Phenomenological Study On The Impact of Servant Leadership For Establishing a Culture of High Performance As Perceived by Human Resource Administrators

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Phenomenological Study On The Impact of Servant Leadership For Establishing a Culture of High Performance As Perceived by Human Resource Administrators

A Dissertation by

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Brandman University
Irvine, California
School of Education
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership
November 2020

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The dissertation of Rebecca Toto is approved

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Phenomenological Study On The Impact of Servant Leadership For Establishing a Culture of High Performance As Perceived by Human Resource Administrators

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ABSTRACT

Phenomenological Study On The Impact of Servant Leadership For Establishing a Culture of High Performance As Perceived by Human Resource Administrators

by Rebecca Toto

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe public school district human resource administrators’ perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

Methodology: This qualitative phenomenological study explored and described human resource administrators’ perceived impact of Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in public school districts in Northern California. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an Interview Protocol developed by the thematic team. Responses from participants were organized coded, and emergent themes were identified.

Findings: The findings from this study show that all participants agreed that each of Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs contribute to establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. Participants shared lived experiences of the seven constructs related to the culture of high performance in their respective districts. Findings included 16 identified themes representing all constructs and contributing to establishing a culture of high performance.

Conclusions: The findings and literature review support that servant leadership constructs greatly contribute establishing a culture of high performance. Results indicate that human resource administrators view all of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs as important and contributing factors. These findings concluded
that relationships and connections, providing support and follow through, interplay of all constructs, service matters, making others a priority and development and growth mindset are essential for HR leaders to incorporate into their daily leadership practices.

**Recommendations:** The researcher recommends servant leadership training be provided to human resource administrators at ACSA and AASPA academies and boot camps, as well as at national and state conferences. Recommendations also include that all new human resource administrators be provided a coach or mentor during their first year as an administrator, with coaching focusing on servant leadership and a culture of high performance. Additionally, a servant leadership handbook and acuity questionnaire should also be developed to provide human resources administrator’s tools to better understand the impact of servant leadership in educational organizations and the important contribution they have in establishing that culture of high performance.
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PREFACE

Following discussions and considerations regarding the opportunity to study Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs, two faculty researchers and eight doctoral students discovered a common interest in exploring the ways K-12 leaders perceive the impact these seven constructs (agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service) have on establishing a culture of high performance. This resulted in a thematic study conducted by a research team of eight doctoral students.

The eight peer researchers and two faculty advisors ultimately chose a phenomenological design that would be most appropriate for this study of the servant leadership constructs and the perceived impact of human resource administrators and how they establish a culture of high performance within their school districts. This structure was resolved to be generally suitable as the non-experimental, descriptive approach to best accumulate the lived encounters of the leaders. Each researcher interviewed six to eight K-12 leaders to describe how they perceived the impact of these seven constructs of servant leadership by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance at their organizations. To ensure thematic consistency, the team co-created the purpose statement, research questions, definitions, interview questions, and study procedures. It was agreed upon by the team that for increased validity, data collection would involve method triangulation using interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Throughout the study, the term peer researchers is used to refer to the other researchers who conducted this thematic study. These were: Freddie Chavarria, Title I
Elementary/Middle School Principals in Orange County and San Diego County; Lillian Maldonado French, Latina Superintendents working in Title 1 school districts; Angela Lawyer, High School Principals in Riverside County; Darrick Rice, High School Principals in Los Angeles County; Antonio Sandifer, Principals of Native American Schools in Washington State; Robin Stout, Public School District Superintendents in California; Rebecca Toto, Human Resource Administrators in California; and Alison Wills, Middle School Principals in Orange County, California.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Establishing a culture of high performance should be the goal of every educational organization. According to the Pew Research Center, American students are performing far below students in other countries in the key academic subjects, ranking 38 out of 71 countries in math, as tested on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). Countries such as Finland, Singapore, and Korea are outperforming the United States not just in math but in reading and science as well (US Department of Education, 2019). While others countries are advancing in their education systems and student achievement, American students continue to perform at mediocre levels (Ryan, 2013; OECD & PISA, 2018). Even with the focus on No Child Left Behind (2002) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), the American educational system has struggled to advance its students to high levels of achievement and to become globally competitive (US Department of Education, 2019). With the American educational system challenged to improve performance, it is essential for leaders to take an active role in further understanding and implementing leadership skills that will result in establishing a culture of high performance.

To establish a culture of high performance, it is essential to focus on effective leadership (Waters & Marzano, 2007). Leadership in organizations through many centuries has resulted in a range of outcomes, both good and bad. The history of leadership has evolved over the years and can be associated with directly or indirectly affecting learning, actions, and outcomes (Fullan, 2001; Waters & Marzano, 2007). Worldwide, organizations utilize leadership to impact and direct the practices and implementation of systems within an organization. A great deal of research has been
conducted on the various leadership models and styles used by leaders throughout the centuries (Ackerman-Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; George & Sims, 2007; Fullan, 2001). Globally, leadership is defined through a variety of methods, models and overlapping characteristics. According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), leadership is about creating a way for people to do, lead or make something extraordinary happen. Historically, leadership models have manifested, evolved and taken on a variety of forms, each having unique and sometimes overlapping characteristics. Many of the current leadership theories stem from the development of historical leadership theories. Fullan (2001) believes that leadership is complex and must adjust and change with the complexity of the world.

According to educational experts (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Fullan & Quinn, 2016), establishing a culture of high expectations, collaboration, collegial awareness, shared values and decision-making, focused on meeting the needs of all students, will result in creating a culture of high performance and an organization positively impacted by effective leadership. Through this leadership, leaders focus on collective efficacy, and are committed to providing high-quality learning experiences, setting high expectations and collaborating to problem-solve for every student, which therefore will result in establishing a culture of high performance (Donohoo, Hattie & Eells, 2018; Marzano & Waters, 2009).

The leadership in an educational organization truly matters (Marzano & Waters, 2009). It is not just the superintendent and principal that need to focus on student achievement in an organization; it is every leader’s responsibility (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). The role of the human resource administrator is an important one, tied directly to
every individual within the organization. Human resource administrators are responsible for leading and developing a culture within a district (ACSA, 2002). Human resource leaders deal directly with individuals and are at the heart of service to others. Understanding the constructs of servant leadership, and leading by serving others first, can increase the impact that human resource administrators have on the organization by establishing a culture that is focused on serving others (Spears, 2010; Patterson, 2003). Human resource administrators’ use and understanding of servant leadership constructs, which specifically focus on placing others first and serve as a framework for creating a positive culture throughout the organization, will benefit organizations and students across the United States by helping students reach high levels of achievement and become globally competitive.

**Background**

Organizations rely on leadership to survive and thrive. Without leadership, there would be no direction, focus, vision or structure to lead and define the organization (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Leadership provides guidance toward goals and expectations. In times of turmoil or crisis, the leader must manage themselves while leading others (Ackerman-Anderson & Anderson, 2010) and must be an exemplar of emotional intelligence (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). A leader who is aware of emotional intelligence, one who shares their values and purpose with a clear vision, is someone that people will want to follow.

In today’s workforce, empathy towards other people can help create meaningful relationships with others and ensure the leader-follower relationship is built on mutual respect and trust. These qualities are crucial for leaders in creating a collaborative
environment that is focused and passionate about achieving goals (Luenendonk, 2020).
Throughout the centuries, leadership has been defined through a variety of methods, models and overlapping characteristics, all of which have evolved and contributed to current leadership practices and theories (Dihn, Lord, Garner, Meuser, Linden & Hu, 2014). No longer is the top-down model of leadership accepted or embraced by organizations. Instead, employees want to feel valued, be inspired, have a voice, and know they are contributing to a shared purpose or goal (Northouse, 2001). The management style of Baby Boomers, top-down leadership, which was once highly regarded and used throughout the world in leading organizations and projects, is no longer accepted or considered effective in the era of Gen X and Gen Y employees (Lloyd-Walker & Walker, 2011). Instead, leadership is expected to provide inclusion, inspiration, and shared purpose (Heathfield, S 2019; Lloyd-Walker & Walker, 2011).

**Culture of High Performance**

Establishing a culture of high performance is not a new phenomenon but is a practice that experts agree must include collective efficacy, collaboration, collegial awareness, shared values and decision-making, and a focus on meeting the needs of all students (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Marzano, R., & Waters, 2009; Fullan & Quinn, 2016). This culture of high performance is developed by creating collective commitments to meet the needs of all students. Organizations that focus on setting high expectations for students and staff, providing collaboration and developing common language and benchmarks, all while focusing on the needs of the students, are considered student-centered and effectively establish cultures of high performance (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010; Marzano & Waters, 2009).
Collective efficacy. Collective efficacy plays an extremely important role in student achievement and overall success in a school. Educators who are committed to providing high-quality learning experiences, set high expectations and collaborate to problem-solve for every student will see greater student achievement results (Donohoo, Hattie & Eells, 2011; Marzano & Waters, 2009). Research shows that high student achievement is positively impacted by collective teacher efficacy (Donohoo, 2018; Donohoo, Hattie & Eells, 2018; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004). Bandura (1997) defines collective efficacy as “a group’s shared belief in its conjoint capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment.” Through commitment, teacher collaboration and sharing of instructional and behavioral strategies, educators can create an environment that sets high expectations for student achievement and focuses on all students learning and achieving at high levels (Donohoo, Hattie, & Eells, 2018). Staff members hold each other accountable to the agreed-upon commitments and work together to ensure all students are learning and meeting attainable commitments.

Professional learning communities (PLCs). Professional Learning Communities focus educators on four driving questions: What do we want students to learn? How will we know if each student has learned what is essential? How will we respond to students who are not learning? And how will we extend the learning of those students who are already proficient (DuFour, DuFour & Eaker, 2008)? These four questions guide educators to provide high-quality learning opportunities for all students and promote a culture of high performance (DuFour & Fullan, 2013). PLCs provide opportunities for educators to put collective efficacy into action. Organizations that
implement PLCs have a collective mission, vision, values and goals all focused on student achievement and collaboration to meet the needs of all students (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Many, 2010; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Fullan, 1993). Through this continuous commitment, collaboration, and focus on student growth and learning outcomes, educational staffs and organizations strive to provide highly focused learning opportunities structured and developed to meet the instructional needs of the students.

If schools implement PLCs with fidelity, students will have a greater chance of performing at a higher level of achievement and educational staffs will see a greater increase in the number of students meeting or exceeding expectations (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). It is through the continuous commitment to focus on the students first that PLCs and collective efficacy contribute to establishing a culture of high performance.

**Leadership Models**

Over time, leadership models have shifted and transformed into many of the current leadership theories that are practiced today. According to Hunt and Fedynich ((2019), the early creation of leadership was developed during the age of expansion and industrial revolution, and identified a leader as a single great individual. The concept has since evolved to theories surrounding leadership that is focused on inclusion and inspiration of others. Fullan (2001) believes that leadership is complex and must adjust and change with the complexity of the world. Many of the current leadership theories stem from the changing times and further development of historical leadership theories. Just as the world is changing, so must the leadership to transform and adjust to the diverse complexity of growth and change.
Transformational leadership. One of the most respected leadership models is transformational leadership as developed by Burns and Bass (1978; 1985). Through transformational leadership, leaders and followers inspire, value and help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation (Burns, 1978). Burns (1978) asserted that transformation generates significant changes in values, expectations and goals for both the leader and the employees in an organization. Bass (1985) furthered Burns’ research by explaining that the measure of transformational leadership is in how the leader influences the followers. Furthermore, transformational leadership inspires followers while developing the leader’s own leadership capacity (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

In transformational leadership, leaders communicate a clear vision and model expectations to achieve results. They are mindful, reflective, alert and observant, and not on “autopilot”, going through the motions of leadership (Ackerman Anderson & Anderson, 2010). Transformational leadership encourages others to provide input, creates new ways of doing things and inspires and encourages individual differences. Transformational leaders are acutely aware of individual needs and concerns while establishing a culture of individual development and growth, recognizing the benefit that each individual brings forward and further developing future leaders (Bass, 1995; Burns, 1978; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999).

Resonant leadership. Resonant leadership entails being in tune or in sync with others in the organization or environment. This means understanding how to talk to people, listening to them, showing individuals that one truly cares and is interested in them personally and professionally, and creating an environment of mutual respect and trust (Boyatzis, R., Smith, M., Van Oosten, E., & Woolford, L., 2013). Resonant
leadership relates greatly to emotional intelligence (EQ). Social awareness, self-management, self-awareness, and relationship management are key characteristics of emotional intelligence and are extremely important in being a resonant leader. A resonant leader develops and utilizes emotional intelligence competencies and learns when and how to use each style depending on the situation (Laschinger, Cummings, Wong, & Grau, 2014).

**Visionary leadership.** Visionary leadership helps leaders see the potential of how things should exist and inspire others to follow a shared vision and collectively accomplish great things. It focuses on leaders being clear with their expectations and setting goals accordingly, all while telling the story about why the change is worth pursuing and inspiring people through providing the vision (Ates, Tarakei, Porck, Knippenberg, & Groenen, 2019). Without vision, leadership efforts can easily dissolve into a list of confusing, incompatible, and time-consuming projects that go in the wrong direction or nowhere at all (Kotter, 2001). A visionary leader takes risks and listens to others. They do not seek to manage or dictate others. Rather, they provide freedom for others to determine how to implement the vision and grow as individuals to reach common goals.

**Authentic leadership.** Authentic leadership is focused on a leader’s self-actualization and reflection, deeply tied to the disciplines of psychology (George & Sims, 2007; Maslow, 1971). In authentic leadership, leaders focus on the development of self-actualization or full-functioning actualization; they lead in such a manner as to make wise personal decisions and to lead as a model for others (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). According to Avolio & Gardner (2005), the following elements are components of
authentic leadership: followers’ development, organizational context, follower self-awareness/ regulation, positive moral perspective, leader self-awareness, leader self-regulation, leadership processes and behaviors, and performance. Authentic leadership aspires to lead with purpose, values, relationships, self-discipline and heart (George & Sims, 2007).

**History of Servant Leadership**

Pioneered by Greenleaf (1977), servant leadership begins with “the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first, then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead, thus resulting in servant-leadership.” Servant leaders do not serve for the focus on results; instead, the focus is on the service itself and the desire to serve others (Harvey, 2001). Similarly, Stone, Russell, & Patterson (2004) conclude that the primary focus of the leader in servant leadership is on the leader serving their followers individually, placing the importance on service and followers, not on oneself.

Characteristics such as humility and selflessness, development of employees, motivation, humanizing the workplace, trust and interest in followers, open-mindedness, focus on relationships, and shared decision-making all represent the servant leadership approach (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1995; Van Dierendonck 2011). Servant leaders derive influence from the service itself; they develop relationships with others and followers are often inspired by the leader’s actions and begin to follow their lead to serve (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). Ultimately, servant leadership is focused on the people, not just the results of the organization.

Since its introduction to the leadership literature, servant leadership has gained momentum and is evident in organizations where leadership is people-centered, focused
on empowering, appreciating and valuing the individuals of the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Van Dierendonck (2011) identified and created six traits of servant leadership. These traits include empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship. An entire conceptual framework for servant leadership was developed based on Van Dierendonck’s research. However, he was not the only researcher who developed a theoretical framework from Greenleaf’s work on servant leadership. Many theorists including Spears (1995), Laub (1999), Russell and Stone (2002), Patterson (2003), and Van Dierendonck (2011) have expanded on Greenleaf’s original servant leadership model to establish their own models.

**Patterson’s Servant Leadership Theoretical Framework**

According to Patterson (2003), servant leadership is guided by virtues. The virtuous constructs define servant leadership and help shape the attitudes, characteristics and behaviors of servant leaders. All the constructs play an equally important part in truly being a servant leader. A servant leader is guided by virtues from within; shows compassion, strength and control; remains calm and peaceful in the midst of turmoil; soothes others when confronted with anger; and possesses tact and graciousness that inspire followers (Patterson, 2003). Patterson introduced a theoretical framework founded upon seven constructs: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service.

**Agapao love**

Love is the cornerstone of the servant leader / follower relationship. Servant leaders consider the needs of their followers, valuing each person as an individual with
consideration of the total person. Servant leaders love unconditionally, genuinely appreciate their followers and care for their people more than the organization’s bottom line. They are genuine, act without pretense, show appreciation to followers, celebrate milestones, listen actively, communicate openly and are empathetic (Russell & Stone, 2002; Patterson, 2003). Love allows the leader to be emotionally, physically, and spiritually present for the followers.

**Humility**

Humility is a virtue of not over-valuing oneself and respecting the worth of all individuals. It is a matter of not being self-focused. Servant leaders exhibit humility when they listen willingly, feel accountable to those who they serve, and openly receive criticism and advice as a welcome opportunity to better serve their followers (Patterson, 2003). Humility is characterized by compelling modesty, shunning public adulation and not being boastful about the success of the organization (Collins, 2001).

**Altruism**

Altruism is defined as a link between good motives and good behavior, generally meaning helping others just for the sake of helping others (Patterson, 2003). The well-being of others becomes the first intention of altruism. The servant leader becomes more concerned for the welfare of others than they are for their own welfare and puts themselves in a position of personal sacrifice to help and care for their followers, seeking equality for all (Hattwick, 1996; Patterson, 2003).

**Vision**

Patterson (2003) refers to vision as the servant leaders focus on the individual member’s state within the organization, see each person as a viable and worthy person
and seek to help and assist each individual in reaching that state. A servant leader’s vision for others is about faith, seeing and speaking things as they are or will be. This often includes seeing unique gifts and traits in individuals that they do not even see in themselves and helping them grow and develop.

**Trust**

Patterson (2003) observes that trust is a building block to work from for servant leaders. Servant leaders build trust by following through and doing what they say they are going to do. They must empower followers and build relationships that are trustworthy and truthful, creating open communication and having open dialogue for clarity of communication (Patterson, 2003).

**Empowerment**

Empowerment is entrusting power to others, virtually giving away power to followers. It involves effective listening, putting an emphasis on teamwork, valuing love and equity, and making people feel significant (Russell & Stone, 2002; Patterson, 2003). Servant leaders empower others by allowing them the freedom to proceed toward their goals, helping them reach their dreams and purpose.

**Service**

Service is a choice to serve, placing focus on the interests of others rather than on one’s own interest (Russell & Stone, 2002). Servant leaders know they are servants first; they choose to serve for the purpose of others and have an attitude for service. They are selfless, giving of their time, energy, care, compassion and often even their own belongings (Patterson, 2003).
Leadership in Education

District leadership plays a key role in the success and expectations of high student achievement. Educational experts Marzano and Waters (2009) believe district leadership is essential in setting high expectations and ensuring high levels of student achievement. District leadership must create defined autonomy, focused on district-defined, nonnegotiable common goals and a system of accountability (Marzano & Waters, 2009). District leadership creates an effective balance of centralized direction along with the individualized freedom to allow site-level staff to respond to student needs and ensure student success. A substantial amount of research has been conducted regarding district leadership and the impact it has within a district (Marzano & Waters, 2009; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Mattos, 2008). Superintendents, educational services administrators, student services administrators, and school site principals are most often considered the individuals responsible for student achievement. However, human resource administrators in educational organizations are one of the key individuals responsible for the development of the culture of the organization, and that includes participating in establishing a culture of high performance.

Human Resource Administrators’ Leadership in Education Organizations

Human resource administrators in educational organizations are responsible for the development of the culture within the organization (ACSA, 2002). Often tasked with a multitude of responsibilities, both legally and culturally, these leaders set the tone of the district by efficiently building teams, inspiring employee engagement and empowerment and serving as good stewards for all employees, regardless of job title (ACSA, 2002).
Additionally, human resource administrators are responsible for knowing all the labor laws and educational codes, leading labor relations, hiring highly skilled individuals, as well the important role of working directly with district leadership to ensure a focus on high student performance. Human resource administrators also serve a critical leadership role in ensuring human resource management elements are properly integrated, communicated effectively to employees and followed in a manner that builds trust and supports employees (Caldwell, 2017). It is the role of the human resource administrator to often be the face of the organization, dealing with all employees, promoting excellence and servitude, all while ensuring high levels of service and professionalism to support and increase achievement.

The implications from the literature reveal that there are no landmark or seminal research studies to be found regarding human resource administrators in servant leadership or in establishing a culture of high performance in educational organizations. Further examination of this population is needed to better understand human resource administrators’ leadership within an educational organization and how servant leadership contributes to the culture of an organization.

**Statement of the Research Problem**

Leaders are often tasked with the challenge of leading, being the heart of the organization, and setting the tone of the culture within the organization (Kouzes and Posner, 2011; Fullan 2001). When problems arise that create a negative undercurrent or culture, it often creates negative attitudes, low morale, lack of production and efficiency, and therefore, lack of achievement within an organization (Heathfield, 2019). The success of any organization relies on its leadership and the culture within it. Human
resource leaders in organizations play a significant role in working with leaders to establish norms and develop values that focus on people first, all while working toward the common goal of success in the organization.

In today’s organizations, human resource leaders are tasked with building human capital and promoting a culture of high performance and achievement by all individuals within an organization (Mercer, Barker & Bird, 2010). With the changing needs of employees, dealing with multiple generations within the workplace, it becomes even more important to focus on and value the individuals of the organization. Developing and building a strong culture that supports employees and focuses on establishing a culture of high performance will help to create an environment where employees want to be and, therefore, will result in higher performance outcomes (Dufour & Marzano, 2011).

According to educational experts (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Fullan & Quinn, 2016) establishing a culture of high expectations, collaboration and discussions focused on meeting the needs of all students will result in creating a culture of high levels of performance. While implementing servant leadership that is focused on the service to others and putting the needs of others first (Russell & Stone, 2002; Patterson, 2003; Spears, 2010), leaders can work towards developing cultures that support the high performance of students. Educational organizations become the perfect environment in which to focus on servant leadership and create a culture of high performance. DuFour and Mattos (2013) believe it is every educator’s responsibility to put student needs first and, in doing so, students will have a greater chance of high performance.

While a great amount of information is known about leadership, about creating a culture of high performance and about leaders in educational organizations, there little to
no research around human resource administrators’ leadership in educational organizations, which contributes to creating a culture of high performance (Luenendonk, 2020; Northouse, 2001; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Donohoo, Hattie & Eells, 2018). In addition, there is limited research around specific leaders in educational organizations and the use of servant leadership in impacting the culture of high performance. There are some studies that have been conducted regarding principals, higher education and servant leadership (Crippen, 2004; Black, 2010; Wheeler, 2012); however, there is a lack of research around the intersection of servant leadership and human resource administrators in educational organizations. As a result of this large gap in research around human resource administrators, servant leadership, and establishing a culture of high performance in an educational organization, further research needs to be conducted. Exploring the perceived impact of servant leadership on establishing a culture of high performance from the human resource administrator’s perspective will provide additional information and research to support and assist organizations and individuals in establishing cultures of high performance.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe public-school district human resource administrators’ perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

**Central Research Question**

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by human resource administrators of public-school districts in California?
Sub-Questions

1. What is the impact of the agapao leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
2. What is the impact of the humility leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
3. What is the impact of the altruism leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
4. What is the impact of the vision leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
5. What is the impact of the trust leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
6. What is the impact of the empowerment leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
7. What is the impact of the service leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?

Significance of the Study

Human resource administrators have a multitude of responsibilities: dealing with increasingly complex organizational environments, serving as employee advocates, facilitating and implementing change, being the link between management and employees and being responsible for developing human capital within an organization (Ulrich, Allen, Brockbank, Younger, & Nyman, 2009). Educational organizations are no exception to this, and often have increased the responsibilities of their human resource administrators. According to the Association of California School Administrators
(ACSA, 2002), human resource leaders are tasked with the duties of recruitment and selection; orientation and induction; evaluation of staff; employee counseling; documentation and discipline; terminations; layoffs; employee relations; complaint management; compliance with local, state, and federal laws; employee assistance programs; staffing projections; and labor relations, including collective bargaining agreements and negotiations. In addition to this, an essential role of a human resource administrator in an educational organization is being part of a leadership team who leads and motivates staff to focus on goals to meet the needs of all students and strive to create a culture of high performance (ACSA, 2002).

Human resource administrators serve a critical leadership role in ensuring all human resource management elements are accurately integrated, communicated effectively to employees and represent the organization in a manner that builds trust, supports employees and creates a positive culture for individuals to work in and thrive (Caldwell, 2017). A human resource administrator serving as a leader in an educational organization must build relationships with employees, know the climate and context of the sites, identify and support the needs of the employees and leaders in the organization, establish high expectations for the team and themselves by utilizing data to inform decisions, and encourage and motivate others to perform at high levels (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon, & Yashkina, 2007). Through this leadership of serving others and focusing on meeting the needs of the individuals, organizations will see positive results and higher achievement (DuFour & Mattos, 2013).
Studies have shown that leadership in educational organizations impact the culture of high performance (Donohoo, Hattie, & Eells, 2018; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; and DuFour & Marzano, 2011), yet no studies have examined how human resource administrators contribute to creating the culture of high performance through the leadership they provide within the educational organization. A better understanding of servant leadership within educational organizations and creating a culture of high performance will assist human resource administrators in providing leadership that is focused on service and meets the needs of all individuals, both employees and students within the educational organization.

