

Second fiddle? An interpretive study of followers of servant leaders

by

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A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Education (Educational Leadership)

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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2008

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human.
Through learning we recreate ourselves.
Through learning we become able to do something that we were never able to do.
Through learning we re-perceive the world and our relationship to it.
Through learning we extend our capacity to create,
to be part of the generative process of life.*

P. M. Senge

What an incredible learning experience my doctoral journey has been! It's even sweeter at this st(age) of my life! I could not have done it without the support of some very special people. First, I would like to thank my husband, Fred, who is the spice of my life. His love and support, seasoned with his delightful sense of humor, and his legendary chicken noodle soup (It was good!) made it so much easier. Thank you to my daughters, Kelsey and Whitney, and my son-in-law, Ben, for encouraging me every step of the way.

Thank you to my Major Professors, Dr. Emily Moore and Dr. Dan Robinson, for their encouragement and guidance throughout my educational process. I extend my deepest gratitude to the members of my committee, Dr. Leslie Bloom, Dr. Barbara Licklider, Dr. John Schuh, and Dr. Mack Shelley, for the time and talent they shared with me not only during the dissertation process, but throughout the program.

I would like to express my great appreciation and sincere gratitude to my friend, classmate, and professional colleague, Susan Rhoades, for her friendship and encouragement as we traveled this doctoral road together. I couldn't have done it without you!

Although I cannot list you by name, I would like to sincerely thank the participants in this study who took the time to share their incredible experiences as followers of servant leaders. Your words will live in my heart and mind forever.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the follower experiences of five nursing educators led by servant leaders in two institutions of higher education. One institution was a small, private, religiously-affiliated college and the other was a large public university. The data collected provided insight into the phenomenon of followership, focusing on the meaning of what it is like to be a follower who is led by a servant leader.

An interpretive research methodology was used for the qualitative study which included interviews with five nursing educators who shared their experiences of being led by a servant leader. The participants were asked to discuss their experiences in terms of how they described themselves as followers; how they were influenced by their leader, their peers, and the organizational environment in which they worked; and how they defined followership.

The participants described their leaders and themselves as caring, open, authentic, and respectful individuals who possessed a high degree of trust, honesty, and integrity. These behaviors were not only between the leader and follower, but also with colleagues, students, and the community. Participants exhibited characteristics of exemplary followers who felt empowered by their leader and valued their freedom to self-manage their work without leader interference. They valued their numerous opportunities to learn and grow in their roles as leader and follower. Service was a common value among participants, who served their leader, but placed primary importance on serving others in the institution and the community. Participants embraced innovation and change and were encouraged by their leader to take risks and pursue innovative solutions. The servant-led participants from both institutions exhibited similar follower characteristics.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The hardest instrument to play in a symphony orchestra is second fiddle.
Leonard Bernstein

The unpredictable future has arrived! Institutions of higher education are faced with complex and conflicting demands from students and their families, governing boards, accrediting agencies, the government, and the public. Higher education faces additional challenges which include the changing demographic profile of the student population, alliance building with community and global partners, increased competition for governmental and private financial resources, rapid technological advancement, diversity recruitment and retention, gender equity, and curriculum reform. These issues are multidimensional, broad in scope, and require complex assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation.

These trends will create significant challenges for leaders of institutions of higher education. New leadership styles are required to thrive in this volatile and unpredictable environment (Hoff, 1999). Even the best leadership may not be enough. What is required in addition to effective leadership, is a group of empowered followers who are actively engaged and committed to the institution which they serve (Bennis, 1999). Educators in their dual role as follower and leader, are an important component of the leader–follower process in institutions of higher education (Buchen, 1998). Educators who share an institutional vision with their leaders and are actively involved in achieving that vision contribute significantly to the success of that institution.

The need for effective followership, as well as leadership, requires a re-examination of the relative responsibilities of each role. DePree (1992) suggested that

leaders put emphasis on the followers by focusing on their needs and talents and encouraging them to use those talents to benefit not only themselves but also the entire organization. According to Seteroff (2003), “When an organization fosters an atmosphere of trust, encourages colleagues and associates to master themselves, and moves toward developing a mental model, they are better able to share their vision of the organization and their place in it” (p. 62).

A promising leader–follower theory that addresses the needs of higher education is the philosophy inherent in servant leadership (Bass, 2000). Robert Greenleaf (1991), the father of servant leadership, described this philosophy as follows:

The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants. (p. 7)

The structural discontinuity or paradigm shift experienced by academia led Buchen (1998) to conclude that “servant leadership is the only model I know that links fulfillment as a faculty member to fulfillment of the institution” (p. 129). This fulfillment comes in part from the focus of servant leadership on placing the needs of others over those of the leader (Bass, 2000). Educators served by servant leaders will have the greatest opportunity to flourish and achieve their own visions and those of the institution. Perhaps equally important is the likely possibility that educators will become servant leaders in serving students and colleagues for the greater good of the institution.

The ultimate achievement of this dynamic process of servant-led followership is the evolution of a servant organization in which the philosophy of servant leadership becomes embedded in the institutional culture and is practiced by leaders and followers alike (Laub, 1999). This concept of the servant organization holds promise for a new paradigm in higher education whereby institutions confront their changing environment with a group of highly engaged and empowered followers who serve others to achieve a common vision for the greater good of the institution.

Statement of Problem

Followership is a role, not a position. The role of follower is played, at times, by almost everyone within an organization. It is paradoxical that followership is rarely discussed in the literature. An abundance of studies describe what it takes to become a good leader, but very little is written about serving as an effective follower. Additionally, although followers have significant experience with the follower–leader relationship, their views are seldom voiced or heard in characterizing their experiences as followers of those leaders.

Followership and leadership exist hand in hand. One cannot be a follower without a leader. One cannot be a leader without a follower. According to Kelley (1992),

Followership and leadership are complementary, not competitive, paths to organizational contribution. Neither role corners the market on brains, motivation, talent, or action. Either role can result in an award-winning performance or a flop. The greatest successes require that the people in both roles turn in top-rate performances. We must have great leaders and great followers. (p. 41)

Kelley (1992) noted that followership and leadership are dependent on each other for existence and meaning. They can never be independent. Leaders *and* followers need each other to exist and have meaning.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the follower experiences of five nursing educators led by servant leaders in two institutions of higher education.

Research Questions

This research study addresses five major research questions which include:

1. How do servant-led followers describe themselves as followers?
2. How are servant-led follower experiences influenced by the context of the organizational environment in which they live and work?
3. How are servant-led followers influenced by their leader and their peers?
4. Do servant-led followers adopt servant leadership characteristics in their leadership roles?
5. What is the meaning of followership as defined by the followers of servant leaders?

The research questions were focused on followers who are educators in a nursing education environment. My findings relative to these research questions are based on the following assumptions:

1. Participants are truthful in sharing their followership experiences when responding to the interview questions.
2. Participants are complete and thorough in their responses to the interview questions.

Significance of Study

In today's changing education environment of doing more with less, leaders of institutions of higher education will not succeed without empowered, engaged, and

committed followers. According to Bennis (1999), “If there is one generalization that we make about leadership and change, it is this: No change can occur without willing and committed followers” (p. 148). Servant leaders can benefit from this study by gaining insight and understanding of the leader–follower relationship from the follower’s perspective. To prioritize the needs of others, servant leaders must be aware of those needs and how their leadership style affects the follower. This study defines the meaning of being a follower who is led by a servant leader. Ideally this knowledge will help the leader to be a more effective leader.

From the follower perspective, this study offers the follower the opportunity to find his/her own voice and use it as a vehicle to express an idea, a solution, a critical perspective, an opinion, or his/her feelings about the follower experience. The findings of the study may assist servant leaders and servant-led followers to attain a better understanding of effective followership, as well as methods to enhance the leader–follower relationship.

This study provides institutions with a better understanding of the characteristics of effective followers, as well as leaders who should be recruited and retained in the work environment. The emphasis on followership in this study provides institutions with a new perspective on the roles that their leaders, faculty, and others play within their institutions. The findings of this study are significant to college boards of directors, administrators, faculty, researchers, policy makers, and other stakeholders who are engaged in the business of higher education.

The findings of this study contribute to the literature on followership, specifically focusing on an often overlooked aspect of the leader–follower relationship. Studying the

experiences of servant-led followers is warranted to better inform servant leaders and followers how each participant in the leader–follower relationship is influenced by the other. The results of this study contribute to the theory building for servant leadership.

Delimitations/Limitations of Study

This study consisted of interviews conducted with servant-led followers who are educators at two colleges of nursing in the midwestern United States. This purposeful sampling limits the transferability of the research findings not only to servant-led followers in nursing education programs, but also to followers of servant leaders in general.

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the follower experiences of five nursing educators led by servant leaders in two institutions of higher education. Five research questions focused on how servant-led followers describe their experience of being a follower, how servant-led follower experiences are influenced by the context of the organizational environment in which they live and work, how servant-led followers perceive their relationship with the leader, whether servant-led followers adopt servant leadership characteristics in their leadership roles, and the meaning of followership as defined by the followers of servant leaders.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature pertaining to followership theory, which includes a discussion on the types of followers, exemplary followers, and the dimensions of follower development and behavior. The second section of the review of literature focuses on relevant literature on followers who are led by servant leaders.

Chapter 3 addresses the theoretical paradigm of this qualitative study, the methodology, as well as the methods of data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study related to the experiences of followers of servant leaders followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to the existing research literature on the topic.

Chapter 5 includes a discussion of the conclusions, application to practice, transferability of the study, and recommendations for future research related to followers of servant leaders.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The leader of a jazz band has the beautiful opportunity to draw the best out of the other jazz musicians. We have much to learn from jazz band leaders (and musicians). For jazz, like leadership, combines the unpredictability of the future with the gifts of individuals.

M. DePree

Introduction

The review of literature in this chapter summarizes the relevant research on followership. This chapter places particular emphasis on followers of servant leaders, the focus of this study. This review begins with an examination of general followership theory which provides a context for the discussion of servant-led followership. The review of followership theory focuses on follower typology, exemplary followership, and follower influences. The discussion then turns to a review of the literature relevant to servant-led followers. Servant leadership theory is initially examined, followed by an analysis of how this leadership style influences servant-led followers. The review concludes with an analysis of the literature on other influences that may shape and influence servant-led followers within an organization.

Followership Theory

Scholars over the last several decades have devoted considerable energy and resources to the study of leadership. The same cannot be said for the study of followership where research is limited. This oversight is curious given that leadership cannot be fully understood without some comprehension of how leaders and followers influence and shape each other (Yukl, 1999). The most effective leaders have little value if the followers of those leaders are not equally effective. The importance of effective

followership cannot be underestimated. Kelley (1992) estimated that leaders contribute no more than 20% to the success of an organization, whereas followers are critical to the remaining 80% of that success.

The significant contributions that followers make to organizations traditionally have been overlooked due, in part, to the common perception that followers are mindless-passive “sheep” that are willingly molded by their all-knowing leaders (Alcorn, 1992; Berg, 1998; Kelley, 1992; Yukl, 1999). Scholarly literature reinforced this view of the malleable, weak follower by commonly attributing successful leader–follower outcomes to the leader alone (Alcorn; Berg; Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Kelley, 1988; Yukl, 1999). This “heroic leadership” bias has left a considerable void in the literature on how followers contribute to the leader–follower relationship and the organization as a whole (Yukl, 1999).

Attitudes on followership are beginning to change and many scholars now acknowledge that followers are a significant determinant of whether leaders and their organizations will be successful (Alcorn, 1992; Bennis, 1999; Berg, 1998; Burbuto, 2000; Chaleff, 2003; Collinson, 2006; Densten & Gray, 2001; Hall & Densten, 2002; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Winston, 2003; Yukl, 1999). Bennis (1999) recently reiterated this view in stating:

If there is one generalization we can make about leadership and change, it is this: No change can occur without willing and committed followers. . . . I am not just reiterating one of those well-worn bromides about leadership: you know, where leaders carefully watch where their followers are going and then follow them. I’m saying something quite different. I’m saying that exemplary leadership and

organizational change are impossible without the full inclusion, initiatives, and cooperation of followers. (p. 74)

Evolving views of organizational theory have also contributed to the growing importance of effective followership. The philosophy of learning organizations has contributed to this development that followers possess considerable knowledge that can influence the success of an organization (Densten & Gray, 2001; Senge, 1990a, 1990b, 1992). “Complexity Theory,” with a bottom-up philosophy of organizational development, also suggests that follower behavior is critical to the structure and fitness of an organization (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). The emergence, in general, of leaner and flatter organizations has further highlighted the need to understand, develop, and maintain exemplary followers in contemporary organizational settings (Bennis, 1999; Kelley, 1988).

A small volume of literature is now emerging that addresses questions unique to followership (Alcorn, 1992; Bennis, 1999; Berg, 1998; Burbuto, 2000; Chaleff, 2003; Densten & Gray, 2001; Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002; Kelley, 1992; Winston, 2003; Yukl, 1999). This literature identified three distinct considerations relevant to this topic. The first consideration is descriptive and attempts to classify the types of followers that exist in various organizational settings. The second consideration is normative and identifies the behavioral constructs related to exemplary followers. The third consideration delineates the various dimensions that shape followers in an organizational context, with particular emphasis on the follower–leader relationship. This section will examine each of these important considerations.

Follower Typology

Kelley (1992) developed a useful classification of followers in his seminal work on followership. Kelley (1992) found that two independent dimensions must be considered in classifying various followers. The first dimension is the degree to which the follower is able to think critically and act independently. This dimension includes whether followers understand the significance of their actions, the actions of others, and the impact of decisions on the goals and vision of the organization (Hall & Densten, 2002). The second dimension is the extent to which followers are actively involved in their work. Active followers take initiative and assume responsibility, whereas passive followers avoid responsibility and require constant supervision (Densten & Gray, 2001; Kelley, 1988). Kelley (1992) developed a typology of followers based on continua related to each of these dimensions, as depicted in Figure 1 and described five classifications that emerge from this typology:

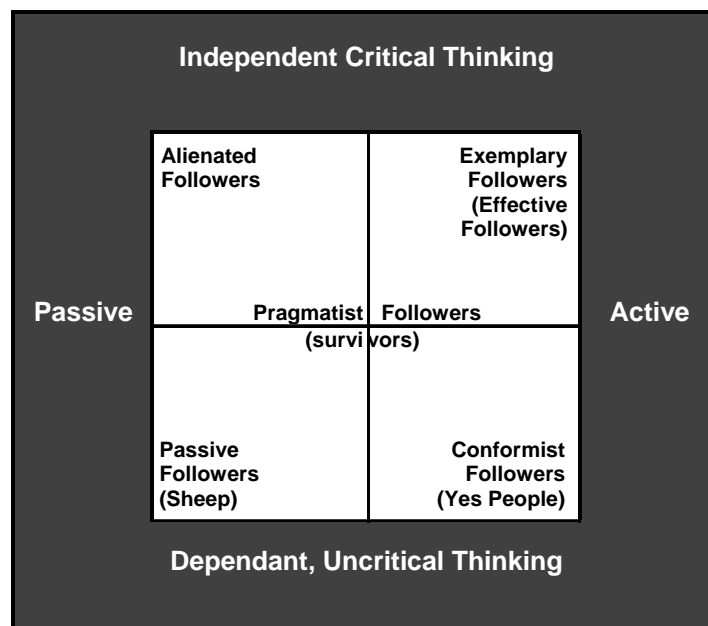


Figure 1. Kelley's follower typology (Kelley, 1988, p. 145; reprinted with permission).

1. *Sheep* are passive followers who lack initiative and a sense of responsibility. Sheep require constant supervision and can perform assigned tasks, and no more, under optimal conditions.
2. *Conformists* actively participate, but are unable, or chose not, to utilize independent critical thinking. Conformists rely upon inspiration from the leader and are unwilling to take unpopular positions.
3. *Survivors* are capable of being active and utilizing independent critical thinking, but choose to do so if such conduct is beneficial to the follower. Survivors are political, risk adverse, and self-serving.
4. *Alienated* followers are independent critical thinkers who choose to be passive in their role as a follower. Alienated followers are cynical, troublesome, and disgruntled.
5. *Exemplary* followers are critical thinkers who conduct their duties with assertiveness and energy. Exemplary followers manage themselves well, are committed to the organization, and possess courage, honesty, and credibility.

Followers in each of these classifications can be found in most organizations.

Kelley (1992) maintained that status should not be the objective of either followers or the organization in which they work. Kelley (1992) strongly believed that every follower can become more effective and urged organizations to assist in this process. Kelley (1988) emphasized the importance of this point in stating:

[An organization] . . . will not succeed without the kind of people who take pride and satisfaction in the role of supporting player, doing less glorious work without fanfare. Organizations that want the benefits of [exemplary] followers must find

ways of rewarding them, ways of bringing them into full partnership in the enterprise. Think of the thousands of companies that achieve adequate performance and lackluster profits with employees they treat like second-class citizens. Then imagine for a moment the power of an organization blessed with fully engaged, fully energized, fully appreciated followers. (p. 148)

These observations highlight the importance of effective followership to leaders and their organizations. The normative framework associated with exemplary followership will be examined next.

Exemplary Followership

The term exemplary followership was first introduced by Kelley (1988) in connection with the development of his follower typology, as previously discussed. This typology generally defines exemplary followers as critical thinkers who are actively engaged. Kelley (1988) also identified self-management, commitment, competence and focus, courage, integrity, and credibility as the central constructs of exemplary followership. Kelley (1992) argued that the effectiveness of all followers should be measured against these normative standards.

Chaleff (2003) recently reviewed Kelley's (1988, 1992) work as part of his study on followership. Chaleff attempted to define effective followership as a part of this study and concluded that effective or courageous followers exhibit the following five behaviors: assumption of responsibility, service, willingness to challenge, acceptance of change, and the desire to take moral action. Several other works that are largely anecdotal also attempted to identify characteristics essential to effective followership. These works include Alcorn (1992; e.g., cooperation, flexibility, integrity, initiative, and problem

solving), Bennis (1993, 1999; e.g., commitment, cooperation, competence, honesty, and the ability to tell the truth), Berg (1998; e.g., love, independent thought, and a complementary and collaborative relationship between followers), Musselwhite (2006; e.g., honesty, supportiveness, reliability, understanding the big picture, the ability to ask good questions, and awareness of one's own assumptions).

Dvir and Shamir (2003) recently reviewed this literature and hypothesized that effective followers are highly developed, empowered individuals who are active, dominant, and not submissive. The concept of empowerment defined in this study encompasses a wide range of behaviors including: (a) critical-independent orientation which entails thinking and acting autonomously; (b) active engagement in tasks, which involves a high level of activity, initiative and responsibility; and (c) self-efficacy, which entails the belief in one's ability to perform a task successfully. Dvir et al. (2002) also attributed this concept of empowerment to effective followership in an earlier study. Follower empowerment, as defined in these studies, includes many of the behaviors that Kelley (1992) identified for exemplary followers.

The emerging theory of authentic followership introduced several constructs that are relevant to the study of exemplary followership. Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, and Walumbwa (2005) theorized that authentic followers exhibit a high degree of trust, effective engagement, and workplace well-being. Iles, Morgeson, and Nahrgang (2005) expanded on the concept of well-being by introducing the concept of "eudaemonic" well-being as a central construct of authentic followership. Eudaemonic well-being is an intensive involvement and special fit with an activity and is closely related to peak experiences of interest, motivation, and joy. Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and

May (2004) highlighted personal and social identity in their conception of authentic followership, as well as commitment, trust, hope, positive emotions, and positive work attitudes. Haslam and Platow (2001) and Haslam, Eggins, and Reynolds (2003) hypothesized that social identity with positive organizational groups is an important aspect of effective followership.

The present study focuses primarily on followers of servant leaders. Winston (2003) hypothesized that servant-led followers will exhibit “agapao” love, which involves respectful value and humanness toward others, leader commitment, high self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, altruism, and service. It is sufficient to note here that the behaviors identified for servant-led followers are consistent with those identified Kelley (1992) for exemplary followers.

Scholars have yet to reach general agreement of the set of behavior constructs that define exemplary followers. However, the following six behavioral constructs seem to capture the meaning of exemplary followership that emerges from the literature:

1. *Self-management*. The construct of self-management is the ability to think independently, take initiative, exercise control over, and take responsibility for actions with little supervision (Kelley, 1992). Kelley (1988) hypothesized that effective followers are highly developed, empowered individuals who are active, dominant, and not submissive. Self-management is nearly identical to the idea of empowerment proposed by Dvir and Shamir (2003), Dvir et al. (2002), and Winston (2003), which emphasized development of a high degree of follower self-efficacy. The constructs of responsibility (Chaleff, 2003), initiative (Alcorn, 1992), and reliability (Musselwhite, 2006) are aspects of the broader construct of self-management (Kelley, 1992).

2. *Independent critical thinking and learning.* Critical independent thinking (Berg, 1998; Kelley, 1992) is autonomous thinking that includes constructive criticism, innovation, and creative thought (Hall & Densten, 2002). One aspect of critical thinking is willingness to challenge the leader and others (Berg; Chaleff, 2003; Kelley, 1992). Effective learning is a process by which the follower's knowledge is constantly enhanced or renewed. Effective learning entails abilities to obtain knowledge and apply knowledge to a particular task (Densten & Gray, 2001). Effective learners are aware of their own assumptions or mental models (Musselwhite, 2006) and assess these assumptions when obtaining knowledge of a particular situation (Densten & Gray). The constructs of independent critical thinking and learning encompass the ability to understand the significance of actions and the impact of those actions on the organization (Bennis, 1999; Kelley, 1992), as well as effective problem solving (Alcorn, 1992), seeking the big picture and asking good questions (Musselwhite), and competence (Bennis, 1999; Kelley, 1992).

3. *Authenticity.* Authenticity involves being open and accountable to others, showing willingness to learn from others, and maintaining integrity and trust (Alcorn, 1992; Kelley, 1992; Laub, 1999). Aspects of integrity include honesty, credibility, trustworthiness, and truthfulness (Bennis, 1993, 1999; Berg, 1998; Musselwhite, 2006). Authenticity also involves self-awareness, self-acceptance, and authentic relationships characterized by: (a) transparency, openness, and trust; (b) guidance toward worthy objectives; and (c) an emphasis on follower development (Gardner et al., 2005). Effective engagement and eudaemonic well-being is an outgrowth of authenticity that involves the follower's involvement, satisfaction, and enthusiasm for work and realizing one's true

potential through self-acceptance, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive relationships, personal growth, autonomy, and self-determination (Avolio et al., 2004; Gardner et al.; Iles et al., 2005). Intrinsic motivation (Winston, 2003) is a likely outgrowth of effective engagement and eudaemonic well-being (Iles et al.).

4. *Agapao love*. Agapao love is a behavior in which others are considered with a sense of moral and respectful value and humanness (Berg, 1998; Patterson, 2003). Agapao love is exhibited by showing humility and concern for others, controlled discipline, seeking what is right and good for the organization, showing mercy in beliefs and actions with all people, focusing on the organization and on the well-being of the others, and creating a sense of peace in the organization (Winston, 2003). Agapao love is consistent with the “courage to take moral action” (Chaleff, 2003, p. 8).

5. *Commitment*. Commitment is a positive belief or psychological attachment to something (Avolio et al., 2004; Bennis, 1999; Kelley, 1992; Winston, 2003). Exemplary followers are strongly committed to their leaders and the goals of the organization and are actively engaged to benefit the organization (Kelley, 1992). The focal point for commitment is important (Becker, Billings, Eveleth, & Gilbert, 1996), and followers who commit to goals that are inconsistent with those of the organization have a destructive impact (Kelley, 1992). A similar, but distinct, concept to commitment is social identity, which refers to that part of an individual’s self-concept associated with membership in a social group (Haslam & Platow, 2001). Social identity with appropriate organizational groups provides the psychological foundation for key organizational phenomena critical to leadership, followership, and organizational effectiveness, including cooperation, trust, empowerment, group productivity, and collective action (Haslam & Platow). Exemplary

followers have a strong social identity with others within the organization and are committed to organizational goals and objectives (Avolio et al.; Haslam & Platow; Kelley, 1992).

6. *Service*. Service involves helping others (Chaleff, 2003; Winston, 2003).

Service entails the willingness to assume new or additional responsibilities to unburden the leader or others to benefit the organization (Chaleff). Service requires the follower to abandon his/her self-interest and focus on the needs of the leader and others (Russell, 2001). Exemplary followers must constantly balance self-management and critical thinking with effective service that entails supportiveness (Musselwhite, 2006) and cooperation (Alcorn, 1992; Bennis, 1999).

The constructs identified in the above synthesis are normative in nature and have been developed from only a few authoritative sources that are available as depicted in Figure 2. No research has been found that attempts to validate these constructs. Additional research is needed to fully understand effective followership. The proposed constructs nevertheless represent a reasonable, but preliminary, theoretical framework upon which future research can be based.

It is somewhat paradoxical that the constructs defining exemplary followers are nearly identical to those that define exemplary leadership. As Kelley (1988) observed, a follower is not only a person, but also a role. Effective followers and leaders are often the same people performing different organizational functions at different times. It is important to understand that these respective roles involve essentially the same skills and behaviors and must be performed effectively in the organization.

CONSTRUCTS OF EXEMPLARY FOLLOWERSHIP	
Self-management	Followers take initiatives and assume responsibility for their roles with little supervision. Followers are not submissive and have a high degree of self-efficacy. <i>Sources:</i> Chaleff, 2003; Dvir and Shamir, 2003; Kelley, 1992; Winston, 2003.
Critical Thinking and Learning	Followers exercise innovative-creative thinking and willingly question their leader. Followers constantly obtain and apply knowledge and understand the significance of their actions. <i>Sources:</i> Bennis, 1999; Densten & Gray, 2001; Kelley, 1992.
Authenticity	Followers value openness integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, credibility, truthfulness. Followers have a high degree of self-awareness, self-acceptance, and self-determination. <i>Sources:</i> Gardner et al., 2005; Iles et al., 2005; Laub, 1999; Kelley, 1992.
Agapao Love	Followers show humility, have a desire to take moral action and are concerned with the well-being of the others. Followers create a sense of peace in the organization. <i>Sources:</i> Alcorn, 1992; Berg, 1998; Patterson, 2004; Winston, 2003.
Commitment	Followers have a positive attachment to their leader and their institution. Followers socially identify with groups that accept and pursue the goals of the institution. <i>Sources:</i> Avolio et al., 2004; Bennis, 1999; Kelley, 1992; Haslam & Platow, 2001.
Service	Followers focus on the needs of others and strongly desire to help and support their leader and colleagues. Followers assume responsibilities to unburden their leader or others. <i>Sources:</i> Bennis, 1999 Chaleff, 2003; Winston, 2003; Russell, 2003.

