

**CONCERN FOR THE LEADER: A WITHIN-PERSON EXAMINATION INTO
THE PERCEIVED EFFECTS OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

by

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A Scholarly Delivery Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Educational Leadership

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Signature Page

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ABSTRACT

This composition of research focuses on servant leadership by school leaders. The scholarly deliverables include a case study and an empirical article. The case study titled “The Consequences of Servant Leadership Implemented by Rural School Principals” chronicles the dilemma faced by a rural school principal implementing servant leadership. The second scholarly deliverable is an empirical article titled “Concern for the Leader: A Within-Person Examination into the Perceived Effects of Servant Leadership.” This study examined servant leadership through a unique perspective, a within-person focus. This approach provides an opportunity to begin to understand the adverse effects that may face school leaders as they implement servant leadership.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FOR HUMAN SUBJECTS
Letter of Approval

April 21, 2023

Dr. Harper:

The West Texas A & M University Institutional Review Board is pleased to inform you that upon review, proposal #2023.04.006 for your study titled, "Concern for the leader: A within-person examination into the effects of servant leadership" meets the requirements of the WTAMU Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) No. 15.99.05.W1.01AR Institutional Review Board (Use of Human Subjects in Research). Approval is granted for one calendar year. This approval expires on April 21, 2024.

Principal investigators assume the following responsibilities:

1. **Continuing Review:** The protocol must be renewed on or before the expiration date if the research project requires more than one year for completion. A [Continuing Review form](#) along with required documents must be submitted on or before the stated deadline. Failure to do so will result in study termination and/or loss of funding.
2. **Completion Report:** At the conclusion of the research project (including data analysis and final written papers), a [Close out form](#) must be submitted to AR-EHS.
3. **Unanticipated Problems and Adverse Events:** Pursuant to [SOP No. 15.99.05.W1.13AR](#), unanticipated problems and serious adverse events must be reported to AR-EHS.
4. **Reports of Potential Non-Compliance:** Pursuant to [SOP No. 15.99.05.W1.05AR](#), potential non-compliance, including deviations from the protocol and violations, must be reported to the IRB office immediately.
5. **Amendments:** Changes to the protocol must be requested by submitting an [Amendment form](#) to AR-EHS for review by the IRB. The Amendment must be approved by the IRB before being implemented. Amendments do not extend time granted on the initial approval
6. **Consent Forms:** When using a consent form, only the IRB approved form is allowed.
7. **Audit:** Any proposal may be subject to audit by the IRB Administrator during the life of the study. Investigators are responsible for maintaining complete and accurate records for five years and making them available for inspection upon request.
8. **Recruitment:** All recruitment materials must be approved by the IRB. Recruitment materials distributed to potential participants must use the approved text and include

the study's IRB number, approval date, and expiration dates in the following format:
WTAMU IRB##-##-## Approved: ##/##/#### Expiration Date: ##/##/####.

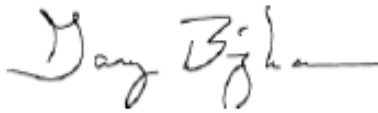
9. **FERPA and PPRA:** Investigators conducting research with students must have appropriate approvals from the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

administrator at the institution where the research will be conducted in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) if applicable to the research being proposed. The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) protects the rights of parents in students ensuring that written parental consent is required for participation in surveys, analysis, or evaluation that ask questions falling into categories of protected information.

Sixty days prior to the expiration of this proposal, you will receive a notification of the approaching expiration date at which time you will need to submit an [Amendment/Continuation/Close out](#) form.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,



Dr. Gary Bigham
Chair, WTAMU IRB



Dr. Angela Spaulding
Vice President of Research and Compliance

Acknowledgment

This moment would not be possible without the loving and unwavering support of my wife. Bay, your unwavering support, love, and encouragement props me up in all that I do. I could not be the father, educator, or leader I am without you by my side. Thank you for believing in me and being there with me through some of the toughest moments in my life.

To my sons, Rhett, Rollie, and Riggs, this degree is ultimately for you. I want each of you to know that you can do hard things. Rhett, there were several nights you walked out of your bedroom at 1 AM to find me still at the table doing research and working. I hope you remember those moments as an adult and share them with your little brothers. It's my prayer I have shown each of you that you can achieve anything if you set your mind to it.

To my angels, Mom and Dad: There have been so many times throughout this journey I longed to share my struggles, challenges, and successes with you both. The traits, values, and work ethic you instilled in me growing up have not left me. In fact, they are the reason I have successfully completed this degree. I try to live each day in a manner that would make you both proud of the husband, father, and leader I am.

Thank you, Dr. Irma Harper. Your role in my journey extended way beyond serving as my chair. You were my constant cheerleader, encourager, and accountability partner. I could not have done this without you. To my other committee members, Dr. Hooper, and Dr. Yang, your feedback, guidance, and support were critical to my success and growth as a learner and leader. Thank you.

Finally, this research into servant leadership is guided by my faith in my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. "For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and

give his life as a ransom for many.” Matthew 20:28. Heavenly Father, thank you for the blessings in my life, and I pray I am able to use each opportunity in my life to bring honor and glory to you, Amen.

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The Consequences of Servant Leadership Implemented by Rural School Principals

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Abstract

This case study examines servant leadership from an untraditional perspective. It follows Principal Ryan, an inexperienced rural school principal, to understand what leads him to an epiphany moment and realize the impact his servant leadership has had on his own personal needs. Servant leadership approaches that lack guidance, structure, intentionality, and balance may lead to the filling of followers' cups while draining the leader's. It is important that servant leaders learn how to and understand the importance of prioritizing their own needs while balancing their efforts to have a positive transformational impact on their campus.

Keywords: servant leadership, rural school principals, mentorship

The Consequences of Servant Leadership by Rural School Principals

Servant leadership, a relatively underdeveloped research area (Liden et al., 2014), has a transformational impact on the organization and is characterized by behaviors like empathy, listening, building community, and stewardship (Lawrence & Spears, 2002). Servant leaders focus on satisfying the needs of their followers, leading to positive results and an increase in teacher job satisfaction (Cerit, 2009). Servant leaders must be able to cast a vision for the organization and fill an operational role focused on meeting the needs of all followers (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2018). Teachers believe that the servant leadership provided by their principals is inadequate, and principals are in need of professional development focused on the implementation of servant leadership (Insley et al., 2016).

This case study focuses on a servant leader of a rural high school. Servant leadership is implemented by school leaders by humbly providing service to the organization in a way that meets the needs of their followers. The purpose of this study is to explore the potential impacts on a servant leader who is focused on the needs of others without a support system that would allow for proper guidance, growth, and development of the leader.

Case Study

Setting

The Lumberjacks of Tall Pines High School (TPHS) are the pride of Shiloh, Texas. Tall Pines Independent School District (TPISD) is a small 2A district that serves 615 students in grades PreK through 12th. TPHS is located as close to the geographical center of Shiloh as possible. As a matter of fact, it is often said that Shiloh was built

around the school. You will find every church, diner, and post office located off Main Street that runs adjacent to the parking lot of TPHS, which conveniently provides all community members a front row seat to who is parked at the school and when they are there. TPHS is always competitive in various sports and extracurricular activities, and has an FFA program that is deeply rooted in a tradition of excellence. The community involvement goes beyond the typical “Friday Night Lights” crowded football stadium. Like other small, rural towns, any event or game at the school is a social event and is always well attended by the community.

Characters

Joshua Ryan is in his first year as principal of TPHS. TPHS is his first building principal assignment after serving 4 years as an assistant principal at Cashley High School (CHS), a large 4A district located about 45 minutes away. During his time at CHS, Mr. Ryan consistently implemented servant leadership principles and successfully built positive relationships with the staff and students while maintaining a healthy balance between his work life and family. One reason for the balance was an afterschool duty schedule that was split between four assistant principals, which allowed him to know at the beginning of the month which days he would be the administrator on duty for games and events. Mr. Ryan found value in the structure and routine provided in his role at CHS. It allowed him to prioritize the most important things in his life, faith, and family. He knew the transition from a larger district to a small, rural high school would present some challenges, but he was confident his ability to build relationships through his commitment to servant leadership would be paramount in making this transition successful.

Mrs. Ryan has been an elementary teacher for the last 6 years. She chose not to work this year after Mr. Ryan insisted that, with his increased salary, she should stay home with their two children. Mrs. Ryan cherishes her time at home with their two young boys but is still adjusting to being a stay-at-home “mom.” There was no doubt in her mind that her husband would be successful as a building principal; she has always been his biggest fan and supporter. The last few years before moving to Shiloh, she and Mr. Ryan had made it a morning routine of waking up early to do a devotional and exercise. One would start with a devotional while the other completed a 10–15-minute CrossFit-style workout and then they would switch. This was just one of the ways the Ryan’s commitment to faith and family was visible in their everyday lives.

A man of few words, Mr. Loftin has been the superintendent of TPISD for 12 years; before he was the principal of TPHS for 7 years. TPISD is where Mr. Loftin has spent all 25 years of his career. Mr. Loftin spent his time as the principal of TPHS under an overbearing micromanager superintendent. Once Mr. Loftin was named superintendent, he committed to hiring principals he thought were strong leaders, giving them their space and allowing them to lead their campus. He was confident he had found the right person to lead TPHS in Mr. Ryan and had already heard positive feedback about him from his wife, a veteran teacher at TPHS.

Affirmation of a Job Well-Done

“Headed home,” Principal Joshua Ryan texts his wife at 8:10 PM on Wednesday evening as he walks out of his office and heads towards the parking lot of TPHS. Mr. Ryan is eight weeks into his first school year as principal of TPHS, a small 2A high school that is located so close to the middle of the small town that it would be easy to

believe the town was built around the campus. As he nears the front entrance, he notices the custodians must have forgotten to empty the trashcan in the front lobby. Without hesitation, he sets his laptop and cell phone down on the front desk, walks over to the trashcan, pulls the black bag out, and heads for the dumpster on the other side of the building. Once he makes it to the dumpster, he heads back into the building and walks down the hallway toward the light still on in Mrs. Loftin's room. Walking towards the room, Mr. Ryan recalls a conversation he had with Mrs. Loftin's husband, the superintendent, when he was hired as the principal of TPHS. The only advice or guidance Mr. Loftin has bestowed upon the first-year principal was during that initial meeting. "This community will support you, as long as they see you active, involved, and that you really care about this place and these kids." It is 9:05 PM and Mr. Ryan makes it back to the front desk and picks up his cell phone to see the two missed calls and three text messages from his wife. Quickly, he replies:

I'm sorry! I left my phone at the front desk. I had to take out the trash, and then I had to stop and help Mrs. Loftin print and staple her unit tests she is giving tomorrow. Leaving the parking lot now; see you in a few minutes.