This study can assist many stakeholders, including all employees of an educational organization, human resource administrators in educational organizations, various administrative organizations such as ACSA, district leadership teams, executive cabinet leadership teams, superintendents of school districts and county offices, and boards of trustees in educational organizations. The study will add to the literature and research of servant leadership in educational organizations, focusing specifically on human resource administrators and the perceived impact of servant leadership in establishing a culture of high performance. The results of this study can also directly assist human resource administrators with implementing the constructs of servant leadership to assist in the ongoing growth and development focused on the service to others and promoting a culture of high performance for all.
Definitions of Terms

The following theoretical and operational terms pertinent to the study are defined to provide clarity and alignment for the reader. The terms were collaboratively developed by a team of peer researchers studying the perceived impact of Patterson’s seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance. Theoretical definitions provide meaning to the reader in relation to ideas and concepts developed out of previous research, while operational definitions convey clarity regarding the purpose of this study and establish guidelines and actions for the researcher to use to measure key variables of the study, and provide clear meaning to terms that might be interpreted different ways.

Theoretical Definitions

**Agapao Love.** Agapao love is the practice of doing the right thing for the right reasons. Agapao love leaders care more for their followers than the interest of the organization, resulting in greater understanding, gratitude, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion (Gunn, 2002; Patterson, 2003).

**Altruism.** Altruism is the practice of demonstrating unselfish concern for the welfare of another, even in the face of risk or sacrifice against one’s personal self-interest. It involves deriving personal pleasure from helping and seeking what’s best for others, often with an attitude of humility, modesty, and selflessness. (DeYoung, 2000; Kaplan, 2000; Monroe, 1994; Patterson, 2003)

**Empowerment.** Empowerment is the act of entrusting power to others—virtually giving away power to followers and allowing them to know and feel significant and important in their role and contribution. It requires effective listening, valuing love and
equity, and an emphasis on teamwork. Empowerment encourages risk taking and self-accountability to accomplish tasks and work toward goals. (Blanchard, 2000; Melrose, 1995; Patterson, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002).

**Humility.** Humility is the practice of being humble and having modesty, not to be mistaken for meekness or the absence of strength. It is a virtue characterized by one’s own talents and abilities and an outward rejection of self-interest while placing true value on the recognition and success of others. (Kim et al., 1999)

**Service.** Service is the moral equivalent of giving of oneself to serve others. It implies that leaders are focused on placing interest on others rather than on their own interest. It can be demonstrated through the gift of time, energy, compassion, care or belongings. Service places others first. (Patterson, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002).

**Trust.** Trust is the level of confidence that one individual has in another’s competence and his or her willingness to act in a fair, ethical, and predictable manner. Trust is essential to organizational culture; integrity and care for others are valued by the leader and followers. (Joseph & Winston, 2005; Patterson, 2003).

**Vision.** Vision is a bridge from the present to the future created by a collaborative mindset, adding meaning to the organization, sustaining higher levels of motivation and withstanding challenge. (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; Landsberg, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 1993; Nanus, 1992)

**Operational Definitions**

This section offers operational definitions of key terms to distinguish the individuals, environment and leadership principles pertinent to this study. As defined here, these terms are specific to the manner in which they are used (Roberts, 2010).
**Culture of High Performance.** A district with a culture of high performance is one that has demonstrated a growth trend over the past two years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Suspension Rate, and Graduation Rate; or has high performance as evidenced by scoring in the blue or green category for two consecutive years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Suspension Rate, and Graduation Rate.

**K-12 School District.** A K-12 school district is defined as a district that provides comprehensive academic instruction to students in grades Kindergarten through 12, including districts that service K-8 students (elementary districts) and K-12 students (unified districts).

**Human Resource Administrator.** For the purpose of this study, a human resource administrator is defined as a Director, Executive Director, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources or Personnel who oversees the human resource management of the public-school district.

**Delimitations**

The study was delimited to 5-8 human resource administrators in California public school districts who represented at least five of the six following criteria:

- Human Resource Administrator was employed at a current school district within California with a minimum of 100 staff members.
- Evidence of leading school or districts with culture of high performance.
- Human Resource Administrator participant has a minimum of two to three years of experience at their current district.
• A minimum of five years’ experience in the K-12 profession.

• Membership in professional associations in their field, such as ACSA.

• Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings.

**Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters, followed by references and appendices. Chapter I introduces the study, including background information about a culture of high performance, leadership models, servant leadership and human resource administrators in educational organizations. It also presented the significance of the problem, purpose statement, research questions, and theoretical and operational definitions pertinent to this study. Chapter II provides an examination of the leadership theory, culture of high performance, and servant leadership. Chapter III describes the methodology and research design utilized to conduct the study, including descriptions of population, sample, data collections and analysis procedures. Chapter IV presents the findings of the study and gives detailed explanation of data collected throughout the study. Chapter V includes the summary of the findings, conclusions, implications for action and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Establishing and maintaining a culture of high performance is what leadership is all about. It doesn’t matter what profession or leadership role you are in; high performance is the ultimate goal that organizations and individuals expect (Fullan, 2001; Waters & Marzano, 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Worldwide, organizations utilize leadership to impact and direct the practices and implementation of systems within an organization. This remains true in the leadership practices of educational organizations as educational leaders strive to continually improve and reach levels of high performance (Waters & Marzano, 2007; US Department of Education, 2019; Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

Chapter II presents a review of the literature as it pertains to the historical background of leadership and leadership models, the importance of establishing a culture of high performance, the theoretical context for Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs (agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service) and the role of leadership in educational organizations. A synthesis matrix of pertinent research was established (Appendix A) and used to guide and support the development of this review. The literature review is organized into seven sections and was prepared by reviewing, synthesizing, and organizing information through a funnel model. The first section provides a review on the importance of leadership. Section 2 summarizes pertinent leadership models such as transformational leadership, resonant leadership, visionary leadership, and authentic leadership theories. The third section includes a history of servant leadership and how it relates to leadership in educational organizations. Section 4 focuses on the theoretical framework of Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership and the seven constructs of servant leadership, giving a succinct
overview of each of the constructs. Next, the fifth section describes how leadership impacts establishing a culture of high performance and the components of creating a culture of high performance in educational organizations. Section 6 discusses the leadership within educational organizations and specifically details the role of the human resource administrator in an educational organization. Finally, section 7 provides a summary of the literature and a basis for the goal of the study, which is to explore the following research question: What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by human resource administrators of public-school districts in California?

**Overview and Importance of Leadership**

Leadership has many definitions. Bass (1985) and Burns (1978) believed that without leadership there would be no direction, focus, vision or structure to lead and define an organization. Leadership provides guidance toward goals and expectations. In times of crisis or turmoil, a leader must manage themselves while leading others (Ackerman-Anderson & Anderson, 2010). Leadership must involve an individual who is exemplary in emotional intelligence (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). Barnett (2000) added: “Leadership can be defined in broad terms as a process by which one individual intentionally exerts influence that causes others to engage in voluntary, goal-directed behavior” (p. 490). He believed “it is the voluntary nature that separates leadership from other types of influence based on formal authority” (Barnett, 2000, p. 490).

The history of leadership has evolved over centuries and has resulted in a range of outcomes both good and bad, depending upon the impact and effects of the outcomes. Leadership involves influencing people and focusing that influence toward attainable
outcomes, such as the completion of tasks or changes in behavior (Gilmore, 2007). Leadership is associated with directly or indirectly affecting learning, actions and outcomes (Fullan, 2001; Waters & Marzano, 2007). It is through leadership that an individual can influence a group or organization by directing, structuring, and facilitating activities and relationships (Yukl, 2010). Regardless of the definition, organizations need leadership to impact and direct the practices and implementation of systems within an organization. Fullan (2001) believes leadership is complex and must adjust and evolve with the complexity of the changing world.

With the ongoing changes and challenges that organizations face, leadership is needed now more than ever. No longer is the top-down model of leadership accepted as it once was during the Baby Boomer era (Lloyd-Walker & Walker, 2011). Instead, leadership that provides inclusion, inspiration, shared purpose and decision-making is the expectation (Heathfield, 2019; Lloyd-Walker & Walker, 2011). Individuals want to feel valued, be inspired, have a voice and know they are contributing to a shared purpose or goal and making a difference in what they do (Northouse, 2001). As leadership continues to evolve with the changing demands of the world, leaders will also need to continue to evolve by implementing the new skills, strategies and practices that future research uncovers to meet those demands.

**Leadership Models**

Over time, leadership models have transformed into many of the current leadership theories that are being practiced today. Hunt and Fedynich (2019) asserted that the early development of leadership occurred during the age of expansion and industrial revolution, which identified a leader as the one great individual who makes the
decisions and has the power. Such leadership emphasized control and centralization of power. Models such as the “Great Man” theory, which suggested leaders are born and not made, supported the concept that select individuals had leadership qualities that were passed between generations (Klingborg, D., Moore, D., & Varea-Hammond, S., 2006). However, over the centuries, leadership has evolved and grown into leadership models that are focused on inclusion, motivation, and inspiration of others. Leadership has shifted away from one person making demands and holding the power to leadership being focused on the needs of the followers, with a vision and shared purpose to work toward (Klingborg, D., Moore, D., & Varea-Hammond, S., 2006). Fullan (2001) believes leadership is complex and must adjust and change with the complexities of the world. Just as the world is changing, so must leadership to transform and adjust to its diverse complexities. An exploration of transformational leadership, resonant leadership, visionary leadership and authentic leadership will help unveil different types of leadership models leaders use to lead organizations.

**Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership has been one of the most recognized and discussed topics in the field of leadership research (Raj & Srivastava, 2016). Founded by Burns and Bass (1978 & 1985), transformational leadership has inspired and motivated leaders to understand how the actions of individual leaders have a direct impact on the effectiveness of employees and followers. Transformational leadership requires a leader that aspires to motivate others, influencing, supporting and inspiring followers to achieve higher standards (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Through inspiration and motivation, followers improve performance and realize self-potential, all while working toward a common goal.
or vision of the organization (Boje, 2000; Bass & Avolio, 1990). Raj and Srivastava (2016) contended that transformational leaders encourage and empower employees to try new things, such as new ways to communicate or giving individuals (followers) leadership opportunities in which the follower leads a team to accomplish a task. Transformational leadership not only encourages workers to perform at their full potential and pursue higher standards of performance excellence, but it also motivates followers and brings awareness of the importance and value of designated outcomes and the ways of achieving those outcomes (Bass & Avolio, 1990 & 2004).

Bass (1985) asserted that transformational leadership contains four main components: (1) charisma or idealized influence, (2) inspirational motivation, (3) intellectual stimulation, and (4) individualized consideration. Each of these components was critical to the leader’s role and how the leader’s behavior affected workers (Bass, 1985). These four components became the “four I’s” of transformational leadership (Luenendonk, 2020).

**Idealized influence.** Transformational leaders are first and foremost a role model to others. They are often respected and admired, resulting in a desire from their followers to emulate them (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Thanks to a strong moral compass, the leader’s integrity and values are clear throughout the organization, never wavering. By unifying followers, transformational leaders have the ability to change their followers’ goals and beliefs (Humphreys & Einstein, 2016). In times of turmoil or crisis, the leader must manage themselves while leading others (Ackerman-Anderson & Anderson, 2010), and be an exemplar of emotional intelligence.
**Inspirational motivation.** A leader who inspires motivation, sparks confidence, and has a clear sense of purpose leads with inspirational motivation (Luenendonk, 2020). This is another very important principle of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders demonstrate behaviors that motivate, inspire and challenge others. They display optimism and enthusiasm while genuinely valuing individuals. By sharing their personal beliefs and values, transformational leaders can inspire individuals to pursue the interests of the organization (Humphreys & Einstein, 2016). Using symbols or stories, inspirational leaders clearly communicate expectations and develop a collective commitment to goals and a shared vision. When followers are inspired by their leader, they desire to change and improve.

**Intellectual stimulation.** Intellectual stimulation is displayed when a leader helps followers become more innovative and creative (Bass, 1999). It includes shared decision-making and innovation at its core, making it a key component of the transformational leadership framework (Luenendonk, 2020). Transformational leaders encourage individuals to challenge their thoughts, imagination and creativity and to recognize their values, beliefs and mindset. They get their followers to re-examine traditional ways of doing things, and encourage individuals to try novel and creative approaches to solving problems and performing work (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Individuals are encouraged to be creative and think outside the box, not to just conform to what everyone else is doing. Intellectual stimulation aims to enhance creativity, and it actively seeks to promote autonomy and shared leadership. A big part of intellectual stimulation relies on the leader allowing the followers the freedom to make decisions. In fact, followers are actually encouraged to be in charge of their own decisions. Leaders
aim to change the way followers think about a problem and to see the different ways they could overcome the issues facing them (Luenendonk, 2020).

**Individualized consideration.** Transformational leaders’ exhibit individualized consideration by listening attentively and paying close attention to their followers’ needs (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leaders are mentors and coaches who strive for growth and achievement by encouraging followers to take on more responsibilities in order to help individuals develop to their full potential (Bass & Avolio, 1990). Providing opportunities for individuals to grow and explore their own leadership skills and ideas is a priority of a transformational leader. Individualized consideration is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, the leader must take into consideration that individuals have different motivations and that, in order to get the most out of those individuals, one must consider their individual needs (Luenendonk, 2020). Followers are encouraged to share ideas and are appreciated for the contributions to the organization. Transformational leaders inspire and encourage individual differences, recognizing the benefit that each individual brings forward (Bass, 1985 and Burns, 1978). True transformational leaders are focused on developing individuals into leaders (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999).

**Resonant Leadership**

Resonant leadership is based primarily on emotional intelligence and focused on positive relational leadership (Cumming, 2004; Goleman et al., 2002). Leaders who are able to motivate their followers through building and managing positive emotions result in high outcomes, which is known as resonance (Goleman et al., 2002; Squires et al., 2010). Resonance entails the use of emotional, financial, environmental, social and cultural intelligence to motivate and encourage followers to bring out their best and
aspire to do their best in all situations to reach desired results (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Cummings, 2004). Consistently utilizing social and emotional skills to recognize, monitor and reflect on not only their own emotions but on others’ emotions as well is a mark of a resonant leader (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

The connections that resonant leaders create with their followers are fostered by the strong emotional intelligence the leader exhibits. These connections create opportunities for leaders and individuals to build trusting relationships and manage emotions productively (McKee & Massimilian, 2006). The enthusiastic and positive leadership creates resonant relationships between individuals and those they lead (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Followers of resonant leaders are optimistic about the future and are motivated to work toward and achieve the best (McKee, Boyatzis & Johnston, 2008). Squires et al. (2010) contended that resonant leadership resulted in leaders that demonstrated a high level of emotional intelligence and were directly in tune with the emotions of those around them. These leaders use empathy and effectively manage their own emotions to build strong, trusting relationships with individuals and create a climate that inspires commitment from them (Squires et al., 2010).

Through resonant leadership, leaders can generate high energy among their followers, which in turn results in high productivity, unity and creativity for organizations. Boyatzis and McKee (2005) contend that it is the energy brought about by the emotional intelligence of the leader that transfers to the followers or members of the organization and therefore results in outstanding outcomes and productivity. A leader who has self-awareness, awareness of others and empathy is a leader who provides resonant leadership (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002). According to McKee and
Rotondo (2007), empathy is another essential element in building and sustaining resonant relationships. This characteristic of empathy in a resonant leader is further supported by Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, who suggested that “without a healthy dose of heart, a supposed leader may manage—but he does not lead” (2002, p. 21).

Resonant leadership requires leaders to actively engage in the process of assessing and supporting their own emotional well-being. The passion, hope and vision that resonant leaders model to their followers serve as inspiration and motivation to the followers they lead (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). Resonant leadership requires leaders to engage in an ongoing renewal process. This process involves steps to identifying and overcoming inevitable stressors associated with being a leader and making sure to practice mindfulness, compassion and empathy (McKee & Massimilian, 2006).

According to Boyatzis and McKee (2005), essential elements in the renewal process include compassion, hope, and mindfulness. Resonant leadership involves the leader being self-aware, mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. In order to be effective and provide resonant leadership, leaders must be in tune with themselves so as to be in tune with their followers (McKee & Massimilian, 2006; Goleman et al., 2002; Boyatzis et al., 2013).

Understanding how to talk to people, listening to them, being attentive, showing you truly care and are interested in them personally and professionally, and creating an environment of mutual respect and trust are all characteristics of resonant leadership (Boyatzis et al., 2013). Leaders who are in tune with others truly understand their needs and know how to intrinsically motivate their followers to perform at their best. It is through social awareness, self-management, self-awareness, and relationship
management that resonant leaders connect and lead individuals and organizations to great success (Laschinger, Cumming, Wong, & Grau, 2014).

**Visionary Leadership**

Similar to transformational and resonant leadership, visionary leadership inspires followers to move beyond their own interests, to believe in and work for the interest of the leader or organization (Yukl, 2012). Visionary leaders focus on followers and seek to gain engagement in the vision of the organization (Stam et al., 2010), often looking beyond what the organization currently is to what it could be in the future (Groves, 2006). Visionary leadership empowers leaders to see the potential of how things should or could be and inspires others to follow a shared vision to accomplish great things by clearly communicating the expectations and goals for the future (Kearney, Shemla, van Knippenberg, & Scholz, 2019). By painting a clear image of the future with the intention to persuade others to contribute to the realizations of that future, visionary leaders inspire innovation and growth (Mascareno, Rietzschel, & Wisse, 2019).

A visionary leader takes risks and listens to others while staying focused on the outcomes for the future. According to Van Knipperberg & Stam (2014), visionary leadership is defined as “the verbal communication of an image of a future for a collective with the intention to persuade others to contribute to the realization of that future” (p. 243). Visionary leaders focus on clearly articulating a vision to guide the organization, providing meaning and purpose to followers. Clearly establishing a focus and image of the vision and developing goals that directly align with the vision allow teams to work together and strive for the desired outcomes (Mascareno, Rietzschel, & Wisse, 2019). Visionary leadership is built on the principles of creating, communicating
and implementing a vision or image that followers understand and want to follow. Leaders focus on being clear with expectations and setting goals, all while telling the story and painting the picture of why the change is worth pursuing (Ates et al., 2019).

By creating a clear vision for followers, a leader can take individuals on a meaningful journey of exploration and innovation while staying aligned to the common goals of the organization. Visionary leaders allow followers the freedom to determine how to proceed forward to reach the desired outcomes, thereby allowing innovation and creativity within the organization, all while moving forward toward the vision (Nanus, 1992; Kotter, 2001; Yukl, 2012; Ates et al., 2019). The ability to inspire teams and create strategic alignment, which is a shared understanding of and commitment to the organization’s strategy and vision, is a core element in the successful implementation of visionary leadership (Ates et al., 2019). Visionary leaders challenge the status quo and look beyond what is, to see what can be, moving organizations and people into action (Grandy, 2012).

**Authentic Leadership**

According to Terry (1993), Conley (2007), George and Sims (2007), and Maslow (1971), authentic leadership focuses on the leader’s self-actualization and reflections. Authentic leaders create a sense of openness and lead in such a manner as to make wise personal decisions and lead as a model for others (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Avolio, Luthans, and Walumbwa (2004) described authentic leaders as “individuals who know who they are and what they think and are perceived by others as being aware of their own values, moral perspective, knowledge and strengths” (p.4). Authentic leadership focuses on a leader being aware of their individual areas of growth and displaying transparency to
followers within the organization. Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson (2008) define authentic leadership as:

Authentic leadership is defined as a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development. (p. 94)

Through displaying transparency and openness, authentic leaders create a work culture and climate where information-sharing and openness of values and beliefs becomes a norm between the leader and their followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Avolio and Gardner (2005) believed the following elements were distinctive to make up authentic leadership: positive psychological capital, positive moral perspective, leader self-awareness, leader self-regulation, leadership processes/behaviors, follower self-awareness/regulation, follower development, organizational context, and overall performance. Similarly, George and Sims (2007) identified authentic leadership with qualities of leading with purpose, values, heart, relationships and self-discipline.

Authentic leadership involves leaders being role models of self-awareness and self-regulation. Reinforcing the practice of self-reflections, growth and fostering a climate in which team members strive to develop and practicing such behaviors are essential components of authentic leadership (Lyubovnikova et al., 2017). Through the process of modeling self-awareness and self-regulation of practices, teams develop the skills to engage in meaningful conversations and gain confidence in their own abilities to lead and take part in decision making processes within organizations. Really knowing
who you are and what you believe in, as well as practicing those values, not only inspires others through your leadership but allows individuals to aspire to be authentic leaders (George & Sims, 2007; Avolio & Gardner, 2005; & Walumbwa et al., 2008).

**Servant Leadership**

“...The great leader is seen as servant first....”

Robert K. Greenleaf

Pioneered by Greenleaf (1977), servant leadership is focused on others rather than upon the self, and on understanding the role of the leader as a servant. Servant leaders do not serve for the sake of results; instead, the focus is on the service itself and the desire to serve others (Harvey, 2001). Self-interest should not motivate servant leadership; rather it should ascend to a higher form of motivation, serving others (Greenleaf, 1977). Stone, Russell, & Patterson (2004) conclude the primary focus of servant leadership is on the leader serving their followers individually, placing the importance on service and followers, not on oneself or on results. Furthermore, Greenleaf (1977) described servant leadership as:

The servant-leader is servant first.... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. The 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 to drive or to acquire material possession...The leaders first and the servant first are two extreme types. Between them some shading and blends are part of the infinite variety of human nature. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other peoples’ highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult
to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely to become servants? (1977, p.4).

Characteristics such as humility and self-servanthood, development of employees, motivation, humanizing the workplace, trust, interest in followers, open-mindedness, focus on relationships, and shared decision-making all represent the servant leadership approach (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1995; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Larry Spears (1996), Executive Director of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, defines servant leadership as:

.... A new kind of leadership model—a model which puts serving others as the number one priority. Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decision-making (1996, p. 33).

Since Greenleaf’s introduction of servant leadership, this leadership philosophy has gained momentum and popularity and is evident in organizations where leadership is people-centered, focused on empowering, valuing and appreciating the individuals of the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Servant leadership frameworks focus on four central tenets: service to others, holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and sharing power in decision-making.

**Service to Others.** Servant leadership begins when the leader takes on the role or position of the servant to the followers. Focusing on the needs and interests of individuals, servant leadership arises not from the exercise of power or control or self-interested actions; instead, it arises from the desire to put others first (Smith, 2005).
According to Greenleaf (1970), a servant leader’s primary purpose and motivation is to inspire greatness in others, while organizational success is indirect and derived from servant leadership.

**Holistic Approach to Work.** “The work exists for the person as much as the person exists for the work” (Greenleaf, 1996, p.8). Organizations must think directly about the relationships that exist between people, the organization and society as a whole. Organizations must focus on individuals being true to who they are, and doing the work because it is meaningful, authentic, empowering and selfless.

**Promoting a sense of community.** A sense of community arises only from the actions of individual servant leaders focused on performing service together as a unit (Greenleaf, 1970). Servant leadership promotes the idea of individuals working together and establishing a community focused on the needs of others and providing human service that would not exist without the community.

**Sharing of Power in Decision-Making.** By developing environments that encourage participation and empower individuals to actively engage in the work being done, servant leaders create a more effective, motivating work environment where individuals want to perform and accomplish tasks (Russell & Stone, 2002). Russell (2001) states, “Leaders enable others to act not by hoarding power they have but by giving it away” (p.80). Allowing individuals to actively share ideas and provide input for decisions creates an environment that individuals want to support and promote.

While these tenets are essential in the framework of servant leadership, behavior theorists Russell & Stone (2002) have also identified 10 major servant leadership characteristics or “attributes” from Greenleaf’s writings:
1. Listening – A critical communication tool, necessary for accurate communication and for actively demonstrating respect for others. According to Greenleaf, “Only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening first” (1970, p.10). Servant leaders actively seek to identify the will of a group and help to clarify that will by listening receptively to what is being said and unsaid.

2. Empathy – The ability to mentally project one’s own consciousness into that of another individual. Greenleaf wrote, “The servant always accepts and empathizes, never rejects” (1970, p.12), and “Men grow taller when those who lead them empathize, and when they are accepted for who they are....” (1970, p.14). One assumes the good intentions of others and does not reject them even when one may be forced to refuse to accept certain behaviors.

3. Healing – Greenleaf defined healing as “to make whole” (1970, p. 27). The servant leader recognizes the shared human desire to find wholeness in one’s self and supports it in others. Many people have broken spirits and have suffered in some way; a servant leader recognizes the opportunity to help make whole those with whom they come in contact.

4. Awareness – Without awareness, “we miss leadership opportunities” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 19). Awareness helps one understand issues; it lends itself to viewing most situations from a holistic approach or position.

5. Persuasion – The effective servant leader builds group consensus through gentle but clear and persistent persuasion, and does not exert group compliance through position power. Greenleaf notes that “A fresh look is
being taken at the issue of power and authority and people are beginning to learn, however haltingly, to relate to one another in less coercive and more creatively supportive ways” (1970, p. 3-4). Servant leadership utilizes person, rather than position power, to influence followers and achieve organizational objectives. Servant leaders are effective at building consensus within groups, using persuasion over coercion.

6. Conceptualization – The servant leader can conceive solutions to problems that do not currently exist (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 23-25). Servant leaders seek to nurture the ability to dream great dreams and to think beyond mundane, day-to-day realities.

7. Foresight – “Prescience, or foresight, is a better than average guess about what is going to happen when in the future” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 16). Servant leaders with foresight understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present and the likely consequences of the future.

8. Stewardship – Organizational stewards or “trustees” are concerned not only for the individual followers within the organization, but also the organization as a whole and its impact on and relationship with all of society (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 31). Servant leadership, like stewardship, assumes a commitment to serving the needs of others and emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion, rather than control or power.

9. Commitment to the growth of people – A demonstrated appreciation and encouragement of others. Per Greenleaf, “The secret of institution building is to be able to weld a team of such people by lifting them up to grow taller than
they would otherwise be” (1970, p. 14). A servant leader recognizes responsibility to do everything within his/her power to nurture the personal and professional growth of individuals.

