A Phenomenological Study on the Impact of Servant Leadership for Establishing a Culture of High Performance as Perceived by High School Principals

Darrick Rice
*Brandman University, drice@mail.brandman.edu*

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A Phenomenological Study on the Impact of Servant Leadership for Establishing a
Culture of High Performance as Perceived by High School Principals

A Dissertation by

Darrick L. Rice

Brandman University

Irvine, California

School of Education

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Committee in charge:

Douglas DeVore, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Carol Anderson-Woo, Ed.D.

Alan Enomoto, Ed.D.
The dissertation of Darrick L. Rice is approved.

Douglas DeVore, Ed.D., Committee Chair

Carol Anderson-Woo, Ed.D.

Alan Enomoto, Ed.D.

Douglas DeVore, Ed.D.

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A Phenomenological Study on the Impact of Servant Leadership for Establishing a Culture of High Performance as Perceived by High School Principals

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ABSTRACT

A Phenomenological Study on the Impact of Servant Leadership for Establishing a Culture of High Performance as Perceived by High School Principal

by Darrick L. Rice

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe the perceived impact of Patterson’s (2003) 7 servant leadership constructs on high school principals in establishing a culture of high performance.

Methodology: The qualitative phenomenological study described the lived experiences of high school principals who lead schools that have implemented Patterson's (2003) 7 servant leadership constructs for establishing a culture of high performance in Los Angeles County, California. The researcher was a part of 8 peer researchers and 2 faculty advisors. The data collection included virtual face-to-face semi structured interviews using a protocol developed by the thematic team. Observations and artifacts for triangulation were utilized, and data were coded for emergent themes.

Findings: The data revealed 16 themes and 329 references across the 7 servant leadership constructs of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Sixteen key findings and 7 major findings were discovered.

Conclusions: Five conclusions were drawn from the data and findings that described the perceived impact of the 7 servant leadership constructs for establishing a culture of high performance for high school principals. High school principals who establish a culture of high performance must (a) adopt and connect all the 7 constructs and understand how the constructs work in relationship to each other, (b) make the need for serving others key,
(c) have a compassionate love for all, (d) have a vision of growth and change, and (e) develop trust through their actions.

**Recommendations:** Further research is needed on servant leadership and the associated constructs. Replications of this study should focus on gaining a deeper depth of knowledge regarding high school principals, including low-performing schools, specific genders, and broader geographic locations. All aspiring administrators must be trained in Patterson’s (2003) 7 servant leadership constructs. To conclude, a meta-analysis research study should be considered, using data from all 8 thematic team members' studies to deepen the understanding of servant leadership across all fields of K-12 education.
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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 high school principals 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 their perceived impact on high school principals and how they establish a culture of high student achievement within their school sites. This structure was resolved to be generally suitable as the nonexperimental, descriptive approach to best accumulate the lived encounters of the leaders. Each researcher interviewed eight high school principals to describe how they perceived that the impact of these seven constructs of servant leadership by Patterson (2003) established a culture of high achievement at their organizations. To ensure thematic consistency, the team 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 was used to refer to the other researchers who conducted this thematic study. These were Freddie Chavarria, Title I elementary/middle school principals; Lillian Maldonado, French, Latina superintendents 
working in Title 1 school districts; Angela Lawyer, high school principals; Darrick Rice, high school principals; Antonio Sandifer, principals of Native American schools; Robin Stout, public school district superintendents; Rebecca Toto, human resource administrators; and Alison Wills, middle school principals.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Heyler and Martin (2018) stated that Robert Greenleaf created the term *servant leadership* in the early 1970s and published the definitions of his thoughts and theory later within the decade. The servant leader according to Heyler and Martin is one who has the desire and passion to lead and serve and then chooses to have that passion move to others to then do the same. It is also noted by Greenleaf (1977) that only a natural servant will respond to a problem by listening first, and Greenleaf suggested that those in a leadership role must first learn to understand their followers.

The great majority of the studies regarding servant leadership were found to consist of one overall recurring topic. The recurring theme involves Patterson’s (2003) constructs of servant leadership. Patterson’s seven constructs are as follows: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. These constructs should be very apparent and dynamic within the school and the community as well. Yet many schools choose to focus only on academic improvement with no focus on the culture and climate of the school (Kiker, Callahan, & Kiker, 2019).

As Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership are being adapted and used throughout the world of business, the K-12 educational world has also adopted the leadership constructs and has begun to foster a collaborative growth mindset among educators (Kiker et al., 2019). When discussing leadership and the different styles of leadership available to school leaders, especially high school leaders, the implementation of guiding, establishing, and communicating the purpose of a school are an essential part of working to achieve a culture with a high academic achievement focus (Kiker et al., 2019). Leadership and leadership positions hold an important role in education.
management within schools, and school leaders are the vital component within the effective growth of education (Phimkoh, Tesaputa, & Somprach, 2015). The important indicators for success or failure of schools and their learning outcomes rest on the ability of those within the educational leadership to use their vast knowledge and experience and to provide the ideas and thoughts to create the vision for change (Phimkoh et al., 2015). The vision should have the clarity needed to provide the ideas of vision sharing, the implementation of the vision, and the creation of the vision. These types of creative leadership indicators support students and school staff members in creating the protocols needed to meet and exceed the challenges of a world going through constant change (Phimkoh et al., 2015).

Like-minded ideas such as a school’s created shared mission, vision, and focus on a high-achieving culture within a school is described as an action by an organization’s leaders to create the guiding outlook for the organization (Terosky & Reitano, 2016). As the organization grows, the leaders should begin looking for commitment, the creation of clarity, and a consensus to an organization’s essential purpose of creating a culture of positive academic growth among followers (Terosky & Reitano, 2016).

Greenleaf (1977) asserted that school leaders should focus on the alignment between the duties of school leaders and a demonstrated allegiance to the servant leadership constructs. He further indicated that it is the responsibility of the school leader to establish the mission, vision, and purpose in a manner that defines the work with certainty. It is the job of the school leader to eliminate ambiguity in vision for those who may have difficulty doing it themselves. The school leader’s ability to define the mission helps to ensure that the organization stays laser focused on its vision. Inasmuch, such
focused school leaders create a school culture rendering high academic achievement and creating a positive school climate (Terosky & Reitano, 2016).

Many school leaders, as stated by Turkmen and Gul (2017), regard themselves as servant leaders with a calling to serve mankind and to see that the power of education is used to lift society to an equal playing field. According to Turkmen and Gul, secondary education leaders, and uniquely secondary administrators, are charged with the task of creating and developing those democratic relationships with all stakeholders. Secondary education leaders are also responsible for creating democratic relationships with the school’s staff, students, teachers, and other administrators with a focus on citizenship within the school culture. High school leaders more now than ever are also asked to focus on making citizenship and student learning a primary focus of creating a culture of high student achievement (Turkmen and Gul, 2017).

Background

Servant leaders are those leaders who have the passion for others’ growing greatness of their followers and have an enthusiasm to visualize the goals of others to help with their achievement (Turkmen & Gul, 2017). Schools, especially those at the secondary education level, can be thought of as a great place for leaders to focus on servant leadership (Turkmen & Gul, 2017). Leaders with a servant leadership mindset tend to shy away from selfishness and self-conceit and foster encouragement, cooperation, and teamwork (Turkmen & Gul, 2017).

According to Turkmen and Gul (2017), school leaders are responsible for the development of a relationship that is democratic by nature between teachers, administrators, and parents and focus on the implementation in regard to improving
citizenship among the students and the protection of those culture values and student growth through education and positive teacher engagement (Turkmen & Gul, 2017).

The theory of servant leadership according to Liu (2019) “has garnered considerable academic and practitioner interest for its emphasis on the moral, emotional and relational dimensions of leadership practice” (p. 156). A servant leader by definition “puts the needs of others first” (Liu, 2019, p. 156) with a focus on empowerment of others as well. Servant leaders also work to build a supportive culture and promote positive engagement of all within an organizational culture for all to follow (Liu, 2019). This type of social impact spreads to create a great value not only in the workplace but also in the community and then through society as a whole (Liu, 2019).

According to Spears (2018), school leaders “who demonstrate servant leadership behaviors will also find the power to serve their students better and to improve the school environment so that they will make a great effort to increase student achievement and achieve the desired educational goals” (p. 2). This type of engagement helps to improve a school’s culture and climate, making student achievement a normalized part of the students’ daily lives and goals for their personal educational outcomes (Spears, 2018).

Servant leadership and its construct moves servant leaders to become increasingly concerned about others (Spears, 2018). This does not mean that servant leadership calls for leaders to care less about themselves at higher stages but that through servant leadership leaders include more and more for others in which it is evident that there must be a genuine concern and consideration for those being served (Spears, 2018).

According to Spears (2018), as leaders begin to grow into their personhood and fullness as servant leaders the ideals of serving others will help leaders to become more
driven and committed. Servant leaders arrive at different levels, ranges, and places that measure the caring for themselves to caring for others (Spears, 2018). Without regard for self or other risk, servant leaders without knowing can cause friction between others because of their level of agapao love for others. As a result, servant leadership calls for leaders to show care for “themselves, their loved ones, neighbors, tribe, people, future generations, other life forms, living systems, and even creation itself” (Spears, 2018, p. 4).

Theoretical Foundations

The word servant can create evolving feelings, both negative as well as positive. In many organizations, the thoughts concerning serving others is normally regarded and applied to employees of the organization and not toward the employer (Heyler & Martin, 2018). As more and more people strive to link themselves to the servant leadership vision, servant leadership theory inverts the pyramid of the organization or school so that leaders are focusing more on serving the other members of the school or organization (Heyler & Martin, 2018).

As time has passed and the ideas regarding servant leadership evolves, the general idea and focus of servant leadership has emerged as a “dynamic form of leadership associated with a positive impact on organizations” (Heyler & Martin, 2018, p. 232). According to Heyler and Martin (2018), leaders and managing leaders have a need to use differentiated approaches to leadership that can work toward developing an employee’s potential, which makes it a must for new leaders to shift away from autocratic leadership styles and toward leadership styles that are more personal, individualized, and cooperative.
In many cases, servant leadership theory fits ideally into the theoretical foundations (e.g., stewardship theory), whereas in some cases, servant leadership may serve as an “antidote to some of the theories” main tenets or assumptions (e.g., agency theory; Spears, 1996). The concepts and ideas regarding servant leadership can be used to facilitate a vast number of additional studies.

One beneficial standard that has been developed through the growth of servant leadership theory is that it can help practitioners and scholars to learn to positively improve and increase the performance index of an organization (Spears, 1996). Leadership theories (authentic leadership, transformational leadership and Greenleaf’s theory of servant leadership) serve as precursors to the background of servant leadership (Spears, 1996).

**Authentic Leadership**

Authentic leadership is viewed as a precursor or initial concept that is ideal with a focus on leadership, which is transformational, ethical, and has a strong commitment to serving others (Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, & Wu, 2018). Thus, the level of authentic leadership represents an underlying focus or wellspring denoting positive leadership.

Based on the viewed root concept or precursor, authentic leadership then is described as one of high moral character, followers who are deeply aware of how they should think and behave. Followers of authentic leadership are also perceived by many of having an understanding and awareness of not only themselves but others as the focus. This allows for self-reflections and growth with an understanding of one’s morals and values with the perspective of the type of strength and knowledge that is possessed (Hoch et al., 2018).
Based on the research by Hoch et al. (2018), the characteristics of authentic leadership are made up of the following constructs: positive moral perspective, self-awareness, balanced processing, psychological capital, relational transparency, positive moral perspective, and authentic behavior. Also, authentic leadership has a focus on the leaders and relational development of its followers (Hoch et al., 2018).

**Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership is defined as the process of leaders’ ability to “move their follower’s performance beyond ordinary limits” (Hoch et al., 2018, p. 502). This evokes the path of the servant leader to create an ongoing process, whereby “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation beyond self-interest to serve collective interests” (Hoch et al., 2018, p. 503). Transformational leaders transform their followers to perform beyond expectations by engaging in the four I’s of behavior: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Hoch et al., 2018).

**Greenleaf’s Theory of Servant Leadership**

As the 1970s began, Robert Greenleaf started to work on his thoughts and later theory regarding the term servant leadership. As theories and thoughts were published the definitions regarding servant leadership were also published later in the decade (Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf (1977) stated that the deep-rooted needs and desire to affect others’ lives in a positive manner is what he called an altruistic calling within the realm of servant leadership.

The leader who is truly called to serve displays the desire with eager enthusiasm to serve others as well as displays a level of high aspiration to lead, empower, and teach
others to be all they can be (Greenleaf, 1977). According to Greenleaf (1977), “Servant leadership theory differs from other leadership theories such as transformational leadership or authentic leadership because of the transformational aspects of leadership and the inspiration of others to understand growth and empowerment” (p. 15).

The servant leader views followers, employees, or subordinates as one of the pivotal reasons for being in a position to lead while fostering the idea of service to others. A true servant leader wants to above all serve, teach, and empower others to grow and develop (Greenleaf, 1977). The servant leader can use a variety or mix of different leadership theories to influence others so that they eventually become servant leaders themselves. Greenleaf (1977) stated that the best test of whether a person is a servant leader is, “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (p. 4).

**Statement of the Research Problem**

Patterson (2003) created the leader–follower servant leadership model that helped clarify and explain the power of servant leadership more than other published work or models. Patterson’s study on servant leadership gave the vision of how leaders can and should interact with their employees or followers. Because Patterson’s theory explained the “how” of servant leadership, other prominent researchers’ ideas are in a stark contrast to her work.

Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership according to Winston (2003) display a significant growth and improvement over the work of Greenleaf (1977) and Spears (1996) as well as R. F. Russell and Stone (2002). It is in contrast to the work
of prior authors, which seemed to focus on the “what” of servant leadership (Winston, 2003). While creating a new theory or model, Patterson (2003) then established the fundamental differences between the transformational leadership theory and the servant leadership theory (Winston, 2003).

According to Irving and Berndt (2017), although early theoretical concepts and work make some connections to servant leadership, the meaning, purpose, and most of the empirical works about servant leadership are frayed literature regarding servant leadership. Bauer, Perrot, Liden, and Erdogan (2019) stated that there is a large amount of published work and articles about servant leadership that are placed in second-tier leadership journals.

As stated by Bauer et al. (2019), without a coherence in the field of servant leadership, research articles related to servant leadership will continue to be studied in other nonrelated fields causing a lack of clarity. As the growing majority of research on servant leadership has been presented in top-tier management journals, servant leadership research still remains fragmented across disciplines and struggles to be integrated (Bauer et al., 2019). As stated by Bauer et al., there are currently 16 known measures of servant leadership, most of which are yet to be reviewed.

As one learns to serve, the choice consciously brings a desire to serve to then be ready and inspired to lead. This growth and orientation toward helping others reflects the leader’s conviction, allows the leader to move away from him or herself, and allows the leader to then lead his or her followers successfully (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019). This shift for the advancement of the leader to the
positive shift of the follower then leads to the movement and buy-in of the leader’s agenda or ambition by all stakeholders (Eva et al., 2019).

Eva et al. (2019) stated that school leaders and school leadership can influence and shift a culture through “practices focused on a school’s values, development of shared norms, attitudes, and beliefs among all staff and stakeholders while developing shared mutual trust and care promo among staff and stakeholders” (Eva et al., 2019, p. 113). Researchers have also stated that a principal can shape a school’s climate and culture of high achievement through understanding its conflicts and the different types of negotiations needed for success (Eva et al., 2019). Irving and Berndt (2017) suggested that principals influence the metaphors, language, rituals, and myths of a school and can understand the factors determining and establishing a culture of high achievement in a school.

To successfully create the culture of high achievement desired or needed, the principal must first create an aligned focus on all parties involved with the success and growth of the school. If the notion is that servant leadership accurately describes the role of a principal then any insight by the principal into the adoption and implementation of servant leadership within every aspect of the school, the culture and behaviors created by the principal will then begin to display a great impact on the school’s culture, climate, and overall student achievement, which will attract leadership theorists, scholars, and other practitioners alike (Irving & Berndt, 2017).
**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe the high school principals’ perceived impact of the seven 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 in high schools as perceived by high school principals?

**Subquestions**

1. What is the impact of the agapao love leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

2. What is the impact of the humility leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

3. What is the impact of the altruism leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

4. What is the impact of the vision leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

5. What is the impact of the trust leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

6. What is the impact of the empowerment leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?
What is the impact of the service leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

**Significance of the Problem**

The dialogue between what type of educational leaders it takes to create a high-performing school culture and climate has become a debate of significance. Those followers of the different styles of leadership and practice will continue to drive the changes in education needed as well as determine the quality of education that needs to reach society. As today’s educational environment changes rapidly to one of a competitive nature for success, there must also be a shift in the focus of determining how success is gained and measured (Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014).

The shift in the growth mindset of leaders who are adapting servant leadership as the motor to create change has now shifted their desires to changing the operating styles with a focus on helping all individuals who need the help and while doing so empowering them to be their best through caring for others to create the climate and culture of academic success (Liden et al., 2014). In achieving this, the concept of servant leadership has attracted the attention of many school administrators who wish to create a culture and climate of academic success (Liden et al., 2014).

The implementation of servant leadership as one of the ways to improve the school structure may differ from other concepts of school leadership structures. Using servant leadership theory with other important leadership theories such as transformative, ethical, and charismatic leadership equips leaders to gear their attention to the specifics regarding the many needs of their stakeholders and followers and by helping them to grow and develop (Liden et al., 2014).
As the discussion of the use of servant leadership to affect academic change as a discourse continues to be studied, Bauer et al. (2019) stated that although a vast number of articles regarding servant leadership appear in second-tier leadership journals, the real issues lie in where the number of studies are being performed. Because the majority of servant leadership studies are conducted within the business or organizational psychology discipline, the need to move servant leadership into other disciplines such as education or socioemotional learning are where the numbers are lacking in the particular field (Bauer et al., 2019).

To be an effective servant leader in the secondary school setting, especially high school, there needs to be mandated prioritizing of learning regarding the roles of the high school principal and the adoption of servant leadership. Yet, principals have been found to have an effect on the type of instruction teachers use in their classrooms through the use of different instructional strategies and a focus on servant leadership (Martin, 2018). The adoption of servant leadership as a catalyst for change promotes the giving of oneself to benefit the many (Martin, 2018).

As the call for accountability continues to increase in education, there is a growing consensus that authoritarian leadership models are becoming more and more ineffective (Bovee, 2012). As more and more educators are increasingly showing interest in the new leadership style of servant leadership to which many corporations have moved to, which involves the ripple effect of putting others first, it has yielded positive results (Bovee, 2012).

What makes Patterson’s (2003) constructs of servant leadership unique from other researchers, such as Greenleaf (1977), Spears (1996), and R. F. Russell and Stone (2002),
is that Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs discuss more of the “how” of servant leadership rather than the “what” of servant leadership. In the building of Patterson’s construct or model, the success of understanding her servant leadership model and its application delineated more on the service and uplift of all. Patterson’s constructs also allow for other leaders to determine early the key difference between that of true servant leadership and what can be deemed by others as transformational leadership by its application and focus on the empowerment of all (Winston, 2003).

The different research and findings can be used to provide training for leaders of all fields as well as for colleges and universities with programs that focus on transformational leadership. Being able to apply Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership moves the needle from a focus on the leader–follower aspect to an appreciation of the true team aspect, allowing for transparency, collaboration, communication, and empowerment to support a like-minded cause.

