

VALIDATION OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' SERVANT LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS
SCALE WITH A POPULATION FROM THE UNITED STATES

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KIM MARIE THURSTON

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SERVANT LEADERSHIP

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KIM MARIE THURSTON

LEMOYNE COLLEGE, B.S. (1992)

RADFORD UNIVERSITY, M.S. (1996)

ALFRED UNIVERSITY, M.A. / C.A.S. (2015/2017)

AUTHOR: Kim Marie Thurston

APPROVED BY: Dr. Mark Fugate, Committee Chairperson

Dr. Andrea Burch, Committee Member

Dr. Michele Lowry, Committee Member

ACCEPTED BY: Kevin Curtin, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Division of Counseling and School Psychology

Jay Cerio, Ph.D.
Dean School of Continuing and Graduate Studies

Beth Ann Dobie, Ph.D.
Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to validate the results of Ekinci's original research study conducted to the *School Principals' Servant Leadership Behaviors Scale* (SPSLBS), a scale measuring the servant leadership behaviors of school principals (2015). Ekinci's scale was developed for use in Turkey and had not been validated for use in the United States. This instrument was selected due to the importance of having a method of assessing principal leadership that is based on the perceptions of their teachers and because no other servant leadership scale has been developed to specifically look at servant leadership within the educational setting. Elementary and middle school teachers from participating New York State and Pennsylvania schools were the primary sampling unit and data was collected by administering the SPSLBS. Results were promising as the multidimensional structure of the SPSLBS was able to be replicated with a sample from the United States using Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The instrument was found to be a reliable measure with satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity. Similar to the original study, the factors correlated well enough to be viewed as constructs measuring the overall servant leadership behavior of school principals, but differently enough to demonstrate that the scale is made up of individual factors and is not just a unidimensional scale. Overall, the goodness-of-fit of the model was adequate. Additional analyses identified no significant difference between the teachers' perceptions regarding their school principals' servant leadership behaviors based on their gender, which differed from the original study. However, teacher perceptions did differ significantly according to their length of employment with their current principal, but did not follow this same pattern as in the original study. The current study initiated the process of strengthening the adaptability and usefulness of the SPSLBS within a broader cultural and geographical context.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION, LITERATURE REVIEW, AND STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the educational system has changed considerably in response to federal legislation. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 and the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act (IDEIA) of 2004 clearly outlined the expectation that interventions are to be based on scientific evidence, and student outcomes are to be evaluated using a data-based decision-making process. Due to increasing demands and accountability measures being placed on our schools, educators have had to cope with major changes in their practices. Many states have now adopted demanding curriculum standards, mandated rigorous teacher assessment processes and reporting, and implemented comprehensive data-reporting systems for gathering and evaluating student outcomes, making the need for effective leadership fundamental to meeting school performance demands (Brumley, 2012). Additionally, schools are confronting multiple challenges including, bullying, violence, gang related activities, substance abuse, absenteeism, high dropout rates, suicide, low parental involvement, changing family structures, and, more generally, a growing distrust of the capabilities of those in authority positions to effectively meet these needs (Milstein & Henry, 2008). In order to address these increasing demands, school improvement efforts need to be comprehensive, impacting all aspects of the school environment, if they are going to meet their primary objective of educating students.

Evidence that improved academic achievement can be achieved by effective school leadership has been established over the past several decades of research (Bass, 2000; Brumley, 2012; Hoy, 2012; Karadag, Bektas, Cogaltay, & Yalcin, 2015; Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty,

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2005; Mitchell & Castle, 2005; Mulford, Silins, & Leithwood, 2004; Riggs & Gholar, 2009; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). There also is mounting research evidence showing a positive correlation between specific leadership practices and a healthy school climate (Bass, 2000; Black, 2010; Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997; Lehr & Christianson, 2002). One theory that has emerged recently as an area of interest is that of *servant leadership*. The term, *servant leadership*, is not new, having been coined by Robert Greenleaf in 1970; however, it has become increasingly relevant as educational settings are being held to a much higher level of accountability, coupled with an increasing awareness of social responsibility and ethical behavior. Greenleaf (1977/2002) described *servant leadership* in the following manner:

It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such, it will be a later choice to serve-after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. (p. 27)

Greenleaf spent over 50 years working in management, and a great deal of his time researching leadership and education, prior to articulating and publishing his concept of *servant leadership*. He founded the *Center for Applied Ethics* in 1974 to bridge the gap between management research and practice, leading to many important findings related to the servant leadership approach. The current research is not associated with the center, now named the *Robert K. Greenleaf Center*, but hopes to contribute to this growing knowledgebase.

Furthermore, in addition to the increasing external pressures faced by school administrators, there has been a shift in employee expectations towards a demand for more ethical, people-centered management (Van Dierendonck, 2011). High levels of stress are

observed when employees feel their work environment is chaotic, they lack autonomy, or they experience conflict with their supervisor and, in turn, there is a negative impact on fundamental organizational outcomes (Chamberlain & Hodson, 2010). In contrast, an effective leadership approach yields improved commitment to the organization and increased employee and role satisfaction, which leads to higher performance and improved organizational outcomes (Murari & Gupta, 2012). Therefore, a principal leadership style that is well grounded in servant leadership theory might be exactly what is needed to accomplish comprehensive school reform while maintaining ethical, responsible practices.

Organizational Leadership

Historical overview of organizational leadership. The quest to identify what leadership is and what a leader can do to motivate their employees to perform at their best has been around since the earliest of times. More recently, an entire cottage industry has been built upon this exploration with thousands of *leadership experts* making a vocation out of assessing, coaching, and molding individuals into leaders who can accomplish organizational objectives (Moccia, 2011). After an extensive review of the research and literature in the field of leadership between 1930 and 1990, Rost (1991) identified over 100 different definitions of leadership and provided a new conceptualization that fundamentally distinguished leadership from management. Although definitions continue to vary to some degree, there are several characterizations that most modern day scholars who study leadership universally recognize as a specific representation of what it means to be a leader (Northouse, 2012). Fundamentally, “leadership is the ability to influence a group of individuals toward achievement of organizational goals” (Boone & Makhani, 2012, p. 83). Similarly, the U.S. Field Manual for Army leadership defines

leadership “as the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation while operating to accomplish the mission and improving the organization” (Moccia, 2011).

Almost all disciplines, including educational administration, have shown an interest in understanding and studying leadership (Rost, 1991). Thus, there are many different approaches to leadership that have evolved over time (Northouse, 2012). In Northouse’s (2012) book, *An Introduction to Leadership: Concept and Practice*, he traces the evolution of leadership theories throughout history. Northouse begins with the early *trait approach*, sometimes called “Great Man” theories because they focused on identifying innate characteristics of well-known or famous leaders throughout history. This approach was prevalent from 1900 to the early 1940s and had a resurgence in the 1970s as scholars began to study visionary and charismatic leadership styles (Northouse, 2012). However, most researchers do not subscribe to the *trait approach* or believe that leadership consists of a single personality feature or characteristic. According to Boone and Makhani (2012), “it is not, as some may incorrectly assume, the hard-to-define attribute of charisma” (p. 84). In contrast, leadership is conceptualized as a broader set of well-recognized skills, behaviors, and attitudes that can be learned and cultivated through practice (Boone & Makhani, 2012). The field of behavioral genetics sheds some light on this issue with heritability studies indicating that about 30% of the variation in the onset of leadership and leadership style could be explained by genetics, while the remaining difference could be attributed to the environment (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). The behavioral genetics research reviewed concludes that when it comes to leadership development, nurture outweighs nature; the environment that an individual grows up and later works in is more significant than heritability (Avolio et al., 2009).

With that being said, researchers began to focus not only on the personality characteristics of the leader, but the behavioral ones as well. In the late 1930's, leadership research shifted its focus to the *behavior approach* in the late 1930s, which had to do with “what leaders do and how they act” (Northouse, 2012, p. 2). In the 1940s and 1950s, researchers at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan conducted pioneering studies of how leaders behaved in small group situations (Northouse, 2012). At the height of the behavior approach in the early 1960s, research focused on how managers use task behaviors and relationship behaviors in an organizational setting (Blake & Moulton, as cited in Northouse, 2012). Then in the late 1960s, the *situational approach* to leadership began to get a foothold and continued to evolve from the 1970s through the 1990s (Vecchio, 1987). The idea underlying this approach is that the right leadership style is dependent upon the situation or, stated inversely, that different situations demand different types of leadership (Boone & Makhani, 2012; Northouse, 2012; Vecchio, 1987). Examples of situational approaches include *path-goal theory*, which examines how employee motivation is boosted by the leader in order to augment their performance, and *contingency theory*, which focuses on the interplay between the leadership style and the specific attributes of the situation (Boone & Makhani, 2012; Northouse, 2012). The research that focused on the contingency approach is prolific within the already extensive literature on leadership (Boone & Makhani, 2012). This seems to be due to its flexibility and ability to be combined with the newer leadership approaches; for instance, some employment situations might “call for autocratic leadership, some for participative or consultative approaches, and still others call for transformational leadership, and so on” (Boone & Makhani, 2012, p. 83).

In the 1990s, interest grew in the concept of *emotional intelligence* and researchers shifted their focus to the relationships between leaders and their employees, which grew into the

leader-member exchange theory (Northouse, 2012). This theory posits that the better the relationships are between the leader and their employees, the better the organizational outcomes will be and vice versa, poor relationships would lead to poor outcomes (Northouse, 2012).

However, there may be additional factors to take into account, as some research suggests there are buffering effects of coworker relations and employee involvement on poor leader-employee relations, but they can also serve as exacerbating factors (Chamberlain & Hodson, 2010).

Taking everything into account, it can be concluded that the study of leadership has come a long way over the past century, with a vastly improved theoretical and research base and tremendous strides being made towards more fully integrating research across disciplines resulting in a knowledgebase that is far less myopic.

Newer leadership approaches. Interestingly, a number of leadership approaches that emerged several decades ago continue to be thought of as “new” in organizational leadership journals. Some of these, such as the *visionary* or *charismatic leadership* theories, evolved into *transformational leadership theory*, which demarcates leadership as a change process that influences employees and the organizations they work within (Northouse, 2012). During the 21st century, several leadership approaches began to appear including, *authentic leadership* that pays special attention to the genuineness of the leader, *spiritual leadership* that looks at how a leader’s values and sense of “calling” influences or motivates their employees, and *servant leadership* that emphasizes the employees’ needs and working to help them become more independent, self-directed, and knowledgeable in their work in order to produce better organizational outcomes (Northouse, 2012). These newer or emerging leadership approaches view leadership as an influence process, which is consistent with the modern-day definition of leadership, mentioned

above, as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Boone & Makhani, 2012).

One of the most regularly written about and frequently researched leadership models is that of *transformational leadership*. This approach to leadership was originally outlined in a 1978 book by Burns, and further advanced by Bass (1985), who viewed *transformational leadership* as an expansion of traditional leadership models that goes beyond the more simplistic approaches that are based on the exchange of rewards contingent upon performance. Bass (1985) characterized the transformational leader as one who transforms and inspires their followers so that they are willing to perform beyond organizational expectations and to put personal interests beneath the interests of the organization. The transformational leader is seen as being able to motivate others to go above and beyond basic expectations. This leadership approach has been positively correlated with leadership effectiveness and many organizational outcomes such as productivity, employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and reduced turnover (Avolio et al., 2009; Bass, 2000; Chin, 2007). With regard to the school setting specifically, a meta-analysis reviewing the results of 28 independent studies determined that the transformational leadership approach had a direct, significant, and positive effect on school outcomes including teacher job satisfaction, overall school effectiveness, and student achievement (Chin, 2007). However, even with the volume of research on this particular approach, there remains a need for further research related to the transformational leadership approach and a number of situational factors as both moderating and mediating factors (Chin, 2007). For instance, it would be interesting to determine the interaction effects and influence of executive level leadership decisions and priorities and to determine the effectiveness of this approach when utilized in organizations located internationally and with those that differ

culturally. Also, since the research spans multiple decades for this particular leadership approach, a longitudinal study would be an interesting endeavor to determine if it is more or less effective with different generations of workers.

Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) have written extensively on *authentic leadership* defined as “a pattern of transparent and ethical leader behavior that encourages openness in sharing information needed to make decisions while accepting followers’ inputs” (p. 423). Authentic leadership is believed to have grown out of the transformational leadership writings due to beliefs that this model of leadership left the door open for inauthentic versus authentic transformational leaders (Avolio et al., 2009). Authentic leadership was introduced to mainstream audiences by Bill George with the publication of his book, *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value* (2003), followed by another, *Finding Your True North* (2007), and then a personal guide (George, McLean, & Craig, 2008). George states that “for our society to function effectively, we need authentic leaders who can encourage people to perform at their best and step up and lead themselves” (George et al., 2008, p. xiii). His core beliefs are that anyone can work to become an authentic leader just as a musician or athlete work on their skills. Hence, he believed that you do not have to have the innate characteristics or traits of a leader to wait for a promotion, be at the top of your organization, or be a particular age, as leadership is a choice not a title (2008).

At the same time in the academic world, Luthans and Avolio (2003, p. 243) referred to *authentic leadership* as “a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development.” In their original description of this type of leadership, the environment that the

leader works within is included, complicating the issue of measurement (Avolio et al., 2009). Another rendition, posited by Avolio, Luthans, and Walumbwa (2004, p. 4) in a working paper, describes authentic leaders as “those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others’ values/morals perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character.” Originally, scholars attempted to use a broad, multi-dimensional, multi-level definition of *authentic leadership* in order to capture the complexity of the leadership process; however, it was necessary to narrow the focus in order to adequately measure different aspects of the construct (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Subsequent research worked to refine this definition, and the Avolio et al. (2009) review found general agreement on four components of authentic leadership, which include (a) balanced processing, (b) internalized moral perspective, (c) relational transparency, and (d) self-awareness. Authentic leadership research using these components found that they represented unique scales that are reliably measured and have discriminant validity from measures of transformational leadership and ethical leadership (Avolio et al., 2009). Suggestions for future research included gathering additional evidence for construct validity, further delineating authentic leadership from other types of modern leadership approaches, and examination of the approach across situations and cultures (Avolio et al., 2009).

Another of the newer leadership approaches is that of *spiritual leadership* conceptualized by Fry in 2003. Fry (2003) viewed the purpose of *spiritual leadership* as a means of creating vision and value congruence across the organization, and ultimately to cultivate high levels of organizational commitment and productivity. The spiritual leader is an intrinsically motivated individual who feels that their work is their calling and who motivates others by having the

values, attitudes, and behaviors that instill a similar sense of spirituality (Fry, 2003).