10. Building community – The rise of large institutions has eroded community, the social act that unites individuals in society. According to Greenleaf, “All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form... is for enough servant leaders to show the way” (1970, p. 30). Servant leaders connect people within an organization so they can support one another and find their sense of belonging.

In the 2010 article *Character and servant leadership: Ten characteristics of effective, caring leaders*, Spears stated that “these ten characteristics are by no means exhaustive. However, they do serve to communicate the power and promise that this concept offers to those who are open to its invitation” (p. 29). The conceptualizations of servant leadership are varied but the prominent characteristics are all very similar. Laub (1999), Spears (2010), Greenleaf (1970), Farling, Stone, & Winston (1993), Patterson (2003), and Van Dierendonck’s (2011) work all support the claim that although the words may be different and vary in number of characteristics or attributes, the concepts of servant leadership are closely akin to traits, characteristics, and behaviors identified in each of the researcher’s models. Figure 1 below shows the comparison of characteristics, traits, attributes or terms found in some of the well-known servant leadership models.
The seminal authors of servant leadership, which include Greenleaf (1977), Spears (1996), Laub (1999), Russell and Stone (2002), Patterson (2003), and Van Dierendonck (2011), all contend that servant leadership involves a leader who is focused on the followers and goes beyond self-interest. True servant leadership is governed by creating organizational opportunities to help followers grow, and these leaders are not driven by a desire for power; instead, they are powered by the need to serve (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

The core relationship between the leader and the follower is the leader’s belief in the intrinsic value of each individual; it is all about the realization, recognition and
acknowledgement of each individual’s ability and believing in the growth and potential (Greenleaf, 1998).

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework utilized to explore and describe human resource administrators’ perceptions of the impact of servant leadership on establishing a culture of high performance is Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership. This theoretical framework clearly defines the constructs of servant leadership and the role a leader plays when utilizing each of the constructs. Patterson’s (2003) work is based on seven constructs that a leader must possess to truly be a servant leader. These constructs include agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. In developing the framework, Patterson (2003) presented the theory as a logical extension of transformational theory, contending that servant leaders are “those leaders who lead an organization by focusing on their followers, such that the followers are the primary concern and the organizational concerns are peripheral” (Patterson, 2003, p. 5). Figure 2 reflects Patterson’s Servant Leadership Model.
Patterson’s Seven Servant Leadership Constructs

Agapao Love

Love is the cornerstone of the servant leader/follower relationship. Patterson (2003) stated “the leader that leads with agapao love has a focus on the employee first, then on the talents of the employee, and lastly on how this benefits the organization” (p. 12). The Greek term agapao love means moral love, doing the right thing at the right time and for the right reasons (Winston, 2002). Winston (2002) further defines agapao love to mean “to love in a social or moral sense and includes embracing the judgement and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty and propriety” (p. 5). Servant leaders express the qualities and value of love through serving the best interest of others, freeing themselves from self-doubt, self-criticism, and self-imposed limitations (Patterson, 2003). Agapao love is shown through the actions of a servant leader, by considering each person as a total person, understanding that each individual has needs, wants and desires (Winston, 2002).
Loving unconditionally, genuinely appreciating followers, and caring for people are ways servant leaders exhibit agapao love (Russell & Stone, 2002). It is through this love that leaders lead with feeling, fostering understanding, kindness, gratitude, compassion and forgiveness (Gunn, 2002). Love is acclaimed as the premier virtue of humankind (Ayers, 2008). The situation in which love or agapao is being expressed depends on the conception or definition of love. According to Ayers (2008), there are three conceptions of love—interpersonal love, impersonal love, and religious love—each representing a different meaning and used in different situations. Interpersonal love is the love found in relationships among family, friends, and couples and goes beyond liking someone a lot into a deeper, more meaningful emotion. The second concept of love is the impersonal love, which is expressed more as a person’s love of material objects, animals, and activities. The third type of love is religious love, which is the experience between individuals and God; beyond a mere experience of emotions, it is noted to be transcendent and spiritual (Ayers, 2008). Each of these leads to the deeper understand of agapao, which stands for the unique manifestation of divine love. Wuest (1999) describes it eloquently:

(Agapao) speaks of a love that is awakened by a sense of value in an object that causes one to prize it. It springs from an apprehension of preciousness of an object. It is a love of esteem and approbation. The quality of this love is determined by the character of the one who loves: not that of the object loved.

In Patterson’s (2003) model, agapao love serves as the catalyst for leadership that benefits others and evokes response within them. Servant leaders serve with the virtue of agapao by authentically valuing people, affirming their worth, and building up
individuals through their leadership (Ayers, 2008; Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2002). Expressing a deep compassion to love unconditionally, caring for their people and genuinely appreciating their followers, servant leaders lead with the construct of agapao love (Russell, 2001; Russell & Stone, 2002; Patterson, 2003). Agapao love is the love of will, not of feeling.

**Humility**

Humility is characterized by compelling modesty, shunning public adoration and not being boastful about the success of the organization or one’s own ability (Collins, 2001). Leaders who possess the quality of humility consider moderation, listen to others for advice and input, keep their accomplishments and talents in perspective and realize that the right use of power means rejecting dictatorial behavior (Sandage & Wiens, 2001; Covey, 2002). Humility is a virtue of not over-valuing oneself and respecting the worth of others, while working together to accomplish great things.

According to Patterson (2003), servant leaders exhibit humility when they listen willingly, feel accountable to those who they serve and openly receive criticism and advice as a welcome opportunity to better serve their followers and the organization. Covey (1994) was also a strong advocate of humility, writing, “the mother of all virtues: the humble in spirit progress and are blessed because they willingly submit to higher powers and try to live in harmony with natural laws and universal principles” (p. 3). Humble leaders seek to direct followers’ attention to the goals and values of the organization, creating a strong sense of culture, acceptance and unity (Wagner-Marsh & Conley, 1999).
Overwhelmingly, the concept of humility is described by researchers as the choice not to center one’s attention on oneself or one’s own accomplishments but instead to focus attention on others and the success of the organization (Collins, 2001; Sandage & Wiens, 2001; Covey, 1994; Wagner-Marsh & Conley, 1999). Servant leaders exhibit humility through the willingness to listen, putting their ego aside and accepting negative feedback openly with the mindset of how to improve and make things better, rather than getting defensive and blaming others. Collins (2001) affirmed that humility is characterized by compelling modesty, not being boastful and shunning public adoration. Humble leaders demonstrate their humility through calm determination, setting up successors for great success, relying on inspired standards and focusing on the people of the organization to appropriate that success (Collin, 2001). According to Covey (2002), one of the greatest gifts a servant leader can give followers is the gift of self; this displays great reverence, respect and “humility”.

**Altruism**

Altruism is defined as a link between good motives and good behaviors, generally meaning helping others just for the sake of helping others (Kaplan, 2000; Patterson, 2003). The well-being of others is the first intention of altruism. It is not merely having good intentions or being well-meaning; instead, altruism is more about the concern for the welfare of others (Monroe, 1994). Servant leaders exhibit altruism through the actions of putting others needs first, making decisions based on what is best for others, often making decisions that sacrifice oneself in order to help others. Monroe (1994) believed there are four critical components of altruism: altruism must entail action, must further the welfare of another, does not diminish if well-intentioned efforts result in
negative consequence, and must carry some possibility of diminution to the welfare of the person committing the sacrificial act. The servant leader becomes more concerned for the welfare of others than they are with their own welfare and perform personal sacrifice to help and care for their followers, seeking equality for all and making a difference to those around them (Hattwich, 1996; Spears, 1998; Patterson, 2003).

According to Higgins (2010) and Newman & Cain (2014), altruism is the act of being selfless or putting others’ needs above one’s own. Servant leaders are the model of altruistic behaviors; being unselfish and putting others needs first are at the forefront of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1997; Patterson, 2003). While leaders make sacrifices to get results that will ultimately benefit others beyond the self-benefit, the act of altruism is at the core of the servant leadership mentality (Patterson, 2003).

**Vision**

Vision has various meanings depending upon who is being asked and what the context of the question is. According to Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999), vision is a fundamental aspect of servant leadership and focuses on leaders fully concentrating on where things are headed, the future, and looking ahead toward goals with the end in mind. Patterson (2003) believes vision is about faith, seeing and speaking things as though they are or will be in the future. Vision creates an atmosphere where the leader looks forward and sees individuals as viable and worthy, investing in them and seeking to assist each individual in reaching high levels (Patterson, 2003).

Martin Luther King, Jr. was one of the most prominent and revered leaders of the Civil Rights movement, and he spoke passionately about his vision. His “I Have A Dream” speech presented his vision clearly and with great impact. Through his visionary
leadership, he gave people a powerful sense of direction and an idea of what to expect for the future (Robbins, 2007). Robbins (2007) stated a vision portrays where you are going, offering a view of something different than what currently is. Vision is understood as an image of the future of collective organization, team, etc., that is different from the current state of affairs (Venus, Stam, & van Knippenberg, 2019). Having a vision based on passion and desire to somehow change the world around you will propel the vision forward (Robbins, 2007). It is through desire and passion that visions come alive.

Communicating a clear and passionate vision is the responsibility of a leader. By providing a clear vision that is inspiring and that expresses clear aspirations and direction, a leader allows followers the opportunity to see the vision through the leader’s eyes, and also to buy into the values, purpose and overall idea (Perkins, Lean, & Newberry, 2017). Vision is a powerful tool that includes seeing each individual’s unique gifts and potential and influences, and helps leaders shape a plan and path for the future (Patterson, 2003; Robbins, 2007; Venus et al., 2019).

**Trust**

According to Merriam-Webster (2020), trust is defined as having confidence, assured reliance, hope and faith in someone or something. Trust can be described as the level of confidence an individual has in another person’s competence and willingness to act in a fair, ethical, and predictable manner (Waddell, 2006). It is through trust that leaders can either build or break a relationship. Collins (2001) believed that leadership is built not only on vision but, just as important, on trust. Trust is a virtue linked to integrity, respect for others, and service to an organization (Harris, 2002). Through the development of trust, leaders can motivate and inspire individuals, creating a work
environment where employees believe in the leader and believe they will follow through with what is being said (White, Harvey, & Fox, 2016). Servant leaders build trust by following through and doing what they say they are going to do. The phrase “walk the walk and talk the talk” is a true model of trust in action.

Servant leaders empower followers and build relationships that are trustworthy and truthful, creating open communication and having open dialog for clarity of concepts or ideas (Patterson, 2003). Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999) believed that a climate of trust helps establish an organization that facilitates cooperation and also results in increased levels of service both from leader to follower and follower to leader. Trust is essential in a work environment where individuals rely on one another to complete tasks and reach goals. Without trust, the leader and the organization have limited ability to make significant change in an organization (White, Harvey, & Fox, 2016).

**Empowerment**

Empowerment means teaming with others through sharing information and creating new structures that use and develop people’s talents (Randolph, 1995). Through empowerment, leaders turn power over to individuals or employees and create opportunities for these individuals to become the decision-makers and leaders of others (Chhotray, Sivertsson, & Tell, 2017; Russell & Stone, 2002). According to research done by Dewettinck and Ameijde (2010), empowerment involves employees in decision-making, showing employees that their work directly impacts the organization and informing employees of organizational change, as well as connecting employees to the workplace through job satisfaction. Leaders can empower employees or individuals by giving them more autonomy and influence over decisions (Yukl, 2012).
Servant leaders empower their followers in by entrusting power to others, attentively listening to individual ideas and thoughts, making others feel significant, putting an emphasis on teamwork and valuing love and equity (Russell & Stone, 2002). In addition, servant leaders empower individuals by teaching and developing each individual and taking a deep interest in their potential. To further define the term empowerment, Melrose (1995) proposed that servant leaders give individuals chances to move into new and more powerful roles while preserving their roots, respecting their value and maintaining their dignity. Empowerment is not about being put in a position that enables power; rather, it is the practice of giving individuals the opportunity to perform their jobs by enabling them to learn, grow and progress while developing strengths and trust (Melrose, 1995).

Patterson (2003) ended her section on empowerment with this statement:

By empowering followers, servant leaders are allowing them freedom to proceed toward their goals, helping them make dreams reality. Empowerment is giving up control and lettering the followers take charge as needed. Throughout this process, the servant leader is channeling followers, is balancing the growth of followers and is aware of what is best for the follower. This empowerment allows the follower to bloom and grow. (p. 6)

Service

Service is a core component of servant leadership (Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Russell & Stone, 2002; Patterson, 2003). According to Russell and Stone (2002), service is the choice to place the interests of others above self-interest. Service is the giving of oneself through the giving of time, energy, care, compassion, generosity and
sometimes one’s belongings (Swindoll, 1981). Through service, leaders support individuals by discovering the uniqueness in each employee, providing a contribution to the larger good, knowing service is bigger than themselves, uncovering creativity and innovation in others, and seeking opportunities to serve others (Wis, 2002; Smith, 2003; Patterson, 2003).

Greenleaf (1970), Melrose (1995) and Russell and Stone (2002) all believed that for servant leaders, service comes first. Greenleaf described “the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first, then the conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead, thus resulting in servant-leadership” (p. 13). Servant leaders know they are servants first; they choose to serve for the purpose of others and have an attitude for service (Patterson, 2003). Additionally, Covey (1990) asserted that a foundation of leadership should include the desire to serve those who serve under the leader, meaning the leader leads through service to others, not of others. Servant leaders derive influence from the service itself, developing relationships with others; followers are often inspired by the leader’s actions and begin to follow their lead to serve (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). The calling to serve is often seen as a life mission, caring and providing service to others as a responsibility to oneself (Wis, 2002). The servant leader models service through their own behavior, leading by doing, resulting in motivating and inspiring followers (Swindoll, 1985; Russell & Stone, 2002).

**Culture of High Performance**

An organization’s long-term success depends on the ability of that organization and leader to sustain the delivery of quality products and services (Kaliprasad, 2006). Establishing an understanding and high expectations should be the goal of every leader as
they move an organization toward a culture of high performance. Culture can be defined as a set of beliefs, norms, values and attitudes an organization or individuals within an organization exhibit in the workplace (Brown, 2004; Robbins, 2006). Research has made increasingly clear that the ability of team and organizations to create a culture of high performance is the most critical step in ensuring the ability to consistently achieve superior results (Juechter et al., 1998; Wriston, 2007; Maxwell, 2002). According to Wriston (2007), there are four critical components necessary to create and sustain a culture of high performance: a collaborative environment, a culture of accountability, focus and a robust process. These components not only allow organizations to set high standards and goals but also provide leaders with direct priority and concentration for the organization (Maxwell, 1993; 2002).

This is not only true in the private sector but also carries over into the public sector, including educational organizations. According to the Pew Research Center, American students are performing far below other countries in the key academic subjects, ranking 38 out of 71 countries in math, as tested on the Programme for International Student Assessment. Countries such as Finland, Singapore and Korea are outperforming the United States not just in math but in reading and science as well (US Department of Education, 2019). Even with the development of No Child Left Behind (2002) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015), the American educational system and leaders have not made the needed increase to get all our students to the levels they deserve.

**Culture of High Performance in Education**

To establish a culture of high performance in an educational environment, it is essential to focus on effective leadership, establishing practices of setting high
expectations, collaboration, collegial awareness, shared values and decision-making, all focused on meeting the needs of all students (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Fullan & Quinn, 2016; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Waters & Marzano, 2007). This culture of high performance is established by creating collective commitments to meet the needs of all students. Organizations must focus on setting high expectations for students and staff, providing collaboration and developing common language and benchmarks, all while focusing on the needs of the students (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2010; DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Marzano & Waters, 2009).

Strong leadership is essential in creating a culture of high performance (Leithwood & Riehl, 2005; Seashore, Wallhstom, & Anderson, 2010; Marzano, Waters, McNulty, 2005; Reeves, 2006). According to Heck (1992), a driving force behind the political effort to improve public education and the implementation of accountability systems is the idea that student academic performance can be increased through strong leadership and strategic school practices or norms. School leaders are responsible for setting up structures and procedures within an organization, as well as accountable for establishing high expectations of performance for both staff and students (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004; Leithwood & Riehl, 2005).

**Measuring a Culture of High Performance**

Measuring high performance in school organizations has been a challenging task, as there is no one proven system to ensure schools and districts are truly increasing in academic performance (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). However, the development of the California School Dashboard, in December of 2017, provided a way to report and measure the achievement scores for all schools and districts in California. The
Dashboard reports on the state’s six priority standards, which comprise Academic Indicators (English Language Arts and Math), English Learner Progress, Chronic Absenteeism, Suspension Rate and College/ Career Readiness (California Department of Education [CDE], 2017). Utilizing the Dashboard, districts are measured based on meeting standards and academic performance and are given a color-coded score, which indicates either meeting standard (green/blue) or needing improvement (yellow/orange/red). To further support the focus on accountability and developing a culture of high performance, the Local Control Accountability Program (LCAP) has been revised and implemented to ensure educational organizations are prioritizing efforts and funds to support improvements and increased academic performance (CDE, 2020).

**Leadership Strategies for a Culture of High Performance**

It is through strong leadership and accountability that a culture of high performance can be developed and implemented as a daily practice and norm for all educators (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). DuFour and Marzano (2011) stated:

> Effective leaders recognize they cannot accomplish great things alone. They also recognize that the ability to lead is not the private reserve of a few extraordinary people or of those in particular positions of authority. They acknowledge that leadership capacity is broadly distributed in the population and is accessible to anyone who has passion and purpose to change things as they are. (p. 2)

By prioritizing practices and implementing strategic systems, school organizations can create a culture of high performance. Studies have indicated that through the implementation of collective efficacy and collaboration through Professional Learning Communities, which includes focusing on student data, school organizations can and will
develop a culture of high performance where all students’ needs are meet and high performance is accomplished (DuFour et al., 2004; Reeves, 2004; Reeves, 2006; DuFour et al., 2010; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

**Collective Efficacy**

Collective efficacy is defined as a group’s shared belief in their joint capability to organize and execute a course of action required to produce given levels of attainment (Bandura, 1997). John Hattie’s (2016) work further supports the concept of collective efficacy as the belief of teachers in their ability to positively affect students. Collective efficacy plays an extremely powerful role in student achievement or performance and the overall success of high performance in a school. Educators who are committed to providing high-quality learning experiences, setting high expectations and collaborating to problem-solve for every student will see greater student achievement results (Donohoo, Hattie & Eells, 2011; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Goddard, Hoy, & Woolfolk Hoy, 2004).

Furthermore, Donohoo (2018) refers to collective efficacy as educators’ shared beliefs that through combined efforts, teachers can positively influence student outcomes and performance no matter the state of the student, whether disengaged, unmotivated and/or disadvantaged. By implementing collective efficacy, teachers encourage others and hold one another accountable to do everything possible to meet the needs of the students. Educators with high efficacy show greater effort and persistence, willingness to try new teaching approaches and attend more closely to the needs of students (Donohoo, 2018). With this increased dedication and commitment to each other and the students, academic performance will reach high levels (Donohoo, Hattie, & Eells, 2018).
Professional Learning Communities

The core mission of professional learning communities is not to simply ensure that all students are taught; instead, the mission is to ensure that all students learn (Buffum, Mattos, & Weber, 2009). DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, and Many (2006) state in *Learning by Doing*:

> The very essence of a learning community is a focus on and a commitment to the learning of each student. When a school or district functions as a PLC, educators within the organization embrace high levels of learning for all students as both the reason the organization exists and the fundamental responsibility of those who work within it. (p. 3)

The focus on learning becomes the foundation of organizations who strive to create learning environments where all educators believe all students are capable of learning at high levels and all educators accept the responsibility for making this outcome a reality for all students (DuFour et al., 2006; Buffum et al., 2009). Schools who focus on learning simultaneously create a culture of collective responsibility and accountability to do whatever it takes to get students to learn at high levels (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; DuFour & Mattos, 2013).

The concept of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has evolved over the years; however, researchers all agree that the main components of PLC include: 1) a focus on learning; 2) a collaborative culture, including shared beliefs, values, vision, trust and respect; 3) collective inquiry into best practices; 4) action orientation; 5) commitment to continuous improvement; and 6) results orientation (DuFour, 2004; DuFour 

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DuFour et al. (2008) went on to assist educators in the focus on learning by developing four driving questions:

1. What do we want students to learn?
2. How will we know if each student has learned what is essential?
3. How will we respond to students who are not learning?
4. How will we extend the learning of those students who are already proficient?

These four questions guide educators to provide high-quality learning opportunities for all students and promote a culture of high performance (DuFour & Fullan, 2013). PLCs provide an opportunity to focus on the individual needs of each student while also providing opportunities for educators to practice collective efficacy and collaboration to better support the academic needs of the student (Donohoo, Hattie, & Eells, 2018; DuFour & Marzano, 2011).

Organizations who implement PLCs effectively have a collective mission, vision, values and goals all focused on student achievement, best practices to meet the needs of the students, and collaboration for students and staff (DuFour et al., 2010; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour & Fullan, 2013; DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Through this ongoing commitment, collaboration, dedication, and focus on student growth and learning, educational staffs and organizations provide focused learning opportunities that will benefit all students and develop a culture of high performance within the organization.

Leadership in Education

Leadership within educational organizations has many different roles and responsibilities. Starting from the very top with the Board of Trustees and moving down the organizational chart to the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Directors,
Coordinators, Principals, and Assistant Principals, each individual is important in creating and maintaining high-performing learning organizations (ACSA, 2002). According to educational experts Marzano and Waters (2009), every district leader is essential in setting high expectations and ensuring a culture of high performance. District leadership must create defined autonomy, focused on district-defined, nonnegotiable common goals and systems of accountability (Marzano & Waters, 2009, Leithwood et al., 2004). Lynch et al. (2016) described leadership in an educational organizational by stating, “In a well-organized school with strong leadership and vision coupled with a concerted effort to improve the teaching performance of each teacher, student achievement can be enhanced” (p. 61).

Leaders must establish a clear vision for the organization that all students can achieve and that staff will do everything in their power to provide learning opportunities that support student learning and development (Harvey, Drotlet, & DeVore, 2014). By establishing an effective balance of centralized direction along with individualized freedom to allow site-level staff to respond to student needs and ensure student success, district leadership can further support establishing a culture of high performance (Mattos, 2008; Marzano & Waters, 2009; DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Superintendents, educational services administrators, student services administrators, and school site principals are most often considered the individuals responsible for student performance. However, as Marzano and Waters (2009) explained, all administrators, no matter the position or the duties within their job description, have an important role in establishing and maintaining a focus on students. Human resource administrators in educational organizations are no exception and are responsible for the development of the culture of
the organization. That includes participating in establishing a culture of high performance focused on students’ needs and achievement.

**Human Resources in Education**

Human resource administrators have a multitude of responsibilities: dealing with increasingly complex organizational environments, serving as employee advocates, facilitating and implementing change, being the link between management and employees, and being responsible for developing human capital within an organization (Ulrich, All, Brockbank, Younger & Nyman, 2009). Human resource administrators within educational organizations are no exception to this; in fact, human resource administrators in educational organizations often have increased responsibilities, covering a wide range of topics and ideas, including creating a culture to promote high performance in with both staff and students (ACSA, 2002).

According to the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA, 2002), human resource administrators are tasked with the duties of recruitment and selection, orientation and induction, evaluation of staff, employee counseling, documentation and discipline, terminations, layoffs, employee relations, complaint management, compliance with applicable laws, employee assistance programs, employee leaves, staffing projections, workman’s compensation, and labor relations, including collective bargaining agreements and negotiations. Equally important is the human resource administrators being part of a leadership team that leads and motivates staff to focus on goals to meet the needs of all students and create a working environment that supports all employees in order to be successful (ACSA, 2002).
Human resource administrators serving as leaders in educational organizations must build strong relationships with employees, know the climate and context of the sites, identify and support the needs of employees and leaders in the organization—whether human resource topics or instructional topics—establish high expectations for the team and self by utilizing data to inform decisions, and encourage and motivate others to perform at high levels (Day, Gu, & Sammons, 2016; Leithwood et al., 2007; King & Balch-Gonzalez, 2009). Caldwell (2017) believes leaders must ensure human resource management elements are accurately integrated and communicated effectively to employees, and leaders must represent the organization in a manner that builds trust, supports employees and creates a positive culture for individuals to work in and thrive. By building positive relationships with employees, leaders, including human resource administrators, can provide leadership focused on serving others and creating an atmosphere where all individuals are working together toward common goals (Donohoo, Hattie, & Eells, 2018; DuFour & Marzano, 2011). Human resource management is not just about increasing performance and maximizing profit. Instead, human resource management in educational organizations is now considered as a method for enhancing employees’ commitment to their work, focus on organizational goals and focus on professional development, aiding in creating a high-quality and committed workforce (Runhaar, 2017).

**Summary of Literature**

This review of the literature focused on exploring leadership models, servant leadership, Patterson’s seven constructs of servant leadership, a culture of high performance that included collective efficacy and professional learning communities,
leadership with educational organizations and human resource administrators’ leadership role within educational organizations. Researchers such as Bass (1985), Burns (1978), Greenleaf, (1977), Spears (1995), van Dierendonck, (2011), Patterson (2003) DuFour et al. (2010) and Marzano & Waters (2009) provide an in-depth review of the leadership models, cultures of high performance and strategies of effective leadership. However, the research lacked studies that examined human resource administrators and the perceived impact that leadership, specifically servant leadership, has on developing a culture of high performance.