**Definitions**

**Theoretical Definitions**

This section offers operational definitions of key terms to distinguish the individuals, environment, and leadership principles pertinent to this study. As defined, these terms are specific to the manner in which they are used in the study (Roberts, 2010).

**Agapao love.** Agapao love is to do the right thing for the right reasons. Agapao love leaders care more for their followers than for the interests of the organization, resulting in greater understanding, gratitude, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion (Gunn, 2002; Patterson, 2003).
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 is best for others, often with an attitude of humility, modesty, and selflessness (De Young, 2000; Kaplan, 2000; Monroe, 1994; Patterson, 2003).

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, 2018; Melrose, 1995; Patterson, 2003; R. F. Russell & Stone, 2002).

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 (Oh et al., 2014).

Service. Service is the moral equivalent of giving of oneself to serve others. It implies that leaders focus on others’ interests 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; R. F. 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 challenges (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, 2016; Landsberg, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 1993; Nanus, 1992).

**Operational Definitions**

**Leadership in K-12 schools.** For this study, leadership in K-12 schools is defined as individuals who operate as organizational and instructional leaders of a public school organization.

**High school.** A high school is a school that provides comprehensive academic instruction to students in ninth through 12th grades.

**High school principal.** For this study, the principal is defined as the organizational and instructional leader of a public-school organization.

**Culture of high performance.** A culture of high performance occurs when a school has demonstrated a growth trend over the past 2 years as indicated by the California Dashboard within the state and local indicators such as academic achievement and attendance.

**Delimitations**

The target population for this study was delimited to include high school principals who represented four of the five following criteria:

1. The principal was employed at a public high school within Los Angeles County with a minimum of 50 staff members.
2. The principal possessed a minimum of 2 or 3 years of experience at his or her current site.
3. The principal had a minimum of 5 years’ experience in the K-12 profession as an administrator.

4. The principal had membership in professional associations in his or her field such as the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA).

5. The principal has had articles, paper, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings.

**Organization of the Study**

This study was organized as a qualitative, phenomenological study based on the voluntary participation of high school principals who were currently serving in Los Angeles County. The study was guided by one central research question. Chapter I provided an overview of the historical, cultural, and leadership frameworks of principals who have applied and implemented Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by high school leaders. Chapter I also discussed the research problem, the purpose of the study, the research question, a statement of the problem’s significance, definitions of terms that are relevant to the study, and the delimitations of the study. Chapter II provides a comprehensive review and analysis of the relevant literature as it relates to servant leadership, leadership constructs, modalities of service, high school principals, and creating a culture and climate of high performance. Chapter III describes the research methodology that was utilized to conduct the study. Chapter IV presents the data gathered through the study, broken down by interview questions aligned to the theoretical framework utilized within the study. Chapter V highlights the researcher’s findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature relevant to study’s purpose and provides a historical background and theoretical context to describe behaviors of exemplary high school principals who have created high-performance schools implementing Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership. The research used a synthesis of literature (Appendix A) to support the writing of this chapter. This literature review provides important concepts about servant leadership, leadership in K-12 educational settings, how the influence of servant leadership can lead to successful high school principals, and how the use of the seven constructs of servant leadership can create cultures of high performance. This thematic phenomenological study regarding servant leadership is divided into four sections. Part I discusses the historical perspective of servant leadership. Part II is an in-depth discussion of theoretical foundations of leadership and how each type of leadership theory has influenced servant leadership. Part III is the theoretical framework that provides an overview of Patterson’s (2003) constructs of servant leadership: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Part IV discusses the role of servant leadership within the K-12 educational setting, how the influence of servant leadership can lead to successful high school principals, and how Patterson’s seven constructs of servant leadership can create a culture of high performance within a high school setting.

**Historical Perspective of Servant Leadership**

Heyler and Martin (2018) stated that Robert Greenleaf created the term *servant leadership* in the early 1970s and published the definitions of his thoughts and theory later within the decade. The servant leader, according to Heyler and Martin is one who
has the desire and passion to lead and serve and then chooses to have that passion move to others to then do the same. According to Greenleaf (1977), the leader who is truly called to serve displays the desire with eager enthusiasm to serve others as well as displays a level of high aspiration to lead and a passion for the empowerment of others. It is also noted by Greenleaf that only a natural servant will respond to a problem by listening first, and Greenleaf suggested that those in a leadership role must first learn to understand their followers.

**Theoretical Foundations**

The theoretical foundation is the portion of the literature review that provides significant support for a particular theory or research for which the research study is framed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Moreover, the theoretical foundation for this literature review is focusing on leadership theory, transactional leadership, behavioral leadership, transformational leadership, and servant leadership. Servant leadership is seen as a holistic leadership approach, according to Sendjaya (2015), that fosters engagement into the ethical, rational, emotional, relational, and spiritual aspects of both followers and leaders such that the two are transformed into what they are capable of becoming.

The servant leader’s propensity to empower his or her followers can cause a reciprocal exchange causing followers to increase their effort and performance to match or exceed that of the leader (Sendjaya, Eva, Butar, Robin, & Castle, 2019). What this leads to, as stated by Sendjaya et al. (2019), is that followers can learn that the offering of help and support to serve others is an appropriate and desirable action within their organization. This type of selfless service of others creates the culture not only of being
reciprocal of service and help but also passing on these good deeds as a part of the organization’s behavior (Sendjaya et al., 2019).

**Leadership Theory**

According to Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Ololube. (2015), leadership “is arguably one of the most observed, yet least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 6). Yet, good leadership is developed through a self-study process that is never ending and includes that one must achieve growth through training, education, and training as well as the accumulation of relevant experience (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). Good leadership is also based upon a person’s strong characteristics and selfless devotion to a team or organization (Amanchukwu et al., 2015). A leader who understands the use of the knowledge and/or style to be an effective leader must be “cognizant of his or her impact on others” (C. T. Bandura, Kavussanu, & Ong, 2019, p. 188). Through the use of the different leadership styles, leaders are able to internalize moral perspective as it pertains to the extent to which leaders’ behaviors are led and directed by, and are congruent with, their standards, morals, and personal values (C. T. Bandura et al., 2019).

Because there are so many different views of leadership, as well as characteristics of leadership that can distinguish between nonleaders and leaders, the shift from personality-based theories to more situational theories allow leaders to shift their skill set based on the two perspectives of the manager and/or the leader (Bass, 1985). Within more dominant theories of leadership, the understanding of the process of leadership and how the different types of theories assist with involving and influencing others determines the use and the amendment of one or more of the major types of leadership theories that are adapted for organizational success (Bass, 1985).
**Transactional Leadership**

The transactional style of leadership was first described by Max Weber in 1947 and then by Bernard Bass in 1981. This style is most often used in management (Bass, 1985). Transactional leadership style creates focus on the control mechanisms within the basic management process of controlling, organizing, and short-term planning (Bass, 1985). The main goal of the follower in transactional leadership is to follow the leader (Avolio, 2007). Within the theory of transactional leadership, the leader serves in a transactional role, making a priority of structure as the first order rather than pushing or expressing creativity (Jones & Rudd, 2008). This leads to a reward and penalty system as a part of the structure needed for success (Avolio, 2007). Transactional leadership behaviors, according to Bass (1985), are aimed at controlling and monitoring followers through economic or means.

The use or application in the work setting regarding the different types of exchanges within transactional leaders involves four dimensions: “Contingent Rewards,” “Active Management by Exception,” “Passive Management by Exception,” and “Laissez-Faire” (Jones & Rudd, 2008, p. 89). Contingent Rewards are based upon a leader linking goals to rewards that can be sometime mutually agreed upon or developed as Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely (SMART) Goals for his or her subordinates (Jones & Rudd, 2008). Through Active Management, the transactional leader is actively monitoring every aspect of his or her subordinate’s performance and taking actions to correct and prevent mistakes while engaging the subordinate (Bono & Judge, 2004). Passive Management by Exception means transactional leaders only intervene when standards are not being met or not up to expectations. The use of
punishment and reprimands are often a penalty of unacceptable performance (Jones & Rudd, 2008). Laissez-Faire leaders allow for subordinates to make decisions while the leaders pass on many of their responsibilities causing a lack of direction (Bono & Judge, 2004).

Transactional leadership as stated by Bass and Avolio (1995) does assist with the establishment of roles and responsibilities for each employee or follower, but it can also encourage bare-minimum work if employees or followers know how much their effort is worth all the time. According to McCleskey (2014), “Transactional leadership allows followers to fulfill their own self-interest, minimize workplace anxiety, and concentrate on clear organizational objectives such as increased quality, customer service, reduced costs, and increased production” (p. 117). This type of leadership style does not welcome a follower or employer’s passion, inner work ethic, talent, or drive, and creates incentives for the mere participation or completion of the project or goals without some sort of oversight (Shamir, 2011).

Behavioral Leadership

The behavioral theory of leadership focuses on the environment of a leader and not his or her natural ability as a leader (Avolio, 2007). Bass (1990) in defining the behavioral leadership theory wrote about the two-leader behavior focuses that are common in organizations: employee-centered leader behavior and job-centered leader behavior. The employee-centered leader behaviors focus on interacting with employees in a way that encourages sensitivity, rapport between follower and leader, and mutual trust (Bass, 1990). The job-centered leader behaviors are focused on completion of the job or task with rewards, a developed bureaucratic structure, close supervision, and
sometimes coercion (Bass, 1990). The purpose of this aspect of leader behavior is to increase profits through production (Yukl, Gordon, & Taber, 2002). The conditions or conditioning of the leader behaviors will make a person more likely to act or lead in a situation that requires a certain style as a response to the environment that they are a part of and/or thrust into causing a leadership response (Avolio, 2007).

This approach regarding the different types of leadership responses emphasizes and also defines how leaders use three defined skills to lead their followers. These skills, according to Conger and Kanungo (1987), are “technical (refers to a person’s knowledge of the process of technique), conceptual (refers to manager’s ideas which enable a manager to set up models and design plans), and human (refers to ability to interact with people)” (p. 639). The application of different leadership responses can determine whether a leader is viewed as a great leader or as a poor leader (Conger & Kanungo, 1987). A good leader, according to Yukl et al. (2002), uses these leadership response skills to also determine goals, motivate his or her followers, and set and achieve goals. A good leader can also use these leadership response skills to provide communication that is effective and used to inspire growth, help with engagement and interaction with his or her followers, and build the needed team spirit to create a successful team (Yukl et al., 2002).

Overall the behavior leadership theory emphasizes that the favorable behavior of a leader is one that provides great satisfaction to his or her followers through positive engagement (Avolio, 2007). The satisfaction of the followers allows leaders to be recognized as leaders who provide empathy, compassion, and fairness within their relationship (Yukl et al., 2002). According to Yukl et al. (2002), the limitations of this
approach are relevant and effective in some settings and ineffective in other settings. Thus, the time factor, which is the vital element, must be considered with the application of the theory (Yukl et al., 2002).

**Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership involves the ability to inspire and motivate followers. According to Bass (1999), the research findings regarding transformational leadership support how leaders can move their followers beyond the immediate self-serving and self-interests through these four types of behaviors: idealized influences (charisma), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and/or individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1995). As transformational leaders, the development of their idealized influence and inspirational leadership is visualized by their followers once the leaders begin to create and envision the desirable and achievable future for success (Bass & Avolio, 1995). Leaders then share and articulate how it is possible to reach their goal attainments (Bass, 1999). Bass and Avolio (1995) stated that leaders must set an example of the correct pathway to follow, the type of standards to set, and at all times, show confidence and determination. Raj and Srivastava (2016) asserted “that by individualized consideration, leaders build one-to-one relationships with their followers by providing support, and encouragement, and show concern for the followers’ needs, skills, and aspirations” (p. 203).

Although transformational leadership theory encourages followers to accomplish more than what would normally be expected of them, it also promotes organizational innovation (Jones & Rudd, 2008). As stated by Jones and Rudd (2008), organizational innovation has been found to be the missing ingredient in regard to how leaders
communicate and behave with their followers. This is due to the type of transcending motivation that the transformational leaders use to promote their own self-interests for the good of the group or organization (Jones & Rudd, 2008). Transformational leaders can be directive or participative, authoritarian or democratic, or a combination of different theories within their approach. Nelson Mandela is described by Bluedorn and Jaussi (2008) and Shamir (2011) as a type of leader who is directive and transformational when he declares, “Forget the past” (Bluedorn & Jaussi, 2008, p. 654). Nelson Mandela can also be participative and transformational when engaged in multiracial consultations.

What is on display by Nelson Mandela is a mature, moral development that is required of all transformational leaders (Bluedorn & Jaussi, 2008; Shamir, 2011).

**Servant Leadership**

As the 1970s began, Robert Greenleaf started to work on his thoughts and later theory regarding the term servant leadership. As theories and thoughts were published, the definitions regarding servant leadership were also published later in the decade (Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf (1977) stated that the deep-rooted needs and desire to affect others’ lives in a positive manner is what he called an altruistic calling within the realm of servant leadership. It was also noted by Greenleaf that only a natural servant will respond to a problem by listening first, and Greenleaf suggested that those in a leadership role must first learn to understand their followers and asserted that leaders should focus on the alignment of the duties of the leader with demonstrated allegiance to the servant leadership constructs.

Greenleaf (1977) further indicated that it is the responsibility of the leader to establish the mission, vision, and purpose in a manner that defines the work with
certainty. It is the job of the leader to eliminate ambiguity in vision for those who may have difficulty doing it themselves. The servant leader views followers, employees, or subordinates as one of the pivotal reasons for being in a position to lead while fostering the idea of service to others. Spears (1996) asserted that Greenleaf believed that leaders should focus on the alignment of the duties of a leader with demonstrated allegiance to the servant leadership constructs.

A servant leader wants to above all serve, teach, and empower others to grow and develop (Spears, 1996). The servant leader strives to influence others so that they eventually become servant leaders themselves. Greenleaf (1977) stated that the best test of whether a person is a servant leader is, “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (p. 45). Greenleaf (1996) proposed four central tenets of effective servant leaders: holistic approach to work, promote a sense of community, share the power in decision-making, and service to others (see Figure 1).

*Figure 1.* The central tenets of servant leadership.
The creation of a holistic work space. The work space is created to be a central area that allows for a follower’s personal opinion; integrated valuation of the individual’s ideals ultimately benefits the long-term interest and performance of the workplace (Greenleaf, 1996). Greenleaf (1996) stated that “the work exists for the person as much as the person exists for the work” (p. 8).

Establishing a sense of community. A sense of community among followers also supports the goals of an organization with the establishment of a culture that is created and grown from the actions of the servant leader (Greenleaf, 1996).

Shared decision-making. The sharing of decision-making supports the establishment of a climate that can build trust and encouragement (Greenleaf, 1996). Transformational leaders who take the time to foster connection and relationships develop a culture of success and a sense of like-mindedness among their followers that spreads throughout the organization (Greenleaf, 1996). Being of service to others. Being of service to others as a leader is to assume “the position of servant in their interactions as the follower,” which guides leaders to have authentic, legitimate leadership that comes from the desire to help others (Greenleaf, 1996, p. 6).

Transformational leaders should champion the use and growth of their follower’s talents to create more effective and motivated teams that lead to more overall success of the organization (Greenleaf, 1996). These four tenets place a greater emphasis on the people rather than the production itself whereas transformational leadership places a greater emphasis on the opposite (Greenleaf, 1977). The results are different measures of success where transformational leadership allows for personhood and fullness in the serving of others and fulfilling objectives and goals, at the same time creating greater
impact overall for everyone involved (Greenleaf, 1977). As leaders grow into personhood and fullness, servant leadership and its constructs move servant leaders to become increasingly concerned about others (Spears, 2018). This does not mean that servant leadership calls for leaders to care less about themselves at higher stages but that through servant leadership leaders include more and more for others in which it is evident that there must be a genuine concern and consideration for those being served (Spears, 2018). Through these revelations, servant leaders have become more driven and committed to the service of others (Spears, 2018).

**Theoretical Framework**

According to Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004), servant leadership is about focus. There is a congruent behavior and attitude regarding the type of focus needed by a leader toward his or her followers to create and promote success. Patterson (2003) stated that servant leadership is a virtuous theory that has a characteristic that is additive to one’s soul and becomes part of the nature of a person who chooses to lead. This virtue or virtuous theory is internal and also spiritual because of the human spirit and the belief in the good in all that grows and can be nurtured in others to be their best person as well (Whetstone, 2001). Aristotle, according to Yu (1998), established as a part of the framework the virtue definition, which says that virtuous theories are used to point out the characteristics that exemplify human excellence. Patterson (2003) stated “that Servant Leadership encompasses seven virtuous constructs, which work in processional pattern. These are (a) agapao love, (b) humility, (c) altruism, (d) vision, (e) trust, (f) empowerment, and (g) service” (p. 27; see also Figure 2).
Figure 2. The model of constructs. This model details how the servant leadership constructs work together beginning with agapao love and ending with service. From Servant Leadership: A Theoretical Model (Doctoral dissertation), by K. A. Patterson, 2003, retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3082719)

Agapao Love

Peterlin, Pearse, and Dimovski (2015) stated in the research that Greenleaf (1977) was the first to understand that servant leaders have a holistic vision of providing healing and understanding as well the clear vision regarding the spreading of love among each other as a team (Peterlin et al., 2015). Leaders who can heal or bring healing within an organization can serve others as they deal with personal pain, rejection and brokenness in order to pursue a level of oneness or team (Peterlin et al., 2015). Servant leaders must operate from the stance that goals exist for the empowerment of the worker through care and love so that the worker or employee will then want to exist to do the work with passion. Peterlin et al. (2015) described agape love or compassionate love as one of the essential foundations of leadership. According to Brouns, Externbrink, and Aledo (2020), the characteristics of healing allow for the servant leader to be internally and externally conscious. Being able to visualize the added dimensions rather than be socially or within business allows for focus and support within learning and understanding of the different people within the organization (Brouns et al., 2020). Servant leaders build community by improving the spirit and empowering love for one another causing employees to act as
concerned members and friends with a passion to see each other succeed, allowing the community to be built in the organization (Smylie, Murphy, & Seashore Louis, 2016).

Among many various types of leaders, narcissistic leadership, according to Smylie et al. (2016), is a result of ineffective leadership, while the idea of agapao love or “Compassionate Love” (p. 46) is deemed as a suitable antecedent for effective leadership like servant leadership. Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) proposed that individuals displaying a high degree of compassionate love will perceive a higher purpose in striving for communion and, once promoted to leadership positions, will engage in servant leadership behaviors in line with their prosocial motivation. Compassionate love also refers to love that “centers on the good of the others” (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015, p. 121). Leaders who provide their employees with agapao love will manifest the employee’s talent, ideas, and willingness to collaborate first and above his or her own self-interest (Thompson, 2011). The need and idea of serving others in order to develop others allows for the type of love that leads to understanding and communication (Powles, 2016). However, narcissists are less motivated to exercise an others-oriented leadership style such as servant leadership, which requires strong communion with others or to see others striving for greatness (Smylie et al., 2016).

Within servant leadership, a focus on the caring aspect needs to be an essential piece of the leaders’ mission to create a climate of agapao love (Brouns et al., 2020). There is evidence as stated by Brouns et al. (2020) that shows how the care of others improves care of all, which then leads to the overall improvement and success of people. The implementation of agapao love leads to improved social and academic support as well as the adoption and use of the positive virtues such as respect, empathy, and
compassion (Peterlin et al., 2015). Agapao love, according to van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015), displays that there is no obligation to caring or a sense of coercion or an expectation to return a level of concern and caring for others but to really foster a love for one another to improve life. Because leaders who have agapao love aim to help others grow and develop in their own right, they also have positive virtues and a caring mindset, which is important for growth of their followers (Powles, 2016).

