Phenomenological Study on the Impact of Servant Leadership on Establishing a Culture of High Performance as Perceived by Principals of Native American Schools

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Phenomenological Study on the Impact of Servant Leadership on Establishing a Culture of High Performance as Perceived by Principals of Native American Schools

A Dissertation by

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Brandman University
Irvine, California
School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

January 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

-Jeremiah 29:11, NIV

I would be remiss if I did not give all of the honor and praise to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for giving me the strength and ability to endure these two and a half years of course work and the dissertation writing journey. Additionally, I would like to say thank you to my Apostle and Pastor and the Greater Life Church family. So many people encouraged me and motivated me to continue when I wanted to give up and quit early in the process. To my good friends James and Bassie Whipple, I really appreciate all of the encouraging words. When I was confused and did not believe that I would be able to earn a doctorate degree, Bassie reminded me that there were people who were looking at me and earning my degree would motivate them to achieve their goals. To the person who would tell everyone that I was pursuing my doctoral degree and, in his own way, motivating me to finish because he could not wait to tell me that I would be a doctor, Michael Knuckles, thank you.

To my wonderful wife of nearly 20 years, thank you, thank you, thank you. I would not have been able to do this without you. Charlene Sandifer, the patience and grace you have shown me is nothing less than amazing. For the many nights that I sat in bed with a laptop in my lap, the countless hours of me typing, and not spending time with you and the kids, you did not get angry. When I really wanted to quit, you would not allow me to speak negatively but spoke
words of hope and expectation into my life. I love you with all my heart and thank God for creating you just for me.

To my talented children, Dontrell, Dania, Davion, and Deontay, thank you all so much for being understanding and allowing me to spend days writing and not getting upset with me. It has been my goal to graduate with this degree in the same year that Dania graduates from high school—we did it together.

It has been my honor and privilege to go through this doctoral journey with my battle buddies, the Lacey Cohort. I could not have asked for a better group of people with whom to complete the course work and the many group activities. Dr. Hadden is the world’s best cohort mentor, she led our group with such grace and integrity. So much thanks and appreciation go out to Dr. DeVore for being the world’s best dissertation chair. You were great at guiding me and supporting me every step of the way.
ABSTRACT

Phenomenological Study on the Impact of Servant Leadership on Establishing a Culture of High Performance as Perceived by Principals of Native American Schools

by Antonio Sandifer

Purpose. It was the purpose of this study to explore and describe how principals of elementary, middle, and high schools for Native American students in Washington State perceived the impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

Methodology. This qualitative phenomenological study was chosen due to the research question asking what is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by principals of Native American schools. A total of eight principals of Native American schools were interviewed and asked a series of questions about their lived experiences and their beliefs or perceptions of the impact the constructs had on establishing a culture of high performance.

Findings. It was discovered through the 15 themes and 247 references identified by the participants, the seven servant leadership constructs of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service all helped to establish a culture of high performance.

Conclusions. There were five conclusions drawn from the findings and data that described the perceived impact of the seven servant leadership constructs for establishing a culture of high performance from principals of Native American schools. Principals of Native American schools that establish a culture of high performance demonstrated the following (a) doing what is in the best interest of teachers, support staff, and students; (b) selfless service; (c) having a
student-centered focus; (d) being a purpose-driven decision maker; and (e) operating within a sacred hoop of the constructs.

**Recommendations for Action.** The researcher recommends this phenomenological study be conducted with Bureau of Indian Education schools only and be replicated with principals of schools with a majority of African American students. Another recommendation is to conduct a mixed-methods study with Native American schools located only on Indian Reservations and a meta-analysis of the servant leadership dissertations. Lastly, a study on the single servant leadership construct agapao love in Native American schools is suggested.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE ......................................................................................................................................................... xiii

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................................................... 1
  Background ..................................................................................................................................................... 3
  Colonial Missionaries and Their Schools .............................................................. 3
  Theoretical Foundation ............................................................................................... 4
    Transformational Leadership .................................................................................. 5
    Servant Leadership .............................................................................................. 6
  Theoretical Framework ........................................................................................... 7
  Culture of High Student Performance ................................................................ 9
    Introduction of State Assessments ..................................................................... 9
  School Principals .................................................................................................... 11
  Problem Statement ................................................................................................. 11
  Purpose Statement ................................................................................................ 14
  Central Research Question .................................................................................... 14
    Sub Questions ....................................................................................................... 15
  Significance of the Study ...................................................................................... 15
  Definitions ................................................................................................................ 17
    Theoretical Definitions ....................................................................................... 17
    Operational Definitions ..................................................................................... 19
  Delimitations .......................................................................................................... 19
  Organization of the Study ...................................................................................... 20

CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................................................................................... 21
  Native American Educational History ................................................................... 22
    Colonial Missionaries and Their Schools .......................................................... 23
    Government Boarding Schools ........................................................................ 25
    New Direction in Indian Education .................................................................... 26
    Washington State Native American Assessment Data ..................................... 27
  Theoretical Foundation ......................................................................................... 28
    Leadership ............................................................................................................. 28
    Transactional Leadership ................................................................................... 29
    Management Leadership Theory ....................................................................... 30
    Behavioral Leadership ....................................................................................... 30
    Contingency Leadership Theory ...................................................................... 31
    Servant Leadership ............................................................................................ 32
  Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................... 38
    Agapao Love ....................................................................................................... 38
    Humility ............................................................................................................... 39
    Altruism ............................................................................................................... 40
    Trust ..................................................................................................................... 41
    Vision .................................................................................................................. 42
    Empowerment .................................................................................................... 44
### CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Statement</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Research Question</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Questions</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling Frame</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentation</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Validity</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Panel Validity</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot Interview (Field Test)</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Reliability</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Coding</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher as Instrument of Study</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Size</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Statement</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Research Question</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Questions</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methodology and Data Collection Procedure</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection and Participants</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sampling Frame .......................................................................................................................... 78
Sample ........................................................................................................................................ 78
  Sample Criteria ......................................................................................................................... 79
  Sample Demographics ................................................................................................................ 79
Study Participants ....................................................................................................................... 80
Data Analysis .................................................................................................................................. 81
  Validity ...................................................................................................................................... 81
Data by Research Questions ....................................................................................................... 82
  Sub Questions ............................................................................................................................. 82
  Rationale ..................................................................................................................................... 84
  Agapao Love ................................................................................................................................. 85
  Humility ........................................................................................................................................ 90
  Altruism ....................................................................................................................................... 94
  Vision .......................................................................................................................................... 99
  Trust .......................................................................................................................................... 106
  Empowerment ............................................................................................................................. 115
  Service ......................................................................................................................................... 121
Key Findings .................................................................................................................................. 125
  Key Findings: Agapao Love ........................................................................................................ 125
  Key Findings: Humility ................................................................................................................ 126
  Key Findings: Altruism ................................................................................................................ 126
  Key Findings: Vision .................................................................................................................... 126
  Key Findings: Trust ...................................................................................................................... 127
  Key Findings: Empowerment ...................................................................................................... 128
  Key Findings: Service .................................................................................................................. 128
Summary ......................................................................................................................................... 128

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .......... 130
Purpose Statement ....................................................................................................................... 130
Central Research Question ......................................................................................................... 130
  Sub Questions ............................................................................................................................. 131
Methodology .................................................................................................................................. 131
Major Findings ............................................................................................................................. 132
  Research Sub Question 1 Major Finding .................................................................................. 133
  Research Sub Question 2 Major Finding .................................................................................. 134
  Research Sub Question 3 Major Finding .................................................................................. 134
  Research Sub Question 4 Major Finding .................................................................................. 135
  Research Sub Question 5 Major Finding .................................................................................. 136
  Research Sub Question 6 Major Finding .................................................................................. 137
  Research Sub Question 7 Major Finding .................................................................................. 138
Unexpected Findings .................................................................................................................... 138
Conclusions .................................................................................................................................... 140
  Conclusion 1: Doing What Is in the Best Interest of Teachers, Support Staff, and Students .. 140
  Conclusion 2: Selfless Service .................................................................................................... 141
  Conclusion 3: Student-Centered Focus ..................................................................................... 142
Conclusion 4: Purpose-Driven Decision Makers ................................................................. 1422
Conclusion 5: Sacred Hoop of Constructs ........................................................................... 143

Implications for Actions .................................................................................................... 144
  Implication 1: Proposal to Present the Servant Leadership Constructs at the National Indian Education Association Conference .................. 1444
  Implication 2: Breakout Session on the Servant Leadership Constructs at the Western Washington Native American Education Consortium .......... 145
  Implication 3: Servant Leadership Constructs Should be Taught in the Principal Certification Programs at Colleges and Universities in Washington State .......................................................................................................................... 1455
  Implication 4: Establishing a Group for Principals of Native American Schools in Washington State and Providing Mentoring to First-Year Principals of Native American Schools Focusing on Servant Leadership ...... 1466
  Implication 5: The Bureau of Indian Education Offers Training in Servant Leadership to Principals of BIE Schools ................................................................. 1477

Recommendations for Further Research ........................................................................... 148
  Recommendation 1: Study Conducted With Bureau of Indian Education Schools Only .......................................................................................................................... 148
  Recommendation 2: Replicate This Study With Principals of Schools With a Majority of African American Students ........................................ 1488
  Recommendation 3: Conduct a Mixed-Methods Study With Native American Schools Located Only on Indian Reservations ................................. 149
  Recommendation 4: Meta-Analysis of the Servant Leadership Dissertations 14949
  Recommendation 5: Study On the Single Servant Leadership Construct Agapao Love in Native American Schools ........................................ 150

Concluding Remarks and Reflections ............................................................................. 150

REFERENCES ................................................................................................................... 152

APPENDICES .................................................................................................................. 183
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. High Performing Criteria, Principal of Native American School...................... 80
Table 2. Demographic Information of Participants .......................................................... 81
Table 3. Agapao Love Themes ....................................................................................... 87
Table 4. Humility Themes ............................................................................................... 91
Table 5. Altruism Themes .............................................................................................. 95
Table 6. Vision Themes .................................................................................................. 100
Table 7. Trust Themes .................................................................................................. 107
Table 8. Empowerment Themes ................................................................................... 115
Table 9. Service Themes................................................................................................. 122
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. A conceptual model of servant leadership............................................. 37
Figure 2. Number of themes from each construct.................................................. 84
Figure 3. Number of frequencies from each construct.......................................... 85
Figure 4. Agapao love themes and frequencies..................................................... 86
Figure 5. Humility themes and frequencies........................................................... 91
Figure 6. Altruism themes and frequencies........................................................... 95
Figure 7. Vision themes and frequencies.............................................................. 101
Figure 8. Trust themes and frequencies.............................................................. 107
Figure 9. Empowerment themes and frequencies............................................... 116
Figure 10. Service themes and frequencies.......................................................... 123
PREFACE