Figure 2. Constructs of exemplary followership.

Overview of Follower Influences

Comprehensive models of follower development and behavior have not been developed in the literature (Densten & Gray, 2001). The literature suggests that several interrelated considerations influence follower outcomes, which include the individual follower, the culture of the organization, and the interpersonal and group dynamics among followers, groups of followers, and leaders.

The influence of these dimensions on follower outcomes was demonstrated in a study by Brown and Thornborrow (1996). This study identified the types of followers found in three organizations using Kelley's (1992) followership style classification system. The study found that the predominant type of followers in these organizations were 26.6% "yes people" and 20.8% "sheep," whereas only 15.7% of respondents were exemplary followers. The study also found that organizations involved in the study were dominated by autocratic cultures and leadership styles. Brown and Thornborrow (1996) concluded that these organizational and leader influences contributed to, and perhaps determined, the type of followers who were attracted to or retained in these organizations.

The leader–follower relationship is perhaps the most important influence on followers. The next section will focus on followers of servant leaders, the focus of this study. Other dimensions that influence follower outcomes are also important, such as engagement by the individual follower, the collectivist aspects of the organization, and the interpersonal relationships between and among followers. These dimensions will be reviewed in the next section. These considerations will be examined in the context of servant organizations immediately following the analysis of servant-led followers.

In summary, this section provides a synthesis of three aspects of followership theory that emerged from a review of the literature. The first aspect is the typology of followers in organizations developed by Kelley (1992). The second aspect is the normative model defining the traits of exemplary followers. The third aspect is a set of interrelated dimensions that includes a process related to the individual followers, the collective aspects of the organization, peer interrelationships, and the leader–follower relationship.

It is important to note that the theoretical framework developed in this section is based largely on conceptual work. Most of the cited theories have not been validated in followership studies. Considerable research is needed before a full understanding of followership can be obtained. This study will attempt to contribute to the theory building process of followership by exploring the real life experiences of servant-led followers.

Followers of Servant Leaders

The relationship formed between the leader and the follower significantly influences both participants. Yukl (1999) observed that leadership is a “shared process of enhancing collective and individual capacity of people to accomplish their work roles effectively” (p. 292). Kelley (1992) made a similar point from a followership perspective in noting:

Exemplary followers do not want leaders who decide their work or their fate.

They want leaders to view them as partners in shaping the enterprise. . . . The

leader’s vision, transformation and empowerment roles . . . are superfluous for

many exemplary followers. . . . From the followers’ viewpoint, leaders add value

in two ways: . . . [by creating] . . . environments where exemplary followers can flourish . . . [and being] less a hero and more a hero maker. (pp. 203, 223)

The literature on leadership is voluminous and progress has been made in understanding the leader–follower relationship as well as other aspects of leadership (Yukl, 2006). However, the literature continues to be leader-centric and no comprehensive theoretical framework has evolved to explain follower behaviors and outcomes as they relate to these leadership theories (Densten & Gray, 2001; Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Yukl, 1999).

The focus of this study is on followers of servant leaders. This emerging leadership theory was selected because the distinguishing feature of servant leadership from other leadership is its emphasis on “facilitating the growth, development, and general well-being of individuals who comprise the organization” (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004, p. 355). This follower-centric leadership theory is similar to the one envisioned by Kelley (1992) and provides an ideal platform on which to explore followership.

This section will first introduce the theoretical framework used in this study to define the leader–follower relationship. The discussion will then analyze the literature on servant leadership and followership to critically assess this theoretical framework from both a leadership and follower perspective.

Overview of the Servant Leader–follower Relationship

The study of servant-led followers is in its infancy. A recent model jointly developed by Patterson (2003) and Winston (2003) represents an initial attempt to define the relationship between servant leaders and their followers. The Patterson–Winston

(Patterson; Winston, 2003) model incorporates models of both the leadership and the followership process that is hypothesized in the leader–follower relationship. The model does not necessarily reflect the current understanding of servant leadership and followership in all respects. These considerations will be critically evaluated below. However, the model represents a substantial starting point at which to define the servant leader–follower relationship and provides a useful theoretical framework for at least part of this study.

The servant leadership model developed by Patterson (2003) attempted to show *how* the servant leader process functions. Patterson’s model incorporated seven constructs: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. The model starts with the leader’s agapao love for others. Agapao love involves humility, concern for others, controlled discipline, and seeking what is right and good for the organization (Patterson). Agapao love creates humility which allows leaders to open their minds beyond themselves to see what followers can contribute to the organization and altruism which encompasses leader concern for the welfare of followers (Patterson). The servant leader then develops a vision for, and trust in, the follower as a result of the interrelationships among agapao love, humility, and altruism. The behaviors of humility, altruism, vision, and trust in turn lead to the empowerment of the follower and culminates with the leader’s service to the empowered follower (Patterson).

Winston (2003) extended Patterson’s (2003) model by incorporating an additional process for servant-led followers into Patterson’s model for leaders. Winston’s extension consisted of six follower behaviors: agapao love, commitment to leader, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, altruism, and service. The model begins with the follower’s agapao

love, which in turn, leads to the development of follower self-efficacy and commitment to the leader. The process continues with the emergence of the intrinsic motivation of the follower and culminates with altruism and service to the leader.

Winston (2003) also observed that the joint model is dynamic and should be viewed as a spiral. Each round in the model will increase or decrease the intensity and strength of the relationship. This moderating variable of maturity is an important aspect of the model. The Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model, which represents an important advancement in explaining the *interpersonal relationship* between the servant leader and the follower and the casual relationships inherent in this model, is depicted in Figure 3. A critical analysis of the Patterson-Winston model requires a greater understanding of the literature on servant leadership and followership, which follows.

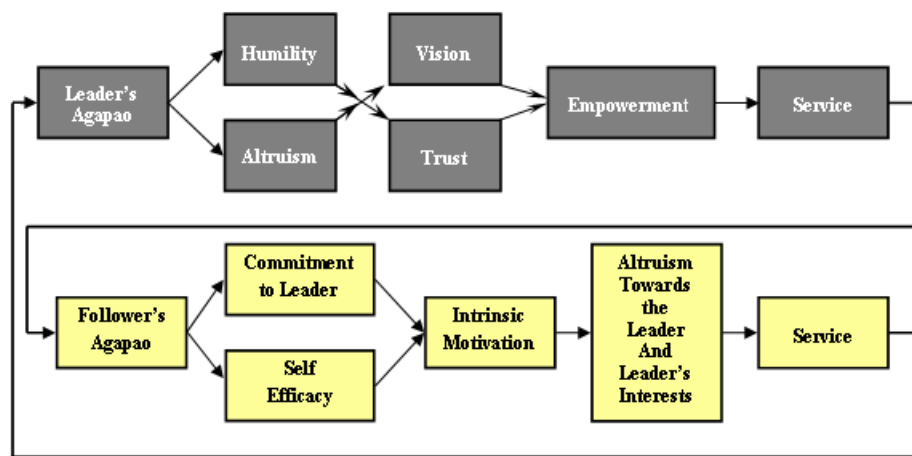


Figure 3. Patterson–Winston servant leader/follower model (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003, p. 6; reprinted with permission).

Servant Leadership

The model for servant leadership proposed by Patterson (2003) was a recent attempt to explain a leadership concept first introduced by Robert Greenleaf (1977). Greenleaf (1984) believed that servant leaders put other people's interests above their own. The choice to serve others in this manner is deliberate and the servant leader's motive is to serve first, as opposed to lead. Dr. Larry Spears (1995, 2004), the Director of the Greenleaf Center of Servant Leadership, later identified the following 10 critical characteristics of the servant leader:

1. Listening receptively to others
2. Empathy with others
3. The ability to heal individuals and organizations
4. Self-awareness
5. The use of persuasion rather than coercion
6. The ability to conceptualize and communicate concepts
7. Foresight
8. Stewardship to hold institutions in trust for the greater good of society
9. Commitment to the growth of others
10. Community building among those who work in the organization. (pp. 4-7)

Scholarly interest in servant leadership is a relatively recent development. The initial focus of this scholarly work was on identifying and refining the constructs associated with servant leadership (Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Irving & Longbothan, 2006; Laub, 1999; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Wong & Page, 2003). Russell and Stone (2002) published a comprehensive review of this literature and identified nine

functional constructs of servant leadership commonly found by scholars at that time. Four of the constructs—honesty, trust, integrity and appreciation of others—are *values* that the servant leader must possess. The five remaining functional constructs—vision, service, modeling, pioneering, and empowerment—are leadership *behaviors* that are considered essential to servant leader effectiveness. Russell and Stone also identified several other attributes of servant leaders that complement these functional constructs, including communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching, and delegation.

Laub (1999) developed a comprehensive set of constructs and definitions for servant leadership that are consistent with this literature and Greenleaf's (1977, 1984, 1991) ideas. Laub's (1999) work provides a useful framework to evaluate other servant leadership models such as Patterson's and will be examined in greater detail for that reason.

The constructs identified in the Laub (1999) model were developed by first reviewing the literature as it existed at that time. A three-part Delphi study was then conducted with 14 authorities from the field of servant leadership. Based on this process, Laub (1999) identified the following six constructs that define servant leaders:

1. *Values people*. Valuing people involves the leader's belief in people, the leader's service to the needs of people before those of the leader, and the leader's receptive, non-judgmental listening (Laub, 1999). Patterson (2003) amplified several aspects of this construct by introducing the behaviors of agapao love, in which others are considered with a sense of value and humanness, humility, and altruism whereby the welfare of others is placed above those of the leader.

2. *Develops people.* Developing people concerns the servant leader's reliance on modeling to exhibit appropriate servant leader behavior, the creation of opportunities for learning and growth for servant-led followers, and the use of encouragement and affirmation to facilitate the development of servant-led followers (Laub, 1999). Modeling involves the manifestation of leader behavior by the followers (Iles et al., 2005). Encouragement and affirmation involves the leader's appreciation of the follower, the leader's awareness of the follower's value and significance (Russell and Stone, 2002).

3. *Builds community.* Building community involves the development of strong personal relationships, working collaboratively with others, and valuing the differences of others (Laub, 1999). Laub (2004) later observed that community becomes possible through the shared supportive framework of a shared purpose.

4. *Displays authenticity.* Authenticity involves being open and accountable to others, showing willingness to learn from others, and maintaining integrity and trust (Laub, 1999). Authentic leaders exhibit self-awareness and self-acceptance and build authentic relationships characterized by: (a) transparency, openness, and trust; (b) guidance toward worthy objectives; and (c) an emphasis on follower development (Gardner et al., 2005).

5. *Provides leadership.* Providing leadership involves envisioning the future, taking initiative, and clarifying goals (Laub, 1999). The importance of vision in the servant leader process was emphasized by Greenleaf (1991) in the following statement:

The failure (or refusal) of a leader to foresee may be viewed as an ethical failure; because a serious ethical compromise today (when usual judgment on ethical inadequacy is made) is sometimes the result of a failure to make

the effort at an earlier date to foresee today's events and take the right actions when there was freedom for initiative to act. (p. 18)

6. *Shares leadership*. Sharing leadership involves facilitating a shared vision, sharing power, releasing control, sharing status, and promoting others. Laub (2004) described vision sharing as a dynamic process in which followers and leaders shape and refine that vision until the vision is shared by the group. Laub (2004) later noted that sharing power and leadership is a provisional process in which the leader is defined by the action initiated rather than positional status.

The six constructs identified by Laub (1999) captured the essence of Greenleaf's (1991) ideas of servant leadership, which are founded around the central notion that leaders place "the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader" (p. 83). This idea was highlighted in Laub's (1999) definition of servant leadership, which is quoted in the table in Figure 4. Laub (1999) also introduced a collectivist aspect of servant leadership by introducing the construct of community building in his model. Laub (1999) expanded the collectivist aspect of servant leadership in his definition of servant organization, which is also quoted in Figure 4. The inclusion of general leadership constructs in the Laub model expressly recognized the importance of certain leadership characteristics that are universally recognized in general leadership theory.

The six constructs identified by Laub (1999) and his definitions of servant leadership and servant organization are summarized in Figure 4 as they appeared in his study (p. 83). Laub's (1999) model provided a useful framework to evaluate the Patterson (2003) model of servant leadership which is similar in many respects. Patterson placed

Servant Leadership is...	
<p>an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Servant Leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization.</p>	
The Servant Leader...	
Values People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By believing in people • By serving other's needs before his or her own • By receptive, non-judgmental listening
Develops People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing opportunities for learning and growth • By modeling appropriate behavior • By building up others through encouragement and affirmation.
Builds Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By building strong personal relationships • By working collaboratively with others • By valuing the differences of others
Displays Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By being open and accountable to others • By a willingness to learn from others • By maintaining integrity and trust
Provides Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By envisioning the future • By taking initiative • By clarifying goals
Shares Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By facilitating a shared vision • By sharing power and releasing control • By sharing status and promoting others
The Servant Organization is...	
<p>an organization in which the characteristics of leadership are displayed through the organizational culture and are valued and practiced by the leadership and workforce.</p>	

Figure 4. Servant leadership and servant organization Model (Laub, 1999, p. 25;

reprinted with permission).

particular emphasis on Laub's (1999) concept of valuing people by introducing of behaviors of agapao love, humility, and altruism. These behaviors both amplify and expand Laub's concept of valuing people and represents an important advancement in the study of servant leadership.

Patterson (2003) also identified empowerment as an important aspect of the servant leadership process. Empowerment occurs when the leader grants power, authority, accountability, responsibility, and resources to the follower to achieve a certain vision within the organization (Winston, 2003). Patterson's specific identification of empowerment as a servant leader construct is consistent with the work of others (Russell & Stone, 2002). Empowerment is similar to Laub's (1999) concepts of sharing leadership and developing people.

Service is the end product for the servant leader in the Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model and is accomplished by providing others with what is needed to achieve vision, mission, and tasks of the organization (Patterson). Service is the hallmark of a servant leader and is also an important behavior inherent in the Laub (1999) model (Farling et al., 1999; Laub, 1999, 2004; Patterson; Russell & Stone, 2002; Winston, 2003).

Patterson's (2003) construct of trust involved integrity, respect for others, and service in the organization. Trust is an important aspect of authenticity that was incorporated into the Laub (1999) model and is universally recognized as a significant contributor to positive follower outcomes (Gardner et al., 2005). Noticeably absent from the Patterson–Winston (Patterson; Winston, 2003) model is the reciprocal development

of follower trust in the leader. Mutual trust is a critical element in the leader follower relationship (Gardner et al.).

Patterson (2003) curiously defined vision as the manner in which the leader sees the future state and role of the follower. This concept of vision is a significant departure from the concept of vision that is generally recognized in servant leadership literature (Laub, 1999, 2004; Russell & Stone, 2002). Servant leaders in the Laub (1999) model are responsible for envisioning the future as it relates to the organization and then developing acceptance of that vision with their followers. This concept of shared vision between follower and leader seems to have been adopted by Winston (2004) in his later interpretations of the Patterson–Winston (Patterson; Winston, 2003) model. The process of developing a shared vision seems more consistent with servant leadership theory than the more limited idea of vision proposed by Patterson.

The Patterson (2003) model omitted general leader traits such as taking initiative and clarifying goals that were included in the servant leader models proposed by Laub (1999) and others (Laub, 2004; Russell & Stone, 2002). The Patterson model additionally ignored collectivist aspects of servant leadership such as community building and the development of servant organizations that are found in the Laub (1999) model. Collectivist concepts such as community building are important leadership considerations that influence follower outcomes and are examined in the next section (Gardner et al., 2005; Yukl, 2006). Further research is necessary to determine how and whether these considerations should be incorporated into a leader–follower model.

The limitations in the Patterson (2003) model do not appear insurmountable. Winston's (2003) apparent recognition of a broader concept for shared vision ameliorates

some of the limitations in Patterson's initial model. Confining this model to interpersonal relationships between the leader and the follower resolves other questions related to the omission of collectivist and other follower influences. The Patterson model is a satisfactory theoretical framework for servant leadership when clarified and confined in this manner.

It is important to note at this point that the observations made in this section are based largely on conceptual studies. Research has only recently begun to validate servant leadership theories such as those proposed by Laub (1999) and Patterson (2003). However, the studies that have been conducted are consistent with the conclusions reached in this section.

Washington, Sutton, and Field (2006) took an important step in this process by finding a significant correlation between servant leaders and agreeableness, empathy, integrity, and competence. Winston (2004) conducted a qualitative single organization case study and observed that servant-led followers perceived their leader to be an intent listener that trusted his/her followers and was accountable to them. Joseph and Winston (2005) found that servant-led followers possessed a high degree of trust in their leaders and their organization. Irving (2005) and Dannhauser and Boshoff (2006) found a positive correlation between servant-led followers and organizational commitment, whereas Drury (2004) came to the opposite conclusion.

These findings are generally consistent with the constructs that underlie both the Laub (1999) and Patterson (2003) models. Findings by Washington et al. (2006) support Laub's (1999) construct of authentic leadership and Patterson's concept of agapao love. Joseph and Winston's (2005) findings on leadership trust also supported the authenticity

construct in the Laub model and highlighted the need to consider this behavior in the Patterson–Winston (Patterson; Winston, 2003) model. The findings on commitment, though mixed, were generally consistent with those hypothesized by both Patterson and Laub (1999). Although these initial studies are encouraging, the validation of servant leadership theory will require a considerable amount of additional research to replicate these findings and resolve many other unanswered questions.

This section examined the literature on servant leadership in an attempt to determine whether a common conceptual framework exists to define this leadership theory. Models developed by Laub (1999) and Patterson (2003) each have aspects that are valuable to this study. Laub’s model provided a comprehensive view of servant leadership which encompasses the leader–follower relationship and other leadership responsibilities such as community building. The Patterson model in many respects refined the Laub model as it relates to the leader–follower relationship and attempted to explain how the servant leadership process occurs. Neither model, however, expressly addressed how followers will react to servant leaders or what follower outcomes will result from the leader–follower relationship. The next section will examine these issues.

Servant-led Followers

The study of servant-led followers is much like the study of followership in general—nearly nonexistent. Winston (2003) recognized this deficiency in his analysis of Patterson’s (2003) model on servant leaders and concluded that the model should be extended to include a process for servant-led followers. This ground-breaking work resulted in a follower model that consisted of six follower behaviors previously noted, namely agapao love, commitment to the leader, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation,

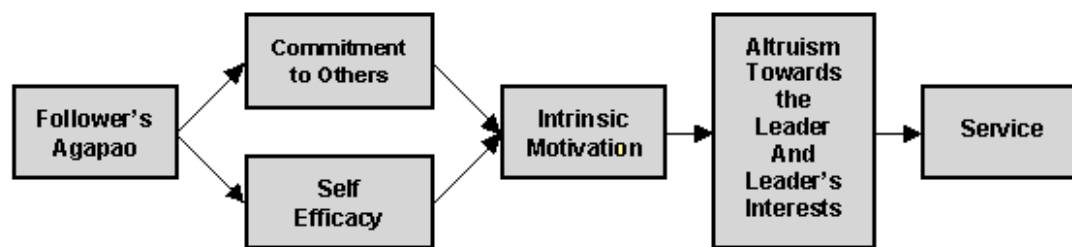


Figure 5. Winston's model for servant-led followers (Winston, 2003, p. 6; reprinted with permission).

altruism to the leader, and the leader's interests, and service. This model for servant-led followers is depicted in Figure 5.

Winston (2003), like Patterson (2003), concluded that agapao love is the cornerstone of the servant leader–follower relationship and hypothesized that followers develop agapao love through the service of the leader to the follower. Others have predicted similar consequences based upon modeling by the follower, which involves the manifestation of leader agapao love and other behaviors by the follower based on the follower observation and acceptance of the leader (Iles et al., 2005).

The behaviors of leader service and modeling also shape follower behavior in other respects. Winston (2003) theorized that servant-led followers will possess a high degree of self-efficacy, which is the follower's perception of his/her own capabilities. Self-efficacy is an antecedent condition to the acceptance of empowerment that the leader grants (Dvir et al., 2002). Empowerment is a servant leader behavior in both the Laub (1999) and Patterson (2003) models. Winston (2003) additionally hypothesized that servant-led followers would exhibit a high degree of commitment to the servant leader and defined commitment to the leader as a positive belief in the leader. Winston (2003)

hypothesized that follower commitment results from the leader's empowerment of and service to the follower (Jacobs, 2006).

Winston's (2003) model predicted that the interrelationship among agapao love, leader commitment, and self-efficacy leads to intrinsic motivation. Winston (2003) defined intrinsic motivation as the inward innate propensity of a follower to exercise his/her capabilities to seek out and master optimal challenges. Literature on authenticity, a construct in the Laub (1999) model, supported this view by theorizing that leader authenticity leads to intrinsic motivation of the follower (Iles et al., 2005).

The Winston (2003) model culminated with the follower's altruism toward and service to the leader. Altruism involves the follower's concern for the welfare of the leader and others, even if this behavior results in personal sacrifice to the follower. Service to the leader and others from altruism and the other antecedent behaviors of agapao love, commitment, intrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy is the ultimate product of the servant leader–follower relationship.

The Winston (2003) model was a notable first attempt to understand the follower outcome of servant leaders. The model did not necessarily reflect all of the behaviors that might be predicted for servant-led followers based on other literature. Servant leader constructs of shared leadership, authenticity, and developing people, which are incorporated into the Laub (1999) model, have important implications on follower outcomes and deserve further attention.

The construct of sharing leadership involves facilitating a shared vision, sharing power, releasing control, sharing status, and promoting others. Bennis (2002) observed that vision is not meaningful and significant unless it is shared. Vision can only be shared

if people have involvement in it (Laub, 2004). Laub (2004) described vision sharing as a dynamic process in which followers and leaders shape and refine that vision until the vision is shared by the group and additionally noted that the sharing of power and leadership is a provisional process in which the leader is defined by the action initiated rather than positional status. The original leader who initiates action in this provisional process may later take the role of follower as the process continues and others may take initiative to become the leader. This sharing process involves and shapes the servant-led follower in a manner not fully explained by the Winston (2003) model.

The construct of authenticity involves being open and accountable to others, showing willingness to learn from others, and maintaining integrity and trust. Avolio et al. (2004) observed that authentic leaders build benevolence and integrity with followers by encouraging open communication, sharing critical information, and providing honest feelings about the people with whom they work. Avolio et al. and Iles et al. (2005) hypothesized that followers of authentic leaders will also exhibit authentic behaviors through modeling and high quality relationships.

The central principle of authentic followership is self-awareness (Gardner et al., 2005). Follower self-awareness involves the knowledge of, and trust in, one's own personal characteristics, values, motives, feelings, and cognitions. Self-awareness coupled with unbiased processing leads to human actualization, self-acceptance, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive relationships, and personal growth (Iles et al., 2005). These behavioral processes underlie and lead to eudaemonic well-being (Iles et al.), self-management behaviors (Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Politis, 2005), independent critical thinking and effective learning (Dvir & Shamir, 2003), and positive

emotions and values such as agapao love and integrity (Iles et al.). These outcomes are important behaviors that servant-led followers manifest according to the Laub (1999) model. Further research is needed to determine whether the Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model should be refined to include authentic behavior.

The construct of developing people includes the servant leader's creation of opportunities for learning and growth for servant-led followers (Laub, 1999). The creation of opportunities for learning and growth enhances the self-development efforts of the follower and improves follower outcomes (Gardner et al., 2005; Iles et al., 2005). Follower self-development behaviors are enabled, in part, by allowing and encouraging follower self-determination, which encompasses the follower's need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness and leads to intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, conceptual learning, and creativity (Iles et al.). The role of follower self-development in the servant leader–follower process is absent from the Winston (2003) model and needs to be explored further.

The image of servant-led followers that emerges from the previous discussion is remarkably similar the description of exemplary followership that was previously developed. Two of these outcomes predicted by the Kelley (1992) model—service and agapao love—are constructs associated with exemplary followership. Two others—authenticity and empowerment—are expected follower outcomes of the Laub (1999) model. The exemplary follower construct of commitment is, in part, predicted by the Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model with respect to leader commitment.

The Laub (1999) model is also consistent with and promotes two other behaviors associated with exemplary followers. The first behavior is independent critical thinking and learning, which is supported by authentic leadership, people valuing, shared leadership, follower development, and empowerment that are included in the Laub (1999) model (Iles et al., 2005). The second behavior is effective engagement and eudaemonic well-being, which results from authentic leadership and followership behaviors, people-valuing, and leadership-sharing, which are encompassed in the Laub (1999) model (Iles et al.).

Research on servant-led followership is limited in general and nonexistent with respect to the development of exemplary followers. The only study that directly considered the Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model was a single case study conducted by Winston (2004). This qualitative study, conducted at a Bible College, found that servant-led followers expressed comments consistent with the constructs of shared vision, agapao love, leader humility, self-efficacy, empowerment, trust, and leader commitment. Joseph and Winston (2005) also found that servant-led followers had a high degree of trust in servant leaders. Irving (2005) and Dannhauser and Boshoff (2006) found a positive correlation between servant-led followers and organizational commitment, whereas Drury (2004) came to the opposite conclusion. These studies, though mixed, generally provide some evidence to support the Winston (2003) and Laub (1999) models.

This study attempts to gain a better understanding of servant-led followers. The Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model provides a useful theoretical framework for this study; however, the previous discussion has also highlighted several

areas where the model is unclear or incomplete. The Laub (1999) model and related followership literature fill many of these gaps from a theoretical standpoint, particularly with regard to authenticity, shared leadership and vision, and people development. This study supplements the Patterson–Winston model to incorporate the theoretical framework that emerges from the Laub model and related literature.