Exhausted from getting the children in bed after Wednesday night church service, Mrs. Ryan reminds her husband of the commitment he made that morning that they would attend church as a family. She said:

Before you became principal, we never missed a Wednesday night service. Our youngest even asked me tonight if you didn't come to church because you were mad at Jesus. What could have kept you from finishing this afternoon at a decent time? You know Wednesday is one of the only days of the week when there are

no games, activities, or meetings to attend! On top of that, you stayed even later to help copy and staple papers? Never in my career has a principal helped me copy and staple tests; why in the world would that be your job?

Mr. Ryan apologized for not keeping his commitment and recapped the chain of events that led to him working later than expected. He said:

My afternoon changed when we had a teacher call in sick for tomorrow. We are low on substitutes, so I felt like I needed to volunteer to cover the class, which meant I had to stay late this evening to finish the minutes from three ARD meetings that I held today. I was originally planning on finishing those minutes tomorrow morning in the office.

Their conversation ends with Mr. Ryan's simple question. "I'm doing the exact same things I did at Cashley for people. I'm leading the way I know how; what else am I supposed to do?"

Mr. Ryan woke up early the next morning to a text message from the transportation director, "Good Morning, Mr. Ryan. I know it's last-minute but Mr. Loftin recommended that I ask you. Do you mind covering the morning bus route?" For the third time this week, he skips his morning devotional and exercise routine in order to get to the bus barn and begin the bus route. After the bus route, Mr. Ryan heads to the Algebra class that he volunteered to cover since there were no substitutes available. While the students were taking a quiz, Mr. Ryan decided to send Mr. Loftin a text, seeking some guidance about his conversation with his wife the night before. Unfortunately, the text goes unanswered.

As the lunch bell rings, Mr. Ryan leaves the Algebra class and heads to the teacher's lounge to grab his lunch. He had no idea today was Boss's Day! He walks into the lounge to see almost the entire faculty, 13 teachers, the counselor, his secretary, and two custodians. The room is full of crockpots, homemade cookies, balloons, and several thank you cards spread out over the table. Surprised and honored, Mr. Ryan couldn't help but reflect on the last 8 weeks. This was the first time he felt confirmation that his efforts had a positive impact on the staff of TPHS. As they finished lunch and he thanked the group for the gift cards, he found himself excitedly thinking about sharing this exciting moment in his leadership as a principal with his biggest fan when he got home. "She will be so excited to hear that my commitment to meeting the needs of this staff is working... won't she?"

Teaching Notes

The leadership role of the principal is critical to the effectiveness of teachers in schools. Schroeder (2016) stated:

In order for a principal to operate as a servant leader and increase teacher effectiveness, he or she must not only personify the characteristics of servant leaders, but also model the way, enable teachers to act, encourage teachers' hearts, and communicate a larger vision to pursue. (p. 15)

It is important for principals to develop and utilize many servant leadership characteristics so that they fulfill their role of modeling a servant's heart, enabling teachers to act, encouraging teachers' hearts, and communicating a larger vision (Taylor et al., 2007).

Servant leaders can experience a sense of depletion when they are not mentored or trained appropriately in these leadership traits. A study conducted by Liao et al. (2021) highlighted the importance of training leaders on certain skills when engaging in servant leadership behaviors in order to avoid this depletion. The problem this study will address is the void in the support for rural school principal servant leaders. These leaders often find themselves on an island, isolated from support from colleagues, which is a common cause of the turnover of rural school principals (Hansen, 2018). These principals, who are constantly putting others' needs ahead of their own (Green, 2013) deserve an opportunity to voice their own needs for personal growth, development, and self-wellness. By studying the perceptions of these school leaders, there will be a more complete understanding of how to develop a mentor program that supports these leaders in their efforts to lead transformational change within their schools.

There is a need for mentoring new principals, especially principals who are considered "servant leaders." Novice teachers and superintendents seem to be the focus for mentoring, but not principals. Twenty-six states require mentorship programs for new teachers, and only 20 states have a requirement for principals to participate in a mentor program (Goldrick, 2016). Texas does not require mentors for new teachers, but House Bill 3, has recently provided funding for districts that implement mentor programs for new teachers (Texas Education Agency, 2022). There is also a statutory requirement for first year superintendents in Texas to participate in a mentorship program (Casetext, 2021). New principals have identified a need for support with operational activities and administrative procedures (Oplatka & Lapidot, 2017); there is a lack of importance in mentoring new principals in Texas.

After establishing the void in the support of these school leaders, it is time to explore some possible solutions that are based on the similarity-attraction paradigm that was developed by Byrne (1971). The similarity-attraction paradigm is rooted in the fact that similarity is a driving force in successful relationships. Casually speaking, people enjoy being around other people that are like them. The first recommendation is to have both the mentee and mentor take personality surveys to better align character traits and increase the similarity between the two leaders. This step would help avoid dissimilarity, which has been found to negatively impact the professional learning and development of the mentee (Moorosi, 2011).

In her study on the support of female school leaders, Peters (2010) concluded that it is necessary to establish mentoring programs that are tailored specifically to the leader's unique characteristics and that there should not be a one size fits all approach to mentoring. Therefore, in addition to the character inventories, leaders in a mentor program should take leadership surveys to identify their leadership style in order to pair them with a mentor who utilizes the same leadership style. This would allow a mentor who identifies as a servant leader to directly support a campus principal who also operates as a servant leader. Studies have established that some of the foundational principles of a successful mentor program for principals are trust (Bakioglu et al., 2010), purposeful experiences for the mentee (Versland, 2018), proximity between mentor and mentee, and reflective opportunities (Gimbel & Kefor, 2018). Of those qualities, trust is the one that must be organically developed. Meng (2019) found that like-minded people are more likely to provide honest and truthful feedback to each other. Pairing servant

leaders with other servant leaders will help foster the trust that Bakioglu et al. (2010) found to be critical to a productive mentor program.

In conclusion, the recommended solutions focus on the process of pairing a mentor and a mentee. Prior to pairing a mentor and a mentee, there is critical data to be collected to help pair leaders together who are like-minded and share similar approaches to leadership. The idea is not to reinvent the wheel and completely build a mentor program from scratch that solely focuses on servant leadership but, with intentionality, establish mentor pairs that are set up to be successful, establish deep, meaningful relationships that lead to the mutual growth and development of the leaders.

Discussion Questions

1. Mr. Ryan is 8 weeks into his role at TPHS. When assuming a new leadership role, is there an appropriate amount of time to dedicate to making sacrifices that result in shaping the climate and culture of a campus? If so, what is that time frame, and what makes it appropriate?
2. How can Mr. Ryan create a better balance in his professional and personal life?
3. Servant leaders are tasked with simultaneously casting vision and meeting their followers' needs (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2018). Which of these leadership roles is Mr. Ryan more effective? What do you recommend he do in order to strengthen his skills in the other area?
4. Create a list of at least three action steps that you would have Mr. Ryan complete after the Boss' Day luncheon and before he leaves campus that afternoon in order to begin to address the imbalance he has created in his life.

5. Explain what problems Mr. Ryan is facing that you feel are not exclusive to servant leadership.
6. Do you believe the issues facing Mr. Ryan could be mitigated or at least minimized if there was a structured support system or mentor in place for him?
7. How do you believe Mr. Ryan would benefit from having a mentor who is familiar with his leadership style?
8. The tasks that Mr. Ryan completed before leaving campus (taking out the trash, making copies, and creating tests) fall directly under another employee's job description and expectations. How can Mr. Ryan ensure his efforts are consistent with servant leadership and not simply completing work for others?

Teaching Activities

1. With your partner, role play the conversation that happens when Mr. Ryan arrives home to tell his wife about his Boss' day luncheon.
2. You become Mr. Ryan for a day and go to work the day following the luncheon. You have realized your servant leadership has created an unhealthy imbalance in your life. List out three people, in or out of the district that you will reach out to about that imbalance. Write out your talking points that you will speak to each of the individuals about.
3. Mr. Ryan has realized that he is in need of some more support from Mr. Loftin. Role play the conversation between Mr. Loftin and Mr. Ryan.

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Servant Leadership**

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore servant leadership through a unique perspective, a within-person focus. Specifically, the research looked to identify adverse impacts faced by school leaders, as a result of their servant leadership. In addition to identifying the adverse implications, this study looked to establish effective strategies to mitigate these negative impacts. **Research Method:** A qualitative study was designed, and data were collected from seven school leaders identified as servant leaders through presurveys, questionnaires, and semi-structured one-on-one interviews. **Findings:** The findings of this study effectively linked actions specific to servant leaders to adverse implications for their physical and emotional well-being. Servant leadership also resulted in a lack of balance between work and personal life for these school leaders. Effective mitigating strategies identified were establishing a support system and practicing prioritizing and intentionality. **Conclusion:** School leaders implementing servant leadership face negative impacts that result in reduced health and wellness. Operating as a servant leader within a school, there are strategies that will help reduce the negative impacts of servant leadership.

Keywords: servant leadership, within-person, school principal, stress, wellness

Concern for the Leader: A Within-Person Examination into the Perceived Effects of Servant Leadership

Anyone who has flown on an airplane has heard the flight attendant provide the pre-flight instructions. Without fail, the flight attendant will mention that, in the case of a mid-air emergency, oxygen masks will deploy overhead. They are reminding passengers to always secure their oxygen masks before looking to assist any other passengers. Servant leaders are passengers on the plane who ignore this request and consistently prioritize others ahead of themselves. This simple analogy of a split-second decision opens a window into the intrigue of servant leadership. Servant leadership may be an oxymoron, but the leadership style has undoubtedly found a place in educational leadership.

The name of this leadership style instinctively prompts the rudimentary question, how can someone be a servant and a leader? Northouse (2019) credited Robert Greenleaf with the development of the concept of the servant leader. Servant leadership is accomplished through the commitment of a leader to serve and prioritize the needs of the followers, “leaders earn followers only by virtue of their selfless commitment to serving the needs of others” (Taylor et al., 2007, p.417). Lawrence and Spears (2002) found that, like other leadership styles, servant leadership has a transformational impact on the organization and is characterized by behaviors like empathy, listening, building community, and stewardship. Liden et al. (2008) focused on differentiating servant leadership from transformational leadership and leader-member exchange styles. What makes servant leadership unique from all other styles is the constant prioritization of meeting their follower’s needs through action. This polarizing difference not only

distinguishes servant leadership from other leadership styles but also drives the focus of this study.