Following discussions and considerations regarding the opportunity to study Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs, two faculty researchers and eight doctoral students discovered a common interest in exploring the ways K-12 leaders perceive the impact these seven constructs (i.e., agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service) have for 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 as the most appropriate for this study of Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership constructs, their perceived impact on principals of Native American schools, and how the principals established a culture of high performance within their school sites. This structure was resolved to be generally suitable as the nonexperimental, descriptive approach was best to accumulate the lived encounters of the leaders. Each researcher interviewed eight K-12 leaders to describe how they perceived the impact of the seven constructs of servant leadership by Patterson (2003) on helping to establish a culture of high performance at their organization. To ensure thematic consistency, the team cocreated the purpose statement, research questions, definitions, interview questions, and study procedures. It was agreed upon by the team for increased validity data collection would involve method triangulation using interviews, observations, and artifacts.

Throughout the study, the term thematic team members is used to refer to the other researchers who conducted this thematic study. These were: Freddie Chavarria, Title I Middle School Principals; Lillian French, Latina Superintendents of Title I 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 of K-12 School Districts; and Alison Wills, Middle School Principals in Orange County, California.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Schools in the United States were first established in the early 1640s. Vollmer (2010) described the original schools in the United States as being formed for White Christian boys, which taught basic reading, arithmetic, and writing. The practice of sending only a few children to school, especially boys, was very common in many early U.S. families (Graham, 2005). Moreover, the developers of the early schools believed the families and churches should take on the major responsibility of educating and raising children (Vollmer, 2010). Education in the early 1600s held much different foundational value and constructs. As the 1700s approached, the methodology of educating young people in the United States began to evolve with the addition of history, science, civics, and some geography, but overall, the curriculum was limited and remained unchanged for the next 150 years (Vollmer, 2010).

Steffes (2012) noted several conversations and new ideas were introduced in the 1890s that would transform and reshape the educational platform. As the educational system was evolving, more families were sending their boys and girls to school and by the 1920s there was a shift against school rigidity. The shift was away from schools focusing on the needs of just society to the schools focusing on the needs of the students (Graham, 2005). With the rapid changes in U.S. society, the education programs progressed, and new subjects and curriculum were developed to ensure all students would be able to operate in the 20th century.

With the advancement of technology in the 21st century, and the changes in the culture and society of the United States, in 2001 the government reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as No Child Left Behind (NCLB)
(Ruff, 2019). According to the U.S. census, there are over 76.4 million students enrolled in schools across the United States. Furthermore, the students in the classrooms are more diverse in gender, race, and ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Velez, 2018). In the 1600s, schools were created for White boys; however, today White students in schools have decreased from 29,035,000 in 1999 to 24,644,000 in 2015 (Bustamante, 2019). In addition, other racial demographics such as African American and non-Hispanic students are continuing to decline at an alarming rate. Though, the Hispanic population of students is increasing since more immigrant families are sending their children to public schools (Bustamante, 2019).

Another population of students that have declined in attending school are Native American. According to the National Indian Education Study 2015, Native American students consist of only about 1% of the total student population in elementary and secondary public schools. While the student population for various ethnic groups are declining, the schools are continuing to implement strategies and technology to encourage students to attend school regularly and achieve academic excellence (Gottfried & Kirksey, 2017). Along with the strategies and techniques to keep students in school, there are some school building principals leading the charge for academic success (Ekinci, 2015).

Moreover, the individuals who serve public schools in principal positions lead with a variety of leadership styles. With the rapid decline of all ethnic groups of students in public schools, a popular leadership style for school principals is servant leadership. Boyer (2012) cited the work of Crippen that claimed principals, who operate with the servant leadership style, put the needs of the students and staff above the needs of the
organization. Additionally, principals have the ability to shape the culture of the school, which can positively or negatively affect students’ academic progress (Roby, 2011).

**Background**

With the number of Native American students neither attending nor graduating from high school, there is a need for change. Historically, Native American students have been placed in environments that may not be conducive to effective learning (Oskineegish, 2015). Therefore, Native Americans students have not been served in the best educational environment.

**Colonial Missionaries and Their Schools**

Some of the first Europeans who arrived in the United States were missionaries. Upon their arrival, the Native Americans (Indians) were already living in the territory and had their own way of living and educating their young people. However, the colonial missionaries wanted to Christianize, educate, and assimilate Native Americans into civilized culture (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Additionally, the missionaries did not agree with the method the Native Americans used to discipline their children. Reyhner and Eder (2004) explained the missionaries were critical of the lack of discipline of the Native American children when in European culture corporal punishment was normal practice; in the Native American culture, corporal punishment was unacceptable.