Theoretically, *spiritual leadership* is comprised of three components, which include (a) vision, (b) hope/faith, and (c) altruistic love (Wang, Guo, Ni, Shang, & Tang, 2019). However, there is a scarcity of research demonstrating its impact on individual and organizational outcomes (Wang et al., 2019). No studies conducted in the educational setting were able to be identified. In the energy industry in mainland China, one study found that *spiritual leadership* was positively related to employee task performance, knowledge sharing behaviors and innovation behavior, when ruling out the possibility of the alternative explanation of *ethical leadership* (Wang et al., 2019). Across the manufacturing, banking, and retail industries, another study found that the three components of *spiritual leadership* did influence organizational outcomes but were mediated by three types of follower factors, specifically, (a) employee spiritual attributions towards work-meaning/calling; (b) employee spiritual attributions towards the organization-membership; and (c) employee spiritual attributions towards inner self-self-efficacy/self-esteem (Chen, Yang, & Li, 2012). Many researchers conclude that, while *spiritual leadership* adds pieces that have been missing from the existing body of knowledge on leadership, there is a lack of consensus on the definition of workplace spirituality, making research difficult in terms of valid construct measurement (Avolio et al., 2009).

Similar to *authentic leadership*, *transformational leadership*, and *spiritual leadership*, *ethical leadership* emphasizes altruism or concern for others, the integrity of the leader, and the leader acting as a positive role model for employees (Brown & Trevino, 2006). *Ethics* typically refers to an individual's underlying set of beliefs, expectations, principles, and values that are used to guide their life (Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2006). Ethical leaders are described as attempting to act from their underlying belief system (Kezar et al., 2006). They

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place their emphasis on ethical standards and moral management, while authentic leaders emphasize authenticity and self-awareness, transformational leaders emphasize vision, values, and intellectual stimulation, and spiritual leaders emphasize visioning, hope/faith, and work as a calling (Brown & Trevino, 2006). *Ethical leadership* is an emerging construct and has yet to be fully explored; although, there is some promising preliminary research that supports its effectiveness, the applicability across cultures and in various settings has yet to be fully researched (Brown & Trevino, 2006).

Finally, the newer leadership approach that is the focus of the current research study involves the servant leadership approach. Robert Greenleaf's concept of *servant leadership* (1977/2002) has made a major comeback, and some argue that given current work environments and the call for leaders who demonstrate a commitment to ethical, value-laden leadership practices it is more popular now than when it was previously introduced (Kezar et al., 2006). Servant leadership has been contrasted with the autocratic leader and demarcated as a leadership approach that places the well-being of employees over the self-interests of the leader (Laub, 2003). The literature suggests that the autocratic leader who wields power and authority to accomplish goals and who exerts control over others can be seen as the antithesis of the servant leader (Laub, 2003).

It is important to note that most of the newer leadership models include morality or values to some degree, while the more traditional leadership approaches such as trait, behavior, power or influence, and situational theories are value-neutral in their approach to leadership (Kezar et al., 2006). The traditional approaches may still yield results and lead to success with organizational objectives; however, the more modern leadership scholars have been questioning whether the *ends justify the means* in light of the many recent scandals involving leadership of

prominent organizations across fields (Kezar et al., 2006; Tett, 2019). According to Kezar et al. (2006), they “exposed how supposedly value-free assumptions of early leadership theories have resulted in disguising unequal power relations and reinforcing the status quo of organizations” (p. 72). After conducting their extensive review, Kezar et al. suggest leadership should be seen as social process that does include values, keeping in mind that leaders may have different sets of values, especially if they are from different cultures, and that employees may react to greater or lesser degrees with regard to ethics and morality. The accountability of leadership has become a focus as the literature has shifted its emphasis towards creating change and demonstrating outcomes (Kezar et al., 2006). However, Kezar et al. believe accountability is more than merely achieving organizational goals; it is a commitment to doing so with ethical standards and taking into consideration all stakeholders in the process.

Leadership within the educational setting. As with leadership in general, leadership within the educational setting has seen a movement towards more ethical leadership approaches as a means to effect necessary changes and achieve organizational outcomes. In his book *Ethical Leadership*, Robert Starratt (2004) discusses how educational leaders can progress from basic technical or managerial efficiency to ethical leaders who understand that the learning process is, at its core, a moral activity that involves not only the student, but the entire family and school community. He contends that educational leadership requires a moral commitment to high quality learning for all students and describes this commitment as comprised of the virtues of proactive *responsibility*, personal and professional *authenticity*, and a *presence* to the employees and their vocation of teaching and ongoing learning. Starratt explains that there is an increase in pressure placed on school districts with high stakes testing and ever-increasing demands for

improved educational outcomes, both of which necessitate a commitment to the virtues he outlines and believes strongly are essential for educational leadership in today's environment.

Likewise, other educational scholars discuss a similar need within the college and university setting (Kezar et al., 2006). They too discuss the complex state of the higher education environment as one with high pressures due to stagnant or reduced state funding, increasing demands for accountability, assessment, and integration of expensive technology, increasing globalization, and increasing competition (Kezar et al., 2006). For the modern age, they concur that the traditional types of leadership are no longer effective and there is a need for different skills if leaders want to be successful (Kezar et al., 2006). It is reasonable to assume that the extensive challenges present in the educational arena at all levels necessitate employees to be creative, highly motivated, and resourceful. Unfortunately, the more traditional authoritarian styles of leadership, foster work environments where decisions are made and implemented without much feedback or discussion from employees, leading to unmotivated and less resourceful employees. Presumably, if employees are left out of the decision-making process, they have no buy-in and are less likely to fully understand and be able to implement the organization's vision and desired outcomes. This has been demonstrated by research showing that external pressures do hold organizations accountable and can lead to improved outcomes; however, they found that positive outcomes were mediated significantly by an effective leadership approach (Tett, 2019). This makes sense, as setting goals and holding organizations accountable does not explain to them how to actually achieve the desired outcome. Thus, an effective leadership approach is crucial in identifying how to implement the strategy in a manner that includes employees and motivates them to assist in reaching the established goals.

Principal leadership. Brumley (2012) discusses the role of the school principal in educational leadership stating that “the school principalship is the most demanding, difficult, and oft-unwinnable position in the entire school system” (p. 4). In his book, he makes a compelling argument that effective principals are necessary for healthy school cultures and significant academic achievements. Marzano (2003) states that in the educational system at the school-level, teacher-level, and student-level, leadership “could be considered the single most important aspect of effective school reform” (p. 172). An extensive research base supports these views.

For example, research has demonstrated that leadership impacts the job satisfaction, efficacy, morale, retention, and attitudes of teachers (Chin, 2007; Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2004; Walker & Slear, 2011). Academic achievement has been shown to improve with effective school leadership (Bass, 2000; Brumley, 2012; Hoy, 2012; Karadag, Bektas, Cogaltay, & Yalcin, 2015; Kelley, Thornton, & Daugherty, 2005; Mitchell & Castle, 2005; Mulford, Silins, & Leithwood, 2004; Riggs & Gholar, 2009; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2004). Mounting research evidence shows a positive correlation between specific leadership practices and a healthy school climate and culture (Bass, 2000; Black, 2010; Haynes, Emmons, & Ben-Avie, 1997; Lehr & Christianson, 2002; Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2004). Research has also identified leadership as essential for fostering employee engagement, team effectiveness, and organizational success (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). One qualitative study related to the instructional role of principals, found that the level of importance the principal places on different educational activities translated to the level of importance the teachers placed on these activities (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). Research evidence supports the importance of principals as instructional leaders and the relationship between leadership and the extent to which a school has a clear mission and goals (Bamburg & Andrews, 1990).

In a recent study seeking to uncover commonalities in both the personal and professional strategies utilized by successful principals, results were consistent with previous research findings related to principal leadership, teacher morale, and school climate/culture (McKinney, Labat, Jr., & Labat, 2015). The principals utilized in the study were considered successful if they were leaders in schools designated as National Blue Ribbon Schools in a southern state of the United States (McKinney et al. 2015). Approximately 500 teachers and 20 principals were administered *The Leadership Practices Inventory* (LPI) in order to compare subordinate ratings of the leader against the leaders' rating of themselves on several leadership traits. The teachers also completed *The Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* (PTO) as a measure of teacher morale. The study sought to determine if there was a correlation between the three subscales of the PTO (i.e., *Teacher Rapport with the Principal*, *Rapport among Teachers*, and *Instructional Issues*) and the five subscales of the LPI (i.e., model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart). A Pearson Correlation was used in order to determine whether a relationship existed between variables and a multiple regression was utilized to examine predictive qualities of the variables. Results met the $p=0.05$ level of significance to indicate suitable statistical results. A strong positive linear relationship was observed between the PTO subscale *Teacher Rapport with Principal* and the five subscales of the LPI (i.e., model the way=.832, inspire a shared vision=.795, challenge the process=.784, enable others to act=.898, and encourage the heart=.864). A moderate positive relationship was observed between the PTO subscale *Rapport among Teachers* and the subscales of the LPI (i.e., model the way=.389, inspire a shared vision=.365, challenge the process=.368, enable others to act=.375, and encourage the heart=.392) and between the PTO subscale *Instructional Issues* and

the subscales of the LPI (i.e., model the way=.522, inspire a shared vision=.472, challenge the process=.498, enable others to act=.521, and encourage the heart=.485).

According to McKinney et al. (2015), the multiple regression showed the most significant results for the two LPI subscales, *enable others to act* and *encourage the heart* ($F(5,257)=237.164, p<.001$) meaning that the respondents strongly agreed that these two principal behaviors were the two best predictors of teacher rapport with principal. Also, there was a significant statistical relationship between rapport among teachers and the combination of the five subscales measuring principal behaviors ($F(5,257)=10.102, p<.001$). Finally, there also was a significant statistical relationship between instructional issues and the combination of the five subscales measuring principal behaviors ($F(5,257)=21.169, p<.001$). Generally speaking, the principals were assessed as individuals that have high expectations for their teachers, are tactful, approachable, caring, sensitive to the needs of others, respectful to subordinates, good listeners, willing to learn from others, possess both personal and professional knowledge of their teachers and staff members, and are willing to seek out new and innovative educational techniques (McKinney et al. 2015). These results revealed that the morale of teachers impacted the level of instruction delivered to students, which in turn, can impact student outcomes. The academic and social connection between principals and teachers impacted the success of these schools to a very large degree (McKinney et al. 2015). According to McKinney, Labat, Jr., and Labat (2015), research supports the view the most important influence on student achievement is the classroom teacher; however, this they state is very closely followed by the impact of the school leader.

Beyond the basic managerial duties of the job of principal, there are both positive and negative internal and external forces seeking to influence the educational process, and these forces have an agenda that the school principal must bring together into a shared vision

(Brumley, 2012). Brumley (2012) identified that effective principals tend to have a positive outlook, choosing to see questions as a sign of curiosity, problems as improvement opportunities, and conflict or controversy as a catalyst for change and for bringing stakeholders together toward a common goal. Fullan (2001) observes that principals must be “all things to all people” (p. 140), and Brumley (2012) expands this notion by adding “all the time” (p. 4). To get his point across, Brumley gives examples of how principals often go *above and beyond* in the course of their duties “removing pencil lead from skin, constantly fixing broken eyeglasses, exterminating vermin, driving bus routes, organizing dusty book rooms, clearing clogged toilets, and teaching classes during a teacher’s maternity leave,” all of which help shape the role of principal into a position of service to others (p. 6). Effective principals do what it takes to meet organizational goals with the expectation of excellence and the belief that *failure is not an option* (Brumley, 2012). Brumley strongly feels that “schools lacking proper principal leadership are doomed to a fate of underperformance or, at best, status-quo mediocrity” (p. 8). McKinney, Labat, Jr., and Labat’s (2015) study on principals at National Blue Ribbon Schools summarized above supports Brumley’s poignant remarks. In this new age of accountability, principals need to adopt a new mindset, as the traditional educational leadership models have only served to impede progress (Brumley, 2012).

Professional standards for principals. Principals are guided by a set of 10 professional standards issued by the National Policy Board of Education Administration (NPBEA, 2015). According to NPBEA (2015), the Council of Chief State School Officers first published standards for educational leaders in 1996, followed by a slightly amended version in 2008 that utilized the empirical research conducted at the time. These Standards provided the framework that most states used to create policy on educational leadership. However, the NPBEA

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determined that the educational system was undergoing seemingly endless changes at a rapid pace and another update was necessary. They too recognized that the global economy is transforming the job market and that there is an ongoing need to prepare students for the *21st century workplace* where technologies and equipment are quickly advancing. Also, the NPBEA noted that the demographics of the children and families they serve and family conditions and structures are changing. In their opinion, educational leaders needed to be fully aware of the seemingly constant political shifts of control and be ready to confront decreases in school funding, while still being subjected to increasingly competitive market pressures and higher levels of accountability for student achievement. The NPBEA optimistically stated that, although the changes are challenging for educational leaders, “at the same time they present rich and exciting opportunities for educational leaders to innovate and inspire staff to pursue new, creative approaches for improving schools and promoting student learning” (p. 1). The NBPEA Standards are the result of an extensive process that included a thorough review of empirical research, the participation of researchers, and over 1,000 educational leaders through surveys and focus groups. The Standards are foundational to all levels of educational leadership, but the specific leadership activities that are explained after each Standard are directed more towards principal school-level leadership than district-level leadership. Areas of leadership that previously were seen as ancillary or not as relevant, now are known via research to significantly contribute to academic achievement and other important student outcomes, and therefore, have been emphasized (NBPEA, 2015). The updated NBPEA Standards recognize the importance of academic rigor and press, but they also stress the fundamental importance of human relationships and the support and care required for students to excel:

1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values - Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and

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enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.

2. Ethics and Professional Norms - Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness - Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment - Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
5. Community of Care and Support for Students - Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.
6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel - Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff - Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community - Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
9. Operations and Management - Effective educational leaders manage school operations

and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

10. School Improvement - Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Regarding one of the newer leadership approaches described previously, the servant leadership approach, and the NBPEA Standards, Brumley (2012) provides an analysis and coherent argument for how the principles of the servant leadership approach can guide implementation of each of the 2008 NBPEA Standards (previously known as the ISLLC Standards). Brumley argues that the Standards provide the operational framework for the role of a principal, while the servant leadership approach provides the mechanism for actual implementation. There are no changes in the updated 2015 NBPEA Standards that would diminish the arguments Brumley presented. In fact, one could argue that a servant leadership approach is needed now more than ever in order to fully and successfully implement the newest version of the NBPEA Standards with the greatest fidelity, as they more fully realize the fundamental importance of human relationships and the support and care required for students to excel (NBPEA, 2015).