It is equally important to reiterate that the Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model is generally restricted to the interpersonal relationship between the servant leader and follower. Other outcomes for servant-led followers may also occur that are unrelated to this relationship. Laub (2004) strongly suggested that servant-led followers will ultimately exhibit characteristics of a servant leader and will manifest those behaviors when placed in a leadership position. It is important to reiterate that leadership and followership are roles and not positions (Kelley, 1988; Laub, 2004). Nearly every leader is a follower and many followers are also leaders. Research on the leadership styles of servant-led followers is nonexistent and requires further study.

The leader-centric models developed by both Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) and Laub (1999) also placed exclusive emphasis and focus on the leader–follower relationship. Leadership does indeed play a significant role in determining follower outcomes. However, followers are also shaped by other factors that are interrelated with leadership. These influences on followers must also be examined to gain a complete understanding of follower outcomes. The next section will explore these considerations.

Other Influences on Servant-led Followers

A significant portion of the literature focuses primarily on leadership when exploring follower outcomes. However, other factors also shape follower behavior, and the literature at least suggests that follower outcomes are influenced by that particular follower, the culture of the organization, the interpersonal and group dynamics among followers, groups of followers, and leaders. These dimensions will be reviewed in this section, with particular emphasis on servant-led followers and servant organizations.

The Follower Dimension

Kelley (1992) suggested that the development of each exemplary follower is primarily the responsibility of the individual follower. Chaleff (2003) also placed responsibility for followership development on the follower and supported Kelley's (1992) position on self-assessment and growth. Yukl (2006) similarly observed that followers should be encouraged to develop self-management behaviors including self-development and noted that the process of self-development involves both behavioral and cognitive strategies. Densten and Gray (2001) suggested that follower learning behaviors are an important aspect of follower development. The theory underlying each of these considerations provides a theoretical foundation for the type of follower self-development posited by Kelley (1992), Chaleff (2003), and Yukl (2006).

Yukl (2006) suggested that behavioral strategies relevant to follower self-development include self-criticism, realistic goal-setting, behavior monitoring, and cue modification. Recent literature on authentic followership supports this view. Authentic followership, which was previously discussed, also encourages follower self-development through self-awareness, unbiased processing, and human actualization.

These self-development behaviors can be enhanced by encouraging follower self-determination, which encompasses the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness and leads to intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, conceptual learning, and creativity. Gardner et al. (2005) and Iles et al. (2005) contended that follower self-determination, self-awareness, and unbiased processing should be permitted and facilitated by organizations and their leaders to promote follower self-development.

Yukl (2006) suggested that cognitive strategies enhance self-development by building self-confidence and optimism. Cognitive strategies include the identification of destructive thought patterns and replacement of those patterns with constructive thoughts (Yukl, 2006). The use of mental imagery to successfully complete a difficult task is an example of such a strategy.

Densten and Gray (2001) focused on the experiential learning model (ELM) to propose yet another theory of follower self-development. ELM focuses on the type of critical thinking that occurs from concrete experiences and conceptual abstraction. Experiential learning involves knowledge of consequences of actions occurring in actual situations, whereas abstract conceptualization results in generalizations that are founded upon those concrete experiences. A deeper understanding of events and behavior is facilitated through active behavioral experimentation and the deliberate reflection upon that experimentation and other concrete experiences. Densten and Gray theorized that continuous thinking and learning on both an experiential and an abstract level provides a foundation for effective behavioral changes that support follower development. This model provides a theoretical framework for the more generalized notion of independent critical thinking that Kelley (1992) envisioned for exemplary followers.

Follower self-development is an important dimension to follower outcomes. The ability of followers to take responsibility for their own development runs counter to the misguided, but frequent, notion that followers are mere “sheep” who anxiously await transformation by a “heroic” leader. The literature increasingly recognized that follower effectiveness is enhanced when organizations and their leaders permit, support, and reinforce development of followers through their own initiatives.

The literature suggests that servant-led followers will exhibit a high degree of self-development. Authenticity behavior, which is predicted by the Laub (1999) model for servant-led followers, promotes self-development as previously discussed (Gardner et al., 2005; Iles et al., 2005). Servant leadership characteristics, such as developing people, valuing people, empowerment, and leadership-sharing, also support and encourage the self-development efforts of servant-led followers. However, no research has been conducted on this aspect of servant-led followership. This topic needs further examination and will be one focus of this study.

The Collectivist Dimension

All organizations have a collectivist dimension that pertains to the organization as a whole or to a group within that organization (Avolio et al., 2004). Collectivist processes provide the foundation for concepts such as organizational culture or organizational environment (Brown & Thornborrow, 1996; Gardner et al., 2005; Yukl, 2006). Collectivist processes influence follower outcomes.

A collectivist concept relevant to this analysis is the structural theory of organizational behavior. This theory contends that organizations that provide open access to information, resources, support, and open opportunities to learn and develop will

empower and enable leaders and followers to accomplish their work (Gardner et al., 2005). This theory suggests that members of an organization cannot be effective unless an environment is created and sustained that allows those members to continually learn and grow.

Social exchange theory tends to support the views of structural theory. The collectivist branch of social exchange theory is called perceived organizational support (POS; Wayne, Shore, & Liden, 1997). POS is grounded in the concept that organizational members develop global beliefs through the process of personification. The personification of the organization by a follower occurs over time based on the accumulated experiences of that follower in the organization. A favorable POS exchange results when the follower perceives that the organization is fair and values the follower (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Wayne et al.). Developmental experiences, promotions, and a history of rewards positively relate to POS (Wayne et al.). A favorable POS is positively related to a follower's job performance, organizational commitment, innovation, and positive attitudes (Gardner et al., 2005; Wayne et al.).

Social identity theory is also relevant to collectivist influences on followers. Social identity refers to that part of an individual's self-concept associated with membership in a social group (Haslam & Platow, 2001). Social identities are formed through self-categorization whereby norms, values, goals, and views of the individual are shared by other members of the social group. An individual's social identity with a particular group results in actions by that individual to serve and advance that group's interests, often at the expense of the individual's own interest (Haslam et al., 2003). Social identity with an organizational work group provides the psychological foundation

for key organizational phenomena, including cooperation, trust, empowerment, group productivity, and collective action (Haslam et al.; Haslam & Platow).

Researchers are beginning to recognize the importance of collectivist processes as important considerations in follower and organizational outcomes and leadership theory. These processes appear to significantly influence a follower's empowerment, self-management behaviors, positive attitudes, values, commitment, and social identity relevant to the organization. Leaders with the full participation of followers can influence work climates that exhibit fairness; encourage constructive development of work groups and teams; and provide access to information, resources, and support (Gardner et al., 2005; Yukl, 2006). These processes are time-consuming and not well understood. As Yukl (2006) observed, "More research is clearly needed on collective processes and contextual factors that determine leadership effectiveness in teams, organizations, and inter-organizational joint ventures" (p. 450).

The role of collectivist processes in shaping servant-led followers is not well understood. The Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model is devoid of any collectivist considerations. However, Laub (1999) suggested that the collectivist process of community building was an important characteristic of servant leaders. Laub (1999) also envisioned the evolution of a servant organization in which servant leadership characteristics are practiced by leaders and followers alike and become a part of the organizational culture. Authenticity and leadership-sharing processes associated with the Laub (1999) model of servant leadership and servant-led followers also facilitates the development of collectivist processes. These aspects of servant leadership are conducive to the creation of an organizational environment that is fair, is open, and values people,

which leads to positive follower outcomes according to social exchange theory and structural theory of organizational behavior (Gardner et al., 2005).

Winston (2004) found that the organizational culture became more open after a servant leader began to lead the organization that was being studied. Joseph and Winston (2005) found that servant-led followers have a high degree of organizational trust. These findings suggested that servant leaders have a positive influence on collectivist processes. This conclusion, in turn, suggested that servant-led followers are favorably influenced by collectivist dimensions within the organization. However, additional research is both needed and warranted to test these theoretical conclusions. Collectivist processes are one focus of this study.

The Peer Dimension

Chaleff (2003) suggested that interpersonal relationships among followers profoundly affect follower outcomes on an individual and collectivist level. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) suggested that the quality of dyadic relationships between followers may significantly influence follower outcomes. Kelley (1992) observed that the interpersonal relationships among followers form networks unique to each follower. These networks also influence group development and collectivist processes. Little, if any, research has been conducted to understand the interpersonal relationships among followers. These relationships have important implications in the study of followership and warrant further investigation.

Servant leadership theory raises interesting questions about peer group influences in a servant-led organization. The Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model predicted that servant-led followers will serve others much like their leaders. The

Laub (1999) model similarly predicted that servant-led followers will exhibit and practice the behaviors of authenticity, people valuing, and people development. The interpersonal relationships among servant followers may therefore resemble the servant leader–follower relationship hypothesized in the Patterson–Winston model and suggested by the Laub (1999) model previously discussed. Peer relationships of this nature should enhance follower outcomes and promote exemplary followership. No research has been done on peer relationships of servant-led followers or the influence of those relationships on follower outcomes. The unique questions posed by servant-led follower relationships warrant further study and are one focus of this study.

Summary

In this chapter, I reviewed and synthesized the relevant literature related to followership, servant leadership, and servant-led followers. The chapter began with a general classification typology for followership. The constructs associated with effective followers were then reviewed to derive a normative set of characteristics of exemplary followers. The influences which relate to follower development and behavior were then briefly examined. Each consideration provides a general theoretical framework on which to evaluate follower outcomes in various organizational and leadership settings.

This study relates specifically to the followers of servant leaders. Servant leadership was chosen as the overriding leadership theory because of its emphasis on followership. The last section of this chapter first summarized a theoretical model of the follower–leader relationship. The theory of servant leadership was then highlighted to provide context. The discussion turned to analysis of servant-led followers. Behaviors expected for servant-led followers are generally consistent with those defined for

exemplary followership. This chapter concluded by reviewing other influences on servant-led followers.

The review of literature revealed that minimal research has been conducted on followership. The research on servant-led followers is nearly nonexistent. The study of servant-led followers is a recent development. Qualitative study is an appropriate research methodology to employ under these circumstances to ascertain a better understanding of the actual experiences of servant-led followers. I chose a qualitative methodology for this study for that reason as more fully explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

*It took me way beyond what I knew,
into places of which I was totally scared,
but as I became less frightened,
I welcomed new ways of thinking and approaching something.
It made me an infinitely richer person,
and I think a better musician.*

Yo-Yo Ma

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the follower experiences of five nursing educators led by servant leaders in two institutions of higher education. This chapter provides information on the theoretical framework for the study, the settings, the selection and description of participants, the procedures used for data collection, and the methods used to analyze the data. The data collected provided insight to the phenomenon of followership, specifically what it is like to be a follower who is led by a servant leader. By learning more about followers of servant leaders, valuable data, such as how followers relate to the servant leader, each other, and to the organization, were collected, advancing existing followership and servant leadership theories.

Theoretical Paradigm

The epistemology I selected for this qualitative research study of followers of servant leaders is constructionism, which is based on the theoretical paradigm that truth, or meaning, comes into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities of the world (Crotty, 2003). It involves making meaning of events that comprise the human experience. Constructionism, in this study, focused on reconstructing the meaning of followership as it emerged when examined in the context of the real world of a follower

who is led by a servant leader. Followership is not followership without human construction, or meaning, based on the participant's perspectives of the world in which he/she lives (Crotty). There are likely many different constructions of what followership means to a person. The purpose of this study was to examine the follower experiences of five nursing educators led by servant leaders in two institutions of higher education.

Methodology

This qualitative study focused on the interpretation of the "essence," or meaning, of what it is like to be a follower who is led by a servant leader. In this study, the researcher identified the essence of human experience concerning a phenomenon as described by the participants (Creswell, 2003). In order to acquire an understanding of the human experiences of servant-led followers, I chose a basic interpretive qualitative research design. Maxwell (2005) offered five intellectual goals for qualitative studies, which are appropriate for this study.

Understanding the Meaning

I chose to conduct a basic interpretive qualitative research study because of an interest in understanding the reality of what it is like to be a follower who is led by a servant leader. The meaning of followership was defined from the participants' perspectives as they shared verbal descriptions about the experiences, events, and situations they were involved in as a follower of a servant leader. These experiences were discussed in terms of how the followers related to the leader, situations in which they engaged with or without the leader, and how the leader influenced their behavior, including personal perspectives the participants had on the follower experience. The findings of the study were not only the participants' accounts of events and actions

surrounding the followership experience, but also a sharing of the reality of the experience of interacting with a servant leader, which facilitated my depth of understanding and rich description of the meaning the phenomenon.

Understanding the Context

Each participant discussed how the followership experience affected her individually and in the context of her interaction with the leader. The stories of follower interaction with the leader added to the meaning of the phenomenon of servant-led followership as I considered each participant's story separately, then as a whole, when all participant stories were woven into themes pertaining to the followership experience.

Identifying Unanticipated Phenomena and Influences

Identification of unexpected phenomenon is an integral component of the research process. Followership is a dynamic process that reflects the situation at the time. It is situational in that it reflects the situation the follower is in with that particular leader at that particular time. That reality is in flux and can change over time. Qualitative research design is flexible, which allowed me, as the research instrument, to modify the design and focus of the study as new participant experiences became available and new meanings of followership evolved throughout the prolonged engagement between the participant and myself.

Understanding the Process

Qualitative research focuses on the respondent's lived experience, in this case, on the process of events and actions that take place as the follower of a servant leader. I used an inductive process to gather data to build concepts or theories about the targeted phenomenon (Merriam, 2002). This was especially relevant for a study on servant-led

followers given that there is minimal validated theory on the phenomenon of followership. I was the primary instrument in data collection and analysis. I constructed the meaning of servant-led followership from interviews in which participants shared their own thoughts with me regarding the process and experience of being a led by a servant leader.

Developing Causal Explanations

Qualitative research requires face-to face interaction with the participant. The data for this study were gathered from individual participant interviews. As the research instrument, I conducted interviews with the participants in order to gain continuous clarification and rich description of *how* a servant leader plays a role in the process of the leader–follower relationship. I used a qualitative approach to establish a framework for understanding the meaning, context, and experience of followership. I used an inductive strategy to interpret the data, which described the subjects’ lived experience as followers of a servant leader. The themes, categories, concepts, and theories derived from the transcribed interview data led to a descriptive construction of the meaning of servant-led followership.

Methods

Research Settings

The research settings for this study consisted of two institutions of higher education in the midwestern United States offering Bachelor in Nursing (BSN) degrees and above. One institution was a small, private, religiously affiliated college of nursing. The other institution was a large, public university of which the school of nursing was a department. These institutions were purposefully selected based on my assessment of the

dean/associate dean/director as a servant leader, their interest in research pertaining to servant-led followers, and ease of access.

The leaders of both nursing programs were long-time leaders in the profession of nursing, recognized by nursing professionals in the state in which they practiced. They had been appointed to leadership positions in state-wide professional nursing organizations and had served the profession of nursing beyond the doors of the organizations of which they were leaders. My assessment was that they possessed many, if not all, of Laub's (1999) constructs of a servant leader, which was evident in their interactions with nursing professionals across the states. Their personal practice and support of servant leadership and their interest in research were important considerations in their selection.

An inquiry letter was e-mailed to the nursing program leaders to request access to possible participants for the study. The inquiry letter to the leaders included the Informed Consent Form, which gave details of the research study, the approval letter from the Iowa State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), request for that college's IRB approval, faculty e-mail addresses, and the letter to be sent to potential participants. The leaders agreed to participate in the study noting that IRB approval from their institution was granted based on the IRB approval received from Iowa State University.

Participants

The 5 participants who qualified for this study were purposefully selected by me based on their response to the inquiry letter requesting participants for the study. The inquiry letter included a description of the nature of the research, the time commitment for participation in the study, the Informed Consent Form, and a copy of Laub's (1999)

servant leadership model with the specific reference to servant leadership removed. Prior to being selected to participate in the study, all participants indicated that their leader, the person who conducted their annual performance appraisal, exhibited all of the leadership behaviors presented in the Laub (1999) model. I discussed the research design with each participant who agreed to participate in the study. All participants signed the Informed Consent form prior to the first interview.

All 5 female participants were educators who were employed full time by the institution at which they worked. Four of the participants were Registered Nurses (RNs) who held an associate dean or faculty position. Their leader was the dean or director of the program. The fifth participant, who was not an RN, was an assistant dean whose leader was one of the associate dean participants in the study. Two participants were master's prepared, and one was enrolled in a doctoral program. Three participants were doctorally prepared. The participants' experience in nursing education ranged from 2 to 43 years.

Methods of Data Collection

Interview procedures and process. Each of the 5 participants was asked to participate in three 60-minute interviews, for a total of 15 interviews for the 5 participants. The interviews, which were scheduled according to the availability of the participant and myself, were conducted at the college at which the participant was employed. I conducted all 15 of the individual, semi-structured, in-depth interviews during which each participant had the opportunity to share information and reflect about her follower experience. Each participant was assured strict confidentiality, noting that each participant and college would be given a pseudonym in the written study.

Thirty days between each of the three interviews facilitated a prolonged engagement which allowed time for thoughtful reflection of the follower experience on the part of the participant. It also gave me an opportunity to explore follow-up questions emerging from initial interviews, as well as gain clarification, verification of understanding, and missing information during the follow-up interviews. Saturation of the topic was reached during the third and final interview with each participant.

The goal of the semi-structured interviews was to allow the participants to express their thoughts and opinions in their own words and allowed for a more fluid exchange between the interviewer and the interviewee (Esterberg, 2002). Ten to 15 open-ended questions per session were used as an interview guide to gather information and to facilitate the reflective nature of the participants' responses. Individual interviews were audio taped with the permission of the participant. Each interview was transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriber. The accuracy of each of the 15 transcripts was validated by visual review of each typed transcript while listening to the audio tape of that interview.

Meeting summaries and reflections. I wrote meeting summaries and reflections of the interview experience during and immediately following each participant interview. The meeting summaries served as reminders and thoughts about the data collected from each interview. This personal information added richness and depth to the study.

Methods of Data Analysis

Reflective data analysis. After conducting each interview I listened to the audio tape, reviewed the interview transcript, and refined my meeting summaries and notes. During my review of the tape, transcript, and notes, I organized my thoughts regarding

conversational patterns and themes, categories, and relationships. I wrote reflective memos throughout the data collection process. These memos helped to refine and analyze my thinking about the interviews and observations and reminded me of subjects that I wanted to discuss at the next interview.

Final data analysis. Final data analysis began after all transcription documents were received following the completion of the entire interview process. I used three strategies suggested by Maxwell (2005) for qualitative data analysis: memo review, categorizing strategies (coding and thematic analysis), and connecting strategies (narrative analysis). I listened to all the audio tapes and read each transcript, noting voice inflections, excitement, or pauses. I noted tentative ideas about categories and relationships and used them throughout the data analysis to stimulate analytic insight to the data. I coded the data to facilitate organization of the data into broad conversational patterns, then themes. Identification of connections between themes facilitated the reduction of numerous themes to more concise themes derived from the data. I employed phenomenological reduction to determine the main themes of each interview, then all of the interviews as a whole. Merriam (2002) defined phenomenological reduction as “the process of continually returning to the essence of the experience to derive the inner structure, or meaning, in and of itself” (p. 94). It was my responsibility as a researcher to capture the participants’ essence of the meaning of servant-led followership as it emerged from interpretation of the interview data.

Confidentiality

The participants in this study were ensured confidentiality in accordance with the Informed Consent Form included in Appendix A. Anonymity was guaranteed by not

revealing the identity of the participants or the institution of higher education in which they were employed. Pseudonyms used for the five participants were Elaine, Emma, Jayne, Jill, and Maria. Pseudonyms used for the institutions of higher education were Alpha College and Beta College. Audio tapes and e-mail correspondence were destroyed after the analysis was completed.

Trustworthiness

It is my intent that this research credibly reflects the essence of what it means to be a follower of a servant leader. I enhanced the trustworthiness of the data by using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) defined criteria for trustworthiness which includes credibility, transferability of the findings, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

The credibility of this study was insured by prolonged engagement with the participants. I conducted three, 1-hour interviews over a 3-month period, which offered me the opportunity to learn the context of the organization and prolonged the contact I had with each participant. Prolonged engagement gave me the opportunity to build trust and establish a positive rapport with the participants.

Triangulation involves collecting data from multiple sources to assist in interpretation of the data (Polit & Beck, 2006). In this study, I assured triangulation by conducting three individual in-depth interviews with 5 different followers of servant leaders. My researcher field notes, which included personal reflections of each interview, contributed to the available data, as well, clarifying my interpretation of the data. This variety of data collection methods led to a broader understanding of the meaning of being a follower of a servant leader.

Peer debriefing provided an external check on the inquiry process. I shared the transcribed interview data with a professional colleague to test my interpretation of the data. During this process, my biases were probed, meanings explored, and the basis for interpretation were clarified (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The peer debriefer was qualified based on familiarity with the research study and the methodological issues.

I did member checks with the participants from whom the data were originally collected in order to validate that my reconstruction of the data was recognizable to them as adequate representations of their own reality as a follower of a servant leader. Each participant was given the opportunity to review her three interview transcripts in order to correct errors of fact and to challenge my interpretations, categories, and conclusions drawn from the interview data. The process of member checking gave me the opportunity to summarize the data as a first step to data analysis.

Transferability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), it is the researcher's responsibility "to provide the database that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of the potential appliers" (p. 316). Five different participants from two different colleges of nursing—one private, one public—provided a wide range of information to be included in the database of servant-led follower experiences. I examined this extensive information to provide a thick, rich description of participants' experiences of being led by a servant leader.

Dependability

Triangulation in data collection, discussed previously, is one way to demonstrate dependability of a research study. Prolonged engagement, member checks, and peer debriefing were also used to strengthen the dependability of the study.

Confirmability

Throughout the data collection process I constructed an audit trail, which included audio tapes, typed transcripts, field notes, and personal reflections on the responses to the interview questions, the data, or the experience. I included a discussion of the problems, issues, or ideas during the data collection and analysis processes.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity explains the researcher's position related to the topic being studied, the basis for selecting participants, the context of the study, and what values or assumptions might affect the data collection and analysis of the study (Merriam, 2002). My professional education and 35 years as a Registered Nurse, administrator, and educator has provided me with strong leadership, communication, interviewing, and observational skills, which stimulated my interest in and preference for qualitative inquiry. It is possible that my extensive experience as an educator and administrator may have affected my relationship with the participants. Although I had never met the participants in this study, the fact that I am a nurse educator, as they were, may have biased the way that I responded to them and how I categorized their responses to the interview questions. My open, accepting, and warm "nurse personality" may have influenced the participants' responses to me as the interviewer. I have a strong interest in servant leadership and try to employ servant leadership constructs in every aspect of my

personal and professional life. I have the expectation that it is beneficial for leaders and followers in an organization to do the same. This attitude may have influenced the manner in which I categorized and determined themes for the data that I collected.

Summary

This qualitative study examines the follower experiences of five nursing educators led by servant leaders in two institutions of higher education. The participants of the study were purposefully selected from educators who were employed by two institutions of higher education in the midwestern United States that offer a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree or above. After receiving permission from the leader of each institution, faculty were sent an e-mail to determine their interest in participating in the research regarding followers. If faculty responded positively and were willing to participate in the study, they were interviewed on three separate occasions at their place of employment. I conducted the individual interviews and recorded field notes. During and following data collection, I categorized the content and determined patterns, and finally themes from the data. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study and a discussion of those findings in relation to the reviewed literature.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

*There are two ways of being creative.
One can sing and dance.
Or one can create an environment
in which singers and dancers flourish.*

Warren G. Bennis

The purpose of this study was to examine the follower experiences of five nursing educators led by servant leaders in two institutions of higher education. Five female nursing educators in two institutions of higher education were interviewed individually over a three-month period. The five participants described their experiences of being a follower of a servant leader with insight, candor, and enthusiasm. This chapter presents the findings of the study followed by a discussion of the findings.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is a preface which summarizes the participants' perceptions of various behaviors exhibited by their respective leaders. The preface provides participant confirmation of the underlying premise of this study that the participants were led by servant leaders. The second section focuses on the findings of this study, which consist of the participant's experiences as followers of a servant leader. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings as they relate to the literature on followership theory.

Preface on Servant Leadership Behaviors

This study was based on the premise that the participants were led by servant leaders. I selected the servant leaders for this study based on criteria that included the leader's leadership and service to the nursing profession both within and beyond the walls of the institution of higher education in which they worked. During the interviews

the participants described their leaders' behaviors, which were consistent with the constructs of servant leadership. The leader behaviors perceived by the participants will be divided into six patterns that match the servant leader constructs identified by Laub (1999). This section concludes with an analysis of how these perceptions relate to the literature.

Values People

Valuing people involves the leader's belief in people, the leader's service to the needs of others before self, and the leader's receptive, nonjudgmental listening. Emma perceived this behavior by her leader when she stated that her leader "values me. I think there's a great deal of trust there." Emma added, "I like [my leader] a lot. She really cares about you. She cares about not only your work, but she cares about you as an individual." Emma illustrated these points with a poignant example about her leader's caring behavior:

We had to put my dog down over the weekend—my little puppy dog, my little rat terrier over here—he was 17 years old—and at 8:30 this morning [my leader] was in here. She just cares about you. When she knows something that's going on in an individual faculty member's life—illness or whatever—she's there. She's either there verbally or she's there in person or she's there in writing. Somehow she makes contact. That is kind of unusual, I think.

Jill emphasized that her leader "values me as a member of her team. I think that she personally cares about me and what's going on." Jill admired her leader's ability to "listen to people, hear what they're trying to say, and show that she is interested in them." Jill concluded, "[My leader] always takes time to find out and check in with people. It's

really important because if you know that someone cares about you and what you're doing, then you can let go of a lot of wasted time in the organization." Jayne spoke of her leader's "unconditional regard—that you don't feel threatened in any way and that she'll work with you if something happens that you don't anticipate." Jane added, "Here, it's—oh, you're good, do this. A behavior that makes it different is encouragement. It's a different approach to life. Here it's, now that's a good idea. How can we make it work?"

Elaine observed that "[my leader] is in tune to our needs and our ability" and her "observations of us—our different things that we do, our special interests that we have—she takes all of those things into consideration." Elaine also noted that her leader "treats everyone fairly" and "with dignity." Elaine appreciated her leader's willingness to "listen, give feedback, and encourage you to do other things." Maria believed that her leader "treats other people with respect. She projects a calm influence that we all need and I think that shows she values people and values the way that they think. I think she facilitates growth that way."