The positive impacts of servant leadership, like an increase in teacher job satisfaction, positive school climate, and teacher motivation, are established in existing literature (Bande et al., 2016; Black, 2010; Cerit, 2009; Shaw & Newton, 2014). The objective of this research was to set aside the organizational benefits and positive outcomes of servant leadership. Instead, the leader is the focal point. Langhof and Guldenberg (2020) confirmed the need to examine servant leadership through this perspective in a literature review. They reviewed 49 empirical articles on servant leadership and almost 86% of the articles analyzed focused on the outcomes of servant leadership in the organization. This study answers the call from empirical articles to explore servant leadership with the well-being of the leader in mind, not the organization (Liao et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2019; McClean et al., 2019).

The Problem

To establish the potential problem, the foundational components of servant leadership and the characteristics of school leaders are presented. It is evident as each is presented that they create a compounding issue facing servant leaders. Greenleaf (1970), the well-accepted creator of this leadership style, said:

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

servants? In addition, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived? (p. 27)

There lies the litmus test for servant leadership. An assessment that is only concerned with the follower's growth, freedom, health, and wisdom. Foundational characteristic number one, the focus and concern of effective servant leadership, is defined solely by its benefit to the follower.

Servant leadership has also been described as a moral-based form of leadership (Patterson, 2003). As leaders are guided by their morals and values, the problem lies in the inherent understanding of the characteristics of servant leadership. Foundational characteristic number two, moral-based leadership, reaches the core of leaders. Morals are not easy to change, disregard, or dismiss. They are the driving force behind the decisions we make.

In addition to these two characteristics of servant leadership, there are characteristics of school leaders that may also compound the issue. For example, a study by Beisser et al. (2014) focused on the personal wellness of principals. This study found a gap between the priorities they hold for their campus regarding student, teacher, and staff wellness and their actions to support their own wellness. The study referred to a phenomenon known as the knowing-doing gap (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000), which is the disconnect between what one knows should be done, and what is actually done. In other words, even though leaders know it is important to manage their stress levels, they disregard that knowledge and proceed without regard for their personal stress levels. This knowing-doing gap is the third foundational characteristic shaping the research problem.

School principals face an imbalance of work and personal relationships. Oplatka (2017) concluded that the workload principals faced daily blurred the lines between work and personal time. Principals reported that they often find themselves answering emails and talking on the phone with colleagues after they have left work for the day. In addition, some other duties and activities pulled them away from their families, like attending sports, events, or activities associated with the school. Principals in this study felt the impact of their commitment to their role as principals. Oplatka stated, “The principals emphasized their strong need to sleep long hours after the school day and during weekends, describing themselves as exhausted” (p. 31). This continued disproportionate focus on work-over-self, resulted in fatigue, exhaustion, and increased stress levels and is the final foundational characteristic framing the research problem.

To review, servant leaders prioritize other’s needs over their own. This leadership style is rooted in their morals and beliefs. School principals disregard their personal well-being in pursuit of a healthy organization. There needs to be more balance between work and personal time for school principals. So, there are overworked school leaders with a propensity to put others’ needs ahead of their own, coupled with a leadership style that requires the dismissal of personal needs in pursuit of meeting the needs of others. These characteristics discussed may be a recipe for disaster or at least present a pace of play that is unstable and unrealistic for leaders. This question may present an elementary inquiry into this leadership style, but after seeing the compounding nature of the above-stated characteristics, it begs the question. If servant leaders are constantly putting others’ needs ahead of their own, how could this leadership style be implemented without negative repercussions to the leader?

The Purpose

The purpose of the study was to peel back the layers of servant leadership and examine school leaders implementing this leadership style through a within-person focus. This explored the adverse implications on the personal wellness of these educational servant leaders. Through the perspectives of these school leaders, the study delved deeper into discovering these adverse effects and efforts to manage their personal wellness. After reviewing the existing literature on servant leadership and school leaders, a conceptual framework was developed. The conceptual framework, a within-person focus, was established by studies that validated the need to explore servant leadership through this lens. Examining servant leadership from this intra-individual approach could add to the limited literature that currently exists on the perceived impacts of leadership on the leader.

Research Questions

This study focused on answering the following question:

RQ1: According to the perspective of educational servant leaders, what adverse effects on their personal wellness do they experience as a result of their servant leadership?

Shifting the lens from examining the organizational outcomes of servant leadership to the impacts of the leader, this qualitative study seeks to discover the negative consequences that may be a byproduct of their commitment to putting others' needs ahead of their own. School administrator wellness has been researched extensively and includes identified areas of stress, burnout, and exhaustion (Friedman, 1995). There is, however, a gap in the existing literature as it relates to personal wellness impacts that are specific to the

implementation of servant leadership. Essentially, this study looked to link servant leader actions to resultant negative personal wellness impacts.

As the dots are connected between decisions to prioritize others' needs instead of their own, this study looked to answer a secondary research question:

RQ2: How do school servant leaders mitigate the personal wellness adverse effects of their leadership style?

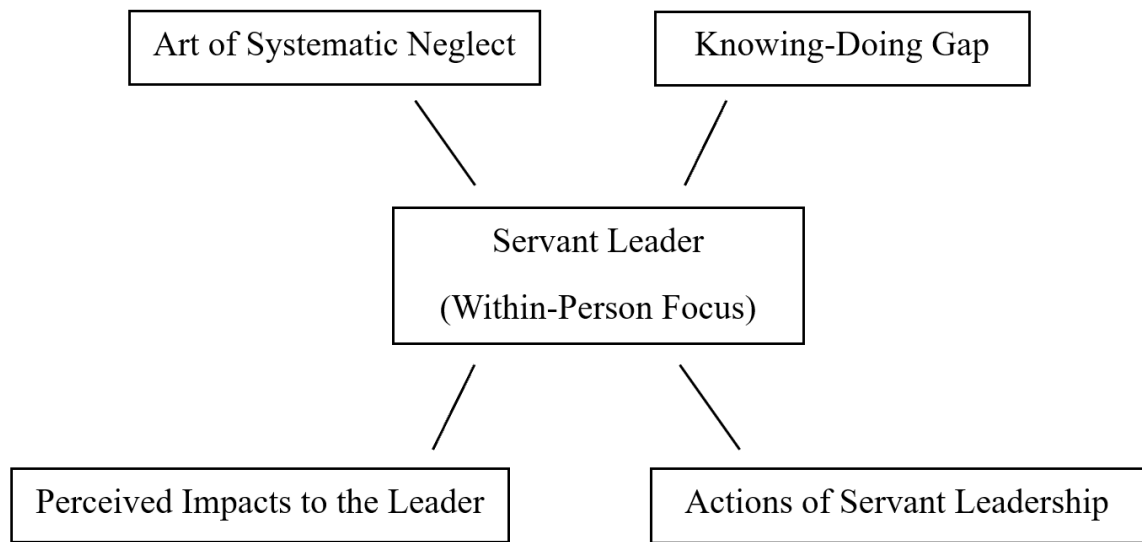
Regardless of leadership style, more experienced school principals establish more effective measures to create a healthier lifestyle (Beisser et al., 2014). Through these school leaders' experiences, this study sought to present strategies specific to servant leaders that have been effective at reducing the adverse personal wellness implications of their leadership style.

Conceptual Framework

This study utilized a “within-person” approach to examining servant leadership. A powerful and vital perspective in the advancement of management, within-person research seeks to establish how the individual is affected by changes, situations, or circumstances over time (McCormick et al., 2020). Servant leadership provides a transformational impact on an organization (Lawrence & Spears, 2002), one that does not happen overnight. The time invested by the servant leader into this transformational change is evidence that studying this leadership style under this conceptual framework of a within-person perspective is appropriate and necessary. Leadership effectiveness is often evaluated based on the outcomes of the organization as seen by the existing literature on servant leadership. Through this metric, a rudimentary definition of successful leadership simply evaluates the organization. Is the organization productive?

Is progress made toward organizational goals or objectives? Is the organization profitable? This evaluation of effective leadership does not take into consideration the effect over time of the leader mentally, physically, emotionally, or socially as they serve their organization, and it represents a “win at all costs” evaluation of effective leadership. Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework for this study. The four pillars, the art of systematic neglect, perceived impacts to the leaders, knowing-doing gap, and actions of school leaders practicing servant leadership represent an existing gap in literature and reinforced the need to examine this leadership style through this lens.

Figure 1



In 1970, Robert Greenleaf wrote an essay titled, *The Servant as Leader*. This writing has since become the foundation of servant leadership. Researchers since Greenleaf have studied and worked to build and refine the framework of servant leadership. According to Greenleaf (1970), the concept of servant leadership was based on a fictional character, Leo, from Herman Hesse’s *Journey to the East*. Several of the

key characteristics that have framed servant leadership can be seen in Leo. For example, Leo never aspired or intended to be a leader; he simply focused on serving those around him and meeting their needs. This is important in servant leadership. As Greenleaf (1970) stated, “The great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness” (p. 9). Greenleaf’s original definition of servant leadership shows that these leaders have an internal desire to serve above all else. They are committed to listening and willing to go first and show the way. This initial desire to serve others first and place the needs of others above their own was found to be an antecedent of servant leadership (Amah, 2018).

Along with Leo, one of the most famous and recognized examples of servant leadership is Jesus. It has been found that there are significant similarities that align a biblical, Judeo-Christian worldview with servant leadership (Wallace, 2007). Jesus’ purpose is laid out in the Bible. “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (*New International Version Bible, 2008*, Mark 10:45). There are examples seen throughout the Bible that point to Jesus as a servant first. Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) detailed the origins of servant leadership and provided biblical examples like those that the one found in John. After dinner, Jesus spends time washing the feet of his disciples. “Now that I your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (*New International Version Bible, 2008*, John 13:14-15). This scripture provides an example of a servant leader modeling the way, a key characteristic of servant leadership (Taylor et al., 2007).

Greenleaf presented a quality of servant leadership called, “the art of systematic neglect” (p. 20). This quality refers to the need for leaders to withdraw themselves periodically intentionally from the pressures and stress of leadership to reorient themselves physically, emotionally, and mentally. Therefore, a servant leader must strategically neglect their own needs up to their personal limits to effectively serve others. The term art of systematic neglect insinuates that this is a skill of servant leaders.