In light of the research demonstrating the key ingredients of successful schools and the ever-increasing demands on the educational system discussed above, leaders effective at building and maintaining a healthy school climate, where teachers and students are motivated, optimistic, and engaged in the learning process, are invaluable. Unfortunately, the more traditional top-down, hierarchical systems of leadership are often entrenched in organizations, including many school districts, and serve as an impediment to the system's change that is necessary (Northouse, 2007). Traditional leadership approaches may result in compliance, but employees often feel empty, undervalued, and unappreciated making it less likely that they will go *above and beyond* for the students they serve (Chamberlain & Hodson, 2010). Also, with regard to accountability,

newer paradigms for research are being suggested that include broadening the concept of the *accountable leader* as one that places the needs and health of their organization above their personal need for control or their self-interests; they exercise accountability in service to their employees (Kezar et al., 2006). Therefore, taking a closer look at a model of leadership that addresses these issues, namely the servant leadership approach, is warranted.

Servant Leadership: Historical Background and Key Characteristics

Current research on leadership theory is moving away from a strong focus on only the leader toward an emphasis on the shared experiences of the leader and their employees, peers, work setting, and organizational culture (Avolio et al., 2009). Many organizations are placing more value on the welfare of their employees than continuing to place all emphasis and admiration on the leader (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Leadership research has also broadened from the for-profit business world to the much wider range of diverse individuals representing public, private, and nonprofit organizations. Due to this shift, the servant leadership approach has increased in popularity, even amongst the newer more positive leadership approaches.

Greenleaf's idea of servant leadership originated from reading Hermann Hesse's novel, *The Journey to the East* (1932/2003), originally published in 1932 (Greenleaf, 1977/2002).

Greenleaf (1977/2002) summarizes the story as follows:

The central figure in the story is Leo, who accompanies the party as the *servant* who does their menial chores, but who also sustains them with his spirit and his song. He is a person of extraordinary presence. All goes well until Leo disappears. Then the group falls into disarray and the journey is abandoned. They cannot make it without the servant Leo. The narrator, one of the party, after some years of wandering, finds Leo and is taken into the Order that had sponsored the journey. There he discovers that Leo, whom

he had known first as *servant*, was in fact the titular head of the Order, its guiding spirit, a great and noble *leader*. (p. 21)

Greenleaf believed the meaning behind the story was that “the great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness” (p. 21).

In contrast to all other leadership theories, Greenleaf (1977/2002) described the practice of going beyond one’s self-interest as the core characteristic of servant leadership. The person-oriented servant leader shows genuine concern with serving their employees, which helps them gain their trust and build strong relationships within the school environment (Van Dierendonck, 2011). The development of employees occurs both directly, through training and mentoring, and indirectly, through the modeling of behaviors that encourage employees to be autonomous in their self-development (Winston & Fields, 2015). Belief in the tenets of servant leadership as a practical operational approach for school communities has gained momentum among scholars and practitioners in the past 20 years (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Bass (2000) commented that “the strength of the servant leadership movement and its many links to encouraging follower learning, growth, and autonomy, suggest that the untested theory will play a role in the future leadership of the learning organization” (p. 33).

Unfortunately, as with the other newer leadership approaches, many researchers note that there continues to be little consensus on a clear operational definition of servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011). For instance, Spears (2010) lists ten characteristics of a servant leader: (a) listening, emphasizing the importance of communication and seeking to identify the will of the people by being committed to listening intently to what is said and unsaid and reflecting upon it; (b) empathy, understanding others, accepting, and recognizing their special and unique qualities; (c) healing, the ability to help make whole; (d) awareness, being awake and self-aware; (e)

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persuasion, seeking to build consensus and influence others by convincing them rather than using the authoritarian model's coercive use of positional power; (f) conceptualization, thinking beyond the present day need and broadening it into a possible future (visioning); (g) foresight, foreseeing outcomes of situations and working with intuitions; (h) stewardship, holding something in trust and serving the needs of others; (i) commitment to the growth of people, recognizing that people have intrinsic value and nurturing the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of others; and (j) building community, emphasizing that local communities are essential in a person's life. Laub (1999) categorized the characteristics into 6 clusters: (a) develops people, (b) shares leadership, (c) displays authenticity, (d) values people, (e) provides leadership, and (f) build community. Boone and Makhani (2012) identify five attitudes that they feel an individual either already possesses or needs to adopt in order to effectively and genuinely implement the servant leadership approach: (a) visioning isn't everything, but it's the beginning of everything; (b) listening is hard work, requiring a major investment of personal time and effort, but it is worth every ounce of energy expended; (c) being a talent scout and committing to staff's success; (d) believing it is good to give away power; and (e) being a community builder. In an extensive literature review on servant leadership, Russell and Stone (2002) identified the two broad categories of *functional* attributes and *accompanying* attributes of servant leadership. The *functional* attributes of the servant leader were described as having vision, being honest, being trustworthy, being service oriented, being a role model, demonstrating appreciation of others' service, and empowering others. The *accompanying* attributes were described as being good communicators and listeners, being credible, being competent, encouraging others, being teachers, and being good delegators. Several renderings include humility, wisdom, relational power, service orientation, employee development, supporting employee autonomy, altruism,

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emotional sensitivity, vision, wisdom, and organizational stewardship (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Some include voluntary subordination, authentic self (humility), covenantal relationship (service to followers), responsible morality, transcendental spirituality, and transforming influence (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Still others include, emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, and behaving ethically (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). Indeed, servant leadership has been described with as many as 28 different dimensions, making research and implementation of the approach difficult (Winston & Fields, 2015). However, as shown in Table 1, in the foremost review of empirical studies on the measurement of servant leadership, Van Dierendonck (2011) provides a synopsis of the fundamental characteristics of the servant leadership approach as related to measurement dimensions:

Table 1. Key Characteristics of Servant Leadership Related to Measurement Dimensions

Key Characteristics	Laub (1999)	Wong & Davey (2007)	Barbuto & Wheeler (2006)	Dennis & Bocarnea (2005)	Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson (2008)	Senjaya, Sarros, & Santora (2008)	Van Dierendonck & Nuijten (in press)
Empowering and developing people	Develops people	Serving and developing others; Consulting and involving others		Empowerment; Trust	Empowering; Helping subordinates grow and succeed	Transforming influence	Empowerment
Humility	Shares leadership	Humility and selflessness	Altruistic calling	Humility	Putting subordinates first	Voluntary subordination	Humility; Standing back
Authenticity	Displays authenticity	Modeling integrity and authenticity				Authentic self; Transcendental spirituality	Authenticity
Interpersonal acceptance	Values people		Emotional healing	Agapao love	Emotional healing	Covenantal relationship	Forgiveness
Providing direction	Providing leadership	Inspiring and influencing others	Persuasive mapping	Vision	Conceptual skills		Courage; Accountability
Stewardship	Builds community		Organizational Stewardship; Wisdom		Creating value for the community; Behaving ethically	Responsible morality	Stewardship

Often, when the servant leadership approach is mentioned, people are confused as to what it is because the phrase seems to be an oxymoron or paradoxical in nature (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). A *servant* typically refers to a subservient, obedient individual who is ordered to do menial jobs from a person of power. A *leader* typically refers to a person that is in charge of others; a person in front of others, controlling and directing the actions of others. Perhaps the attributes of a servant leader can best be described using Greenleaf's own experience and observations that "the very top people of truly great organizations are servant leaders. They are the most humble, the most reverent, the most open, the most teachable, the most respectful, the most caring, and the most determined" (p. 12). In any event, one attribute that all of the descriptions of the servant leadership approach have in common is that it is not the traditional approach to organizational leadership, which tends to consolidate power in the hands of a few top level individuals and expect blind following and compliance from employees (Winston & Fields, 2015).

Servant Leadership: Comparison with Other Leadership Approaches

The leadership approaches that are most similar to the servant leadership approach are authentic leadership, transformational leadership, spiritual leadership, and ethical leadership, each of which was described in detail above. However, it is the emphasis on serving followers that sets the servant leadership approach apart from all other approaches. In fact, many researchers go so far as to state that it is a servant leaders' moral objective to serve others (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Graham, 1991; Mayer et al., 2008). This is not to be confused with merely being a moral or ethical person that employees emulate as a good role model; rather, the servant leader goes further in that they see it as their duty to serve others so that they can meet organizational objectives. The research in leadership has so often focused solely on the leader

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that some scholars believe the future of the research will be on what contributes to or undermines effective leadership development of employees (Avolio et al., 2009). Additionally, further globalization of the market and increased workforce mobility, intensifies competition amongst employers for the best employees and heightens the need to develop leaders from within (Avolio et al., 2009).

With regard to the authentic leadership approach, there is overlap with the servant leadership approach in the two areas of authenticity and humility, but none of the other attributes are accounted for (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Authenticity is obviously the main attribute of the authentic leader. Humility in the authentic leadership approach is described as the willingness to learn; however, not only is the servant leader willing to learn, they also are willing to stand back, share leadership, and allow employees to be autonomous in their work (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Also, authentic leaders do not necessarily emphasize the development of employees into leaders, even though they may have a positive impact on them via role modeling (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). In the opinion of Van Dierendonck (2011), the authentic leadership approach falls short of being a full model for positive leadership and should be incorporated into the servant leadership approach.

Regarding the transformational leadership approach, this leader's goals are more focused on the advancement of the leader (Stone et al., 2004). While there is specific attention given to the development of employees, there also is the charismatic nature of the transformational leader, which calls into question the motivation of the employees and the purpose underlying their compliance and growth (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Even so, both transformational leadership and servant leadership have been shown to have a positive relationship with organizational learning and organizational performance (Choudhary, Akhtar, & Zaheer, 2013). However, the

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leader's loyalty is where the two approaches primarily differ. The transformational leader's primary allegiance is to the organization; therefore, the risk of employees being manipulated to achieve organizational goals or to meet the leader's personal goals is heightened (Graham, 1991; Van Dierendonck, 2011). The servant leader focuses more on the development, well-being, and functioning of their employees, facilitating a shared vision and trusting employees to follow-through with meeting the needs of the organization (Stone et al., 2004). Also, the servant leader is focused on humility, authenticity, and interpersonal acceptance, none of which are attributes of transformational leadership, per se (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Parolini, Patterson and Winston's (2009) empirical study confirmed that servant leaders are perceived as primarily focusing on the needs of the employee, while transformational leaders are primarily focused on the needs of the organization. Servant leaders are expected to want to serve first, to be more unconventional, and to support the autonomy of employees, more than transformational leaders (Parolini et al., 2009).

The spiritual leadership approach also is similar to the servant leadership approach in that there is a focus on values, visioning, making work meaningful, and building upon the strengths of employees (Van Dierendonck, 2011). The spiritual leader helps employees find a calling or sense of meaning in their work and builds an organizational culture based on altruistic love, which leads employees to feeling understood and appreciated (Van Dierendonck, 2011). However, there is little empirical research clarifying what behavior is actually related to spiritual leadership (Avolio et al., 2009; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Therefore, Van Dierendonck (2011) contends that servant leadership is a more "sophisticated theory" that more fully explains the leader-follower relationship (p. 1238).

Finally, the ethical leadership approach is similar to the servant leadership approach in that it emphasizes interpersonal relationships, two-way conversations with employees,

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demonstrating caring for people, integrity, trustworthiness, and serving the good of the whole (Van Dierendonck, 2011). *Ethical leadership* is still considered an emerging construct that has yet to be fully explored; although, there is a short 10-item scale in use to measure a leaders' ability to make fair decisions, show ethical behavior, listen effectively, and have the best interest of employees in mind (Brown & Trevino, 2006). However, Van Dierendonck (2011) clarifies that the servant leader is far more focused on the development of the employee, while the ethical leader is focused more on directive and normative behavior. There are three servant leadership attributes that are common with the operationalization of the ethical leadership approach, specifically, humility, stewardship, and the empowering and developing of employees (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, and providing direction do not seem to be as important in the conceptualization of ethical leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

In summary, it is clear that several of the newer, more positive, leadership approaches espouse characteristics that are similar with one another. However, it is important for effective measurement, training, and implementation of these approaches to tease out exactly where the differences lie and what underlies the leader's primary behavioral motivation. According to the comprehensive review and analysis conducted by Van Dierendonck (2011), no other approach to leadership incorporates all of the six key characteristics of servant leadership, which, in his opinion, positions servant leadership as the most elaborate approach with the most explicit emphasis on the importance of employee development. He also feels that this approach is distinctive in the leader's dual motivation to both lead and also to serve as the foundation of the characteristic behaviors. Wong and Davey (2007) suggest that servant leadership is "deceptively simple, yet is probably the most profound and difficult type of leadership" (p. 7). They feel the difficulty lies in the need for a shift in attitude and beliefs, clarifying as follows:

All the exercises in team-building will not make you a team person, if you are an egoistic person at heart. Egos die hard. Pride will not easily let go of its prisoners. That is why there are so few servant leaders. Servant Leadership training challenges our basic attitudes and motivations. It demands a new orientation towards the self and people. (p. 7)

Servant Leadership: Measurement Tools

As previously discussed, a large portion of the early research on the servant leadership approach had concentrated on operationalizing the concept (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Despite the fact that this leadership approach was introduced over 40 years ago, with empirical research studies beginning in 1999, a solid definition and theoretical framework still seemed to be a distant goal. However, Van Dierendonck (2011) met this challenge head on by conducting his comprehensive review with the purpose of defining the main characteristics of servant leadership “based on the combined insights of the most influential theoretical models and the operationalization from seven different research groups” (p. 1229). Operationalizing the concept of servant leadership was an important endeavor because a universal definition was crucial for the development of instruments that could adequately measure the servant leadership approach. Prior to the *School Principals’ Servant Leadership Behaviors Scale* (SPSLBS), utilized in this current study, there were seven instruments developed specifically to measure either organizational servant leadership culture or an individual’s servant leadership behaviors. These seven instruments are briefly described below, followed by a synopsis of each measure presented in Table 2.