**Humility**

Patterson’s (2003) element of humility in regard to the servant leadership construct is more than just background concepts of agapao love (Winston, 2003). To Patterson (2003), humility is a virtue that is peaceful, and it rejects the self-glorification of self-aggrandizement as a reversal of social norms as it relates to serving others. According to Winston (2003), the virtue of humility is peculiar in nature and speaks to one who is humbled not allowing him or herself to esteem or think of him or herself in a higher manner. To be an effective leader who works to empower others, the person who leads as a servant leader must have a level of humility and trust developed in every relationship created in order to transfer the need of serving to others (Bushe, 2019). The process of engaging and mentoring must be at the forefront of nurturing those aspiring to leadership roles (Bushe, 2019). Accordingly, servant leadership has consistently been mirrored with the virtues of humility that are deemed as non-self-centered (Verdofer, 2016). The term humility can also be a characteristic or a construct with the focus being more enduring and also being more modest, more open minded than arrogant, more respectful, and more humble (Verdofer, 2016).
Individuals who are humble seek more of a view or a picture that is objective of their own inner and outer strength, capabilities, and limitations by thoroughly engaging in the lives of others and the environment of which they are a part of (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017). Thus, individuals who are humble are willingly to seek a clear understanding of their strengths and weaknesses and also become more receptive to other ideas, inputs, and advice to foster growth (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017). Humility is also characterized by the listening and learning from all people and consists of the mutuality and care for all who are encountered (Oyer, 2011). It involves the realistic appraisal of one’s strengths and weaknesses, accomplishments and talents, failures and successes, and an ability and willingness to see the accurate portrayal of the self while being modest and without exaggeration (Ekinci, 2015).

Sousa and van Dierendonck (2017) stated that to be a great leader requires and demands the acceptance of others. A leader must be ready to equip his or her followers with the implied understanding that taking responsibility for others as well as for oneself leads to a growth in humility (Ekinci, 2015). The research that is focused on examining mindfulness as it relates to servant leadership is an approach that makes humility and altruism the central ideas or components of the servant leadership process (Oyer, 2015). Oyer (2015) implied that servant leaders’ dispositional mindfulness has a direct correlation to the servant leadership dimensions of authenticity, standing back, and humility.

**Altruism**

Altruistic behaviors refer to an approach by which leaders start their focus on the empowerment of their followers and tend to the followers’ particular needs to help them
grow as leaders (Swen, 2020). There is also a focused energy by an altruistic leader on the expectations, focus, and needs of his or her followers (Swen, 2020). Greenleaf (1977) stated that leadership has an aspect that is important to the characteristics of a leader who is internally conscious of serving the many. Ekinci (2015) also stated that the behaviors and attitudes of the altruistic leader cause a positive effect on an organization’s process in regard to a worker’s commitment, dedication, and belonging. One of the principles of altruism is being an altruistic leader who operates in a manner that focuses on increasing the effectiveness of others and also personifies and models the necessary engagement needed to make the changes desired (Schroeder, 2016). Through altruism, leaders can engage and encourage their followers to have the heart to want to make a difference for others (Warin, 2017). Altruistic leaders seek to work collaboratively with their followers to develop a belief in a common goal (Wongkom, Sanrantana, & Chusorn, 2019). Wongkom et al. (2019) indicated that this type of collaboration can increase the effectiveness of the followers by modeling and leading through love, respect, and understanding of all views.

As an altruistic leader and a school administrator, it should be the aim of the leader to create a product to be aligned with and followed by all those involved (Ekinci, 2015). An altruistic leader should make it his or her purpose to produce staff members and students who are not only academically engaged and competent but should also understand and foster the importance of being loving, caring, and empathic (Barbuto, 2005). These types of ideas and/or visions for success break the traditional lines of discipline and educational policy regarding the professional responsibilities of educators (Sağnak & Kuruöz, 2017).
According to Cerit (2009), mindfulness can prompt an internal transformation from the ideas of an altruistic leader to his or her followers through modelled relational behavior. The relational behavior shared by servant leaders with an understanding of altruism can increase their level of sincere love and responsibility to one another and people and not in a leader–subordinate relationship (Cerit, 2009). The mindfulness trait leads to honest and open relationships and clear and transparent communication, which are the effects of servant leadership (Crippen, 2004). Mindfulness, which is also a part of altruism, allows leaders to focus on the feeling and thoughts of those being led (Wongkom et al., 2019). Mindfulness is shared from the leader to the followers without the passing of any type of judgment during the moments of engagement and collaboration (Wongkom et al., 2019).

**Vision**

Just as in athletic coaching, leaders in the educational realm must within their vision have created a process known as turnarounds (Westfall, 2020). Having a turnaround is when philosophies, methods, purpose, and procedures are developed, taught, and understood from the transformational leaders to their followers (Westfall, 2020). The idea or process of the turnaround calls for strong fearless leaders not afraid of changing courses or paths for success to implement a comprehensive vision and plan (Jensen, Moynihan, & Salomonsen, 2018). The leader then must be able to first teach and communicate with others in order for the turnaround to be effective (Jensen et al., 2018). When developing their vision, leaders must share their strategic values, relationship values, and behavioral values to communicate the intricate pieces of their mission or goal (Jensen et al., 2018). This allows for followers who have a similar thought process to that
of the leader to help transform the culture to implement the new vision needed for change (Seto & Sarros, 2016).

Under the guidance of the transforming leader, the followers learn to promote, envision, embrace, and then apply the constructs of servant leadership within their daily lives to develop meaningful and quality relationships not only with their peers but also with the transformational leader regarding the vision (E. J. Russell, 2016). As stated by Davidson and Butcher (2019), transformational leaders have an understanding that leadership has a one-sided impact yet also understand that the vision comes from embracing the ideals of Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs to assist them with affecting culture (Davidson & Butcher, 2019).

A leader’s communication skills will be one of the single most effective ways to provide his or her followers with the vision from a transformational leader (Jensen et al., 2018). The strategy of using communication to share the like-minded vision and agenda of the servant leader is a skilled necessity that requires an engagement in a particular alchemy that provides a particular growth and change (Westfall, 2020). The use of a particular alchemy in many cases is exceptional because it is garnered through communication that produces a picture of inspiration (Seto & Sarros, 2016). This picture or view for a leader then inspires others to have their own vision of their own personal achievement and growth (Phimkoh et al., 2015). Overall this growth causes others to have their own vision, increases employee buy-in and belief, and improves the attractiveness of the organization as a whole (Phimkoh et al., 2015). The vision, purpose, and developed goals improve performance because having a meaningful purpose and significance allows for pride and honor to grow in its followers (Archbald, 2013).
Trust

Trust is an essential building block in the development of the relationship between servant leaders and the stakeholders and followers, which are the fundamental building block for the climate and culture of the organization (Shaw & Newton, 2014). This type of trust allows workers in an organization to rectify their mistakes and learn from them and other experiences to better the organization (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Schools and organizations must develop working levels of trust within their different systems to create constant effectiveness to develop and cultivate a culture of success (Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2019). Trust then becomes an important variable and leads to a mutual understanding or developed culture of competence, honesty, openness, loyalty, and consistency (Lu, Zhang, & Jia, 2019).

Trust and the subordinates of trust, such as organizational trust, not only affect teachers but also the teachers’ relationships within an organization significantly because they can affect the overall organizational citizenship behavior (Lu et al., 2019). The development of trust within a team also helps create a level of openness and creates the organizational climate, professionalism, authenticity, and cooperation among coworkers (Kars & Inandi, 2018). The authentic leader applying trust in a working relationship does so to create the culture and climate of positive employee trust (Kars & Inandi, 2018).

According to Jeyaraj and Gandolfi (2019), organizations need to display dimensions of organizational trust and some aspects of a laissez-faire autocratic behavior to help with developing autonomy. This understanding of the different types of leadership promotes growth by understanding the negative and positive dimensions of organizational trust (Babaoğlan, 2016).
According to Joseph and Winston (2005), there are indicators suggesting that employees who trust their leaders are not only able to be their “true-selves” but also able to improve their overall feelings regarding work. When employees can trust the culture developed by the leader, not only the followers’ feelings regarding working improve but also their engagement improves (Joseph & Winston, 2005). Within the developed levels of trust is the development of empowerment to be a part of the school and community surrounding the organization thoroughly supporting its success (Bird, Wang, Watson, & Murray, 2009).

These types of leaders work to positively influence the trust of students, colleagues, and parents and all employees at the lowest level (Rieke, Hammermeister, & Chase, 2008). To create trust as a servant leader, the leader must see and believe in people’s potential and must believe in the empowerment of the people who are participating in the pursuit of trust (Lambert, 2004). There is also the nurturing of trust that involves the servant leader to employ strategies of various degrees considering how the leaders treat and align themselves with their followers as well as be researchers of their followers (Lambert, 2004). Overall, the trust in a leader, and the leader’s ability to empower people, reflects the trust and confidence needed by the school’s followers to do their job effectively (Joseph & Winston, 2005).

Empowerment

Empowerment, according to Patterson (2003), is akin to developing people and growing others to be great. The leader who empowers others in this process actually transfers a portion of power that is often reserved for the top rung of traditional leadership (Patterson, 2003). According to Balyer, Özcan, and Yildiz (2017), the term
empowerment in the educational setting suggests actual and real changes within one’s expertise on a professional level. Empowerment calls for leaders and followers to participate in various decision-making processes regarding the long-term and short-term goals of the school (Mestry, 2017). While practicing these said decisions in the field of education and in the school setting, empowerment by the servant leaders improve their professional expertise and raise their autonomy and involvement in decision-making processes (Mestry, 2017). Through the empowerment of teachers, a teacher then displays the confidence to develop as a professional growing his or her own competence as well as growth within his or her limitations and potentials (Dambe & Moorad, 2008).

Empowerment especially as a servant leader is one of the most important constructs for a successful principal (Dambe & Moorad, 2008). This requires that the servant leader or principal understands the process it takes to grow and develop his or her followers and to build them up as leaders with a passion for improvement (Balyer et al., 2017).

The servant leader must develop relational skills to promote collaboration and growth action that jointly involves his or her followers to improve the effectiveness of communication (Balyer et al., 2017). This type of empowerment creates trust and belief within its followers and caters to their organizational growth goals, which can be synchronized for team success (Balyer et al., 2017). Empowerment by leaders can not only affect the staff but also affect the student because its focus allows for the external accountability and competitive performativity to be imposed upon those who are a part of the culture and climate (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015). This type of normative prescription for high-performing schools and educational settings leads to a needed empowerment with high expectations as the outcome (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015). This type of empowerment
also causes the school and the surrounding community to both be led to cultural and educational success (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015).

By empowering and developing people, servant leaders are able to grow their followers by expressing authenticity, stewardship, humility, interpersonal space, interpersonal acceptance, and direction, and by providing purpose (Hammond, 2018). Servant leadership works at its best when it empowers its followers and creates a focus regarding the relationship between them and the principal or school leader (Hammond, 2018). True servant leaders empower all students, staff, and stakeholders to develop ownership, have a connected purpose, and create accountability for mentoring to cause real growth and transformation (Hammond, 2018). There is also real passion with sharing a synergy of like-minded thinking to develop all individuals involved with the mission of growth and change (Norris, Sitton, & Baker, 2017). The empowerment of employees especially in an educational setting must begin with a full engagement process of a follower’s professional growth, self-efficacy, and decision-making (Norris et al., 2017). With empowerment, a leader must also grow his or her followers’ skills in solving problems and capabilities to solve multiple issues (Norris et al., 2017).

Service

The true attributes of service are not simply to carry out tasks but to ensure that those individuals who are being served become more competent and have the ability to meet the needs of others and their own needs as well (Black, 2010). This allows for the follower to be equipped better to serve the organization and the general societies also (Black, 2010). Followers can then become more autonomous and not solely reliant on the will of the servant leaders who are committed to improving the work environment, which
can then contribute to the personal and professional growth of a school leader (Black, 2010). The leaders who are engaged with creating a culture of service and high performance tend to be one of “regretless service” (Hung, Tsai, & Wu, 2016). According to Hung et al. (2016), regretless service of a leader promotes selfless contributions in order to be the change needed for his or her staff members to promote success. This includes adopting and promoting behaviors that can be shown to all stakeholders (Hung et al., 2016). A servant leader’s vision of service to others includes helping subordinates grow and be empowered to make change that reflects ethical behavior (Hung et al., 2016). Servant leaders share their vision of service to improve the empowerment of parents and other stakeholder groups to strengthen their ties and relationships with the teachers and staff and create pathways of growth both academically and socio-emotionally (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). These types of services by a servant leader are carrying, assisting, respecting, and supporting the overall growth of the community as a whole (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015).

The relationship between the school and the community that are involved in creating the high-functioning relationships is developed because of a focus on serving others (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). Servant leaders who are wise recognize and gear their service of creating high-performing schools to understand the influences that are reciprocal in nature (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). School servant leaders should strive to develop organizations that assist in developing community engagements that work to develop the involvement of parents, staff, and stakeholders to participate in the planning and decision-making within a school setting (Liden et al., 2014). It has been noted and found that the role of service to support the mediated relationship between
individuals and team-level servant leadership also found that the supports for the role of service are subjectively rated based on performance (Liden et al., 2014). Liden et al. (2014) stated that studies on servant culture provide evidence on how servant leadership influences outcomes at both individual and team levels that are related to the needed culture of behavioral norms and related expectations.

**Leadership in K-12 Schools**

High school leaders more than ever are also asked to focus on making citizenship and student learning a primary focus of creating a culture of high student achievement (Turkmen & Gul, 2017). According to Turkmen and Gul (2017), school leaders are responsible for the development of a relationship that is democratic by nature between teachers, administrators, and parents, that focuses on the implementation of improving citizenship among the students, and that protects those cultural values and student growth through education and positive teacher engagement (Turkmen & Gul, 2017).

**High School Principals Exemplify Servant Leadership**

The research literature in regard to K-12 leadership highlights the importance of a leader establishing, communicating, and guiding the purpose of a school. Similar to concepts like vision and mission, purposing is defined as an action by an organization’s formal leadership to establish an overarching purpose for the organization and subsequently fostering clarity, consensus, and commitment to the organization’s basic purpose among its followers (Terosky & Reitano, 2016). Principals in schools who follow the constructs and the ideals of servant leadership in all aspects perform better, demonstrate high commitment levels and satisfaction in the service of others, especially children, and maintain a positive attitude not only in regard to life but also in every aspect.
of their work (Terosky & Reitano, 2016). Servant leaders work to increase organizational
effectiveness by setting an example through their behavior that supports a culture of
meaningful relationships to foster collaboration (Terosky & Reitano, 2016).

Greenleaf (1977) asserted that it is the responsibility of leaders to establish an
organization’s purpose in ways that it provides certainty and vision for others who may
have difficulties in doing so themselves. Greenleaf argued that communicating a purpose
also requires the leader to have an engaging zest for leadership to ensure that the
organization lives up to its purpose without excuses. Along with a focus on the culture
and climate of learning, high school principals must understand that learning has become
imperative, and the obligation of the principal is to prioritize, attend to, and act on matters
of learning (Terosky & Reitano, 2016). Principals who are servant leaders are able to
reduce motivational barriers in followers to strive for or accept the responsibility of
leadership to effect change (Lacroix & Verdorfer, 2017). Despite the genuine motivation
to serve others as a servant leader, K-12 school principals must also have that same
genuine motivation to lead. This means that someone who may see the responsibility of
leadership as inherently daunting and unattractive is not a candidate to become a servant
leader (Lacroix & Verdorfer, 2017). To be an effective school principal with a focus on
servant leadership, according to Lacroix and Verdofer (2017), there must be a joy not
only in reading others but also in having a passion for the growth and nurturing of others
to be their best in all aspects. Instructional leadership and creating a culture that leads to
an attainment of high achievement and performance in all academic and socioemotional
aspects with the culture must be a part of the leadership role and the responsibility of the
principal (Maclin, 2018). For every true servant leader who is a K-12 school principal,
his or her position includes creating, defining, and delivering the school’s vision and mission, managing the school’s curriculum and instruction program, and creating a positive culture and climate conducive to learning for the parents, students, stakeholders, and the community at large (Maclin, 2018).

**The Importance of Establishing a Culture of High Performance**

As a servant leader, the focus on understanding what distinguishes a level of high performance is almost exclusively qualitative in nature based on an outlier design for what is deemed as high performance. Attributes of high performance can be attributed to growth and improvement or change of direction in numerous attributes that can range from academic, such as English language arts (ELA), math, and science growth and improvement levels, to school culture and climate levels, such as suspension rate, student attendance, and graduation rates (Leithwood & McCullough, 2016). Within the culture of high performance is also the success of the school’s programs (e.g., sports teams, academic teams, visual and performing arts, and various clubs) and how successful school programs become a representation not only of the school but also of the community it resides in (Gross et al., 2015).

School–community partnerships play an essential role in successful schools, often providing resources and support to meet the needs of students both current and alum, families that may have also attended the school, and staff needs that go above and beyond what is at school (Gross et al., 2015). Reciprocally, community partners benefit from their relationships with schools, including learning about schools’ inclusive culture (Gross et al., 2015). Attributes that lead to high performance are developed through partnerships with community members, community organizations with a vested interest...
in the success of the students within a school, and the business community, which must be committed to support the school in different ways and options (Gross et al., 2015). According to Gross et al. (2015), these are authentic partnerships that are deemed as respectful alliances among educators, families, and community groups who value their partnership and relationships.

When developing academic levels of performance, the focus must be on the development of the district-level administrators, the school leadership, and the teachers, staff, and stakeholders in all phases (academic, athletics, and socioemotional) with a framework of success in every aspect of education (Leithwood & McCullough, 2016). This relates to the transformational leadership and the servant leadership approach in order to create success in all endeavors of education within the school. According to Leithwood and McCullough (2016), within the transformational approach to achieve academic excellence, a school leader must do the following:

- Establish broadly shared goals, mission, vision, and a founding of ambitious images of the educated person in order to have a model of success for which students strive for.
- Create and provide instructional guidance with a focus on ambitious goals for teaching, learning, and overall success in every area.
- Build the school staff capacity and commitment to look for evidence of informed decision-making.
- Create learning-oriented organizational improvement processes.
- Provide job-embedded professional development for teachers, community, and leaders with an alignment to a school growth and improvement plan.
• Align budget, personal policies/procedures, and uses of time within the overall mission, vision, and goals.

• Use a comprehensive performance management system for school development.

• Advocate for and support a policy governance approach.

• Develop and nurture productive working relationships with students, parents, teachers, and staff members for buy-in and overall support.

As these approaches are formulated within a school to achieve a level of high performance in all aspects, the overall dependence must be on the people who provided the service, the students who are receiving the services, and the community who will benefit from the students who are a part of a high-performance school and who will become members of society (Leithwood & McCullough, 2016).

**Attributes of High Performance**

While leaders work to achieve a balance with the implementation of the mission and vision of the school, many school administrators and their leadership teams wish to continue growth through creating an ideal culture and climate for academic success with a focus of serving all (Liden et al., 2014). Leaders can seek to create continued success over time by infusing the different aspects of Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership into the culture of the school with a focus on collective efficacy, professional learning communities, and a plan for student performance (Liden et al., 2014). The relationship between professional learning communities and efficacy has been positively linked according to DuFour and Eaker (1998) because teachers’ efficacy is positively linked to increased student achievement by concentrating on the gaps in
learning. There is also a clear focus on creating an environment of collaborative inquiry and action research to achieve better student results (DuFour, Eaker, & DuFour, 2005).