Knowing personal limits and serving others up to those limits provides a potential area of inquiry. How skilled are servant leaders in implementing this systematic neglect in their leadership? Are servant leaders proficient at knowing their own limits and not only do they identify the need to withdraw from leadership to reset themselves but do they actually follow through with it? Since skills can be developed, there may also be a case to explore how servant leaders build and develop these skills. There were no empirical articles discovered that provided more insight and discovery into the art of systematic neglect as a characteristic of servant leadership. However, referring to the biblical example of servant leadership, Jesus provides a clear picture of personal neglect by a leader. The crucifixion of Jesus represents the ultimate sacrifice. A servant leader sacrificing their life is obviously not the typical or expected byproduct of servant leadership. However, it does represent the first pillar of the conceptual framework and provided evidence that negative implications of servant leadership exist.

The second pillar of the conceptual framework was discovered through review of research that has continued to refine servant leadership. Researchers like Spears (1998), Liden et al. (2008), and Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) have all added valuable research that continues to define servant leader behaviors. However, what is clear after reviewing

the previous literature from these researchers is that each adds characteristics or broad dimensions of servant leadership but fails to identify specific servant leader actions. For example, Liden et al. (2008) developed a leadership questionnaire focused on seven dimensions of servant leadership, emotional healing, and creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically. These seven characteristics are used to frame servant leadership actions in this study. Since the onus of this research is to understand how servant leadership actions lead to perceived implications of this leadership style, the constructs of the framework must allow these characteristics of servant leadership to be translated into observed behaviors. As empirical evidence grew on servant leadership, certain themes were identified. Table 1 displays the themes of servant leadership found in the existing literature.

Table 1*Existing Themes and Dimensions of Servant Leadership*

Author	Themes and subthemes
Graham (1991)	Inspirational, moral
Buchen (1998)	Self-identity, capacity for reciprocity, relationship builders, preoccupation with the future
Spears (1998)	Listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment, community-building
Farling et al. (1999)	Vision, influence, credibility, trust, service
Laub (1999)	Valuing people, developing people, community-building, displaying authenticity, providing leadership, sharing
Patterson (2003)	Agape love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, service
Dennis and Bocarnea (2005)	Empowerment, trust, humility, Agápao love, vision
Barbuto & Wheeler (2006)	Altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasion mapping, organizational stewardship
Liden et al. (2008)	Empowering, helping, subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, emotional healing, conceptual skills, creating value for community, behaving ethically
Sendjaya et al. (2008)	Transforming influence, voluntary subordination, authentic self, transcendental spirituality, covenantal relationship, responsible morality
Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011)	Empowerment, humility, standing back, authenticity, forgiveness, courage, accountability, stewardship

Note. Adapted from “The validation of the servant leadership scale,” by A. Grobler, & A.P. Flotman, 2020, *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 46(2), 3.

It is essential to examine those dimensions, themes, or characteristics of servant leadership and work to employ a conceptual framework that provides an opportunity to operationalize servant leadership into daily, actionable behaviors. Therefore, the second pillar of the conceptual framework is based on servant leader actions.

The third pillar of the framework was developed by examining the existing literature on the positive impact of servant leadership. The empirical evidence on the positive impacts of servant leadership has been extensively researched and validated (Bande et al., 2016; Black, 2010; Cerit, 2009; McNabb & Rohde, 2021; Shaw & Newton, 2014). Positive outcomes occur when servant leaders can implement their servant leadership by simultaneously casting vision for the organization and carrying out actions that meet the needs of all followers (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2018). Similar to the fact that the characteristics of servant leadership present similarities to other leadership styles, there are also commonalities between the outcomes of this leadership style and others like transformational leadership. Both of these leadership styles have a transformational impact on the organization, which takes time and is a slow process (Armstrong & Spears, 2015; Lawrence & Spears, 2002). Barbuto and Hayden (2011) found that as servant leadership is effectively implemented, the quality of relationships between leader and follower increases. The stronger the relationship between follower and leader, the greater the organizational trust. “Servant leadership is the independent variable that causes or produces a culture or community of trust that in turn produces organizational success” (Reinke, 2004, p. 37). Servant leadership empowers followers (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002) and also results in dedicated employees who feel safe in their workplace and are connected to the leader’s and organization’s vision and direction (Sokoll, 2013), which reduces employee turnover (Brohi et al., 2018).

In the school setting, existing literature has established valuable and impactful outcomes of successful servant leadership like increased self-efficacy, teacher job satisfaction, school climate, increased principal performance and teacher retention, and a

more collaborative environment (Black, 2010; Cerit, 2009; Malingkas et al., 2018; Shaw & Newton, 2014; Taylor et al., 2007). Teachers are also more motivated and inspired by principals who practice servant leadership as they work towards a shared vision (Attah & Tasker-Mitchell, 2020). The issue with existing literature on the benefits of servant leadership is that research has continuously focused on the impact on followers and the organization. Therefore, perceived impacts to the leader make up the third pillar of the conceptual framework. Establishing the within-person focus as the conceptual framework can lead to a significant addition to the literature on servant leadership in educational leaders because this intra-individual approach was not found in any existing literature on servant leadership in the educational setting.

The fourth and final pillar of the conceptual framework was derived from further investigation into the role of school leader. School principals are saddled with the responsibility of being effective instructional leaders while also managing the operational components of their campus. Beisser et al. (2014) conducted a mixed methods study on the wellness practices of school leaders. The principal is in a critical position to help drive and facilitate a culture focused on healthy lifestyle choices. These include students, teachers, and staff's mental, physical, and emotional well-being. The study set out to determine if school principals felt responsible for fostering a culture that prioritizes a healthy lifestyle and how their actions and behaviors align with that priority in their personal lives. A survey was administered that gathered data on the school leader's balance between work and personal life and healthy lifestyle choices such as diet and exercise. Since the participants needed to be secondary school principals, a purposive sampling technique was used. Results from a ten-point Likert scale survey showed that

even though principals felt personally responsible for helping establish a healthy school environment (M=8.52), their personal commitment to modeling a healthy lifestyle was lower (M=6.52). The study also analyzed demographic data from the school principals and found that the more veteran principals reported less stress and an increased ability to balance work-life obligations. This conclusion supports the need for mentors or developmental programs for new and inexperienced school leaders. The research pointed out a phenomenon called the knowing-doing gap (Pfeffer & Sutton, 2000). This gap is the disconnect between the knowledge of what to do and the ability to act in a manner that aligns with that knowledge. It is the synthesis of knowledge and action. This gap can be minimized through experience, which was seen in this study as less experienced principals reported higher stress levels and increased difficulty maintaining a healthy balance between work and personal life. The study provided recommendations to reduce stress and increase healthy living opportunities, such as minimizing unhealthy eating options in their environment, networking with other administrators, adopting a collaborative approach to leadership to share the workload, and being mindful of the impacts of an unhealthy lifestyle. The study concluded by recognizing that these incredibly passionate school leaders are almost willing to sacrifice their health and well-being because of their passion and love for what they do. This gap between what is known, and what is done by leaders makes up the fourth pillar of the conceptual framework.

Review of Literature

After an extensive review of the existing research on the within-person effects of leadership, a study by Liao et al. (2021) provided the most relevant empirical evidence.

This study hoped to add value to leadership knowledge by examining servant leadership behaviors from a within-person focus.

Although this study consisted of leaders outside of education, it adds significant insight into ways to operationalize servant leader behaviors from a within-person perspective. This study defined these behaviors as “episodic leader behaviors that are representative of servant leadership on a given day” ((Liao et al., 2021, p. 1190). The study believed there would be a connection between an increase in laissez-faire behaviors from servant leaders due to the increased state depletion caused by their implementation of servant leadership behaviors. In other words, as servant leaders perform daily behaviors, they are exhausting their mental, physical, and emotional resources. This left them depleted, which resulted in the leader shifting their behaviors to conserve remaining resources by implementing a laissez-faire approach. Findings supported the need to examine leadership through the within-person focus.

Another relevant finding from the Liao et al. (2021) study is that there appears to be a cyclical nature in servant leader behaviors. The cycle presented itself when significant results were found by comparing current-day nondemanding (laissez-faire) work with next-day demanding work (service). Interestingly, the study concluded that servant leadership behaviors might take their toll on the resources of some leaders, but for others, those who routinely practice perspective taking do not experience a significant depletion. Perspective taking actually turned out to be a moderator of depletion as it relates to servant leadership behaviors. The willingness and experience in taking others’ perspectives was the factor that allowed servant leader behaviors to replenish a leader. In other words, servant leaders who practice perspective taking consistently do not

experience depletion through their servant leader behaviors. In fact, they were rejuvenated. The implications for practice from this study point to the importance of training leaders on servant leadership practices and perspective-taking.

Lopez et al. (2012) conducted a mixed methods study. In this study, the school leaders carried smartphones throughout their day, prompting them to answer scripted questions that logged their responses related to their location, behavior, and actions at varying intervals. This innovative and technological approach to studying the behaviors and actions of school leaders provided an accurate picture of the daily actions of the leaders. The results show that school principals were in their offices over half of the time (53.27%) and only spent 7.5% of their time in classrooms. This study also showed that principals were spending more time on administrative tasks and that those tasks were often perceived as urgent (41.12% & 68.22%, respectively). The qualitative component of this study involved interviews with the school leaders to gauge their experience as a participant in the study. Overall, the participants reported a positive and non-invasive experience that was efficient and not overly burdensome.

Servant Leadership Behaviors of School Principals

Servant leadership has become more consistently seen implemented in educational systems, resulting in school leaders who desire to create authentic connections with teachers (Barbuto & Hayden, 2011). High demands are placed on school leaders who implement servant leadership, resulting in increased resources to implement their leadership style effectively (Liao et al., 2021). Although it consumes much energy, “servant-leadership provides the promise of an effective educational leadership and management model” (Crippen, 2005, p. 16). For school leaders to be

influential servant leaders, they must create buy-in through their actions by modeling service and connecting to their teachers on a personal level (Schroeder, 2016).

Kuykendall and Slater (2020) found that servant leaders must be committed to hearing concerns from their followers regardless of the impact on their schedule. This research also stated that a servant leader needs to foster relationships by being empathetic and dedicating time to learning about a teacher's professional and personal interests or concerns.

Research has also found a positive correlation between the practice of servant leadership by school principals and their performance (Malingkas et al., 2018). The principal's leadership role is critical to teachers' effectiveness in schools. Schroeder (2016) stated:

For a principal to operate as a servant leader and increase teacher effectiveness, he or she must not only personify the characteristics of servant leaders but also model the way, enable teachers to act, encourage teachers' hearts, and communicate a larger vision to pursue. (p. 15)

Principals must develop and utilize many servant leadership characteristics to fulfill their roles effectively (Taylor et al., 2007).

