,

Javonte U. Lipsey, M.S.
3rd year PhD student – Sport Management
The Ohio State University

Appendix B. Consent Forms

WEB-BASED INFORMED CONSENT FORM A: Quantitative Survey Senior Level
Administrator Participants

Please read the following information carefully. Then indicate that you have read and agree to the terms of this consent agreement by typing your name at the bottom of the page. Confirm your participation by typing your first and last name below, and clicking on "Continue" to proceed to the survey.

Title of Project:

A Beacon of Hope: Assessing Servant Leadership among Intercollegiate Athletic Executives

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this study is to examine the antecedents and strategies of servant leadership as a means to identify and develop servant leaders. This research is being conducted as part of the requirements for completing a doctoral dissertation. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a senior level administrator within a Division Autonomy 5 Athletic Department.

Procedures:

Participation in this study will require approximately 10-15 minutes of your time to complete a web-based survey. Your participation is voluntary. At the beginning of the survey you will be asked to complete a demographic information sheet. You will also be asked to distribute a website address to 2-3 of your co-workers that invites them to complete a shorter version of this survey that asks for similar information about their perception of your leadership characteristics. You will also have the opportunity to volunteer to be interviewed for a second phase of this study, but this is not required to participate in the survey.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time in the process.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to your participation in this study. The information gained from this study may help us to better understand why senior level leaders in athletics adopt servant leadership characteristics.

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. Individual names will be replaced with codes. Names will then be deleted from all records and there will be no way to identify who completed the surveys. The electronic data will be maintained on the principal investigator's secure, password- protected personal laptop computer. No hard copies of the data will be kept.

The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as aggregated data or anonymously. Any information that could potentially identify you, such as gender, ethnicity or employment/location descriptions, will be carefully phrased to avoid violating this anonymity.

Compensation:

No compensation is provided for participation in this study.

Opportunity to Ask Questions:

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. Or you may call either investigator at any time at the phone numbers listed below.

Please contact the investigator if you want to voice concerns or complaints about the research, and/or in the event of a research related injury. Please contact the Ohio State University Institutional Review Board at (614) 688-8457 for the following reasons: (a) you wish to talk to someone other than the research staff to obtain answers to questions about your rights as a research participant; (b) to voice concerns or complaints about the research; (c) to provide input concerning the research process; (d) in the event the study staff could not be reached.

Freedom to Withdraw:

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or the Ohio State University.

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By typing your name below, and proceeding with the web survey, you are certifying that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You may print a copy of this consent form to keep or request a copy from the principal investigator.

Name and Phone Number of Investigator(s)

Javonte Lipsey, M.S., Principal Investigator (269) 910-8375

Brian Turner, PhD, Secondary Investigator (614) 247-8374

Please indicate that you have read and agree to the terms of this informed consent letter by typing your first and last name below, confirming your participation, and clicking on "Continue" to proceed to the survey.

INFORMED CONSENT FORM B: Qualitative Interviews of senior level administrator
Participants

Title of Project:

A Beacon of Hope: Assessing Servant Leadership among Intercollegiate Athletic Executives

Purpose of the Research:

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Procedures:

Participation in this study will initially require approximately 60 of your time which involves an in-person interview at a location convenient to your local employment to discuss the reasons you have demonstrated servant leadership characteristics. A sample of the types of questions asked in the interview include: "Why do you lead?" and "What is something you feel deeply about in terms of serving the larger community?" Additional questions will be asked to further explore the answers you give to provide a broad sense of the meaning behind your lived experiences as an intercollegiate athletic administrator. This interview will be audio recorded with your permission.

You will receive an electronic report of the interview including the exact words you stated. The report will likely include a few additional questions from the interviewer to clarify the original responses given, which will help maintain the accuracy of the information provided. You are asked to review the report and respond to the questions by your preference of either e-mail or phone. This will require approximately 20-30 minutes of your time.

Risks and/or Discomforts:

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this research. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time in the process.

Benefits:

There are no direct benefits to your participation in this study. The information gained from this study may help us to better understand why intercollegiate athletic administrators adopt servant leadership characteristics.

_____ please initial

Confidentiality:

Any information obtained during this study which could identify you will be kept strictly confidential. Individual names will be replaced with codes. Names will then be deleted from all records and there will be no way to identify who completed the surveys. The electronic data will be maintained on the principal investigator's secure, password- protected personal laptop computer. No hard copy data will exist. The information obtained in this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but the data will be reported as aggregated data or anonymously.

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Freedom to Withdraw:

You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with the investigators or the Ohio State University.