Develops People

Developing people pertains to the servant leader's creation of opportunities for learning and growth of people and the use of encouragement and affirmation to facilitate that development. Maria observed this behavior noting, "[My leader] supports me and gives me tasks that she knows that I have personal experience in to help me learn something that is going to further my experience." Maria added that her leader "encourages me to take advantage of everything on campus. She sees me seeking my Ph.D. and teaching at the graduate level. A lot of those ideas came from her, so I would say she definitely has a vision for me." Elaine similarly noted that her leader has "always

been after me to get my doctorate. I think that's her vision." Elaine also noted that her leader "encourages you to try new things. Don't be afraid to do things."

Emma emphasized that that her leader "is always looking at ways we can support the faculty in the program, to financially support them. She's always got her eye out on how to help a person move to the next level." Emma added that "for the some of the younger faculty, [our leader] has a vision of what she thinks their future could be." Jill similarly observed that her leader "often has a vision for all of us and puts the wheels in motion for those things to happen." Jill believed that her leader encouraged personal growth by "identifying people's strengths, letting them work to those strengths, then partnering those people up based on opposing strengths."

Jayne stressed that her leader "is very supportive of her entire staff in terms of their professional development to be sure we have the skills to perform our responsibilities." Jayne appreciated her "freedom to learn" and added:

The support here in terms of development and your own learning is clear here.

You feel that support all the way up the chain of command. It's been a very important aspect to me because it's such a glaring difference from where I came from.

Displays Authenticity

Authenticity involves being open and accountable to others, showing willingness to learn from others, and maintaining integrity and trust. Emma observed that "[Her leader] has helped people be more open. I think seeing her being so open and wanting to know people has been good and has shaped the organization in a little bit different way." Emma also emphasized that "[Her leader] wouldn't be at all hesitant to say we have to be

ethical. You see that by the things she talks about, the things she emphasizes, the things she supports.” Jill also noted repeatedly how much she appreciated that her “leader and her group have a very high level of honesty and openness. In fact I’m always kind of amazed at what gets shared and how open and honest it is at that level.”

Jayne described the authenticity of her leader in the following observation:

I feel comfortable consulting with [my leader] with just about any question. I don’t think that [my leader] is a different person with the Dean than she is with the secretary—she’s always the same. I think that is an authenticity that people sense—that they are very comfortable with. She’s very reassuring.

Elaine emphasized that her leader has “been honest with me. I’m not afraid to be totally honest, to express my feelings with her.” Maria similarly stated that her leader is “is a very open, honest leader.” Maria also saw her leader as someone who “values the way people think, and encourages people to be honest and encourages us to come to her with problems. She is open to communication more than anything else.”

Shares Leadership

Sharing leadership involves facilitating a shared vision, sharing power, releasing control, sharing status, and promoting others. Emma described this behavior by her leader when she stated that her leader “picks her people that she trusts, and then she trusts them.” Emma expanded on this notion by noting that her leader “trusts that I know what I’m doing. She knows what’s going on but she does not meddle at all, which I appreciate.” Emma also perceived that her leader “depends on me for a lot of things. She’ll ask my opinion. I think there’s a great deal of trust there.” Jill similarly noted:

I have a leader that trusts me to do my job, that tells me what needs to be done, but then doesn't micromanage me in that process. There's also a lot of freedom to grow and some freedom to fail, learn from your mistakes and move forward.

Maria observed that she has "a lot of autonomy and ability to run my program."

Maria was "just fine with my level of empowerment and autonomy." Maria added, "My leader steps back and says you guys need to decide this as a group. She does a lot of different things to facilitate people thinking on their own instead of just doing group think." Elaine perceived that her leader "tries to let the group make their decisions." Elaine believed that she was "empowered" and had the "freedom to do what I want to with our lectures and with assignments and different things like that."

Jayne found it significant that her leader "respects and trusts my judgment. She asks my opinions about what I would do." Jayne clarified, "We certainly aren't allowed to go our own directions, but we have the ability to make decisions and we consult with each other before we make decisions." Jayne emphasized that she had "the freedom to get the job done as best you can and get you the resources as you need them." Jayne described how this empowerment occurs:

[My leader] says this is the project we need done, this is why we need it done, this is what we're trying to achieve—go do it. There's no checking over your shoulder, there's no micromanagement. Occasionally you have to let people know where you stand with the project, of course. I always feel that I can ask questions when I run into something. There's never the person sitting on your shoulder.

Provides Leadership

Providing leadership involves envisioning the future, taking initiative, and clarifying goals. Jill commented on these behaviors by observing that “[my leader] has a vision. She’s always giving the same message. She’s consistent and it’s out there. She uses a very participative process in terms of planning and visioning.” Jill elaborated on these observations stating:

This organization changed because the same message got preached and there was consistency and there was sort of reiteration over time. It takes giving the same message over and over again. It takes being consistent with how you treat people. It takes role-modeling the values that you want those people to start working with.

Emma summarized the consequences of these efforts when she observed, “I do think we have an unusual organization here, the general level of trust and the general agreement on the goals. I think we do have that.” Emma added that her leader is “a wiz at finances. She’s just not a micromanager but she’s certainly a leader. She really sets the tone. She has the big picture so we can count on her to keep us informed and involved.”

Jayne explained that “you know the vision of the organization by paying attention to what other people are doing. How they articulate what they’re doing. [My leader] specifically seeks input on things.” Jayne added that she developed her “goals and vision as opportunities come up. I talk with [my leader] about whether it’s a good fit. If I decide not to do it, I consult with her to [see if] I should reconsider.” Jayne added that she and her leader are “colleagues and I feel like we’re on a team accomplishing what we’re trying to do to take care of students. I just want to learn from her. We are professional friends.”

Elaine commented that her leader “is very forward thinking and always encourages us to work on things. She is always there if you need advice and she’s very good.” Elaine added, “We know what the mission is. It’s embedded in us and we want to carry out that mission more than anything.” Maria stated a similar experience:

They make it very clear when we’re hired—these are the goals and mission and vision of the college and this is what we’re trying to do. They present it with each faculty meeting that we have, they may present an idea and then they’ll say this is how this would go toward our mission.

Maria added that her leader is “competent first, more than anything. She’s got the experience. She knows what she’s doing. She knows the background behind everything. She makes some very difficult decisions but she does them in a very competent way.”

Builds Community

Building community involves the development of strong personal relationships, working collaboratively with others, and valuing the differences of others. Jill credited her leader for recognizing the importance of quality relationships in her college and observed how her leader shaped those relationships. “[My leader] has worked really, really hard to make everybody appreciate that they have a value here and that there really aren’t second class citizens.” Jill praised her organization “in terms of structure, in terms of comfort with information, how open people are, how trusting people are—I don’t think you could ask for better.” She added:

I think that, from a standpoint of servanthood leadership, you can tackle an issue and come up with a solution in a different way because we care about each other

and we're in this together, so we can take time to work through and resolve problems, even though we don't exactly agree on how that should be done.

Emma explained, “[My leader] leads us to value relationships. [She] has helped people be more open. [My leader] being so open and wanting to know people has been good and has shaped the organization.” Emma believed that her organization “works partly because of how it's organized and partly because of the people. You don't have those silos. Everybody feels like they have a stake.”

Jayne observed that her colleagues are “respectful of each other. We collaborate a lot. There's a lot of trust. She added: “there's a confidence in working with people that you're going to come out on the other side, not carrying your flag or that person's flag, but a different flag altogether—some new idea.” Jayne emphasized that her leader promotes this attitude because she “builds and maintains relationships regardless of the level of the person that she's working with. She is very supportive of her entire staff. Here it's, now that's a good idea. How can we make it work?” Jayne believed that this attitude was influenced by her leader's “high tolerance for ambiguity. There's a confidence that we're going to be okay regardless of what happens.”

Maria asserted that “what makes [our college] so great is you feel like you are part of a community.” Maria added, “I think the teamwork here is really, really good. Because our program is built upon the idea of a journey and so you can't start a journey in the middle, you have to keep building on it.” Maria then emphasized that her leader made everyone “feel like we really own the program. It's not just her program—it's everybody's program. I think she facilitates growth that way.” Elaine similarly noted that her institution had “a home atmosphere where students can talk to their professors and

feel free to do as much as they want to.” Elaine observed that her colleagues were “like a group of sisters—we all have our good points and our bad points and we all get along well. We’re very deeply committed to [our institution].” She believed that her leader reinforced this attitude because “she includes everyone. Everyone is able to express themselves. We’re all a part of the group.”

Analysis of Leadership Behaviors

The preceding description was divided into six patterns matching Laub’s (1999) constructs for servant leaders, which are valuing people, developing people, displaying authenticity, sharing leadership, providing leadership, and building communities. Participants interestingly described their leader’s behavior using much of the same terminology used by Laub (1999) in defining these constructs.

The participants cited numerous examples of how their leaders valued and developed people. Their leaders displayed authentic behaviors of openness, integrity, trust, and valuing the opinions of others. The leaders shared leadership by empowering their followers and released control by not meddling or micromanaging. The participants generally perceived that their leaders exhibited behaviors consistent with servant leaders based on the previously discussed descriptions. Leaders communicated and reinforced a shared vision and mission. Each leader promoted the creation and preservation of community within their college by encouraging strong personal relationships, working collaboratively with others, and valuing differences.

The participant’s perceptions concerning their leaders was generally consistent with the description of servant leaders in the literature. These perceptions further

suggested that the participants were servant-led followers, which is an underlying premise of this study.

Description of Findings on Servant-led Followership

All 5 participants in this study were followers of servant leaders, based on follower experiences discussed in the preceding preface. Participants, as followers of servant leaders, identified a number of common experiences and situations that were expressed during the interview process. These experiences were not isolated to individual responses by one participant, but rather emerged as conversational patterns of all of the participants.

The participants spoke candidly about the importance of being a follower, their expectations of themselves as followers, and the leader–follower relationship. These general follower experiences will be presented first in this section, followed by presentation of the themes that were determined from the interviews with the participants. The three themes that were identified from the conversational patterns in the interviews include “collegial relationships build a strong community,” “the freedom to be,” and “expectation for excellence.”

Overview of Participant Perceptions on Servant-led Followership

The importance of followership. Each of the participants recognized the importance of followership within the organization. Participants were aware of their own roles as followers and as leaders within the college. Each participant’s view varied on the relative importance of her followership and leadership roles; however, none of the participants believed that her organization could be successful without effective followership.

Jill viewed followership and leadership as roles played by each individual in the organization rather than positions held by those individuals. She described her idea of leadership and followership roles and the relative importance of these roles as follows:

I think you have to have people who are willing and interested in doing both of those roles [leadership and followership] in a balance. There's no doubt that [Leader] is a leader and widely recognized as a leader, but still in her roles, there are times that she's a follower. It's probably a 70/30 or 60/40 some kind of split in there. It takes both groups to make a great organization. All of us in our roles have to do both things and probably the further away you get from some sort of split on that, the further away you get from being a good organization.

Emma observed, "Without the leader, you probably don't have a unified set of goals. Everybody would have goals—even the followers would have goals, but they might not be together as much." Emma then acknowledged, "The goals aren't going to be realized unless you have the followers doing the work. I suppose the most impact would be the leader because of the goals, but you have to have those followers to do the work." Jayne believed similarly that "leadership and followership work hand-in-hand. If you're an effective leader, the followers are following you." She concluded, "I'm not sure if you'd be a leader if your followers weren't coming along. You might be a manager. A manager can bring other kinds of threat—not social influence so much."

Elaine acknowledged the importance of leadership and observed, "You have to have the team following. You have to have the group on board and believing and sharing together that vision to embrace change and embrace whatever lies ahead. You need both to keep it going." Maria went even further with her analysis when she stated:

I would have to say that it's the followers that really support the whole organization. We're the foundation. [The leader] may be the lighthouse that is making all the racket. But if [the leader] didn't have us supporting her then she would just be out there doing nothing. I would have to say the followers are the most important because we're here on a day-to-day basis doing the things that are continuing in the legacy that [this college] has become.

Participant expectations of themselves as followers. All participants acknowledged that they were followers; however, many of the participants viewed themselves primarily as leaders due to their position in the college or because of their assigned responsibility as a course coordinator. Each of the participants understood her respective roles as follower and as a leader and recognized the importance of each role. The participants were able to articulate the expectations of their follower role and were aware of when and how they should contribute to the institution as a follower.

Emma was certain of her follower role in relation to her leader when she categorically stated, "She's the leader. My role is being part of her team, to be supportive to her, personally and in her leadership role, an advocate for her." Emma further explained her role as a follower as she noted:

I think it has sort of two aspects. It is supportive by doing what I can do—the actual activities—and then also being supportive in an emotional way to the organization in reaching those goals—sort of like a cheerleader, you know, something like that. [My leader] sees me as a person she can ask advice from. She doesn't always ask my advice, which I would never expect her to. I don't have expertise in all the areas that she's involved in, but she does seek my advice

frequently. I do have an overall kind of picture of the place and its growth and some of the stumbling blocks and that sort of thing, so I think that's helpful.

Elaine stated that her role as a follower was to “carry out whatever the directive is or the mission is to the best of my ability and to maintain a positive attitude in carrying out whatever it is that I'm doing.” Jayne knew that her leader relied on her as a follower “to implement the projects that we talk about in a timely way, to use the money that we have as effectively as possible to accomplish those goals, and to work and consult with other people as I need to in order to accomplish those goals.”

Maria believed, “My role as a follower is, to number one, listen to the people that I am following to see just exactly what I should be doing and then, also, my role as a follower is to get clear expectations.” She explained that her leader might tell her on occasion, “I don't have any clear expectations or clear goals for this project . . . run with it and see what you can do. I like that autonomy, but I always ask.” Maria recognized that she had an obligation to her leader to “assist her if she needs help and to question her—you're telling me to do this, but why? She appreciates my honesty.” Maria stressed that “even if I don't agree with what [my leader] decides I try to understand just exactly how or why she has come to that decision.”

Jill believed that she had a responsibility as a follower to “recognize that there's a bigger vision besides just what you're trying to accomplish.” She observed, “As a follower, you have to be able to speak up when you disagree, but when the organization is going in a direction that isn't what you believe, you have an obligation to support the bigger vision in the organization.” Jill explained the role shifting between leader and the follower in this manner:

I don't know that we specifically encourage each other to be followers except in this way, we do facilitate that. I think we're all overly involved and so I think sometimes one of them may say to me, you know, you don't have to do that or you can take a different kind of role in that, you need to let go of that or you need to just be there and listen and participate—you don't need to take it over. I think we try to do that for each other. In that case, probably we do encourage each other to be followers sometimes and I think that's hard for us sometimes.

Participant expectations of themselves as leaders. Most participants understood their leadership roles and many viewed themselves more as leaders than followers within their college. Participants recognized they had a responsibility to assume these leadership roles in combination with their follower role.

Jill reflected on herself as a leader. "In terms of my leadership style, I try to provide a lot of support to people. I try to meet their needs in a timely manner in a really busy environment." She shared, "I give people a lot of freedom to fail and learn from that. I want to give people enough latitude so that they learn from their mistakes and they can improve their processes and go on." She concluded, "You need a lot of individual, differing strengths and you have to be able, as their leader, to bring those people together with those strengths and get them to appreciate that." Jill acknowledged that her leadership role must be balanced with her role as follower in stating:

As a leader, you've got to be willing to be a follower. I think even as you talk about servant hood styles of management, you have to be willing to be a servant and do it, but at the same time, you've got to have that leadership and not shy away from that.

Emma sees everyone as a leader in her college. She explained that her leader “hires people that she trusts and that do their jobs. She doesn’t meddle. If we know what the general overall mission is, then we each have our own little part of that and we’re leaders in that—all of us.” Emma shared, “I think, in many cases, I’m the leader. . . . There are lots of areas in the [organization] that I’ve been involved in, in various ways, but I certainly think I’m a follower, too.”

Jayne acknowledged, “I’m a leader on certain projects in terms of coordinating them to be sure that they happen.” She contrasted this role with situations where she was “a part of other people’s projects to help them achieve their goals.” Jayne did not have difficulty in distinguishing between these roles, as she observed, “I don’t think it’s hard to switch. I think you just have to keep in mind what your particular role is in any particular situation because that’s going to vary.”

Elaine believed that “there are times as a leader that you have to help people who are naturally leaders to be followers in certain circumstances.” Elaine reflected, “I tend to be a quiet person, but when I do speak up, it’s usually about something that I’m concerned about. . . . I try to look at things globally, in the broader sense instead of narrow blinders.” She clarified her leadership role as follows:

I try to be courteous. I try to be direct—go to the person that I have a concern with and try to resolve whatever it is. As far as like my students, I have an open door policy with my students. I find that our students are younger. They tend to need more time with you. And so a lot of times you end up listening and counseling more than you actually do teaching. It’s enjoyable to get to know the

students. That's what I enjoy. I want to know them and help them as much as I can.

Maria understood her dual role as a follower and a leader when she made the following statement:

I feel like more of a follower in the nursing department itself just because I am so new here and I'm still learning a lot. I think that's very important to realize that I need to be a follower and not a leader, because I don't have enough experience to be giving an informed opinion on a lot of things. As far as [my program], I am the leader. I think it's very interesting to be able to see the differences in that.

Jill summarized these views of shifting between follower and leader roles in the following statement:

There are obviously groups that you're in that you're expected to lead, but then there are groups that you participate in and are expected to be more of a follower, or contributor, to that. I think that I do that fairly well although I think the longer you're in a leadership role, the harder it is to be a follower. . . . If I feel like it's not an area that I'm particularly competent in . . . it's easier to be a follower in that. Whereas if I see that I've got a higher skill level and have more experience in a certain area and sometimes I need to be a follower—that's more difficult.

Obviously, in the course of our day-to-day workload, there are all kinds of experiences that you have where you're a follower and sometimes you're a leader.

Relationship of participants with their leader. The participants universally believed that their leader significantly influenced them by being a role model and mentor. Each participant was appreciative of the guidance offered by her leader. Emma noted that

her leader was a “role model” and “displays her values more in actions. . . . You simply see that by the things she talks about, the things she emphasizes, and the things she supports.” Jayne described her leader as “clearly my mentor, she’s my role model.” She learned from her leader by “watching her interact with people . . . it’s a combination of those things and the individual conversations.” Jill similarly observed that the manner in which her leader “interacts and treats her team is a huge influence on me.”

Elaine stated that during meetings her leader “will share when she was a student sometimes and her values as far as integrity and fine writing/communication skills.”

Maria added that:

[my leader] likes to lead by example and to me that’s one of the best parts about that because I can go to her and say how would you handle this or how would you handle that and she’s able to give me examples. She just doesn’t tell me how to do it.

Each of the participants believed that the manner in which her leader treated her was a significant benefit to her as she carried out her roles in the college. Emma considered her leader to be “a friend, and a boss, and a colleague.” Emma saw her leader as “approachable and down-to-earth.” She explained that her leader is “not a micromanager, but she’s certainly a leader. She really sets the tone.” Jayne observed, “When I think of [my leader], what comes to mind is the term, ‘unconditional regard’—that you don’t feel like that you’re threatened in any way and that she’ll work with you to get through it.” Jayne confidently stated, “Whatever would happen, [my leader] and I would talk through it and figure it out.” Jayne believed that she and her leader “enjoy each other’s company and that makes it easier.”

Elaine asserted the importance that her leader “is always there if you need advice. It’s been good because I’ve learned a lot from her. She encourages you to try new things. Don’t be afraid to do things.” She also noted that her leader has “taught me not to sweat the small stuff. It’s a good lesson and that is very hard for me to do because we all want everything to run smoothly.” Maria described her leader as doing something that is “very extraordinary. She steps back and says ‘you guys need to decide this as a group.’ She allows us to really feel like we own the program.”

Jill believed that several things “set her leader apart.” She first noted that her leader “communicates, communicates, communicates, and she’s pretty good at that. She has a wonderful sense of humor. She knows how to use humor.” Jill observed that her leader “values a lot of different perspectives. She values that it takes a team to run this, and that as a team, we need diversity.” Jill admired her leader for “making everyone feel like she’s personally interested in them. She has a very good skill set of competencies for doing that. She’s very well respected and I think she knows how to develop people.” Jill then explained the benefits of her leader’s behavior as follows:

I think that it’s easy to [follow] when overall you have respect for your leaders and when you buy into their vision. You can put your opinion out on the table, it gets thought about, it gets discussed, and then you maybe have to be able to move on and then support. I also think that if you don’t really trust and believe in your leadership and where they’re taking you, when that becomes political, you spend a lot of wasted time trying to move an agenda that isn’t necessarily good for the organization. You have to feel like you can support them and support the vision

and the agenda and the objectives and the goals and the mission that they have overall.

Each participant viewed their leader as an important influence on their growth, well-being, and success within their institutions. The significance of the follower–leader relationship is examined further in conjunction with each of the themes that follow.

Collegial Relationships Build a Strong Community

The nature and quality of relationships among followers, leaders, and colleagues was a theme that was universal among all participants. Participants strongly emphasized the caring behaviors inherent in their relationships throughout the institution. Trust and respect was also an expectation that provided a strong foundation for the relationships described by each participant. Participants consistently described their commitment to their leaders and institutions as an aspect of their followership experience. The leaders of the participants were a significant catalyst for building relationships founded upon trust, respect, and caring behaviors. The nature and quality of these relationships contributed to a feeling of “family” and “community” within the participants’ colleges. These patterns are described in the discussion that follows.

Care and concern for others. The participants reported numerous examples of how their colleagues care for each other. Jill emphasized that “a value that’s an important one is caring—caring about people. You can’t pretend to care, you have to genuinely care.” Jill elaborated on this idea as she observed, “Sometimes people just need you to care about them. They don’t need you to accomplish something—they just need you to care about them.” Jill further explained how she genuinely cares for others:

I take time to listen to people. For the most part, I try to give them the time that they need and I try to show them that I care about them. . . . You ask them how they're doing, you ask them what's going on with them, you find out about their personal life a little bit, and you just make a point to check in with them and see them. . . . When I don't feel as good about what I'm doing, it's because I haven't taken the time to do those kinds of things with people.

Jill believed that caring behaviors existed in the organization as a whole as she commented:

I would say that we have a team of people that each of us has our own unique challenges and interests, but we care. From a standpoint of servanthood leadership, I think that's one of the most important dynamic things about that.

Jayne emphasized that she strives "to develop relationships with the students at all levels and I don't mean just the people I work with in the office, but the people within the school as a whole." She further observed that her efforts to build relationships reached "outside the school, to the other schools, to the community, and those kinds of things."

Jayne explained the importance of these relationships when she reflected:

It's not given in the sense that it's demanded like you WILL work in teams. It's more a recognition throughout the school, I think, that we can't do the mission ourselves, individually. You don't have the resources individually to do that.

Again, we bring all kinds of expertise to the different issues and that part, the recognition of that, and the ability of all of these various team members to listen to each other, and then to act collaboratively is wonderful.

Jayne believed that the hallmark of these relationships is caring, which she defined in terms of support.

If anything happens to people personally, whether it's health-wise or whether it's family-wise, whoever, the people in the organization respond immediately. The support is there whether it's your responsibilities that need to be covered, or again this idea that if you need to take time to do whatever, we'll try and find a way to make that happen. So I think it is caring in that sense.

Elaine explained that her experiences outside her department made her realize, "our little community in nursing looks even better—the collegiality that we have." Elaine perceived her colleagues generally as caring individuals with some exceptions. She described some of her peers as "people who do care and are genuinely interested and sincerely care. I think everyone respects each other. But as far as caring, some do and then some are very self-absorbed." Elaine explained these relationships among her colleagues further when she stated:

My colleagues? It's never dull. It's always interesting. It's good. It's a good group. We're kind of like a group of sisters—we all have our good points and our bad points and we all get along well. It's embedded in us and we want to carry out that mission more than anything. So we know our heritage very well and we're very deeply committed to [College].

Emma observed that her colleagues have "a liking for each other. I think we all like each other. There's lots of caring." She offered her thoughts about how that caring is accomplished:

We have such a sense around here that we're here to take care of each other, to help each other and to figure out a way to help. We always try to get steered toward a positive business approach that is problem solving and helpful versus just tearing things down.

Maria saw caring in a broader sense when she stated, "One thing that I try to follow even in my personal life—making sure that each person that you come across is an individual and I want to learn one thing about that person." She learned this behavior from her college which taught her "how important people are and how important it is to give back to society and make sure that you are trying to make the best society for everybody, not just the privileged." Maria believed that this culture of caring was maintained in her college over a long period of time. She commented:

They hire people who are going to be able to continue on the philosophy that was set out for us. We're not going to hire somebody that's just a number cruncher. We're going to hire somebody that really cares about its people. I think, even with different leadership, we would continue on in the same value system that we've got.

Trust and respect for others. The prevalence of trust and respect was important to participants and existed at all levels of their respective institutions. Participants often spoke of trust and respect in the same sentence. Maria discussed the importance of these behaviors within her institution as follows:

People treat each other with respect. I always go back to the Golden Rule—if you treat others as you want to be treated, and then you're going to be fine. I think everybody around here treats everybody with respect. I guess it's a collegial

atmosphere. I think everybody's here because they like to teach and they like to educate, so everyone looks at that and says, "Why not, let's keep going." There's a lot of collaboration that goes on in other coursework because they have more flexibility with their students' times so that's really neat to see. The students really have a good time with that. I like that.

Maria added that "people need to trust you and trust what you say, that you're acting in their best interest or that you're acting responsibly in your choices."

Jayne also viewed trust and respect as an example of the Golden Rule as she explained in the following dialogue:

It's probably the cliché that I like to treat others the way I'd like to be treated, is what it boils down to. I want to respect other people's rights to make decisions. For whatever reason, they might talk to me about an issue and I can present some ideas, but it's still that person's decision, whether it's a student's decision about what happens at the school, whether it's an administrator's decision about what they're going to do, or whether it's a faculty member's decision about what they're going to do with a class.

Jayne added that at her college, "People are very respectful. People assume that you know what you're doing. That's not always true of other organizations and that assumption is a different kind of trust to begin with." Jayne reiterated these points when she elaborated on the way people treat each other in her institution:

We're respectful of each other. We collaborate a lot. You could say that everything affects everybody. There's a lot of trust in terms of the general

philosophy, which is that good people are hired and good people are allowed to do their job. We still seek each other out for how we're feeling.