After scouring through databases looking for studies relating to the behaviors of servant leaders, and removing any literature due to quality control standards, the resulting compilation of sources was scarce. The original intention of this research was to examine the relationship between servant leadership behaviors and rural school principals. After searching for literature on rural school principals' implementation of servant leadership, it was clear, due to the lack of empirical evidence, that the scope of the study needed to

be widened. Removing the rural school principal criteria and including assistant principals helped provide empirical, peer-reviewed articles and two dissertations aligned with the research objective. Most of the literature provided generalizations of servant leader principals' behavior and intentions but not what day-to-day actions operationalize their servant leadership. In the search through literature, there is not enough empirical research on the day-to-day, actionable servant leadership behaviors of school principals. The sources presented below were selected because they provided evidence of the behaviors of school leaders practicing servant leadership.

Taylor et al. (2007) examined the servant leadership of school principals. The quantitative study sought to understand the leadership practices of school principals better as they implemented servant leadership. This study was completed in two phases. First, participants completed a survey that helped identify servant leaders from non-servant leaders and explored relationships between demographic variables and servant leadership implementation. The second phase compared servant leaders to non-servant leaders and their performance on a survey completed by three randomly selected teachers on their campuses. After inviting all potential participants in the state to participate in the study, a total of 112 principals returned the initial self-assessment. A median split of the self-assessment scores divided participants into two groups, servant leaders and non-servant leaders. One concerning component of the resultant participant pool that was not identified in the article as a concern, was that the participant pool was made up, almost exclusively of a single ethnicity. Other demographic variables are more evenly proportioned. There are relatively proportionate amounts of principals from the three different campus levels, elementary, middle, and high school.

Results from the first phase of the Taylor et al. (2007) study showed that there was no proof that specific demographics were likely to produce servant leaders. By analyzing the variance between the means of servant leaders vs. non-servant leaders, this study reported significant results between servant leaders and non-servant leaders. Servant leaders, in each of the five practices of leadership, scored higher than non-servant leaders. The need to enable others to serve, act, grow, and perform was only surpassed by the need for servant leaders to model the way for their followers. Emotional healing and the ability to encourage the heart of followers were found to be the next highest-scoring practice of servant leadership. The altruistic calling dimension of our framework was reported just above persuasive mapping or the ability to cast vision. Though there are similarities in the framework established through the study by Taylor et al. (2007) and the framework, the results provide insight into areas of practice. However, they do little to establish the daily behaviors of servant leadership by school leaders.

After conducting a more extensive study that identified successful instructional leadership in urban areas, Terosky and Reitano (2016) shifted their focus to examine what leadership style these successful school leaders were implementing. The results indicated that 83% of the participants were utilizing servant leadership strategies aligned with the ten characteristics of servant leadership created by Spears (1992). This study met all criteria regarding sound methodology by utilizing purposeful sampling methods based on recommendations from superiors. It cross-referenced those with results on school surveys to ensure the leadership practices have translated to an effective and positive school climate and culture. Eighteen school leaders participated in interviews, shadowing, and observations while qualitative data were collected. The data were

presented through individual case studies, which provided evidence of servant leadership strategies across the 10 characteristics that Terosky and Reitano (2016) recategorized into three main areas, purposing, building followers' capacity, and creating collaborative cultures. The purposing category included conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, and persuasion. Healing, empathy, and commitment to followers' growth were categorized into building followers. Finally, building community, listening, and awareness was placed in the creating collaborative and participatory cultures category. The servant leaders in this study presented insight and examples of how they operationalize servant leadership. Investing in teacher growth and development was a theme present throughout the case studies of this example. This need to grow and develop followers aligns with the litmus test of servant leadership described by Greenleaf (1970). Does the follower grow professionally and personally because of servant leadership? This study is valuable to this research because it provided concrete examples of servant leadership behaviors through case study examples. Terosky and Retaino (2016) conclude their study with a push towards examining professional development opportunities for school leaders that focus on servant leadership.

Teachers' opinions on the servant leadership behaviors of principals were studied by Insley et al. (2016). There needs to be more empirical evidence that directly focuses on the implementation of specific servant leader behaviors by school leaders. This study was included because it examined servant leadership by asking teachers to identify their idea of servant leadership behaviors conducted by school leaders. A qualitative study with 12 teachers participating in a focus group discussion led to content analysis of the recorded conversation and discussion. Teachers reported that behaviors that emphasized

an empathetic approach that fostered positive relationships with staff were the effective behaviors of servant leadership by principals. An active approach to listening, spending time inside and outside of the school setting to connect with staff on a personal level, and making efforts to build the community of staff by organizing social events are other reported behaviors of effective servant leadership based on the teacher's perspective. In addition to the findings above, this study concluded that principals must have the opportunity to develop servant leadership behaviors. The teacher's perspective in the focus groups was clear that their principals lacked ability in servant leadership. This continues to be a trend, a consistent charge for developing a program that explicitly supports a school leader's development of effective servant leadership.

The Principalship

Principals undoubtedly wear multiple hats and are forced to fill different roles throughout their day. For instance, a school leader may fill in as a substitute bus driver, complete administrative tasks like checking attendance, working on the budget or approving purchase orders, deal with behavioral issues, complete teacher observations, monitor lunch duty, conduct parent meetings, oversee dismissal, and attend evening sporting events. Hiring superintendents even pointed out that it was important for aspiring principals in rural areas to know that they "Will have to do things that aren't in the principal's job description...cut the lawns, plant flowers, help with the district banquet, help out with graduation...all in the same day!" (Cruzeiro & Boone, 2009, p. 6). These tasks routinely are described as extending beyond the school day, which makes the role of principal, "all encompassing... I put all of my energy into the job to the detriment of everything else you know, including family life" (McNamara et al., 2018, p. 103). In

this section, studies reviewed provide evidence of the workload of principals and the demands on them from their role as educational leaders. The studies selected help paint a picture of what it is like to be a school principal. A search was conducted for studies that focused on the workload of principals, which is a top challenge for new principals (Shoho & Barnett, 2010), and stressors associated with the position.

Concerned with the health complications arising from chronic stress, Boyland (2011) studied elementary principals in Indiana. This study's theoretical framework is based on the transactional relationship between stress and a principal's ability to cope with stress. One hundred ninety-three principals participated in the mixed method study. The study's participant pool had an appropriate distribution across several demographic factors, such as gender and principal experience. In terms of campus demographics, the majority of participants (68.4%) were from rural schools. Ninety-two percent of participants reported experiencing moderate to high levels of job stress. Recurring themes found in the qualitative data support the claim that principals suffer from too much on their plates. For example, one participant reported, "The position is stressful because I always have too much to do and not enough time" (Boyland, 2011, p. 5). Another critical finding from this study is that 70% of experienced principals reported experiencing higher stress levels now than they did earlier in their careers. This appears to be from the increased accountability placed on principals from "No Child Left Behind," which was signed into law in 2002. An alarming and relevant result of this study was that 69% of principals felt that their overall health and wellness had been negatively impacted due to the stressors of their position. Participants reported health complications such as high blood pressure, fatigue, and anxiety. The study highlighted the importance of principals

implementing effective stress management strategies, which should be a part of principal preparation programs. This study implies that the nature of the principal position comes with increased levels of stress that can negatively affect the health of the school leader.

Chaplain (2001) conducted another study that provided evidence of the tasking nature of the principal position. The 36 school leaders that participated in the study completed a survey and a one-on-one interview. When asked if they felt their position was stressful, 55% of respondents reported it was very or extremely stressful. The sources of stress reported by participants were managing self, others, finances, curriculum, and change. Progressing the campus towards goals that may be mandated by new legislation or different district initiatives was an example of managing change. Managing interpersonal relationships was a significant source of stress. These stressors presented themselves in difficult parent or teacher interactions and mandated initiatives that reduced the administrator's ability to feel in control. "They [staff] don't appreciate all the other demands on my time" (Chaplain, 2001, p. 205). Examining this particular response from a participant provided an image of constant interruptions and expectations to be available to assist in other areas at a moment's notice. The framework for this study points out the need to be accessible. The result of this study shows that being accessible and available is an expectation of principals and is not solely reserved for servant leaders. Interestingly, as the study further examined those participants reporting the highest stress levels, there appeared to be a positive correlation between higher stress levels and higher job satisfaction. Similar to other studies presented, conclusions identified the value and importance of ensuring an effective support system for school leaders.

Oplatka (2017) conducted a qualitative study on principal workload. This study provided insight into principals' feelings when they encounter increasing amounts of tasks to complete or manage in their roles. Fifty principals who met the established criteria for the study were selected and participated in semi-structured interviews to gather their perspectives and feelings regarding the workload demands in their role. The analysis of the interviews led to the identification of consistent themes caused by the intense workload for principals. The results from this study were centered on the following themes:

- Imbalance between work and personal time
- Reduced time for investing in family relationships
- Fatigue
- Negative emotions
- Lack of control

The role of the principal permeates every aspect of the principal's life. The ability to compartmentalize or turn work off when the principals left the building was only present in a select few participants. Most participants reported a lack of separation between their work and personal life. While at home, when they are supposed to be focusing on their family, principals routinely report answering emails, writing reports, or taking phone calls to speak with upset parents or teachers. "In fact, the principal's work day never ends, even when s/he leaves the school setting" (Oplatka, 2017, p. 28). Principals consistently reported that they are forced to work at home because there is not enough time in the school day to complete all their tasks. This lack of separation influences the principal's relationships with their spouse and children. Principals were

left with less time to practice their religion with their families. An important finding from the study was that principals report missing routine doctor's appointments since their schedules always conflict with available times. The sense of fatigue in principals due to the workload was consistently reported among participants. When overworked, principals feel the need to sleep and are physically and mentally exhausted. That fatigue is also coupled with negative emotions towards their position that manifests in a lack of personal fulfillment and, as one participant stated, "makes me question my career choice" (Oplatka, 2017, p. 32). The culmination of these byproducts of a heavy workload is feeling out of control. A heavy workload that stretches principals thin results in a reduced ability to invest fully in a particular area. This results in constantly sprinkling efforts across a multitude of tasks that only sometimes result in completion. Without the satisfaction of completing a task, principals are left in a holding pattern of progress where they report feeling that they are not in control. Although the majority of principals reported the negative implications of workload, some highlighted the positive feelings they get when they can accomplish a goal or objective. The self-satisfaction of seeing growth, progress, or accomplishment is rewarding. In conclusion, the study suggests revisiting principal preparation programs to provide support and training on effective time management to help establish a better balance between work and personal life, which has proven to increase job satisfaction (Reagan, 2016). Principals' supervisors are also challenged to become more intentional in their support of principals and the challenges that are a byproduct of their workload.