Laub (1999) was the first researcher to develop a written measurement tool for assessing servant leadership characteristics within organizations. He utilized a Delphi study and literature

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review to determine the distinct attributes of servant leadership and then used these attributes to create the *Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA)* instrument (Laub, 1999). The study's sample included 847 employees of 41 participating religious non-profit organizations, secular non-profit organizations, for profit organizations, and public agencies from various states throughout the United States and from one organization in the Netherlands. The volunteer employees rated their organization, and a total of 828 of the responses were usable. The factor analysis indicated that the instrument was comprised of two factors, namely, organizational assessment items and leadership assessment items. Laub pointed out that he considered potential sub-scores, but there was a high correlation amongst the scales; therefore, he recommended using the overall OLA score for research purposes. This was considered the primary limitation of the study. Although the scale lacked the intended multidimensionality, it still can be used to assess the overall servant leadership culture of an organization and can be credited with initiating conceptualization and empirical research on this leadership approach (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

Page and Wong (2000) developed the next instrument, the *Servant Leadership Profile (SLP)*, which was updated in 2003, the *Servant Leadership Profile –Revised (SLP-R)*, and again in 2007 (Wong & Davey, 2007). This instrument was designed as a self-report measure, meaning the individuals completing the profile are rating themselves on the different leadership attitudes and behavior items. The first instrument was developed utilizing only a conceptual analysis and measured both the theoretical characteristics and the process of servant leadership with 99 items divided into 12 subscales (Wong & Davey, 2007). The 2003 version dropped the number of subscales to seven and utilized an opponent-process model, a large sample size of over 1,000 subjects, and empirical research in its development (Wong & Davey, 2007). The opponent-process model specifically set apart autocratic leadership approaches from the servant

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leadership approach, meaning it is not possible to be motivated by pride and power and also be a servant leader (Wong & Davey, 2007). Wong and Davey's 2007 version dropped the number of subscales to five (i.e., a servant's heart, serving & developing others, consulting & involving others, inspiring & influencing others, and modeling integrity & authenticity) that the researchers felt captured the essential attributes of servant leadership (Wong & Davey, 2007). However, Van Dierendonck (2011) feels a limitation of the instrument is that the five-factor version of the SLP-R only covers four (i.e., empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, and providing direction) out of the six characteristics listed in Table 1 above. Two of the fundamental characteristics of the servant leadership approach Van Dierendonck determined to be important, but felt were left out were *interpersonal acceptance* and *stewardship*. Wong and Davey (2007) state that they continually collect reliable and valid data on the SLP-R and contend the five factors they have identified are both meaningful and stable.

In 2005, Dennis and Bocarnea conducted an extensive literature review and exploratory factor analysis to develop an instrument measuring the seven dimensions of servant leadership theorized in Patterson's 2003 model (i.e., Agapao love, acts with humility, is altruistic, is visionary for followers, is trusting, is serving, and empowers followers). In this study, the participants were followers rating their leaders on the items on the instrument to determine if their behaviors fit Patterson's model of servant leadership. Statistical results of this study determined that Dennis and Bocarnea's (2005) servant leadership instrument measured five of Patterson's seven factor model (i.e., empowerment, love, humility, trust, and vision). Unfortunately, the study only confirmed reliability of three of the scales (i.e., love, empowerment, and vision); therefore, representing only half of what current researchers consider the essential attributes of servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011). The researchers

identified several limitations of the study including that the offering of incentives totaling \$350 to take the survey may have resulted in some participants rushing to ensure they received one. Dennis and Bocarnea also commented that they had no way to determine how well the participants understood the concept of servant leadership even with Patterson's definition given. The authors suggested future research should look at developing assessments using individual organization's staff reviewing an identified servant leader.

In 2006, Barbuto and Wheeler utilized a literature review and exploratory factor analysis to develop an instrument assessing 11 potential characteristics of servant leadership. Their data set was collected from 80 elected community leaders and 388 employee raters from counties in the Midwestern United States. The elected leaders filled out a self-report version of the instrument and the 388 employees filled out a rater version for the purpose of assessing their leader's servant leadership characteristics. Data was collected to test the internal consistency, confirm factor structure, and assess convergent, divergent, and predictive validity. Results yielded five servant leadership attributes (i.e., altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organizational stewardship). An attempt to replicate these findings with a South African sample from the automotive industry failed, suggesting that the instrument might be one-dimensional like Laub's (1999) instrument (Dannhauser & Boshoff, 2007). However, in another more recent study using a sample comprised of teachers from South Africa, the psychometric evaluation of the measure showed reasonable construct validity (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2013). Van Dierendonck (2011) also contends that the instrument realistically only includes four (i.e., humility, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship) out of the six essential characteristics listed in Table 1 above. The two essential characteristics Van Dierendonck felt were left out were *developing people* and *authenticity*. Barbuto and Wheeler

(2006) believed their study was limited by a sample that could not be classified as a probability sample, but felt their excellent response rate (>80%) and the fact that the elected officials served communities of varied populations resulted in a good representation of public sector elected leaders. However, they stated that additional research was needed in order to generalize results to the private sector. The researchers also stated that the elected officials were asked to distribute the rater versions to their staff members, which may have impacted the results.

Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2008) created a measure, called the *SL-28*, by first identifying nine dimensions of servant leadership through a literature review. They then developed relevant items and subjected them to exploratory factor analysis with a sample of 298 students from a Midwestern university, yielding a 7-factor solution (i.e., empowering, helping subordinates grow & succeed, putting subordinates first, emotional healing, conceptual skills, creating value for the community, and behaving ethically). Confirmatory factor analysis with a sample of 164 employees and 25 supervisors from a Midwestern production and distribution company confirmed their initial findings. The employees rated their supervisors on the researchers' conceptualized servant leadership attributes and the supervisors completed a separate rating form of their subordinates' work performance. Liden et al. (2008) further validated the scale by controlling for the transformational leadership and leader-member exchange approaches and determined that servant leadership is a distinct, multidimensional construct. According to Van Dierendonck (2011), the 7-factor solution only truly covers four of the essential attributes of servant leadership as envisioned currently and listed in Table 1 (i.e., empowering & developing people, humility, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship). *Authenticity* is absent and Van Dierendonck states that *conceptual skills* are likely more of an antecedent to *providing direction* than an essential attribute in and of itself. The researchers

identified the cross-sectional design of their study as a limitation because it compromised the causal inference of the relationships they identified. They also felt that larger, less homogenous sample would have added more to the knowledge-base and improved the results.

Senjaya, Sarros, and Santora (2008) developed the *Servant Leadership Behavior Scale*, a 35-item, six-dimension instrument (i.e., covenantal relationship, transforming influence, authentic self, responsible morality, voluntary subordination, and transcendental spirituality). They first developed the items via literature review and then validated them using content experts and confirmatory factor analysis. These researchers utilized a sample of 277 graduate students from one of Australia's largest universities who rated supervisors or leaders in senior or middle management positions. However, there was no data reported on the factorial validity of the overall six-dimension model and the high inter-correlations between the dimensions (ranged between .66 and .87) raised a concern related the factorial validity that remains to be addressed (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Senjaya et al. (2008) acknowledged that there may be concerns associated with the discriminant validity of the six-factor model developed in their study and suggested a competing model analysis would be required in future studies to compare the relative fit indices of the correlated six-factor model and a one-factor model. However, the researchers predicted that future studies would show that the six-factor model would be significantly better than the one-factor model in the end and encouraged replication studies be conducted with larger sample sizes.

Finally, Van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011) developed their multi-dimensional instrument, the *Servant Leadership Survey*, to measure servant leadership after an extensive literature review, interviews with experts, exploratory factor analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis. In all, there were four studies involving 213, 263, and 236 participants from the

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Netherlands, and 380 participants from the United Kingdom, who rated the items as followers considering the behavior of leaders. The final result was a 30-item, eight-dimensional (i.e., empowerment, humility, standing back, authenticity, forgiveness, courage, accountability, and stewardship) measure of servant leadership. Van Dierendonck’s 2011 review contends that this measure “seems to be the only instrument with a good factorial structure that covers all six key characteristics of servant leadership” (p. 1243). However, Van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011) did note limitations, namely, that no other leadership scales were included with outcome measures to know definitively if there was any overlap, convenience sampling was used, and due to the anonymous nature of the respondents, they were unable to obtain sufficient multi-level data.

Table 2. The Measurement of Servant Leadership

	Laub (1999)	Wong & Davey (2007)	Barbuto & Wheeler (2006)	Dennis & Bocarnea (2005)	Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson (2008)	Senjaya, Sarros, & Santora (2008)	Van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011)
Development samples	847 people from 41 organizations	24 leaders, self-rating; 1,157 people from diverse backgrounds	388 people rating leaders in leadership training seminar	250, 406, and 300 people from diverse occupational backgrounds	298 undergraduate students; 182 people in production and distribution company	277 graduate students	1,571 people in eight samples from two countries and diverse occupational backgrounds
Methodology	Literature review; Delphi study of experts; exploratory factor analysis	Literature review; exploratory factor analysis	Literature review; face validity; exploratory factor analysis	Literature review; exploratory factor analysis	Literature review; exploratory factor analysis; confirmatory factor analysis	Literature review; content expert validation; confirmatory factor analysis	Literature review; interviews with experts; exploratory factor analysis; confirmatory factor analysis
Number of items	43	62	23	23	28	35	30
Internal consistency	.90 to .93	Not reported	.82 to .92	.89 to .92; not reported for 3-item scales	.76 to .86	.72 to .93	.69 to .91

As can be seen in Table 2, there have been several scales developed to measure servant leadership behavior. However, Ekinici (2015) determined that a more specific need existed for a multidimensional, structured, valid, and reliable scale for behavior related directly to servant

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leadership in the educational setting. Therefore, he developed the SPSLBS in order to collect quantitative data regarding teachers' perceptions of their school principal. The SPSLBS is a 36-item instrument based on leadership theory, management and education literature, and expert opinion. In his study, the volunteer teachers were asked to rate each of the 36 items on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Mostly*, and 5 = *Always*. All items are scored in the positive direction with a high score indicating a high level of principal demonstrated servant leadership behaviors. The highest possible mean score on a variable is 5.0. The lowest possible mean score is 1.0. Ekinici selected the five dimensions included in the instrument due to their acceptance in related literature and because they represented the attitudes and behaviors of leaders toward followers, a concept that sets Servant Leadership apart from other types of leadership. The survey items focus on the dimensions of *empathy*, *altruism*, *humility*, *integrity*, and *justice*.

In Ekinici's (2015) view, the servant leadership approach can be particularly effective in the school setting because "the school is based on an operating system that is dominated by human relationships" (p. 343). Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2013) offer some preliminary evidence in support of measuring servant leadership in the school setting. The researchers conducted a study using a sample of primary and secondary school teachers from schools in South Africa and measured servant leadership behaviors using Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ). Results of this study indicated the instrument had reasonable construct validity as a five-dimension measure and could be used reliably in the context of the South African school setting, as all subscales had good reliability coefficients ($\alpha > 0.80$). However, it is important to note that the SLQ had not been designed for specific use in the school setting. Ekinici contends that it is important to have a survey measuring the servant

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leadership behaviors of school principals that is based on the perceptions of their teachers, as no other servant leadership scale has been developed to specifically look at servant leadership behaviors within the educational setting.

Ekinci determined that any measurement tool of servant leadership must specifically focus on the attributes that set it apart from other approaches, meaning they are specifically based on an approach of focusing on followers. Additionally, many of the scales developed prior to Ekinci's have Christianity-laden language, limiting their use in a broader context and perpetuating the belief that servant leadership is only effective in not-for-profit or religious based organizations. Although, it is reported to be the most influential leadership model within the Christian community because of the belief that Jesus Christ practiced servant leadership and encouraged his followers to do the same (Wong & Davey, 2007). Ekinci developed this scale for use in Turkey and, therefore, used language that is far more universal in its connotation.

It is also important to note that many rating scales used to assess leadership behaviors in use today are designed to be completed by the individual themselves as the informant. These self-report measures, as they are often referred to, are frequently used for training purposes in order to help the leader gain insights into their own style of leadership and improve in their chosen profession. However, it has been shown that leaders do not typically provide valid, unbiased ratings of their own leadership abilities (Brown & Trevino, 2006). A meta-analysis of self-supervisor, self-peer, and peer-supervisor ratings suggested that managers' self-ratings of their own performance are unrelated to ratings obtained from superiors and subordinates (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988). Based on their literature review, the researchers sort the number explanations for the low correlations between different raters into three categories including (a) egocentric bias, (b) differences in organizational level, and (c) observational opportunities, with

egocentric bias seeming to have the greatest impact and need to be researched further (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988). Also, when using rating scales, superiors tend to focus on the technical competence of their managers, whereas, subordinates regularly think of their supervisor in terms of their integrity and ethics (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). Therefore, allowing that effective leadership requires much more than mere competence at technical managerial duties, it is crucial for executive level leadership to collect pertinent information from subordinates when making decisions about hiring, evaluating, or terminating principals. With regard to the instruments developed specifically to measure the servant leadership approach, a variety of methodologies have been used. Some assess the organization itself to determine if there is a culture of servant leadership (Laub, 1999); some utilize the follower as rater of their supervisor or of leaders in a more general sense (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dennis & Bocarea, 2005; Ekinci, 2015; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Senjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008; and Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011); and one is a self-report measure where the leader rates themselves in servant leadership behaviors (Wong & Davey, 2007). Ekinci's scale, the SPSLBS, was selected for use in this study because of the belief that subordinates (i.e., teachers) will likely provide the best appraisals of their supervisor's (i.e., principal) servant leadership behaviors.

An additional clarification in selecting the SPSLBS is the impact of choosing to measure the principal, rather than measuring executive level leadership (e.g., superintendent). The research related to trust in leadership sheds light on how the different levels of management impact the relationship between the type of leadership and the outcomes measured. In a comprehensive meta-analysis summarizing four decades of empirical research on trust in leadership, Dirks and Ferrin (2002) found that trust in a close or direct supervisor is more strongly related to outcomes (e.g., job performance, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship

behavior) than trust in a distant organizational leader or executive. The authors also found that trust in a close or direct supervisor relates more to employee specific outcomes, rather than widespread organizational focused outcomes. Distant organizational leadership or executive leadership is more strongly associated with widespread organizational focused outcomes such as overall organizational commitment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Therefore, if the level of management influences servant leadership in this way, then it stands to reason that the principal will be more influential on the teachers' group or individual level outcomes.