The missionaries organized schools to transform the Native American students into productive citizens who could contribute to the community. Moreover, the missionary school later transitioned into on-reservation boarding schools (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). As the United States was evolving into the early 20th century, the approach to educating the Native American children began to alter. After the Civil War, the U.S.
government collected as many Native American children as possible and removed them forcibly from their homes to civilize them in off-reservation boarding schools (Fields, 2016). Several students have been conducted concerning the living conditions of the off-reservation boarding schools. In March 1927, Lewis Meriam visited Charles H. Burke Indian School while he was conducting a study on the quality of life for the Native American people. Meriam produced a final report known as the *Meriam Report* that propelled radical reforms in the education of Native American students (Johnson, 2018).

Almost 5 decades later, the Kennedy report was published, and it showed how Native Americans were being educated. At that time, one-third of all Native American children were still being educated in schools managed by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). Fields (2016) went on to claim today about 40,000 Native Americans are attending schools run by the BIE; however, 92% of Native American students are attending public schools. In Washington State, there are 1,149,011 students in public schools and 14,941 are considered to be Native American (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction [OSPI], 2020). Therefore, the Native American student population consists of only 1% of the total student population. Native American students are scoring in the lowest percentile in English language arts and math compared to students of other ethnic groups (OSPI, 2020).

**Theoretical Foundation**

The word leadership is a term that has been expressed in various aspects. Northouse (2014) made a clear statement leadership involves people; for a person to function in leadership there must be followers. Northouse continued with an example of an athlete, scientist, musician, and other individuals who may lead in their various fields
of expertise, but they are not leaders who have followers and function with leadership. Leadership also means different things according to the state of affairs and what part of the world the event or situation is occurring (Mindtools, 2020).

Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower declared, “Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it” (Mareus, Firestone, Patterson, & Winston, 2019, p. 55). For several decades, top-down leadership has been a leadership style many bosses and organizational leaders have adopted. Mareus et al. (2019) cited Rogers, Samuel, and Rowling (2017) and suggested a top-down leadership style may not be the most effective method for leading schools or other large organizations.

**Transformational Leadership**

A popular leadership style commonly used in an organization is transformational leadership. Koh, Steers, and Terborg (1995) defined three types of transformational leaders. First, transformational leaders bring attention to the values and importance of subordinates. Second, transformational leaders encourage others to rise above their interests and put more energy into the larger group or organization. Lastly, transformational leaders are involved in altering or influencing followers’ needs.

Additionally, Andressen, Konradt, and Neck (2012) posited transformational leadership is a traditional leadership style and is critical when fostering employee self-leadership by motivating the employees to think outside of the box, create their ideas, and encourage change in the organization. Also, Hamza and Abdelmone (2018) believed an important characteristic of a transformational leader is when the leader can lead the organization during modernization and inspire the behavior of followers to address the
issue the organization is currently facing. When there is a need for a major change in an organization, Hamza and Abdelmone (2018) believed the transformational leadership style is a vital management method for creating and developing change processes in organizations.

**Servant Leadership**

The title servant leadership was first introduced in 1970 by Greenleaf (Frick, 2004; Patterson, 2003). Frick (2004) quoted what Greenleaf believed to be a vital component to a servant leader. Greenleaf said a leader is one who “goes out ahead and shows the way . . . He says, ‘I will go, follow me!’ when he knows that the path is uncertain, even dangerous” (as cited in Frick, 2004, p. 337). Furthermore, a servant leader has the mentality and understanding they are servants first, which is much different from a leader who is leader first (Frick, 2004). Another person who was very influential in the servant leadership movement was Autry. According to Autry (20016), servant leadership can be a set of leadership practices, a philosophy, or leadership qualities. Some of the qualities of a servant leader are to build teams, heal, listen, persuade, and empower followers by sharing the governmental responsibilities of the organization.

In 2003, Patterson conducted a study looking at servant leadership and developed seven servant leadership constructs. Patterson (2003) determined the servant leadership theory can be a logical extension to the transformational leadership theory. However, in transformational theory the leader, in some cases, lacks certain characteristics. Thus, a servant leader must adopt a new understanding of how leaders lead by using their heart as a focus of their leadership and serving their followers.
Theoretical Framework

Patterson (2003) defined servant leadership as a virtuous theory. Patterson (2003) stated, “A virtue is qualitative characteristic that is part of one’s character, something within a person that is internal or almost spiritual” (p. 2). Additionally, virtues can be considered the characteristics and mindsets one possesses as a means to interact with others (Patterson, 2003). Patterson’s seven servant leadership constructs consist of (a) agapao love, (b) humility, (c) altruism, (d) vision, (e) trust, (f) empowerment, and (g) service (Dierendock & Patterson, 2014).

Agapao love is demonstrated when a leader believes every person in the organization is important, and they have wants, needs, and desires (Patterson, 2003). Gunn (2002) argued servant leaders have the ability to lead with love and they do what is right based on how they interact with others. Furthermore, servant leaders put the needs of others in the forefront and the leader assists the followers into become leaders themselves (Gunn, 2002).

Humility is when the leader can give the followers the necessary support and freedom where the leader does not have to take the credit for the success of the organization (Sousa & Dierendock, 2015). Also, Collins (2001) claimed an individual who leads with humility never boast or brags but gives all of the praise and attention to others in the organization. Furthermore, Sandage, Wiens, and Dahl (2001) posited leaders who demonstrate humility abandon their own objects to ensure the goals and objectives of others are achieved.

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 (DeYoung, 2000). Kaplan (2000) described leaders
who display altruism characteristics are selfless helpers who seek to help others without
expecting anything in return.