School Principal Wellness. The focus now shifts to establishing empirical evidence relating to the wellness of school leaders. Do educational leaders already face

possible deteriorations to their health and wellness? Again, an objective of this review of literature is to identify the compounding issues facing school leaders who practice servant leadership. The previous section highlighted the workload associated with the position and specific stressors that have been identified. This section focused on finding empirical, peer-reviewed articles that provided insight into the relationship between personal wellness and the school leader. First, it is necessary to define personal wellness. To define personal wellness, the Wellness Wheel (Sweeney & Witmer, 1992) and The Invisible Self (Myers & Sweeney, 2004). Both models describe wellness as multidimensional, encompassing social, emotional, physical, mental, personal, professional, relational, and societal factors. The definition of wellness adopted here is a malleable mental, physical, emotional, or social state that multidirectional stressors and pressures in various environments can impact. For example, a servant leader's decision to enact servant leadership behaviors throughout their day may present impacts beyond their work day that affect personal time with family. This definition will allow examination into how a school leader experiences potential impacts on their physical health as well as how their role affects them in other areas like emotionally, socially, or spiritually.

Another study that identifies the types and sources of stress incurred by school leaders was completed by Okoroma and Robert-Okah (2007). Understanding the stressors around school leaders is essential to this study since significant well-known health complications can result from stress. This quantitative study used a stress inventory survey created by the researchers. The data results were analyzed to identify significant relationships between the following sources of stress, inadequate funds, inadequate facilities, poor conditions, poorly trained teachers, and work overload. Four of the five

sources above presented significant results in their impact on administrative stress for school leaders. Inadequately trained teachers were the only source not found to have a significant relationship with stress. This study provided further evidence that overworked school leaders are at risk for reduced personal wellness.

Method

Identified in the literature review section, there are clear benefits to a school in the implementation of servant leadership. However, there is a void in the literature examining servant leadership from the within-person focus. A qualitative study was designed to best fit the objectives of this research. Qualitative research proved to be an appropriate methodology for several reasons. Taylor et al. (2015) discussed the flexibility and latitude qualitative methods provide researchers, which proved valuable for this study. For example, this study originally intended to study a specific number of school leaders. The flexibility of qualitative methodology allowed the participant pool to be determined based on the actual situation of participant recruitment.

Qualitative research also provided the opportunity to collect individual perspectives and feelings based on human experiences (Saldana, 2011). This allowed the researcher to collect data relevant to the research questions. RQ1, according to the perspective of educational servant leaders, what adverse effects on their personal wellness do they experience as a result of their servant leadership, required the direct input and perspective of the school leader. After all, the leader is the most valid and reliable source to provide data on how their personal wellness may be impacted by their servant leadership. RQ2, how do school servant leaders mitigate the personal wellness adverse effects of their leadership style, also supported the qualitative methodology of

this study. To answer both research questions and stay aligned with the conceptual framework for the study, it was important that the leader remain the center of focus. The qualitative nature of this study allows for the flexibility of a semi-structured interview, which results in latitude during the data collection process to explore additional areas of inquiry that are discovered (Fuchs, 2017). This methodology accurately aligns with the conceptual framework of the study and allows the impacts on the school leaders as they practice servant leadership to remain at the center of inquiry.

Participants

The participants for this study were educational leaders, including principals and assistant principals identified as servant leaders. There were certain criteria that were appropriate to have in place for participants in this study. To ensure participants had adequate experience to provide relevant and meaningful data, no participants were serving in a school leadership role for the first time. This meant the participants could pull from lived experiences over the course of at least a year, an important consideration in order to collect data on impacts on personal wellness and input on how those impacts may be minimized. In addition to the required experience, participants were required to take a leadership inventory to confirm their leadership style was servant leadership. Servant leadership is an effective leadership style for school leaders, evidenced by the benefits to schools and campuses that have already been discussed in this study. The gap in the literature is not in finding the benefits to the organization but in discovering the impacts on the leader. I collected demographic information such as years of experience, gender, whether they served in a rural or urban district and the exact type of leadership position held.

Participants were recruited through network sampling. To maximize the convenience of the qualitative data collection, all participants currently served in districts within Educational Service Center Six (ESC6). The researcher utilized personal connections with superintendents at districts within ESC6 and sent recruitment emails to 35 superintendents. The recruitment email provided a brief detail about the study and identified servant leadership qualities. Superintendents were asked to recommend any of their principals or assistant principals. Since this study has already established the inherent nature of servant leaders to prioritize others ahead of themselves, network sampling provided a chance to recruit school leaders that their superintendent believed are servant leaders and vulnerable enough to set aside the foundations of their leadership style to have an honest discussion about the potential impacts to their personal wellness.

Since the researcher has worked as a superintendent in ESC6 for 5 years, it is possible a relationship or, at minimum, a familiarity between the researcher and participants exists. The majority of the researchers' immediate connections and networks within ESC6 are among superintendents, not campus administrators. To avoid direct relationships between participant and researcher, no participants worked for the school district where the researcher currently serves as the superintendent.

Seven superintendents responded and recommended a total of 16 potential participants. The potential participants received an email invitation to participate in the study. The invitation included an outline of the study, the participant requirements, informed consent, the presurvey, a link to complete the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ; Liden et al. 2008) and detailed information regarding their participation in the study. This included the expected time commitments, the interview structure, and how

anonymity will be provided through the assignment of a pseudonym that will follow them throughout the study. The SLQ allowed the school leaders to self-assess their servant leadership and provided confirmation of their leadership style. This recruitment strategy resulted in a total of seven school leaders that participated in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The first step of the data collection process was a presurvey collecting demographic information of each participant, followed by a self-assessment on servant leadership. Both surveys were completed electronically. The questionnaire provided a numerical score ranging from 0-28 in each of the seven servant leadership dimensions identified by Liden et al. (2008). The results from the SLQ are in Table 2.

Table 2

Participant Information

Leader	Gender	Campus	Emotional Healing	Putting Others First	Empowering Others	Behaving Ethically	Concept Skills	Creating Value for Community	Helping Others Grow
A	Female	Middle School	28	21	21	28	27	25	27
B	Female	Elementary	23	20	22	25	27	20	23
C	Female	Elementary	27	27	27	28	26	26	28
D	Female	Elementary	27	26	14	24	23	20	20
E	Female	Middle School	28	25	23	28	28	27	28
F	Male	High School	25	28	27	28	25	28	28
G	Female	High School	25	28	24	28	25	25	26

Focus groups could have provided opportunities to facilitate conversations among participants but presented challenges in coordinating schedules for these school leaders. For that reason, one-on-one video conference interviews were scheduled with each school leader. These interviews were semi-structured but maintained a consistent inquiry

through an interview guide that aligned with the research questions. Since RQ1 is exploratory in nature, “a very open-ended protocol is appropriate to consider” (Devers & Frankel, 2000, p. 268). Therefore, a semi-structured format that allowed for more open-ended questions reinforces the exploratory methodology needed to answer RQ1, which seeks to gain an initial understanding of a phenomenon and provide the researcher the latitude to dig deeper into responses throughout the interview. Since the conceptual framework was constructed to focus on the leader, the one-on-one interviews provided valuable perspectives directly from the participant’s experiences.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data followed the framework (Gale et al., 2013) method, which provided opportunities to analyze data according to themes that developed during the data collection process (Ward et al., 2013). Gale et al. (2013) detailed the seven stages of the framework method, transcription, familiarization, coding, building and then applying an analytical framework, charting and then interpreting the data. The first and second stage of data analysis was completed through the transcription of interviews by the researcher while also creating a quality audio recording. Detailed transcription is key to establishing a clear foundation for subsequent stages of analysis (Gale et al., 2013). The audio recording served as a source to ensure that the transcription was completed accurately and provided a valuable opportunity for me to be immersed in the data.

The objective of the third phase, coding, was to identify relevant information while maintaining a broad scope of the data. Since the focus of the study was on the intrapersonal impacts of servant leadership, attention was paid to ensure the coding of

responses that shine a light on personal wellness implications on these school leaders.

After enough coding was completed, an analytical framework was developed with emerging themes and classifications. This framework was applied to all other transcripts.

The data were then organized on a matrix to effectively prepare it for its final interpretation and analysis. I charted and organized data in a manner that ensured the integrity of the responses was maintained and was not reduced down to less meaningful data. The ability to maintain the participant's perspective and feedback was another valuable tool the framework method provides (Smith & Firth, 2011). Though the interpretation of the data were presented as the seventh and final stage (Gale et al., 2013), it is important to understand that the data will be undergoing consistent analysis for emerging themes to explore in order to answer the research questions. These seven stages of the framework method, "systematically and explicitly apply the principles of undertaking qualitative analysis to a series of interconnected stages that guide the process" (Smith & Firth, 2011, p. 54), providing valuable structure for this novice researcher.