The Servant Leadership Approach and the Impact on Specific Outcomes

Servant leadership research conducted outside of the educational setting. A great deal of the literature on the servant leadership approach is anecdotal in nature leading many leadership scholars to call for more rigorous quantitative research in this area (Bass, 2000; Brumley, 2012; Northouse, 2007; Russell & Stone, 2002; Senjaya, 2003; Senjaya & Saros, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2000; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Some researchers have taken on this challenge with promising results. For example, Mayer, Bardes, and Piccolo (2008) conducted an empirical research study and found support for a theoretical model connecting the servant leadership approach to job satisfaction, with organizational justice and need satisfaction as mediators of that relationship. Murari and Gupta (2012) conducted a correlational analysis in technology oriented organizations in India and found that several of the servant leadership characteristics (i.e., listening, empathy, awareness, persuading, conceptualizing, foresight, developing people, and building community) identified by Spears (2010) had a significant impact on the empowerment of employees, which resulted in organizational commitment, work environment satisfaction, role satisfaction, and job involvement. The researchers defined empowerment as “the process of

enabling or authorizing an individual to think, behave, take action, and control work and decision-making in autonomous ways” (p. 35).

In another study, Hunter, Neubert, Perry, Witt, Penney, and Weinberger (2012) utilized a multi-level, multi-source model in which they surveyed 224 retail stores in the United States, including 425 employees, 110 store managers, and 40 regional managers to test the relationship between personality, servant leadership, and critical employee and organizational outcomes. These researchers found that the personality trait of agreeableness positively related to servant leadership, while extraversion negatively related to servant leadership. They also found that servant leadership was related to less employee withdrawal in the form of turnover intentions and disengagement, more employee helping behavior, and an improved service climate. Researchers found that servant leadership significantly predicted the organizational commitment of employees, community citizenship behavior, and in-role performance (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). Additionally, servant leadership behavior was positively associated with organizational justice, and simultaneously, organizational justice also shared a significant and positive correlation with organizational citizenship behavior and job performance (Zehir, Akyuz, Eren, & Turhan, 2013). While the research is in its infancy and there is not a high volume as of yet, results seems to be promising in the for-profit organizational structure. Next, research related to the servant leadership approach in education is examined.

Servant leadership research conducted within the educational setting. With regard to the servant leadership approach and the impact on specific outcomes in the educational setting, Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson, and Jinks (2007) found that public school principals identified as servant leaders were rated significantly higher by their teachers in the leadership areas of challenging, inspiring, enabling, modeling, and encouraging, as compared and contrasted with

principals who did not utilize a servant leadership approach and a normative data set of business managers. The servant leadership approach was also shown to have a significant positive correlation with school climate in a study surveying a randomly selected sample of 231 full-time teachers and 15 principals in Ontario, Canada (Black, 2010). Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2008) determined that servant leadership makes a unique contribution in explaining community-citizenship behaviors, in-role performance, and organizational commitment beyond transformational leadership and leader-member exchange (LMX), which were both controlled for in the study.

Unfortunately, with the operational definition of servant leadership and the development of corresponding measurement tools only recently taking shape, there is not a great deal of empirical research to be found in the educational setting. Further impeding this pursuit is the fact that none of the measurement tools were designed specifically for the school setting, with the exception of the SPSLBS, used in the current study. However, there is enough preliminary research evidence demonstrating the relationship between implementation of this specific leadership approach and a number of important educational outcomes. Therefore, validating the results of Ekinici's original research study, conducted in order to develop a scale specifically measuring the servant leadership behaviors of school principals, is a necessary next to step to supporting further research to determine if there is in fact an impact of this leadership approach on important educational outcomes.

School Principals' Servant Leadership Behaviors Scale

First stage. According to Ekinici (2015), the purpose of his research was to develop a scale describing the servant leadership behavior of school principals and to evaluate these behaviors according to teachers' perceptions utilizing the scale. Additionally, the author sought

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to determine and evaluate school managers' servant leadership behaviors and contribute to the efforts to differentiate servant leadership from other types of school leadership. After a thorough review of the literature, he determined that principals' servant leadership behaviors had not been sufficiently studied and tested. First, he developed a scale outline based on relevant literature about servant leadership and by examining other servant leadership scales. He concluded that five dimensions – altruistic behaviors, empathy, justice, integrity, and humility - were commonly used in the servant leadership construct, and he initially formed a pool of 48 items tapping into these dimensions. The five dimensions selected to be included represented the attitudes and behaviors of servant leaders towards their followers, and also sets the servant leadership approach apart from other types of leadership (Ekinici, 2015).

Next, experts in the field of education science were consulted in order to establish the content validity of the scale (Balci, 2001, as cited in Ekinici, 2015). Their feedback resulted in nine items being removed from the scale outline. The final version consisted of 39 items that were scored on a five-point Likert-type scale. The draft scale included an explanation for participants about the aim of the research and 8 items requesting personal information about the respondents. In the 2011-2012 spring semester, Ekinici utilized a random sampling method identifying 17 public elementary schools from the Batman province of Turkey in order to create the study group. The relevant authorities gave permission, and the researcher was able to distribute and collect the scale in the same day. He administered the draft scale to 470 primary school teachers in order to determine reliability and validity. The schools returned 406 of the draft measurement tools, and of those, the researcher was able to use 363 scales, as 43 had incomplete or incorrectly filled out information and had to be removed. Citing Comfrey and Lee (1992), who determined 300 or more respondents to be a good level for establishing factors,

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Ekinci considered his sample size to be sufficient. Participants consisted of 60.1% male teachers and 39.9% female teachers. The teacher participants were asked to give an opinion of the level of the behavior represented in each item by their principal and to indicate how often the behaviors were demonstrated with 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Mostly*, and 5 = *Always*. All items were scored in a positive direction, with high scores demonstrating high levels of servant leadership attitudes and behaviors. The final version has a total of 36 items meaning the maximum servant leadership score is 180 and the minimum is 36, given that the highest possible mean score on a variable is 5.0 and the lowest possible mean score is 1.0 (Ekinci, 2015).

In order to fulfill the purpose of the research, descriptive statistics of correlation, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) were performed on the collected data. Ekinci (2015) reported that the EFA was performed to establish the strength of the five dimensions and the coalescence of the items with the relevant factors. Prior to the factor analysis, the researcher performed the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test in order to determine the compliance of data to factor analysis. The KMO value was reported to be .971, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity value was found to be significant ($\chi^2=11848.5$; $p<.01$). Ekinci determined that the data met compliance and that factor analysis could be conducted on the data, as the KMO coefficient was higher than .60 and the Bartlett's test was significant (Sencan, as cited in Ekinci, 2015). The Varimax rotation procedure was used to analyze which items loaded on each dimension or factor. As a result, it was identified that there were 9 items under the first factor (altruistic behavior), 9 items under the second factor (empathy), 8 items under the third factor (justice), 7 items under the fourth factor (integrity), and 3 items under the fifth factor (humility). The relationship of the items making up the SPSLBS scale with total scale points was examined, and when the correlation coefficients were analyzed,

the r value was observed to vary between .428 and .824, suggesting a high level of correlation of each item with the total scale points. Cronbach's Alpha and item-total correlations were used for the internal consistency reliability coefficient of the scale. The researcher also utilized Spearman Brown for the test split method calculation to reevaluate the reliability of the scale. The first factor was found to be stronger than the others in terms of explained variance, as it explained 53.89% of the total variance of 67.35%. The second (4.82%), third (3.33%), fourth (2.72%), and fifth (2.57%) factors explained 13.46% of the remaining variance. Ekinici (2015) reports that the obtained 67.35% reflects a good rate of the ratio of explained variance to total variance and determined that the scale is at an acceptable level of structural validity. In analyzing the factor numbers, it was determined that the 36 items are positioned under the five factors with eigenvalues greater than one, which is considered significant and supports the scale as a five-factor structure. However, given that there is a decrease in eigenvalues from the first factor to the fifth factor related to their explained variance and the more significant strength of the first factor as compared to the other factors, the scale can also be used as a single factor scale (Ekinici, 2015). In addition, Ekinici determined that there was a high level of significant correlations amongst the factors and for the whole scale. He explained that because the correlation coefficient was .80 and above, data regarding the same-structure measurement was presented, and it was possible that the scale could be used with both a single factor and multiple factors.

Next, Ekinici (2015) performed a CFA to examine the structural validity of the scale's five-factor structure that had been established by the EFA. The 36 items were divided into the 5 main factors, and Ekinici reported that all values related to the model demonstrated good compliance values that were acceptable. The Chi-Square value ($X^2= 1895.29$, $df=584$, $p<0.01$) indicated the model data compliance was significant. Examination of the standardized

coefficients, obtained from the CFA, show the relationship between factors and items are distributed between 0.55 and 0.87. Ekinci explained that standardized coefficients are an indication of the relative importance of an item for its own size. In this study, the items with the highest contribution to servant leadership behavior were the 5th item for *empathy*, 13th item for *altruistic behavior*, 17th item for *humility*, 26th item for *integrity*, and 39th item for *justice*. Examination of the relationship between dimensions found that the highest relationship was between the dimensions of *empathy* and *altruistic behavior* (0.93), while the lowest relationship was between the dimensions of *empathy* and *humility* (0.74). Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient and test split reliability coefficient methods again measured the reliability of the scale. The Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficients for the scale dimensions of altruistic behavior, empathy, fair attitude and behavior, integrity, and humility were found to be 0.941, 0.935, 0.901, 0.909, and 0.748, respectively. The researcher stated that the .70 or higher value of these coefficients is generally seen as sufficient for reliability. With Spearman Brown correction, the test-split reliability coefficient of the scale was determined to be .931. Ekinci did not utilize the test-retest method as he was unable to reach his study group for the second time, and he considered this a limitation of his study. Even so, Ekinci concluded that the SPSLBS is adequately reliable to measure the servant leadership behavior of school principals.

The research studies related to the measurement of servant leadership behaviors and scale development reveal a multidimensional factor structure that varies between three factors and twelve factors (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Spears, 2010; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). A large number of factors, a large number of items, and a structure that is overly focused on the leader are some of the primary limitations identified in servant leadership scale development studies prior to Ekinci's (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2010).

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As described above, Ekinici's (2015) study using the SPSLBS revealed a five-factor structure, and he considered this to be a more *user-friendly*, functional approach to measuring the servant leadership behaviors of school principals. Regarding the scales being overly focused on the leaders, Ekinici sought to develop a scale that takes into account the opinions of teachers so that their relationship with their school principal is considered in the context of servant leadership and in the context of their school's unique organizational climate and culture.

Second stage. In the second stage of Ekinici's (2015) study, descriptive information about the teachers who completed the scale was collected and analyzed in order to determine if the information had a significant impact on the ratings. Essentially, did views on school principals' servant leadership behaviors differ significantly based on teacher descriptive factors? For this portion of the study, the primary sampling unit was 663 teachers determined by the convenience sampling method (Fraenkel & Wallen, as cited in Ekinici, 2015). Of the 663 teachers, 262 scales were collected from teacher participants, and considered as valid. Descriptive data was collected pertaining to the volunteer teachers' gender, the length of employment under their current principal, union membership, principal union membership, and similarity of the union membership. This data was then analyzed using a t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Regarding the gender variable, 158 scales were collected from male teachers and 104 from female teachers. Significant differences were found related to the teachers' opinions regarding school principals' servant leadership behavior according to gender ($p < 0.01$). The male teachers evaluated the servant leadership behaviors of their principals at a higher level than their female counterparts did. Ekinici interpreted this finding for the higher male ratings as a result of there being a greater number of male school principals and that male principals may be more comfortable expressing service-oriented behavior towards same-sex

employees than opposite sex employees. However, he qualified his opinion by stating he found no research to support that contention. He did cite the Barbuto and Gifford (2010) study that found no significant difference between the competence levels of men and women in terms of servant leadership behaviors. Ekinici concludes that gender, as a variable, needs to be studied further in the relation to servant leadership.

Another significant difference was identified in relation to the teachers' opinions regarding school principals' servant leadership behavior according to their length of employment with their current principal (Ekinici, 2015). More specifically, findings indicate that as the length of employment of teachers with their current school principals increased, their perception regarding the school principals' servant leadership behaviors increased in a positive direction ($p < 0.05$). Ekinici postulated that with more time, communication, relationships, and social interaction increases and improves, which would impact the teachers' perceptions of their principal in a positive direction and also be associated with the servant leadership approach in general. It also could be suggested that teachers would continue to work for a principal that exhibits servant leadership behaviors and would also have a positive perception of that principal and their workplace. Ekinici gave no recommendation or suggestion that this variable requires further study; however, it would be interesting to observe and determine if the pattern can be replicated.

In contrast, no significant differences were identified between the union membership status of teachers and their perceptions regarding their school principals' servant leadership behaviors (Ekinici, 2015). Regarding principal union membership, Ekinici reports that the teachers had a significantly higher level of perception against the servant leadership behaviors of school principals without union membership. However, this was mistakenly reported as

significant at the 0.05 level ($p=0.09$) and Ekinci suggested that the significant finding may have been due to the teachers having a more objective perception when the principal does not belong to a union. Regarding the third dimension of union membership, Ekinci identified a significant difference of teacher perceptions between the teachers that share the same union membership as their school principal and the teachers that are members of a different union than their school principal ($p<0.05$). The teachers with the same union membership as their principal perceived the principal servant leadership behaviors at a higher level than the teachers who do not share the same union membership. Overall, Ekinci concludes that principal union membership can lead to teacher perceptual differences. For the purpose of this study, there is no attempt to replicate these particular findings, as principals are not union affiliated in the United States, and all teachers are union affiliated in the states the samples are selected from for this study.

Summary and Justification

It is important to have a valid and reliable instrument to measure the servant leadership behaviors of school principals that is based on the perceptions of their teachers. Prior to Ekinci's (2015) scale, no other servant leadership scale had been developed to specifically look at servant leadership behaviors within the educational setting. Ekinci's results indicate that his instrument is valid and reliable; however, there have been no studies to date that attempt to replicate his results. There also are no studies attempting to replicate his results on a United States sample. This is important given the poor results of replicative studies described above by Van Dierendonck (2011) in his review of the servant leadership measurement tools in use up to that point in time. Only one additional measurement tool was identified after the Van Dierendonck review, and this was merely a validation study of a short form (i.e., the *SL-7*) for one of the tools already in use and already having been reviewed, the *SL-28* (Liden, Wayne, Meuser, Hu, Wu,

Liao, 2015). The *SL-7* short form also was meant to be a measure of global servant leadership, rather than a multidimensional measure. Therefore, there is a need to validate a measurement tool that specifically identifies principal leader behaviors that are essential to establish servant leadership in the educational setting. It is important to validate Ekinici's tool as it seems to have been successful in consolidating the large quantity of attributes used to conceptualize and operationalize servant leadership, and it also was specifically designed to distinguish it from the other newer leadership approaches. Further understanding the core attitudes and behaviors of a servant leader will facilitate a school's efforts to develop and foster the approach in this setting.