Chapter II contained a critical review on the literature surrounding the research on servant leadership and the various leadership theories as well as a review of a culture of high performance and leadership within educational organizations. A synthesis matrix (Appendix A) was used by the researcher to organize the study variables presented in the literature. The synthesis matrix enabled the researcher to view the literature in an overview format and draw conclusions about relationship between entries. The researcher used the matrix to organize the references and themes related to the variables presented in this study. There is a lack of literature connecting servant leadership, human resource administrators’ leadership and a culture of high performance within educational organizations. This study, then, will explore human resource administrators’ perceived impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on developing a culture of high performance in school districts in California.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Chapter III outlines the methodology used to understand the phenomenon of human resources administrators’ perceived impact of Patterson’s seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in K-12 school districts. This qualitative research method was used because it attempts to set aside preconceived assumptions and biases to describe the essence of lived experiences of the participants (Patton, 2015). The study specifically explores and describes each of the seven servant leadership constructs and human resource administrators’ perceptions of the impact of these constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in school districts.

The chapter begins with the reiteration of the purpose statement and research questions for the study, as well as the research design used by all thematic team members to accomplish the purpose of the study. This methodology section then describes the population, target population, and the process used to identify the research sample as well as outlining the instrumentation used in data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). An overview of the data collection and an analysis of how the data was organized and analyzed is also included. The limitations of the study are then discussed, detailing the steps taken to increase validity and reliability. The chapter concludes with an overall summary of the methodology used in the study.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe public school district human resource administrators’ perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.
Central Research Question

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by human resource administrators of public-school districts in California?

Sub-Questions

1. What is the impact of the agapao leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
2. What is the impact of the humility leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
3. What is the impact of the altruism leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
4. What is the impact of the vision leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
5. What is the impact of the trust leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
6. What is the impact of the empowerment leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
7. What is the impact of the service leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?

Research Design

The research design explains the specific plan the researcher used to answer the research question by gathering reliable data and information to generate credible conclusions (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). This qualitative study used a
phenomenological method to explore and describe how human resource administrators perceived the impact of Patterson’s seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in K-12 school districts. The study was part of a larger thematic study on how K-12 leaders perceived the impact of Patterson’s seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance. A group of eight peer researchers along with two faculty advisors met, explored, and discussed potential options for the study, and arrived at the decision to conduct a qualitative non-experimental phenomenological study designed to gather data on the lived experiences of each peer researcher’s identified K-12 leader.

Dissertation research often falls into qualitative, quantitative or mixed-method categories. Qualitative and quantitative methods are most common and distinguish the various modes of inquiry and methods of research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Quantitative research design emphasizes measuring and describing phenomena by using numbers, statistics, structure and control (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Roberts (2010), quantitative research focuses primarily on numerical data results gathered from sources such as tests, surveys, and experiments and is more logical, asking researchers to pursue facts and reasons for human behavior by seeking information about a limited number of variables (Roberts, 2010).

Qualitative research design methods are distinct from those used in quantitative methods because they emphasize gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena. This data is gathered in the form of words rather than numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative research design looks at the essential character or nature of something and does not try to manipulate the environment; rather, it seeks to explore and conduct
research in its natural real-world setting (Roberts, 2010). It is not a question of how much or how many; instead, its data focuses on words that describe people’s knowledge, actions, perceptions, feelings, behaviors, and interpersonal interactions (Roberts, 2010). Qualitative inquiry studies interpret and attach meaning to individuals’ experiences (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research relies on three kinds of data: interviews, direct observations and written communication or documents. Qualitative data for this study were collected through virtual interviews with human resource administrators, structured to gather data regarding the perceived impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance. Scripted interview questions were developed and used to collect qualitative data to be interpreted for themes, patterns and understanding (Patton, 2015). All interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded once complete to reliably gather data for the study.

**Method**

The eight thematic researchers selected the qualitative phenomenological methodology for this study to explore and describe human resource administrators’ perceived impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in K-12 school districts in California. This non-experimental descriptive approach is the most appropriate methodology for gathering data that is intended to capture the lived experience of this group (Patton, 2015). The participants in this study had direct experience with the phenomena and participated in interviews to collect the desired data.

The thematic team evaluated and discussed the appropriateness of the study being a phenomenological study. With the focus of the study being to explore and provide a
rich description of the experiences (Patton, 2015) of K-12 administrators, the team selected the phenomenological approach as it was determined to be most suitable for understanding the phenomenon of servant leadership and its impact on creating a culture of high performance—in this case, among human resource administrators as K-12 leaders. This phenomenon warranted a method of investigation that captured the essence of the experience as perceived by the participants and the true meaning of what occurred through the participants’ experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). A phenomenological study provided a systematic approach of conducting the research to uncover the lived experiences of human resource administrators.

**Population**

The research population is the complete collection of individuals who are the focus of a study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The population in this phenomenological study was human resource administrators in public school districts in California. Human resource administrators play an important role in driving the culture of an organization. These leaders oversee many aspects of the organization, including the processes for all recruiting, hiring, retaining, evaluation, collective bargaining, onboarding of employees, ensuring equality and fairness within the organization, compliance with laws and regulations, and ethical and non-discriminatory practices, to name a few. Human resource leaders must establish and support a culture in which employees are motivated and valued to work together and achieve organizational goals and objectives (ACSA, 2002).

According to the California Department of Education (n.d.) website, California had 1,037 public school districts during the 2018-2019 school year. These school
districts are all public-school districts that provide educational services and learning opportunities for students living in the state of California. The districts vary in grade levels and services provided, depending on which student classifications and ages are being served.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>California Public School Districts</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unified School Districts</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary School Districts</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Districts</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Public-School Districts in California</td>
<td>1037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each of the above 1,037 school districts, one administrator is typically designated with the responsibility of overseeing the human resources functions of the organization. The State of California does not collect information on how many individuals serve as human resources administrators in school districts. For this study, the researcher estimated the population of human resource administrators in California at approximately 1,037.

**Sampling Frame**

The sampling frame was defined as a small percentage of the total population, narrowed down to specifically define participants who display certain characteristics or elements that meet the purpose of the study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). For this study, the sampling frame was 70 public-school district human resource administrators working in public-school districts in Northern California, located in Alameda County, El
Dorado County, Napa County, Nevada County, Placer County and Sacramento County, who adhere to the criteria of leading in a culture of high-performance K-12 school district. These six counties were selected because of geographical location as well as these counties had districts that meet the criteria of a culture of high performance. A school district that has established a culture of high-performance is defined as a district that has demonstrated a growth trend over the past two years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Suspension Rate and Graduation Rate; or has high performance as evidenced by scoring in the blue or green category for two consecutive years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Suspension Rate and Graduation Rates.

This study specifically focused on human resource administrators who each represented at least five of the six following criteria:

1. Human Resource Administrator was employed at a current school district within California with a minimum of 100 staff members.
2. Evidence of leading school or districts with culture of high performance.
3. Human Resource Administrator participant has a minimum of two to three years of experience at their current district.
4. A minimum of five years of experience in the K-12 profession.
5. Membership in professional associations in their field, such as ACSA.
6. Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings.
Sample

The sample for the study is a group of individuals from whom data is collected, representative of a larger population that the researcher intends to generalize (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Utilizing non-probability sampling is most common in educational research, as it allows the researcher the use of subjects who happen to be accessible or represent certain types of characteristics or elements (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It is less costly and time-consuming than probability sampling and usually ensures a higher participation rate to complete the study. When determining the sample of a research study, the researcher must ask two questions to determine the appropriateness of the selected sample: “Is the sample biased, and is the size adequate?” (Patten, 2012, p. 45).

The sample for this study was selected using purposeful and convenience sampling methods. Purposeful sampling involves selecting individuals who present particular characteristics or elements from the population that will be informative and representative of the topic being researched (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher selects participants whom they believe to be good sources who will provide valuable information to be used in the research (Patten, 2012). For this study, the researcher selected seven human resource administrators who exhibited five of the six predetermined criteria, and were representative of the larger population.

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method that is used for qualitative studies, which selects subjects who are accessible or easily available (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Utilizing convenience sampling allows the researcher to conduct research in a reasonable amount of time within a reasonable geographical area,
with participants who willingly volunteer to participate in the study. For this phenomenological study, the researcher selected individuals based on their location, availability to participate and history of working in high performing public-school districts in Northern California. Utilizing both purposeful and convenience sampling allowed the researcher to generalize the research outcomes from the participants who shared the same characteristics as the larger sampling frame population (Creswell, 2008).

According to McMillan & Schumacher (2010) and Patton (2015), the sample size for qualitative research studies is not measured by the total number of required participants; instead, it is dependent upon the depth of knowledge that can be generated from the information and data provided from the individuals participating in the study. Sample size for qualitative studies can range from 1 to 40 or more, depending on the depth of information provided (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Patton (2015) agreed with McMillan and Schumacher (2010), stating that “there are no rules for the sample size in qualitative inquiry. The sample depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of inquiry…. what will have credibility, and what can be done with the available time and resources” (p. 311). For this study, the researcher selected seven qualified participants for the sample. These individuals were selected using purposeful, convenience and criterion-based sampling to explore and describe the lived experience of human resource administrators in high-performing California public-school districts.

Sample Selection Process

For the purpose of this research, participants were selected based on the criteria determined by the thematic team and also the geographic location of the individual in Northern California. The seven sample participants were selected from Alameda County,
Placer County, El Dorado County, Napa County, Nevada County and Sacramento County. Each of the seven participants met at least five of the six criteria required to participate in the study and were employed in high-performing school districts in Northern California. The participants self-verified and verbally confirmed to the interviewer, their qualifications of meeting five of the six criteria.

Once the researcher had identified the high-performing districts in Alameda County, Placer County, El Dorado County, Napa County, Nevada County and Sacramento County, the researcher emailed the human resource administrators in those districts, describing the research study and the five to six criteria needed to participate in the study, to determine whether the individual would be a candidate to participate in the study. When each human resource administrator’s qualifications and potential willingness to participate were verified, the participant was placed on a master list of eligible participants. Utilizing convenience sampling, the researcher then contacted the eligible candidates and selected the first seven individuals who agreed to participate in the study.
Figure 3. Population, sampling frame, and sample. This figure demonstrates the population of human resource administrators in California, target population in Northern California and sample used in the study.

Instrumentation

This qualitative research approach used the researcher as an instrument for data collection and data analysis. It was descriptive in nature and therefore could have the potential for biases (Patton, 2015; Patten, 2012). Patton (2015) cautions researchers to be highly aware of personal biases influencing outcomes, such as past experiences, relationships, perspectives, age, gender, position, etc. In an effort to reduce the bias present in this study, the researcher and the thematic team members developed an interview protocol (Appendix B) of semi-structured, open-ended questions. An alignment table (Appendix C) was created by the thematic team to ensure that each
interview question was directly aligned back to the research questions and purpose of the study. Utilizing the semi-structured interview allowed the researcher to follow up with additional probe questions depending upon each participant’s initial response to the interview questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The eight members of the thematic group, along with two faculty advisors, worked together to develop questions that aligned to Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs and the perceived impact of establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. Patterson’s seven constructs included agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service. Each of the eight thematic team members was partnered with another and assigned two constructs for which to develop scripted interview questions, as well as one probe question for each construct, thus resulting in the creation of 14 interview questions and at least 7 probe questions to be utilized for the interview protocol. Once all questions had been compiled and completed, the team then developed and used an alignment table to evaluate the alignment of each interview question to the research questions.

The interview questions were thoroughly reviewed by two experts in the field of K-12 education and deemed to be appropriate and aligned to the purpose of the study. In conducting qualitative research, it is advised that an expert review be conducted prior to implementing any research protocol (Patton, 2015). Once approved by the field experts, the thematic team members each conducted a field test to evaluate the effectiveness of the interview questions. Upon completion of the field test, the researcher submitted a summary of the field test with an evaluation of the interview questions and prompts. The eight researchers then met with the two faculty advisors to review the field test feedback
and discussed potential adjustments to interview questions. A few semantic changes were made to the interview questions and the team deemed the questions appropriate and acceptable for the research study.

**Researcher as Instrument**

In conducting a phenomenological research study, the researcher becomes the instrument of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). For this study, the researcher led all participant interviews in order to understand the perspectives and lived experiences of the individuals. Upon completion of each interview, the researcher provided the participant with the interview transcript to ensure accuracy of data and intent of information gathered. The researcher for this study has worked in a leadership role in education for over 20 years and has been a human resources administrator for 6 years. While in the role of an educational leader, the researcher has conducted and been part of hundreds of interviews and is confident and comfortable in leading interviews with participants.

**Field Testing**

Field testing for the interviews were conducted by the eight researchers of the thematic team using Zoom. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), field testing is necessary as a check for bias in the interviewer, in the questions being asked, and in the procedures of the interview. A field test gave the researchers an idea of how long the interview would take, what data could be gathered during the interview and how easily the data could be summarized and coded (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). After conducting the field test interview, the participants provided the researchers with detailed feedback regarding the interview questions and the procedure of the interview (Appendix
D). Each researcher was responsible for arranging and conducting the field test with an individual who was like the participants whom they would use in the actual study.

An expert observer accompanied each researcher to observe the field test and provide feedback regarding the interview length, the comfort of the interviewee, the questions, the timing, the verbal and nonverbal cues and the tone of the overall interview. This expert observer then provided feedback to the researcher using the Interview Observer Feedback Reflection Questions (Appendix E), and that information was then shared in the summary of the field test sent to the faculty advisors. Once all field tests had been conducted and summary information gathered, the thematic team and facility advisors met to discuss the results and make modifications to the interview protocol as needed. Upon the review of all researchers and based upon faculty members’ comments and feedback, the final interview questions were approved and the interview protocol was used to conduct research interviews with seven human resource administrators of public-school districts a culture of high-performance.

Validity

Qualitative researchers should utilize a multitude of procedures in order to check the validity of an instrument and the accuracy of the findings in the study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Verifying the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative research is a must and can be done through triangulation of data, clarifying research bias, using peer feedback and external audits and conducting field observations (Creswell, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Roberts 2010). A number of these strategies, as well as the use of multiple researchers, were employed in this study to increase the validity of the data. All thematic team members collaborated to develop the interview questions and
thoroughly evaluated them for alignment to the research questions and purpose of the study. The interview questions were created, reviewed, revised and field tested by the eight thematic researchers, and outside experts were consulted to ensure alignment and appropriateness of question asked. The two faculty advisors worked closely with the eight thematic researchers on evaluating each question for alignment to the purpose of the study. The researchers developed and submitted the questions to the faculty experts, who provided feedback. The team then met with the experts to develop a consensus for the final wording of the instrument, the informed consent, and the protocol to ensure validity of the study. The thematic team members all understood and agreed to utilize the interview protocol as developed, conducting a 60-minute interview with six to eight participants that met the population sample selected by the researcher. All interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure accurate data was gathered and the transcribed documents were shared with each participant of the study for review.

**Reliability**

According to Roberts (2010), reliability is the degree to which an instrument being measured is consistent and trustworthy. Furthermore, reliability ensures that the instrument is stable and consistent even if the circumstance or phenomena were measured at a different time, resulting in similar outcomes (Roberts, 2010). To ensure reliability in this study, all eight thematic researchers utilized the same interview protocols and questions for all of the interviews and data collection.
**Internal Reliability**

By working collaboratively with the eight thematic researchers and the two faculty advisors to develop and test the interview protocol for alignment to the purpose and research questions, the researcher substantiated internal reliability. Instrumental in the internal reliability of the study were the two faculty advisors, who had expertise developing and implementing phenomenological qualitative research studies. Each of the eight researchers submitted a summary of collective field-test feedback to the faculty experts, who then analyzed the information and held a team meeting to discuss the feedback shared and provided a few recommendations for edits to improve the instrument. The edits were minor, with the changing of a word in one of the questions and a change in the order of another question for the construct of humility.

**Data Collection**

Qualitative research uses data that is descriptive in nature. Interviews, observations and fieldwork, and collection of documents or artifacts are all qualitative methods (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). The data collection for this phenomenological study focused on in-depth, semi-structured open-ended personal interviews designed by the thematic team and the faculty advisors. Prior to data collection, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was essential to assure participant confidentiality and safety of research practices (Roberts, 2010). Once IRB approved the proposal study, the researcher reached out to potential participants to begin the interview process and data collection. Participants who met the criteria and agreed to participate in the study were sent an invitation letter (Appendix F) via email, as well as a copy of the Brandman University Bill of Rights (Appendix G), the IRB informed consent (Appendix
H) and an email confirming the time and date of the Zoom interview. A week prior to the interview, a follow up email with the interview time was sent to confirm the scheduled interview. This email also included the IRB Informed Consent (Appendix H), Brandman Bill of Rights (Appendix G), and the interview questions that would be asked during the interview (Appendix B).

The data collection for this phenomenological study included a recorded video of the Zoom interview, a Zoom transcription of the anecdotal interview from the semi-structured interview questions developed by the thematic team and faculty advisors (Appendix B) and notes taken during the interview by the researcher. Field notes labeled with participant numbers 1-8 were stored in the researcher’s personal computer, which was password-secured for additional confidentiality and security. The researcher securely stored the field notes and interview data for three years prior to destroying the data. The interview protocol included scripted, semi-structured interview questions and supplemental probing questions to clarify for additional understanding as needed to ensure rich data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Each of the participants were asked the same questions, and statements were transcribed and coded to identify themes. After conducting each of the interviews, the researcher followed up with a personal thank-you to each of the participants as a gesture of gratitude for their willingness to participate in the study.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis in a qualitative study is dependent upon the researcher deciphering and understanding large amounts of information and converting raw data into themes or codes (Roberts, 2010). The data collected in qualitative studies may be complex and
detailed, so it requires the researcher to be skilled at coding data and interpreting information. Different researchers may use different strategies to approach the coding of textual data as there is no one right way to do it (Roberts, 2010). Researchers are encouraged to include all information about the use of software, processes and any other items used to transform the data in order to help the reader understand how the data was collected and analyzed.

The data analysis for this study included the researcher utilizing the information gathered during the seven semi-structured interviews, observations and artifacts, and organizing the data by coding. In coding data, a researcher defines a set of tentative codes derived from the participants’ responses to the interview questions. The researcher uses these codes to compare, sort, and synthesize large amounts of data, which are then used to describe the entire data collection and tell the story of the information gathered (Patton, 2015). The researcher gathered qualitative data from the virtual interviews with the participants, through observations during the interviews and by reviewing and collecting artifacts from websites and district plans. The interviews were recorded and transcribed to allow the researchers to code the data accurately following each interview. The data gathered was uploaded into NVivo software, which assisted in the organization of themes. Tables and charts were developed to assist in the analysis and organization of themes to determine the findings of this study. The process of review, reflection, in-depth analysis and peer coding assisted in ensuring the reliability of the codes and data collected (Patton, 2015).
**Intercoder Reliability**

To further ensure reliable results, the qualitative research component of this study also consisted of establishing intercoder reliability. Patton (2015) stated, “Interrater reliability is valued, even expected, as a means of establishing credibility of findings” (p.665). When multiple individuals analyze the same data, it helps to ensure that researchers are sharing what is surfacing or seen in the data; it provides shared insights and allows considerations of various themes that may emerge based on the different perspectives of the researchers (Patton, 2015). The shared knowledge, interpretations, and lived experiences collected during the interviews were analyzed by the researcher and a peer researcher from the thematic team to ensure intercoder reliability. Compton et al. (2012) noted, “Reliability in coding means that the biases inherent in the observers/researchers are substantially less than the ‘true variation’ of the behavior being coded” (p.350). The researcher reliability and quantified reliability were set at 80% or greater. A peer researcher analyzed one of seven of the interviews for coding and the description of the study’s themes to ensure that the threshold of 80% or greater reliability was met (Patton, 2015). The researcher and peer researcher experienced agreement with the determined themes with a threshold of 80% or higher (Lombard, Synder-Duch, & Campanella Bracken, 2010). This was deemed to be an adequate level of reliability for this phenomenological study and ensured reliability of identified codes.

**Limitations**

All research studies are faced with limitations or elements that may negatively impede the ability to generalize findings (Roberts, 2010). It is essential that researchers
acknowledge the limitations of their study and understand that they often have no control of these limitations. When researchers identify limitations within the study, it is essential that the researcher state them openly so that individuals reading the study can determine the overall affect the limitation had on the data collection and analysis of information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Roberts, 2010). The limitations for this study of human resources administrators’ perceived impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in school districts were time and distance, sample size and the researcher as instrument of the study.

**Time and Distance**

When collecting qualitative data with the human resource administrators in a school district, time was a factor because the human resource administrators have very busy schedules and lots of day-to-day tasks to complete. Time is very valuable and even scheduling 60 minutes for an interview may take away from other tasks that must be completed and have to be put off in order to participate in the interview. Having limited time to conduct the interview may also create briefer, less detailed answers where participants will not be able to expand in full detail to the interview questions, resulting in less informative data being gathered. Distance was a delimitation for this study as the researcher conducted interviews only in Northern California school districts. These districts were close geographically, but the choice limited the selection of qualified participants throughout the state.

**Sample Size**

Although there is no exact number of participants required for a phenomenological study, the sample size required to gather adequate information and
data is typically 1 to 40 participants in qualitative research studies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The thematic team and faculty advisors determined together that an adequate sample size for this study would be six to eight participants. Although the sample size of eight individuals limited the generalizability of the study, the researchers were able to generate rich data with the selected sample size. Together, the team of researchers interviewed over 48 participants and gathered valuable information and data to enhance the research on servant leadership.

**Researcher as Instrument of the Study**

Patton (2015) states, “The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing the fieldwork—as well as the things going on in a person’s life that might prove to be a distraction” (p. 22). Researchers must be aware of and acknowledge the perceptions and beliefs that are brought with them into the study, and must address those upfront. The quality of research will depend significantly upon the skill and unbiased approach the researcher takes in conducting the interviews. For this study, the researcher needed to acknowledge the perspective she brought as a human resource administrator and do everything possible to limit bias and personal assumptions in the study.

**Summary**

Chapter III discussed the phenomenological research study used to explore and describe human resource administrators’ perceived impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. The chapter reviewed the purpose statement and researcher questions, as well as providing a detailed explanation of the population, sampling frame, sample, selection
process for the sample, instrumentation and validity and reliability of the study. Data collection and analysis procedures were explained and described in detail. Lastly, the limitations of the study were explained. The outcomes and detailed descriptions of data collection and researcher findings are provided in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION AND FINDINGS

Overview

This qualitative phenomenological study explored and described human resource administrators’ perceived impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in public-school districts in California. Patterson’s (2003) theoretical framework of the seven constructs of servant leadership included: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service. The thematic team of eight peer researchers and two advising faculty collaborated and determined that a qualitative phenomenological research design would gather rich descriptions of lived experiences of K-12 leaders. The thematic team collaboratively created research-based definitions of the seven servant leadership constructs, the criteria for a qualified districts that represent a culture of high performance, the criteria for the qualified K-12 leader, the sample size, and the semi-structured interview questions.

This chapter begins with a review of the purpose statement and research questions, then describes the population and sample utilized in the study. It then describes the research methodology, data-collection procedures, analysis of data including direct quotes from the human resource administrator participants and various tables presenting data gathered during the interviews, observations and artifact review. The data collected address the central research question as well as the seven sub-questions. Chapter IV concludes with the presentation of key findings from the study and leads into Chapter V, which will present a summary of findings, conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe public school district human resource administrators’ perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

Research Questions

Central Research Question

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by human resource administrators of public-school districts in California?

Sub-Questions

1. What is the impact of the agapao leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
2. What is the impact of the humility leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
3. What is the impact of the altruism leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
4. What is the impact of the vision leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
5. What is the impact of the trust leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
6. What is the impact of the empowerment leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
7. What is the impact of the service leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?

**Research Methodology and Data Collection Procedures**

A phenomenological study was chosen to explore and describe public-school district human resource administrators’ perceived impact of servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in K-12 school districts. The thematic team collectively determined a phenomenological study was most appropriate for this study as it would produce rich descriptions of lived experiences and add to the depth of research and data on servant leadership. Personal one-on-one interviews were completed with human resources administrators to gather information and data on the perceived impact of servant leadership on establishing a culture of high performance. All interviews were conducted via Zoom and recorded with the participants’ permission, as a mean to capturing all aspects of the interview. These interviews served as the primary data collection for the study, and additional sources of data, including artifacts and observations were collected to create a deeper understanding of the participants’ perception of servant leadership. All qualitative data were stored securely by the researcher and triangulation of data was used to bring greater credibility to the findings (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010).

The interview protocol (Appendix B) developed collaboratively by the eight thematic researchers and two faculty members included 14 semi-structured open-ended interview questions, with two questions for each of the seven servant leadership constructs. A field test was conducted with an expert observer to ensure that the questions were valid and easily understood. All seven interviews were conducted in a
private confidential office where only the researcher could be part of the Zoom session. The interviews lasted between 41 minutes and 1 hour and 3 minutes, all were audio-recorded and transcribed via Zoom, then the appropriate transcript was sent to each participant for review to ensure accuracy of the transcription.

The researcher for this study adhered to all university guidelines to maintain participants’ confidentiality. Data were not collected until after permission from the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB, Appendix I) was granted and after completion of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program (Appendix J) protecting all participants’ privacy through the length of the study. Upon approval of BUIRB, the researcher reached out to potential participants, secured interviews with eligible candidates and gained verbal confirmation of meeting five of the six criteria in order to participate. The researcher collected informed consent documentation through collecting a hard copy of a signed document or verbal acknowledgement of informed consent prior to starting a Zoom interview. All hard-copy documentation was stored in a locked file for the duration of the study.