**Student performance.** When monitoring student performance, assessments serve a vital role in providing information in the form of data that can be used to not only help students but also inform administrators and policy makers (Ogor, 2007). Within education there is a quest to monitor student performance efficiently and effectively in many different education settings that can display a level of growth based upon related instructional practices (Ogor, 2007). California has established an accountability system known as the California School Dashboard that is an online tool that shows how the local educational agencies and schools are performing on the state and local indicators included in California’s school accountability system (California Department of Education, n.d.). The California School Dashboard has a key part in reporting overall student learning, assists with transforming testing, and places a focus on equity for all students. The dashboard is made up of six state indicators, two of them being academic indicators, which focus on English language arts/literacy and mathematics assessments, and student engagement indicators such as chronic absenteeism (California Department of Education, n.d.). Within the California School Dashboard, the state measures performance on two factors: current year results and whether results improved from the prior year (California Department of Education, n.d.). When assessing student performance in English language arts/literacy and mathematics assessments, students are given an end-of-the-year summative assessment that is aligned with the Common Core State Standards in which the test has been adopted by the California Department of Education (n.d.). Chronic absenteeism is measured according to the California
Department of Education as students who are chronically absent from school at least 10% of the instructional days that they were enrolled to attend in a school. Chronic absenteeism leads to student truancy and to students eventually dropping out of school. According to Sheldon and Epstein (2004), chronic absenteeism is a strong indicator of alcohol, tobacco, and substance abuse. Chronic absenteeism can also lead to other factors such poor standardized assessments, low levels of student achievement, and other social-emotional factors causing further disruptions to a student’s success (Sheldon & Epstein, 2004).

**Collective efficacy.** For schools, perceived collective efficacy, according to Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998), refers to the judgment of teachers in a school that the entire faculty can organize and deliver the courses of action needed on student learning to have positive outcomes. Collective efficacy can then be perceived also as a construct useful to teachers and researchers. Collective efficacy allows for a link between teacher behavior and teacher efficacy that can foster student achievement (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). The sense of efficacy can yield promising findings regarding the teachers having a self-referent efficacy (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). Research, as stated by Goddard, Hoy and Hoy (2004), has grown regarding the organizational dimensions to create an interest in the efficacy beliefs in schools. As studies are developed about collective efficacy beliefs and emphasis regarding how teachers not only have self-referent efficacy perceptions but also believe in the conjoined capability of a school’s teachers as a whole (Goddard et al., 2004). According to A. Bandura (1997), group perceptions can reflect a school or district’s emergent collective efficacy within the school staff belief developing successful levels of performance within the social systems
of teachers and staff with the same mission and vision. The link between student success and collective efficacy with a focus on student beliefs, teacher beliefs, and instructional efficacy is the overall focus on positive professional teaching practices that can empower, grow, and inspire all involved to reach successful heights (Pajares & Miller, 1994). Other self-referent constructs related to collective efficacy involve a self-concept that is influenced by self-efficacy to translate to student success (Pajares & Miller, 1994). Collective efficacy allows a belief in oneself to be able to achieve at a high level and an understanding that task success comes with a strong belief in one’s capabilities to learn and have a positive self-worth (Pajares & Miller, 1994).

**Professional learning communities.** According to DuFour and Eaker (1998), the created idea and organizational structure of the professional learning community model displays how work practices can be created to be team oriented and developed with an agreement on the same mission, vision, and purposes. The definition of a professional learning community, as stated by DuFour (2004), is having schoolteachers establish an organizational commitment that is centered on the success of student learning. These teams will meet and collaborate regularly on curriculum, instruction, and assessments that will have an overall effect on student learning (DuFour, 2004). These types of team collaborations are also focused on organizational decision-making, common curriculum, and developing curriculum with a common assessment. The professional learning communities (PLCs) also assess and analyze assessment data to make instructional changes (Dufour, 2004).

The PLC model works on the assumption that students are not only taught but are also placed in a learning environment developed by data and assessment, planning, and
Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leaders explain the “how” of servant leadership and expand on the prior focus of servant leadership by work of Greenleaf (1977) and/or Spears (1996), which merely focused on the “what” of servant leadership. The fundamental difference, as pointed out by Bass (2000), is what transformational leaders do for their followers to gain greater output and organizational gains, but servant leadership focuses on the overall well-being of the followers, creating caring, empathy, and buy-in to produce greater and more effective results (Winston, 2003). The literature gap, according to Irving and Berndt (2017), states that although early theoretical concepts and work make some connections to servant leadership, the
meaning, purpose, and most of the empirical works regarding servant leadership are frayed literature concerning servant leadership. Bauer et al. (2019) stated that there is a large amount of published work and articles about servant leadership that are placed in second-tier leadership journals. As stated by Bauer et al., without a coherence in the field of servant leadership, research articles related to servant leadership research will continue to be studied in other nonrelated fields causing a lack of clarity. As the growing majority of research on servant leadership has been presented in top-tier management journals, servant leadership research still remains fragmented across disciplines and struggles to be integrated (Bauer et al., 2019). According to Patterson (2003), the seven constructs explore the attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs of the leader–follower servant leadership model. The seven constructs work together to create higher levels of commitment, self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation that lead to a leader’s desire to see his or her organization or school do very well (Winston, 2003). This rise in success creates the passion for service by leaders and also the motivation and purpose to see others grow and be empowered to serve others (Winston, 2003). Chapter III contains an explanation of the research design and the methodology of the study, including the study population and sampling procedures for data gathering and analysis.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology used to complete this study regarding Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership. This qualitative phenomenological study described the behaviors of high school principals who were building cultures of high performance in a high school setting. First is a review of the study’s purpose statement and central research question followed by the research subquestions. Next is the research design, description of the population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis for this study. Last, the limitations of the study and a comprehensive summary of the study are discussed.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe the high school principals’ perceived impact of the seven 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 in high schools as perceived by high school principals?

Subquestions
1. What is the impact of the agapao love leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?
2. What is the impact of the humility leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?
3. What is the impact of the altruism leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

4. What is the impact of the vision leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

5. What is the impact of the trust leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

6. What is the impact of the empowerment leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

7. What is the impact of the service leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

**Research Design**

A qualitative design allows a researcher to collect, analyze, and interpret data using qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). Certain qualitative methods allow the researcher to gather certain pieces of data and attach descriptive meaning to them accordingly. Qualitative researchers can investigate and conduct one or more types of interactive research approaches, which then allows for qualitative research to either be based upon a multilayered reality with shared social experiences that are interpreted by people (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Within this study, the opinions about the behaviors were shaped by the maximum use of interviews, artifacts, and observations that were captured and used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

According to Patton (2015) in his textbook titled *Qualitative Research & Evaluations Methods*, “Qualitative findings grow out of three kinds of data collection: (1) in-depth open-ended interviews; (2) direct observation; (3) written documents” (p. 4).
Qualitative findings may be presented alone or in combination with quantitative data, but the clear understanding of the differences is that qualitative research is preferred when research makes its meaning and understanding through description and narrative, whereas quantitative research determines to make its meaning and understanding through the use of numbers (Patton, 2015). Because of the nature and purpose of this study, the use of the quantitative approach was not applicable nor appropriate. The use of the quantitative approach involves the possible measure of the reactions and statistical aggregation of data and does not seek the understanding or meaning of the driving behaviors (Patton, 2015).

**Methodology**

Numerous research design methodologies were investigated and considered, but the approach of qualitative research that was deemed the most appropriate method for this study was qualitative research design. Qualitative research design methods slightly differ and are distinct from those used in quantitative methods because the gathering of data is emphasized regarding the gathering of naturally occurring phenomena (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

These data are then gathered in a format of words instead of numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). One of the qualities of qualitative research design is that the essential character or nature of something is what is observed and does not try to change or manipulate the surroundings or environment, rather qualitative research design explores and conducts natural real-world setting research (Roberts, 2010). The collaboration of thematic researchers decided ultimately on a phenomenological approach. Thematic researchers are a team of novice researchers who can be described as a think tank with a shared topic, idea, patterns, and opinions using a step-by-step manner
to create a thematic analysis of qualitative research (Roberts, 2010). Thematic researchers are allowed the flexibility regarding the choice of the theoretical framework for any theory chosen for the study (Patton, 2015). The approach of the qualitative phenomenological research method allows the thematic team members to collaborate and explore the depth and breadth of meaning and understanding of experiences on an everyday basis (Patton, 2015).

**Rationale**

Phenomenology describes the meaning of a lived experience, puts aside all judgement, and begins making sense out of a particular experience or situation through the collection of data, which helps with bringing clarity to what is happening (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). With the collaboration of the doctoral chair and thematic team members, the idea and opportunity to research a concept of commonality presents itself as appealing to the thematic team. The thematic approach was selected to study how K-12 leaders perceive the importance of Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership to create a culture of high performance.

The team of thematic researchers agreed to the use of interviews, observations, and artifacts with differentiated subjects and samples from various populations. The use of the phenomenological study technique is ideal for the researcher to conduct interviews that are lengthy and informative with the subjects understanding their own perspective, which allows for the researcher to then capture the lived experience (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). During the researchers’ thematic cohort meetings, the discussion and consideration of methodology deemed most appropriate for this type of study was a mixed method or a phenomenological study. After a collaborative group discussion, it
was determined that the focal point of the study would be based on a school or school district that was led by an administrator (vice/assistant principal, principal, or superintendent) who had developed a culture of high performance within the educational setting.

**Population**

A population, as defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), is “a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to which we intend to generalize the results of the research” (p. 129). The population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristics, for example all principals would make up the population of principals, and all teachers would make up the population of teachers (Creswell, 2012). The population can also be a collective group with characteristics that are similar in every aspect that can then be generalized by a researcher in regard to a particular study (Roberts, 2010). The population for this thematic study represented high school principals in California. According to the California Department of Education (2020a), there are 1,322 high school principals in charge of public high schools in California. Therefore, the population for this study was the 1,322 high school principals in California.

**Sample Frame**

The sampling frame represents the total group of individuals from which the study’s sample could be drawn (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The sampling frame for this study was narrowed to high school principals from high schools within Los Angeles County, California. In Los Angeles County, there are 400 high school principals leading public high schools, according to the California Department of Education (2020b).
Therefore, the sampling frame was high school principals from 400 schools in Los Angeles County, California. The county of Los Angeles was chosen because of its proximity to the researcher.

**Sample**

Creswell (2012) defined a sample as a subgroup of the sample frame or as a small percentage of the population in total. Within the smaller sampling frame, the researcher can generalize the population targeted and select a sample of either individual representatives or an entire population (Creswell, 2012). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) noted that the important information critical to researchers is to “define carefully both the sampling frame and the target population” (p. 129). The sampling frame can represent the totality of the group or narrow its focus to an individual for whom the data will be collected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

This study focused on how high school principals perceived the importance of Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership to create a culture of high performance. The researcher used nonprobability, purposive sampling to select the sample of eight high school principals. For the purpose of selecting the sample for this study participants were selected from schools that demonstrated a growth trend over the past 2 years as indicated by the California Dashboard within the state and local indicators such as academic achievement and attendance and met four of the following five criteria.

1. The principal was employed at a high school within Los Angeles County with a minimum of 50 staff members.

2. The principal participant possesses a minimum of 2 or 3 years of site leadership experience.
3. The principal has a minimum of 5 years’ experience in the K-12 profession.

4. The principal holds memberships in professional associations in their field, such as the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA).

5. The principal has had articles, paper, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings.

In this research study, eight high school principals were selected out of the 400 high school principals within Los Angeles County, according to the California Department of Education (2020b). Based on the criteria for selecting these unique participants, purposive sampling was used. The use of purposive sampling involved participants who were selected because they possessed the elements that were uniquely particular to the population characteristics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

**Sample Selection Process**

All of the principals who were selected were school leaders in various school districts within Los Angeles County. The researcher contacted principals within districts with comprehensive high schools that were perceived to have had a culture of high performance based upon the two measures of student performance in English language arts (ELA) and math and chronic absenteeism. The prospective participants were contacted by email or telephone call to their office. Many of the calls were directed to their executive assistants for scheduling of the interview time. If a prospective principal chose to participate, he or she was notified that he or she would receive an informed consent form (Appendix B). Figure 3 represents a summary of the population, sampling frame, and sample.
Instrumentation

In this study the researcher conducted all of the interviews, viewed all of the observations, and reviewed all of the collected artifacts. The researcher worked in the field of K-12 education for over 20 years, 10 years as a school and district-level administrator. Additionally, the researcher has worked in five of the school districts located in the area of study within Los Angeles County. The researcher was used as an instrument for data collection and analysis for this qualitative research through in-depth interviews. A phenomenological interview focuses on capturing the lived experience of participants by evoking anecdotal accounts and stories through informal, interactive interviews (Patton, 2015). A caution of interviews, however, is the potential for subjectivity and bias (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010), so measures were taken to reduce bias in the study by developing an interview protocol, finalizing interview questions with expert researchers, and piloting a field test with an experienced public school principal and experienced researchers.

The thematic team, along with the two faculty advisors, collectively developed semistructured questions aligned to the research questions. Semi-structured questions are open-ended questions, specific in their intent, which allow respondents to answer individually (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The faculty advisors created working
groups by assigning a group of two people, two of the seven constructs from Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs. The individual groups were tasked to develop two interview questions and one probe for each construct. Probes are used to seek further clarification or elaboration and should be neutral so as not to affect the response (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The thematic team created an alignment table (Appendix E) to ensure alignment of the interview questions to the research questions. Individual groups shared their questions and probes with the collective group and were evaluated using the alignment table. This process resulted in a draft interview protocol consisting of 14 interview questions and seven probes.

The two faculty advisors, who were considered experts in qualitative research, reviewed the research protocol and approved the use of the protocol in a field test to evaluate the effectiveness of the interview questions. Each team member administered a field test to a similar population of each team member’s study. The field test also included an observer, skilled in qualitative interviews, to provide feedback on the process and questions. The thematic team brought the collective interviews back to the team, and along with the advisors, revised the questions and probes and finalized the interview protocol (Appendix C) to be used in the research study.

**Researcher as an Instrument of the Study**

When conducting qualitative research, the researcher becomes an instrument of the study. Patton (2015) stated, “During field-work the research spends time in the setting under study, makes firsthand observations of activities and interactions, sometimes engaging personally in those activities as a participant observer” (p. 14). For this study, the researcher guided all participant interviews and participated in all other necessary
data collection methods of the study. Upon the completion of all interviews, the researcher provided each participant with interview transcripts to confirm accuracy and intent of gathered interview information. The researcher of this study has worked in education for over 20 years and in an educational leadership role for over 10 years. Additionally, he has conducted well over 100 interviews because of hiring and investigations as part of his leadership roles and responsibilities.

**Validity**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the term *validity* means “the degree to which scientific explanations of phenomena match reality” (p. 134). It also refers to “the truthfulness of findings and conclusions” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 134). Although validity can refer to how an instrument or study can and does measure for truthful conclusions, the failure in not having a valid measured study can lead to study contamination (Patton, 2015). To deter and reduce bias and contamination, the following procedures were used: (a) questions were created and developed by the thematic team of eight peer researchers and two faculty members and (b) the two thematic chairs were the qualified observers who monitored and collected all the field tests for signs of bias based upon how the research questions were asked.

As a part of the qualitative study, the researcher as the instrument of study now becomes part of the qualitative study process (Seidman, 2006). The researcher will ask questions, as well as respond to the participants, and be a crucial part of the two-way conversations with prospective principals. The researcher will also collect the data, perform an analysis of the data, and make an interpretation of the data while they are
being collected during the study. In all, the researcher will be an important factor in the meaning-making process of the study (Seidman, 2006).

**Field Test**

A field test was conducted with a high school principal who met the criteria of the sample but was not a part of the study. Field tests, also known as “pilot tests,” are used to ensure that the researcher obtains the correct decision-making data (Patton, 2015). The field test helps with the mitigation issues that can enable a researcher to identify and correct any problems that may arise (Patton, 2015). Within the field test, both the content and process data collection and the instrument data help the researcher to identify and correct problems (Patton, 2015).

These eight field-test interviews conducted by the eight thematic team researchers were called “pilot interviews” and were used to gauge the neutrality and effectiveness of the interview protocol. The pilot group received the exact documents as were given to the sample population. The information given included the cover letter, the interview questions, the administration instructions, the electronic informed consent, and the interview protocol itself. After the pilot interview was conducted, the researcher asked the pilot interviewee to provide feedback using a set of reflective questions (Appendix E).

The participants’ comments, suggestions, and concerns were noted, and changes were made accordingly. Furthermore, during the pilot interviews, an expert who observed was used to provide feedback. The expert had been a school and district-level administrator for over 20 years and had obtained his doctorate in education partially through completion of a dissertation in which he used interviews to obtain his data. After the completion of the pilot interview, the researcher asked the expert observer for
feedback using a set of reflective inquiry questions (Appendix E). The thematic students collected further feedback based upon the expert observer’s feedback, and the revisions were agreed to as a group.

**Reliability**

According to Patton (2015), the level of agreement between two or more independent researchers is referred to as reliability. The thematic team of eight peer researchers studied Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership as it relates to K-12 leaders’ perceptions about the importance of the seven constructs to create a culture of high-performance. Each of the thematic team researchers used the same purpose statement, central research question, and research design within the team researcher’s individual research studies. The thematic team met to share ideas and collaborate in triads and dyads within the thematic team to develop information regarding different emerging themes and the data coding process.

**Internal Reliability of Data**

Creswell (2012) stated that “the scores from an instrument are reliable and accurate in an individual’s scores are internally consistent across the items on the instrument” (p. 161). The internal reliability of the data depends on the instrument that is being used to collect the data (Creswell, 2012). The interview questions developed for the study can only be used once per principal, and there is only one version of the instrument being used throughout the study (Creswell, 2012). Also, each participant in the study must complete the instrument being used to gather data.

The importance of internal reliability of the data assists with the triangulation across the different data sources collected during the study to help reduce biases and
strengthen the research (Patton, 2015). The triangulation also assists with checking for consistency and helps identify results that are similar (Patton, 2015). This thematic study used interviews, artifacts, and field notes for review to check for consistency and improve the internal reliability of the data. Each participant was provided with his or her own transcript of the interview to help further the reliability and assist with accuracy of information collected.

**Data Collection**

The researcher obtained permission from the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) through a detailed online process (Appendix F). The BUIRB reviews all research projects involving humans, approving only research that maintains professional standards. Once the researcher’s committee approved Chapters I–III of this study, the BUIRB application process was the last step of approval required prior to initial data collection. After receiving approval from the review board, the researcher conducted interviews of the public high school principals. Because of the nature of this study and the collection of data being primarily through interviews of professional adults, this study fell under minimal risk within the BUIRB process. Upon approval from the BUIRB, the principals were contacted by the researcher sharing with the principals the implicit intent, purpose, benefit, and risk regarding the study. Each participant was then sent a corresponding cover letter explaining and outlining the information gathered and how this information will be used for the purpose of the study being conducted. The researcher also included the informed consent, Brandman Bill of Rights, and a copy of the interview questions.
Data were then collected through recorded virtual Zoom and phone interviews during the months of October and November of 2020, along with the recorded written transcripts for accuracy. The interview questions were previously mailed to the participants prior to the scheduled interview. Each participant was then sent reminder emails prior to the interview date that was agreed upon. Each participant was asked to reserve an interview time of 45–60 min for the interview. Following the review of the transcripts of the interviewees for accuracy, the data were coded by the researcher for themes. The theme data were entered into the NVivo software. The data collection for the study was primarily interview questions since this study was conducted virtually due to the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic. However, the researcher did include observations from the virtual interview and artifacts.