Elaine believed that in her college there was a "sense that it's a place where people still respect each other and treat each other with dignity." She added that among her colleagues "I think everyone respects each other." Elaine extended this philosophy of trust and respect to her students, explaining, "A lot of times you end up listening and counseling more than teaching. It's enjoyable to get to know the students. That's what I enjoy. I want to know them and help them as much as I can."

Emma, like the other participants, believed that her colleagues "have respect for each other and there's a good give and take and a sense of working together." She explained her approach to people when she stated, "I try to treat other people with respect and understanding. I like to give people the benefit of the doubt. I can hold the line but it's harder for me. I'm understanding and forgiving." Emma also noted that one of her core values is "respect for others. Relationships are very important to me—getting to know people, knowing what's important to them. I think I'm a people person." Emma summarized her experiences with people at her college when she stated: "They are really good people. They're interested, they're approachable by students, and they're fun. We have a good time. We're just a close knit group. We're respectful to each other. It's a great place to work."

Jill echoed this response when she described the level of respect at her college. "People, for the most part, treat each other with respect and can disagree and respect that." She explained how she reciprocated respectful behavior. "I treat [my colleagues] with respect. I take time to listen to people. For the most part, I try to give them the time

that they need.” Jill added, “I’m probably seen as fairly collegial.” Jill reflected on the importance of trust and respect in her institution as she observed:

I don’t have to worry that somebody’s out trying to sabotage me because there’s a lot different sense of working together and caring about each other, respect for each other and that we’re more open and upfront about our issues. . . . We have such a sense around here that we’re here to take care of each other, to help each other, and to figure out a way to help. We always try to get steered toward a positive business approach that is problem solving and helpful versus just tearing things down.

Commitment to leader and organization. Participants were cognizant of the difference between committing to their leader and to their organization. All of the participants were unequivocally committed to their leader. Organizational commitment was also pronounced, but more conditional with respect to some participants.

Participants expressed their commitment to their leader in a variety of ways. Elaine mentioned that she had “great respect” for her leader who “influences me a lot.” She further noted, “I admire [my leader]” and “like her very much.” Maria viewed her leader as a “mentor” and defined another way she was committed to her leader as follows:

I’m never going to say anything about [my leader] that I would not say to her face. I think there’s a loyalty issue there and if I have a problem with her, if at all possible, I’m going to go to her first. I think that’s part of being an adequate follower.

Jill observed that “I’ve worked under a lot of different leaders and a lot of different styles, but this [leader] is probably the best.” Jill viewed her leader as a “role model” who is “very trusting and open” and whose relationship with her was “more collegial than boss to subordinate.” Jayne viewed her leader as her “mentor,” “role model,” and “professional friend.” Jayne observed that even “the people who worked here and left still feel loyalty to her.” Emma considered her leader to be a “friend and a boss and a colleague” and “all-around good person” that she “likes a lot.” Emma believed that she had a responsibility to her leader to “be supportive emotionally for her as an individual and for her as a leader.”

Several of the participants expressed some trepidation when asked what would happen if their leader left the organization. Elaine said that it would “scare” her. Jayne stated that her leader’s retirement was what “we’re all afraid of.” Emma felt that the departure of her leader would be “tough.” Jill also emphasized that if her leader left, she would re-evaluate whether she would stay at the college. She felt that she might leave if the new leader did not possess qualities similar to her current leader.

Despite these reservations, the participants recognized, as Jill noted, “none of us are bigger than the organization.” Emma added “that our view is that nobody is irreplaceable.” Jayne stated that the college was “aiming for a seamless transition” when her leader retired. Maria went further when she stated that she would be “supportive” if her leader retired and took comfort that her leader had created a “very solid foundation that allows us to build on top of it.” Emma similarly believed that the departure of her leader would not impair the college because:

There's a wonderful foundation here and any search committee would have these values—the values that we have in the organization—and would definitely look for somebody who is interested in change, a person who is our public face across the country, and somebody who's not a micromanager. I think we'd be okay.

We'll look for somebody who will carry on the core values of the organization.

The participants' belief that their organization would persevere after their leader's departure was closely aligned with the participants' expressions of organizational commitment. Emma simply stated, "I'm committed to the success of this school." Jill observed, "I think there's a sense of serving the school—that we're here to make a contribution and on the cutting edge of so much stuff." She added that "in spite of fully radical changes in the organization, people are still committed to the organization." Jayne felt that her college "in terms of structure, in terms of comfort with information, how open people are, how trusting people are—I don't think you could ask for better."

Elaine emphasized that she was "very loyal" and "very committed to the organization and to the profession." She observed:

A lot of us are from [this college]—we know what the mission is. It's embedded in us and we want to carry out that mission more than anything. So we know our heritage very well and we're very deeply committed to [the college].

Maria similarly stated that "I love [this college] because it is so friendly and when you come here, you feel like you are part of a community." She elaborated on her decision to work at her institution:

I was born [outside this state] and when I decided to work for this college [my family asked], what are you doing? You know what? I couldn't beat the way that

[this institution] treated me [when I was a student here]. I truly felt like I was going to be part of a community. And I still feel that way.

Leader as catalyst for strong relationships. The relationship between each participant and her leader was universally described as one founded on trust, respect, and caring behaviors. Each participant believed that the leader–follower relationship was an important factor in shaping her positive view about the role she played in the institution. Participants also believed that their leader significantly influenced the quality of relationships formed among their colleagues within the institution.

Emma simply stated that “I like [my leader] a lot. She really cares about you. She cares about not only your work, but she cares about you as an individual.” Emma added, “I think there’s a great deal of trust there.” Emma explained how her leader shapes the relationships in her institution:

Relationships are very important—getting to know people, knowing what’s important to them. [My leader] leads us to value relationships. [She] has helped people be more open. [My leader] being so open and wanting to know people has been good and has shaped the organization.

Elaine expressed “great respect for [my leader] as somebody who influences me a lot.” She candidly noted, “Sometimes I feel like I’m emotionally charged, thinking I need to do what’s right all the time and she will bring me to earth.” Elaine concluded, “I like [my leader] very much. She’s always been honest with me, so I would describe it as good.” Elaine provided insight on how her leader facilitated collegiality as she observed, “[My leader] is in tune to our needs and our ability” and her “observations of us—our different things that we do on committees, our special interests that we have—she takes

all of those things into consideration.” Elaine spoke of how her leader not only deals “fairly” with her, but also “treats everyone fairly.”

Maria emphasized that her leader “treats me with respect and really encourages me. I see her as a mentor—somebody to go to ask questions to and really get her opinion.” Maria believed that her leader “tries to project a calm influence that we all need and I think that shows she values people and values the way that they think and encourages people to be honest.” Maria was impressed with how her leader encourages her when she “steps back and says ‘you guys need to decide this as a group.’” Maria believed that this practice “allows us to really feel like we really own the program. It’s an ownership thing where it’s not just her program—it’s everybody’s program. I think she facilitates growth that way.”

Jayne viewed her leader as a “mentor” and a “role model. She emphasized that unlike a previous organization where she worked, “Here, it’s—you’re good. [There] is encouragement. Here it’s, that’s a good idea. How can we make it work? It’s not a given that the obstacles are going to stop you.” A behavior that was central to Jayne’s relationship with her leader was “unconditional regard—that you don’t feel like you’re threatened in any way and if something would happen that you don’t anticipate, she’ll work with you to get through it.” Jane further explained how her leader shaped relationships within the institution when she stated:

[My leader] is someone who builds and maintains relationships regardless of the level of the person that she’s working with. I don’t think that [my leader] is a different person with the Dean than she is with the secretary—she’s always the same.

Jill described her relationship with her leader as one “built on mutual respect.” Jill emphasized that her leader “values me as a member of her team. I think that she personally cares about me and what’s going on. I personally care about her.” Jill believed that this relationship was “more collegial than boss to subordinate.” Jill emphasized that her leader exemplified caring “when I have my monthly meetings with her. They are never like get down to the business, I’m busy. She always takes time to check in with people. How’s it going? How are you doing?” Jill believed this behavior is important because “if you know someone cares about you, you can let go of a lot of wasted time. I’ve been in organizations where so much energy gets wasted on political issues.”

Jill believed that her leader influenced how she and others viewed their colleagues in noting, “[Our leader] has worked really, really hard to make everybody appreciate that they have a value here and that there really aren’t second class citizens.” Jill admired her leader’s ability to “draw out different people, and make people feel like she’s not just seeking the opinions of the senior leadership professor. She’s seeking *my* opinion.” Jayne offered this example of how her leader taught her to deal more effectively with people:

[My Leader] has influenced me probably the greatest in her ability to get in a large group and work with a large group and interact with people and have the confidence. A lot of that is quit worrying about yourself and what you’re going to say and how you’re going to be perceived, and listen to people, hear what they’re trying to say to you, and respond to them and show that you’re interested in them versus, “Oh my gosh, if I say the wrong thing I’m going to look like a fool,” that kind of thing.

Community founded on collegial relationships. The participants recognized that the quality of their relationships among peers was influenced not only by their leader, but also by the culture of the institution. Maria explained this aspect of relationship building in the following dialogue:

What makes [our college] so great is just that it is so friendly and when you come here you feel like you are part of a community. We have a lady in the cafeteria who remembers every single person's name on campus. She can call you by name. It's just amazing to me. I mean people are really willing to work with and help you out to do whatever you need to do. I couldn't beat the way that they treated me. I truly feel like part of a community. They treat me with respect, and they encourage me and treat me like a member of the family.

Elaine liked her institution because of "the quality, the size, the sense that it's a place where people still respect each other and treat each other with dignity." Elaine further emphasized that her institution "feels like home. It's a home atmosphere where students can talk to their professors, they can get to know them, and they can feel free to do as much as they want to, where they can be challenged." Maria echoed these thoughts when she stated:

We want to present the best foot forward, wanting to have the community think of us as a place where you can send your kids or you can come and you are going to be treated appropriately and there's not going to be any controversy. You're going to get a quality education in a safe environment. I guess that's one way to look at it.

Emma felt that her organization was “unusual” because of “the innovation stuff and the general level of trust and the general agreement on the goals. I think we do have that.” Emma expanded on these thoughts when she commented:

I don't think I would change anything about the organization. I think it works partly because of how it's organized and partly because of the people. You don't have those silos where people are protecting their money or their part of the budget. Everybody feels like they have a stake.

Jayne offered several observations about how relationships are influenced by and within the organization. She commented that “we bring ourselves to the organization. What we do is going to influence all the relationships we have here.” Jayne described her organization as follows:

The organization is not a box—it's this ongoing kind of living conversation that we have. Your actions and how they're interpreted—what you say and how you say them over time—they shape the organization a certain way. That's why I think that what you say literally can make a difference in what your organization looks like. I absolutely think the organization influences you as well. I think I'm a different person because of the places I've worked and the people I've worked with and worked for.

Jayne believed that this dynamic had shaped her institution into an organization where respect flourished:

We're respectful of each other. We collaborate a lot. You could say that everything affects everybody. There's a lot of trust in terms that the general philosophy is that good people are hired and that good people are allowed to do

their job. We still seek each other out for how we're feeling. If anything happens to people personally, whether it's health-wise or whether it's family-wise, whoever, the people in the organization respond immediately. I think it is caring in that sense.

Jill praised her "organization in terms of structure, in terms of comfort with information, how open people are, how trusting people are—I don't think you could ask for better." She provided the following comprehensive explanation of the dynamic within her organization:

I have a lot of respect for my colleagues and their capabilities. They are all caring people. Everybody has their own agenda in what they are trying to accomplish, but no matter what, when you get together with them, they are very caring people. When we get together, it's not about I've been doing this and I've been doing that, it's about how are you, how are things going for you, how are you coping? I would say that we have a team of people that each of us has our own unique challenges and interests, but we care. And I think that, from a standpoint of servanthood leadership, you can go forth and come together and deal with problems in a different way, or tackle an issue and come up with a solution in a different way, because you have a tone of I may disagree with him or her on this particular point, but number one, we care about each other and we're in this together, so we can take time to work through and resolve problems, even though we don't exactly agree on how that should be done.

The Freedom to Be

The theme, freedom to be, describes a strong belief held by each participant that they were encouraged to function independently and to grow in their follower role. Jayne articulated this aspect of her follower role as “the freedom to get the job done as best you can and get you the resources as you need them,” “freedom to learn,” and the “freedom to make decisions.” Elaine similarly stated she had the “freedom to do what I want to with our lectures and with assignments and different things like that.” Jill emphasized a related consideration in observing that she had “a lot of freedom to grow and freedom to fail and learn from your mistakes and move forward.”

Four separate, but related, patterns were identified from the participants’ perceptions of their freedom to be. The first pattern involves the willingness of leaders to empower each participant and grant them freedom. The remaining three patterns are interrelated participant behaviors pertaining to their freedom to self-manage, the freedom to act and fail, and the freedom to grow.

Willingness by the leader to grant freedom. All participants agreed that their leaders granted them the freedom and empowered them to perform their roles with a high degree of independence to manage their own responsibilities. Emma commented on her experience:

I think that’s, in many cases, the expectation, that you have your assignment and your area of responsibility. Certainly that’s the expectation at the leadership level. [Leader] doesn’t get involved. She knows what’s going on and she will consult you. She wants to consult with you. She’s not completely hands-off, but she doesn’t know what goes on here day to day. All of the administrators are expected

to manage themselves and to manage their areas of responsibility. And I do think that also is true about faculty.

The other participants shared Emma's views about their empowerment and freedom. Elaine believed that she was "empowered" and had the ability to self-manage her "lectures, assignments, and other responsibilities." Jill perceived that her leader "trusts me to do my job, tells me what needs to be done, but then doesn't micromanage me in that process." Maria observed that she has "a lot of autonomy and ability to run my program." She also believed that her role as a follower was to "listen to people I am following to see exactly what I should be doing. If they say I want you to increase the size of your program, I'm going to increase it." Jayne believed that her leader gives her "the freedom to get the job done as best you can and gets you the resources as you need them. That's what I translate empowerment as."

Similar observations by the participants on their empowerment and leadership sharing were made in the preface. These observations also reflect that the leaders of the participants were granted considerable freedom to self-manage their responsibilities, participate, act, fail in their roles, and grow as individuals and professionals.

Freedom to self-manage. Most participants felt that the ability to self-manage their responsibilities was essential to their satisfaction in the follower role. Emma appreciated and strongly desired her empowerment as she emphasized, "I like to be able to do what I want to do, just to be real honest. I feel pretty sure that I know what should be done or I can find out or try things in my area." Emma added that at her institution, "I think there's a lot of self-management." Maria felt "just fine with my level of empowerment and autonomy." Elaine was comfortable with her level of empowerment

and appreciated her leader's willingness to "listen, give feedback, and encourage you to do other things or seek other avenues." Jayne added that her leader "trusts that I know what I'm doing. She does no micromanaging whatsoever, which I appreciate." Jayne stressed the importance she placed on this autonomy in the following personal story:

I went to a continuing nursing education program and was asked which of four characteristics helps you be most successful in your job. I chose autonomy. There were two of us out of the whole group who chose autonomy. Eighty percent chose teamwork. I was just shocked that people chose teamwork. Then I thought, do I believe in teamwork? I do, obviously. I mean, you can't do this kind of job without working with lots of people who have different kinds of expertise who bring their perspectives to the problem. I guess I decided that in the end, at some point I have to make a decision, whether I'm working on a team, whether it's about my own work. I think that issue of autonomy was most important to me probably because I like that combination of being able to work together and still have responsibility for my area in terms of some freedom to make decisions. I think it's a good balance.

Jill stressed that "empowerment is really important to me." She added, "Part of that is knowing what I know and can do, knowing what my limitations are, knowing I have freedom to fail but learn from that freedom—those are all a lot a part of that empowerment issue." Jill also seemed to capture the sentiment of each participant regarding the reciprocal nature of empowerment when she stated:

You know there are people who get real hung up about power and how much power they have. And actually I think people who give away power end up with

more power than people who are trying to mandate their power on other people. I think when you give up power most people will give it back.

The freedom to participate, act, and fail. Each of the participants indicated that they participated in important decisions made in their college. Emma perceived that her leader “depends on me for a lot of things. She’ll ask my opinion. I do consultation with her. I think there’s a great deal of trust there.” Jayne reinforced this point by noting that her leader sought “input from people who would be impacted by that decision.” Jayne observed that her leader “makes specific overtures in terms of I have this kind of thing to consider, I want your input on this, what do you see, what concerns do you have?” Jayne found it significant that her leader “respects and trusts my judgment.” Jayne also stressed that “rarely is there anything that is implemented that people at least haven’t heard of or have had some kind of way to influence that.”

Elaine perceived that her leader “tries to let the group make their decisions. She asks my opinions about what I would do.” Maria stated, “Our leader steps back and says you guys need to decide this as a group. She directs it at times and says think about this. But I also think that she allows us to really feel like we really own the program.”

The participants additionally believed it was important to have the ability to act within the context of their own responsibilities. Jayne commented, “I like that combination of being able to work together and still have a responsibility for your areas in terms of some freedom to make decisions.” She added, “We certainly aren’t allowed to go our own directions, but we have the ability to make decisions and we consult with each other before we make decisions.” Jayne concluded, “I have a leader who trusts me

to do my job, that tells me what needs to be done, but then doesn't micromanage me in that process."

Emma emphasized that her leader "does not interfere in any way, shape, or form with what any of us do. She picks her people that she trusts, and then she trusts them. She trusts that I know what I'm doing." Elaine indicated that she was also able to make decisions concerning her assignments. She added that her leader "does a good job of encouraging you to do other things or seek other avenues" and to "try new things." Maria stated that her leader "always encourages us to work on things" and observed that "critical thinking is highly encouraged—to come up with new ideas, new ways of getting information across."

Jill believed that part of the freedom to act included the freedom to fail. She expressed the following idea:

I give people a lot of freedom to fail and learn from that. That's not saying that I want people that make mistakes over and over again, but I want to give people enough latitude so that they cannot be afraid to function, but that if they make a mistake, they learn from their mistake and they can improve their processes and go on.

Jayne also held this view and observed that her leader "allows people to make mistakes as they figure it out, and if there's a mistake, we'll fix it. Just the freedom to learn, and if you make a mistake, you're not going to get your head chopped off." Emma added, "There's also a lot of freedom to grow and some freedom to fail and learn from your mistakes and move forward."

The freedom to grow. All participants believed that their leaders strongly encouraged and facilitated their development and growth, both personally and professionally. Observations by the participants concerning these findings were summarized previously in the preface. The participants also stressed that their growth was further enhanced and nurtured by their colleagues and generally by the culture in their institutions. Participants also recognized that the freedom to grow also created a responsibility to undertake their own self-development. Their experiences relevant to these latter two considerations are described below.

Jayne was appreciative that she was given the “time and freedom to learn” at her institution. This opportunity was nurtured in part by her colleagues and the culture within her institution as she observed in the following dialogue:

We bring all kinds of expertise to the different issues and that part, the recognition of that, and the ability of all of these various team members to listen to each other, and then to act collaboratively is wonderful. The support here in terms of development, support for your own learning, and learning to do a variety of kinds of things that are important to you, is clear here, and that’s all the way up the chain of command. You feel that support. It’s been a very important aspect to me because it’s such a glaring difference from where I came from.

Emma observed that her growth was influenced by her colleagues “with their different perspectives. It’s a sounding board. Many times it’s support. If they have different perspectives or ideas, we just talk it out. I think that’s invaluable.” Jill observed that within her college, “we have such a sense around that we’re here to take care of each other, to help each other and to figure out a way to help.”

Elaine acknowledged that her growth was influenced by “faculty members who are getting their doctorates and in working with some of the more senior faculty members—they role model very well how they keep abreast of what they say and practice.” Maria explained that her “co-workers look at things different ways. They always give me ideas on things to look for and ways to change. They are always open and give me different ideas on how to handle things.” Maria added, “I think the teamwork here is really, really good. Because our program is built upon the idea of a journey, you have to keep building on it.”

Participants also emphasized that they had an obligation to pursue their own self-development as an integral part of their freedom to grow. Emma emphasized that “professional development is really my own responsibility.” Elaine echoed this thought when she stated, “It’s our personal responsibility to keep up our license, I mean, that’s a given, to keep up as far as our nursing skills for things that we do in that.” Maria explained her self-development responsibilities as follows:

I felt like it was necessary for me to continue on and get my Ph.D. I felt like if I’m going to teach at the college level then I need to have my Ph.D. It was my personal feeling that I need to be as well-educated as the other faculty members. Performance—nobody has ever sat down with me and said these are your performance goals. But I’ve sat down and I’ve made my own goals as far as what I would like to see with this program, what I would like to accomplish.

The participants’ observations made it clear that professional growth is important to each of them and is strongly supported by their leaders and their colleagues. The

impact of the freedom to grow on the success of the organization was emphasized by the participants. Jayne expressed this view when she stated:

The more developed you are professionally, the better the organization will work. Learning helps you do your job better. The organization will function better and is more innovative. I encourage people with ideas about what they want to do to take a class, go to a workshop, and make that happen when in a position to do so. It's holistically a good thing for that person.

High Expectation for Excellence

All participants had a high expectation for personal and professional excellence, not only for themselves, but also for those with whom they worked. High expectation for excellence emerged as a prevalent theme as participants shared their experiences. They consistently cited the importance of integrity, openness, and honesty as an essential value in the culture of their institutions. Service to their leader, colleagues, students, and others was a behavior practiced and valued by each participant. Participants universally embraced the mission and vision of their institutions, which significantly influenced them in their follower role. A penchant for innovation and change was embraced by all of the participants and was a fundamental and overriding feature of the culture of Alpha College. Each of these patterns is examined further in the analysis that follows.

Honesty and integrity. Honesty and integrity were strong personal values for each of the 5 participants. These values guided their decisions and how they related to others. Elaine viewed honesty not only as an important core value, but also as a strong foundation of her faith, which she emphasized in the following passage: "Honesty is number one—it's like getting back to the Ten Commandments—you're following those

as your core foundation. Honesty is number one. Integrity. The concept of what is right and wrong, following God's commandments."

Emma expressed a similar view in stating that "honesty and integrity are important and I value those in both my personal and my professional life." Jill echoed this notion when she observed that "honesty and integrity are really important to me, including holding confidences." Jayne, when asked what values were important to her, stated that "honesty and frankness are very high." Maria expanded on these thoughts when she stated:

You know there are so many values you can think about. I guess integrity would be the one I would pick. People need to trust you and what you say, that you're acting in their best interest, or that you're acting responsibly in your choice.

Integrity is encouraged and practiced at [our college]. We want to present the best foot forward, just wanting the community to think of us as a place where you can send your kids or you can come and you are going to be treated appropriately, and there's not going to be any controversy. You're going to get quality education in a safe environment.

Participants also believed that integrity and honesty led to an "openness" in their institutions that was important to each of them. Jill expressed this belief when she stated, "I'm always kind of amazed at what gets shared and how open and honest it is. I would say that there's a lot of openness and honesty in this school." Maria reflected that "there is a high level of honesty and frankness in this institution." Jayne reiterated this thought when she stated that, at her school, "frankness is very high." Emma reflected that "there is a lot of openness [which] I think that helps the general atmosphere."

This culture of honesty and openness described by each participant was influenced by the leaders in each institution. Emma observed, “[My leader] has helped people be more open. I think seeing her being so open has been good and has shaped the organization in a little bit different way.” Emma emphasized that her leader “wouldn’t be at all hesitant to say we have to be ethical. You see that in things she talks about, the things she emphasizes, the things she supports.” Elaine stated, “I am always honest with [my leader]. I feel she’s been honest with me. I’m not afraid to be totally honest, to express my feelings with her.” Maria saw her leader as someone who “encourages people to be honest.”

Jayne was impressed with how her leader treats everyone the same from the Dean to her own secretary. Jayne observed, “I think that is an authenticity that people sense, that they are very comfortable with. She’s very reassuring.” Jayne further noted how this authenticity was reciprocated in her relationship with her leader when she stated, “I would feel worse about not telling her about something that might be going on than about telling her. I feel there’s that much support.”

Service. Service was an important value for the follower participants of this study. They envisioned service at many levels in the organization, including service to the leader, service to each other, service to the students, service to the community, and service to the greater idea of health care. These various views of service simply highlighted an overriding belief that service was an integral part of the participants’ personal and professional lives.

Elaine tied her concept of service to “serving the greater good. It’s serving all of mankind.” She viewed her service as her “journey with God, trying to uphold my faith or

carry out or display my faith that way.” She added, “I want to serve others. I want to help others as much as possible.” For Elaine, “service doesn’t stop here at the college. It permeates into our home life, the things that we do there including the different activities and organizations that we belong to and volunteer for.”

Emma emphasized that service to her was “our service to students. But I think there’s an extension of that because they will serve the patient.” Jill expanded on this idea by observing that “we’re all expected as part of the school to do service to others. It’s really part of your job that you’re going to figure out how you’re going to do service to others. It doesn’t have to be done in the same way.” Jill also shared a personal experience that illustrated how her leader exhibited an act of service at a board meeting they both attended. She explained that “everybody was sitting around waiting to start the meeting and start the meal and [my leader] got up and grabbed the water pitcher and poured water for everybody!”

Jayne believed that there were two ways of describing service in her institution. She first explained the service that “becomes defined a certain way with faculty because of the way it relates to their performance appraisal. For some people it’s 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service which can be committee work, service to the medical center, contributions, and service to the community. Jayne talked about an extension of her service to the institution:

The idea of service, and this is probably more pervasive among everybody, that we’re serving this greater idea of health care. . . . I think there’s a sense in the big sense of serving the school—that we’re here to make a contribution and on the

cutting edge of so much stuff. It feels like we are serving this idea of pushing health care forward.