*Vision* is when a servant leader has the ability to look into the future and see
others in the organization as critical and necessary. The leader believes in that person’s
future and does whatever is necessary to assist each person in achieving their individual
goals (Patterson, 2003). Additionally, servant leaders with vision inspire their followers
to use their talents to effective future leaders (Patterson, 2003).

*Trust* is the level of confidence 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, the leader, and followers value integrity and care for others
(Joseph & Winston, 2005). Patterson (2003) argued trust is vital in building and
sustaining effective relationship for any leader. Also, servant leaders build trust when
they do what they said they are going to do.

*Empowerment* is allowing others to have power in the organization. The leader
gives power to the followers and gives them the freedom to serve. With empowerment,
the leader takes a risk and promotes self-accountability for the organization (Patterson,
leader to develop leaders in the organization from their followers.

*Service* is when the leader gives of themselves to others. The leader places their
focus on the interest of others in the organization. It can be demonstrated with giving of
time, energy, gifts, compassion, caring, or belonging (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). Greenleaf (1977) believed service is the heart of servant leadership.

**Culture of High Student Performance**

The culture of a school building can be affected and changed by the students, teachers, parents, and administration. According to Roby (2011), all individuals in a school building can influence the culture of the school. When teacher leaders and administrators effectively present positive attitudes, they can cultivate a climate if continuous love for learning. As posited by Norman (2019), school culture can be a set of views the school administration has established for the governing and establishing of the school’s members. Also, culture can be a set of beliefs, attitudes, and assumptions shared in the organization.

**Introduction of State Assessments**

In the early 20th century, when religious institutions were still operating many of the schools in the United States, the government began to look for accountability for the funds the government was allocating for public education (William, 2008). Moreover, accountability has various meanings; it could be answerable, blameworthy, or liable. Additionally, the test has been designed to determine a variety of measurements and the results are used in a variety of ways (William, 2008). As the years progressed, education continued to be a hot topic for citizens and politicians. In 1983, a report entitled *A Nation at Risk* was produced by the Reagan administration which highlighted the failures of the public educational system (Maranto, 2015).

Following the *A Nation at Risk* report, each newly elected president enacted an initiative to improve the educational system. President George H. W. Bush tried to enact
a systemic reform; however, the program did not pass congressional votes. Maranto (2015) stated:

President Clinton introduced GOALS 2000, President G.W. Bush signed NCLB into law in 2002, and President Obama implemented Race to the Top (RTT). While each program had its signature design, one constant throughout all of them was the reliance upon standardized testing in math and reading to gauge success. (p. 3)

With all the different approaches to address the issue of students not achieving academic standards, there is still a gap.

The achievement gap is the unequable ability for one group of students to reach a standard for educational achievement over another group of students. Colgren and Sappington (2015) saw the achievement gap is plain and clear when the results of academic achievement are disproportioned from one racial or ethnic and socioeconomic background from another group. Numerous studies have been conducted to evaluate the ever-increasing achievement gap between African American students and White students. However, the achievement gap is continuing to expand among other ethnic groups compared to White students. Additionally, more attention has been given to income inequality based on research indicating income-based achievement gaps are not increasing and have surpassed race-based achievement gaps (Baker, Bloom, & Davis, 2016).

Furthermore, to make significant progress in closing the achievement gap, more than transactional efforts will have to be implemented. Colgren (2015) went on to suggest all educators must appreciate and value the contributions students of all economic
and ethnic backgrounds can contribute to the classroom and use that experience to enhance the learning environment. All students should be provided with the same quality of instruction and a rigorous curriculum.

**School Principals**

While addressing the achievement gap is vitally important, understanding who the individuals are and what their responsibilities are to address how the school operates is necessary. Currently, there are over 90,000 principals in public schools in the United States (Roby, 2011). The role of the school principal is very influential. The principal can affect the culture, climate, and professional development of the staff and students. Along with the many duties of a school principal, the primary responsibility is to maintain and cultivate a positive and healthy teaching and learning community for everyone in the school (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000).

According to Martin (2018), during the 1980s, school principals were considered to be innovators who were continuously looking for methods to increase student achievement through positive teacher instructional practices. Moreover, with the demanding pressures of standardized testing and accountability from the states, the principal role is evolving. Kaufman (2019) conducted a study in a metropolitan area of how principals handle stress in the high stress and demanding job. During the interviews, most of the principals stated they had participated in some type of physical activity over the past month to manage and cope with the stress of the job.

**Problem Statement**

The federal Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) is responsible for 183 BIE schools, which are located on 64 Native American Indian Reservations. Additionally, the BIE is
accountable for monitoring the educational system, which includes curriculum, academic achievement, staff/faculty, facilities, and materials (Fishbaugh, Dugi, & Schmitz, 2016). In addition to the monitoring of the schools, the BIE is required to produce an annual report outlining the areas the BIE has been monitoring. According to a recent BIE annual report, the BIE schools have a shortage of curricula and the necessary materials for the teachers to perform their duties adequately. Also, there is a lack of professional development opportunities, which results in the students performing below the achievement level in reading, writing, and math (Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA], 2019).