Email Correspondence

A follow-up email was sent to qualifying principals who met the purposeful, sampling criterion and agreed to voluntarily participate in this study. The email confirmed the scheduled interview date and time. It also confirmed the location of the interview. The researcher then sent a follow-up email as a reminder to each participant prior to the mutually agreed upon interview date. The interviewees were made aware that follow-up interviews might have been necessary as trends emerged in the data and further clarification was required.

Interview Process

The interview protocol began with an introduction of the research, which included information on the doctoral program, and stated the purpose of the study. The interviewee was asked to review and acknowledge his or her agreement to the informed consent
(Appendix B) and provided the Bill of Rights (Appendix D). Interviewees were informed that the interview would be audio recorded for the researcher’s ease in transcription. Along with audio recording, the researcher notified interviewees that handwritten notes would be taken throughout the interview.

The standardized interview language was predetermined prior to the interview developed by the thematic team in order to create consistency among cases and used to encourage constructive responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Several questions were considered in the interview of principals, all regarding the implementation of Patterson’s (2003) constructs of servant leadership to create a culture and climate of high performance in a high school setting. Using direct data collection, the researcher interviewed participants using a scripted interview and recorded responses directly from the data sources within a sample of the population. Prefatory statements were given to support the flow of the interview. Utilizing probing questions, the researcher encouraged in-depth interview responses, enhancing the quality of meaning from the interview responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Interviewing was completed based on research participants’ availability. No particular order was used in scheduling the interview dates and times. An interview schedule was built once all participants had confirmed their individual interview appointments. The end of the interview included closing remarks, thanking the interviewee for his or her time and willingness to contribute to research, and a reminder that the researcher may need a short follow-up interview for clarification of answers relevant to the analysis.
The research for this study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic and all data collection was completed virtually. This limited the ability of the researcher for collection of observational data. However, the researcher looked for facial expressions and gestures during the interview process. Observations were recorded by the researcher as field notes, which were “text recorded by the researcher during an observation in a qualitative study” (Creswell, 2008, p. 224).

**Artifacts**

Artifacts were the third type of data collected and the final component of triangulation to increase validity in this study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), “Artifacts are tangible manifestations that describe people’s experiences, knowledge, actions, and values” (p. 361). The researcher collected artifacts by searching the schools’ websites and requesting the participants to provide artifact documents. Participant to included samples of vision and mission statements, communications with stakeholders, and other documents available to the researcher that would indicate the importance of the seven constructs to the school’s culture of high performance.

**Data Analysis**

According to Patton (2015), “The data analysis that is involved with organizing each interview calls for in-depth study and comparison, much like case study analysis” (p. 47). As a phenomenological study, each interview from the selected principals is to be looked at like a case that needs to be analyzed. Roberts (2010) indicated that the strategies for coding data may vary among researchers. The thematic researchers used the intercoder strategy to code and support reliability of the findings.
Intercoder Reliability

In addition to pilot testing the interview questions and the field test of the interview protocol, a research expert was used to review a sample of the transcribed interview data to add interrater reliability to the study. This expert had earned a doctorate and has had experience with qualitative research by conducting analyses of interview transcripts using the NVivo software. Interrater reliability is the use of one or more researchers to independently analyze and code data to establish more consistency in the findings (Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman, & Marteau, 1997; Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002; Patton, 2015). The researcher and the research expert met to compare their independent analyses comparing one participant interview transcript using the following process recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018).

1. Researcher shared the NVivo transcript coding with the interrater coder.
2. The independent coder reviewed the transcript and coding, providing feedback to the researcher regarding the alignment of codes developed from the transcript by the researcher.
3. Researcher and independent coder process ensured an 80% or higher agreement in the coded data.

Analysis

The data coding for this phenomenological study involved two primary steps: coding for themes and scanning codes for frequency of recurring themes. The interviews were transcribed and coded developing frequency tables to organize themes using NVivo. All data from artifacts and observations (field notes) were coded manually with the
assistance of an Excel program and tables to be used for data analysis in Chapter IV.,
were coded within the frequency tables.

**Limitations**

According to Roberts (2010), “Limitations are particular features of your study
that you know may negatively affect the results of your ability to generalize” (p. 121).
Additionally, she stated, “Limitations are usually areas over which you have no control”
(Roberts, 2010, p. 162). The limitations of the study are stated for the reader to determine
for him or herself the degree to which the limitations affect the study. This study was
limited to principals of high schools within Los Angeles County, which covers a square
radius of 4,084 square miles of land area in California. Within Los Angeles County there
are approximately 78 school districts and 400 high schools, according to the California

Participants were selected high schools within Los Angeles County. There were
eight participants who represented principals who were selected from schools that
demonstrated a growth trend over the past 2 years as indicated by the California
Dashboard within the state and local indicators such as academic achievement and
attendance and met four of the five selection criteria.

Because of the many privacy acts placed on school employees, which protect the
rights of students’ information as well as that of the adults within the school, along with
other legalities, liabilities, and confidentialities, some information was not disclosed to
the public. Therefore, some participants may have been skeptical or cautious regarding
the answering of some questions, especially if their answers involved a story about an
incident or a moment in time within the school. The study was therefore limited to the
information and answers that were willingly shared by the participants. Because of the current state “Stay at Home Order” of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the interviews were completed through a distance learning platform.

**Time**

In every ideal situation within research, access to an unlimited time schedule with unlimited resources would be an ideal situation. According to Patton (2015), this allows the researcher to be more comfortable with obtaining the needed research outcomes. Before data collection could be completed, approval from BUIRB was needed, and data collection could not begin until approval was granted. Data collection began within the months of August and December during the beginning of school for many of the participating principals, which caused the limiting of time available to conduct interviews and gather artifacts. All interviews were limited to 45–60 minutes. More participants would have produced a broader view, but with the thematic team as a whole completing the study overall, stronger themes emerged.

**Sample Size**

The sample size for the thematic phenomenological study was eight exemplary principals who were selected to be interviewed for this study. The thematic team, which was composed of eight researchers, selected the size of the sample through the use of emails, cohort meetings, and team discussions regarding the participants’ work schedules and limited availability, and also the need to collect enough research data in selecting the sample size. The small sample size, according to Creswell (2012), can provide valuable information on the chosen study and can help with the mitigation of potential bias and influencing actions of the researcher.
**Geography**

Los Angeles County has over 78 school districts and 400 high schools, according to the California Department of Education (2020b) as of the 2018-2019 accounting year. The geographical location extended to cover a square radius of 4,084 square miles of land area in California. The scheduling of interviews, meetings, or the performance of observations, or walk-throughs within the schools, and meeting with the principals were determined based on proximity to the researcher who resided in the city of Long Beach, California, which is a part of Los Angeles County.

**Summary**

Chapter III, the methodology, contained an explanation of the approach used in this phenomenological qualitative study. The collected data were used to describe how high school principals created cultures of high performance through the use and adoption of Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership. This chapter identified the purpose statement, research questions, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter IV reviews the findings of the collected data and also discusses outcomes in more depth. Chapter V addresses the major findings, conclusions, and implications based on the Chapter IV data analysis.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This phenomenological study identified and described high school principals’ perceived impact of the seven servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance. The chapter summarizes the data collected from eight interviews with high school principals. The chapter begins with a review of the purpose of the study, research questions, and methodology. Next, the chapter includes tables illustrating the themes and patterns collected and analyzed for each interview. Chapter IV concludes with a summary analysis of the findings from all eight interviews.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe the high school principals’ perceived impact of the seven 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 in high schools as perceived by high school principals?

Subquestions

1. What is the impact of the agapao love leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?
2. What is the impact of the humility leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

3. What is the impact of the altruism leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

4. What is the impact of the vision leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

5. What is the impact of the trust leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

6. What is the impact of the empowerment leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

7. What is the impact of the service leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

**Population**

A population as defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) is “a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to which we intend to generalize the results of the research” (p. 129). The population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristics, for example all principals would then make up the population of principals, and all teachers would then make up the population of teachers (Creswell, 2012). The population can also be a “collective group,” with characteristics that are similar in every aspect, that can then be generalized by a researcher in regard to a particular study (Roberts, 2010). The population for this thematic study represented high school principals in California. According to the California Department of Education (2020a), there are 1,322 high school principals in
charge of public high schools in California. Therefore, the population for this study was
the 1,322 high school principals in California.

Sample

Creswell (2012) defined a sample as a subgroup of the sample frame or as a small
percentage of the population in total. Within the small population, the researcher can
generalize about the population targeted and select a sample of either individual
representatives or an entire population (Creswell, 2012). McMillan and Schumacher
(2010) noted that the important information critical to researchers is to “define carefully
both the sampling frame and the target population” (p. 129). For this study, the sampling
frame was 400 high school principals from within Los Angeles County. Figure 3
illustrates the population, sample frame, and sample used in the study.

This study focused on how high school principals perceived the importance of
Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership to create a culture of high
performance. The researcher used nonprobability, purposive sampling to select the
sample of eight high school principals. For the purpose of selecting the sample for this
study, participants were selected from schools that demonstrated a growth trend over the
past 2 years as indicated by the California Dashboard within the state and local
indicators, such as academic achievement and attendance, and met four of the following five criteria:

1. The principal was employed at a high school within Los Angeles County with a minimum of 50 staff members.

2. The principal participant possesses a minimum of 2 or 3 years of site leadership experience.

3. The principal has a minimum of 5 years’ experience in the K-12 profession.

4. The principal holds memberships in professional associations in their field, such as the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA).

5. The principal has had articles, paper, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings

In this research study, eight high school principals were selected out of the 400 high school principals within Los Angeles County according to the California Department of Education (2020b). Based on the criteria for selecting these unique participants, purposive sampling was used. The use of purposive sampling involves participants who were selected because they possessed the elements that are uniquely particular to the population characteristics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

**Methodology and Data Collection Procedures**

Numerous research design methodologies were investigated and considered, and qualitative research design was deemed the most appropriate method for this study. Qualitative research design methods slightly differ and are distinct from those used in quantitative methods because the gathering of data is emphasized regarding the gathering of data for naturally occurring phenomena (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). These data
are then gathered in a format of words instead of numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

One of the qualities of qualitative research design is that the essential character or nature of something is what is observed and does not try to change or manipulate the surroundings or environment, rather qualitative research design explores and conducts natural real-world setting research (Roberts, 2010). The collaboration of thematic researchers decided ultimately on a phenomenological approach. Thematic researchers are a team of novice researchers who can be described as a think tank, with a shared topic, idea, patterns, and opinions, using a step-by-step manner to create a thematic analysis of qualitative research. Thematic researchers are allowed the flexibility regarding the choice of the theoretical framework, but any theory can be chosen for the study (Patton, 2015). The approach of the qualitative phenomenological research method allows the thematic team members to collaborate and explore the depth and breadth of meaning and understanding of experiences on an everyday basis (Patton, 2015).

Upon approval from the BUIRB, the principals were contacted by the researcher who shared with them the implicit intent, purpose, benefit, and risk regarding the study. Each participant was then sent a corresponding cover letter explaining and outlining the information gathered and how this information was to be used for the purpose of the study being conducted. The researcher also included the informed consent, Brandman Researcher’s Bill of Rights, and a copy of the interview questions. Data were then collected through recorded virtual Zoom interviews along with the recorded written transcripts for accuracy. The interview questions were previously e-mailed to the participants prior to the scheduled interview. Each participant was then sent reminder e-
mails prior to the interview date that was agreed upon. Each participant was asked to reserve an interview time of 45 to 60 minutes or the interview. Following the review of the transcripts of the interviewees for accuracy, the data were coded by the researcher for themes. The themed data were then entered into the NVivo software.

**Interview Process and Procedures**

The interview protocol began with an introduction of the research, which included information about the doctoral program and stated the purpose of the study. The standardized interview language was predetermined prior to the interview developed by the thematic team in order to create consistency among cases and was used to encourage constructive responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Several questions were considered in the interview of principals, all regarding the implementation of Patterson’s (2003) constructs of servant leadership to create a culture and climate of high performance in a high school setting. Using direct data collection, the researcher interviewed participants using a scripted interview and recorded responses directly from the data sources within a sample of the population. Prefatory statements were given to support the flow of the interview. Utilizing probing questions, the researcher encouraged in-depth interview responses, enhancing the quality of meaning from the interview responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Interviewing was completed based on research participants’ availability. No particular order was used in scheduling the interview dates and times. An interview schedule was built once all participants had confirmed individual interview appointments. The end of the interview included closing remarks, thanking the interviewee for his or her
time and willingness to contribute to research, and a reminder that the researcher may need a small follow-up interview for clarification of answers relevant to the analysis.

**Demographic Data**

Eight high school principals were selected for the study. All high school principals in this study led comprehensive high schools throughout Los Angeles County. Each study participant was assigned a number in order to maintain confidentiality. Further, the names of their organizations were not used in the study. Seventy percent of the study participants were female. The average age range of the study participants was 40–50 years old. The longest years of service in the profession was 42 years. Table 1 highlights the demographic data of each participant. All study participants exceeded the minimum requirements of the thematic research team’s ideals of high-performing criteria for high school principals.

Table 1

*Demographics of High School Principals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Years in the profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>65–75</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40–50</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>50–60</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>45–55</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40–50</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>65–75</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>40–50</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>45–55</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Study Participant Criteria**

A high school with a culture of high performance is defined as a district that has demonstrated a growth trend over the past 2 years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of English language arts, mathematics, suspension
rate, and graduation rate; or one that has high performance as evidenced by scoring in the blue or green category for 2 consecutive years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of English language arts, mathematics, suspension rate, and graduation rate. Table 2 illustrates that all of the participants met the previously established criteria-based data from the California Dashboard and their response to the required criteria.

Table 2

*Study Participant Criteria*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study participant</th>
<th>Min 5 years in profession</th>
<th>Successful relationship w/followers</th>
<th>Leading successful organizations</th>
<th>Publications</th>
<th>Recognition by peers</th>
<th>Member in professional organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

The findings outlined in this chapter were obtained from content generated by the study participants. As highlighted in the interview sessions, the selected high school principals shared their lived experiences as educational leaders as related to Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership.

**Data Analysis**

The purpose of qualitative research is to assist in discovering patterns within the studied data through examination that helps make sense of the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The interview transcripts were uploaded into NVivo 12, a web-based
software program that assists with the aggregation of collected data. The researcher used NVivo to identify and track codes and themes from the interviewee transcription data. The researcher also coded the observation notes and artifacts when applicable as part of the data analysis. This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and there were limited observations and artifacts due to the social distancing requirements and use of virtual interviews.

After the completion of the coding process, the themes for each construct subquestion were identified, and the frequencies to determine the relevance were collected for each theme. According to McMillian and Schumacher (2010), the themes are in exact relationship to the conceptual framework of the research. The process of coding allows the researcher to learn and understand the traits and behaviors in which high school principals engage to lead their schools that exhibit a culture of high performance using Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership. For themes to be included in the study, they needed to be referenced by a minimum of six (75%) of the participants. Additionally, a theme needed to represent a minimum of 20% or more of all data coded within a construct. These criteria resulted in a total of 14 themes qualifying to be included in the study.

**Interrater Reliability**

For this thematic study, an interrater agreement with a peer researcher was established to determine accuracy of the themes identified from the data collection. The purpose of the agreement was to discover the extent to which two or more researchers consistently rated their observations of the research data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Similar consistencies and patterns identified between both researchers were used
to develop variables and related codes. Ten percent of the coding from this study was analyzed by a peer researcher. The peer researcher independently coded frequencies from one of the interviews, with a 90% agreement, indicating reliable coding. The researchers used the NVivo (Version 12) as the instrument to document and code their findings.

**Research Central Question and Subquestion Results**

The thematic research team, in design of the study’s purpose and research questions, created an interview protocol containing 14 questions. The coding of all data sources resulted in the development of 16 themes and 329 frequencies related to Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership: agapao love, altruism, empowerment, vision, humility, service, and trust. Each construct produced two or three major themes. Figure 4 highlights an aggregate overview of the frequency and percentage count that emerged from each servant leadership construct. Figure 5 highlights the themes in each construct. Within the constructs themselves, agapao love had the highest frequency count of 57, which accounted for 17% of the data, followed by trust, which also accounted for 17% of the data but had a slightly lower frequency count by only one at 56. Next, was vision, which accounted for 15% of the data and had a frequency count of 48. Humility had a frequency count of 45 and accounted for 14% of the data, and both service and altruism were tied with the frequency being 43 each and the accounted data both being 13%. The lowest of all of the constructs was empowerment, which accounted for 11% of the data and a frequency count of 37.
**Figure 4.** Frequency and percentage in each servant leadership construct.

**Figure 5.** Number of themes in each construct.
The following section provides an analysis for each of the study’s seven research subquestions. The analysis is presented per each subquestion and includes themes aligned to each of the respective constructs. The themes are organized by the number of frequencies for the identified themes.

**Agapao Love: Research Theme Results**

*What is the impact of the agapao love leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?*

The peer research team defined agapao love as to do the right thing for the right reasons. Agapao love leaders care more for their followers than for the interests of the organization, resulting in greater understanding, gratitude, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion (Gunn, 2002; Patterson, 2003). The coding process resulted in identifying two themes related to servant leadership and the impact of the agapao leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance. The construct was referenced 57 times by the eight study participants, which represented 17% of the data. In addition, the agapao love themes yielded three artifact sources (meeting documents regarding the schools sunshine committee for self-care, staff discussion regarding COVID-19 in the workplace, and food pantry for families). The construct also yielded two observation sources (observed self-care media training regarding the effects of COVID-19 and COVID-19 PPE [Personal protective equipment] training) resulting in the highest frequency counts of all constructs in the study. Table 3 and Figure 6 illustrate the two themes that emerged from the agapao love theme for servant leadership.
Table 3

*Themes and Frequencies for Agapao Love*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>% Based on N</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Total sources</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate of care</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership that focuses on others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The N for interview participants = 8.

![Figure 6. Themes and frequencies for agapao love.](image)

**Climate of care.** The climate of care theme was referenced 36 times in eight sources and represented 63.16% of the information related to the servant leadership construct of agapao love. The theme also produced a shared high with another construct regarding the frequency count for the servant leadership construct of agapao love. Each of the participants shared their individual experiences regarding the climate of care theme during the interview process. The one-on-one interview process of the high school principals shared the common practice of the importance of creating the climate of care within their schools.
Each principal discussed how having a genuine manner of concerns for their staff, students, and parents must be at the forefront of serving others. They each articulated that the need for compassion, kindness, and patience must be shown from a leadership level and then displayed for all to see and learn from.

Participant 1 shared similar examples of the importance of showing how having a genuine manner of concerns for their staff, students, and parents must be at the forefront of serving others. Participant 1 stated that “they displayed and shares their ideals of agapao love by focusing on the care for others whenever possible as a part of the school’s culture.” Participant 2 stated,

The most important way to demonstrate agapao love is to show care and concern in a genuine manner for the person of concern. Another way to demonstrate agapao love is to opt for kindness, kind works, and a positive disposition. These will most often yield positive outcomes and interactions. People can be their true selves when they have a climate of care and concern that they operate in and will always put their best efforts forth in those situations.