Many scholars in the leadership field have identified a need for further research in the servant leadership approach (Bass, 2000; Laub, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002; Senjaya & Sarros, 2002; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Educational leadership scholars like Sergiovanni (2000) explicitly advocate that the servant leadership approach be given more emphasis in school administration literature, as well as, increased attention from those seeking to reform the educational system. Additionally, Ekinici's servant leadership scale was published in 2015, and five years later, there are no studies found that seek to validate the tool or utilize the tool in educational research, although the study was found to be cited in seven dissertations and one journal article co-written by the original author demonstrating the need for principals to be trained in the servant leadership approach (Insley, Iaeger, Ekinici, & Sakiz, 2016).

Research Questions

1. Can the multidimensional factorial structure of the "School Principals' Servant Leadership Behaviors Scale" (SPSLBS) be replicated with a sample from the United States; meaning from the 36-item instrument, are the five factors clearly identifiable constructs as measured by the questions that they are comprised of?

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2. Is the “School Principals’ Servant Leadership Behaviors Scale” (SPSLBS) a reliable measure with a sample from the United States?
3. Do teacher perceptions regarding their school principals’ servant leadership behaviors differ significantly according to gender?
4. Do teacher perceptions regarding their school principals’ servant leadership behaviors differ significantly according to their length of employment with their current principal?

Chapter 2

Research Design and Methodology

Participants

The target population was drawn from a convenience sample and consisted of 105 elementary and middle school teachers who consented to participate as volunteers in the study. 500 surveys were distributed, along with self-addressed stamped return envelopes, to all teacher mailboxes in four elementary schools and four middle schools within three school districts. According to the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES, 2019) one school district's locale is classified as Town: Remote (33) and the other schools districts' locales are classified as Rural: Distant (42). Sample demographics are described in Table 3.

Variables

The servant leadership behavior of principals is the overall latent variable measured. Empathy, altruism, humility, integrity, and justice are the individual constructs or factors theoretically believed to comprise the overarching latent variable of servant leadership. The individual items in the scale are the observed endogenous variables. Independent variables included in the study are demographic data related to the teacher respondents' gender and the duration of time the teacher has worked with their current principal. Descriptive statistics for survey responses by the five factors are described in Table 4.

Measure

Assessment of Principal Servant Leadership Behaviors (Ekinci, 2015; see Appendix A)

The School Principals' Servant Leadership Behaviors Scale (SPSLBS) was utilized to collect quantitative data regarding the teachers' perceptions of their school principal. Ekinci (2015) developed the 36-item instrument based on leadership theory, management and education

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literature, and expert opinion. Participants were asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Mostly*, and 5 = *Always*. All items are scored in the positive direction; a high score illustrates high levels of servant leadership. The highest possible mean score on a variable is 5.0. The lowest possible mean score is 1.0. The five dimensions were selected to be included due to their acceptance in related literature and because they represent the attitudes and behaviors of leaders toward followers, a concept that sets Servant Leadership apart from other types of leadership. The survey items focus on the dimensions of *empathy*, *altruism*, *humility*, *integrity*, and *justice*.

Empathy measures the degree to which the principal demonstrates important features of servant leadership such as interpersonal relations, active listening, and social interactions (Ekinci, 2015). Spears (2010) identifies *empathy* as one of the dimensions of servant leadership and describes the servant leader as one who treats each person as valuable and believes each person's feelings and needs should be considered. This dimension is measured by items 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 and has a reported reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of 0.94 (Ekinci, 2015).

Altruism measures the degree to which the principal demonstrates an unselfish desire to focus on the needs, expectations, and problems of their followers rather than on their own. This dimension is measured by items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 has a reported reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of 0.94 (Ekinci, 2015).

Humility measures the degree to which the principal accurately estimates their own accomplishments, strengths, and weaknesses, sincerely communicates and recognizes their followers accomplishments, avoids self-promotion or boasting, and is humble enough to seek assistance when needed (Patterson, 2003; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Ekinci (2015)

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notes that without *humility* arrogance and selfishness can create an impediment to the employees' commitment to their work. This dimension is measured by items 34, 35, and 36 and has a reported reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of 0.90 (Ekinici, 2015).

Integrity measures the degree to which the principal demonstrates consistency in their words, attitudes, and behaviors, resulting in follower development of trust and internal confidence in them and in the greater organization (Harter, 2002). This dimension is measured by items 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33 and has a reported reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of 0.91 (Ekinici, 2015).

Justice measures the degree to which the principal demonstrates the attitudes and behaviors of fairness when they carry out their organizational tasks, when they distribute resources, and during the employee evaluation process (Ekinici, 2015). This dimension is measured by items 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 has a reported reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) of 0.75 (Ekinici, 2015).

Research Design

The first part of the study sought to replicate the original validation study of Ekinici's (2015) "School Principals' Servant Leadership Behaviors Scale" with a sample from the United States. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was utilized to determine if the multidimensional factorial structure of the scale could be replicated and to determine if the scale could be considered a reliable measure with this sample. The second part of the study sought to determine if the teacher participants' perceptions regarding their school principals' servant leadership behaviors, as measured by their responses on the scale, differed significantly according to their gender or according to their length of employment with their current principal. These processes are described in further detail below in the "Data Analysis" section.

Procedure

The study was conducted during the Winter of 2020 with teachers from three school districts located in remote and rural areas of western New York and Pennsylvania. All teachers volunteered to participate. The Human Subjects Review Committee approved this research study on December 3, 2019. Following this approval, several school superintendents were contacted by telephone and then sent follow-up emails to summarize the discussion and provide the specific details of the research. After receiving superintendent permission, the survey packets were hand-delivered to the school districts along with self-addressed stamped envelopes so that the teachers could mail the surveys back to the author and maintain their anonymity. Each school was assigned a code to ensure that the SPSLBS remained associated with each school participating in the study. All volunteer teacher participants were assigned a participant identification code as a way to ensure that the SPSLBS remained associated with each individual participant and to ensure participant confidentiality. Survey data collection began after the teachers returned from their Winter Holidays on January 14, 2020, and the last survey packet was received on February 14, 2020. All participating teachers signed an informed consent for volunteering to participate in the study and returned the consents with their completed surveys. They also received a letter to debrief them after their participation concluded. Additionally, they were given the option to opt out of participation and informed that they could cease participation at any time during the study with no penalization. 105 teacher surveys were returned via US postal service and analyzed for the purpose of this study. Research has suggested that this is an adequate level to establish factors when taking into consideration both the level of communality of the variables and the level of over-determination of the factors (MacCallum, Widaman, Zhang, & Hong, 1999).

Data Analyses

Testing reliability and validity. In order to resolve the research questions posed in this study, several statistical analyses were conducted and the multidimensional nature of the factors of principal servant leadership was tested. The primary sampling unit consisted of the teachers who volunteered to participate in the study. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was utilized in order to replicate the original validation study of Ekinci's (2015) "School Principals' Servant Leadership Behaviors Scale" (SPSLBS). Structural equation modeling was used to design a model in STATA statistical software for the purpose of the analyses. Cronbach's Alpha analysis was used to determine the internal consistency of item responses based on the average correlation between items. Chi-Square (χ^2) value was calculated in order to determine the goodness-of-fit of the model. Additional goodness-of-fit statistics include the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), indices for comparison against baseline (CFI and TLI), and residuals (SRMR and CD). Demographic data related to the gender of teacher respondents and the duration of time the teacher had worked with their current principal was analyzed utilizing a t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) in SPSS statistical software. The Tukey HSD test was applied to determine the source of the difference identified. The level of significance was set at a probability level of $\alpha = .05$ for all statistical analyses.

Privacy safeguards. All data was handled with extreme caution and attention to maintaining the confidentiality and security of the information. All hard copy surveys were stored in a locked file cabinet in a locked office; therefore, under double lock. All data and research documents that were entered into a computer were password encrypted. Furthermore, no identifying participant or school information was used in the data sets as they were anonymously coded with no information that could link the specific school or participant to their

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responses or demographic information. As discussed with each school's superintendent, the data was only used for the sole purpose of completing this dissertation and in the context of sharing and discussing the outcomes.

Chapter 3

Results

All data collected were imported into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and STATA statistical software for analysis. In accordance with volunteer instructions, only surveys from teachers working in an elementary or middle school were included in the analysis. No data were missing as all SPSLBS survey items and demographic questions were completed in full. Specific information related to descriptive statistics for all demographic information and for the assessment measure is located in Tables 3 and 4, respectively.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The study of structural validity of the SPSLBS' five-factor structure was conducted using CFA via structural equation modeling (SEM) in the STATA statistical program. Results of the SEM in Figure 1, illustrate the standardized factor loading values for each of the 36 observed variables as well as their standard error. Unit loading identification was utilized, meaning standardized factor loadings were used rather than unstandardized. A path from each latent variable to one measured variable was set to 1 allowing correlations to be used rather than covariances between items. Unidimensional measurement models are thought to offer more precise tests of convergent and discriminant validity (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The 36 items divide into five factors, and the standardized coefficients show the relationship between factors, and items are distributed between 0.55 and 0.88 (with one item at 0.38). Overall, there is more than adequate evidence of convergent validity with 28 of the 36 factor loadings greater than 0.70, seven greater than 0.55, and only the one falling at 0.38; anything falling under 0.30 would suggest a really weak relationship (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). All correlations between the latent variables are in the acceptable range as well, and although four exceed 0.90, six do not,

suggesting there is discriminant validity in support of the multidimensionality of the scale. Essentially, similar to the original study, the factors correlate well enough to view them as constructs measuring the servant leadership behavior of school principals, but different enough to demonstrate that the scale is made up of individual constructs and is not just a unidimensional scale.

Goodness-of-fit. The compliance indices and statistical significance levels are given in Table 9. The Chi-Square value, calculated as a preliminary goodness-of-fit measure of the model, was significant ($X^2=1052.56$, $df=584$, $p<0.001$) suggesting the model may not fit the data very well. However, the Chi-Square statistic is very sensitive to sample size, rarely is found to be insignificant, and many researchers suggest it should no longer be relied upon as the sole basis for acceptance or rejection of a model (Schlermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003; Vandenberg, 2006). Therefore, several additional indexes were used to provide a more complete view of the model goodness-of-fit taking into account not only the sample size, but also the complexity of the model and other relevant issues related to the study. These include the relative or normal chi-square (X^2/df ratio), the root mean squared error of approximation (RMSEA), indices for comparison against baseline (CFI and TLI), and residuals (SRMR and CD).

The relative, or normal chi-square, is the chi-square fit index divided by the degrees of freedom in an effort to make it less dependent on the sample size. Although there are many differences in what is suggested, Byrne (1991) takes a conservative approach suggesting a chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio larger than 2 indicates an inadequate fit and those lower than 2 are generally considered to represent a reasonable model. The X^2/df ratio, calculated to test the validity of the five-factor structure of the instrument, is 1.80 demonstrating satisfactory model fit

compliance. RMSEA, a parsimony-adjusted index, suggests that the model fit is moderate or adequate with a lower bound 90% confidence interval that is greater than the 0.05 cut off and an upper bound that is less than the 0.10 cut off (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The RMSEA index is 0.088 with the cut-off for good fit generally reported to be less than 0.08; this would be considered an adequate fit as poor fit would be greater than 0.10 (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). CFI, the comparative fit index, and TLI, the non-normed fit index, were at 0.851 and 0.839, respectively. Results for these two baseline comparison indexes also are merely adequate as values greater than 0.9 indicate a good fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The standardized root-mean squared residual (SRMR) was 0.072 indicating a good fit; a perfect fit corresponds to an SRMR of 0 and a good fit is typically less than 0.08 (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The coefficient of determination (CD) was 0.999. A perfect fit corresponds to a CD of 1; therefore, these results indicate a very good fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). The CD is calculated to interpret the value of the correlation. It explains the level of variance in the dependent variable caused or explained by its relationship with the independent variable (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008).

Given that the Chi-Square value suggests the model may not fit the data very well and the additional fit indices yield mixed results ranging from an adequate/moderate fit to a very good fit, there is evidence of a possible misfit in the model. Because the standardized factor loadings look good for each of the respective factors, it seems more likely that the fit indices were impacted by an overlap amongst the factors. Therefore, the modification indices were checked to determine if any items had high double-loadings in the study. There were several items that did load on additional factors than the ones that they were ascribed to. For example, measurement items 2, 4, 5, 6, and 9, all items measuring Altruism, also loaded on Empathy, and

measurement items 13, 11, 14, and 15, all items measuring Empathy, also loaded on Altruism. This intuitively makes sense as the factors themselves can be viewed as similar by definition. However, each item was reviewed again based on current Servant Leadership theory, and from a theoretical and conceptual perspective, it would not make sense to move these items. The decrease in Chi-Square value ($X^2=1052.56$, $df=584$, $p<0.001$) that would have resulted if the suggested paths were added ranged from 3.930 to 27.653. The resultant impact to the Chi-Square value would not justify the change in the model structure. It is reasonable to assume the five factors would have some similarities, as they theoretically are all aspects of the overarching construct of Servant Leadership.

Reliability Analysis

The analysis of internal consistency of SPSLBS item responses was conducted using Cronbach's alpha in the STATA statistical program. Results of this analysis, located in Table 5, demonstrate that, overall, there is a high level ($\alpha = 0.9743$) of internal consistency (Cho & Kim, 2015). Additional inter-factor and inter-item analysis can be found in Tables 6, 7, and 8. Results reveal an acceptable level of internal consistency for *humility* ($\alpha = 0.7648$) and a high level of internal consistency for *empathy* ($\alpha = 0.9178$), *altruistic* ($\alpha = 0.9179$), *integrity* ($\alpha = 0.9171$), and *justice* ($\alpha = 0.9149$). The obtained results are similar to the results found in Ekinci's (2015) study and indicate that the scale adequately measures the servant leadership behavior of school principals.

Secondary Analyses

T-Test results of the teachers' opinions related to their school principal's servant leadership behaviors according to gender are found in Table 10. There was no significant difference detected between the mean response of male teachers versus female teachers ($p>0.05$).