Consent, Right to Receive a Copy:

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. Your signature certifies that you have decided to participate having read and understood the information presented. You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep.

_____ Yes if you agree to be audio recorded during the interview.

_____ No if you do not agree to be audio recorded during the interview.

Signature of Participant: _____

Signature of Research Participant

Name and Phone number of investigator(s)

Javonte Lipsey, M.S., Principal Investigator (269) 910-8375

Brian Turner, PhD, Secondary Investigator (614) 247-8374

Appendix C. Servant Leadership Questionnaire – self-rater version

The Servant Leadership Questionnaire Items (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006)

Altruistic calling (α = .82)
01 This person puts my best interests ahead of his/her own.
03 This person does everything he/she can to serve me.
35 This person sacrifices his/her own interests to meet my needs.
46 This person goes above and beyond the call of duty to meet my needs.

 Emotional healing (α = .91)
05 This person is one I would turn to if I had a personal trauma.
16 This person is good at helping me with my emotional issues.
27 This person is talented at helping me to heal emotionally.
38 This person is one that could help me mend my hard feelings.

Wisdom (α = .92)
06 This person seems alert to what's happening.
09 This person is good at anticipating the consequences of decisions.
17 This person has great awareness of what is going on.
28 This person seems in touch with what's happening.
50 This person seems to know what is going to happen.

Persuasive mapping (α = .87)
07 This person offers compelling reasons to get me to do things.
08 This person encourages me to dream "big dreams" about the organization.
18 This person is very persuasive.
29 This person is good at convincing me to do things.
40 This person is gifted when it comes to persuading me.

Organizational stewardship (α = .89)
21 This person believes that the organization needs to play a moral role in society.
34 This person believes that our organization needs to function as a community.
43 This person sees the organization for its potential to contribute to society.
45 This person encourages me to have a community spirit in the workplace.
54 This person is preparing the organization to make a positive difference in the future.

Appendix D. Interview Protocol and Questions

Interview Protocol (Derived from Beck (2014))

The protocols that follow include open-ended, semi-structured interview questions. If it is necessary for clarification or to gather information about their experiences, specific probes will be used to elicit further information. The use of probes will enable the person being interviewed to be as informative as possible in his or her responses. The probes are tailored to be neutral prompts to encourage further exploration of the topic and will not suggest specific answers. Examples of probes include, "Tell me more about that?" and "how did this come about?"

The protocols below include some recommended follow-up questions that may also be used to promote further discussion in the subject areas. The follow-up questions will be communicated with a tie to whatever the participant has already said, so the exact phrasing of the questions may vary.

Method

Virtual (via Zoom), one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, followed by transcription review.

Logistics

1. Researcher will identify candidates for interview using specific criteria, based on the results from the Servant Leadership Questionnaire conducted during the quantitative phase of this study.
2. Researcher will contact interview candidates to invite their participation. If interested, candidates will be provided with the informed consent and the interview protocol.
3. If the candidate agrees to be interviewed, a signed informed consent will be obtained.
4. Researcher will schedule interview time and send zoom link
5. The virtual interview will be conducted with audio recording.
6. The researcher will have the audio transcribed and will review the content of the transcript. Areas that require clarification or further discussion will be noted.
7. Researcher will e-mail transcript to participant with additional questions for clarification and elucidation.
8. Participant will review transcript for accuracy and answer questions. Participant responses will be gathered by return e-mail.

Interview Questions

1. What event or experience in your life has had a profoundly positive impact on your leadership development?
       a. How were you different after the event?
       b. Why do you believe this experience had an impact on you?
       c. Is there a mentor, role model or parent that played a role in your
       leadership development? If so, how?

2. Why do you lead?
       a. Please tell me more about an experience of leading others. b. Is this typical of your
       leadership? In what ways?
       c. How would you describe your role as a leader?
       d. What do you personally find rewarding about leading others?

3. What is something you feel deeply about in terms of serving the larger community?
       a. How did it develop?
       b. Has it always been that way for you?
       c. What motivates you to serve?
       d. Tell me if the term "giving back" has meaning for you?
       e. How did this come about?

4. Why are you someone people would turn to if they are going through a difficult situation?
       a. Please provide an example.
       b. Please tell me more about that.

5. How do you get other people to do what you want to do?
       a. Please provide an example of that.
       b. Tell me more about that.
       c. Where did you learn to do that?

6. I appreciate you filling out the survey. Several questions dealt with picking up cues from your environment and being aware of what is going on around you.
       a. Where do you think that comes from for you?
       b. Please tell me about an experience that contributed to this for you.