Participant 3 expressed that “in order to work together, we must be able to show compassion and have a genuine interest and concern for all that are involved to be successful.”

Because servant leadership, according to Greenleaf (1977), calls for a leader to care for others as much and ideally more than themselves, high school principals who strive to be servant leaders will prompt the care and attention need for all to be a stronger team and organization through encouragement, service, and support. During the interview process, Participant 4 expressed that “as a leader, my care for others’ well-being and
compassion for others’ concerns allows others on the team to also be led by caring for others.” Participant 4 communicated,

The most important way to demonstrate agapao love is to be passionate about what you do. The second would be to lead with care in order to create a climate of care. When you are a servant leader, it is important to support staff and demonstrate that you care about not only their well-being their family’s well-being as well. You want to demonstrate to staff that you value their contribution to the organization mission and vision and that their selflessness to see others achieve is all you could ever want to see as a leader.

**Leadership that focuses on others.** This theme was referenced 21 times in eight sources and represented 36.84% of the information related to the agapao love servant leadership construct. This theme produced the lowest frequency count for the agapao love construct. The prevalent theme was based on participant input circles regarding the need to be able to see the greater good for others. There is also a need for listening to each voice and understanding that it is about the group allowing for servant leaders to channel their agapao love to focus their leadership qualities to promote and uplift other (Spears, 1996).

This was highlighted in the lived experiences shared by Participant 5 that “through agapao love we will be able to acknowledge the differences in order to reach our common goal.” Participant 5 shared, “The need for having those critical conversations to develop positive working relationships helps us to create and model good practices that are based on love and respect.” Participant 6 stated “that leaders need to adapt agapao love to help with leading for the sake of progress and growth.”
Participant 8 shared, “To lead others, agapao love must come from the top and, then leads to a stronger team and a stronger organization with a focus giving attention to your followers’ needs and growth points.” Participant 7 also echoed “the need for leaders to be open to all stakeholder ideas and strategies and a have an open mind and heart to listen so you can then lead.”

**Trust: Research Theme Results**

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

For this study, trust 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). Trust was tied with agapao love with the frequency at 17% of the data yet ranked second in the total number of references at 56. Table 4 and Figure 7 illustrate the two themes that emerged for the servant leadership construct of trust.

**Table 4**

*Themes and Frequencies for Trust*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>% Based on N</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Total sources</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrity and care of others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The need to be honest, fair and ethical</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. The N for interview participants = 8.*
Integrity and care of others. This theme was most frequently referenced for the construct of trust at 62.50% of the data. The theme was referenced 35 times with 100% of the study participants who shared their experiences related to the theme. It was indicated by all that within the construct of trust, the integrity needed to care for all students, families, and stakeholders to affect a school culture and climate is an essential need to create a culture of success (Spears, 1996).

Participant 8 expressed, “Creating an open dialog built on trust allows for successful teams to be built.” Participant 8 also stated that “the focus of care for all that are involved puts their needs and interests at the forefront of creating a culture of success.” Participant 4 shared that “a leader must have integrity and purpose to create personal relationships that can develop positive growth within your employees.”

Participant 2 shared,

The growing and learning from others create a level of trust in people to do their jobs without micromanagement or creating controlling variables and then allows leaders to listen to all voices so that shared decisions are what drive success.
Participant 7 stated that “the development of trust within each other as well as respect for the diversity of others allows for the shared common vision and purpose to be adapted and lived out by all.”

**The need to be honest, fair, and ethical.** This theme was the second most referenced of the trust construct at 21 times from eight sources and represented 37.50%. According to Jeyaraj and Gandolfi (2019), schools and organizations must develop working levels of trust within their different systems to create constant effectiveness to develop and cultivate a culture of success. One hundred percent of the study participants shared their experiences related to this theme based on their interviews. Participant 1 shared that “a leader gains credibility with his/her followers by gaining credibility through good deeds, honest and clear communication, and a willingness to engage all in a very supportive manner.” Participant 3 stated,

Honesty from a leader’s standpoint is you must always say what you mean and mean what you say, and to be transparent regarding what you will do as a leader and will not do as a leader and always share why. The need for having a rationale behind all of your decisions and being able to provide the rationale through constant communication creates transparency in successful teams.

Participant 5 shared that “a leader should ask for constructive criticism to always reevaluate themselves and their ideas to be in alignment with the ethical ideals of serving others.” Participant 6 discussed,

A leader must have a mission-driven mindset in order to create the pathways for success. This type success that is thrived from a shared mission and vision is
related to trust and how the value of trust in all to be on one accord helps with creating deliverables that will serve those that need them.

**Vision: Research Theme Results**

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

For this study, vision is 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 challenges (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, 2016; Landsberg, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 1993; Nanus, 1992). The theme was unique in this study due to the fact that it was the only construct by which the percentage of data used within the construct was even at 50% with a total of 48 frequencies gathered from the construct data. This made the vision construct the third highest of the seven constructs. In addition, the vision themes yielded one artifact source, a copy of the professional development agenda giving clarification of the vision and purpose of implementing the use of data, and one observation source, a recorded professional development PowerPoint to staff regarding using data to develop a reading intervention plan. Table 5 and Figure 8 illustrate the two themes that emerged for the servant leadership construct of vision.

Table 5

*Themes and Frequencies for Vision*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>% Based on N</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Total sources</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of purpose and direction</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision for success</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The *N* for interview participants = 8.


**Figure 8.** Themes and frequencies for vision.

**Clarity of purpose and direction.** This theme was referenced 24 times with 100% of the study participants, which equated to 50% of the data for the vision construct. Participant 1 stated that “the achievement of set goals and aims of an organization can lead to high levels of performance.” Participant 2 shared that “having a shared vision can lead to further alignment with a result of continued success with clear pathways for goals to be set and achieved.” Participant 3 discussed in the interview how “a clear purpose and direction helps to unify everyone by empowering others to create measurable growth, goals, and outcomes for to support a cycle of trust.” Participant 4 shared that “we as educational leaders can then create the path for continued success and create goals for high performance when the team’s purpose and actions are clear.”

**Vision for success.** This theme was referenced 24 times, which also equated to 50% of the data for the vision construct. Participant 5 shared,
When the school vision is prioritized, you see all stakeholders in the organization working toward a shared goal. The staff, principal, parents, teachers, students, support staff, and community members all join together to work and meet the needs of the students being served. You see all members of the school community looking forward, trying to motivate, working to unify everyone in order to achieve the best for the students within the school.

Participant 6 stated that “the vision should drive the establishment of culture of high performance, but only when all stakeholders are involved in creating that vision.”

Participant 7 shared that “the vision helped the organization and the leadership stay focused on serving high-needs students and withstand the challenge of serving easier students.” Participant 8 shared that “when we prioritize the vision, we see our leaders leading teachers and finding ways to increase student learning outcomes.”

**Humility: Research Theme Results**

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

For this study, humility was defined as understanding 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 (Oh et al., 2014). Table 6 illustrates the two themes that emerged for the servant leadership construct of humility. The two themes in this construct had a total of 45 frequencies with a difference of 1.11 within the variables of the number of constructs with the acknowledge support and celebrate others being the theme that gathered the most themes.
at 23 frequencies. Trends throughout this theme suggested that to be an effective leader who works to empower others, the person who leads as a servant leader must have a level of humility and trust developed in every relationship created in order to transfer the need of serving to others (Bushell, 2019). Table 6 and Figure 9 illustrate the two themes that emerged for the servant leadership construct of humility.

Table 6

*Themes and Frequencies for Humility*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>% Based on N</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Total sources</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge, support, and celebrate others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being available to others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The N for interview participants = 8.

*Figure 9.* Themes and frequencies for humility.
Acknowledge, support, and celebrate others. This theme was the most frequently referenced for the construct of humility with 51.11% of the data. This theme was also referenced 23 times, which led between the themes under the humility construct. Participant 1 shared,

Staff and teachers need often take priority over my own needs. This is mostly reflected in collaborating with schedules and working around their schedule instead of mine. I often stop working on my own priorities to help them address their own needs or questions.

Participant 7 stated,

The staff members need to know you hear them. I listen even when there are times that I have other projects that are priority. It takes a moment to demonstrate your care and then you can always reschedule a meeting with staff when they trust that you will get back to them. Staff need to know that you are humble.

Participant 8 shared,

It was always more important for my teachers and staff to feel valued and appreciated than it was for me to receive accolades from my superiors. I listened to their concerns with the goal of acknowledging that every voice was heard whether I acted in their favor or not.

Participant 5 shared,

This question in and of itself is pushing into my personal bounds of humility! LOL. I think when we honor our team members’ accomplishments and publicly recognize their contributions, while providing constructive criticism privately, that leaders show humility. Sometimes it may be tempting to identify mistakes in
public to deflect your responsibility of an error or in an effort to correct bad behavior, but I’ve found this is never the case and it can be a critical leadership mistake.

**Being available to others.** This theme was the second most frequently referenced for the construct of humility with 48.89% of the data. This theme was also referenced 22 times, which was also second between the themes under the humility construct. Participant 2 shared, “When staff call out sick and I have the day off, I come in and cover. I make sure whatever they need to serve kids is in their hands.” Participant 3 shared,

I had an incident when my assistant principals were both out due to last minute illness, my security guards needed to leave due to an issue with a small child, and the lunch staff in the cafeteria was sick and shorthanded. Each one of the assistant principals offered to come in in lieu of caring for themselves to support me. But I refused to allow it and worked to fill all of the gaps. I was spread thin as I was the principal and the only person in the front office. I was also responsible for monitoring student activity in the absence of the security guard and administrative support, and I went to the kitchen to assist with lunch and supervision. It was a day that I thought I would not survive. But if I had it to do all over again, I would make the same choices. My team has always supported me, and I wanted to do the same for them. Everything turned out just fine that day. It just took me out of my comfort zone.
Participant 4 stated,

When I began at my current school as the principal, some of the decisions I made did not result in higher student achievement in math. After meeting with math teachers, I brought in a math expert and let the teachers select the curriculum they wanted to use. During department meetings and learning communities, I reinforced to teachers that their concerns were valued and listened to and I had to be the person who at that particular time needed to sit and listen first so I could then get up and lead.

**Altruism: Research Theme Results**

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

For this study, altruism was defined as being able to demonstrate 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 is best for others, often with an attitude of humility, modesty, and selflessness (De Young, 2000; Kaplan, 2000; Monroe, 1994; Patterson, 2003). The results from the coding process identified two themes related to the servant leadership construct of altruism. The construct was referenced 43 times by the eight participants, which represented 13% of the data. Table 7 and Figure 10 illustrate the two themes that emerged from the servant leadership construct of altruism.
Table 7

*Themes and Frequencies for Altruism*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>% Based on N</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Total sources</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unselfish concerns for others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking what’s best for others</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The N for interview participants = 8.

![Alturism](image)

*Figure 10.* Themes and frequencies for altruism.

**Unselfish concern for others.** This theme was the most frequently referenced for the construct of altruism with 69.77% of the data and was also the lead theme, which was referenced 30 times. Trends throughout this theme speak of how altruistic behaviors by leaders should focus their energy and passion on the empowerment of their followers and then tend to the followers’ particular needs to help them grow as leaders (Swen, 2020). Participant 3 discussed,
When people feel that they are treated fairly and/or have been listened to and are committed to implementing practices that improve student performance. When teachers are able to lead their own learning it also empowers students to take responsibility for their own learning through projects and action of utilizing their own voices.

Participant 4 stated,

As a school and as a school district, part of our school’s commitment to serving others comes with the understanding that we have to be selfless. Our school’s overall culture does foster selflessness, and we demonstrate this by always leading with the student and stakeholders in mind first. Everything we do is student focused.

Participant 5 shared, “The recipients of altruism benefit from it. As a result, the culture of the organization is improved because altruism is on full display for the affected staff person.” Participant 6 shared, “Altruism communicates that decisions are not dictated from the top-down. It provides a shared value to reach the organization’s goals.”

**Seeking what’s best for others.** This theme was referenced 13 times by 100% of participants and represented 30.23% of the data coded in the construct of altruism. Participant 2 stated,

There are some great people in my organization. But there are some who are very self-centered and narcissistic. But what I do see is that when educators focus on students, student needs, student outcomes, and invest their energy in those areas, the student performance is not short of exemplary every single time. Students, especially, need to know that they are our focus and the center of our attention.
They need to know that we care in a selfless manner to maximize their health, well-being, socialization, and academic performance.

Participant 4 stated,

When people feel that they are treated fairly and/or have been listened to, [they] are committed to implementing practices that improve student performance. When teachers are able to lead their own learning, it also empowers students to take responsibility for their own learning through projects and actions of utilizing their own voices.

Participant 5 stated,

Depending on the student, time is a factor. Some students are seeking affirmation from an adult or role model. This will increase student performance because they want to meet the expectations of the person that is showing them that they care. However, some students may see it as an easy way out. Some believe that your actions are untrue because they have never seen it [or] received this type of action from an adult or role model.

**Service: Research Theme Results**

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

Service is defined as the moral equivalent of giving of oneself to serve others. It implies that leaders focus on others’ interests rather than on their own interests. It can be demonstrated through the gift of time, energy, compassion, care, or belonging. Service places others first (Patterson, 2003; R. F. Russell & Stone, 2002). Some of the participants discussed how similar trends among the participants promoted selfless
contributions in order to be the change needed for the participants’ staff members to promote success. This included adopting and promoting behaviors that can be shown to all stakeholders (Hung et al., 2016). The servant leadership construct of service has three themes with a total number of 43 frequencies and makes up a similar percentage to the altruism with 13% of the data. Unlike the previous construct, the $N$ value of participants for this particular construct was 75% or six of the eight participants with 25% or two of the participants during the interview. In addition, the empowerment themes yielded three artifact sources (professional development agenda focused on giving and serving others, teamwork, and serving others to create growth and change) and three observation sources (PowerPoint regarding the focus on serving others to make a change and creating growth through service). Table 8 and Figure 11 illustrate the three themes that emerged from the servant leadership construct of service.

Table 8
Themes and Frequencies for Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>% Based on N</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Total sources</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving of oneself to serve</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use teamwork to serve</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve others to create growth</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. The $N$ for interview participants = 6.*
Figure 11. Themes and frequencies for service.

**Giving of oneself to serve others.** This theme was the highest of the three themes that focused on service with 16 frequencies and 37.21% of the data. Participant 6 stated,

In regards to serving others, we remain at the center and believe that our greatest impact will not be noticed until our children can ingest what we teach them and put into practice the knowledge they gain from our interactions.

Participant 3 shared,

When administrators and staff go above and beyond their normal duties to support students and their families, it strengthens communication and trust among all stakeholders. An example is when staff volunteer to participate in a program designed to promote social justice, it has a positive impact on the overall performance of the organization. Students become more empathetic towards others thereby reducing bullying and other socially inappropriate behaviors.
Participant 2 stated,

Once our new superintendent came aboard, I immediately began to see a shift in service. He has provided not only a vision of serving others that has now begun but trickle down to all the schools with a focus on consistently serving our students and stakeholders in all his plans. Together, we will all work toward this vision of serving and ensure student success.

Participant 4 shared,

During the beginning COVID-19 crisis, we as a team began to focus on more social-emotional learning and communication with our students, parents, staff, and the community to constantly seeking input and feedback to find out their needs and how through a need to serve others [it] became our school’s official mandate.

**Use teamwork to serve.** This theme was the second highest of the three themes that focused on service with 14 frequencies and 32.56% of the data. Participant 1 shared,

I experienced an incident where administrators gathered to provide support and assistance to the clerical team to meet a time sensitive deadline. We all jumped in to help regardless of title or position, worked together as a team, took the heavy load off of one of the team members, and shifted the tone of the space. All members of the team felt like members of the team. It became very apparent that there were not big I’s and little you’s. The efforts of every member of the team helped to achieve success in that moment.
Participant 6 stated,

    The service that is provided in my organization is educational support, pedagogy, instructional and socio-emotional support to all students enrolled in the district. To be able to service others as a team focuses on academic growth, socialization, social support, and post-secondary achievements of all of our students.

Participant 4 shared that “the overall impact of this service is that all stakeholders feel like they are part of an organization that values and cares and that is committed to their growth.”

Serve others to create growth. This theme was third of the three themes that focused on service with 13 frequencies and 30.23% of the data. Participant 2 stated,

    The service that is provided in my organization is educational support, pedagogy, instructional and socio-emotional support to all students enrolled in the district. The impact of this service is academic growth, socialization, social support, and postsecondary achievements.

Participant 6 shared,

    One of the teachers on the staff took it upon herself to donate her own books so that her colleagues could create a classroom library. The result was that service began the creation of a culture of literacy in every classroom and subject. The spring results of our local assessment showed an increase in reading scores for 78% of the students, including English learners and students with disabilities.
Participant 3 shared,

I witness the act of serving others within the organization on a daily basis. When you know that the teachers that you work with love a school so much that their time is thoroughly immersed in the betterment of others, it’s easy to take for granted that I, the teachers, and staff are hired as employees but see themselves as family. With that, our family looks to take care of each other to help the student continue to improve and excel.

**Empowerment: Research Theme Results**

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

Empowerment is defined as 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, 2018; Melrose, 1995; Patterson, 2003; R. F. Russell & Stone, 2002). The servant leadership construct of empowerment had the lowest frequency of all the constructs at 37 and made up 11% of the data. Of the three themes in the construct, only one, encouraging others to excel, was answered by 100% of the participants. The other themes, such as believe in others and sharing roles and contributions, were answered by 87.5% of the participants each. Within the given dialog of the interviews, the question of empowerment was answered by many of the participants but tended to almost reflect and relate to the other constructs during the interview conversation with the participants as the researcher looked to code the themes.
during data analysis. Hence, this was one of the many reasons why the construct was rated the lowest yet had three distinct reoccurring thoughts that warranted the coding of the three themes. In addition, the empowerment themes yielded one artifact source (meeting agenda regarding professional growth classes and staff training on lesson study teams). The construct also yielded one observation source (online training for math curriculum training). Table 9 and Figure 12 illustrate the three themes that emerged from the servant leadership construct of empowerment.

Table 9

Themes and Frequencies for Empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>% Based on N</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Total sources</th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging others to excel</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe in others</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing of roles and contributions</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The *N* for interview participants = 8.

![Empowerment](image)

*Figure 12.* Themes and frequencies for empowerment.
Encouraging others to excel. This theme was the highest of the three themes that focused on empowerment with a frequency of 17 and 45.94% of the data.

Participant 1 shared,

We encourage risk-taking within our students and in our teachers. We provide teachers with opportunities to create relevant curriculum. We want our staff to grow in areas that they may not have had an opportunity to grow in at a traditional school setting. We also want our students to understand that there is some healthy risk to being different, or trying new things, which ultimately can come with great rewards. We want to empower our students and staff to be unafraid to be great.

Participant 3 stated,

Typically, veteran teachers are often assigned leadership roles and responsibilities. At our school, novice teachers were selected for trainer-of-trainer positions and representatives of their departments. Empowering all teachers to maximize their potential greatly enhances the capacity of all teachers to stretch and grow in their profession. Empowerment also allows others to view novice teachers as being a vital part of the organization and supports the goals of the organization.

Participant 4 shared,

Staff have the opportunity now more than ever to build rapport and deepen relationships with students. I am coaching them to not be afraid to think outside of the box. I know that their input is invaluable, but I want to continue to encourage them to believe in themselves and continue to have confidence in doing the right thing at the right time.
Believe in others. This theme was tied with sharing roles and contributions with 10 frequencies and 27.03% of the data used for this construct.