ANOVA results of the teachers' opinions related to their school principal's servant leadership behaviors according to their employment durations with their current school principals are found in Table 11. The average of the teachers' responses on the SPSLBS was compared to four ranges of employment durations including, those teachers employed less than one year, one to three years, four to six years, and greater than six years. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference, but with only 8% of the overall variance accounted for, this is a small to medium effect size ($F(3, 584) = 2.955, p < 0.05, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .081$). Additionally, although the analysis was significant, it did not indicate which means are different from which other means; therefore, a post hoc analysis was conducted to analyze the main comparisons. Results of this analysis can be found in Table 12. Employing the Tukey HSD post hoc test, significant differences were found between the one to three years of employment with their current principal condition and the four to six years of employment with their current principal condition ($p = 0.019$) with the one to three years employment condition mean scores being significantly higher. There were no significant differences found amongst the other employment durations. Further post-hoc analysis specifically looking at the mean responses for each of the five factors revealed that the significant differences found between the one to three years of employment condition and the four to six years of employment condition were specifically found to be significant in the *Empathy* factor and the *Justice* factor, but not in the *Altruism*, *Humility*, or *Integrity* factors.

Chapter 4

Discussion

Summary

Primarily, the present study sought to validate the School Principals' Servant Leadership Behaviors Scale, as originally developed by Ekinçi (2015). By measuring the reliability and validity of the SPSLBS with a sample of elementary and middle school teachers from the United States, this study initiated the process of strengthening the adaptability and usefulness of the measurement instrument within a broader cultural and geographical context. Secondly, the present study sought to determine if there were significant differences in the teachers' perceptions of their school principals' servant leadership behavior according to their gender or the duration of time they had worked with their principal.

Research Question One. The multidimensional factorial structure of the SPSLBS was able to be replicated with a sample from the United States. The 36 measurement items did divide into the five factors, as originally developed, with standardized coefficients in an acceptable range to establish convergent validity. All correlations between the latent variables were also in the acceptable range and although four exceed 0.90, six do not, suggesting there is discriminant validity in support of the multidimensionality of the scale. Essentially, similar to the original study, the factors correlate well enough to view them as constructs measuring the overall servant leadership behavior of school principals, but different enough to demonstrate that the scale is made up of individual constructs and is not just a unidimensional scale. Regarding the fit of the model, the Chi-Square value was calculated as a preliminary goodness-of-fit measure of the model and found to be significant and much smaller, thus closer to being insignificant, than that calculated in the original study. Even so, a significant finding suggests the model may not fit the

data very well. However, the Chi-Square statistic is very sensitive to sample size, rarely is found to be insignificant, and many researchers suggest it should no longer be relied upon as the sole basis for acceptance or rejection of a model (Schlermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003; Vandenberg, 2006). Therefore, several additional indexes were used to provide a more complete view of the model goodness-of-fit taking into account not only the sample size, but also the complexity of the model and other relevant issues related to the study. These include the X^2/df ratio, RMSEA, CFI, TLI, SRMR, and CD.

The X^2/df ratio, calculated to test the validity of the five-factor structure of the instrument, is 1.80 demonstrating satisfactory model fit compliance. RMSEA (0.088), CFI (0.851), and TLI (0.839) all demonstrate adequate fit. The SRMR (0.072) indicates good fit and the CD (0.999) is indicative of a very good fit. Modification indices were checked to determine if any items had high double-loadings in the study. There were several items that did load on additional factors than the ones that they were ascribed to. However, each item was reviewed again based on current Servant Leadership theory, and from a theoretical and conceptual perspective, it did not make sense to move these items. The resultant impact to the Chi-Square value did not justify the change in the model structure. It is reasonable to assume the five factors would show some similarity as they theoretically are all aspects of the overarching construct of Servant Leadership.

Research Question Two. The SPSLBS was demonstrated to be a reliable measure, in relation to its dimensions and as a whole, with a sample from the United States. The analysis of internal consistency was conducted using Cronbach's alpha and overall there is a high level of internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.9743$), as well as, a moderate to high level of internal consistency for the dimensions of *humility* ($\alpha = 0.7648$), *empathy* ($\alpha = 0.9178$), *altruistic* ($\alpha = 0.9179$), *integrity* ($\alpha = 0.9171$), and *justice* ($\alpha = 0.9149$). The obtained results are similar to the results found in

Ekinci's (2015) study and indicate that the scale adequately measures the servant leadership behavior of school principals.

Research Question Three. In contrast to Ekinci's 2015 study, no significant difference was identified between the teachers' perceptions regarding their school principals' servant leadership behaviors based on their gender. Ekinci found that male teachers evaluated servant leadership behaviors of their principals at a higher level than female teachers did. He stated it may have been the result of there being a greater number of male school principals and the possibility that male principals are more comfortable showing servant leadership behaviors toward their same-gender colleagues. In the current study, seven of the school's principals are female and one principal is male with the majority of teacher participants being female (N = 87) rather than male (N = 18). Regarding the gender breakdown of principals, this is not a typical representation from a national perspective as nationally, forty-six percent of public school principals were male and 54 percent were female in the 2017–2018 school year (NCES, 2020). If Ekinci's reasoning regarding same-gender collegiality is accurate, the current study should have shown that female teachers evaluated servant leadership behaviors of their principals at a higher level than their male counterparts. This was not the case. In fact, the mean response for male teachers was slightly higher than the mean response for female teachers, though not significant. Ekinci also acknowledged that in his review of the literature, he found no research to support his finding.

After review of the literature, it was determined that researchers identified no significant gender differences in several studies examining teachers' perceptions of school principals' servant leadership behaviors (Balay, Kaya, & Yilmaz, 2014; Cerit, 2005; Salameh, 2011). Additionally, there were no significant gender differences reported in any of the servant

leadership scale development studies reviewed for this current study, regardless of what occupation or industry the participants were sampled from; however, several of them did not include this particular analysis in their study (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Laub, 1999; Liden, Senjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Wong & Davey, 2007).

Research Question Four. Similar to Ekinci's 2015 study, teacher perceptions regarding their school principals' servant leadership behaviors did differ significantly according to their length of employment with their current principal. Further analysis revealed that, of the four employment duration groups being analyzed, significant differences were found between the one to three years of employment condition and the four to six years of employment condition. Teachers working anywhere from one to three years rated their principal significantly higher than teachers working with their principal anywhere from four to six years. There were no significant differences found amongst the other employment durations. These findings may suggest that as teachers gain more work experience they may become more critical of their leaders. Ekinci's findings indicated that as the length of employment of teachers with their current school principals increased, their perception regarding the school principals' servant leadership behaviors increased in a positive direction. He suggested the possibility that with more time, communication, and relationships, social interaction increases and improves, which would impact the teachers' perceptions of their principal in a positive direction and also be associated with the servant leadership approach in general. The findings of the current study do not follow this same pattern and significant differences were not found between all group conditions. Results were more in line with the study conducted by Laub (1999) who found no

significant difference among OLA scores of individuals who worked for their organization less than 1 year, 1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-10 years, 10-15 years and more than 15 years.

General Limitations of the Study

Although, the current study adds quantifiable evidence of SPSLBS' reliability and validity as a multidimensional measurement tool for use in the educational setting, there are several limitations as well. First, even though the survey collection process was anonymous and an explanation was given that the school district administrations would not be given specific information regarding the principals of each school or any identifying information, teachers still may have been hesitant to answer the surveys in a less than favorable manner or to complete the survey at all, resulting in a smaller sample size. The teachers were asked to rate their supervisor and may have feared retribution possibly resulting in higher ratings or opting not to participate at all. This potential along with the potential for halo effects that are often known to occur in survey research, could have led to elevated ratings making significant group level interpretation more difficult.

Next, a larger sample size may have resulted in a more thorough and accurate analysis of any differences at the group level, especially with regard to the male teacher participation rate and teachers employed less than one year. Unfortunately, in the middle of the survey data collection, the Coronavirus-19 pandemic occurred and schools were closed. The decision was made to cease collection due to the potential for teachers to rate their principals based on their ability to lead during a crisis, and not on the specific survey items. This also meant there was no possibility of retesting for test-retest reliability analysis, and test-split procedures are too faulty to be useful. Additionally, because the sample size was one of convenience, the external validity of the study may be compromised. The sample was representative of the local population, but not

of the population of the United States as a whole, and thus may not be thought to extend to all teachers, principals, or schools in the United States. For instance, the gender breakdown of principals in this study is not a typical representation from a national perspective, as nationally, forty-six percent of public school principals were male and 54 percent were female in the 2017-2018 school year (NCES, 2020). Also, nationally, about 76 percent of public school teachers were female and 24 percent were male in 2017-2018, with a lower percentage of male teachers at the elementary school level (11 percent) than at the secondary school level (36 percent; NCES, 2020). There also could be the possibility that those teachers who chose to participate in the study could be different than those choosing not to participate, which could impact the outcome. Caution should be exercised when attempting to make any wide-ranging interpretations or conclusions of this study.

Furthermore, given that the study is a cross-sectional research design, it does not allow for causal inferences, and it only provides a snapshot of participants' experiences at a single point in time. To enhance the predicative validity of the measure, it would be highly beneficial for future research to utilize a longitudinal approach to determine if teacher perceptions regarding the servant leadership behavior of principals change over time. It would be particularly interesting to see the results of a leadership study conducted now or in the near future, given the leadership challenges currently occurring due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Given the frustration teachers seem to be experiencing, their leaders may be rated lower on different leadership characteristics. Although, the newer, more ethical styles of leadership when implemented effectively, may be exactly what is needed during times of crisis, as they offer opportunities for leaders to treat employees with a great deal of support, empathy, and understanding. Longitudinal designs would be particularly helpful in determining if specific

educational outcomes (e.g., academic achievement, school climate, teacher job satisfaction) are impacted by servant leadership practices and whether they could be maintained over the course of time. An intervention approach would also be helpful with a pre- and post-survey measuring the perception of principal servant leadership behaviors before and after implementation of a training course for instance.

General Strengths of the Study

The SPSLBS was developed in 2015, and five years later there are no studies found that seek to validate the tool or utilize the tool in educational research, although the study was found to be cited in seven dissertations and one journal article co-written by the original author demonstrating the need for principals to be trained in the servant leadership approach (Insley, Jaeger, Ekinci, & Sakiz, 2016). This study is the first attempt at replicating the reliability and validity results of the SPSLBS since it was developed in 2015. Even with a small sample size, the results were promising, and the instrument was found to be a reliable measure with satisfactory convergent and discriminant validity. Due to the sample being from the United States and the original study being conducted in Turkey, the current study initiated the process of strengthening the adaptability and usefulness of the measurement instrument within a broader cultural and geographical context. Similar to the original study, the five factors were found to have a high level of relationship overall and with each factor, meaning the scale likely could be used as a single-factor scale measuring principal servant leadership behavior or as a multidimensional instrument as was originally intended.

The fact that this study adds to the replication process of the SPSLBS is an important step towards encouraging future research efforts and use of the tool in a more wide-spread manner. This is important because schools need functional tools that are readily available and that can be

implemented in a practical manner. Having simple but effective tools that schools will not see as burdensome, to develop and implement processes around, can be crucial for effective system-wide implementation and to boost further research relating to improving employee and academic outcomes. It seems reasonable to assume that when organizational or self-evaluative processes are too burdensome and not specifically mandated by regulatory bodies, there is less likelihood they would be utilized. The SPSLBS addresses the primary limitations identified in a number of other servant leadership scale development studies by reducing the number of factors, reducing the number of items, and placing the focus more on the employee rather than exclusively on the leader. Additionally, this tool simplifies the labels of the five factors using language that seems more readily understandable by all people, instead of using language that seems to be used more in the field of Leadership or Industrial Organizational Psychology.

Directions for Future Research

The findings of this study indicate that this measurement tool has good potential for use in further research related to servant leadership practices in the educational setting. Again, operationalizing the concept of servant leadership in a practical, useable way with more common terminology makes further research more likely. Determining, through scientific methods, the direct and indirect impact servant leadership practices have on performance measures all become realistic objectives with a reliable and valid measurement instrument. Therefore, the first objective should be to address the limitations of this study, especially with regard to the sample size and representation. This study should be replicated with a larger and more diverse sample of participants, using a more random or representative sample of teachers from school locations including city, suburban, and town locales. Also, the current study was concerned with validating the SPSLBS with a sample from the United States; however, it is worthwhile to

mention that some researchers suggest that a cross-cultural sample may become less relevant due to the influence of the internet and large increases in the number of people traveling and working internationally (Liden et al., 2015).

Next, given the mixed results found in this study in comparison with the original study and other similar servant leadership studies regarding the gender variable and the employment duration variable, further examination is necessary in both areas to determine if there are differences in the way the different group conditions perceive the servant leadership behaviors of school principals. Improved theories will become more prevalent once more consistent findings and patterns are established through solid research methods. Additionally, future research should look at servant leadership practices within schools in relation to performance measures such as school climate, school and community citizenship behavior, employee satisfaction, employee turnover rate, employee absenteeism rate, employee commitment, student academic achievement, student dropout rate, discipline referrals, etc. It also would be helpful to examine the SPSLBS in relation to different antecedent variables such as, emotional intelligence, motivation, openness to change, education, etc. Furthermore, many schools are implementing trauma-informed care models within their schools, and this leadership model, with its emphasis on showing genuine concern towards their employees, may go hand-in-hand with such initiatives. Research focusing on how the two impact each other or enhance one another would be an interesting endeavor.

Also, future studies should statistically compare the SPSLBS with other servant leadership measures and with measures of other leadership approaches in order to determine convergent and divergent validity, especially those leadership approaches that seem to have similarities (e. g., authentic, spiritual, ethical). Some researchers have previously addressed this

need utilizing different servant leadership instruments and other measures of transformational leadership and leader-member exchange approaches (Liden et al., 2008). Lastly, more research is needed to determine if servant leadership training programs would be effective at enhancing servant leadership behaviors as has been demonstrated with Transformational Leadership in a pre- and post- test controlled group design (Barling, Weber, & Kelloway, 1996).