Maria believed that “service is helping others, stepping outside of your comfort zone, and giving back to the country that we live in and making sure that other people’s lives are touched and better than when you first came into it.” She also stressed that at her institution “we have service integrated throughout every course. It makes it very important. It is applied on a daily basis.” This organizational ideal was incorporated into the organization’s mission statement which Maria quoted as: “Service: We instill a good sense of responsibility in caring that calls us to serve the common good. Lifelong learning is one of the values. Pursuit of truth and dignity, commitment to students, justice, gratitude, hospitality, and service.” Maria emphasized that she “liked the statement so much I hung it up in my office because I felt like we should really follow those goals.” Maria expanded on the importance of service in her life when she stated:

To me, that’s something that’s very important. And I think I learned that at [this college] when I came here, is how important people are and how important it is to give back to society and make sure that you are trying to make the best society for everybody, not just the privileged but other people as well. The idea of service and helping others and not just thinking about ourselves and thinking about, yes, we lead a pretty privileged life, but what do other people’s lives look like.

Embracing mission and vision. The participants at each college indicated that they were influenced and guided by the mission, goals, and vision of their leaders and the institution. Despite these consistent observations, the process of establishing the mission,

vision, and goals varied significantly at the two colleges from which the participant groups were selected. Each participant group will be examined separately for this reason.

In discussing the mission of Beta College, Elaine observed:

A lot of us are from [Beta College]. It's nice to have that in that we know what the mission is. It's embedded in us and we want to carry out that mission more than anything. So we know our heritage very well and we're very deeply committed to [the college].

Maria explained that Beta College was founded many years ago by a group originally led by a woman who "stepped outside the box and said, 'I need to do more, I need open my house up to society and make sure women and children are taken care of with welcoming arms.' It didn't matter where they came from." Maria emphasized that "we really truly try to follow the philosophy that she set out." Maria also talked about the pervasive nature of this mission and vision of her organization:

They make it very clear when we're hired that these are the goals and mission and vision of the college and this is what we're trying to do. They present it with each faculty meeting that we have, they may present an idea and then they'll say this is how this would go toward our mission and because we are a service-oriented organization, a lot of that has to fit in there. We have service integrated throughout every single course. It makes it very important. It is applied on a daily basis.

The mission and vision of Alpha College was developed more recently than the one at Beta College and had different origins. Jill shared her perception of how the mission of her college was established:

This organization changed because the same message got preached and there was consistency and there was sort of reiteration over time. It takes giving the same message over and over again. It takes being consistent with how you treat people. It takes role-modeling the values that you want those people to start working with. Emma described the consequences of these changes when she stated, "I do think we have an unusual organization here, the general level of trust and the general agreement on the goals. I think we do have that." These goals and visions are established in a dynamic and participative process that Jill explained as follows:

We develop personal goals and vision as a group. As we develop goals and a vision for the school, there's an aspect of where the organization is going and there's an aspect of how we want to do that. Our personal goals get fed into that. We usually develop a three to five year vision plan and we do that, but then annually we look at how we've met where we are in terms of that. It's not like every time we get together we develop goals. It's more fluid and we know where we're going, we know what we want to do, but it's more of, it may take a different turn because something's changed in the environment that we need to respond to.

Jayne explained that the goals and visions of the organization come from being in the meetings where the discussions take place. She added that "you know the vision of the organization by paying attention to what other people are doing and how they articulate what they're doing. The [leader] specifically seeks input on things." Jill similarly noted, "In response to faculty who say they don't know what the leader's vision

is, I respond, ‘Yes, you do. If you listen to her, she’s always giving the same message. She’s consistent and it’s out there.’”

Embracing innovation and change. Each of the participants expressed a willingness to embrace change and pursue innovative ideas. This behavior was more pronounced at Alpha College where innovation was embedded in the culture of the institution and enthusiastically accepted by each of the participants at that institution. Participants made it clear that the overarching identity of Alpha College was, in fact, defined by its penchant for innovation. Emma proudly observed that Alpha College was “an unusual organization with the innovation stuff.” This high degree of identity with innovation was not found at Beta College where change processes were being introduced, but not fully embedded in its culture like they were at Alpha College. For this reason, the observations on innovation and change will be separated on the basis of the institutions served by each participant.

Beta College, according to Maria, “is changing as a whole. They’re really amping up and moving into the next level and I think we’re going to have to change with it or move out.” Maria added “there’s a lot of pressure to amp it up and move it out. It should be very interesting to see what happens over the next couple years.”

Maria embraced these changes as illustrated by her comment that these changes are “going to be kind of fun to think about.” She specifically emphasized that this process gave her the opportunity to reflect on “the different ways that these classes can be offered and taught and that will be fun. You look at it from a fresh perspective. You bring in fresh ideas; you’re more willing to think outside the box sometimes.” She observed, “What’s the worst that could happen? So you change it. Things will be okay.” She

seemed excited about the prospect of change when she added: “Why not? Let’s go for it and see what happens!” Maria generally believed that Beta College “was open to new ideas, new programs, things that would get the name of the college out there.”

Elaine was also encouraged that Beta College had begun to talk “about changing things. More focus on the master’s program and getting a committee for research.” Maria reiterated this view in noting that “everything now is toward developing the master’s program.” She noted that this program would be “outside the box” and proudly observed that there was “really some innovative thinking there, thinking about service-oriented master’s programs.” Elaine embraced these changes and the change process in general as she explained in the following passage:

You have to embrace the concept of change. It has to come from within each individual. You have to have that vision of doing the best you can all the time and I think it has to be a vision of quality, a vision of not just quality, but imagination. It’s almost like going back into our childhood where you have to have that spirit of wanting to learn and wanting to imagine or visualize something better and whatever it is, you have to be ready to embrace that change.

The process of change and innovation that was just beginning at Beta College was fully an overarching expectation at Alpha College. Emma emphasized this fact in stressing that “we really embrace change as an overall culture.” Emma expanded on these thoughts when she stated:

This organization is very interested in change. For the most part, very open to change. The whole [institution] sees the school of nursing as a trail blazer. We’re all interested in it and excited by it. Although we might be a little afraid, we’re

confident that we can do whatever it is, if we think it's a good thing. [Our leader] has encouraged and supported that. [One of my colleagues] is one of the most creative people I have ever known. She has great ideas and she can see that they are carried out.

She added, "We have people with [advanced] degrees in educational technology who partner with faculty members so they keep up on what's new in technology. The faculty does not feel alone and that helps us with this innovation stuff."

Jill similarly believed that "it's been part of our culture to be innovative." Jill provided some historical perspective in sharing that "in the past, faculty was ivory tower and didn't have hands-on familiarity with the real world." She attributed the change in this attitude to her leader who "is open to doing things in non-traditional ways. She has really helped the school move forward. We just have a lot of innovative things going on." Jill, like Emma, concluded that "we're seen as trailblazers. If [the institution] is going to try something new with technology, they test it in nursing."

Jill also believed that the innovation at Alpha College "starts with the people that are in the jobs. How we can compete is through innovation. That's become part of our culture and so I think we strive to look for unique and innovative ways." She reiterated that "it helps that we have some very innovative people. People have stayed here because they've been fascinated with the innovation and being able to be more creative and to be able to approach it in more non-traditional ways."

Jayne echoed many of these views about innovation at Alpha College. She explained that "I don't feel that organizational culture is as monolithic. If there is one [common culture at this college], it would probably be the emphasis on being on the

cutting edge of nursing—we're learning new things all of the time." Jayne elaborated on this thought when she emphasized:

I value innovation, the ability to try new things as they're needed. Part of sustaining innovation is keeping abreast of what's going on and realizing that there's change coming and trying to anticipate how we would best influence what that is rather than waiting to get hit by it. Trust has to play part of that. Tolerance for ambiguity has to be part of that. Confidence that we'll be fine regardless. It's not just trust interpersonally, but trust in people's abilities. I think more of that unconditional regard again. It's a willingness to let people try and see what happens and if it doesn't work out exactly as you think it might, we'll adapt and go forward.

Jayne was particularly emphatic that "a high tolerance for ambiguity" was necessary to support a culture of innovation. She described how this characteristic was exhibited throughout her organization when she stated, "You don't see a lot of anxiety about we don't know exactly what's going to happen tomorrow. There's a confidence that we're going to be okay regardless of what happens to it." Jayne stressed the importance of being able to "take risks and even if things don't work out, you'd be okay, we'll figure out a way to manage that." Jayne described her experience in taking risks:

I think that there's a confidence in working with people that you're going to come out on the other side, not carrying only your flag or that person's flag, but a different flag altogether—some new idea that neither of you thought of.

Jill supported Jayne's view of the support for innovation when she stated:

Here, it's that's a good idea. How can we make it work? It's a general approach of how are we going to do this? Here it's the opportunity and how are we going to take advantage of it. . . . We're always looking for how to do what we do better, how to meet the needs of the patients better, how to meet the needs of our students to meet those patients' needs. It so forward thinking here.

Emma summarized this pervasive attitude when she stated:

We have a situation here that I think is very unusual. The [school of nursing] is viewed in the medical center as the innovator for the use of computers, use of technology, use of all the platforms for teaching and all that stuff. We're definitely seen as the innovator in the whole [institution].

The findings of this study were based on the researcher's interpretation of the meaning of the participants' rich descriptions of their experiences as followers of a servant leader. These findings and the literature pertaining to these findings will be analyzed in the next section.

Discussion of Findings on Servant-led Followership

The purpose of this study was to examine the follower experiences of five nursing educators led by servant leaders in two institutions of higher education. Five major research questions were presented:

1. How do servant-led followers describe themselves as followers?
2. How are servant-led follower experiences influenced by the context of the organizational environment in which they live and work?
3. How are servant-led followers influenced by their leader and their peers?
4. Do servant-led followers adopt servant leadership characteristics in their leadership roles?

5. What is the meaning of followership as defined by the followers of servant leaders?

The 5 educators interviewed for this study offered insights that are reflected in the findings relevant to these questions. The discussion that follows will examine these findings as they relate to each of the research questions.

How do Servant-led Followers Describe Themselves as Followers?

The participants in this study understood their follower role and believed that they made valuable contributions to their organization in that role. They described events, situations, and experiences that were identified in the themes and patterns previously reviewed. The discussion of how the participants described themselves as followers will focus on two pattern groups from the theme, *collegial relationships build a strong community*, including “trust, respect, and concern for others” and “commitment to the leader and organization”; the theme, *freedom to be*, in its entirety; and each of the patterns from the theme, *high expectation for excellence*, including “honesty and integrity,” “service,” “embracing mission and vision,” and “embracing innovation and change.” The discussion will conclude with several comprehensive observations of the followership behaviors described by the participants.

Trust, respect, and concern for others. The participants valued caring relationships. These attitudes were not limited to, or even primarily focused on, their leaders, but also extended to their colleagues and students. Developing and nurturing caring relationships was an important aspect of the institutional cultures within their respective colleges. These relationships were frequently described as sisterly, genuine, supportive, collegial, and collaborative. Participants described caring behaviors that

enhanced their professional lives and their personal well-being. One participant captured this attitude when observing that people, more than anything else, just need you to care about them.

Trust and respect for others was inherent in the culture of the participants' colleges and was exhibited at all levels of those institutions. Participants equated respect with the Golden Rule and genuinely believed that they treated others as they would like to be treated. Participants viewed trust as the confidence in others to fulfill their responsibilities, speak truthfully, and do what they say they will do. Trust and respect were also equated with understanding, forgiveness, and the freedom to disagree without personal animosity. One participant summed up these attitudes by emphasizing that she did not have to worry about someone trying to sabotage her because people in her institution trust, respect, take care of each other, and find a way to help.

The caring, respectful, and trusting behaviors described by the participants were consistent with the concept of agapao love, which encompasses a sense of moral and respectful values, caring, and humanness in relationships with others (Berg, 1998; Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003). Agapao love is one of the characteristics identified for exemplary followership (Berg; Patterson; Winston, 2003). The frequent descriptions of behaviors associated with agapao love strongly suggested that the participants possess this characteristic of exemplary followership.

Winston (2003) predicted that servant-led followers would exhibit agapao love, particularly to their leader. The findings in this study supported this aspect of the Winston(2003) model for servant-led followers. However, participants did not focus primarily on the leader in describing these behaviors and most often mentioned them in

the context of relationships with their colleagues, students, and others within and outside the institution. The latter finding is similar to Laub's (1999) concept of servant organizations whereby valuing people is displayed by both leaders and followers in their relationships. This outward view by followers of developing caring relationships throughout the institution was not addressed in the Winston (2003) model or extensively in the literature and deserves further research consideration.

Commitment to leader and organization. As followers, the participants were unequivocally committed to their leader. The participants described their leader as a role model, mentor, and professional friend who had a positive influence on them. These positive leader behaviors were reciprocated by the participant followers with a high degree of commitment to their leaders. This commitment was manifested in a variety of ways that were described in terms of loyalty, emotional support, service, open communication, and friendship. The level of leader commitment found in this study was captured by one participant when she observed that followers have a responsibility to be there for their leader as an individual and as a professional.

None of the participants limited their commitment to their leaders alone. Participants realized that their leaders were not bigger than the organization. Participants generally believed that they would remain committed to the organization, even if their leader left. Participants described their commitment to their institution not only in general terms, but also in carrying out its mission and goals. One participant captured the essence of organizational commitment expressed by others when she described her feeling as a sense of serving the school and making a contribution to its success.

Commitment to the leader and to the organization is a characteristic associated with exemplary followership (Kelley, 1992). Exemplary followers have a strong social identity with others within the organization and are committed to organizational goals and objectives (Avolio et al., 2004; Haslam & Platow, 2001; Kelley, 1992). The participants described a commitment to both their leader and their institution in a manner consistent with the literature on exemplary followership.

The Winston (2003) model predicted that servant-led followers would be committed to their leader. The findings in this study support the Winston (2003) model in that respect. The Winston (2003) model does not address whether servant-led followers would also be committed to their organization. Irving (2005) and Dannhauser and Boshoff (2006) found a positive correlation between servant-led followers and organizational commitment, whereas Drury (2004) came to the opposite conclusion. The findings in this study are consistent with the conclusions reached by Irving and Dannhauser and Boshoff that servant-led followers are committed to their organization.

Freedom to be. All of the participants emphasized that they were given the freedom to function independently and to grow professionally and personally. These freedoms fell within three patterns consisting of a high degree of self-management; the ability to participate, act, and fail; and an institutional culture that encouraged professional and personal development. Several important findings emerged from these patterns.

Participants were comfortable with the significant level of empowerment afforded them by their leader. All participants agreed they could perform their responsibilities as followers with a high degree of independence and freedom. Participants expected this

level of empowerment in many instances and relished their ability to self-manage their work. Participants believed they could take initiatives and perform their responsibilities without unwanted meddling from their leaders. One participant captured the essence of these beliefs when she stated that her leader told her what needed to be done, why it needed to be done, and then told her to go do it.

The participants indicated that they participated in important decisions made in their institution. The participants were able to take independent actions within the context of their own responsibilities. One participant described this capability as a combination of being able to work together and still being able to make decisions about matters within the purview of their assigned responsibilities. Participants were given the freedom to think, learn, and act independently without the fear of reprisal, even when mistakes were made. This attitude was described as the freedom to learn and fail. The high degree of independent thought, learning, and action permitted and encouraged by each institution was highly valued by each participant.

All participants believed their leader and their peers encouraged growth and development, both personally and professionally. Leaders and followers recognized their individual strengths and partnered with others with complementary skills and abilities. A collaborative atmosphere fostered and encouraged these reciprocal relationships at each institution. Participants also believed they were primarily responsible for their own self-development and pursued self-development opportunities to learn and grow. One participant summarized these attitudes by explaining that learning helps the organization to function better and be more innovative.

The participants exhibited characteristics consistent with self-management behaviors associated with exemplary followers (Kelley, 1988, 1992). Participants reflected the ability to think independently, take initiative, and exercise control over their actions with little supervision, all of which is associated with self-management behaviors (Kelley, 1988, 1992). Participants also believed they had the capability and freedom to act within their roles and were confident in their ability to fulfill their responsibilities. These characteristics reflect a high degree of empowerment and self-efficacy behaviors that are closely aligned with self-management and exemplary followership (Dvir et al., 2002; Dvir & Shamir, 2003; Winston, 2003).

A related, but distinct, attribute of exemplary followership, is independent thinking and learning, which includes constructive criticism, innovation, and creative thought (Berg, 1998; Hall & Densten, 2002; Kelley, 1992). Independent thinking also entails effective learning that involves the follower's ability to obtain knowledge and apply knowledge to a particular task (Densten & Gray, 2001). Independent learning encompasses the ability to understand the significance of actions and the impact of those actions on the organization (Bennis, 1999; Kelley, 1992). Each participant emphasized innovative thinking, questioning, and self-development. An institutional culture existed at each college that allowed participants to take risks and fail. This culture facilitated and encouraged participants to pursue learning opportunities, exercise critical thinking, and take their own initiatives. These behaviors are consistent with the independent thinking and learning exhibited by exemplary followers.

Kelley's (1992) model predicted that servant-led followers would be empowered by their leader and would, in turn, have a high degree of self-efficacy, which is a positive

perception that one is capable of accomplishing assigned tasks. The participants in this study were empowered and welcomed and even expected the freedom they were given to carry out their responsibilities. These behaviors are consistent with Kelly's (1992) model.

The participants also highlighted the importance complementary–collaborative partnering among their peers and the valued independent thought and learning. None of these considerations are addressed in Kelley's (1992) model. The incorporation of these behaviors into servant-led followership might be considered, given the frequency of these behaviors among the participants and the perceived benefits each of them had to the success and well-being of the participants and their institutions.

Honesty and integrity. Honesty, trust, and integrity were values possessed by the participants, their leaders, and their peers. These values guided their decisions and were the foundation of their relationships with their leader, colleagues, and students. Closely aligned with these values was a perception of openness in their relationships within the institution. An expectation of open relationships founded on honesty and integrity was a core value inherent in the culture of each institution. One participant captured the essence of this environment when noting that people need to trust you and what you say and believe that you are acting in their best interest.

The high value placed on open and honest behaviors and relationships closely resembles the authenticity associated with exemplary followership (Avolio et al., 2004; Gardner et al., 2005; Iles et al., 2005; Kelley, 1992; Laub, 1999). Authenticity encompasses being open and accountable to others, showing willingness to learn from others, and maintaining integrity and trust (Alcorn, 1992; Bennis, 1993, 1999; Kelley, 1992; Laub, 1999).

The behaviors of effective engagement and eudaemonic well-being grow out of authenticity and entail the enthusiasm for work and the realization of true potential through self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relationships, personal growth, autonomy, and self-determination (Avolio et al., 2004; Gardner et al., 2005; Iles et al., 2005). The experiences of the participants nearly paralleled these descriptions. The relationships among participants, their leaders, and colleagues were founded upon a high degree of authenticity and care. Participants genuinely enjoyed their work and were excited about their self-development and learning opportunities. These positive feelings underlie effective engagement and eudaemonic well-being associated with authenticity and effective followership.

The Winston (2003) model does not expressly suggest that servant-led followers will exhibit authentic behaviors. It does, however, predict that servant-led followers will be intrinsically motivated, which entails an inward propensity to master optimal challenges. Others have suggested that intrinsic motivation is a likely outgrowth of effective engagement and eudaemonic well-being, two behaviors related to authenticity (Iles et al., 2005). Effective engagement and eudaemonic well-being also affect motivation, but also impact trust, hope, positive emotions, and positive work attitudes (Iles et al.). The high degree of authenticity displayed by participants and the importance they placed on this characteristic suggests that further consideration needs to be given to the role played by authentic behaviors in the servant leader–follower relationship to which the Winston (2003) model pertains.

Another limitation of the Winston (2003) model is its exclusive focus on the leader–follower relationship. Participants consistently observed that the authenticity they

valued extended not only to and from their leader, but also to and from their colleagues. Laub's (1999) concept of servant organizations encompassed this broader view by suggesting that characteristics associated with servant leaders would be displayed by everyone in the organization. Laub (1999) further identified authenticity as a central feature of servant leadership and, by extension, would also suggest that servant-led followers would display this behavior in a servant-led organization. This view of authentic behavior is not restricted to the leader–follower relationship and more accurately reflects the views of the participants in this study than does the Winston (2003) model.

Service. Service was an important participant value and a pervasive expectation within their institutions. The participants described their service in terms of listening, mentoring, giving feedback, problem solving, teaching, and supporting others.

Service by participants was not primarily focused on their leader, but was directed rather toward students, colleagues, the college, the community-at-large, and even the greater idea of health care. One participant explained that service helped her avoid thinking solely of herself and instead concentrate on how important other people are and how important it is to give back to society. This idea of service captured the essence of how all participants viewed this behavior.

Service is a characteristic of exemplary followers (Chaleff, 2003; Winston, 2003). Service, in this context, requires the follower to abandon his/her self-interest and focus on the needs of the leader and others in a supportive and cooperative manner (Alcorn, 1992; Bennis, 1999; Musselwhite, 2006; Russell, 2001). The nature and extent of service performed by participants was perhaps more pervasive and broader in scope than the

descriptions of this construct in the literature, particularly as their service related to colleagues, students, and the greater community. The importance placed on serving others by each participant suggests that the extent and breadth of this behavior should be examined further in the context of effective followership.

Service is the final outcome of the Winston (2003) model for servant-led followers. The focus of the service suggested by Winston (2003) was to the leader. The model did not encompass service to others. Each of the participants possessed a strong desire to serve and support their leader and this finding is consistent with the Winston (2003) model. However, participants appeared to concentrate their service on their colleagues, students, and the community, rather than their leader. This downward and outward focus seems broader in scope than the service contemplated by Winston (2003) and would appear more consistent with the behaviors suggested by Laub (1999) in a servant organization. This outward focus of service deserves further analysis in refining the theoretical framework for servant-led followers and followership, in general

Embracing mission and vision. Some participants were affiliated with a college whose mission and vision was established by its founders and became an important component of the institution's culture. Other participants were associated with an institution where the leader, with input from followers, developed the mission and vision of the organization. Visioning at this institution was participative and dynamic. Goals evolved as conditions changed. Despite the differences of the visioning process at each institution, all participants understood, supported, and were committed to the mission and goals of their respective colleges. One participant captured the essence of this attitude in observing that the mission of her college was "embedded" in the members of the faculty

and each of them was deeply committed to actualizing that mission on behalf of the institution.

Exemplary followers are strongly committed to the mission, vision, and goals of the organization and its leaders (Kelley, 1992). The participants in this study supported the vision, mission, and goals of their organization in a manner consistent with exemplary followership.

The Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model for servant-led followers did not initially consider the implications of organizational mission and vision. The vision that was contemplated related to how the leader sees the future role of the follower. Winston (2004) later seemed to reinterpret the vision construct in the Patterson–Winston model to encompass a shared vision between follower and leader. Others have contended that servant leaders are responsible for envisioning the future as it relates to the organization, then developing acceptance of that vision with their followers (Laub, 2004; Russell & Stone, 2002). Greenleaf (1991) believed that visioning was an ethical mandate of servant leaders and followers.

Participants believed that their leader had a vision for them, which they appreciated. However, participants understood that the more salient concept of vision was associated with the mission and goals of the organization. These observations reflect a broader view of visioning than was initially suggested in the Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model and are more consistent with the contentions by Greenleaf (1991) and others who contended that visioning is focused on the organizational mission and goals (Kim, 2004; Laub, 2004; Russell & Stone, 2002).

The visioning process in the two institutions associated with study was perhaps more complex than the literature would suggest. One institution had a mission that was historically based and embedded in the culture of the institution. The other institution employed a visioning process that was dynamic and participative among leaders and followers. The visioning process used in each institution entailed common aspects that were contemplated in the literature. All the participants notably observed that the mission and vision at their institution was consistently and frequently communicated by their leaders and colleagues. Each of the participants understood and was committed to the vision and mission of their respective colleges. These outcomes are consistent with those expected in servant-led organizations (Laub, 1999, 2004; Russell & Stone, 2002).

Embracing innovation and change. Change and innovation was accepted and embraced at both colleges. Participants were universally open to new ideas and expressed excitement about the prospect of pursuing new initiatives and programs. A participant from Beta College described this attitude as a spirit of wanting to learn and wanting to imagine or visualize something better.

Innovation defined the identity of Alpha College. Participants from Alpha College consistently stated that innovation was a central value in the culture of their institution. Participants openly accepted the challenges of anticipating and adapting to change to preserve, and even enhance, their institution. Participants and their colleagues had a high tolerance for ambiguity that entailed a certain confidence that the institution would be fine regardless. The followers at Alpha College were allowed to take risks without reprisal. The culture of innovation and change that was created at Alpha College

cultivated a feeling of pride and excitement among the participants that their institution was on the cutting edge of healthcare education.

Literature comparing leadership theories suggests that servant leadership is more appropriate for stable organizations than for institutions constantly dealing with change (Smith, Montagno, & Kuzmenko, 2004). An unexpected finding in this study was the high degree acceptance of change and innovation by all the servant-led followers. This attitude was particularly pronounced at Alpha College, where innovation was not only embraced, but was an expectation throughout the institution. The integration of innovation as a central element of the culture at Alpha College and the manner in which change was embraced by all the participants raises a significant question regarding the assertion that dynamic organizations are less suitable for servant leadership styles.

This study generally suggests that servant-led followers are a catalyst to change. Participants were allowed to take risks and were encouraged by their leaders to pursue creative and innovative solutions to the challenges that confronted them. The positive manner in which servant-led followers in this study embraced change is a construct largely ignored by the literature and deserves further study. Whether these conclusions can be generalized in the context of other institutional settings remains an open question.

Comprehensive observations. The servant-led followers in this study exhibited a high degree of agapao love, authenticity, service, and self-management skills. Participants were committed to their leader and to the institution. They valued learning and practiced critical thinking, as exhibited by their pursuit of innovative ideas and learning opportunities. These behaviors are commonly associated with exemplary, or

effective, followership in the literature (Avolio et al., 2004; Bennis, 1999; Chaleff, 2003; Gardner et al., 2005; Iles et al., 2005; Kelley, 1992; Winston, 2003).

This study generally supports the Winston (2003) model for servant-led followers. Participants particularly possessed the characteristics of agapao love, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and service which are cornerstones in the Winston (2003) model. Participants exhibited the behaviors of authenticity, self-management, tolerance, and pursuit of innovation. These characteristics are not fully contemplated by Winston (2003) and deserve further research, given their common association with exemplary followership.