In addition to the interview protocols, observations and artifact collection were conducted and gathered to ensure triangulation of data occurred and to increase the reliability of the study (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). The researcher collected data through observation during the interviews and reviewed district websites for artifact collection. Gathering and analyzing multiple sources of data provide triangulation as themes and information are compared from different sources and settings (Patton, 2015). Observation data was organized into observed categories which included body language and/or facial expressions, and tone of voice. All data was recorded and stored securely.
for further use in data collection and analysis. Additionally, artifact data was collected from each of the participants, including the participant’s years of service in education, years in the current district and years in the current human resources position, as well as information from district websites. All collected data were stored in a secure file with a password protection.

**Interrater Reliability**

To further ensure reliable results, the qualitative research component of this study also consisted of establishing intercoder reliability. Patton (2015) stated, “Interrater reliability is valued, even expected, as a means of establishing credibility of findings” (p.665). When multiple individuals analyze the same data, it helps to ensure that researchers are sharing what is surfacing or seen in the data; it provides shared insights and allows considerations of various themes that may emerge based on the different perspectives of the researchers (Patton, 2015). The shared knowledge, interpretations, and lived experiences collected during the interviews were analyzed by the researcher and a peer researcher from the thematic team to ensure intercoder reliability. Compton et al. (2012) noted, “Reliability in coding means that the biases inherent in the observers/researchers are substantially less than the ‘true variation’ of the behavior being coded” (p.350). The researcher reliability and quantified reliability were set at 80% or greater. A peer researcher analyzed one of seven of the interviews for coding and the description of the study’s themes to ensure that the threshold of 80% or greater reliability was met (Patton, 2015). The researcher and peer researcher experienced agreement with the determined themes with a threshold of 80% or higher (Lombard, Synder-Duch & Campanella Bracken, 2010). This was deemed to be an
adequate level of reliability for this phenomenological study and ensured reliability of identified codes.

**Population**

The population for this phenomenological study was human resource administrators in public-school districts in California. According to the California Department of Education (n.d.) website, California had 1,037 public school districts during the 2018-2019 school year. The State of California does not collect information on how many individuals serve as human resources administrators in school districts throughout the state; therefore, for this study the researcher estimated the population of human resource administrators in California at approximately 1,037. This population of 1,037 human resource administrators was too large to sample every administrator as a possible participant. The researcher determined to select a smaller population sample from within the larger group to conduct the study, due to time constraints and the cost of conducting such a large study. The sampling frame was therefore narrowed down to a total of 70 public-school district human resource administrators working in school districts located in Alameda, El Dorado, Napa, Nevada, Placer, and Sacramento counties of Northern California.

**Sample**

The thematic team collectively developed the sample criteria and determined that six to eight participants for each researcher were needed to conduct the study. The sample for the study is the group of individuals from whom data is collected, representative of a larger population that the researcher intends to generalize (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). When a researcher chooses a quantitative study, the sample is
often random; however, because this study was qualitative and very specific to a particular population and specific identified criteria, the sample population was criteria-based. The target population for this study was narrowed down to 70 human resource administrators in Alameda, El Dorado, Napa, Nevada, Placer and Sacramento counties located in Northern California because of convenience to the researcher’s time, geography, and meeting the specific criteria of both being a district with a culture of high performance and also meeting the specific criteria of a study participant. Sample size for qualitative studies can range from 1 to 40 or more, depending on the depth of information provided (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Patton (2015) stated that “there are no rules for the sample size in qualitative inquiry. The sample depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, …… and what can be done with the available time and resources” (p. 311). Figure 3 illustrates the study’s population, sampling frame, and sample used in the study.
Figure 3. Population, sampling frame, and sample. This figure demonstrates the population of human resource administrators in California, target population in Northern California and sample used in the study.

For the purpose of this research, participants selected were selected based on the criteria determined by the thematic team and also the demographic location of the individuals, working in districts that met the criteria for being a high-performing district. The human resource administrators selected to participate in the study represented at least five of the six following criteria:

1. Human Resource Administrator was employed at the current school district within California with a minimum of 100 staff members.
2. Evidence of leading school or district with a culture of high performance.
3. Human Resource Administrator participant has a minimum of two to three years of experience at their current district.

4. A minimum of five years of experience in the K-12 profession.

5. Membership in professional associations in their field, such as ACSA.

6. Articles, papers, or materials written, published or presented at conferences or association meetings.

The criteria for a district that has established a culture of high performance were defined as a district that has demonstrated a growth trend over the past two years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Suspension Rate and Graduation Rate; or has high performance as evidenced by scoring in the blue or green category for two consecutive years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Suspension Rate, and Graduation Rates. Purposeful criterion-based sampling was used to find the participants that qualified and meet the study’s definition (Patton, 2015). Seven participants were identified and selected to participate in this study. To identify the seven participants, the researcher contacted all 19 of the human resource administrators in the 19 districts that meet the criteria of a high-performing district throughout the six identified counties and 70 different districts. Out of the 19 districts who meet the criteria, seven human resource administrators responded, were qualified and agreed to participate in the study. Table 2 illustrates the analysis for the study participant criteria. Participants were identified through districts meeting the criteria for a culture of high performance, followed by determining whether the current human resource administrator met at least
five of the six qualifying criteria. The participants in the sample met all of the criteria established for the study.

Table 2

*Study Participant Criteria*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Administrator was employed at a current school district within California with a minimum of 100 staff members.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of leading schools or districts with a culture of high performance.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Administrator participant has a minimum of two to three years of experience at their current district.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A minimum of five years’ experience in the K-12 profession.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership in professional associations in their field, such as ACSA</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demographic Data**

Seven current public-school district human resource administrators who work in Northern California were selected to participate in the study. For confidentiality purposes, participants were assigned a number and identifying demographic data, such as the participants’ gender, number of years in the education, and years in current HR position. Four of the participants were male and three were female. All participants had been in education for over 20 years and met at least five of the six eligibility criteria. Table 3 represents the demographics of the human resource administrators who participated in the study.
Table 3

Demographic Data of Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years In Education</th>
<th>Years in HR Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26 years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28 years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>23 years</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41 years</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Presentation and Analysis of Data**

The presentation and analysis of data for this study were obtained using a qualitative phenomenological method in which the researcher gathered data through multiple sources. Virtual face-to-face Zoom interviews were conducted with seven human resource administrators in public-school districts in Northern California. The seven recorded interviews were transcribed through Zoom transcription, reviewed for accuracy and then uploaded into NVivo, a qualitative coding software used for qualitative data analysis. Observation data were gathered during each interview representing body language or facial expression, and tone of voice and artifact data were gathered from district websites and information provided from participants. All qualitative data collected were coded for themes, using the NVivo software. Intercoder reliability was established through the peer researcher, who analyzed 10% of transcribed interviews to ensure consistent identification of themes and codes. Themes emerged from responses of the lived experiences the human resource administrators provided during each interview and aligned to the central research question of the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in public-
school districts in California. The peer researcher’s results indicated agreement with 90% accuracy to the researcher’s identified themes, therefore establishing that coding was accurate, reliable and trustworthy.

**Data by Central Question and Sub-Questions**

The presentation and analysis of data is organized by the central research question and sub-questions used in this study. Through face-to-face virtual Zoom interviews with seven qualified human resource administrators, observations during interviews and collected artifacts, the lived experiences of human resource administrators were explored and described in detail to gather data. The findings from the interviews, observations, and artifacts are reported in the following section in relation to how they answered the research question.

**Central Research Question**

The central research question asked, “What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by human resource administrators of public-school districts in California?” The seven constructs of servant leadership developed by Patterson (2003) consist of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Emerging themes were determined first as those themes that were referenced by a minimum of 50% or more of the participants. When participant criteria of a minimum of four participants were met, the researcher then determined that an emerging theme must meet the criterion that the referenced themes represented a minimum of 20% or more of all data coded within that construct. Coded data not included in the study failed to meet one of two
thresholds: the 20% or more of all data coded or 50% of participant references. Therefore this data was not included in data gathered or utilized in the study.

The extensive coding process resulted in 16 themes with 280 interview transcript frequencies from the 7 interviews, 11 observation frequencies, and 44 artifacts from review of websites and documents provided by participants. Themes and frequencies were distributed across the seven servant leadership constructs: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and services. The frequency of themes suggests there is an equal balance of importance among the servant leadership constructs. Figure 4 shows the distribution of each theme among the seven constructs studied.

![Themes Bar Chart](image)

**Figure 4**: Number of themes in each servant leadership construct.

The above graph indicates the number of themes that emerged in all seven constructs. Both Agapao love and Trust resulted in three themes. Service, Empowerment, Altruism, Humility, and Vision emerged with two themes apiece. Overall, for the seven servant leadership constructs, 16 total themes emerged, with a
balanced distribution among all constructs, indicating that each construct is important in establishing a culture of high performance. Each construct produced themes that resulted in references of varied distribution. Figure 5 illustrates the servant leadership constructs by frequency, which includes NVivo data from participant interviews, observations during interviews and artifacts reviewed for the study. Figure 5 also illustrates the percentage of frequency for each of the constructs.

![Servant Leadership Constructs Percentage and Frequency](image)

**Figure 5:** Servant leadership constructs percentage and frequency.

A hierarchy of total theme frequencies from participant interviews, observations and artifacts was developed for each of these constructs. The highest-frequency servant leadership construct studied was agapao love, with 75 references or 22.7% of the total references made. The second-highest frequency construct was trust, with 60 references or 18.2% of the total references made. The next highest frequency represented was service with 49 references or 14.9% of the total references made. Empowerment and vision were the fourth and fifth highest-frequency construct, with empowerment...
representing 41 frequencies or 12.4% of the total references made and vision representing 38 frequencies or 11.5% of the total references. Finally, the last two constructs of altruism and humility came up with equal representation of 34 references each or 10.3% of the total references made.

Figure 6 illustrates the hierarchy of total frequencies in each of the servant leadership constructs, followed by Figure 7, which displays the percentage of frequency for each of the identified themes.

*Hierarchy of Total Themes Frequencies*

![Hierarchy Chart]

*Figure 6.* Total number of frequencies for each servant leadership construct.
Sub-question 1: Agapao Love Theme Results

What is the impact of the agapao leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?

Agapao love for this study was defined as the practice of doing the right thing for the right reason. Agapao love leaders care more for their followers than for the interest of the organization, resulting in a greater understanding, gratitude, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion (Gunn, 2002; Patterson 2003). Findings from the interviews, observations and artifacts indicate human resource administrators perceive that
compassion, caring for others, creating connections and providing support and understanding contribute greatly to establishing a culture of high performance.

General analysis of data shows that 87.5% or 6 of the 7 participants provided examples of agapao love being a contributing factor in establishing a culture of high performance. In addition, experiences of agapao love were referenced 58 times in the interviews, observed 17 times in observations and artifacts, resulting in the highest frequency counts of all constructs in the study. Table 4 and Figure 9 illustrate the themes and frequencies that emerged in data analysis of interview transcripts, observations and artifact review. Utilizing NVivo software the data was coded to the identified themes of how human resource administrators perceived the construct of agapao love. The themes, percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Agapao Love Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/pattern</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on N</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact Sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creating connections and family focus</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion, kindness, and caring for others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide support and understanding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The N for interview participants = 7.
The data collected from the study sources showed that the human resource administrators perceive having compassion, kindness, and caring for others, creating connections and being family-focused, and providing support and understanding all contribute to establishing a culture of high performance in district. Figure 8 details the identified themes and frequency of each theme in graph form.

![Agapao Love Graph](image)

*Figure 8: Themes and frequencies for Agapao Love.*

Three themes emerged from the NVivo coding process for agapao love. These themes represent data from interview transcripts, observations during the interviews, and collected or reviewed artifacts. The total frequency of all agapao love references resulted in 75 references, with 58 of the total 75 references being coded from interview transcripts, which represented 77.3% of all data coded for agapao love. When analyzing the data, findings show that agapao love had the highest response frequency of all constructs, representing 22.7% of all data collected. The following sections describe each identified agapao love theme and represent the responses and perceptions of human resource administrator participants.
Creating connections and family focus.  This theme was the most frequently referenced in the construct of agapao love. The theme was referenced by 5 of the 7 participants or 71.4% of participants with a total of 29 frequencies, and represents 39% of the total references for the construct of agapao love. A common theme shows that the respondents perceive that being connected and having a family focus are contributing factors of establishing a culture of high performance. The lived experiences of the perceived benefit of this theme come from the stories and descriptions told by the human resource administrators during the interviews, as well as the artifacts and information found on district websites representing connection and family focus. Participant 1 shared that when he first came to his district, he remembers his superintendent telling him that family comes first. According to the participant, it was in this moment 26 years ago that connection and family focus became a priority for him. He shared the conversation he had with his superintendent, stating,

I remember him saying nothing is more important than your family. He was meaning your immediate family, but he was also talking about your second family, which is the people who you work with. So, my perception of agapao love started way back then and continues to still be the focus of family within the district. I believe agapao love is family and connection, personal family and work family.

He continued to share that he believed agapao love is about connecting with others and showing an interest in those that you work with. He then shared an example of how agapao love is demonstrated, stating,
I think you demonstrate agapao love by taking a personal interest in the people who you work with. You are genuinely personally interested in individuals. You get to know their kids’ names, spouses’ names and things that are going on in their lives. This helps you understand the lens that someone is acting through. An example is, if someone’s kid is going through a hard time, you are able to recognize that and talk about it and then have a better understanding of why that person might be acting a certain way or behaving in a certain manner and you can show compassion and empathy to them.

Participant 6 shared a similar response in speaking about family and connection with individuals. He shared, “I think that a family kind of relationship is important and meeting people, recognizing their basic needs and the emotions they may be feeling.” He also stated, “It is that family peace that keeps people functioning and keeps people stable, and dedicated to the families and kids of the organization. I believe it has a ripple effect and just leads to overall effectiveness and also the commitment to the organization from all the different employees.” Observations and artifacts were also collected for this theme with seven artifact references collected. The artifact references were found on district websites and in district LCAP plans referencing connection and family priority.

**Compassion, kindness and caring.** This theme was the second most frequently referenced in the construct of agapao love. The theme was referenced by 6 of the 7 participants, or 85.7%, with a total of 28 frequencies and represents 38% of the total references for agapao love. A common theme shows that the human resource administrators perceive compassion, kindness, and caring as an important contributing factor in establishing a culture of high performance. The rich descriptions and
experiences shared by the respondents on the perceived benefit of this theme come from the stories and descriptions told by the human resource administrators during the interviews, as well as the artifacts collected and observation during the interviews.

During three of the interviews, the researcher recorded data for observation when participants shared stories of compassion, kindness and caring. The researcher noted that the facial expressions and overall body language of three participants changed when discussing the topic of agapao love and specifically compassion, kindness and caring.

Participant 2 and Participant 3 both shared that care and kindness is a key factor in their districts. Participant 3 shared that she believed that the caring started at the top with the superintendent and then spreads throughout the district through the actions and relationships she observed of staff. She stated,

> When I first came to this district, I was a little surprised and taken aback from the level of service and caring that I saw the teachers in this district provide to the students. The care, the extra steps that they take to advocate for their students, sometimes we have to rein them in a little bit. But I mean we have counselors and teachers that take on extra duties or roles, just because they want to provide for the students. I’ve seen them take on being a club advisor for the kids when they really didn’t have time or energy to do it, but because the students wanted it, they took it on. I believe agapao love and compassion and caring are a big part of the culture here.

Participant 2 shared how being in a small district has allowed her and others to know each other on a personal basis. She said, “We know people by name and we are able to focus efforts on each individual and then that allows every teacher to also focus
that same energy and caring to the students and kids in the district.” She went on to observe that, “We celebrate individuals and recognize them for their work, and we focus on the relationship.”

Similarly, Participant 4 expressed the thought, “through developing relationships with individuals and taking time to step into other people’s shoes, people realize that you truly care about them and that you truly are there for the right reasons.” He further explained how he has witnessed staff go above and beyond for students and to help other staff members. He stated, “This is like a synergistic effect, it inspires other people to reach to higher levels, so that caring and kindness becomes contagious.”

Participant 6 shared a similar experience in his district. Describing agapao love, Participant 6 stated,

This is a high priority for our district administration and also our site administration and that caring is kind of what leads most of our decisions. We’ve had a way we look at all of our decisions. The focus always goes back to caring and caring is the most important aspect because you can make those top-down leadership or managing decisions, but if you don’t deal with caring and compassion, then it won’t go so well. So, before we look at cost or anything else, we just really try to understand the interest and in a compassionate and caring way understand what individual needs are.

Lastly, Participant 7 shared the statement, “All the personal stuff we deal with and the hard stuff we deal with, it is really important that you have people in place that truly care and can demonstrate those skills that they are being empathic, kind and truly caring for the individuals in the district.” Additionally, she shared that really in human
resources and education in general, you must care about kids and individuals because we
are the customer service for education.

**Provide Support and Understanding.** This theme was the least frequently
referenced in the construct of agapao love. Nevertheless, the theme was referenced by 5
of the 7 participants or 71.4%, with a total of 18 frequencies, representing 24% of the
total frequencies in agapao love. Although this theme was the least referenced among the
themes that emerged in agapao love, the detailed stories and descriptions of experiences
from the interviews with the human resource administrators revealed the perception that
providing support and understanding contributes to establishing a culture of high
performance. Participant 3 shared that she believed providing support and understanding
is part of the amazing culture they have within her district. She said,

I believe it is all about goals and supporting the students. Being a support is
probably the most important way to assist in reaching goals. We look at how can
we unconditionally support you in making changes. I mean everything from
discipline to special education, staff needs to know that you are consistent and no
matter what you’re going to have their back and going to support them. You are
going to be there and you are going to be supportive.

Participants 5 and 7 both expressed how they believe that the role of human
resources is to support sites and staff, which in turn then supports the students in the
district. Participant 5 shared, “Always do like the right thing for the right reason and
that’s for the students. That’s always our goal district wide.” The focus of supporting
anyone and everyone was clearly inferred from each of the respondents. Participant 7
made several statements that support this theme of agapao love. She shared,
You know my philosophy out to the staff is we are here to serve the school sites. We are here to serve the staff who then directly serve the kids, and so it’s not what the schools need to do for us but what we need to do to support the schools. She also stated, “Part of understanding and support is giving individuals what they need. Understanding what they need and by understanding their needs you can then honor them and support them, which in return will result in better performance.”

**Sub-question 2: Humility Theme Results**

*What is the impact of the humility leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?*

Humility for this study was defined as being humble and having modesty, not to be mistaken for meekness or the absence of strength. It is a virtue characterized by one’s own talents and abilities and an outward rejection of self-interest while placing true value on the recognition and success of others (Kim, Atkinson, & Yang, 1999). Findings from the interviews, observations and artifacts indicate that human resource administrators perceive that putting others’ needs first, admitting mistakes and being honest contribute greatly to establishing a culture of high performance.

General analysis of data shows that 100% or 7 of the 7 participants provided examples of humility being a contributing factor in establishing a culture of high performance. In addition, experiences of humility were referenced 29 times in the interviews, and observed 5 times in observations, resulting in 34 frequency counts and representing 10.3% of frequency references of all constructs in the study. Table 5 and Figure 10 illustrate the themes and frequencies that emerged in data analysis of interview transcript, and observations. Utilizing NVivo software, the data was coded to the
identified themes of how human resource administrators perceived the construct of humility. The themes, the percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 5.

Table 5

*Humility Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/pattern</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on N</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact Sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Putting others’ needs first</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admitting mistakes and being honest</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The N for interview participants = 7.

The data collected from the study sources showed that the human resource administrators perceive that putting others’ needs first, admitting mistakes and being honest are essential actions of humility that contribute to establishing a culture of high performance in district. Figure 9 details the identified themes and frequency of each theme in graph form.
Two themes emerged from the NVivo coding process for humility. These themes represent data from interview transcripts, and observations during the interview; no artifacts were collected for the leadership construct humility. The total frequency of all humility references resulted in 34 references, with 29 of the total 34 references being coded from interview transcripts, which represented 85.3% of all data coded for humility. When analyzing the data, findings revealed that humility had one of the lowest frequencies of response of all constructs, tying with the construct of altruism. Overall frequency of humility represented 10.3% of all data collected. The following sections describe each identified humility theme and represent the responses and perceptions of human resource administrator participants.

**Putting others needs first.** This theme was the most frequently referenced theme for the construct of humility at 68%. The theme was referenced by 100% of the respondents with a total of 23 frequencies within the overall theme. This theme was referenced by all participants and referred to several times throughout the interviews, as well as observation of three participants’ facial expressions changing and being noted.
during the interviews. As a highly referenced theme, respondents perceived that putting others first contributes to establishing a culture of high performance. Participant 1 shared,

We always try to look at the needs of the kids first. First by the students, then by the parents, and then by the staff. That’s just kind of the lens that we use, it has nothing to do with me, it was is good for the kids first, then for others.

He shared an example of this when he discussed the situation with COVID, school closures, and the planning for the reopening of schools. In the explanation of putting others’ needs first, he talked about the sacrifices made to get to the reopening of school. He explained,

Thinking about the hybrid schedule that we’re on now. I think about what my own needs are in this department as an HR professional and actually then as a leader of the facilities department as well, it would have been a heck of a lot easier if we went back every other day. I think the staffing would have been easier, the transitions would be easier, the transportation would be easier and I personally wouldn’t have had to deal with a bunch of the other stuff that we are dealing with, but it’s not what is best for kids, which we believe kids needed to be in school five days a week. So yeah, selfishly, I could have advocated for an easier schedule but ultimately, it was not what kids need and what is best for kids.

He ended by sharing how it is so important as a leader and individual to step outside of yourself and to really look at the needs of others. He stated, “Far too often organizations and leaders don’t look beyond themselves and this can negatively impact performance.”
Participant 3 also talked about the situation of COVID and how the closure created unique situations for everyone. She shared, “For me with the start of COVID and when we did shut down and staff worked remotely, I would continue to come in to work and I let my staff work from home. This limited my ability to go and see my 98-year-old mother-in-law in person because I never knew who I may be exposed by and I didn’t want to spread this to my family. But I allowed my staff to work remotely, so they didn’t have to make that sacrifice.” She expressed how hard this was for her because she could only visit her mother-in-law through the window; however, she felt that it was the right thing to put the needs of her staff and the needs of the district first.

Participants 2, 4, 6 and 7 also shared experiences where they each described a situation where they looked at the needs of others rather than their own needs. In fact, Participant 2 shared,

Over the years I have been trying to push the administrators’ salaries and directors’ salaries, and I put my own salary to sleep because I’m always focused on the work, not on myself. The superintendent just pointed this out that our district in not comparable to others because of this. I was just focused on the work and just totally forgot about myself.

The lived experiences shared by the human resource administrators was evident in the interviews, as indicated by all respondents speaking to this theme as well as the frequency of reference.

Admitting mistakes and being honest. This theme was second most referenced in the construct of humility with the frequency of 11 references, 9 resulting from interviews and 2 from observations. Admitting mistakes and being honest was
referenced by 5 of the 7 participants during the interviews, representing 71.4% and showing that human resource administrators perceive that this theme contributes to a culture of high performance. Two of the participants were observed changing their tone of voice and exhibiting a different facial expression when they were talking about admitting mistakes and being honest. Participant 4 not only changed his tone of voice but he also shrugged his shoulders as he shared his perception of humility. He shared his thoughts by stating,

We’re human, and we make mistakes. In what I’ve learned over my years in watching people and knowing myself is the worst thing we can do, and we have all done it, is we make a mistake and then we’re either embarrassed or whatever it is, so we defend the mistake right rather than simply coming forward and admitting that it didn’t go the way I thought and taking accountability for that action.

He shared a specific example of a time when he was moving too quickly to rush a process and inadvertently upset one of his analysts because he jumped the gun and didn’t follow the process. This resulted with him having to own up to that misstep and admit to the staff that he didn’t follow the process that was in place for a reason, but owning up to this allowed for the staff and him to move forward and understand that mistakes happen.

Participant 2 endorsed the idea that admitting mistakes is a big part of humility. She stated,

Humility is being honest, when you mess up, you admit that you messed up. You know, I’m human. I’m a person and I am sorry. That one is on me and I will do
whatever it takes to make it better. I mean being honest and admitting when you mess up is so important.

She shared a story of when she could have sworn she had sent an email, but then came to realize that she had never hit send on the email and had to admit to others that she had messed up. She explained that by being honest with her staff and admitting her mistake, she was able to continue to work collaboratively with her staff and they have an understanding that mistakes happen.

**Sub-question 3: Altruism Theme Results**

*What is the impact of the altruism leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?*

Altruism for this study was defined as the practice of demonstrating unselfish concern for the welfare of another, even in the face of risk or sacrifice against one’s personal self-interest. It involves deriving personal pleasure from helping and seeking what’s best for others, often with an attitude of humility, modesty, and selflessness. (DeYoung, 2000; Kaplan, 2000; Monroe, 1994; Patterson, 2003).

General analysis of data shows that 85.7% or 6 of the 7 participants provided lived experiences of altruism being a contributing factor in establishing a culture of high performance. In addition, experiences of altruism were referenced 34 times in the interviews, representing 10.3% of frequency references of all constructs in the study. Observations and artifacts were not gathered for the construct of altruism as none were evident during the interviews or found on district websites. Table 6 and Figure 11 illustrate the themes and frequencies that emerged in data analysis of interview transcripts, observations, and artifacts. Utilizing NVivo software, the data was coded to
the identified themes of how human resource administrators perceived the construct of altruism. The themes, the percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 6.