Furthermore, data has shown Native American students score lower on math and science than any other racial group of students on national standardized assessments (Hoffman & Kurtz-Costes, 2019). McComas et al. (2017) posited the issue of Native American students failing, and the achievement gap, is continuing to grow at an alarming rate. Though, it has gotten little attention compared to other racial groups of students such as African American and Hispanic students. The National Center for Education Statistics (2007) showed over a third of Native American students are not meeting basic educational standards at the individual grade levels. While Native American students are not achieving academic standards, culturally responsive teaching is often considered a cultural learning styles (McComas et al., 2017). Furthermore, Native American students have the highest dropout rate and the lowest graduation rates among all racial groups of students in public schools in the United States. Nevertheless, Native American students are only 1% of the total student population resulting in this group of students being overlooked in the conversation about the nation’s achievement gap (Fields, 2016).
In the states of Washington and Oregon, there are nine BIE schools. At the beginning of each school year, the schools are required to submit an enrollment count. During the October 2019 enrollment count, there were a total of 14,941 Native American students in Washington’s public schools. Additionally, Native American students have the second highest rates for disciplinary actions such as suspensions and expulsions. Furthermore, Native American students have the highest percentage rates of students that have fewer than two absences per month (OSPI, 2020). Multiple studies have been conducted and have shown students who have excessive absenteeism and are not preforming at the basic grade level by the third grade are more likely to drop out of high school (Gottfried & Kirksey, 2017). In addition to the high percentage of Native American students not attending school, the data has shown the Native American students are performing in the lowest categories on the state assessment in the areas of English language arts and math, and second lowest in science (OSPI, 2020).

As the data has demonstrated, Native American students are not achieving academic progress. Qian and Walker (2019) believed school principals must deal with political bureaucratic and high demands from several different directions to ensure their individual school performs well on the state assessments. Furthermore, the school principals often use a top-down leadership approach to manage the bureaucratic system and oversee the day-to-day operations in the school building (Qian & Walker, 2019).

Servant leaders are people who put the service of others before their own personal needs. Furthermore, the leader must demonstrate a natural calling to serve others (Spears, 2002). Sousa and Dierendonck (2015) posited servant leadership style leaders have a critical role in the engagement advancements in the organization. Moreover, in a
study conducted by Herndon (2009), there was a statistically significant relationship between school principals and the climate and culture of high student achievement. Also, Kelley, Thornton, and Daugherty (2005) conducted a quantitative study that evaluated 31 elementary school principals and it was determined servant leadership had a significant outcome on school climate and culture of high student achievement. Additionally, Boyer (2012) surveyed principals, teachers, and students then determined a significant relationship existed between the principal servant leader and school culture and climate.

Research has shown a link between servant leadership and student achievement in K-12 public schools; however, the link between school principals as servant leaders and their impact on establishing a culture of high student achievement for Native American students has not been proven. Van Winkle, Allen, DeVore, and Winston (2014) found a servant leader has the ability to see the potential and power in their followers and help them to develop.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe principals’ of elementary, middle, and high school of Native American students in Washington State perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

**Central Research Question**

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by principals of elementary, middle, and high schools with a student population of 40% or higher of Native American students in Washington State of high-performance schools?
Sub Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Significance of the Study

As the data has demonstrated, Native American students are continuing to increase the achievement gap (McComas et al., 2017). Additionally, Native American students in Washington State have historically scored lower on the state standardized assessment compared to students of other racial demographics (OSPI, 2020). With the development of the NCLB, all students were supposed to be able to achieve academic success. However, even with the enactment of NCLB and several state laws to implement strategies and techniques to decrease the achievement gap in schools, Native
American students have not made any gains (McCardle & Berninger, 2014). Furthermore, there is a need for a school culture that will promote high student achievement for Native American students. Therefore, research has showed there is a significant impact on academic achievement and school culture and climate when the principal of the school led with a servant leadership style.

The research question for this qualitative research study is what is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high student performance as perceived by principals of Native American schools in the Pacific Northwest (PNW)? Still, there is a gap in the research related to how effective the impact of servant leadership is on establishing a culture of high student achievement. When a school principal implements the seven servant leadership constructs that were developed by Patterson, the researcher explored how effective those constructs in servant leadership are on the culture of high student performance for Native American students to address this gap.

According to the BIA (2020), there are 183 K-12 schools across the United States established for educating Native American students. Additionally, there are thousands of other schools with a student body of Native American students that will benefit when the principals in those schools use the seven constructs. In addition, when the seven constructs of servant leadership are used in the school, not only will Native American students succeed academically, but a culture and climate of high student performance will be established in that school building; resulting in a community of high achieving students and a leader who serves first.
This research was to explore and describe principals’ of Native American schools perceived impact of servant leadership constructs established by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high student performance. Moreover, there was a critical need for this study because when students do not achieve academically, often there is a struggle for the student to come to school regularly, resulting in chronic absenteeism (Lee, 2010). Likewise, research has shown students who experience chronic absenteeism are more likely to drop out of high school and many high school dropouts end up in prison (Cater, 2018). Furthermore, the school principal’s perceived leadership style is valuable to this study, because as the leader they have the ability to shape and transform the school community. Ultimately, causing Native American students’ past historical trauma and cultural deprivation to take a back seat and a new future is formed.

Definitions

The following definitions are terms significant to the study. All members of the thematic team collaboratively developed the definitions.

Theoretical Definitions

The theoretical definitions are from Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs.