Participant 2 stated,

I want to continue to foster and encourage development. I feel that it is my job as a leader to grow them professionally. Through conversations focused on growth and development, they can see a broader picture of themselves and the benefits of gaining knowledge.

Participant 5 stated,

Once given a prescribed task, the staff within my organization, especially on my team, is empowered to complete the work in the manner that they see fit. They can be creative in their approach, nontraditional, unique, as long as the end results are those desired. Team members are not micromanage in their processes and procedures. The outcomes are what get the main focus.

Sharing of roles and contributions. This theme was tied with sharing roles and contributions with 10 frequencies and 27.03% of the data used for this construct.

Participant 7 stated,

As the principal of a large high school, I experienced a high level of empowerment as it relates to day-to-day decision-making. I led the leadership team through a series of monthly meetings and quarterly strategic planning retreats to focus on data analysis and instructional practice improvement. Action plan outcomes were developed in collaboration with input from all stakeholders and a robust discussion with the leadership team.
Participant 8 shared,

I perceive empowerment within my organization through the belief in my work, my efforts, my organization, and my results. Those within my team believe in me, my work ethic, and have a rapport with me. Through their belief in me and my ability, I am empowered to complete the work within my wheel well with autonomy, independent thought, creativity, and my own ingenuity.

**Key Findings**

After the interviews were transcribed and coded for themes, the observations coded for themes, and the artifacts reviewed for themes, 16 key findings were evident regarding the high school principals’ perceived impact of the seven servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance. Selection of the 16 key findings was determined by evaluating which themes were referenced by at least 80% of study participants and represented at least 20% of all frequencies within each of the seven servant leadership constructs.

**Key Findings for Agapao Love**

Agapao love was the highest referenced construct in this study with 57 references or 17% of the total references made in the study. Two themes emerged and are described as follows:

1. Having a climate of care was referenced by 100% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references in the construct of agapao love and yielded 63.16% of the data coded.

2. Leadership that focuses on others was referenced by 100% of the participants and represented 36.84% of the data coded in the construct of agapao love.
When analyzing the data collected, the findings showed that high school principals perceived that the construct of agapao love impacts establishing a culture of high performance.

**Key Findings for Humility**

Humility was the fourth ranked referenced construct in this study with 45 references or 14% of the total references made in the study. Two themes emerged and are described as follows:

1. Acknowledge, support, and celebrate others was referenced by 100% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references in the construct of humility and yielded 51.11% of the data coded.

2. Leadership that focuses on others was referenced by 100% of the participants and represented 48.89% of the data coded in the construct of humility.

When analyzing the data collected, the findings showed that high school principals perceived that the construct of humility impacts establishing a culture of high performance.

**Key Findings for Altruism**

Altruism was the fifth ranked construct in this study with 43 references or 13% of the total references made in the study. Two themes emerged and are described as follows:

1. Unselfish concerns for others was referenced by 100% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references in the construct of altruism and yielded 69.77% of the data coded.

2. Seeking what’s best for others was referenced by 100% of participants and represented 30.23% of the data coded in the construct of altruism.
When analyzing the data collected, the findings showed that high school principals perceived that the construct of altruism impacts establishing a culture of high performance.

**Key Findings for Vision**

Vision was the third ranked referenced construct in this study with 48 references or 15% of the total references made in the study. Two themes emerged and are described as follows:

1. Clarity of purpose and direction was referenced by 100% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references and was the only qualifying theme in the construct of vision and yielded 50% of the data coded.

2. Vision for success was referenced by 100% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references and was the only qualifying theme in the construct of vision and yielded 50% of the data coded.

When analyzing the data collected, findings show that high school principals perceived that the construct of vision impacts establishing a culture of high performance.

**Key Findings for Trust**

Trust was the second ranked referenced construct in this study with 56 references or 17% of the total references made in the study. Two themes emerged and are described as follows:

1. Having integrity and care of others was referenced by 100% of participants and represented 62.50% of the data coded in the construct of trust.
2. Being honest, fair, and ethical was referenced by 100% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references in the construct of trust and yielded 37.50% of the data coded.

When analyzing the data collected, the findings showed that high school principals perceived that the construct of trust impacts establishing a culture of high performance.

**Key Findings for Empowerment**

Empowerment was the seventh ranked referenced construct in this study with 37 references or 11% of the total references made in the study. Three themes emerged and are described as follows:

1. Encouraging others to excel was referenced by 100% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references in the construct of empowerment and yielded 45.94% of the data coded.

2. Believe in others was referenced by 87.5% of participants and represented 27.03% of the data coded in the construct of empowerment.

3. Sharing of roles and contributions was referenced by 87.5% of participants and represented 27.03% of the data coded in the construct of empowerment.

When analyzing the data collected, the findings showed that high school principals perceived that the construct of empowerment impacts establishing a culture of high performance.
Key Findings for Service

Service was the sixth ranked referenced construct in this study with 43 references or 13% of the total references made in the study. Three themes emerged and are described as follows:

1. Giving of oneself to serve others was referenced by 75% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references in the construct of service and yielded 37.21% of the data coded.

2. Use teamwork to serve was referenced by 75% of the participants and represented 32.56% of the data coded in the construct of service.

3. Serve others to create growth was referenced by 75% of the participants and represented 30.23% of the data coded in the construct of service.

When analyzing the data collected, the findings showed that high school principals perceived that the construct of service impacts establishing a culture of high performance.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to describe the data analysis and findings of the research conducted to address the research questions of the perceived impact Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs had on establishing a culture of high performance. Patterson’s constructs include agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. This chapter provided a data summary capturing the lived experience of eight high school principals through semistructured interviews, observations, and the collection of artifacts. The data were summarized into
key findings describing Patterson’s servant leadership constructs, and data were coded into themes resulting in 16 emerging themes.

Chapter V provides final summary of the study with final remarks and reflection including major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for actions, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

A summary of the study’s findings is presented in this final chapter. Chapter V begins with a summarized restatement of the purpose statement, central research question and subquestions, and the methodology that helped develop the content of the study, followed by the descriptions of the study’s population and sample participants. Next, Chapter V provides a breakdown of the major findings, unexpected findings, and conclusions for each of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs (agapao love, humility, altruism, trust, empowerment, vision, and service). The chapter also presents implications for action, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks, reflections, and comments shared by the researcher.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe the high school principals’ perceived impact of the seven servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance. The lived experiences of high school principals who lead schools that exhibit a culture of high performance based on their perceived impact of the seven servant leadership constructs (agapao love, humility, altruism, trust, empowerment, vision, and service) were investigated in this research study. Fourteen major findings and 16 leadership themes emerged from the data collection via personal interviews. The conclusions developed from these findings as well as recommendations will be used for future research. This study included one central research question and seven subquestions for each of the seven servant leadership constructs.
Research Questions

Central Research Question

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance in high schools as perceived by high school principals?

Subquestions

1. What is the impact of the agapao love leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

2. What is the impact of the humility leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

3. What is the impact of the altruism leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

4. What is the impact of the vision leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

5. What is the impact of the trust leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

6. What is the impact of the empowerment leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

7. What is the impact of the service leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?

Methodology

For this qualitative phenomenological research study, personal, in-depth virtual interviews were conducted with eight high school principals who lead comprehensive
high schools within Los Angeles County. The interviews were conducted to gain their perspective of their lived experiences as related to each of the seven servant leadership constructs and their perceived impact of creating a culture of high performance within their schools. The data generated from the interviews, artifacts, and observations were coded and analyzed for themes in NVivo. The artifacts and observations collected are of professional developments and trainings the principals had regarding reading and math intervention, COVID-19 and the stay-at-home act and the school reopening plan, and the overall effects that COVID-19 has had on learning and the distance learning module.

Also, there was a professional development training on serving student, parents, and staff regarding their social-emotional levels within a shared PowerPoint training for staff. This study’s main data collection method was the in-depth interview; however, due to the COVID-19 stay-at-home order, many of the observations and interviews were completed through digital video media (i.e., Google Meets or Zoom). The participants allowed the researcher to triangulate the data from the in-depth interviews with observations and artifacts. The study’s target population was the approximately 400 high school principals within Los Angeles County.

Each of the peer researchers, nine doctoral students with two faculty chairs who collaboratively designed this study, used the same criteria for identifying a study sample of eight educational leaders within his or her respective target population. These target populations included high school principals who lead comprehensive high schools. All potential study participants needed to exhibit at least four of the following five characteristics identified by the peer research team as criteria for determining an exemplary high school educational leader:
1. The principal was employed at a public high school within Los Angeles County with a minimum of 50 staff members.

2. The principal possessed a minimum of 2 or 3 years of experience at his or her current site.

3. The principal had a minimum of 5 years’ experience in the K-12 profession as an administrator.

4. The principal had membership in professional associations in his or her field such as the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA).

5. The principal has had articles, paper, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings.

**Population**

A population as defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) is “a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to which we intend to generalize the results of the research” (p. 129). The population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristics, for example all principals would then make up the population of principals, and all teachers would then make up the population of teachers (Creswell, 2012). The population can also be a “collective group,” with characteristics that are similar in every aspect, that can then be generalized by a researcher in regard to a particular study (Roberts, 2010). The population for this thematic study represented high school principals in California. According to the California Department of Education (2020a), there are 1,322 high school principals in charge of public high schools in the state of California. Therefore, the population for this study was the 1,322 high school principals in the state of California.
Sample Frame

Creswell (2012) defined a sample as a subgroup of the sample frame or as a small percentage of the population in total. Within the small population, the researcher can then generalize about the population targeted and select a sample of either individual representatives or an entire population (Creswell, 2012). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) noted that the important information critical to researchers is to “define carefully both the sampling frame and the target population” (p. 129). For this study, the sampling frame was 400 high school principals from within Los Angeles County. Each of the participating principals led high-performing schools based on their academic data found on the California Dashboard. Figure 3, repeated here for ease of reference, illustrates the population, sample frame, and sample used in the study.

Figure 3. Summary of the population, sampling frame, and sample.

This study focused on how high school principals perceived the importance of Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership to create a culture of high performance. The researcher used nonprobability, purposive sampling to select the sample of eight high school principals. For the purpose of selecting the sample for this study, participants were chosen from schools that demonstrated a growth trend over the
past 2 years as indicated by the California Dashboard within the state and local indicators such as academic achievement and attendance and met four of the following five criteria:

1. The principal was employed at a public high school within Los Angeles County with a minimum of 50 staff members.

2. The principal possessed a minimum of 2 or 3 years of experience at his or her current site.

3. The principal had a minimum of 5 years’ experience in the K-12 profession as an administrator.

4. The principal had membership in professional associations in his or her field such as the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA).

5. The principal has had articles, paper, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings.

In this research study, eight high school principals were selected from the 400 high school principals within Los Angeles County, according to the Los Angeles Unified Certificated Staff 2018-19 report (California Department of Education, 2020b). Based on the criteria for selecting these unique participants, purposive sampling was used. The use of purposive sampling involves participants who were selected because they possessed the elements that are uniquely particular to the population characteristics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

**Demographic Data**

Eight high school principals were selected for the study. All of the high school principals in this study lead comprehensive high schools throughout Los Angeles County. Each study participant was assigned a number in order to maintain confidentiality.
Further, the names of their organizations were not used in the study. Seventy percent of the study participants were female. The average age range of the study participants was 40–50 years old. The longest years of service in the profession were 42. Table 1, repeated here for ease of reference, highlights the demographic data of each participant. All study participants exceeded the minimum requirements of the thematic research team’s ideals of high-performing criteria for high school principals.

Table 1

*Demographics of High School Principals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age range</th>
<th>Years in the profession</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>65–75</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>40–50</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>50–60</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>65–75</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>45–55</td>
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**Study Participant Criteria**

A high school with a culture of high performance is defined as a school that has demonstrated a growth trend over the past 2 years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of English language arts, mathematics, suspension rate, and graduation rate. Participants were to lead schools with cultures that also exhibited high performance as evidenced by the scoring in the blue or green category for 2 consecutive years as indicated by the California Dashboard in two of the four areas of English language arts, mathematics, suspension rate, and graduation rate. Finally, the participant had to meet the study participant criteria as described in Table 2 (repeated here for ease of reference) that illustrated a minimum of years in the profession, a
successful relationship with followers, having led successful organizations, being
published in peer-reviewed journals, having had the recognition by peers as an effective
leader, and having been a member of a professional organization such as the Association
of California School Administrators (ACSA).

Table 2

Study Participant Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study participant</th>
<th>Min 5 years in profession</th>
<th>Successful relationship w/followers</th>
<th>Leading successful organizations</th>
<th>Publications</th>
<th>Recognition by peers</th>
<th>Member in professional organization</th>
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Major Findings

The study’s central question was answered through an investigation of the study’s
subquestions. The findings were informed by criteria used to evaluate the percentages of
references for each theme. The themes that were referenced by at least 75% of the high
school principal study participants and represented at least 20% of all references within
each of the seven servant leadership constructs were identified as a major research
finding. Sixteen major research findings emerged from the data analysis. The major
themes were also developed from the data from the collection of 10 artifacts and seven
observations. Chapter IV presented an analysis of the data concerning servant leadership
constructs. The following sections divided by the central question and the constructs
represent a summary of the key findings of the research study. The data analyzed from Chapter IV and the literature review from Chapter II support these major findings.

Central Research Question

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs for establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by high school principals?

To answer the question regarding the impact of the seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance, qualitative data were collected through virtual interviews with eight high school principals. For schools that were found to have a perceived culture of high performance, peer-designed and reviewed interviews were completed using scripted open-ended guided questions developed by the thematic team of researchers. Eight high school principals were asked about Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs and how they assisted with creating a culture of high performance. All seven servant leadership constructs—agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service—were investigated in the study. The major findings for this study are presented in the data providing input from each individual regarding the research questions that are specific to each of the seven servant leadership constructs developed.

Agapao Love

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

Major Finding 1: Climate of care. Having a climate of care was referenced by 100% of the participants. This construct yielded the highest references at 57 and represents 63.16% of the data related to the agapao love servant leadership construct. The
work of Brouns et al. (2020) supported the findings as they showed how the care of others improves the care of all, which then led to the overall improvement and success of people. Because leaders who have agapao love aim to help others grow and develop in their own right, they also have positive virtues and a caring mindset, which is important for the growth of their followers (Powles, 2016). This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of establishing a climate of care.

**Major Finding 2: Leadership focused on others.** This theme was referenced by 100% of the participants and represents 36.84% of the data related to the agapao love servant leadership construct. The work of Powles (2016) supported these findings as he found that the need and idea of serving others in order to develop others allows for the type of love that leads to understanding and communication. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of establishing leadership that focuses on others. The need for being able to have those critical conversations to develop positive working relationships helps teams to create and model good practices that are based on love and respect.

**Trust**

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

**Major Finding 3: Integrity and care for others.** This theme was referenced 35 times with 100% of the study participants. The servant leadership construct of trust was
referenced in 62.50% of the data. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of establishing integrity and care. There must also be an open dialog built on trust that allows for successful teams to be built. There needs to be a focus of care for all who are involved that puts their needs and interests at the forefront of creating a culture of success. The work of Kars and Inandi (2018) supported these findings as they found that the development of trust within a team also helps create a level of care and concern for others that creates cooperation among coworkers.

**Major Finding 4: Being honest, fair, and ethical.** This theme was referenced 21 times with 100% of the study participants and represents 37.50% of the overall data for the trust servant leadership construct. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of being honest, fair, and ethical regarding actions taken by a leader and always sharing the whys or why nots with followers. There is also a need for having a rationale behind all decisions and being able to provide the rationale as a leader through constant communication, which creates transparency in successful teams. A leader should ask for constructive criticism to reevaluate themselves and their ideas to be in alignment with the ethical ideals of serving others. Overall, a leader must have a mission-driven mindset in order to create the pathways for success. The work of Lu et al. (2019) supported these findings as they found that trust then becomes an important variable and leads to a mutual
understanding or developed culture of competence, honesty, openness, loyalty, and consistency.

**Vision**

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

**Major Finding 5: Clarity of purpose and direction.** This theme was referenced 24 times with 100% of the study participants, which equated to 50% of the data for the vision servant leadership construct. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of having a clarity of purpose and direction. Having a shared vision can lead to further alignment with a result of continued success with clear pathways for goals to be set and achieved. The need for a clear purpose and direction helps to unify everyone by empowering others to create measurable growth, goals, and outcomes to support a cycle of trust. The work of Jensen et al. (2018) supported these findings as they found that a leader’s communication skills will be one of the single most effective ways to provide his or her followers with the vision from a transformational leader.

**Major Finding 6: Vision for success.** This theme was referenced 24 times with 100% of the study participants, which equated to 50% of the data for the vision servant leadership construct. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of having a vision for success. The staff, principal, parents, teachers, students, support staff, and community
members all join together to work and meet the needs of the students being served. Leaders can then see all members of the school community looking forward, trying to motivate, and working to unify everyone in order to achieve the best for the students within the school. The vision should drive the establishment of a culture of high performance but only when all stakeholders are involved in creating that vision. The work of Jensen et al. (2018) supported these findings as they found that when developing their vision, leaders must share their strategic values, relationship values, and behavioral values to communicate the intricate pieces of their mission or goal. This allows followers who have a similar thought process to that of the leader to help transform the culture to implement the new vision needed for change (Seto & Sarros, 2016).

**Humility**

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

**Major Finding 7: Acknowledge, support, and celebrate others.** This theme was referenced 23 times with 100% of the study participants and represents 51.11% of the data for the humility servant leadership construct. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of establishing how to acknowledge, support, and celebrate others. This is mostly reflected in collaborating with schedules and work times of others. It is also that the staff members need to know their leader hears them. It only takes a moment for a leader to demonstrate care and concern for others. It is always more important for teachers and staff to feel valued and appreciated than to receive accolades as a superior.
The work of Bushell (2019) supported these findings as he found that the process of acknowledging, celebrating, engaging, and mentoring others must be at the forefront of nurturing those aspiring to leadership roles.

**Major Finding 8: Being available to others.** This theme was referenced 22 times with 100% of the study participants and represents 48.89% of the data for the humility servant leadership construct. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of being available to others. There is a great value in a person’s being available and being present to listen to all others first so then he or she can get up and lead. The work of Greenleaf (1996) supported these findings as he found that being of available to others as a leader is to assume “the position of servant in their interactions as the follower” (p. 6), which guides leaders to have authentic, legitimate leadership that comes from the desire to help others.

**Altruism**

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

**Major Finding 9: Unselfish concerns for others.** This theme was referenced 30 times with 100% of the study participants and represents 69.77% of the data for the altruism servant leadership construct. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of unselfish concerns for others. Allowing followers to lead their own learning also
empowers them to take responsibility for their own learning through projects and action helping others utilize their own voices. There must be a concern regarding the commitment to serving others that comes with the understanding that leaders have to be unselfish to help others creating a culture that fosters selflessness by always leading with the student and stakeholders in mind first. Everything done as a team along with parents and stakeholders is student focused. The work of Spears (1996) supported these findings as he found that a servant leader should concern him or herself unselfishly to above all serve, teach, and empower others so that they may grow and develop.

**Major Finding 10: Seeking what’s best for others.** This theme was referenced 13 times by 100% of the participants and represented 30.23% of the data coded in the construct of altruism. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of establishing how to seek what’s best for others. Students, especially, need to know that they are principals’ focus and the center of their attention. Students need to know that the principals care in a selfless manner to maximize their health, well-being, socialization, and academic performance. The work of Hung et al. (2016) supported these findings as they found that a servant leader’s vision of service to others includes a selfless manner regarding helping subordinates to grow and be empowered to make change that reflects ethical behavior.