Implications for School Psychologists

School psychologists have an important role in advocating for leadership that is ethical, as well as effective, based on solid scientific evidence. As additional school-based servant leadership research is pursued and the amount of evidence grows establishing a positive relationship with school, teacher, and student outcomes, districts may seek wide-spread implementation of this leadership approach. Ongoing state and federal regulatory entities continually mandating education reform efforts may also prompt adoption of more effective leadership approaches. School psychologists are in a perfect position to assist with this type of systems-wide implementation. For instance, in addition to be strong advocates, they could serve as models and coaches of servant leadership behaviors, train colleagues in the approach, design a pre- and post- implementation data process, progress monitor the implementation process, progress monitor specific outcomes that are related, etc. Also, with additional research and implementation successes, more school districts will consider selecting for and cultivating servant leadership qualities for those in leadership positions such as principals. They may use these types of measurement tools for identifying teachers or other school personnel interesting in pursuing leadership positions to determine if they possess these qualities and would be a good fit within the desired culture. School psychologists can encourage and consult with their administration in these areas.

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Principals may seek to use the instrument for self-assessment purposes to identify strengths and weaknesses they can include in their professional development plans. If principals want to influence school outcomes, they should assess their leadership style and set goals for higher levels of servant leadership behaviors, and school psychologists need to remember the extent to which the priorities of the principals become the priorities of the rest of the school and sometimes even the larger community. School psychologists can assist them with the survey process and the interpretation and reporting of results. Similarly, district administrations that seek to value employee growth and development may wish to use the survey to self-assess and address areas in need of continuous improvement procedures. School psychologists can and should encourage and assist in these efforts.

The school psychologist's role largely centers on assessment and academic and behavioral improvement efforts. However, school psychologists are in a unique position to be able to impact school-wide practices that promote learning and a climate conducive for learning. This study seeks to assist school psychologists in recognizing that a principal leadership style that is well grounded in servant leadership theory might be exactly what is needed to accomplish comprehensive school reform efforts while maintaining ethical, responsible practices. School psychologists are strongly encouraged to use effective consultation practices at the systems-level to be a conduit for this type of change. Principals often are committed to endeavors such as recruiting exceptional teachers and reducing turn-over. School psychologists can play a role as leadership consultant to assist in these efforts. After all, effective recruitment and retention of high-quality employees benefits every member of the school-wide team.

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Tables

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Demographic Variables

	N	%	
Total	105	100	
Gender			
Male	18	17.14	
Female	87	82.86	
Duration Year			
Less than 1 year	8	7.62	
1-3 years	33	31.43	
4-6 years	22	20.95	
Greater than 6 yrs.	42	40	
Schools			
			<u>NCES Locale</u>
1	23	21.9	Rural: Distant
2	42	40	Town: Remote
3	21	20	Rural: Distant
4	19	18.1	Rural: Distant
School Level			
Elementary	53	50.48	
Middle	52	49.52	

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Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Responses by Factors

Factors	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Empathy	105	4.09	.68752
Altruism	105	4.25	.65061
Humility	105	3.90	.76827
Integrity	105	4.25	.68736
Justice	105	4.14	.68381

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Table 5

SPSLBS Overall Reliability

Items 1-18	N	Items 19-36	N	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
M01	105	M19	105	
M02	105	M20	105	
M03	105	M21	105	
M04	105	M22	105	
M05	105	M23	105	
M06	105	M24	105	
M07	105	M25	105	
M08	105	M26	105	
M09	105	M27	105	
M10	105	M28	105	
M11	105	M29	105	
M12	105	M30	105	
M13	105	M31	105	
M14	105	M32	105	
M15	105	M33	105	
M16	105	M34	105	
M17	105	M35	105	
M18	105	M36	105	
Test scale				0.9743

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Table 6

Reliability for each Factor

Factors	Number of Items per Factor	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
Empathy	9	0.9096
Altruistic	9	0.9080
Humility	3	0.9568
Integrity	7	0.9088
Justice	8	0.9088
Test Scale		0.9341

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Table 7

Reliability: Cronbach's Alpha (α) Inter-Factor Correlations

	Empathy	Altruism	Humility	Integrity	Justice
Empathy	1.0000				
Altruism	0.8689	1.0000			
Humility	0.5391	0.5980	1.0000		
Integrity	0.8356	0.8047	0.6036	1.0000	
Justice	0.8554	0.8506	0.5688	0.8671	1.0000

Table 8

Reliability for Measurement Items per Factor

Items	N	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Items	N	Cronbach's Alpha (α)
<u>Empathy</u>			<u>Altruistic</u>		
M18	105	0.9025	M07	105	0.9084
M13	105	0.9050	M02	105	0.9079
M16	105	0.9050	M08	105	0.9127
M11	105	0.8976	M04	105	0.9064
M12	105	0.9043	M03	105	0.9148
M15	105	0.9053	M01	105	0.9070
M10	105	0.9106	M05	105	0.9099
M14	105	0.9113	M06	105	0.9052
M17	105	0.9309	M09	105	0.9045
Test Scale		0.9178	Test scale		0.9179
<u>Humility</u>			<u>Integrity</u>		
M36	105	0.8151	M27	105	0.9064
M35	105	0.5827	M31	105	0.8999
M34	105	0.6315	M32	105	0.9259
Test Scale		0.7648	M29	105	0.8946
<u>Justice</u>			M28	105	0.8985
M23	105	0.8950	M30	105	0.8977
M22	105	0.9078	M33	105	0.9068
M20	105	0.9081	Test scale		0.9171
M26	105	0.9025			
M24	105	0.8960			
M21	105	0.9108			
M25	105	0.8986			
M19	105	0.9113			
Test Scale		0.9149			

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Table 9

SPSLBS CFA Results and Compliance Indices related to the CFA Model

Fit statistic	Value
Likelihood ratio	
<i>df</i>	584
X^2	1052.56
X^2/df	1.80
Population error	
RMSEA	0.088
90% CI, lower bound	0.079
upper bound	0.096
pclose	0.000 probability RMSEA \leq 0.05
Information Criteria	
AIC	7044.123
BIC	7357.290
Baseline comparison	
CFI	0.851
TLI	0.839
Size of residuals	
SRMR	0.072
CD	0.999

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Table 10

T-Test Results of Teacher Opinions about School Principals' Servant Leadership Behaviors According to Gender Variable

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> *
Male	18	4.2948	.50489	1.029	.306
Female	87	4.1284	.64578		

**p* < 0.05

Table 11

ANOVA Results of Teacher Opinions about School Principals' Servant Leadership Behaviors According to their Employment Durations with Current School Principals

Working Length with Current Principal	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	F	p^*	η^2
Less than 1 year	8	4.1840	.72221			
1-3 years	33	4.3485	.50294			
4-6 years	22	3.8510	.81377			
Greater than 6 years	42	4.1614	.53380			
Total	105	4.1569	.62489			
				2.955	.036	.081

* $p < 0.05$

Table 12

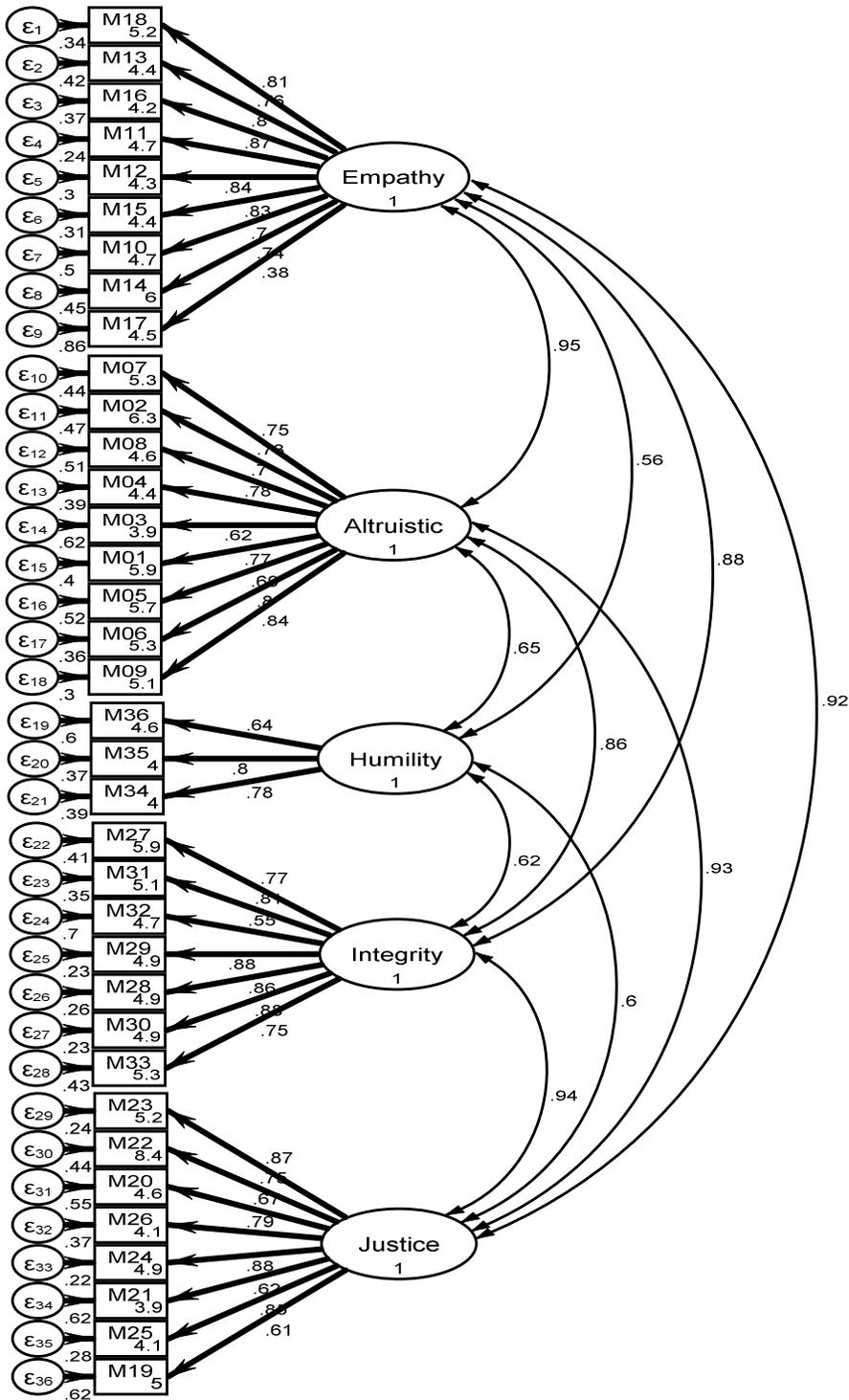
Post Hoc Comparisons: Teacher Response Mean According to their Employment Durations with Current School Principals

Working Length with Current Principal	Working Length with Current Principal	Mean Difference*	Std. Error	Sig.
Less than 1 year	1-3 years	-.16446	.23960	.902
	4-6 years	.33302	.25101	.548
	Greater than 6 years	.02265	.23454	1.000
1-3 years	Less than 1 year	.16446	.23960	.902
	4-6 years	.49747*	.16734	.019
	Greater than 6 years	.18711	.14143	.551
4-6 years	Less than 1 year	-.33302	.25101	.548
	1-3 years	-.49747*	.16734	.019
	Greater than 6 years	-.31037	.16001	.218
Greater than 6 years	Less than 1 year	-.02265	.23454	1.000
	1-3 years	-.18711	.14143	.551
	4-6 years	.31037	.16001	.218

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure

Figure 1: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results



Appendix A: School Principals' Servant Leadership Behaviors Scale

Below is a collection of statements that describe some principal behaviors. Please give your opinion of the level of the behavior represented in each item by your current principal, taking into consideration how often each behavior is carried out by them from the options of “always,” “mostly,” “sometimes,” “rarely,” and “never.”

Item Numbers	My School Principal	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Mostly	Every Time
1	Thinks about their employees before themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Tries to improve working conditions.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Supports me without any expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Thinks about what is to my advantage and sacrifices for me.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Rather than to be served, enjoys serving others.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Respects my personality.	1	2	3	4	5
7	On my bad days would be by my side.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Paves the way for me by giving initiative.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Gives me appreciation.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Makes me feel what they think about me.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Makes me feel that they correctly understand my thoughts and feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Is sensitive to my feelings and reactions.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Understands me very well even if I don't express my feeling directly.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Consistently encourages me to be successful in my job.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Creates a sincere and hearty climate in the communication process.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Can look at situations and events with my viewpoint.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Is available every time during the day.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Listens to my problems effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Strives to be restrained in making decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Takes care to equally distribute responsibilities and tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Gives a restrained response to something done wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Appreciates success.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Trusts their employees.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Forgives their employees' mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Does not hold a grudge against the employee.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Does not allow the formation of a privileged person or group.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Is recognized as one of the reliable people at school.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Is the same inwardly and outwardly.	1	2	3	4	5

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29	Exhibits open and transparent attitudes and behaviors at school.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Is the same in thought and word.	1	2	3	4	5
31	Accepts their own mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
32	Does not hesitate to administer self-criticism.	1	2	3	4	5
33	Gives priority to values and principles, rather than personal goals and achievements.	1	2	3	4	5
34	Does not like to be praised with words about themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
35	Does not like to talk about themselves.	1	2	3	4	5
36	Avoids arrogant behavior.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B: Author Biography

Kim Thurston was born in Dunkirk, New York and grew up in Olean, New York. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from LeMoyne College, located in Syracuse, New York, in 1992, and then went on to serve in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. She received her Master of Science degree in clinical psychology from Radford University, located in Radford Virginia, in 1996, her Master of Arts degree and Advanced Certificate in school psychology from Alfred University, located in Alfred, New York, in 2015 and 2017, respectively, and her Doctor of Psychology degree in school psychology from Alfred University in 2020. During her time at LeMoyne College, she was inducted into Psi Chi, the National Honor Society in Psychology, and Alpha Sigma Nu, the National Jesuit Honor Society. In graduate school, she was inducted into the Phi Kappa Phi, National Honor Society Chapters at both Radford University and Alfred University. Kim completed a pre-doctoral internship at the Letchworth Area School District in Gainesville, New York. In 1998, she began her 22 years of employment with Beacon Light Behavioral Health System located in Bradford, Pennsylvania where she currently resides. Kim's professional interests include, helping children and adolescents with severe social-emotional issues, psychological practices including assessment and consultation, effective implementation of clinical and trauma-informed systems of care, evidence-based program implementation and advocacy, behavioral healthcare administration, and cultivating and encouraging effective leadership practices and healthy, productive workplace cultures. In addition to her profession, Kim has two adult children and a very large family that she enjoys spending time with. Lucky enough to live near a National Forest, she enjoys kayaking, boating, hiking, and cycling.