**Agapao Love.** Agapao love is to do the right thing for the right reasons. Agapao love leaders care more for their followers than the interest of the organization resulting in greater understanding, gratitude, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion (Gunn, 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’s best for others, often with an attitude of humility, modesty, and selflessness (DeYoung, 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 (Melrose, 1995; Patterson, 2003; 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 (Kim, Li, & Ng, 2005).

**Service.** Service is the moral equivalent of giving of oneself to serve others. It implies 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, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002).

**Trust.** Trust is the level of confidence 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.** A bridge from the present to the future created by a collaborative mindset, adding meaning to the organization, sustaining higher levels of motivation and

**Operational Definitions**

The operational definitions relevant to the study are as defined:

**Elementary School.** For the purpose of this study elementary school is defined as a school that provides comprehensive academic instruction to students in grades Kindergarten through sixth grade.

**High Performance.** For the purpose of this study high achievement is defined by the Washington State School Recognition Board for schools who have demonstrated being exemplary in either closing gaps, growth, or achievement.

**Middle School.** For the purpose of this study middle school is defined as a school that provides comprehensive academic instruction to students in sixth through eighth grades.

**Native American Schools.** For the purpose of this study Native American schools are defined as schools in Washington State with a student population of 40% or higher of Native American students.

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

**Delimitations**

The target population for this study included principals of schools with a population of 40% or higher Native American students, who represented five of the seven following criteria:
• Principal was employed as a principal in a public school within the State of Washington with a minimum of 30 staff members.

• Evidence of leading school with culture of high student performance.

• Principal participant has a minimum of 2 or 3 years of experience at their current site.

• A minimum of 5 years experience in the K-12 profession.

• Membership in professional associations in their field, such as Washington Schools Principal Associations (WSPA).

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

• Principal was willing to be a participant and agreed to the informed consent form.

**Organization of the Study**

This dissertation includes five chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter I offers a summary, which included the background, purpose statement, central question, sub questions, significance, delimitations, and definitions. In Chapter II, there are the theoretical framework and the review of literature that aligns to the central questions. Chapter III outlines the research design, and displays the methods used to collect and analyze data. Chapter IV presents the results from the study. Chapter V presents conclusions of the study with implications for actions, recommendations for future research, and remarks.
CHAPTER II – LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the beginning of time, immemorial Native American people have lived in what is known as the United States. However, with the Indian Removal Act of 1830, several Native American tribes that resided on the eastern side of the Mississippi Rivers were forced to relocate to other parts of the county designated for Native American people (Gram, 2016). Numerous battles were fought between Native American tribes and the European settlers, which resulted in thousands of Native American people losing their lives. Due to the forced movements, several Native American tribes fought to maintain their heritage and the way of living. Krueger (2018) explained the traditional practices of hunting, fishing, gathering, and family engagement changed drastically, and families had to modify the raising and educating of the children.

Educating the children has always been a priority in Native American families. However, the education process was a community event that encouraged and promoted family and community values (Farmer, 2018). Furthermore, in the 19th century, the term “Vanishing American” became very popular in describing the forced attendance of Native American children in various educational systems that were established to kill the Indian to save the child (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Additionally, Krueger (2019) declared Native Americans are seen in today’s society as tropes of tipis and warriors from the past, with casinos today. Moreover, in the back of most Americans’ minds, Native Americans are still considered savages and outlaws who will kill to defend their land and nature.

In the PNW, Native American students have experienced racial and cultural prejudice for several decades. Due to racial injustice, Native American students have struggled academically and do not meet the state standards for basic education.
However, there are some principals of Native American Schools who have implemented strategies from Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs to establish a culture of high performance.

A review of literature was conducted to provide historical background for Native American education, the theoretical foundation, and the theoretical framework of Patterson’s (2003) seven constructs for servant leadership (i.e., agapao love, humility, altruism, trust, vision, empowerment, service) for the culture of high performance. A synthesis matrix was provided (see Appendix A) to guide the research of this review of literature. The review was organized into five parts. Part I includes the history of Native American education in the United States. Part II outlines five theoretical foundations for leadership (i.e., transactional leadership, management leadership theory, behavioral leadership, contingency leadership theory, and servant leadership). Part III includes the theoretical framework for this study, Patterson’s servant leadership seven constructs (i.e., agapao love, humility, altruism, trust, vision, empowerment, and service). Part IV reflects on the culture of high performance. Part V includes history of school principals and the roles and responsibilities of building principals.

Native American Educational History

Native American people do not exist as a homogenous group of people, and there are over 560 federal recognized Native American tribes and bands in the lower 48 states (BIA, 2019). Moreover, each tribe or band of Native American people have their own history, and several tribes continue to practice the traditional teachings and values. Furthermore, the educational process of the Native American children looks different depending on the tribe’s cultural values and traditional practices (Price, Kallam, & Love,
According to Meyer and Bogdan (2001), when the Europeans/White man came to a new country, which is the United States today, they found the Native Americans living a lifestyle that was considered barbaric and uncivilized.