Table 6

$Altruism Themes$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/pattern</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on N</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact Sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeking what is best for others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling unselfish concern for others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. The N for interview participants = 7.*

The data collected from the study sources showed that the human resource administrators perceive that seeking what is best for others and modeling unselfish concern for others as important themes of altruism that contribute to establishing a culture of high performance in district. Figure 10 details the identified themes and frequency of each theme in graph form.
Two themes emerged from the NVivo coding process for altruism. These themes represent data from interview transcripts only; neither observations during the interview nor artifacts were collected for the leadership construct altruism. The total frequency of all altruism references resulted in 34 references, with all 34 frequency references being coded from interview transcripts, which represented 100% of all data coded for altruism. When analyzing the data, findings show that altruism was one of the lowest responses of frequency of all constructs, representing 10.3% of all data collected, tying with the construct of humility. The following sections describes each identified altruism theme and represent the responses and perceptions of human resource administrator participants.

**Seeking what is best for others.** This theme was the most frequently referenced theme for the construct of altruism at 62%. The theme was referenced by 6 of the 7 or 85.5% of respondents, with a total of 21 frequencies within the overall theme. A common theme shows that the respondents perceive seeking what is best for others as an important aspect of altruism that contributes to establishing a culture of high
performance. The lived experiences of the perceived benefit of this theme come from the stories and descriptions provided by the human resource administrators during the interviews. Participant 4 referred to altruism as a way to meet the needs of individuals: “It is the ultimate dedication and sacrifice from the system and that’s from the classroom on up, do what is necessary to meet the needs of others.” He continued by stating, “I have seen what happens when people go above and beyond to meet the needs of students; they sacrifice their own time, money and efforts to do what needs to be done.”

Participant 5 affirmed the thought when he shared, “Altruism brings the community together, when you have teachers and administrators who go above and beyond to help students to move forward and perform higher.” Participant 1 also commented that altruism is “everyone working in the best interest of others, which is meaning meeting the needs of our students.” He followed up by stating, “I think what kind of permeates through is that we focus on the collective good. The collective good at the administrative level, the collective good of our employees, the collective good of the teachers and classified and we try to meld that all into one collective process, always thinking of others first.” He concluded with, “I believe when people are looking out for others, it becomes contagious and that helps in creating that culture of high performance and focus on the needs of others rather than self.”

**Modeling unselfish concern for others.** This theme was the second identified theme in the construct of altruism and was referenced 13 times, representing 38% of all references for the construct of altruism. The theme was prevalent in five of the seven interviews, showing that human resource administrators perceive modeling unselfish concern for others contributes to a culture of high performance in a school district. This
was highlighted in the lived experiences shared during the interviews, including

Participant 4’s response,

You need to be willing to hold any role and do any work that is necessary to get the job done. So, if you need to go and substitute in a classroom you go substitute in a classroom. If you need to go work in the cafeteria, you go work in the cafeteria and not because you are forced to but instead because you know it is the right thing to do and you want others to know you are not above anything, we are all in this together. I mean, just intuitively doing that because it is good for everyone and it is the right thing.

Participant 6 also shared his perception of modeling unselfish concern for others when he described a situation he had encountered at work when dealing with employees. He shared,

I think you are able to sense when somebody has a need and without them asking you are able to meet that need. My assistant was having a bit of a melt down and I just peeled down the layers and let her know that I was here for her and let her know my door was open. She finally came and talked with me, just letting me know she is overwhelmed at work, at home and just generally in life. We talked and shared and upon her leaving, she expressed how much it meant to her that I spent the time to listen and show concern.

Through these lived experiences shared by the respondents, it is clear that human resource administrators perceive that modeling unselfish concern for others contributes to creating a culture of high performance.
Sub-question 4: Vision Theme Results

What is the impact of the vision leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?

Vision for this study was defined as a bridge from the present to the future created by a collaborative mindset, adding meaning to the organization, sustaining higher levels of motivation and withstanding challenge (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; Landsberg, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 1993; Nanus, 1992). Findings from the interviews, observations and artifacts indicate that human resource administrators perceive that the themes of working together for a common purpose or goal and collaboration and teamwork focus on students first, contributing greatly to establishing a culture of high performance.

General analysis of data shows that 100% or 7 of the 7 participants provided examples of vision being a contributing factor in establishing a culture of high performance. In addition, experiences of vision were described and referenced 27 times in the interviews, and 11 artifacts reviewed and referenced, resulting in 38 frequency counts and representing 11.52% of frequency references of all constructs in the study. Table 7 and Figure 12 illustrate the themes and frequencies that emerged in data analysis of interview transcripts, observations and artifacts. Utilizing NVivo software, the data was coded to the identified themes of how human resource administrators perceived the construct of vision. The themes, the percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 7.
Table 7

Vision Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/pattern</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on N</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact Sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work together for a common purpose and goal</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration &amp; teamwork for students first</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The N for interview participants = 7.

The data collected from the study sources showed that the human resource administrators perceive that working together for a common purpose and goal and collaboration and teamwork for students first are essential actions of vision that contribute to establishing a culture of high performance in a district. Figure 11 details the identified themes and frequency of each theme in graph form.

*Figure 11:* Themes and frequencies for Vision.
Two themes emerged from the NVivo coding process for vision. These themes represent data from interview transcripts and artifacts, with no observations being recorded for the leadership construct vision. The total frequency of all vision references resulted in 38 references, with 27 of the total 38 references being coded from interview transcripts, which represented 71.1% of all data coded for vision. When analyzing the data, findings show that the construct of vision was fifth in response of frequency of all constructs, representing 11.5% of all data collected. The following sections describe each identified vision theme and represent the responses and perceptions of human resource administrator participants.

**Working together for a common purpose and goal.** This theme was the most frequently referenced theme for the construct of vision at 55%. The theme was referenced by 100% of respondents with a total of 21 frequencies within the overall theme. As a highly referenced theme for the construct of vision, respondents perceive that working together for a common purpose and goal contributes to creating a culture of high performance. This is illustrated through the lived experiences respondents shared and from the artifacts collected from district websites and district plans.

Participant 1 shared,

You have a set vision that also gets you clear targets. You know why you are doing what you are doing and that gives people a purpose at their job. If there was not vision or target, I think a lot of people would still do what was right for kids, but we’d be going in so many different directions that the singular efforts would be lost and not make a big impact.
Participant 2 also shared, “When you see something being prioritized, everyone is working toward the same goal.” She used the analogy of a rowboat, stating, Imagine everybody on the rowboat, and everybody is rowing in the same direction; you’re speeding up and the power is behind you. You’ve got positive people who are working hard, that are happy to be working together and vice versa, if you have people on the rowboat that don’t know where you are going and row in the opposite direction, the ship will stand still and not move forward, maybe even spin in the same place, making no traction.

Through her analogy, it was clear she was referring to all individuals working together for a common purpose and goal. Participant 7 shared her perception of vision when she stated, “if you don’t know where you are going, you don’t have a vision, and if the vision is unclear then no progress will be made.” She shared how she works with her staff to visit and discuss the district vision and department vision on a regular basis, just to ensure that everyone is clear and understanding their purpose and the goals.

**Collaboration and teamwork focus on students first.** This theme was the second identified theme in the construct of vision and was referenced 17 times, representing 44.7% of all references for the construct of vision. The theme was prevalent in six of the seven interviews, with 9 frequencies referenced during the interviews and 8 artifacts from websites or school plans, indicating that human resource administrators perceive collaboration and teamwork focusing on student first contributes to a culture of high performance in a school district.

Trends throughout this theme include the importance of focusing on students first, working collaboratively, and being team-oriented. Respondents expressed the
importance of teamwork and collaboration as a priority in their job. Participant 2 commented,

It is not one person. It is everybody, everybody because if you don’t get everybody to join in than you’re not going to be able to build the bridge to get you where you need to go. You may get halfway but the bridge is going to fall apart and you’re going to be right back where you started.

She followed up by sharing that, “teamwork is so important in accomplishing goals and setting vision, you need to work together to get to the finish line, if there ever is a finish line.” Participant 3 and 5 also commented about collaboration. Participant 3 stated, “I think the behaviors or actions I see is coordinated collaboration, agreements to disagree but to work together as a team to prioritize for the district or school.” Participant 5 commented, “Teamwork is knowing we have the right people in place and strategic positions to continue moving forward. It also about collaboration of creating a welcoming and supportive team.”

In addition, Participant 6 shared his view of vision through collaboration and teamwork. He stated,

I see people celebrating each other and the leadership at the site. I see the results kind of speak for themselves as far as student achievement and student learning. I see the school organization recognized and focused on the vision, whatever that may be about a program or a product or a level of achievement. I see less problems from those sites because vision is clear and there is teamwork and collaboration occurring at those sites.
Sub-question 5: Trust Theme Results

What is the impact of the trust leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?

Trust for this study was defined as the level of confidence that one individual has in another’s competence and his or her willingness to act in a fair, ethical, and predictable manner. Trust is essential to organizational culture; integrity and care for others are valued by the leader and followers (Joseph & Winston, 2005; Patterson, 2003). Findings from the interviews, observations and artifacts indicate that human resource administrators perceive that consistent action and constant support, following through and keeping commitments, and building relationships and caring for others contribute greatly to establishing a culture of high performance.

General analysis of the data shows that 100% or 7 of the 7 participants provided examples of trust being a contributing factor in establishing a culture of high performance. In addition, experiences of trust were referenced 54 times in the interviews, observed once in observations, and referenced in five artifacts, resulting in 60 frequency counts and representing 18.2% of frequency references of all constructs in the study.

Table 8 and Figure 13 illustrate the themes and frequencies that emerged in data analysis of interview transcripts, observations and artifacts reviewed. Utilizing NVivo software, the data were coded to the identified themes of how human resource administrators perceived the construct of trust. The themes, the percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 8.
Table 8

_Trust Themes_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/pattern</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on N</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact Sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistent action and constant support</td>
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<td>71.4</td>
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<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow through and keep commitments</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build relationships and care for others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The N for interview participants = 7.

The data collected from the study sources showed that the human resource administrators perceive having consistent action and constant support, following through and keeping commitments and building relationships and caring for others contribute to establishing a culture of high performance in a district. Figure 12 details the identified themes and frequency of each theme in graph form.
Three themes emerged from the NVivo coding process for trust. These themes represent data from interview transcripts, observations during the interview, and artifacts that were reviewed or collected for the leadership construct trust. The total frequency of all trust references resulted in 60 references, with 54 of the total 60 references being coded from interview transcripts, which represented 90% of all data coded for trust. When analyzing the data, findings show that trust had the second highest response frequency of all constructs, representing 18.2% of all data collected. The following sections describe each identified trust theme and represent the responses and perceptions of human resource administrator participants.

**Consistent action and constant support.** This theme was the most frequently referenced theme for the construct of trust at 38%. The theme was referenced by 71.4% or 5 of the 7 respondents with a total of 20 frequencies within the overall theme. As a highly referenced theme for the construct of trust, respondents perceive that consistent
action and constant support contribute to creating a culture of high performance. This is illustrated through the lived experiences respondents shared, one observed reference and five from artifacts collected from district websites.

The words *support* and *being consistent* came up often throughout the interviews and could be tied to many of the identified themes. However, when discussing the construct of trust, respondents were most likely to talk about supporting individuals no matter what and being consistent. In fact, 5 of the 7 respondents referred to consistency in some manner during their interview. Participant 1 commented,

> You create a sense of predictability. I like when people characterize my leadership as knowing what I would say or what I would do. I think being consistent and predictable creates some trust because you know how someone might respond or react, rather than the opposite of not knowing what the reaction may be.

He finished by sharing the comment, “When you’re predictable, it also means that your consistent and you’re fair. People trust you.”

Participant 3 shared, “to build trust you must be consistent, and having your staff know that no matter what you are going to have their back and you are going to support them.” She shared that when working with her staff, it was important to her that her staff know they can trust her and that she builds trust by providing support and consistency. She commented, “I show them I care, and I let them know that I am always going to be there for them, supporting and encouraging.”

**Follow through and keep commitments.** This theme was the second identified theme in the construct of trust and was referenced 20 times, representing 33% of all
references for the construct of trust. The theme was prevalent in all seven interviews, with 20 frequencies referenced during the interviews and no observations or artifacts, indicating that human resource administrators perceive that following through and keeping commitments contribute to a culture of high performance. All seven respondents spoke to the theme of keeping commitments and following through with actions. Comments such “walk the walk and talk the talk” came up in three of the interviews, referring to following through with actions and keeping to one’s word. Participant 3 stated, “trust is when we say we are going to do something and following through with it.” She also defined trust thus:

Making sure that people understand or can feel that they can believe in your ability and your willingness to complete whatever is decided. We do what we have said we are going to do and we have a commitment to making it happen.

Participants 5 and 6 both commented to this effect: “if I say I am going to do something then I follow through and do it.” Both participants felt very strongly about keeping commitments and being true to their word. Participant 6 elaborated on his statement thus:

Follow through is essential. Follow through in actions and words, following up with people, this allows you to build the trust and when problems arise, they already trust you so you will get through things faster and more efficiently.

**Build relationships and care for others.** This theme was the least frequently referenced in the construct of trust. Nevertheless, the theme was referenced by 5 of the 7 participants or 71.4%, with a total of 17 frequencies, representing 28% of the total frequencies in trust. Although this theme was the least referenced among the themes that
emerged in trust, the detailed stories and descriptions of experiences from the interviews with the human resource administrators revealed the perception that building relationships and caring for others contributes to establishing a culture of high performance. Participant 2 shared that she believes relationships are a key to building trust. She discussed the importance of getting to know people and stated that in order to do that as a leader, one must “Personally get to know people, value and respect them regardless of their position, title, or affiliation in the district.”

Participant 6 shared that he builds trust when he commented,

I try to build trust and relationships with my staff by seeking to understand people on a basic kind of human level. Knowing more about them than just their job. I try to connect with them personally. You show your vulnerability and let some of your personal guards down, so they know you’re not just a robotic leader, that you care and that you too have things that you are dealing with. I have those relationships with my staff. I want them to know I care about them and they are more than just employees to me.

**Sub-question 6: Empowerment Theme Results**

*What is the impact of the empowerment leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?*

Empowerment for this study was defined as the act of entrusting power to others—virtually giving away power to followers and allowing them to know and feel significant and important in their role and contribution. It requires effective listening, valuing love and equity, and an emphasis on teamwork. Empowerment encourages risk-taking and self-accountability to accomplish tasks and work towards goals (Blanchard, 2000;
Findings from the interviews, observations and artifacts indicate that human resource administrators perceive that encouraging and developing leadership and decision-making, along with the practices of listening and valuing input and ideas, contributes to establishing a culture of high performance.

General analysis of data shows that 85.7% or 6 of the 7 participants provided examples of empowerment being a contributing factor in establishing a culture of high performance. In addition, experiences of empowerment were referenced 36 times in the interviews, and referenced 5 times in artifacts, resulting in 41 frequency counts and representing 12.4% of frequency references of all constructs in the study. Table 9 and Figure 14 illustrate the themes and frequencies that emerged in data analysis of interview transcripts, and observations. Utilizing NVivo software, the data was coded to the identified themes of how human resource administrators perceived the construct of empowerment. The themes, the percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 9.
Table 9

Empowerment Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/pattern</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on N</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact Sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encourage and develop leadership &amp; decision making</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen and value input and ideas</td>
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<td>57.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The N for interview participants = 7.

The data collected from the study sources showed that the human resource administrators perceive that encouraging and developing leadership and decision-making, along with listening and valuing input and ideas, are essential actions of empowerment that contribute to establishing a culture of high performance in a district. Figure 13 details the identified themes and frequency of each theme in graph form.

Figure 13: Themes and frequencies for Empowerment.
Two themes emerged from the NVivo coding process for empowerment. These themes represent data from interview transcripts and artifacts; no frequencies were observed during the interviews for the leadership construct empowerment. The total frequency of all empowerment references resulted in 41 references, with 36 of the total 41 references being coded from interview transcripts, which represented 87.8% of all data coded for empowerment. When analyzing the data, findings show that empowerment received the fourth highest response of frequency of all constructs, representing 12.4% of all data collected. The following sections describe each identified empowerment theme and represent the responses and perceptions of human resource administrator participants.

**Encourage & develop leadership and decision-making.** This theme was the most frequently referenced theme for the construct of empowerment at 73%. The theme was referenced by 85.7% of respondents with a total of 30 frequencies within the overall theme. As a highly referenced theme for the construct of empowerment, respondents perceive that encouraging and developing leadership and decision making contributes to creating a culture of high performance. This was illustrated through the lived experiences respondents shared with the researcher and through the artifacts collected from district websites and district plans.

Participant 1 shared his thoughts about encouraging and developing others when he talked about his experience of hiring others within the district or in his department. He stated,

Empowerment to me is: my goal as HR is to hire people smarter and more capable than me. I am not afraid to say it, and I am not afraid to say someone is smarter than me or more capable than me. I am not afraid if someone is more
strategic than me, that’s what I want. I want to surround myself with the best and develop and help an individual grow to be at their best. I think when you can be like this then you want individuals to grow and even be better than you, then maybe someday they can take my job and I will know the district is in good hands.

Similar to the comments of Participant 1, both Participants 3 and 4 referenced the importance of providing opportunity for growth and decision making. Participant 3 commented, “I think our superintendent does a great job at supporting our missteps and allows us to take responsibility and risk in decisions, knowing that it will allow us to grow and learn to overcome obstacles as well as giving us other ideas and collaboration when we need the support in a decision or problem we may be facing.” Participant 4 shared, “You know empowerment to me says that you are given the latitude to move on things and make decision without have to check in with your superior constantly.”

**Listen and value input and ideas.** This theme was the second identified theme in the construct of empowerment and was referenced 11 times, representing 26.8% of all references for the construct of empowerment. The theme was prevalent in four of the interviews, with 9 frequencies referenced during the interviews and 2 artifacts, indicating that human resource administrators perceive that listening and valuing input and ideas contribute to establishing a culture of high performance. Two frequencies of artifacts were gathered from the review of two of the district LCAPs, which made reference to surveys and input from staff. Participant 6 shared that listening to people is something he practices on a regular basis. He states,
Active listening is something that I do every day. We teach active listening, meaning you’re kind of paraphrasing what they are saying, so they know they are heard. We encourage staff to share ideas and thoughts and value the input they bring forward. Doesn’t always mean we do what they say but we want them to feel heard and valued.

Similar to the conversation about listening bringing value and providing empowerment, Participant 7 shared, “I do a lot of questioning, asking so what do you think or how do you feel about that?” She shared that this helps her to get ideas from individuals that may be reluctant to share or feel as if their ideas are not valuable. Later in the conversation, she shared, “I think when you allow opportunities for individuals to share ideas and proposals then we are able to do more brainstorming and we can get all the ideas out on the table and be on the same page. It is truly about getting people involved and feeling empowered to share their thoughts.”

Sub-question 7: Service Theme Results

What is the impact of the service leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?

Service for this study was defined as the moral equivalent of giving of oneself to serve others. It implies that leaders are focused on placing interest on others rather than on their own interest. It can be demonstrated through the gift of time, energy, compassion, care or belongings. Service places others first (Patterson, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002). Findings from the interviews, observations and artifacts indicate that human resource administrators perceive that placing importance on serving others and
providing growth and development opportunities contribute to establishing a culture of high performance.

General analysis of data shows that 100% or 7 of the 7 participants provided examples of service being a contributing factor in establishing a culture of high performance. In addition, experiences of service were referenced 37 times in the interviews, and 12 frequency references from artifacts, resulting in a total 49 frequency counts and representing 14.8% of frequency references of all constructs in the study. Table 10 and Figure 15 illustrate the themes and frequencies that emerged in data analysis of interview transcripts, and artifacts. Utilizing NVivo software, the data was coded to the identified themes of how human resource administrators perceived the construct of service. The themes, percentage of participants who contributed to each theme, and the frequency count of responses received are represented in Table 10.

Table 10

Service Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/pattern</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on N</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact Sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place importance on serving others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide growth and development opportunities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The N for interview participants = 7

The data collected from the study sources showed that the human resource administrators perceive that placing importance on serving others and providing growth and development opportunities are essential actions of service that contribute to
establishing a culture of high performance in a district. Figure 14 details the identified themes and frequency of each theme in graph form.

![Bar Chart: Themes and frequencies for Service]

*Figure 14: Themes and frequencies for Service.*

Two themes emerged from the NVivo coding process for service. These themes represent data from interview transcripts and artifacts, no observations were collected for the leadership construct service. The total frequency of all service references resulted in 49 references, with 37 of the total 49 references being coded from interview transcripts, which represented 75.5% of all data coded for service. When analyzing the data, findings show that service had the third highest response of frequency of all constructs, representing 14.8% of all data collected. The following sections describe each identified service theme and represent the responses and perceptions of human resource administrator participants.

**Place importance on serving others.** This theme was the most frequently referenced theme for the construct of service at 67%. The theme was referenced by 100% or 7 of the 7 respondents with a total of 33 frequencies within the overall theme. As a highly referenced theme for the construct of service, respondents perceive placing
importance on serving others as contributing to establishing a culture of high
performance. This is illustrated through the lived experiences respondents shared, and
through artifacts collected from district websites. The concept of serving others came up
many times throughout the interviews and could be tied to many of the identified themes.
However, when discussing the construct of service, respondents talked about supporting
individuals and proving service to students. Participant 2 believes that service is what her
school district is all about. She shared that it is not just about the kids though; in fact, as
she commented,

   I would say the biggest service we do is support the entire community. That looks
different at each school because the needs are different at each school. I could
easily say every single school does something unique and the district office has its
own service that we provide and send out to others.

She continued by sharing that if anyone in the district has a need, individuals just step up
and provide. An example she shared was when a retired staff member’s house burned
down in the Paradise fire. Once staff heard about this, staff members rallied together to
get food, home goods, sleeping bags, and other items to assist this former staff member.
This was just one of the several stories she shared of the service for others that she sees
occurring in her district.

   Participants 4 and 5 shared examples of how the administrators in their districts
do things like cook for their staff, bring in treats, and have weekly celebrations
recognizing individuals for the greatness they bring to the district; they believe they do
this just because they care for others and want the individuals to know this, and through
these actions they are showing their gratitude and providing service to their staff.

Participant 4 explained,

> With the people they lead, they know how hard they are working in their life, and doing little things like bringing in treats demonstrates that they care and that they know the service that the individuals are providing is important. It makes them feel appreciated for what they do.

**Provide growth and development opportunities.** This theme was the second identified theme in the construct of service and was referenced 16 times, representing 32.6% of all references for the construct of service. The theme was prevalent in five of the interviews, with 9 frequencies referenced during the interviews and 7 artifacts, indicating that human resource administrators perceive that providing professional growth and development opportunities contributes to establishing a culture of high performance. Seven frequencies of artifacts were gathered from the review of five of the district LCAPs, providing information about professional growth opportunities in the district. Participant 1 shared that when it comes to providing growth opportunities for staff members in his district, he feels this is a strength of his district as they providing ongoing learning opportunities with experts within the district providing the workshops and trainings. He stated,

> We have a real belief towards learning and growing and when you have a real belief in learning and growing, you provide the opportunities for individuals to learn and grow. You support people in their learning opportunities and encourage growth and development at every level. We even provide funds to support the continued growth of our employees.
Participant 7 shared a similar philosophy of growth and development for the employee in her district. She shared, “Any little training that we can provide to employees before they start to help them be successful in their position is what we try to do.” She explained how they take time out to have staff come into the district a day before they actually report to their site to train them and give them strategies to be successful. She also shared how they support their new teachers. She stated, 

We assign them a mentor so whether it’s because they are getting their credential and need an induction mentor or whether they are just new to our district we try to provide them with a support and coach to assist them with the challenges of being new. We provide constant support and service to keep them on track. Kind of give them things to think about, so they know what to prepare for and to know that they are not alone, and we want them to succeed. Just as we do with our students.

She believes this service of assisting staff and providing growth opportunities directly impacts the students and the culture of the district.

**Key Findings**

This qualitative phenomenological research study included a data collection process with semi-structured interviews, observations and artifacts. The data were coded for themes, and each body of data was analyzed closely to meet predetermined criteria. Key findings were determined to be those themes that were referenced by 50% or more of all participants and represented 20% or more of the coded data for the respective construct of servant leadership. Overall, for the seven servant leadership constructs, 16 total themes emerged, with a balanced distribution among all constructs, indicating that
human resource administrators perceive each construct is important in establishing a culture of high performance. Figure 7 illustrates each servant leadership constructs and the total percentage of frequency for each identified theme within the construct, which includes NVivo data from participant interviews, observations during interviews and artifacts reviewed for the study.

![Percentage of Frequency in Theme](image)

*Figure 7:* Percentage of frequency of each identified theme.

The following is a brief summary of findings for each of the servant leadership constructs based on the data collected aligning to each research question.
Agapao Love Key Findings

Agapao love was the most frequently referenced servant leadership construct in this study with 75 references or 22.7% of the total references made in the study. Three themes emerged and are described below.

1. *Creating connections and family focus* was referenced by 5 participants or 71.4%. This theme yielded the highest number of references for agapao love and represented 39% of data coded.

2. *Compassion, kindness and caring for others* was referenced by 6 participants or 85.7%. This theme was the second most referenced for agapao love and represented 37% or 28 frequencies of all data coded for agapao love.

3. *Provide support and understanding* was third highest-frequency theme for agapao love with 5 participants or 71.4% referencing during interviews. This theme had 18 frequencies or 24% of all data coded for agapao love.

When analyzing the data collected during interviews, observations and artifacts, findings indicate that human resource administrators perceived that the construct of agapao love greatly impacts establishing a culture of high performance.

Humility Key Findings

Humility was tied for the least referenced servant leadership construct in the study with 34 references or 10.3% of the total references of all constructs. Two themes emerged and are described below.

1. *Putting others needs first* was referenced by 100% of participants or 7 of 7. This theme was the most commonly referenced theme for humility and had 23
frequencies or 68% of all data coded for humility. References were collected and observed during interviews.