7. Think about a time when you were in a leadership role, how did you anticipate the consequences of decisions?
       a. How did this come about?
       b. Describe the process of how you go about making a decision.

8. How do you take a complex issue and simplify it so that others understand it?
       a. Going into those situations, how do you think about framing the issue or
       problem?
       b. Please tell me about an example.

9. If you have a faith or belief system, what role does it play in your commitment to serving others or your community?

Demographic Information (Modified from Beck (2014))

Note: Some questions were removed from Beck (2014), as they did not fit the purposes of this study. For example, "what career field do you work in?" was removed, as every subject for this study works in the field of intercollegiate athletics. In addition, some questions were altered to pursue more inclusiveness in answers. For example, "Please indicate your gender" was modified to be an open response format, for greater inclusivity (e.g., responses from gender non-binary, or gender-fluid individuals).

Demographic Information (self-raters)

1. Please indicate your current position.

2. Please indicate the total number of years you have served in a leadership role.
___ Less than one year
___ One to five years
___ Six to ten years
___ More than 10 years

3. What is your current position in your organization? Please write in. _____

4. Please indicate your gender. (open response)

5. What is your age group?
___ 20 – 29 years
___ 30 – 39 years
___ 40 – 49 years
___ 50 – 59 years
___ 60 years or over

6. How spiritual or religious do you consider yourself to be?
___ Not at all spiritual or religious
___ Not very spiritual or religious
___ Somewhat spiritual or religious
___ Very spiritual or religious

7. If you have a faith or belief system, how often do you attend a religious service?
___ Never
___ Occasionally
___ Once per week
___ More than once per week

10. What best describes your racial or national background?
___ White
___ Black or African American
___Hispanic or Latino

___ Asian
___ American Indian or Native American
___ Middle Eastern
___ Pacific Islander
___ Bi-racial or Multi-racial
___ Other (describe) _____

11. What is your current marital status?

12. ___ Single, never married
___ Married
___ Divorced
___ Widowed

13. Please indicate the number of hours, on average, that you volunteer in your community.
___ None
___ Less than one hour per week
___ One to five hours per week
___ Five to ten hours per week
___ More than ten hours per week

13. Level of education (select highest degree completed) ___ Less than high school
___ High School Diploma/GED
___ Some College
___ 2- Year College Degree (Associates)
___ 4 – Year College Degree (BA, BS)
___ Master's Degree
___ Doctoral Degree
___ Professional Degree (JD, MD)

14. Metropolitan Population (Municipal Classifications - League of Municipalities)
___ Metro area (300,000 or more)
___ Primary City (100,001 to 299,999)
___ City of the First Class (5,001 to 100,000)

SLQ Self-Rater Form (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006)

My Name: _____

This questionnaire is to describe your leadership behaviors and attitudes as you perceive them. Please answer all of the questions. Please indicate how well each of the following statements describes you.

Use the following rating scale:

Not at all (0), Once in a while (1), Sometimes (2), Fairly Often (3), Frequently, if not always (4)

_____1. I put others' interests ahead of my own
_____2. I do everything I can to serve others
_____3. I am someone that others will turn to if they have a personal trauma
_____4. I am alert to what's happening around me
_____5. I offer compelling reasons to get others to do things
_____6. I encourage others to dream "big dreams" about the organization
_____7. I am good at anticipating the consequences of decisions
_____8. I am good at helping others with their emotional issues
_____9. I have great awareness of what is going on
_____10. I am very persuasive
_____11. I believe that the organization needs to play a moral role in society
 _____12. I am talented at helping others heal emotionally
_____13. I am in touch with what is going on
_____14. I am good at convincing others to do things
_____15. I believe that our organization needs to function as a community
 _____16. I sacrifice my own interests to meet others' needs
_____17. I can help others mend their hard feelings
_____18. I am gifted when it comes to persuading others
_____19. I see the organization for its potential to contribute to society
_____20. I encourage others to have a community spirit in the workplace
_____21. I go above and beyond the call of duty to meet others' needs
_____22. I know what is going to happen
_____23. I am preparing the organization to make a positive difference in the future

Altruistic Calling: (Sum) 1)____, 2)____, 16)____, 21)____ = _____
Emotional Healing: (Sum) 3)____, 8)____, 12)____, 17)____ = _____
Wisdom: (Sum) 4)____, 7)____, 9)____, 13)____ 22)____ = _____
Persuasive Mapping: (Sum) 5)____, 6)____, 10)____, 14)____ 18)____ = _____
Organizational Stewardship: (Sum) 11)____, 15)____,19)____, 20)____ 23)____ = _____