Winston (2003) focused entirely on the leader–follower relationship. This focus does not fully capture the experiences and behaviors of servant-led followers in this study. This observation is particularly pertinent to the participants' behaviors related to agapao love, service, and authenticity. The focus of these behaviors was not leader-centric, but rather outward in view to colleagues, students, and the community-at-large. This pervasive attitude deserves further attention in the development of servant-led follower theory.

This broader focus also highlights another aspect of this study, specifically, that the participants readily shifted between their follower and leader roles and were influenced not only by their leader, but also by their colleagues and the organizational culture as a whole. These aspects of the study will be explored more fully when addressing the remaining research questions.

How are Servant-led Follower Experiences Influenced by the Context of the Organizational Environment in Which they Live and Work?

Collectivist Processes. Collectivist processes pertain to the organization as a whole and define institutional culture, identity and environment (Avolio et al., 2004, Brown & Thornborrow, 1996; Gardner et al., 2005; Yukl, 2006). The literature suggests that collectivist processes influence follower outcomes, but the extent and importance of that influence is not well understood, particularly for servant-led followers (Yukl, 2006). The participants offered numerous insights relevant to this collectivist dimension of followership theory.

All participants described their respective institutions with terms such as “community” or “family.” Collegial and collaborative relationships were the norm and institutional silos were nonexistent. Each participant identified authenticity, service, and respectful and caring behaviors as core values in their respective organizations. The members of both institutions had a high level of trust and agreement on goals. The fundamental mission of Beta College was embedded in the culture of that institution. Innovation was a central value in the culture of Alpha College. Participants spoke of these organizational characteristics consistently and on numerous occasions throughout the interview process.

The participants observed that the core values and culture of both institutions were formed prior to the arrival of their current leaders. Participants similarly believed that the cultural values of the institution would survive if their leader left the organization. Participants explained their attachment to the institution using descriptions such as “deeply committed,” “very loyal,” “a strong sense of serving the school,” and

“love for the college.” The institutional identity expressed by the participants was distinct from their relationship with their leader.

The participants also recognized that the culture of their organization was not static. They acknowledged that their leader and their colleagues played an important role in changing, shaping, or reinforcing the culture of the organization. Participants emphasized the need for consistent and frequent communication as a means of changing or, conversely, preserving the culture, identity, or environment of the organization.

Participants generally believed that the culture and value of their institution positively influenced their views and behaviors. Participants at Beta College consistently mentioned how the mission embedded in the culture of that institution favorably shaped their behaviors. Participants at Alpha College similarly stressed their high regard for innovation, caring behaviors and open relationships, values they universally attributed to the culture and identity of their institution. One participant summarized the beliefs of all participants when she emphasized that the college influenced her and she was a different person because of her association with the institution.

The perceptions of the participants suggest that collectivist processes shape servant-led followers in a way distinct from leader–follower influences. Participants expressed views consistent with social exchange theory which predicts that followers will personify global beliefs over time based on their accumulated experiences (Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Wayne et al., 1997). Participant observations were also congruent with social identity theory, which contends that an individual will adopt the norms, goals, and values of the social group or organization with which the individual identifies (Haslam et al., 2003). Participants exhibited behaviors predicted by these collectivist

theories, including cooperation, trust, empowerment, collective action, and innovation (Gardner et al., 2005; Haslam et al.; Rupp & Cropanzano; Wayne et al.; Yukl, 2006).

Laub (1999) and Spears (1995) suggested that community building is a responsibility of servant leaders. Laub (2004) theorized that community becomes possible only if a supportive framework of a shared purpose evolves. All participants expressly stated that their institutions were caring communities based on shared goals and values. The findings in this study suggest that collectivist processes, as well as leader influences, were important to achieving this outcome. This finding is somewhat more expansive than the literature suggested in placing emphasis on leadership influences.

Laub (1999) envisioned the evolution of a servant organization in which values and constructs of servant leadership define the culture of the organization. Laub (1999) did not explain the processes that influence the development of a servant organization, but theorized that such a culture would emphasize authenticity, fairness, and the value of people. The participants in this study described institutional cultures that were similar to Laub's (1999) idea of a servant organization. These findings suggest that collectivist, as well as a leader influences, contribute to the evolution of a servant organization.

No attempt has been made to fully integrate collectivist concepts into the theory of servant-led followership. The Winston (2003) model is devoted exclusively to the leader–follower relationship and does not consider collectivist ideas. The findings in this study are consistent with literature that suggests that collectivist processes shape follower outcomes (Gardner et al., 2005; Haslam et al., 2003; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Wayne et al., 1997; Yukl, 2006). How collectivist processes specifically influence servant-led followers remains an open question that deserves further study.

Demographic considerations. This study included a large, public institution as well as a small, private, religiously affiliated college. Winston (2004) noted that his and other studies on servant leader–follower behaviors had frequently been conducted in religious institutions and observed that further study of these behaviors was needed in the context of secular institutions. The findings in this study with respect to the large public institution contribute to the void in the literature identified by Winston (2004).

Participants from both institutions perceived that they were being led by a servant leader and exhibited similar follower characteristics, particularly with respect to authenticity, self-management, and caring and serving behaviors. These characteristics were consistent with exemplary followership and the servant-led followers described in the Winston (2003) model. Participants described cultures at each institution consistent with those Laub (1999) defined for servant organizations. The secular institution embraced change and strongly encouraged innovation. These findings suggest that follower behaviors and institutional characteristics do not vary significantly in secular and religious institutions led by servant leaders.

How are Servant-led Followers Influenced by Their Leader and Their Peers?

The literature suggested that interpersonal relationships and behavior modeling among individuals within an institution influence follower outcomes. The literature has concentrated primarily on leader modeling and the leader–follower relationship. However, the interpersonal relationships and modeling among follower peers, as well as related collectivist processes previously discussed, also influence follower outcomes. The discussion that follows will examine the interpersonal and modeling dimensions of followership that were experienced by the participants.

Leader–follower relationship. All participants believed that their leaders had a positive influence on them. Participants acknowledged that they modeled leader behaviors. One participant emphasized that she learned a lot from her leader by watching how she acted in different situations. Many participants emphasized that their leaders led by example, whereas others observed that they learned more from their leader’s actions than anything else.

Characteristics mentioned frequently by participants in the context of leader modeling were consistent with the behaviors of agapao love and authenticity. Participants believed that the authenticity of their leaders made followers comfortable and highly loyal.

Leaders stressed the importance of building collegial collaborative relationships throughout the institution. Leaders modeled this behavior in their own relationships. These leader behaviors influenced participants to build open and caring relationships with their colleagues. One participant captured the essence of these findings by observing that her leader taught her to quit worrying about herself, listen to people, and show that you’re interested in them.

Leaders were generally supportive of their followers’ needs and served their interests. Leaders nurtured the professional and personal growth of their followers and provided resources for self-development. Leaders encouraged followers to try new things and to take risks. Leaders facilitated follower development through educational opportunities and work place experiences.

Empowerment was an important consideration underlying the interpersonal relationship between the participants and their leaders. Participants were allowed to self-

manage their responsibilities without persistent meddling or micromanaging by their leader. This autonomy provided the freedom to make decisions, fail, learn, grow, and flourish as a valued member of the institutional team. The “unconditional regard” of their leaders allowed the participants to perform their roles with the knowledge that their leader would help them work through problems without fear of reprisal. Leaders recognized the unique abilities of their followers and had a vision for each of them based on those skills and abilities.

Leaders facilitated the evolution of a shared vision with their followers by frequently and consistently communicating the mission and goals of their respective institutions. The leader at Beta College reinforced its mission by her own actions and by encouraging followers to incorporate aspects of that mission into the program, courses, daily activities, and service to others. The leader at Alpha College sought input from her followers concerning the vision and goals of that institution. That leader encouraged and facilitated innovation, a cornerstone of the mission and identity of Alpha College.

The interpersonal relationships of the participants and their leaders were founded upon mutual respect and authentic, trusting, and caring behaviors. These relationships were viewed as collegial rather than one of “boss and subordinate.” The leaders routinely sought opinions and advice from their followers. Participants had no reservations in respectfully questioning the decisions of their leader. Participants believed that they had a responsibility to support their leaders emotionally and professionally. The leader–follower relationships were reciprocal in nature, and leaders were viewed affectionately as “friends” and “colleagues.” The participants described their leaders as role models and mentors.

The participants perceived leader behaviors consistent with the constructs defined by Laub (1999) for servant leaders as discussed previously in the preface. Leaders were influenced by these behaviors through modeling and encouragement as predicted by the literature (Iles et al., 2005; Laub, 1999, 2004; Russell & Stone, 2002). Participants often described follower behaviors that resembled those of their leader. This finding is consistent with Laub's (2004) contention that followers of servant leaders would exhibit the same behaviors as their leader.

The leader–follower relationships perceived by the participants provided insight relevant to the model proposed by Patterson (2003) and Winston (2003). Patterson hypothesized that servant leaders would exhibit agapao love, altruism, and humility. These behaviors, according to Patterson, lead to trust, empowerment, and a vision for the follower that culminates in the service to the follower. The servant leaders in this study exhibited caring and authentic behaviors consistent with agapao love, altruism, and humility. Leaders trusted and empowered their followers and had a vision for each of them. Leaders served their followers with encouraging, supportive behaviors and provided for their needs. The leadership characteristics perceived by the participants are similar to those predicted in the Patterson model.

Winston (2003) contended that the servant leader behaviors predicted by Patterson (2003) would lead to similar follower outcomes and theorized that followers, like their leaders, would exhibit agapao love, leader commitment, and a high degree of self-efficacy. Winston (2003) concluded that these behaviors would in turn create intrinsic motivation, altruism, and service to the leader. The behaviors exhibited by the

followers were consistent with those predicted by Winston (2003) as discussed previously in connection the first research question.

Winston (2003) emphasized that this model of the servant leader–follower relationship is dynamic and circular in nature. Winston (2003) contended that each round of leader–follower interaction will increase or decrease the intensity and strength of the relationship.

The participants repeatedly noted the frequent and reinforcing behaviors inherent in their leader–follower relationship that enhanced vision sharing, growth and development, and collaborative and collegial relationship-building. This illustrates how the leader–follower relationship evolves and intensifies over time to achieve favorable follower–leader outcomes in manner similar to Winston’s (2003) contention.

A limitation of the Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model is its exclusive focus on the leader–follower relationship. As discussed previously, many of the caring and authentic behaviors were described by the participants in the context of their colleagues, students, and others. This outward focus of follower behaviors is not addressed by the Patterson–Winston model. This study suggests that behavior deserves further consideration as the theory of servant-led followership is refined.

The lived experiences of the participants as followers were generally at odds with the heroic leader theories often posited in the literature (Kelley, 1992; Yukl, 1999). The leaders in this study were certainly admired, appreciated, and esteemed for their professional abilities and personal characteristics. The participants, on the other hand, viewed their leaders as colleagues with whom they could collaborate—not all-controlling bosses. These perceptions were consistent with Kelley’s (1992) observations that

exemplary followers desire leaders who create environments where followers can flourish and leaders are “less of a hero and more of a hero maker” (pp. 203, 223). The leaders in this study seemed to share this view by adopting a follower-centric approach consistent with servant leadership where growth, development, and general well-being of individuals are emphasized (Stone et al., 2004).

Peer relationships. The participants valued their relationships with their colleagues and emphasized the genuine caring, trust, authenticity, and mutual respect inherent in these relationships. Participants had the freedom to express themselves openly within their peer group. They appreciated the diversity of ideas and expertise among their colleagues and employed collaborative approaches that capitalized on this diversity to develop innovative solutions and initiatives. Participants were influenced by and grew professionally from the collaboration with their colleagues. One participant acknowledged the importance of these relationships by observing that she and her colleagues respected and trusted each other and collaborated frequently.

The literature suggested that interpersonal relationships among followers significantly influenced their development and other follower outcomes on a personal and collectivist level (Chaleff, 2003; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Kelley, 1992). Laub (1999) contended that relationships among servant-led followers resembled the servant leader–follower relationship and should enhance follower outcomes. Participant observations, similar to the literature, suggested that peer relationships positively influenced follower learning, growth, and how followers function within their roles. The glimpse at peer relationships in this study suggests the need for further research on this aspect of followership theory.

Follower self-development. Participants emphasized that their growth and development was primarily their own responsibility. One participant noted that her pursuit of a terminal degree was her personal decision based on her high regard for personal development and education. Others echoed this view by emphasizing their strong belief that learning and professional growth is a responsibility of every follower to assure not only their own development, but also the success of the organization. Participants were given considerable freedom to grow by their institutions. Leaders encouraged and nurtured that growth.

Yukl (2006) observed that followers should be encouraged to develop self-management behaviors including self-development. Kelley (1992) and Chaleff (2003) suggested that exemplary followers should assume the responsibility for their own development, self-assessment, and growth. Recent literature on authentic followership encouraged follower self-development through self-awareness, unbiased processing, and human actualization (Gardner et al., 2005; Iles et al., 2005). The participants exhibited authentic behaviors conducive to effective growth and development and consciously assumed responsibility for their own development, consistent with exemplary followership.

Laub (1999) suggested that servant leaders have a responsibility to develop their followers. The participants observed this characteristic in their leaders, but also independently assumed the responsibility for their own self-development. The participants' willingness to undertake their own development is different in emphasis from Laub's (1999) implied suggestion that leaders transform their subordinates into effective followers. The participants' observations seem more consistent with the

contention that follower outcomes improve when development and growth is accomplished through the follower's own initiatives (Kelley, 1992; Chaleff, 2003; Yukl, 2006). The literature on servant leadership largely ignores this consideration, and the findings in this study suggest that further study of self-development behaviors and influences is warranted to fill this void.

Do Servant-led Followers Adopt Servant Leadership Characteristics of Their Leader?

The participants understood the differences between their follower and leader roles and knew when it was appropriate to assume each role. Participants were comfortable in assuming leadership roles and described their leadership styles in a manner consistent with the constructs of servant leadership. Caring behaviors were again emphasized as the cornerstone of their relationships with their own followers. Participants also valued honesty, integrity, respect, and trust in their relationships with their followers. Service and support to those they led was important to the participants. Participants empowered their followers and encouraged them to grow, develop professionally, take chances, fail, and learn from their experiences.

One participant in this study was not only a follower, but was also the leader of another participant. The leadership style of this participant was described very similarly to the observations made by the participants with respect to other leaders. The follower of this participant specifically emphasized the "authenticity" of her leader and the caring behaviors she exhibited. This follower also stressed her leader's support and encouragement for her personal well-being and professional development and growth. It is noteworthy that the participant was in her leadership position prior to the arrival of her own leader who was also a focus of this study. The findings did not address how this

participant's leadership behaviors were developed, but her current leader was probably not a primary influence under these circumstances.

Laub (1999) believed that servant leaders would develop other servant leaders. The concept of a servant organization is premised on the presence of servant leaders throughout the organization. The findings in this study support Laub's (1999) contention. A question that remains unresolved is the processes that lead to the development of these leadership styles. Many participants believed that their own leader influenced their development as a servant leader through modeling, encouragement, and affirmation. The findings also suggest that servant leadership behaviors were developed by some participants prior to the arrival of the current leader. This finding tends to imply that other processes, such as those related to collectivist concepts or peer relationships, may contribute to the development of servant leadership behaviors. These considerations warrant further study.

What is the Meaning of Followership as Defined by the Followers of Servant Leaders?

When the participants were asked about their experience as a follower, they hesitated, as if to ask, "Me? A follower?" Participants did not react in this manner because they disliked being labeled as a follower. Participants, in fact, believed that the follower role significantly contributed to the success of the organization. The participants simply saw themselves primarily as leaders who, at times, assumed a follower role.

The importance of followership was not lost on the participants, despite their preference for their leadership role. One participant observed that leaders were simply the lighthouse and, without followers, the leader would be nothing. This participant concluded that followers, rather than leaders, were most important to an organization

because they performed the functions that continued the legacy of the institution. All of the other participants acknowledged that neither the leader nor the organization would be viable without effective followership. The participants' views in general were consistent with Kelley's (1992) contention that the success of an institution is based more on the contributions of followers than those of its leaders.

The followership role defined by the participants was also more expansive than the traditional view that passive followers depend on guidance from their heroic leader. Participants, in contrast, had no reservations about giving advice to their leader or providing a "listening ear." The leaders often sought this advice. Participants believed they could question the opinions of their leaders when they disagreed, but also understood they had a responsibility to support their leader's final decision even if they disagreed. Participants also viewed their followership role as one where supportiveness is extended to, rather than received from, the leader. The participants did not limit this support to professional matters, but were also extended this behavior to the leader's personal and emotional needs. One participant noted that she supported her leader in an emotional way by being a "cheerleader" for and on behalf of her leader.

Participants recognized that they had a responsibility as followers to understand the "bigger vision" of their institution and act as an advocate to accomplish that vision. Several participants similarly emphasized they had a responsibility to present a positive image of their institution and its mission. The participants generally viewed their role as paramount in actualizing the attainment of the institutional mission and vision. The consistent focus on implementation of the mission of the institution was yet another way followers contributed to the success of the organization according to the participants.

The participants realized that an essential aspect of followership is performing the responsibilities assigned to them by their leader. Participants were given the freedom to perform these responsibilities without meddling by their leader. One participant described this empowerment by explaining that her leader chose people she trusts and then trusts that they will capably perform their roles. The participants expected this level of self-management. One participant frankly stated that she liked to be able to do what she wanted because she knew what was needed to perform her role.

The participants believed that their roles were not static and emphasized their responsibility to embrace change and pursue innovative ideas. One participant emphasized that every individual had a responsibility to have a spirit of wanting to learn and wanting to imagine something better. Another participant observed that innovation starts with the people who strive to look for unique and innovative ways to do their jobs. She then explained that people have stayed at her institution because they were fascinated with being able to approach their jobs in nontraditional and innovative ways. Participants fully embraced the redefining of their roles through innovative solutions that improved their effectiveness and contributed to the success of their institutions.

The participants, as followers, did not focus their behavior exclusively, or even primarily, on their leaders. Participants, to the contrary, believed they had responsibilities to others that ranged from collaborative initiatives with their colleagues to serving and caring for the needs of their peers, students, and the greater community. One participant illustrated this attitude by observing that people in her institution sought each other to collaborate and sometimes just to check and see how the other is feeling. She concluded that everybody affects everybody. This outward view of followership created an

environment that was neither leader-centric nor leaderless, where leaders and followers alike appreciated the strengths of others, sought each other's advice, and most importantly in the view of participants, cared and served others regardless of status.

The participants' views of followership were influenced by another important observation repeatedly made—that followership and leadership are simply roles and not static positions. Participants could articulate and distinguish between their respective roles as follower and leader and understood the importance of each role. Participants were comfortable shifting between the two roles when the situation required. One participant even observed that even the dean at her college, who was widely recognized as the leader, sometimes needed to function as a follower. Participants did not define themselves as either a follower or leader, but instead conceptualized these ideas as valuable roles that each of them performed at various times in the institution.

These follower experiences are only partially described in the literature. Both Winston (2003) and Kelley (1992) delineated some of the follower behaviors identified by the participants. Laub (1999, 2004) believed that servant-led followers would exhibit the characteristics of servant leaders consistent with the observations of the participants. Kelley (1992) contended that effective followers want leaders to view them as partners in shaping the enterprise, an expectation often expressed by the participants. Kelley (1992) and Laub (2004), like the participants, observed that followers and leaders are often the same people performing provisional roles rather than positional obligations. None of this literature, however, fully captured the depth and richness of the follower experiences expressed by the participants.

Participants blurred the line between leader and follower altogether. Their leaders were described as colleagues, friends, and even followers at various times. Participants conversely conceptualized their own function more often as leader rather than follower. These attitudes did not reflect a lack of respect or admiration for their leaders. Participants made it abundantly clear that the opposite was true. These attitudes also were not indicative of the participant's negative view of followership. Participants, to the contrary, readily accepted this role and understood its importance. What participants seemed to articulate was quite different and involved a collaborative dance in which leader–follower roles were less important than achieving some greater purpose or good for those participating and the institution as a whole. That dance seemed to be the essence of servant-led followership that emerged from the lived experiences of the participants.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*It's the group sound that's important,
even when you're playing a solo.
You not only have to know your own instrument,
you must know the others and how to back them up at all times.
That's jazz.*

Oscar Peterson

Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and limitations of the study and offers recommendations for future research based on the findings of the study. The purpose of this study was to examine the follower experiences of five nursing educators led by servant leaders in two institutions of higher education. Further understanding of servant-led followership assists servant leaders and followers to attain effective followership, helps leaders to refine their leadership skills from the perspective of the follower, and provides strategies for an enhanced follower–leader relationship. The findings of this study provide those who are engaged in higher education with a new perspective on the roles that leaders, administrators, faculty, and other stakeholders play within the institution. Equally important is the contribution these findings make to the limited literature on followership, specifically servant-led followers and the theory of servant leader–follower behavior.

I used an interpretive approach for this qualitative study which included interviewing 5 female participants who were educators at two colleges of nursing in the midwestern United States. During each of the three 1-hour individual interviews, the 5 participants were asked to share verbal descriptions about their experience of being led by a servant leader. These experiences were discussed in relation to the research

questions for this study consisting of how participants described their leader; how they described themselves as followers and leaders; how their roles and behaviors were influenced by their leader, colleagues, and the institution in which they worked; and how they defined the meaning of followership.

The participants' thick, rich descriptions of their experiences facilitated understanding of the meaning of servant-led followership. The findings from this study are summarized below. Application to practice for leaders and followers will be presented. The transferability of the study will then be discussed, followed by recommendations for future study.

Summary of Findings

Perceptions of Servant Leadership

I chose the servant leaders for this study based on the knowledge I had of them as leaders. The leaders were experienced nurse educators who had served the profession of nursing beyond their current leadership positions. They consistently demonstrated Laub's (1999) servant leader constructs in their interactions with nursing professionals. Participants agreed with my assessment prior to the interviews.

During the interviews, the participants described their leaders as caring, open, and respectful individuals who possessed a high degree of trust, honesty, and integrity. The leaders empowered their followers and allowed them to fail and then learn from their mistakes. They had a vision for their followers and encouraged professional and personal development and growth. Leaders stressed community building and collegial relationships within their institutions. Participants and their leaders shared a vision of the

mission and goals of the institution. The participants' observations of their leaders were consistent with servant leader constructs proposed by Laub (1999) and Patterson (2003).

The Follower Experience

Commitment to the leader. All participants were unequivocally committed to their leaders. Their commitment extended to the organization. Participants generally believed that they would remain committed to their institution, even if their leader left.

Caring and trusting behaviors. Caring, trusting, and respectful behaviors were frequently expressed by participants in describing themselves and their colleagues. The participants focused these caring behaviors not only on their leader, but also on their colleagues and others.

Honesty and integrity. Honesty, integrity, and openness were core values of each participant. Authentic behaviors were an important foundation for relationships formed by the participants with their leaders, colleagues, and students.

Freedom to self-manage. Participants expected and received a high level of empowerment from their leader and valued their ability to self-manage their work without leader interference.

Freedom to think and learn. Participants exercised and valued their ability to think, learn, and act independently without the fear of reprisal, even when mistakes were made.

Freedom to grow. The personal and professional growth and development of participants was encouraged and facilitated by leaders and colleagues. Participants took responsibility for their self-development and pursued opportunities to learn and grow.

Service. Each participant viewed service as an important value and a common expectation in their institution. Participants served their leader, but placed primary importance on serving their colleagues, students, and the community-at-large.

Innovation and change. Participants embraced change and innovation and were allowed to take risks and pursue innovative solutions. Participants at Alpha College had a “high tolerance for ambiguity” that facilitated the innovative culture at their institution. These findings challenge current literature that claimed that servant leadership is more appropriate for stable organizations than institutions constantly dealing with change. (Smith et al., 2004).

Shared mission and vision. Participants and their leaders shared and supported a common institutional mission and vision. The mission of Beta College was embedded in its culture, whereas the goals at Alpha College were developed in a visioning process involving leaders and followers. The institutional mission was communicated frequently and consistently by leaders and actualized by participants.

Comprehensive observations. Participants exhibited characteristics consistent with exemplary followership, consisting of self-management, independent thinking and learning, authenticity, leader and institutional commitment, agapao love, and service. (Avolio et al., 2004; Bennis, 1999; Iles et al., 2005; Kelley, 1992; Winston, 2003). Participant behaviors were congruent with the constructs of the Winston (2003) model for servant-led followers. The Winston (2003) model, however, neither fully incorporated the participant behaviors of authenticity, self-management, and innovation nor contemplated that participant behaviors were primarily outward to colleagues, students, and the

community-at-large rather than leader-centric. These considerations warrant further attention in building the theory of servant-led followership.

Leader–follower Relationship

Leader modeling. The participants were influenced positively by behaviors role modeled by the leader. Behaviors frequently mentioned in this context were consistent with descriptions of agapao love and authenticity. Leaders stressed the importance of collegial, collaborative relationships and modeled this behavior in their own relationships.

Leader encouragement and affirmation. Leaders encouraged professional and personal growth of followers and provided resources for self-development through educational and work place opportunities. Leaders urged followers to try new things and take risks. Leaders encouraged actualization of the institutional mission with frequent and consistent communication with followers. Leaders were supportive of followers' needs and served their interests.

Empowerment and unconditional regard. Leaders empowered their followers to self-manage their roles. Leaders exhibited an “unconditional regard” that allowed participants to perform their roles with the knowledge that their leader would help them work through problems without fear of reprisal.

Interpersonal relationship. The participants and their leaders formed relationships founded upon mutual respect, authenticity, trust, and caring behaviors that enhanced growth, development, and vision sharing. Leaders and followers supported each other emotionally and professionally. Leaders sought advice from participants who, in turn,

were willing to question the decisions of their leader. Leaders had a vision for each follower based on the follower's unique abilities.

Comprehensive observations. Behaviors congruent with agapao love, trust, altruism, and authenticity were inherent in the leader–follower relationships described by participants. Leaders empowered followers and had a vision for them. Followers were intrinsically motivated and committed to their leaders. Leaders and followers supported and served each other's needs. These findings are consistent with the Patterson–Winston (Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2003) model on servant leader–follower relationships.

Participants viewed their leaders as colleagues with whom they could collaborate. Leaders were follower-centric where growth, development, and the general well-being of individuals are emphasized. These relationships were consistent with the leader–follower relationships advocated by Kelley (1992) for exemplary followers and Stone et al. (2004) for servant leader–follower relationships.