2. **Admitting mistakes and being honest** was referenced by 5 participants or 71.4%. This theme yielded 11 frequencies and represents 32% of the data coded in the construct of humility. References for this theme were gathered from interviews and observation.

When analyzing the data collected during interviews and observations, findings indicate that human resource administrators perceived that the construct of humility does contribute to establishing a culture of high performance.

**Altruism Key Findings**

Altruism was tied for the least referenced servant leadership construct in the study with 34 references or 10.3% of the total references of all constructs. Two themes emerged and are described below.

1. **Seeking what is best for others** was referenced by 85.7% or 6 participants. This theme was the most referenced theme for altruism and was referenced with 21 frequencies or 62% of the data coded for this construct. All references were gathered from interviews.

2. **Modeling unselfish concern for others** was referenced by 5 participants or 71.4%. This theme yielded 13 frequencies and represents 38% of the data coded in the construct altruism. References for this theme were gathered from interviews.
When analyzing the data collected, findings show that human resource administrators perceived that the construct of altruism does contribute to establishing a culture of high performance.

**Vision Key Findings**

Vision was the fifth most referenced servant leadership construct in the study with 38 references or 11.5% of the total references of all constructs. Two themes emerged and are described below.

1. *Work together for a common purpose and goal* was referenced by 100% or all 7 participants. This theme was the most referenced theme for vision and was referenced with 21 frequencies or 55% of the data coded for this construct. References for this theme were gathered from interviews and artifact review.

2. *Collaboration and teamwork for students first* was referenced by 6 participants or 85.7%. This theme yielded 17 frequencies and represents 45% of the data coded in the construct altruism. References for this theme were gathered from interviews and artifacts.

When analyzing the data collected, findings show that human resource administrators perceived that the construct of vision does contribute to establishing a culture of high performance.

**Trust Key Findings**

Trust was the second highest referenced servant leadership construct in the study with 60 references or 18.2% of the total references of all constructs. Three themes emerged and are described below.
1. *Consistent action and constant support* was referenced by 71.4% or 5 participants. This theme was the most referenced theme for trust and was referenced with 23 frequencies or 38% of the data coded for this construct. References for this theme were gathered from interviews, observation and artifacts.

2. *Follow through and keep commitments* was referenced by all 7 participants or 100%. This theme yielded 20 frequencies and represents 33% of the data coded in the construct trust. References for this theme were gathered from interviews.

3. *Build relationships and care for others* was referenced by 71.4% or 5 participants. This theme yielded 17 frequencies and represents 28% of the data coded in this construct.

When analyzing the data collected, findings show that human resource administrators perceived that the construct trust greatly contributes to establishing a culture of high performance.

**Empowerment Key Findings**

Empowerment was the fourth most referenced servant leadership construct in the study with 41 references or 12.4% of the total references of all constructs. Two themes emerged and are described below.

1. *Encourage and develop leadership and decision making* was referenced by 85.7% or 6 participants. This theme was the most referenced theme for altruism and was referenced with 30 frequencies or 73% of the data coded for this construct. References were gathered from interviews and artifacts.
2. *Listen and value input and ideas* was referenced by 4 participants or 57.1%.

This theme yielded 11 frequencies and represents 27% of the data coded in the construct empowerment. References for this theme were gathered from interviews and artifacts.

When analyzing the data collected, findings show that human resource administrators perceived that the construct of empowerment does contribute to establishing a culture of high performance.

**Service Key Findings**

Service was the third most referenced servant leadership construct in the study with 49 references or 14.9% of the total references of all constructs. Two themes emerged and are described below.

1. *Place importance on serving others* was referenced by 100% or all 7 participants. This theme was the highest referenced theme for service and was referenced with 33 frequencies or 67% of the data coded for this construct. References for this theme were gathered from interviews and artifacts.

2. *Provide growth and development opportunities* was referenced by 5 participants or 71.4%. This theme yielded 16 frequencies and represents 33% of the data coded in the construct service. References for this theme were gathered from interviews and artifacts.

When analyzing the data collected, findings indicate that human resource administrators perceived that the construct service does contribute to establishing a culture of high performance.
Summary

Chapter IV addressed the data collection and findings regarding the central research question and the seven subsequent questions used to guide this study. Findings resulted from the collection of data through semi-structured interviews, observations, and artifacts. The results indicate that human resource administrators perceive that all seven servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) contribute to and have an impact on establishing a culture of high performance in a district.

General information includes that 100% of participants shared meaningful lived experiences of how they perceive Patterson’s (2003) seven leadership constructs: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service, each contributing to establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. In scripted interviews all seven human resource administrators shared detailed meaningful stories of their lived experiences. The researcher also gathered data from observations during the interviews, including body language and tone of voice, as well the review of district websites and LCAP plans for the use of artifact or document data.

The researcher identified 16 themes with varying levels of frequency, but concluded that all 16 were relevant and provided reliable data for the study. The codes related to themes were identified and the researcher created a hierarchy of the constructs based on the highest percentage of frequency: agapao love (22.7%), trust (18.8%), service (14.8%), empowerment (12.4%), vision (11.5%), altruism 10.3% and humility (10.3%). All themes were important and discussed and findings indicate each construct contributes to creating a culture of high performance.
Chapter V discusses the major findings in greater detail and explores the unexpected findings, and conclusions. In addition, the chapter discusses implications for action, recommendations for further research, and concludes with closing remarks and reflection.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Chapter V presents a summary of the study and essential conclusions drawn from the data collected and analyzed in Chapter IV. This qualitative phenomenological research study explored and described public-school district human resource administrators’ perception of the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of higher performance. Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs include agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service. The chapter presents the purpose statement, central research question and seven sub-questions, and an overview of the methodology, followed by a review of the population and sample and the demographic data of the seven human resource administrators who participated in the study. Additionally, the chapter presents major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions and implications for action. Chapter V concludes with recommendations for further research, as well as closing with researcher remarks and reflections.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe public-school district human resources administrators’ perceived impact of the seven servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.
Central Research Question

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by human resource administrators of public-school districts in California?

Sub-Questions

1. What is the impact of the agapao leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
2. What is the impact of the humility leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
3. What is the impact of the altruism leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
4. What is the impact of the vision leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
5. What is the impact of the trust leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
6. What is the impact of the empowerment leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?
7. What is the impact of the service leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?

Methodology

A qualitative phenomenological research method was used to explore and describe public-school district human resource administrators’ perceived impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high
performance. Qualitative research collects data from the lived experiences of participants, creating meaning through their shared stories, events and actions, and it is fundamentally descriptive in nature (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Creswell, 2009). For this study, seven interviews were conducted with public-school district human resource administrators who lead in districts with a culture of high performance in Northern California.

The thematic dissertation team, comprised of eight peer researchers, as well as one faculty chair and one faculty advisor, collaboratively created the Thematic Interview Protocol (Appendix B), which was the primary source used in this study and drew on the foundational research of servant leadership from the leadership review. The interview questions directly related to the central research question for the study and were developed to gather data of the lived experiences of human resource administrators. All interviews were conducted virtually utilizing Zoom and recorded and transcribed through Zoom transcription. These interviews served as the primary data collection for the study and additional sources of data, including artifacts and observations, were collected to create deeper understanding and provide triangulation to the study. Triangulation of data provides data across inquiry techniques, which may yield different insights about the topic being studied and lend greater credibility to the findings of a study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The transcribed interviews were entered into NVivo, cross-referenced, and analyzed to discover emergent themes. All data were stored in a secure file, which was password-protected by the researcher.
Population

The population for this phenomenological study was human resource administrators in public school districts in California. According to the California Department of Education (n.d.) website, California had 1,037 public school districts during the 2018-2019 school year. The State of California does not collect information on how many individuals serve as human resources administrators in school districts throughout the state therefore, for this study the researcher estimated the population of human resource administrators in California at approximately 1,037. This population of 1,037 human resource administrators was too large to sample every administrator as a possible participant in this phenomenological study therefore, the researcher determined to select a smaller population sample from within the larger group to conduct the study. The sampling frame was narrowed down to 70 public-school district human resource administrators working in school districts located in Alameda, El Dorado, Napa, Nevada, Placer, and Sacramento counties of Northern California.

Sample

The thematic team collectively developed the sample criteria and determined that six to eight participants for each researcher were needed to conduct the study. For the purpose of this research, participants were selected based on the criteria determined by the thematic team and also the geographic location of the individuals, working in districts that met the criteria for being a district with a culture of high performance. The human resource administrators selected to participate in the study represented at least five of the following six criteria:
1. Human Resource Administrator was employed at the current school district within California with a minimum of 100 staff members.

2. Evidence of leading school or district with a culture of high performance.

3. Human Resource Administrator participant has a minimum of two to three years of experience at their current district.

4. A minimum of five years of experience in the K-12 profession.

5. Membership in professional associations in their field, such as ACSA.

6. Articles, papers, or materials written, published or presented at conferences or association meetings.

The criteria for a district that has established a culture of high performance were defined as a district that has demonstrated a growth trend over the past two years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Suspension Rate and Graduation Rate; or has high performance as evidenced by scoring in the blue or green category for two consecutive years as indicated by California Dashboard in two of the four areas of Language Arts, Mathematics, Suspension Rate, and Graduation Rates. Purposeful criterion-based sampling was used to find the participants that qualified and met the study’s definition (Patton, 2015). Seven participants were identified and selected to participate in this study. To identify the seven participants, the researcher contacted all 19 of the human resource administrators in the 19 districts that met the criteria of a high-performing district throughout the six identified counties and 70 different districts. Out of the 19 districts who met the criteria, seven human resource administrators responded, were qualified and agreed to participate in the study. Sample size for qualitative studies can range from 1 to 40 or more, depending on
the depth of information provided (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). Patton (2015) stated, “there are no rules for the sample size in qualitative inquiry. The sample depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the inquiry, ……. and what can be done with the available time and resources” (p. 311).

**Demographic Data**

Table 2 illustrates the analysis of participants who met the established set of criteria in order to participate in the study.

Table 2

*Study Participant Criteria*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Administrator was employed at a current school district within California with a minimum of 100 staff members.</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of leading schools or districts with a culture of high performance.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human Resource Administrator participants has a minimum of two to three years of experience at their current district.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A minimum of five years’ experience in the K-12 profession.</td>
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<td>Membership in professional associations in their field, such as ACSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven current public-school district human resource administrators who work in Northern California were selected to participate in the study. For confidentiality purposes, participants were assigned a number and identifying demographic data, such as the participant’s gender, number of years in education, and years in current HR position. Four of the participants were male and three were female. All participants had been in
education for over 20 years and met at least five of the six eligibility criteria. Table 3 represents the demographics of the human resource administrators who participated in the study, including gender, years in education and years in current HR position.

Table 3

Demographic Data of Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years In Education</th>
<th>Years in HR Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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Major Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to explore and describe public-school district human resource administrators’ perceptions of the impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. The major findings from this study describe the relationship of the study to the review of literature and prior research conducted on servant leadership. All major findings align to the central research questions and were answered through the analysis of data gathered from each of the sub-questions. Chapter IV presented detailed data of the key research findings resulting from the coding of themes, which included the frequencies from interviews, observations, and artifacts. A summary of major findings is presented with alignment to sub-questions used for each servant leadership construct.
Central Research Question

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by human resource administrators of public-school districts in California?

In answering this central question, qualitative data were collected through virtual interviews with seven human resource administrators in Northern California who lead in districts with a culture of high performance. The participants were asked about the seven constructs of servant leadership developed by Patterson (2003) and their perception of the impact of each of the constructs, (agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and services) on establishing a culture of high performance. All seven servant leadership constructs researched in this study were determined to be important and essential in establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. The major findings for each sub-question are presented in the following sections.

Research Sub-Question 1

What is the impact of the agapao leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?

Major Finding 1. Creating connections and compassion, kindness and caring. Human resource administrators who participated in this study placed the highest degree of importance on agapao love, referencing this factor with a frequency of 75 or 22.7% of the total references in the study. The two highest frequently mentioned agapao love behaviors perceived by human resource administrators as being important to creating a culture of high performance are creating connections and family focus (39%), and compassion, kindness, and caring for others (37%). The findings show that human
resource administrators believe that connecting with individuals both professionally and personally contributes to establishing a culture of high performance. Although not all seven of the participants referred to compassion, kindness and caring, 85.7% of the participants directly shared experiences indicating the importance of showing individuals compassion, kindness and caring in their leadership. Comparing the results of the major findings of agapao love from this study and ones presented in the review of literature in this study, the researcher found that it aligns with previous studies found in the literature review. The major findings corroborate and support Patterson’s (2003) framework, as well as other servant leadership research, in which agapao love impacts leadership by authentically valuing people, affirming their worth, expressing deep compassion to love unconditionally and caring for and genuinely appreciating their followers (Ayers, 2008; Patterson, 2003; Winston, 2002; Russell & Stone, 2002).

**Research Sub-Question 2**

*What is the impact of the humility leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?*

**Major Finding 2. Putting others’ needs first.** Human resource administrators who participated in this study believed that putting others’ needs first is an important factor to include when establishing a culture of high performance. Putting others’ needs first was referenced by all seven of the participants and referenced 23 times, representing 68% of the total references made for the construct of humility. The findings show that human resource administrators who participated in this study all agreed that putting others’ needs first positively influences the ability to establish a culture of high performance in an educational organization. Leadership should not be thought of as a
single person taking ownership and focusing on oneself; instead, leadership needs to focus on placing a priority on the needs of others and giving credit and recognition to those who work together to reach goals and make it happen (Maxwell, 2002). The act of humility allows human resource administrators to be mindful of putting the needs of others first, and leading with the intention of focusing on others, not on oneself.

Although humility was one of the least frequently referenced construct during the interviews and received only 34 total references or 10.3% of all constructs referenced, the human resource administrators who participated in this study believe it was indeed important to contributing to a culture of high performance. Comparing the results of the major findings of humility from this study to ones presented in the literature review of the study, the researcher found it plausible to state that this study aligns with previous studies found in the review of literature. The major findings of humility in this study corroborate those of previous studies concluding that leadership that includes humility provides inclusion, inspiration, valuing others, shared decision-making, and placing value on individuals’ contributions to a shared purpose or goal and recognizing staff for their work (Heithfield, 2019; Lloyd, Walker & Walker, 2011; & Northouse, 2001).

Research Sub-Question 3

*What is the impact of the altruism leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?*

**Major Finding 3. Seeking what is best for others.** Human resource administrators who participated in this study believed that seeking what is best for others is an important contributing factor when establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. Seeking what is best for others first was referenced by 6 of the 7
participants for a total of 23 frequencies, representing 68% of the total references made for the construct of altruism. The findings show that human resource administrators who participated in this study all agreed that seeking what is best for others positively influences the ability of a leader to establish a culture of high performance in an educational organization.

Although not all seven of the participants referred to seeking what is best for others during their interview and altruism overall was one of the least frequently referenced constructs, 100% of the participants directly shared lived experiences and expressed their perception that altruistic behaviors contribute to service leadership and establishing a culture of high performance. Altruism for this study was defined as demonstrating unselfish concern for the welfare of another, even in the face of risk or sacrifice against one’s personal self-interest. It involves deriving personal pleasure from helping and seeking what is best for others, often with an attitude of humility, modesty and selflessness (DeYoung, 2000; Kaplan, 2000; Monroe, 1994; Patterson, 2003).

Comparing the results of the major findings of altruism from this study and ones presented in the review of literature in this study, the researcher found it aligns with previous studies found in the literature review. The major findings corroborate and support Patterson’s (2003) framework, as well as other servant leadership research, in which altruism impacts leadership in such a manner that the leader becomes more concerned for the welfare of others than they are with their own welfare. Leaders model altruistic behaviors of being unselfish and seeking what is best for others first, which are at the forefront of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977; Hattwich, 1996; Spears, 1998; Patterson, 2003).
Research Sub-Question 4

What is the impact of the vision leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?

Major Finding 4. Work together for a common purpose and goal. Human resource administrators who participated in this study believed that working together for a common purpose and goal is an important factor that contributes to effectively establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. The major finding of working together for a common purpose and goal was referenced by all 7 of the participants and referenced 21 times, representing 55% of the total references made for the construct of vision. The findings show that human resource administrators who participated in this study all agreed that working together for a common purpose and goal positively influences the ability to establish a culture of high performance. Setting a vision and having a common purpose that is communicated to all individuals in an organization is a fundamental aspect of servant leadership and focuses the leader and followers on fully concentrating on where things are headed, the future and looking ahead toward goals with an end in mind (Farling, Stone & Winston, 1999; Patterson, 2003).

Although vision did not rank as one of the most frequently referenced constructs in the study and received only 38 total references or 11.5% of all constructs referenced, the human resource administrators who participated in this study believed it was an important contributing factor in successfully establishing a culture of high performance. Comparing the results of the major findings of vision from this study to ones presented in the literature review, the researcher found that findings from this study align with
previous studies found in the review of literature. The major findings of vision in this study corroborate those of previous studies concluding that leadership that includes vision provides a clear picture and communication of the purpose and goal being worked toward. Vision is understood as an image of the future of the collective organization, where everyone works together and moves the organization forward toward a common purpose (Perkins, Lean & Newberry, 2017; Venus, Stam & Van Knippenberg, 2019).

**Research Sub-Question 5**

*What is the impact of the trust leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?*

**Major Finding 5. Consistent action/constant support and follow through**

*keep commitments.* Human resource administrators who participated in this study placed the second highest degree of importance on trust, referencing this factor with a frequency of 60 or 18.2% of the total references in the study. The two most frequently mentioned behaviors of the construct trust by human resource administrators as being important to creating a culture of high performance are consistent action and constant support (38%), and following through and keeping commitments (33%). The findings show that human resource administrators believe that being consistent in one’s actions and following through with commitments both contribute to establishing a culture of high performance. Although not all seven of the participants referred directly to the theme of consistent action and constant support, 100% of the participants did share lived experiences regarding being consistent, following through on one’s words and actions and placing a priority on building relationships.
Comparing the results of the major findings of trust from this study and ones presented in the review of literature in this study, the researcher found it aligns with previous studies found in the literature review. The major findings support Patterson’s (2003) framework, as well as other servant leadership research, in which trust is a major component of leadership. The major findings of trust in this study corroborate previous studies concluding that leadership that includes trust establishes an organization that facilitates cooperation, and also increases levels of service both from the leader and the followers. Trust is essential in a work environment where individuals count on one another and follow through on commitments (White, Harvey, & Fox, 2016; Farling, Stone & Winston, 1999).

**Research Sub-Question 6**

*What is the impact of the empowerment leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?*

**Major Finding 6. Encourage and develop leadership and decision-making.**

Human resource administrators who participated in this study believed that encouraging and developing leadership and decision-making is an important factor to include when establishing a culture of high performance. Encouraging and developing leadership and decision-making was referenced by 6 of the 7 participants or 85.7%, and it was referenced 30 times, representing 73% of the total references made for the construct of empowerment. The findings show that human resource administrators who participated in this study all agreed that encouraging and developing leadership and decision-making positively influences the ability to establish a culture of high performance in an educational organization. Leadership should be focused on developing individuals into
leaders themselves; it should inspire and encourage growth and reaching one’s full potential (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Luenendonk, 2020). Focusing on empowerment allows human resource administrators to develop and grow leaders from within an organization and also assists leaders in focusing on a growth mindset for all.

Although empowerment was the fourth most referenced construct during the interviews and received only 41 total references or 12.4% of all constructs referenced, the human resource administrators who participated in this study believe empowerment was important to contributing to a culture of high performance. Comparing the results of the major findings of empowerment from this study to the ones presented in the literature review, the researcher found it plausible to state that this study aligns with previous studies found in the review of literature. The major findings of empowerment in this study corroborate those of previous studies concluding that leadership that encourages and provides opportunities for empowerment involves giving power over to individuals and giving individuals opportunities to learn, grow and progress while developing strengths and trust and becoming leaders of others (Chhortray, Sivertsson, & Tell, 2017; Russell & Stone, 2002; Melrose, 1995; Yukl, 2012).

**Research Sub-Question 7**

*What is the impact of the service leadership construct on establishing a culture of high performance?*

**Major Finding 7. Placing importance on serving others.** Human resource administrators who participated in this study believed that placing importance on serving others is an important factor to include when establishing a culture of high performance.
Placing importance on serving others was referenced by all seven of the participants and referenced 33 times, representing 67% of the total references made for the construct of service. The findings show that human resource administrators who participated in this study all agreed that the construct of service and specifically placing a great deal of importance on serving others, positively influences the ability to establish a culture of high performance in an educational organization. Service for this study was defined as the moral equivalent of giving of oneself to serve others. It implies that leaders are focused on placing interest on others rather than on their own interest. It can be demonstrated through the gift of time, energy, compassion, care or belongings. Service places others first (Patterson, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002). The act of service is prevalent in every school district across the country; however, it is the type of service and purpose of the service that provides for different outcomes, resulting in some school districts being able to establish a culture of high performance and others just spinning their wheels continuing to fail their students.

Service was the third most referenced construct during the study and received 49 total references or 14.9% of all constructs referenced. The human resource administrators who participated in this study believe that placing importance on serving others is important to contributing to a culture of high performance. Comparing the results of the major findings of service from this study to ones presented in the literature review, the researcher found it conclusive to state that this study aligns with previous studies found in the review of literature. Service leaders derive influence from the service itself, developing relationships with others; followers are inspired by the leaders’ actions and often follow their lead to serve (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). The
major findings of service in this study corroborate those of previous studies concluding that leadership that includes service support individuals by discovering the uniqueness in each individual, knowing service is bigger than themselves and looking for opportunities to serve others (Wis, 2002; Smith, 2003; Patterson, 2003). Human resource administrators believe that through their service to others, a culture of high performance can be established and grown.

**Unexpected Findings**

There were two unexpected findings from this study. The first unexpected finding was that the researcher did not anticipate that humility would be the lowest referenced construct within the study. The researcher suspected, based on previous conversations with colleagues and the overall definition of humility within the study that human resource administrators would have referenced humility more than the 34 total references and 10.3% of all references. This surprised the researcher because during the interviews only one of the participants spoke to giving credit to others for the work that is done within the district. Instead, the participants’ responses focused more on the idea of putting others’ needs first and admitting when doing something wrong rather than recognizing others for their accomplishments. Although these are honorable and valid responses, it was not expected or anticipated that humility would rank so low in the hierarchy of frequency references for each construct.

The second unexpected finding was how common the statement of “we don’t really deal with the academic achievement in the district, we are more the people department”, was made by the participants in the study. Five of the seven participants shared at the start of the interview that they did not deal with student achievement
directly and therefore may not be able to speak about the impact of a culture of high performance in their district. Although the researcher is aware that the human resource administrators do not directly oversee student performance within a district, it was surprising to hear that because they don’t work with the students or teachers directly, they don’t believe they impact the overall performance. The researcher concluded that these participants mistook the idea of a culture of high performance for that of a culture of high achievement instead, therefore resulting in the statements made at the beginning of the interviews. The two participants who did not make such statements, noted that even though they do not directly work with students, they believe that their leadership and actions do directly impact the culture within the district. This was more of what the researcher had expected to hear from the participants of the study because the literature supports the notion that leaders at all levels and all individuals within a district are important to contributing to the culture of high performance in an organization.

Conclusions

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to explore and describe public-school district human resource administrators’ perceptions of the impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance. Based on the review of literature, data collection and findings in this study, conclusions were drawn and explain how human resource administrators perceive the impact of the seven servant leadership constructs of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service on establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. The following conclusions for this study are generalized interpretations of those findings.
Conclusion 1: Relationships and Connections

Based on the findings of this study and supporting research, it is concluded that human resource administrators who focus on building relationships and making connections with staff and stakeholders have a greater impact and contribution in establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. All human resource administrators discussed the importance of building relationships with individuals at all levels within the district. It does not matter what job or role an individual holds; they need to feel valued and included in the organization. By connecting with individuals and building relationships, this can be accomplished, which therefore results in creating a culture of high performance (Heithfield, 1999; McKee & Massimilian, 2006; Luenendonk, 2020).

The idea of focusing on getting to know people on a deeper level and sharing things both professionally and personally not only allows a leader to understand what the employees are dealing with, but also allows the employees to see the leader as a person who is interested in them and truly cares about them as an individual, not just a person filling a job. Through relationships, leaders can build trust, show empathy and understanding, and identify strengths and potential areas of growth for employees (McKee, Boyatzis & Johnston, 2008; Squires et al., 2010). A culture of high performance cannot be accomplished alone; it is through connections with staff and building relationships with employees that districts can reach high levels of performance.
Conclusion 2: Provide Support and Follow Through

Based on the findings of this study and supporting research, it is concluded that human resource administrators who fail to provide support and follow through on commitments will struggle with establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. All human resource administrators discussed the need to provide support to school sites and individuals and to follow through on commitments that they make. The concept of “walk the walk and talk the talk” was discussed by four of the seven administrators and was deemed an important, effective leadership strategy. Additionally, the other three participants made reference to the idea, “when I say I am going to do something, I must follow through and do it.” This supports the premise of the importance of supporting and following through on commitments. Human resources administrators are the customer service in an organization, and it is essential that they provide outstanding service and follow through with employees to be successful (ACSA, 2002; Ulrich et al., 2009).