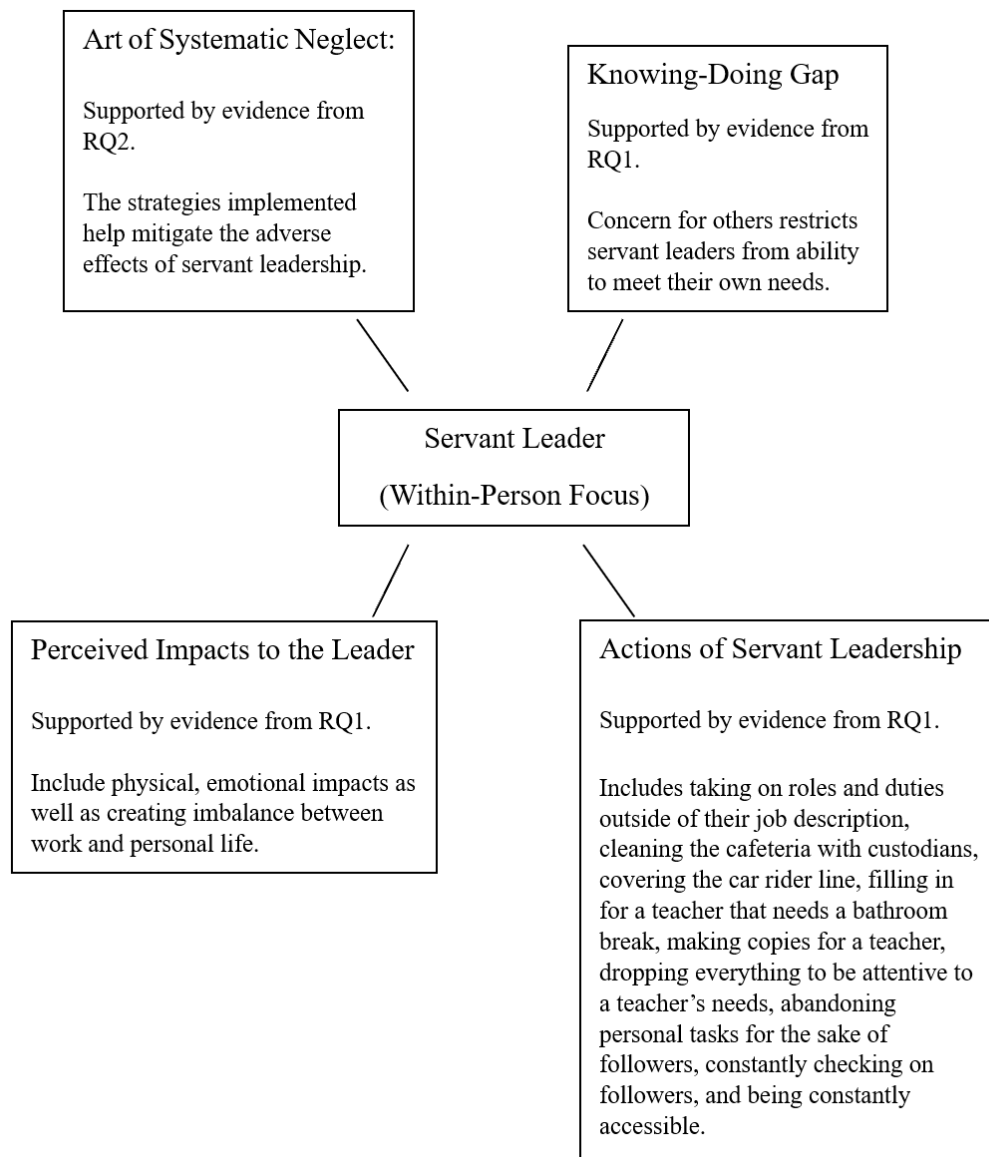
The initial coding process was inductive in nature and codes were applied. After this initial, inductive coding process, theoretical coding was administered. This shifted the analysis from an inductive approach to a deductive approach. These original codes were then analyzed in comparison to the seven characteristics of servant leadership identified by Liden et al. (2008).

Findings

The study had two research questions. The first question focused on identifying the perceived adverse impacts of servant leadership experienced by school leaders. The

themes discovered were physical and emotional impact and work/life balance. The second research question attempted to identify the strategies that servant leaders use to minimize the adverse impacts of their servant leadership. The themes that were determined were creating a support system and intentionality and prioritizing. Figure 2 provides an illustration of the findings as they relate to the conceptual framework.

Figure 2



Adverse Effects

The themes discussed from RQ1 provided a link back to the conceptual framework pillars. The perceived impacts on the leader include increased stress, reduced sleep, lack of physical fitness, increased fatigue and guilt, emotionally drained, feeling overwhelmed and a lack of balance between their work and personal life. The specific servant leader actions identified in the themes from RQ1 are taking on roles and duties outside of their job description, cleaning the cafeteria with custodians, covering the car rider line, filling in for a teacher who needs a bathroom break, making copies for a teacher, dropping everything to be attentive to a teacher's needs, abandoning personal tasks for the sake of followers, constantly checking on followers, and being constantly accessible. Discussed in the third theme of RQ1 is evidence supporting the knowing-doing gap of the conceptual framework.

Theme #1: Physical Impact

The physical impacts include increased stress levels, reduced sleep and nutrition, lack of physical fitness, and increased fatigue. Servant leader actions were coded according to the characteristics established by Liden et al. (2008), the actions that impacted physical wellness were found in emotional healing, conceptual skills, and putting subordinates first. Specifically, when asked about servant leadership actions that increased the amount of stress, Participant 6 detailed how putting subordinates first by taking on roles and tasks outside of his job description increased his stress levels. He stated, "You're going to take things off of people's plates and put them on your plate... your shoulders have to be broad... some people aren't built for that type of stress." This willingness to not allow their duties to be bound by their formal job description resulted

in servant leaders covering the cafeteria for custodians, covering car rider lines in excessive heat, making copies for teachers, and filling in for a teacher who needs a bathroom break. Each had the ability to choose to delegate someone to complete any of those tasks instead of sacrificing their own time to fill the void. All of these actions impacted the demand on the leader's time, which resulted in increased stress. Servant leader actions like dropping everything to be attentive to a person's needs and constantly checking on teacher's emotional wellness are two other examples that infringe on the schedule of a servant leader. As scheduled tasks are delayed or pushed back, stress increases. Emotional healing actions included behaviors like prioritizing your staff's time over your own, which led to a lack of sleep and increased fatigue. Participant 4 detailed the resultant impact of that servant leader action and stated, "It's real tempting to just curl up in a ball somewhere and catch a few hours of sleep... That's all I want to do, I wanted sleep. I'm exhausted." The flexibility and adaptability in their daily operations detailed by participants, a conceptual skill of servant leaders, resulted in the unhealthy habit of skipping meals and eating more fast food. For example, Participant 2 stated, "I do have a rolling desk and try to take care of e-mails and things as I'm walking...half the time, I'm eating lunch on the go." Participants also pointed to the infringement on their calendars their servant leadership actions produced that caused poor nutritional habits.

Theme #2: Emotional Impact

Servant leadership was found to leave school leaders emotionally drained, overwhelmed, and an increased sense of guilt. Interestingly, participants identified the feeling of guilt as a byproduct of contrasting actions related to their servant leadership. Participant 1 stated that her guilt resulted from the times they may have strayed from

their commitment to servant leadership. Specifically, when asked about closing her door and completing work instead of constantly being visible and accessible, she stated, “I feel icky, or guilty if I’m in here.” In a contrasting perspective, Participant 4ss guilt derived from instances where her willingness to allow tasks to impact her daily calendar resulted in her inability to spend time with her family, “It does make me feel guilty and, you know, I feel bad for missing out on some of the things.” Participant 1 expanded on the commitment to accessibility and constantly being available for followers and provided evidence that servant leadership is also emotionally draining. He stated:

If I’m locked behind my doors, or I don’t have time for my people. It causes me stress if I am not able to answer a text, or an email, pick up the phone on the weekends, even if it is emotionally draining.

Participants’ commitment to not only be available, but abandon the personal tasks of the leader for the sake of the follower was a consistent action identified by participants. Servant leaders produced evidence of how they operationalized the emotional healing component of the servant leader theme by Liden et al. (2008). It was stated that teachers seek out the participants to discuss emotionally taxing topics like an unexpected pregnancy, or as Participant 4 stated, “They want to have someplace to come and cry.”

Theme #3: Imbalance of Work and Personal Life

Servant leader actions proved to create an imbalance between work and personal life for participants. What is evident through the data is that servant leadership requires incredible dedication from the leader to sacrifice possibly their most important asset, their time. Each of the aforementioned servant leadership actions took time away from other duties and tasks that still have to be completed. It has been seen that servant leaders pay

for their willingness to sacrifice their personal times, as these actions routinely led to the participants working late hours at home, on weekends, and even on days off. Participant 3 presented evidence of the “Knowing-Doing Gap” discussed in research by Beisser et al. (2014). She realized that she encouraged and even put safeguards in place for her staff to maintain a healthy work-life balance, yet she was modeling just the opposite by working late and on Sundays. She said, “I mean, I’m modeling for you to work on a Sunday... I didn’t realize that I was modeling that I was taking away time of my own family.” Her commitment to prioritizing others’ needs ahead of her own pushed her to complete newsletters and other tasks at home and on the weekend. Participant 6 reiterated that his reluctance to delegate in fear of overloading others, resulted in reduced family time, “Instead of spending time with my wife, after my kids, go to bed, I’m sitting there till 12 o’clock making sure all this stuff is ironed out for this week.” As the gap increased between a healthy work life balance through servant leadership actions the impacts crossed over between the previous themes. Reported by Participant 4, discussed when she realized she was not being a servant leader for her family when her daughter asked, “Why don’t you stop working go play tennis with me or whatever? So, it definitely takes a toll on you.”

Mitigating Adverse Impacts

An important outcome of this research is not only to identify the negative implications of servant leadership, but also to understand effective measures that these leaders have utilized to minimize those adverse impacts. The themes discovered from were, establishing a support system, practicing intentionality, and prioritizing. Data provided through RQ2 provided findings related to the fourth pillar of the conceptual

framework, the art of systematic neglect. Servant leaders established strategies and structures to help them identify that point of neglect and reorient themselves to healthier habits.

Theme #1: Intentionality and Prioritizing

As found in the data for RQ1, the practice of prioritizing other's needs ahead of their own resulted in adverse impacts on the leader. As prioritizing is discussed in this section, it refers to the practice that supports the art of systematic neglect. Participants explained that, at some point, it is crucial that you prioritize aspects of your life to establish healthier habits. For example, Participant 1 stated, "We're really going to have to schedule in those exercise times. Because it does, make me feel better and the pride does help with any stress." Learning to say no was also an action by servant leaders in an effort to establish priorities. Other strategies deemed effective by participants were practicing intentionality in specific areas. Participant 5 discussed specific training completed to help create healthy habits and boundaries:

We went to a resiliency training; it taught us to breathe that taught us to remember our place. For me, I love to be outside. Once you take your place mentally, you say this is where I need to be for happiness.

This intentionality for personal growth was echoed by several other participants through different techniques. Participant 3 used a sign on her desk to remind her the importance of being intentional, "I used to have a sticker on my desk right here that would say, mindful. To me, it was a reminder to be mindful of my time." She went on to state how she established boundaries between her work and personal life. She stated:

It's being transparent and honest with people, and having those boundaries and being OK to tell people, 'Hey, not right now.' My staff knows I have kids of my own and so when they have extracurricular activities, they know and understand I may not be here or available.