Non-leader Influences on Followers

Peer relationships. The participants experienced genuine caring, trust, authenticity, and mutual respect in relationships with their colleagues. They valued the diversity of ideas and expertise of their colleagues and collaborated with them to develop innovative solutions and initiatives. The participants believed that peer relationships positively influenced their learning, growth, and ability to function in their roles, as suggested by the literature (Chaleff, 2003; Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995; Kelley, 1992). The study of peer relationships is nearly nonexistent for servant-led followers.

Follower self-development. The participants took responsibility for their personal and professional self-development and valued the high degree of independent thought

and learning permitted and encouraged by their leader and peers. The importance of follower self-development has been suggested in the literature (Chaleff, 2003; Kelley, 1992; Yukl, 2006), but has not been studied with respect to servant-led followers.

Collectivist influences. The participants described their institutions as “communities” and identified collaborative relationships, trust, authenticity, service, and caring as core values of each institution. The participants at Beta College were strongly influenced by the mission embedded in their institutional culture. The participants at Alpha College were equally influenced by the caring and authentic values and innovation attributed to their institutional culture. They exhibited behaviors predicted by collectivist theories, including cooperation, collective action, and innovation (Gardner et al., 2005; Haslam et al., 2003; Rupp & Cropanzano, 2002; Wayne et al., 1997). Participant observations were similar to the concepts of community building and servant organizations described in servant leadership literature by Laub (1999) and Spears (1995). Collectivist concepts, however, have not been integrated into the theory of servant-led followership.

Demographic considerations. This study included a large public institution as well as a small religiously affiliated college. The participants from both institutions exhibited similar follower characteristics, particularly with respect to authenticity, self-management, and caring and serving behaviors. The secular institution embraced change and strongly encouraged innovation. These findings address a void in the literature identified by Winston (2004) and suggest that follower behaviors do not vary significantly in secular and religious institutions led by servant leaders.

Dual Roles as Leader and Follower

Role as leader. The participants had dual roles as leader and follower at their institutions. They saw themselves primarily as leaders, but believed their follower role was important and significantly contributed to the success of the organization.

Leadership characteristics of participants. The participants exhibited the characteristics of a servant leader in performing their leadership role. This finding is consistent with Laub's (1999) contention that servant leaders would develop other servant leaders.

Provisional role shifting. The participants understood that followership and leadership are roles and not static positions. They could define their respective roles as follower and leader and were comfortable shifting between the two roles when the situation required. They believed that each role was important. These findings are consistent with the observations of Kelley (1988) and Laub (2004) that followers and leaders are often the same people in provisional roles that are performed as circumstances dictate.

The Meaning of Servant-led Followership

The literature does not fully capture the thick, rich descriptions by the participants regarding their experiences as a servant-led follower. The participants never drew a distinct line between leadership and followership. They believed that both roles carried a responsibility to listen, give advice, and support leaders and followers alike. This attitude did not reflect a lack of respect for their leaders or a negative view of followership. The participants valued their leaders and appreciated the importance of effective followership. They instead believed that leader-follower roles were less important than collaboratively

achieving some greater purpose or good for colleagues, students, and the institution as a whole. This collaborative effort to accomplish some greater purpose was the essence of servant-led followership that emerged from the lived experiences of the participants.

Application to Practice

The focus of this study was on followers of servant leaders. A number of findings in this study have significant application to the practice of followership *and* leadership in institutions of higher education. Participants easily assumed both leadership and followership roles in the organization. This finding suggests that members of an institutional team must understand when and how to effectively perform each role.

Another finding that transcends follower–leader roles is the importance of developing interpersonal relationships founded on caring, trustful, and authentic behaviors. Leaders and followers should promote, model, and develop these behaviors when dealing with individuals at all levels of the institution. These behaviors similarly shape the institutional culture in a beneficial manner when consistently exhibited by members of the institutional team.

The follower role requires personal initiative to develop and practice self-management skills as well as independent critical thinking and learning. Followers should enhance these abilities by taking responsibility to pursue self-development opportunities. They should be sensitive to their leader’s needs. Followers should promote the creation of an environment in which they feel comfortable questioning their leader. Followers should contribute to the development of an institutional vision and support the realization of that vision in the institution and in the community.

It is important that leaders recognize the value of attracting and developing exemplary followers. The development of effective followership in an organization requires leaders to support a high level of empowerment for their followers. Leaders should provide the resources needed to develop exemplary followers and model the caring-authentic behaviors that are important to all interpersonal relationships within the institution. Leaders can further facilitate effective followership by encouraging followers to take risks without fear of reprisal. The development of a shared vision and objectives by leaders is essential to exemplary followership. Collegial interactions that minimize superior-subordinate roles enhance leader-follower relationships that exhibit the highest level of effectiveness.

Transferability of the Study

All 5 participants of this study were Caucasian females who were educators at one of two midwestern institutions of higher education offering a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree. The selected servant leaders and 4 of the 5 participants were Registered Nurses. It is possible that the gender, professional background, and experience of the participants in a health care education setting may have influenced their perception of the importance of communication and relationships in working with others. The lack of racial and ethnic diversity among participants may also have an impact on the transferability of the study findings.

Although the researcher's engagement with each participant was 3 months, the actual interview time was only 3 hours with each of the 5 participants over that prolonged period of time. Due to the small number of participants, their concentrated health care professional educator focus, and the limited engagement and interview time with each

participant, the findings may not be transferable to followers of servant leaders in other nursing programs, other institutions of higher education, or followers in the population as a whole.

Recommendations for Future Research

Seven recommendations for future research emerged from the conclusion of findings from the study. Those recommendations will be discussed next.

Outward Caring and Service

The caring and service behaviors discussed by the participants of this study did not exist solely between the leader and the follower. The participants noted that these behaviors extended beyond the leader–follower dyad to colleagues, students, and beyond to the community. Current research does not address this phenomenon. Future research is needed to examine the caring relationship and service patterns of servant-led followers.

Authenticity of Servant-led Followers

The participants believed that authentic behaviors were an important aspect of the relationships they formed with their leaders and followers. Current research on servant-led followership does not fully explain the nature, extent, and implications of the authentic behaviors of servant-led followers or the importance of this behavior on the servant leader–follower relationship. Future research is needed to examine the relationship between authentic behavior and led followership and the implications of authenticity in the theoretical framework of the servant-leader/follower relationship.

Self-management Behaviors of Servant-led Followers

The participants in this study described self-management behaviors that were frequently attributed to servant-led followers. Winston (2003) predicted that servant-led

followers would possess a high degree of self-efficacy or belief that they are capable of accomplishing assigned tasks. The concept of self-management is related to self-efficacy but is broader in scope and encompasses the follower's ability to think independently, undertake self-development, take initiative, and exercise control over and take responsibility for actions with little supervision (Kelley, 1992). Current research does not fully explore the implications of self-management behaviors by servant-led followers. Future research is needed to fully explore the substance and extent of self-management behaviors of servant-led followers.

Interpersonal Relationships Among Followers of Servant Leaders

The initial purpose of this study was to examine the follower experiences of five nursing educators who were led by servant leaders in two institutions of higher education. Not only did the followers talk about their relationship with the leader, but they also shared experiences of their relationships with their colleagues. Many of those peer relationships were a reflection of how their leader interacted with them as followers, but many more experiences appeared to be independent of that leader-follower influence. The current literature does not address the dynamics of this three-dimensional leader-follower-peer relationship, which warrants future study.

Collectivist Impact on Servant-led Followers

An important finding of this study was that the culture of the institutions seemed to have a significant influence on the follower experiences reported in this study. Numerous unanswered questions remain for future research regarding servant-led followers. Was the culture established prior to the time the servant leader arrived, or how

does the servant leader influence the culture of the institution? How do followers impact the culture of an institution?

Compelling Drive for Innovation

The participants in both institutions expressed a compelling drive for personal, professional, and institutional innovation. They felt that innovation was the key to the longevity of their institution. Each of the participants took responsibility for her personal and professional growth whether it be additional education or volunteering for growth opportunities in her institution and the community. They received consistent support and encouragement from their servant leader for their efforts. Smith et al. (2004) contended that more static environments are more appropriate environments for servant leaders, which was not the case for this study. Further study is indicated to determine servant-led follower experiences in static as well as dynamic institutions.

Provisional Role Shifting

Participants were comfortable with the provisional nature of their leader and follower roles and understood when it was appropriate to perform each role. The behaviors described by participants for each role were often indistinguishable, and leader and follower constructs were frequently interchangeable. Current literature is leader-centric, does not typically consider follower behaviors at all, and has not fully examined the leader and follower roles commonly assumed by the same individual or the different behaviors needed to perform each role effectively. Further study of this provisional nature of leadership and followership as well as the behaviors inherent in each role is warranted.

Conclusion

Institutions of higher education face a growing number of complex issues that necessitate new and innovative solutions. Creative leadership is needed to address these issues, but leadership alone is not enough to adequately confront these challenges. The unique approaches required to survive, and even thrive, in this changing environment cannot be developed without the contributions of highly committed and empowered followers. Acknowledgement of the importance of effective followership rarely appears in the literature. The contributions made by followers to the success of an institution are not well understood. This study has filled some of that void by describing the lived experiences of servant-led followers in institutions of higher education.

The participants in this study portrayed followership in a vastly different way than the descriptions traditionally found in the literature. These servant-led educators were fully empowered and capable of self-managing their roles effectively. Relationships with colleagues were founded on caring, respectful, and authentic behaviors. Followers valued their colleagues for their unique abilities and frequently joined them in cooperative efforts that incorporated the unique contributions of each person involved. These joint initiatives were often innovative and strengthened the institution as a whole.

The idea of heroic leadership was not shared by the participants in this study. The rejection of this traditional view did not engender a lack of respect for their leaders. To the contrary, the participants viewed their leaders as mentors and were influenced by the authentic-caring behaviors their leaders consistently modeled. The participants' departure from the heroic leadership model was based on their view that the leader–follower relationship should be collegial rather than one of superior-to-subordinate and reciprocal

rather than one of dominance and dependence. Advice was given as well as received, and support was provided and returned on an emotional and professional level. This open, caring relationship created a high degree of trust and commitment among the servant leaders and followers, resulting in a genuine sense of empowerment for all involved.

The participant's view of followership was influenced by their realization that leadership and followership were provisional roles—not positions. Participants served both as leaders and followers and believed that each role was important. They understood when each role was appropriate. Despite this understanding, the participants placed less meaning on leader–follower roles than on the quality of relationships they formed. The roles being played in these relationships were secondary in importance.

Paramount to the participants was being a member of an institutional team in which each person is valued by others for his/her unique strengths and contributions. This overarching attitude promoted collaborative partnering among colleagues whereby the ideas of those involved were encouraged and openly considered. This ability to uniquely mesh the personal strengths and views of the collaborative team led to innovative initiatives and solutions that transcended the individual contributions of team members. Participants strongly believed that these collective endeavors achieved the mission of their institutions by serving some greater purpose for the students, their colleagues, and the community-at-large. These achievements were far more important to participants than focusing on leader–follower distinctions

What does it mean to be a follower who is led by a servant leader? For the five nursing educators in this study, it means working in an institution where collegial relationships create a strong community. It means caring, authentic relationships founded

on a high degree of trust, honesty, and integrity. It means serving others within the institution and the greater community, not just the leader. It means empowerment of followers by leaders and an abundance of opportunities for followers to learn and grow. It means an expectation for excellence whereby followers take risks and pursue innovative solutions. The orchestration of a servant-led institution is not the responsibility of the leader–conductor alone. It consists of a committed cadre of exemplary followers who play every part—including second fiddle—with purpose and enthusiasm.

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APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: **Second Fiddle? An Interpretive Study of Followers of
Servant Leaders**

Investigators: Shirley Beaver, Ph.D.c, R.N., C.N.A.A.

This is a research study. Please take your time in deciding if you would like to participate. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to learn about nursing faculty followers who are led, or have been led, by a servant leader. This information will contribute to the available research on servant-led followers and to servant leader theory. You are being invited to participate in this study because you are a full-time or part-time nursing faculty member at a college that offers a BSN degree or above and have indicated that you are, or have been supervised by a leader who demonstrates servant leadership constructs.

DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your participation will last for three months and will involve your participation in three interviews each lasting 30-60 minutes. The interviews will be conducted at your place of employment. During the study you may expect the following study procedures to be followed:

1. Sign the informed consent form.
2. Participate in three 30-60 minute interviews with the researcher regarding your experiences as the follower of a servant leader. The interview will be held at your place of employment.
3. The interviews will be audio taped. The audio tapes will be destroyed on June 30, 2008.
4. You may skip any interview question that you do not wish to answer or that makes you feel uncomfortable.
5. Pseudonyms will be used for your name, the name of your leader, and the name of your college.
6. You will be asked to review the transcripts and researcher-designated themes of the content of your interviews as a method of assuring the authenticity of the interview.
7. All interview and survey data will be kept on a password-protected computer and will be destroyed on June 30, 2008.

RISKS

While participating in this study you may experience the following risks: There are no foreseeable risks at this time from participating in this study.

BENEFITS

If you decide to participate in this study there may be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained in this study will benefit society by providing valuable information about followers of servant leaders, therefore advancing servant leadership theory.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

Not applicable for this study.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION

You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time. If you decide to not participate in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

RESEARCH INJURY

Not applicable for this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken. Participants in the study will be assigned a unique code and letter and will be used on all forms instead of your name. Identifiers will be kept separate from the data. The researcher will have access to the data which will be kept confidential in a file cabinet in

my home and on password protected computer files. All data and audio tapes will be destroyed on June 30, 2008. If the results are published, your identity will remain confidential.

QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study.

- For further information about the study contact Shirley Beaver at sbeaver@mercydesmoines.org or by phone at 515-643-6615 or Dr. Dan Robinson at dcr@iastate.edu or by phone at 515-294-8182.
- If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Diane Ament, Director, Office of Research Assurances (515) 294-3115, dament@iastate.edu.

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant's Name (printed) _____

(Participant's Signature)

(Date)

INVESTIGATOR STATEMENT

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to read and learn about the study and all of their questions have been answered. It is my opinion that the participant understands the purpose, risks, benefits and the procedures that will be followed in this study and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

(Signature of Person Obtaining
Informed Consent)

(Date)

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview Guide #1

Introductions

Review/Sign Informed Consent Form

1. What is your educational background?
2. How long have you been in nursing?
3. How long have you been in nursing education?
4. What is your role in the organization?
5. What are your responsibilities in this position?
6. What is your title/rank in the organization?
7. Describe the organization in which you work.
8. What do you like about this organization?
9. What would you change about the organization?
10. What are you *able* to change in this organization?
11. Tell me about the people with whom you work.
12. What people influence you the most in this organization?
13. In what way do those people influence you?
14. What people do *you* influence in the organization?
15. Describe the level of honesty and frankness in your interpersonal relationships with your colleagues.
16. Describe your relationship with your leader.
17. What would you do if she left the organization?

Interview Guide #2

1. Describe your personal characteristics in the context of this organization.
2. How would your peers describe you as a colleague in this organization?
3. How would your leader describe you?
4. How do people treat each other in this organization?
5. How do you treat people in this organization?
6. How does your leader treat you in this organization?
7. Describe the importance of service to others in the context of your role?
8. Describe your responsibility for professional development and performance in this organization?
9. How do you employ critical thinking in your role?
10. What are your core values that guide your personal and professional life?
11. How do your core values compare to the values of this organization?
12. Does this organization shape the values of its people or do the people shape the values of the organization?
13. During our last interview you spoke of the empowerment you are given in your role. Is it important to you to be empowered? Do you feel comfortable being empowered?
14. When you disagree with a colleague in the organization, how do you handle the situation? With the leader?
15. You did or did not mention _____ earlier. Describe the level of _____ in this organization, both among your peers, and with your leader.
 - *Caring/Love*
 - *Trust*
 - *Integrity*
 - *Independent Thinking/Learning*
 - *Self Management*
 - *Commitment*
16. Describe the decision making process in this organization.
17. Describe the visioning process in this organization.

Interview Guide #3

1. What is your perception of your role as a follower?
2. What are your responsibilities to the organization as a follower?
3. What are your responsibilities to the leader as a follower?
4. Describe how your leader views you as a follower.
5. Do you feel comfortable being viewed as a follower?
6. How does your leader facilitate your role as a follower?
7. Describe how others facilitate your role as a follower
8. Describe how the organization facilitates your role as a follower.
9. Describe whether you view yourself as a follower, a leader, or both.
10. How does your leader influence your role when you are leading others?
11. What comes to mind when you think about your leader?
12. Describe your relationship with your leader.
13. Does your leader have a vision for you? How do you know that?
14. How do you develop your personal goals and vision for the organization?
15. Are these goals and visions shared by your leader and others in the organization?
16. How does your leader influence group growth, including psychological well-being and development of group members?
17. How does your leader display her personal values? The values of the organization?
18. How are the goals and vision of the organization communicated to you?
19. You have mentioned that innovation is a value in this organization. How is this value developed and sustained in the organization?
20. Is there anything else that you would like me to know about your organization?

APPENDIX C
LETTER TO DEAN

928 6th Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Current Date

Name, Dean of Nursing
Address
City/State/Zip

Dear (Name), Dean of Nursing,

My name is Shirley Beaver. I am currently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program at Iowa State University. My dissertation, entitled *Second Fiddle? An Interpretive Study of Followers of Servant Leaders* was approved by the Iowa State University Institutional Review Board on March 28, 2007. The next step is to contact the Deans of Nursing at the participating colleges to request access to possible participants for the study.

Individuals who qualify to participate in the study are part-time and full-time nursing faculty who are employed by your college. These individuals will be asked if they have ever been supervised by a leader who exhibits leader constructs listed on the attached page. If they respond that they have, and are willing to participate in the study, they will be asked to participate in three interviews about their experience as a follower of a servant leader. Each interview will last 30-60 minutes and will be scheduled and take place at the participant's place of employment. Survey data will remain anonymous and will be reported in aggregate.

I have attached the letter to be sent to potential participants and informed consent form for your review. I am asking if you are willing to release names and e-mail addresses of the nursing faculty in your institution. If so, potential participants will be sent the attached letter, consent form, and self-addressed return envelope.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Shirley Beaver

Leadership is...	
<p>an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization.</p>	
My Leader...	
Values People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By believing in people • By serving other's needs before his or her own • By receptive, non-judgmental listening
Develops People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing opportunities for learning and growth • By modeling appropriate behavior • By building up others through encouragement and affirmation.
Builds Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By building strong personal relationships • By working collaboratively with others • By valuing the differences of others
Displays Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By being open and accountable to others • By a willingness to learn from others • By maintaining integrity and trust
Provides Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By envisioning the future • By taking initiative • By clarifying goals
Shares Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By facilitating a shared vision • By sharing power and releasing control • By sharing status and promoting others

APPENDIX D
LETTER TO PARTICIPANT

928 6th Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Current Date

Name
Address
City/State/Zip

Dear (Name),

My name is Shirley Beaver. I am currently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program at Iowa State University. My dissertation entitled *Second Fiddle? An Interpretive Study of Followers of Servant Leaders* was approved by the Iowa State University Institutional Review Board on March 28, 2007. Your name and e-mail address was given to me by the Dean/Director of the Nursing education program for which you teach.

Since you are a part-time or full-time nursing faculty member at COLLEGE NAME, you are initially eligible to participate in the study. If you have ever been supervised by a leader (the person who currently does or has done your performance appraisal in the past) who exhibits the constructs listed on the attached page, I am interested in talking with you about your experience of being led by this person. If you are willing to participate in the study, you will be asked to participate in three separate interviews about your experience as a follower of this leader. The interviews will each last 30-60 minutes, will be scheduled at your convenience, and will take place at your place of employment. The survey data will remain anonymous and will be reported in aggregate.

If you have be led by a leader who exhibits these constructs and are interested in participating in this important research, please contact me by e-mail at sbeaver@mercydesmoines.org by DATE. My telephone number is 515-643-6615 if you have questions regarding the study or your eligibility. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Shirley Beaver

Leadership is...	
<p>an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization.</p>	
My Leader...	
Values People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By believing in people • By serving other's needs before his or her own • By receptive, non-judgmental listening
Develops People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By providing opportunities for learning and growth • By modeling appropriate behavior • By building up others through encouragement and affirmation.
Builds Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By building strong personal relationships • By working collaboratively with others • By valuing the differences of others
Displays Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By being open and accountable to others • By a willingness to learn from others • By maintaining integrity and trust
Provides Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By envisioning the future • By taking initiative • By clarifying goals
Shares Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By facilitating a shared vision • By sharing power and releasing control • By sharing status and promoting others

APPENDIX E
PERMISSION LETTERS

January 6, 2008

Robert E. Kelley, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor
Tepper School of Business
Carnegie Mellon University
5000 Forbes Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

Dear Dr. Kelley,

My name is Shirley Beaver. I am currently a doctoral student pursuing my PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University. I plan to graduate in May, 2008.

I am currently writing my dissertation, entitled *Second Fiddle? An Interpretive Study of Followership Styles* grid in my review of literature. I retrieved the grid from:

Kelley, R. E. (1992). *The power of followership: How to create leaders people want to follow and followers who lead themselves*. New York: Doubleday.

Your research on followership has been very inspirational to me as I conduct my qualitative research on followers of servant leaders. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Shirley Beaver, PhDC, RN, CNA-A
Dean of Nursing
Mercy College of Health Sciences
928 6th Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

From: Robert Kelley [rk2n@andrew.cmu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2008 3:13 PM
To: Beaver, Shirley; kelley@cmu.edu
Subject: Re: Permission

Shirley,

Thanks for your note and kind words about my work. I did my undergrad at Drake so I have a fond spot in my heart for Iowans.

You have my permission to use my grid on page 97 from my book "The Power of Followership" for use in your dissertation. This is a one time permission.

My policy is that academic researchers can use my material without cost. Should you want to use it for any other purpose, you need to contact me again. Also, please send me a copy of your results when you have them.

Best wishes on your research.

Robert Kelley
Tepper School of Business
Carnegie Mellon University

January 6, 2008

Dean Jim Laub, Ed.D.
The MacArthur School of Leadership
Okeechobee Hall, 2nd Floor
Palm Beach Atlantic University
901 S. Flagler Drive
West Palm Beach, Florida 33401

Dear Dr. Laub,

My name is Shirley Beaver. I am currently a doctoral student pursuing my PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University. I plan to graduate in May, 2008.

I am currently writing my dissertation, entitled *Second Fiddle? An Interpretive Study of Followers of Servant Leaders*. I am writing to ask your permission to include your Servant Leadership and Servant Organization Model in my review of literature. I retrieved the model from:

Laub, J. A. (1999). Assessing the servant organization: Development of the organizational leadership assessment (OLA) instrument. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60 (02), 308A. (UMI No. 9921922)

Your research on servant leadership has been very inspirational to me as I conduct my qualitative research on followers of servant leaders. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Shirley Beaver, PhDc, RN, CNA-A
Dean of Nursing
Mercy College of Health Sciences
928 6th Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

From: JIM LAUB [JIM_Laub@pba.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2008 4:18 PM
To: Beaver, Shirley
Subject: RE: Permission

Shirley – I would welcome you using the OLA servant leadership model in your dissertation literature review. You can also check out the website www.olagroup.com for additional information on the model and the instrument. The Research tab has about 30 dissertations listed that have utilized the OLA – that may be of some use for you. I wish you well with your study.

Jim Laub, Ed.D.
OLAgrouP
5345 SE Jennings Lane
Stuart, FL 34997
561-379-6010
olagroup@comcast.net
www.olagroup.com

January 6, 2008

Assistant Professor Kathleen A. Patterson, Ph.D.
School of Global Leadership and Entrepreneurship
Regent University, CRB 257
1000 Regent University Drive
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23464

Dear Dr. Patterson,

My name is Shirley Beaver. I am currently a doctoral student pursuing my PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University. I plan to graduate in May, 2008.

I am currently writing my dissertation, entitled *Second Fiddle? An Interpretive Study of Followers of Servant Leaders*. I am writing to ask your permission to include your Servant Leadership Model in my review of literature. I plan to use it as part of Winston's Extension of the Patterson Model. I retrieved your model from:

Patterson, K. (2004). Servant leadership: A theoretical model. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable*.

Your research on servant leadership has been very inspirational to me as I conduct my qualitative research on followers of servant leaders. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Shirley Beaver, PhDc, RN, CNA-A
Dean of Nursing
Mercy College of Health Sciences
928 6th Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

From: Kathleen Patterson [kathpat@regent.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2008 3:04 PM
To: Beaver, Shirley
Subject: RE: permission

Greetings Shirley,

How good to hear of your work.
Yes, permission granted to use any of the work you feel necessary.

Keep in touch, I would love to hear what you are doing.
Kathleen

Kathleen Patterson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
School of Global Leadership and Entrepreneurship
Regent University
É Phone: 757-226-4765
Email: kathpat@regent.edu
Servant Leadership Research Roundtable
http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/home.shtml

January 6, 2008

Dean Bruce E. Winston, Ph.D.
School of Global Leadership and Entrepreneurship
Regent University, CRB 257
1000 Regent University Drive
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23464

Dear Dr. Winston,

My name is Shirley Beaver. I am currently a doctoral student pursuing my PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Iowa State University. I plan to graduate in May, 2008.

I am currently writing my dissertation, entitled *Second Fiddle? An Interpretive Study of Followers of Servant Leaders*. I am writing to ask your permission to include your Extension of Patterson's Servant Leadership Model in my review of literature. I retrieved the model from:

Winston, B. (2003). Extending Patterson's servant leadership model: Explaining how leaders and followers interact in a circular model. *Servant Leadership Research Roundtable*. August

Your extensive research on servant leadership has been very inspirational to me as I conduct my qualitative research on followers of servant leaders. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Shirley Beaver, PhDc, RN, CNA-A
Dean of Nursing
Mercy College of Health Sciences
928 6th Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

From: Bruce Winston [brucwin@regent.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2008 4:24 PM
To: Beaver, Shirley
Subject: Re: permission

You are welcome to include the model.

I published a case study about a servant leader at Heritage Bible College that might be of interest. It was published by Leadership and Organizational Development Journal.