Conclusion 3: Interplay of all Constructs

Based on the findings of this study and supporting research, it is concluded that human resource administrators perceived that Patterson’s seven servant leadership constructs of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service matter, support one another, and contribute to a culture of high performance in a school district. In all interviews within the study, human resource administrators referenced at least two if not more of the constructs when responding to the individual construct’s questions. Therefore, the researcher concluded that the constructs do not stand alone but rather are intertwined and interplay with each other through the actions and beliefs of the
leader. To further explain this conclusion, the construct of trust was described as support and follow-through, as well as open communication and relationships. Similarly, the construct of agapao love was described as caring for others, creating connections, building relationships, and providing support, which were also described as elements in the constructs of trust, humility, empowerment, altruism, and service.

Although research defines and delineates each of the constructs of servant leadership individually, not one construct stands alone or is more important than another. Researchers support the claim that although the words may stand alone and may vary in number, characteristic or attributes, the concepts of servant leadership relate directly to the traits, actions and behaviors of the leaders as they focus on service for others and go beyond self-interest (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1996; Russell & Stone, 2002; Van Dierendonck, 2011).

**Conclusion 4: Service Matters**

Based on the findings of this study and supporting research, the researcher concluded that service is a priority and matters greatly in establishing a culture of high performance. Human resource administrators who focus on providing service for others with the priority of making decisions based on students first will have great success in creating a culture where individuals want to work and perform at high levels. Focusing on the needs of others and always making service to others the priority creates an environment where individuals know decisions are made not because of power or want, but rather based on what students need and what is best for the students in the district. The service provided in a district is not just about teaching instead, service is giving of oneself through the giving of time, energy, care, compassion, generosity, and sometimes
one’s belongings (Swindoll, 1981; Wis, 2002; Patterson, 2003). Through leadership focused on service to others, school districts can create organizations where all administrators understand that they contribute to the overall culture of performance (ACSA, 2002; Marzano & Waters, 2009).

**Conclusion 5: Make Others a Priority**

Based on the findings of this study and supporting research, it is concluded that human resource administrators who focus on themselves first will not be successful in establishing a culture of high performance in a school district. All human resource administrators discussed the need to make sure that individuals in the district know that they matter and are appreciated for the work they do. They described placing a priority on recognizing staff for their unique contributions and taking the time to get to really know each of the staff members throughout the district. They emphasized the importance of listening to staff input and of being available and present when staff have questions or want to share ideas. Individuals want to valued, be inspired, have a voice and know that they are making a difference in what they do (Heathfield, 2019; Lloyd-Walker & Walker, 2011). True leadership within a school district provides inclusion, shared decision-making, collaboration, shared purpose and focus on meeting the needs of all students (DuFour & Marzano, 2011; Fullan & Quinn, 2016).

**Conclusion 6: Development and Growth Mindset**

Based on the findings of this study and supporting research, it is concluded that human resource administrators who have a mindset that is focused on growth and the development of individuals will be successful at supporting a culture of high performance. It is imperative that human resource administrators continually look for
ways to provide opportunities for individuals to take on new tasks and roles, not giving extra work to others but rather providing opportunities for individuals to learn new things, explore new experiences and expand their knowledge. Individuals get bored doing the same things over and over again therefore, in order to retain staff, professional development and growth opportunities are need to increase their knowledge, skillset and abilities. At the same time, development and growth are established through allowing people to make mistakes and learn from them. Leadership that focuses on a growth mindset us leadership that understands and encourages individuals to take risks, and that develops people’s talents at all levels throughout the organization (Randolph, 1995 & Russell, 2001).

**Implications for Action**

The ability of human administrators to utilize and implement the servant leadership constructs of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service within their districts is imperative to the success of establishing a culture of high performance. Human resource administrators who are not capable or have difficulty implementing or practicing these constructs will struggle to positively influence a culture of high performance and may serve a very limited term in a human resources position. This study lends credence to Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs, bringing understanding and meaning to how human resource administrators can contribute to a culture of high performance. The following are implications for action to address the conclusions derived from the study with the goal to build the capacity of human resource administrators’ understanding of the impact they have in establishing a culture of high performance in a school district.
Implication 1: Servant Leadership Training in Human Resource Administrators

Academies or Boot Camps

The Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) and American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) hold boot camps and academies for new and aspiring human resource administrators. These academies and boot camps provide training and learning opportunities that focus on the basics of human resources such as hiring and recruiting, leaves, educational laws, and negotiations. However, they do not include opportunities to learn about the importance of building relationships and serving others, which is imperative for all human resource administrators to learn, understand, and implement. It is critical that new and aspiring administrators are equipped with the skills and understanding of how to use servant leadership constructs in their daily leadership practices. Learning about these constructs and hearing real-life accounts of how these impact a culture of high performance will give new and aspiring human resource administrators a greater opportunity to focus on the service of others and to understand the relationship and role they hold in a school district when it comes to impacting a culture of high performance. Developing and providing servant leadership training in the academies and boot camps will accomplish this purpose.

Implication 2: Coaching and Mentoring for Human Resource Administrators

Every new human resource administrator needs to be assigned an exemplary human resource coach or mentor during their first year. The coaches or mentors will be identified through established criteria, as well as trained on effecting coaching methods
and the servant leadership constructs. Additionally, resources and specific guidelines outlining the constructs should be developed to provide relevant and appropriate support to new human resource administrators enabling them to successfully navigate HR with a servant leadership approach. The conversations during the coaching sessions will include discussions around the constructs of servant leadership and the experiences new human resource administrators are having in utilizing the constructs in their leadership. These discussions will also provide time for questions and deep conversations to further develop the understanding of each construct. Providing this coaching and mentoring will ensure that new human resource administrators receive ongoing support and development early in their tenure and create a service-oriented model that can be replicated within district and organization.

**Implication 3: Create a Handbook for Human Resource Administrators**

The author will create, publish and distribute a handbook for human resource administrators that includes Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service and that describe how each of these constructs can relate to the practice and actions of the actions of human resources in creating a culture of high performance. The handbook would include specific examples of how human resource administrators can utilize the constructs of servant leadership in their daily practices. A section in the handbook would be designed and specifically designated for the recipients to write down reflections and describe experiences they encounter within each construct to further develop understanding from within about servant leadership.
Implication 4: Servant Leadership Sessions at Conferences

Human resource administrators have access to many professional conferences through ACSA and AASPA, but the conferences must include sessions specific to servant leadership and the servant leadership constructs. Sessions at these conferences should include an overview of servant leadership, its history, the connection to educational organizations and the details and definitions of Patterson’s seven servant leadership constructs. Additionally, sessions must provide specific examples of how these constructs impact a culture of high achievement through the eyes of a human resource administrator, sharing lived experiences of the importance on building relationships, making connections with others, and putting others’ needs first. In order to train human resource administrators at a deeper level, the themes in this study would be used to provoke small-group conversations, lead whole-session discussions and provide thought-provoking reflection for administrators.

Implication 5: Implement Servant Leadership as Part of the Administrative Services Credential Program

Universities and colleges provide a variety of trainings programs and curricula as part of their requirements for obtaining an administrative credential. It would be worthwhile to write a proposal to California Teaching Commission (CTC) and local universities as to why servant leadership needs to become part of the required coursework and theory taught to obtain the administrative credential. Such a proposal could use the findings of this study as well as others within the thematic study for supporting evidence and literature as to why the adoption of servant leadership curriculum into credential
programs is important. It would be necessary to work directly with ACSA to get their support and backing on the proposal for CTC.

Implication 6: Servant Leadership Acuity Tool and Resource for Human Resource Administrator

Develop a servant leadership acuity tool and resource to guide to assist human resource administrators in their understanding and utilization of the servant leadership constructs. Utilizing a tool similar the questionnaire found in in *Becoming a Resonant Leader* (McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnson, 2008), human resource administrators could identify and reflect on each of the servant leadership constructs, assisting in recognizing areas of strength and areas of weakness for servant leadership, providing a guide in construct areas that need attention. Once areas are identified human resource administrators could then utilize the servant leadership handbook to further develop those servant leadership skills.

Implication 7: Model the constructs of servant leadership within the school district with an emphasis on developing an attitude of gratitude.

The author will model the constructs of servant leadership and gratitude in her daily leadership practices when interacting with others throughout the district and county. Whenever possible, the author will lead discussions and conversations that relate the servant leadership constructs to the experiences that are occurring in the district. This will result in developing a deeper understanding of servant leadership along with an attitude of gratitude, and encourage other leaders to utilize servant leadership constructs in their daily practice. By modeling of the constructs and focusing on having an attitude
of gratitude, servant leadership throughout the district will become contagious and part of the daily practice and expectations of all leaders.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This study explored and described the lived experiences of public-school district human resource administrators and their perceptions of the impact of Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance. The constructs consisted of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to further the research on the servant leadership constructs and the establishment of a culture of high performance.

**Recommendation 1: Conduct a Mixed-Methods Study**

It is recommended that a mixed-methods study be conducted with human resource administrators to gather data in both qualitative and quantitative form. This would provide further insight into the perceived impact of the servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance. It would allow the researcher to reach a larger sample and collect data through both interviews and a survey of the larger administrator population.

**Recommendation 2: Conduct a Case Study of High Performing School Districts**

It is recommended that a case study be conducted of high-performing school districts to see how human resource administrators utilize servant leadership in establishing a culture of high performance.
**Recommendation 3: Conduct a Replication Study from the Perspective of Staff**

It is recommended that a phenomenological study be conducted of the lived experiences of Educational Services Administrators and their perceptions of the impact of servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance. A comparative study could then also be conducted, comparing the perceptions of human resource administrators and educational services administrators.

**Recommendation 4: Meta-Analysis of the Servant Leadership Dissertations**

It is recommended that a meta-analysis study be conducted with the other dissertations from the servant leadership thematic. Utilizing all eight of the studies with their varying populations and varying findings and conclusions would provide a different analysis of data and could potentially result in new conclusions and findings which would add to the research of the impact servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance.

**Recommendation 5: Replicate the Phenomenological Study with Human Resource Administrators in Southern California**

It is recommended that the study be expanded and conducted with human resource administrators in Southern California public-school districts. Once the study has been conducted, it is recommended that a comparative study be conducted with the data and findings from each human resource administrators from Northern California and Southern California. This would determine whether any additional themes or findings surface from the southern region of the state.
Recommendation 6: Comparative Study of Gender

It is recommended that a comparative study be conducted to determine whether gender impacts the perception of the impact of servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance. This study would provide data on the similarities and differences relating to the male and female participants and the themes and finding that resulted from each group.

Recommendation 7: Phenomenological study of Human Resource Administrators perception of the impact of their role on a culture in a district.

It is recommended a phenomenological study be conducted on the perception of the public-school district human resource administrators about the impact of their role on the culture in a school district. This study would provide information about how human resource administrators perceive their role in the public-school district and would provide valuable information to current and aspiring administrators on the impact they may on the culture within the district.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

Servant leadership in education is essential for leaders as we are educating and serving our most precious commodity, which will greatly impact the future of our nation. Leaders in educational organizations are tasked with great responsibilities including ensuring students are learning and developing academically, developing the social and emotional well-being of students, and creating a culture of high performance that is focused on meeting the needs of all students no matter what it takes. The leadership in an educational organization truly matters (Marzano & Waters, 2009). It is not just the superintendent and principal that need to focus on student achievement in an
organization; it is every leader’s responsibility (DuFour & Marzano, 2011). The role of the human resource administrator is an important one, tied directly to every individual within the organization. Human resource administrators play a key role in leading and developing a culture within a district (ACSA, 2002). These leaders deal directly with individuals and are at the heart of service to others.

Understanding the constructs of servant leadership, and leading by serving others first, can increase the impact that human resource administrators have on the organization by establishing a culture that is focused on serving others (Spears, 2010; Patterson, 2003). While human resource administrators do not work directly with students in the school district, research supports and validates the notion that they are responsible for leading and contributing to the overall culture of performance in a school district. Although research exists examining factors that contribute to the academic achievement and success of students to increase performance, there is little to no research describing the impact of servant leadership on establishing a culture of high performance and even less research involving public-school district human resource administrators and servant leadership. This study explored and described the lived experiences of human resource administrators and their perception of the impact of Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance. A review of the literature, in-depth interviews, observations and artifacts collected from participating human resource administrators and district websites validates the idea that human resource administrators and servant leadership impact the culture of high performance in a school district.

As an active serving human resource administrator and a servant leader at heart, I found that this study was inspiring and invigorating to conduct as its results support and
confirm, the reasons I do what I do. I first got into education to make a difference and positively impact children’s lives and learning, and this idea has not changed. Moving up through the ranks and working in positions at the district office often removes leaders from the day-to-day interactions with students and limits the opportunities to truly see how one’s work is impacting a school culture and individual students. However, through this research and the experiences shared by the human resource administrators in this study, it is evident that human resource administrators do contribute to and make a difference in the culture of high performance.

The research conducted through this study will be beneficial to aspiring, new, and veteran human resource administrators for years to come. My hope is that these findings will inspire human resource administrators to lead as servant leaders and implement the servant leadership constructs in their daily practice knowing that what they do impacts the culture of high performance in a district. By expanding the research on servant leadership and developing research regarding human resource administrators in educational organizations, a deeper understanding of the impacts of servant leadership can be developed. Professional development opportunities can be created to train and educate human resource administrators on the importance of implementing servant leadership constructs and also the contribution these administrators make in establishing a culture of high performance in a district. As district administrators become further and further removed from the daily interactions with students it is imperative that they understand the importance of providing servant leadership and the impact the servant leadership constructs have on establishing a culture of high performance.
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APPENDIX B

Thematic Servant Leadership Interview Protocol-Draft

“My name is Rebecca Toto and I’m a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I’m a part of a team conducting research to explore the ways Human Resource Administrators perceive the impact these seven constructs (agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service) have on establishing a culture of high performance. We are seeking to better understand what it is that you do to build a culture of high performance within your district.

I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview on servant leadership. The information you give, along with the others, hopefully will provide a clear picture of how Human Resource Administrators establish a culture of high performance.

The questions I will be asking are the same for everyone participating in the study. The reason for this study is to try to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating Human Resource Administrators’ will be conducted in the same manner.

Informed Consent

I would like to remind you that any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported without reference to any individual(s) or any institution(s). For ease of our discussion and accuracy I will record our conversation as indicated in the Informed Consent sent to you via email. I will have the recording transcribed to a Word document and will send it to you via electronic mail so that you can check to make sure that I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas. The digital recording will be erased.

Did you receive the Informed Consent and Brandman Bill of Rights I sent you via email? Do you have any questions or need clarification about either document? Do you consent to move forward with the interview?

We have scheduled an hour for the interview. At any point during the interview you may ask that I skip a particular question or stop the interview altogether.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let’s get started, and thanks so much for your time.

Agapao Love

Agapao love is to do the right thing for the right reasons. Agapao love leaders care more for their followers than the interest of the organization resulting in greater understanding, gratitude, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion. (Gunn, B. 2002; Patterson, K. 2003)

Sub-Question 1: What is the impact of the agapao leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?

Q1: What are your perceptions of the culture that exists in your district regarding Agapao Love?
**Probe:** Can you give examples of this?

Q2: What would you describe as the 2 or 3 most important ways to demonstrate Agapao Love?

**Humility**

Humility is the importance of being humble and having modesty, not being mistaken for meekness or the absence of strength. It is a virtue characterized by one’s own talents and abilities and an outward rejection of self-interest while placing true value on the recognition and success of others. (B. Kim et al., 1999)

**Sub-Question 2:** What is the impact of the humility leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?

Q1 - Tell me about a time where you put your staff and teachers needs before your own.

Q2 - Servant leaders are characterized by displaying humility towards the members of their district. Tell me about a time when you showed humility towards your staff or a staff member?
   
   **Probe:** How did this make you feel?

**Altruism**

Altruism is demonstrating unselfish concern for the welfare of another, even with a risk or sacrifice against one’s personal self-interest. It involves deriving personal pleasure from helping and seeking what’s best for others, often with an attitude of humility, modesty, and selflessness. (DeYoung, R. 2000; Kaplan, S. 2000; Monroe, K. 1994; Patterson, K. 2003)

**Sub-Question 3:** What is the impact of the altruism leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?

Q1: What is your perception of altruism and its impact on high student performance?

Q2: What do you believe are the specific impacts it has on the culture of performance in your district?

   **Probe:** Can you give me an example of how altruism has impacted your district’s culture of high performance?
Vision

A bridge from the present to the future created by a collaborative mindset, adding meaning to the organization, sustaining higher levels of motivation and withstanding challenge. (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; Landsberg, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 1993; Nanus, 1992)

Sub-Question 4: What is the impact of the vision leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?

Q1: How does the use of creating a vision in your leadership impact the establishment of a culture of high performance?

Probe: Share examples of how your day-to-day management supports your vision for a culture of high performance.

Q2: What behaviors or actions do you observe when vision is prioritized in school leadership?

Trust

Trust is the level of confidence that one individual has in another’s competence and his or her willingness to act in a fair, ethical, and predictable manner. Trust is essential to organizational culture; integrity and care for others are valued by the leader and followers.

Sub-Question 5: What is the impact of the trust leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?

Q1: There is a lot of literature on the importance of building a climate of trust within an district. How do you develop and sustain trust in your district?

Q2: Thinking about your district, please share some examples of how trust has supported a culture of high performance?

Probe: You have shared some ways you develop and sustain trust. Are there 2-3 key leadership behaviors for developing a climate of trust?
Empowerment

Empowerment is entrusting power to others. Virtually giving away power to followers and allowing them to know and feel significant and important in their role and contribution. It requires effective listening, valuing love and equity, and an emphasis on teamwork. Empowerment encourages risk-taking and self-accountability to accomplish tasks and work toward goals. (Blanchard, K. 2000; Melrose, K. 1995; Patterson, K. 2003; Russell, R.F. & Stone, A.G. 2002).

Sub-Question 6: What is the impact of the empowerment leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?

Q1: How do you perceive empowerment in your district?

Q2: Empowerment often encourages risk taking and self-accountability, please describe the opportunities you see staff having within your district to utilize empowerment?

Probe: Please tell me about a few specific ways you see empowerment impacting performance.

Service

Service is the moral equivalent of giving of oneself to serve others. It implies that leaders are focused on placing interest on others rather than on one’s own interest. It can be demonstrated through the gift of time, energy, compassion, care or belongings. Service places others first. (Patterson, K. 2003; Russell, R.F. & Stone, A.G.2002).

Sub-Question 7: What is the impact of the service leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?

Q1: Tell me about a time when you witnessed service within your district and how did that service impact the culture of performance?

Q2: Describe the service that is provided in your district and what do you believe is the impact of this service on the overall performance within the organization?

Probe: Why do you believe this service has that impact?
“Thank you very much for your time. If you like, when the results of our research are known, we will send you a copy of our findings.”

General Probes
Possible Probes for any of the items – For researcher’s eyes only:-)
The General probes may be used during the interviewee when you want to get more information or expand the conversation with them. These are not questions you share with the interviewee. It is best to very familiar with the probes and use them in a conversational way when appropriate to extend their responses.

1. “Would you expand upon that a bit?”
2. “Do you have more to add?”
3. “What did you mean by …….”
4. “Why do think that was the case?”
5. “Could you please tell me more about…. “
6. “Can you give me an example of ……..”
7. “How did you feel about that?”
APPENDIX C

Alignment of Interview Questions to Research Questions

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe human resource administrators perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Corresponding interview questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. What is the impact of the agapao leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance? | Q1: What are your perceptions of the culture that exists in your district resulting from Agapao Love?  
Q2: What would you describe as the 2 or 3 most important ways to demonstrate Agapao Love?                          |
| 2. What is the impact of the humility leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance? | Q1 - Tell me about a time where you put your staff and teachers needs before your own.  
Q2 - Servant leaders are characterized by displaying humility towards the members of their district. Tell me about a time when you showed humility towards your staff or a staff member? |
| 3. What is the impact of the altruism leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance? | Q1: What is your perception of altruism and its impact on your districts culture of high performance?  
Q2: What do you believe are the specific impacts it has on the culture of performance in your district? |
| 4. What is the impact of the vision leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance? | Q1: How does the use of creating a vision in your leadership impact the establishment of a culture of high performance?  
Q2: What behaviors or actions do you observe when vision is prioritized in school leadership? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. What is the impact of the trust leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?</td>
<td>Q1: There is a lot of literature on the importance of building a climate of trust within a district. How do you develop and sustain trust in your district? Q2: Thinking about your district, please share some examples of how trust has supported a culture of high performance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What is the impact of the empowerment leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?</td>
<td>Q1: How do you perceive empowerment in your district? Q2: Empowerment often encourages risk taking and self-accountability, please describe the opportunities you see staff having within your district to utilize empowerment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What is the impact of the service leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?</td>
<td>Q1: Please share some examples when you have witnessed service within your district and how did that service impact the culture of high performance? Q2: Describe a service that is provided in your district and what do you believe is the impact of this service on the overall performance within the organization?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX D

Field Test Interviewee Feedback Questions

1. How did you feel about the interview? Do you think you had ample opportunities to describe what you do as a leader when working with your team or staff?

2. Did you feel the amount of time for the interview was ok?

3. Were the questions by and large clear or were there places where you were uncertain what was being asked?

4. Can you recall any words or terms being asked about during the interview that were confusing?

5. And finally, did I appear comfortable during the interview… (I’m pretty new at this)?
APPENDIX E

Interview Observation Reflection Questions

1. How long did the interview take? Did the time seem to be appropriate?

2. Were the questions clear or were there places when the interviewee was unclear?

3. Were there any words or terms used during the interview that were unclear or confusing?

4. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer in regards to the preceding descriptors?

5. Did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared? For the observer: how did you perceive the interviewer in regards to the preceding descriptors?

6. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that was the case?

7. Are there parts of the interview that seemed to be awkward and why do you think that was the case?

8. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would it be and how would you change it?

9. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?
Appendix F

Invitation Letter to Participate

Date:

Dear Potential Study Participant:

I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University completing research toward a doctorate degree in Organizational Leadership. I am part of a thematic dissertation group with 8 researchers that is studying the perceived impact of servant leadership on establishing a culture of high performance in K-12 school districts. The purpose of my phenomenological research study will explore and describes human resource administrators’ perceived impact of Patterson’s seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in public school districts in California.

In order to participate in the study, each human resource administrator must meet at least five of the six following criteria and meet the criteria for a culture of high performance.

- Human Resource Administrator was employed at a current school district within California with a minimum of 100 staff members.
- Evidence of leading school or districts with culture of high performance.
- Human Resource Administrator participant has a minimum of two to three years of experience at their current district.
- A minimum of 5 years’ experience in the K-12 profession.
- Membership in professional associations in their field, such as ACSA.
- Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings.

Definition of Culture of High Performance: A district with a culture of high performance is one that has demonstrated a growth trend over the past two years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Suspension Rate, and Graduation Rate; or has high performance as evidenced by scoring in the blue or green category for two consecutive years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Suspension Rate, and Graduation Rate.

I am asking for your assistance in the study by participating in a virtual ZOOM interview which will take from 45-60 minutes and will be set up at a time that is convenient for you. If you agree to participate in the interview you will be assured that it will be completely confidential. No names will be attached to any notes or records from the interview. All information will remain in locked files accessible only to the researcher. No one from your school district will have access to the information obtained during the interview. You will be free to stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any time.
I am available to answer questions via telephone 916-709-6205 or via email at rtoto@mail.brandman.edu, to answer any questions you may have.

Please email or call me if you are willing to consider being a part of this study. Your participation would be greatly valued.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Toto
Doctoral Candidate, Bradman University
Director of Human Resources
Dry Creek Joint Elementary School District
BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant’s Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.
APPENDIX H

INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMATION ABOUT: Servant Leadership: Patterson’s Seven Constructs and the Perceived Impact of Human Resource Administrators on Establishing a Culture of High Performance.

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Rebecca Toto, M.A.

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Rebecca Toto, a doctoral student from the School of Education at Brandman University. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore and describe public school district administrators' perceived impact of Patterson’s seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance.

The interview(s) will last approximately 45 – 60 minutes and will be conducted in a one on one virtual interview setting using Zoom.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher.

b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study all recordings will be destroyed. All other data and consents will be securely stored for three years after completion of data collection and confidentially shredded or fully deleted.

c) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding servant leadership and the impact it has on establishing a culture of high performance. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and will provide new insights about this study in which I participated. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact rtoto@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at 916-709-6205 or Dr. Doug DeVore (Advisor) at ddevore@brandman.edu or Dr. Lisa Simon (Secondary Advisor) at lsimon2@brandman.edu.

e) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and
that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the “Research Participant’s Bill of Rights.” I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

__________________________________
Signature of Participant

__________________________________
Signature of Principal Investigator

__________________________________
Date
BUIRB Application Approved: Rebecca Toto

Institutional Review Board <my@brandman.edu>
Reply-To: webmaster@brandman.edu
To: rtoto@mail.brandman.edu
Cc: ddevore@brandman.edu

Fri, Sep 18, 2020 at 9:06 AM

Dear Rebecca Toto,

Congratulations! Your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If you need to modify your BUIRB application for any reason, please fill out the "Application Modification Form" before proceeding with your research. The Modification form can be found at IRB.Brandman.edu.

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank You,

BUIRB
Academic Affairs
Brandman University
16355 Laguna Canyon Road
Irvine, CA 92618
buirb@brandman.edu
www.brandman.edu
A Member of the Chapman University System

This email is an automated notification. If you have questions please email us at buirb@brandman.edu.
This is to certify that:

Rebecca Toto

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Human Subjects Research
Social-Behavioral-Educational Researchers
1 - Basic

Under requirements set by:

Brandman University

Completion Date 16-May-2019
Expiration Date N/A
Record ID 31635334

Not valid for renewal of certification through CNE. Do not use for TransCelerate mutual recognition (see Completion Report).

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify?wb5b559a4-6221-4956-a567-dbee8c89ede5-31635334