Theme #2: Support System

Throughout interviews, participants frequently referenced the importance of surrounding themselves with a support system that helps hold them accountable. Participants discussed how their support group would act as, "truth tellers." These truth tellers would help the servant leaders recognize their unhealthy habits and encourage them to take care of themselves. Participant 3 gave the following example, "I have members of my leadership team that may see me working on a Google Doc at 10:30 at night and they will get on the document and literally type, go to bed!" This support system was found to help reduce workload, holding leaders accountable to their family time and prior obligations. The study by Liao et al. (2021), the only other study found that examined servant leadership from a within-person perspective, presented evidence that perspective taking is a moderator of the negative impacts of servant leadership. The data from this study supports the need to be receptive of feedback from those within your support system, to help reorient your perspective and encourage servant leaders to move towards healthier lifestyle decisions. Interestingly enough, being a human is not a prerequisite to serving in a supportive role. Participant 7 explained:

We have a dog and he loves to go walking. He's a motivator for me because when I get home and put tennis shoes on, He is always excited and like let's go for a walk. So, I think that makes a big difference.

Data also supported the need for servant leaders to have mentors they have learned from throughout their career. These servant leaders learned the importance of scheduling and strategies to establish priorities directly from previous supervisors. Participant 5, calling it a blessing, “I am blessed to have other leaders and be around other leaders, who, are almost like a support group”, established the importance of this support group.

Additional Findings

As data were gathered and analyzed, it was clear that there were unintentional, additional findings that added value and perspective to this study. First, coupled with the negative implications already discussed, participants expressed positive impacts on their personal wellness from their servant leadership. Increased emotional or physical health was experienced when servant leaders performed acts that modeled their servant leadership for others. When asked about their emotional wellness due to their servant leadership, Participant 3 stated, “It's increased a lot, because it helps me fill my own bucket. I'll see other teachers acting as servant leaders for their teams.” Positive impacts were also found from the positive climate and culture that had been fostered at campuses.

Another additional finding relates to the experience of the participants and their ability to handle and deal with the negative impacts of their servant leadership. Three of the participants had moved into administration after serving as an athletic coach. Each of these three confirmed that their coaching experience prepared them to handle the stress associated with acting as a servant leader. Specifically, Participant 6 stated, “Because I'm an ex-coach, I understand all that, and I can deal with adversity very easily, and handle all the whatnot. So it doesn't stress me out... you're built to deal with stress if you come

from that background.” Participant 1 reiterated the value of her coaching experience, “I really feel the coaching side of me has helped me deal with dealing with stress, you know, not feeling overwhelmed.”

Discussion

Summary

Since servant leaders are constantly prioritizing other’s needs ahead of their own, this study aimed to gain an understanding of the adverse impacts faced by school leaders implementing servant leadership. This qualitative study gathered data from seven school leaders identified as servant leaders. The data collected provided valuable insight into how these servant leaders operationalize their servant leadership on a daily basis, and how those actions result in adverse effects emotionally, physically, and how it reduces their ability to maintain a healthy work/life balance. In addition to the themes regarding adverse impacts from servant leadership, themes were identified that allow servant leaders to minimize these impacts. The themes for minimizing these effects were intentionality and prioritizing, as well as establishing a support system.

Conclusions

The data collected from this research provided a definitive and valuable understanding of servant leadership. After establishing an understanding of servant leadership, a basic curiosity guided this research, “How can servant leaders take care of themselves if they are always focused on taking care of others?” That curiosity was translated into two research questions.

RQ1. According to the perspective of educational servant leaders, what adverse effects on their personal wellness do they experience as a result of their servant leadership?

The data identified observable servant leader actions, impacts to the leader, support for the knowing-doing gap, and evidence of that servant leaders practice the art of systematic neglect through specific strategies. Findings showed the challenge for servant leaders to consistently meet the needs of their staff while also meeting their personal needs. The evidence proved implementing servant leadership does come at a cost for school leaders. Specifically, these school leaders will face physical impacts such as increased stress and fatigue, reduced sleep, nutrition, and physical fitness. Emotional adverse impacts included feeling emotionally drained, overwhelmed and an increase in their sense of guilt. The final adverse impact consistently seen as a byproduct of servant leadership actions was a reduced ability to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life. The studies by Okoroma and Robert-Okah (2007), Boyland (2011), Chaplain (2001), and Oplatka (2017), confirmed that school principals have increased stress, fatigue, and an imbalance between their work and personal life. The adverse impacts provided through this research are similar in each of the aforementioned studies. However, the sources of the impacts are polar opposites. The studies mentioned above identified the causes of negative impacts to school leaders to be factors such as district initiatives, inadequate funding or facilities, increased accountability, heavy workload, and poor work conditions. This study aimed to link specific servant leader actions to resultant adverse impacts on the leader. Therefore, the adverse impacts faced by school leaders who operate as servant leaders would be in addition to the already supported health and wellness challenges that come from being a school principal.

The study was guided by the conceptual framework of a within-person focus. The identified actions of servant leaders were organized according to the seven themes

presented by Liden et al. (2008), emotional healing, creating value for the community, putting subordinates first, conceptual skills, empowering and helping subordinates grow, and behaving ethically. The conceptual framework for this study was implemented to examine servant leadership through a new lens and establish the leader as the focus in each of the four pillars. The interview questions intentionally provided an opportunity for participants to self-reflect and evaluate their servant leadership in relation to their own personal wellness. This effectively brought the leader's personal impacts into the focus of the study.

RQ2. How do school servant leaders mitigate the personal wellness adverse effects of their leadership style?

The second inquiry was based on establishing strategies servant leaders have effectively utilized to minimize the adverse effects identified in RQ1. Findings consisted of the following two major themes, intentionality and prioritizing, in addition to establishing a support system. Intentionality was applied in areas like calendar, scheduling, and personal growth or reflection. These servant leaders acknowledged that it was important to identify those times in which prioritizing your needs, time, or health was of the utmost importance. In other words, these leaders practiced the art of systematic neglect through these techniques and strategies. The support system of leaders that the participants referenced were found to be truth tellers and accountability partners. Participants provided examples of this support system stepping in to help reiterate boundaries and healthy habits, or providing valuable mentor opportunities.

As the data from RQ2 is presented, it is framed around a skill of servant leaders first identified by Greenleaf (1970), the art of systematic neglect. According to Greenleaf,

this skill should be practiced by servant leaders. He promoted the need for servant leaders to periodically withdraw themselves in order to replenish their ability to serve. By implementing a within-person conceptual framework, the participants were able to provide data and perspective into the art of systematic neglect. This idea of intentionally working up to the point of exhaustion before allowing a period of withdrawal was supported by this study. Participants discussed the intentionality behind their approach to servant leadership as well as the importance of prioritizing. In addition, the participants affirmed the need to surround themselves with a support system to help reinforce healthy habits and behaviors.

Implications

The following are recommendations for policymakers to consider in attempts to provide supportive measures for school principals operating as servant leaders. Both recommendations have seen precedent in previous policy and legislation but have not been utilized across states specifically for school principals or assistant principals. Mentor programs for principals are currently required in only 20 states (Goldrick, 2016). Required mentoring programs should be mandated by states to mentor principals. Based on the findings from this study, it would be wise to establish mentor pairs by matching leadership styles. It is recommended that mentees and mentors complete a leadership inventory so leaders with similar leadership styles are paired together. Also, this study provided evidence that highlighted the value of a school leader's time. Other school employee positions, counselors, for example, have been required to complete time audits. This practice would provide a better understanding of possible policy changes that would protect and ensure proper allocation of time for school leaders.

From a practitioner standpoint, this research has produced a valuable perspective from servant leaders who have gained experience operating as school leaders who prioritize other's needs ahead of their own. As these school leaders gained experience, they have assembled a toolbox of strategies to minimize these adverse effects. Based on the evidence, school leaders operating as school leaders need to build specific structures into place that help protect and safeguard their own personal needs. For example, establishing times during the workday that will allow meaningful and important progress to be made on tasks that otherwise would be completed at home, after hours. Since the servant leader's actions routinely impact their daily schedule, it is important to establish protected times throughout the day that liberate the servant leader from the need to prioritize other needs ahead of their own.

Through decades of inquiry into this leadership style, researchers have established themes and characteristics of servant leaders. All of the servant leader actions identified in this research align with the characteristics defined by Liden et al. (2008), emotional healing, putting subordinates first, empowering others, creating value for the community, behaving ethically, and conceptual skills. This study also provided valuable insight into the pillars of this framework that the researcher was unable to find any prior empirical evidence to support. Specifically, the findings related to the art of systematic neglect, perceived impacts to servant leaders, and how servant leadership is operationalized by school leaders shrink gaps in existing literature. The structure, data collection process, and analysis completed by this study have provided relevant and key findings that may encourage and warrant further inquiry into leadership styles utilizing this conceptual framework.

This study intended to identify specific servant leader actions and link them to subsequent adverse impacts. This intentionality existed to differentiate these adverse impacts from similar impacts facing all school leaders. To further that differentiation, subsequent studies that consisted of both servant leader and non-servant leader participants would add valuable context to this phenomenon. Another potential approach would be to conduct a phenomenological study that dedicated time to collecting data through physical observations over an extended period. This would provide additional insight into these servant leader behaviors and provide an opportunity to map them directly to adverse effects. The additional finding from this study also points to an interesting inquiry. Each participant who had an athletic coaching background attested to the fact that their experience as a coach allowed them to handle stress levels. Though not directly linked to servant leadership, further research should be completed to examine this relationship between coaching experience and the ability to effectively handle stress.

Strength

Servant leadership provided an important depth of existing literature in which the conceptual framework was derived for this qualitative study. The qualitative methodology utilized allowed the researcher to encourage and promote self-reflection from participants. This opportunity to empower those who are reluctant to think about their own needs allowed a level of vulnerability from the participants and provided depth to the experiences and understanding of how servant leadership impacts school leaders. As previously stated, there was a gap in the literature in both understanding how servant leadership was operationalized daily and how this leadership style may impact the leader. This study adds evidence for both specific servant leadership actions and perspectives

into servant leadership through a within-person focus. Another void in literature filled by this research is the support of the art of systematic neglect first identified by Greenleaf (1970). Lastly, the data provided by answering RQ2 can be used to create a framework for effectively minimizing the adverse impacts of servant leadership.

Limitations

Although not possible due to the available timeline for this study, data saturation could be better achieved by increasing the number of participants. Originally, the researcher's goal was to create a participant pool of 10 servant leaders. This had to be reduced after response and participation was only received from seven individuals.

Another consideration is that this study focused on rural school principals, therefore some of the impacts may relate to the qualities and characteristics of a rural school principal. In addition to the number of participants, increased experience levels within their current role may have provided additional data on effective measures to mitigate the adverse impacts of servant leadership.

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