**Service**

*What is the impact of the service leadership characteristics on establishing a culture of high performance?*
Major Finding 11: Giving of oneself to serve others. This theme was referenced by 75% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references in the construct of service and yielded 37.21% of the data coded. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of giving of oneself to serve others. The work of Black (2010) supported these findings as she found that the true attributes of service are not simply to carry out tasks but to ensure that those individuals who are being served become more competent and have the ability to meet the needs of others and their own needs as well.

Major Finding 12: Use teamwork to serve. This theme was referenced by 75% of the participants and represented 32.56% of the data coded in the construct of service. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of the use of teamwork to serve. When serving others there must be a natural tendency to go above and beyond the normal duties to support student success with a commitment to their overall growth. The work of Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) supported these findings as they found that servant leaders share their vision of service to improve the empowerment of parents and other stakeholder groups to strengthen their ties and relationships with the teachers and staff and create pathways of growth both academically and socioemotionally.

Major Finding 13: Serve others to create growth. This theme was referenced by 75% of the participants and represented 30.23% of the data coded in the construct of
service. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of establishing a climate to serve others to create growth. The impact of this service to students is academic growth, socialization, social support, and postsecondary achievements. The work of Hung et al. (2016) supported these findings as they found that the regretless service of a leader promotes selfless contributions in order to be the change needed for his or her staff members to promote success.

**Empowerment**

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

**Major Finding 14: Encouraging others to excel.** This theme was referenced by 100% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references in the construct of empowerment and yielded 45.94% of the data coded. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of encouraging others to excel. This provides teachers and students opportunities to excel at any endeavor. The overall goal when empowering others is to provide opportunities to grow and excel in different settings. The work of Patterson (2003) supported these findings as she found that empowerment is akin to developing people and the growing others to be great. The leader who empowers others in this process actually transfers a portion of power that is often reserved for the top rung of traditional leadership (Patterson, 2003).
**Major Finding 15: Believe in others.** This theme was referenced by 87.5% of the participants and represented 27.03% of the data coded in the construct of empowerment. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of believing in others. A leader should look to grow the staff members professionally as well as to work to grow students academically and socially and emotionally as well. The work of Balyer et al. (2017) supported these findings as they found that believing in others requires that the servant leader or principal understands the process it takes to grow and develop his or her followers and to build them up as leaders with a passion for improvement.

**Major Finding 16: Sharing of roles and contributions.** This theme was referenced by 87.5% of the participants and represented 27.03% of the data coded in the construct of empowerment. This major finding was supported by the data from the analysis of interview transcripts, literature review validation discussed in Chapter II, and participant statements provided in Chapter IV that support the importance of sharing of roles and contributions. The work of Norris et al. (2017) supported these findings as they found that the empowerment of employees, especially in an educational setting, must begin with a full engagement process of a follower’s professional growth, self-efficacy, and decision-making.

**Unexpected Findings**

The researcher found two unexpected findings related to the seven servant leadership constructs: (a) the overall impact of empowerment leadership characteristics and (b) the impact of the service leadership characteristics. The researcher found that of
the seven constructs, the empowerment construct with 37 references and 11% of the
coded data displayed the least impact among the servant leadership constructs. This was
unexpected given the researcher’s experience as a high school administrator that the
empowerment of others to drive overall change and create a culture of high performance
was not higher among the constructs. However, every participant in the study was very
aware of the importance and benefits of empowerment, and its overall value among the
constructs shows that while principals are being transparent and collaborative, the
building of others to serve should be an important construct for leaders to learn and
adopt. A second unexpected finding was for service leadership. This finding supported
the impact of the service leadership characteristics with 43 frequencies and 13% of the
coded data of the seven servant leadership constructs, which also displayed room for
improvement and growth. Both the empowerment construct and the service construct
were unexpected findings because they were perceived as less important than the other
five servant leadership constructs.

Conclusions

This study identified several conclusions that can be drawn from the literature and
findings of this study explaining how high school principals perceived the impact of the
seven servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003), to establish a culture
of high performance. The following conclusions were developed from the data analysis in
Chapter IV that described how agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust,
empowerment, and service assisted high school principals in establishing a culture of
high performance in the high school setting.
Conclusion 1: Construct Relationship

Based on the findings from the research and literature, the researcher concluded that the construct relationship of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service are essential and need to be developed and followed inorder to provide high school principals with the necessary background knowledge and understanding to lead and establish a culture of high performance within the school. The research suggests that when all seven servant leadership constructs are applied within the principal's day-to-day operations, planning and implementation within school sites, the results could create cultures of high performance. According to Irving and Berndt (2017),

If the notion is that servant leadership accurately describes the role of a principal then any insight by the principal into the adoption and implementation of servant leadership within every aspect of the school, the culture and behaviors created by the principal will then begin to display a great impact on the school’s culture, climate, and overall student achievement, which will attract leadership theorists, scholars, and other practitioners alike. (p. 7)

While leaders work to achieve a balance with the implementation of the mission and vision of the school, many school administrators and their leadership teams wish to continue growth through creating an ideal culture and climate for academic success with a focus of serving all (Liden et al., 2014). Leaders can seek to create continued success over time by infusing the different aspects of Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs of servant leadership into the culture of the school with a focus on collective efficacy, professional learning communities, and a plan for student performance (Liden et al., 2014). Despite the genuine motivation to serve others as a servant leader, high school
principals must also have that same genuine motivation to lead (Lacroix & Verdorfer, 2017).

**Conclusion 2: A Passion to Serve Others Is Key**

Based on the findings from the research and the literature, the researcher concluded that having a passion for serving others is a key component for high school principals establishing a culture of high performance on their school sites. The importance of serving others allows for genuine growth and concern for students, teachers, and staff members and allows relationships to develop and thrive. High school principals must have a vision and goal for service, which allow all involved to be empowered to grow in order to establish a culture of high performance. According to Hung et al. (2016), regretless service of a leader promotes selfless contributions in order to be the change needed for his or her staff members to promote success. Servant leaders who are wise recognize and gear their service of creating high-performing schools to understand the influences that are reciprocal in nature (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). School servant leaders should strive to develop organizations that assist in developing community engagements that work to develop the involvement of parents, staff, and stakeholders to participate in the planning and decision-making within a school setting (Liden et al., 2014).

**Conclusion 3: Have a Compassionate Love for All**

Based on findings from the research and the literature, the researcher concluded that high school principals should have a compassionate love for all students, staff, and stakeholders to create a culture of high performance on their campuses. Leaders who can heal or bring healing within an organization can serve others as they deal with personal
pain, rejection, and brokenness in order to pursue a level of oneness or team (Peterlin et al., 2015). Servant leaders must operate from the stance that goals exist for the empowerment of the worker through care and love so that the worker or employee will then want to exist to do the work with passion. A compassionate or agapao love serves to build community by improving the spirit and empowering love for one another causing employees to act as concerned members and friends with a passion to see each other succeed, allowing the community to be built in the organization (Smylie et al., 2016).

**Conclusion 4: Have a Vision of Growth and Change for One’s Followers**

Based on findings from the research and the literature, the researcher concluded that high school principals should have a vision of growth and change both academically and socioemotionally for their students, staff, and stakeholders to create a culture of high performance on their campuses. The vision, purpose, and developed goals improve academic performance because having a meaningful purpose and significance allows for pride and honor to grow in its followers (Archbald, 2013). The leader then must be able to first teach and communicate with others in order for the turnaround to be effective (Jensen et al., 2018). When developing their vision, leaders must share their strategic values, relationship values, and behavioral values to communicate the intricate pieces of their mission or goal (Jensen et al., 2018). This allows for followers who have a similar thought process to that of the leader to help transform the culture to implement the new vision needed for change (Seto & Sarros, 2016).

**Conclusion 5: Develop Trust Through One’s Actions**

Based on findings from the research and the literature, the researcher concluded that high school principals must develop trust through their actions for their students,
staff, and stakeholders to create a culture of high performance on their campuses. This type of trust calls for students, parents, and staff member to make meaningful decisions that result in overall goal attainments. Trust is an essential building block in the development of the relationship between servant leaders and the stakeholders and followers, which are the fundamental building blocks for the climate and culture of the organization (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Trust and the subordinates of trust, such as organizational trust, not only affect teachers but also the teachers’ relationships within an organization significantly because they can affect the overall organizational citizenship behavior (Lu et al., 2019). The development of trust within a team also helps create a level of openness and creates the organizational climate, professionalism, authenticity, and cooperation among coworkers (Kars & Inandi, 2018). Schools and organizations must develop working levels of trust within their different systems to create constant effectiveness to develop and cultivate a culture of success (Jeyaraj & Gandolfi, 2019). Trust then becomes an important variable and leads to a mutual understanding or developed culture of competence, honesty, openness, loyalty, and consistency (Lu et al., 2019).

**Implications for Action**

The prior conclusions suggest a need for implications for action. A culture of high performance is created on a school campus when a connection of all seven servant leadership constructs is applied by site leaders. In general, research affirmed the independent influence of each construct. This study lent credibility to the seven constructs and brought shared meaning to how site leaders worked to create a culture of high performance on their campuses. The following are the researcher’s
recommendations to address the conclusions derived from this study. The researcher also
developed implications for action and included the responsible persons or groups for
implementing the designated implications.

Implication 1

Humility is a virtue that is peaceful, and it rejects the self-glorification of self-aggrandizement as a reversal of social norms as it relates to serving others. The element of humility must be approached by all school administrators in order to not serve themselves but to be able to serve others. School administrators that display the needed level of humility to lead others should first be molded and be guiding through the art of leadership with an understanding of servant leadership. The Servant leadership constructs should be their overall building blocks to becoming an administrator with humility being their approach to becoming a servant leader. Individuals who are humble seek more of a view or a picture that is objective of their own inner and outer strength, capabilities, and limitations by thoroughly engaging in the lives of others and the environment of which they are a part (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2017).

Implication 2

There must be a mandate developed to choose servant leaders as school administrators, particularly high school leaders who live their lives and govern accordingly by the seven servant leadership constructs (agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service) as the initial measuring rod for recommendation to the position of school leader. Patterson (2003) stated that servant leadership is a virtuous theory that has a characteristic that is additive to one’s soul and becomes part of the nature of a person who chooses to lead. This virtue or virtuous theory is internal and
also spiritual because of the human spirit and the belief in the good in all that grows and can be nurtured in others to be their best person as well (Whetstone, 2001).

**Implication 3**

High school principals need to continually seek professional development opportunities for themselves in regard to practicing and understanding the seven servant leadership constructs (agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service). The behaviors and attitudes of the principals who are servant leaders cause a positive effect on an organization’s process in regard to a worker’s commitment, dedication, and belonging. Being a high school principal who operates in a manner that focuses on increasing the effectiveness of others through the professional development of themselves can personify and model the necessary engagement needed to make the changes desired.

**Implication 4**

High school principals need to incorporate a self-reflection on a frequent basis. The 360-degree assessment and the emotional intelligence survey are two of many tools high school principals can incorporate into their frequent reflections. The importance of receiving data-based information to reflect on your role as a leader from your followers and those you work with every day. Other methods for self-reflection may include personal journals, seeking feedback from others and peers, and reflecting on the feedback to identify how they can improve. Finally, the use of exit interview surveys for high school principals seeking to leave a school or district. And identifying the key areas of personal and socioemotional growth will aid in determining the key areas of personal and
socioemotional development that are necessary for exhibiting strong conversational leadership skills.

**Implication 5**

The elementary, middle and high school principals need more professional development and research on the impact of servant leadership on creating effective schools and growing student achievement. The focus of the professional development and research should also be to provide training regarding the collective knowledge of the servant leaders for current and aspiring principals. This type of focus group of servant leadership educators could be very effective at speaking engagements, administrative service credential classes, and specific conferences that can be learning forums such as the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the Center for Principal Leadership, and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP).

**Implication 6**

The thematic researchers’ who engaged in the study of the principals at the elementary and secondary school levels overall implication is that there is a need to disseminate more information on the impact of servant leadership. The need to publish scholarly articles on their findings regarding servant leadership and the impact of servant leadership creates cultures of high performance for submission to educational publications. Peer-reviewed publications that feature research-based articles can aid in further professional growth and development of school administrators. Collaborative discourse regarding the particular research studies on the impact of servant leadership
should be a part of publications such as *EdCal* and *Leadership Magazine* (ACSA), and *The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Newsletter* (ASCD).

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The findings from this phenomenological research study based on Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs (agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service) established the findings and conclusions of the study. Recommendations of further study of the seven servant leadership constructs include the following:

**Recommendation 1**

The current study included eight high school principals whose adaption of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs have been specifically applied in creating cultures of high performance in Los Angeles County. In order to gain more insight into this study, the research should be replicated in other parts of the United States and internationally.

**Recommendation 2**

A comparative study should be conducted between high school principals and their followers who have adapted Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs that have resulted in cultures of high performance to explore and identify any differences or similarities between the other high school principals’ perceived understanding of servant leadership practices and their followers’ perceptions of their servant leadership practices.
**Recommendation 3**

A mixed methods research design collecting both quantitative and qualitative data would provide further insight into the use of servant leadership constructs by high school principals. The thematic research team, consisting of eight research peers, one chair, and one faculty member, considered briefly a mixed methods research design for this study of the servant leadership constructs of K-12 leaders of cultures of high performance. It was then decided by the team to use the phenomenological design to describe the perceptions of K-12 leaders. Therefore, a mixed methods research study could use the same phenomenological approach of this study and then deliver a survey to all high school principals to collect relevant quantitative data.

**Recommendation 4**

It is recommended that a future qualitative phenomenological research study examine the gender-specific, race, and rural or urban settings in servant leadership practices. This research study did not identify participants by gender, race, or type of geographical settings, and therefore, potential differences between the approaches of males and females, race, and geographical settings were not considered. A future study would afford the researcher the opportunity to elucidate similarities and differences in servant leadership behaviors between males and females, race, and geographical setting.

**Recommendation 5**

Conduct a replication study using principals in low-performing schools based on assessment and graduation data and criteria to determine if the same sentiment is shared in servant leadership behaviors between high-performing and low-performing school sites.
Recommendation 6

The scholarly work completed by the Brandman University servant leadership thematic research team significantly advances the research currently available in this emerging field. The findings from all of these studies on the use of the seven servant leadership constructs (agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service) should be examined to understand better the summation of servant leadership data collected through a meta-analysis and furthermore add to the body of work in the field of education and education research.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

Education must not simply teach work—It must Teach Life.

—W.E.B. Du Bois

I have spent my last 23 years in pursuit of one thing and that is to be of service to others. I have always had a passion to see others shine and excel and found great joy in doing so. Once I moved past the ideals of self and self-aggrandizement, I truly saw that I could affect someone else’s life as I have been affected by others. Many of the men and women who have had great effect on me and allowed me to grow into this space were all servant leaders. My high school football coach who is also a member of my fraternity has been my lifelong mentor as well. I learned from him and through his teaching that “the few always serve the many,” and he was willing to be the one to teach and serve others like him. He was the first person to attended college in his family and was one of five brothers who all attended the same college and joined the same fraternity.

Ironically, he told me that the five of them were the only men in his neighborhood from a small town in Mississippi during the early 60s to attend college. I learned from
him early on that education was the greatest weapon and equalizer of all and that it should be a weapon given to all to use wisely. I have had the good fortune to only have one real job my entire life, and that is as an educator. My hope is to constantly serve others and the exemplify these following principles throughout my life: Manhood, Scholarship, Perseverance, and Uplift. These principles call for a person to serve and be of service to all mankind. The uplift of others through scholarly attainments allows men who seek knowledge to be regarded as a man always. The perseverance needed to obtain scholarship calls for an understanding of manhood and the importance to standup for one’s beliefs and attainments.

The ability to serve others is not something a person learns or obtain in books but derives from the heart and is formed in his or her actions and deeds to show someone else the light. Receiving my doctorate will be a dream come true for a young man who was once told by a counselor that I would be great as a janitor or possibly a mechanic if I attended junior college, but that “may be as far as you go.” I remember understanding what tunnel vision really meant and telling myself that I will always work to broaden my scope of vision and then I will make it my mission to broaden the scope of vision for all people. In my journey of becoming a servant leader, I have learned a multitude of skills that have greatly impacted my role as a school administrator.

This research study has allowed me to listen, observe, and review best practices not only of high school principals but of the different levels of school administrators in general. Through the lens of servant leadership, many of the study participants were able to articulate and share what they naturally do on a consistent basis. During my interviews, each of the participants expressed their sentiment of gratitude for someone finally taking
the time to listen and acknowledge their efforts in leading high schools and school districts as well. I am most grateful to the individuals who contributed to my research knowing that their engagement will lead to a growing body of work regarding servant leadership. This study provided findings and recommendations for seven servant leadership constructs that establish a culture of high performance on campuses of high school principals.
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APPENDIX A

Synthesis Matrix

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APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

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

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Mr. Darrick Rice Doctoral Candidate

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Darrick Rice, 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 60 mins).

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 drice@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at (310) 413-1374 cell 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
APPENDIX C

Thematic Servant Leadership Interview Questions

Directions:
I will be asking the interview questions below regarding the seven constructs of Servant Leadership based on Patterson’s (2003) theoretical framework. Please review the definitions and interview questions prior to our scheduled interview. You may want to print and have a hard copy to reference during the virtual interview.

Agapao
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)

Q1: What are your perceptions of the culture that exists in your organization resulting from Agapao Love?

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. (Oh et al., 2014)

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 organization. Tell me about a time when you showed humility towards your staff or a staff member?

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. (De Young, R. 2000; Kaplan, S. 2000; Monroe, K. 1994; Patterson, K. 2003)

Q1: What is your perception of altruism and its impact on your organization's culture of high performance?

Q2: What do you believe are the specific impacts it has on the culture of performance in your organization?
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, 2007, 2016; Landsberg, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 1993; Nanus, 1992)

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?

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.

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

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

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. 2018; Melrose, K. 1995; Patterson, K. 2003; Russell, R.F. & Stone, A.G. 2002).

Q1: How do you perceive empowerment in your organization?

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

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).
Q1: Please share some examples when you have witnessed service within your organization and how did that service impact the culture of high performance?

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

Research Participant’s Bill of Rights

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 E

Alignment Table

*Alignment of Interview Questions to Research Questions*

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe high school principals’ perceived impact of servant leadership constructs established 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 *school* 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 *school*. 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 *school* culture of high performance?  
Q2: What do you believe are the specific impacts it has on the culture of performance in your *school*? |
| 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? |
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 *school*. How do you develop and sustain trust in your *school*? |
| Q2: Thinking about your *school* please share some examples of how trust has supported a culture of high performance? |

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

7. What is the impact of the service leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?

| Q1: Please share some examples when you have witnessed service within your *school* and how did that service impact the culture of high performance? |
| Q2: Describe a service that is provided in your *school* and what do you believe is the impact of this service on the overall performance within the organization? |
UIRB Approval

The researcher obtained permission from the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (UIRB).

IRB#: 1183
Application Review Date: 11/5/2020

Dear Darrick L Rice,

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,

UIRB
Academic Affairs
Brandman University
16355 Laguna Canyon Road
Irvine, CA 92618
buirb@brandman.edu
www.brandman.edu

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This email is an automated notification. If you have questions please email us atuirb@brandman.edu.