**Colonial Missionaries and Their Schools**

Therefore, the federal government saw the need to educate the Native American children so they would become civilized people according to the White man’s standards. Consequently, Native American boarding schools or Indian residential schools were established in the early 19th century with the intent to assimilate Native American children into Euro-American culture, along with providing basic education in Euro-American subjects. Furthermore, Native American children were removed from their homes, forced to abandon their native languages, and the children were not allowed to retain any of the cultural practices or rituals (Trafzer, Keller, & Sisquoc, 2006). Some of the first boarding schools were opened on reservations in rural areas and were operated by Christian missionaries from many different dominations to ensure Native American children’s souls would be saved and educated (Bear, 2008). According to Galler (2008), the early missionaries were considered to fall under two categories. First, the missionaries were seen as righteous Christians who risked their lives to ensure the lost souls of the Native Americans would be saved. However, from the perspective of the Native Americans and others, the missionaries were portrayed as villains and the Native Americans as their helpless victims.

Moreover, the missionary boarding schools were led by individuals who taught life lessons from the Bible, but in some cases, the experiences of the Native American children did not align to the teaching of the Bible (Norton & Booss, 2019). In some
situations, parents would voluntarily send their children to the missionary/residential schools, and in other cases, the children would run away from home to attend the school; however, the process of the residential schools was very traumatic for most students (Reyhner & Eder, 2004). Adams (1995) stated although Native American children suffered isolation, diseases, harsh punishment, loneliness, and physical and sexual abuse several of the students were able to find some sense of enjoyment during their boarding school days. Even during the most challenging times, history has shown children can endure and find some kind of joy during the storm. For example, Trafzer et al. (2006) retailed a story from Sarah Long Horn, who was born in 1902 and was a student in the Rainy Mountain Boarding School. Sarah had a cousin who attended the school and one day she visited her cousin at the school. She recalled:

We mostly were raised together, and I always want to be with her . . . I went down there to see that girl. They say she’s going to school, so I went to visit her, and she begged for me to stay. So, I thought to myself, I’ll stay for a few days and then I’ll go back. Then when the time came, well, I was already in school. So, I just stayed there and never did go back home . . . that’s how I got to school. I went to school myself. By going visiting, she asked me to stay, so I just stayed with her. (Trafzer et al., 2006, p.70)

All the children were not forced to attend boarding schools, as was in Sarah’s case. Additionally, some of the students saw the school as a home away from home since their other family members were at school with them.
**Government Boarding Schools**

While the missionary school was continuing to educate the Native American students on how to become a good Christian, the U.S. government began to take another approach at the educational methods used for the Native American children. Adams (1995) summarized in the early 1900s, the federal government saw the need to intervene in the education of the Native American children, took control of the various religious groups, and developed off-reservation boarding schools. During this time, the BIA established a three-tiered system of schools. Furthermore, the responsibility of the government boarding schools was to take the smartest students and place them in the boarding schools for 5 years where the students would learn in English only in industrial shops, with the overarching demand for becoming Americans and no longer be Indians (Adams, 1995).

Under the supervision of the BIA, there were over two dozen government run board schools on the western side of the Mississippi River. Also, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the federal government began to transform how the education of the Native Americans would benefit the county with the increase of immigration, industrialization, urbanization, and World War I (Gram, 2016). Furthermore, Lynch (2016) expressed the U.S. government attempted to address the misguided attempts of the missionary schools and the government boarding schools for the education of the Native American children under the Indian Removal Act. One of the reforms the government implemented was to publish a report entitled *Committee of One Hundred*; the purpose of this report was to examine and identify the current situation in Indian affairs.
The findings from the Committee of One Hundred was known as the Meriam Report and Lynch (2016) summarized the poverty and poor health of Native American students in the missionary schools was unacceptable and could not truly educate Native American students. Also, Lynch reported the quality of the curriculum, facilities, and the experiences of the teachers needed some improvements. After the Meriam Report’s findings were presented, the U.S. government tried to enact policy to enhance the quality of life for the Native Americans and the educational process of the children. Rosier (1999) explained the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 gave the Native Americans the right to sovereignty of tribal self-government. Additionally, the Johnson O’Malley Act, ensured the states would be responsible for the education of Native American children.

**New Direction in Indian Education**

In 1824, the U.S. government enacted the BIA, which had the responsibility to oversee land the government held in trust for the Native American tribes and the education of Native American children (BIA, 2020). The BIA continued to grow and gain more authority, three major legislative actions restructured the organization as it related to the education of Native American students. First, the teaching of Native American history and culture in BIA schools were introduced in the Reorganization Act of 1934 (BIA, 2020). Before the Reorganization Act, the government operated the boarding schools with the objective to eradicate the Indian and assimilate the child into European culture.

The Johnson O’Malley Act gave the U.S. Secretary of Interior the authority to subsidize education for Native American students, especially for those not living on reservation lands (Hilberg & Tharp, 2002). Additionally, in 1975 the Indian Self-
Determination and Education Assistance Act gave federally recognized tribes the ability to partner with the BIA to manage bureau-funded schools on reservation land and to determine the education program for the students. Lastly, the Education Amendments Act of 1978 gave federal funds directly to Native American schools operated by the tribes. Under the amendment, the school was empowered to create a school board to govern the policies and procedures of the Native American school, and the school was allowed to hire teachers and other staff members (BIA, 2020). With the new governmental regulations, Native American schools located on federally recognized reservations were able to educate the students in traditional practices and cultural awareness. The NCLB Act of 2001, increased schools’ accountability to improve student’s academic progress. Native American schools were able to apply for additional funds to ensure all students received additional support and to hire more teachers (BIA, 2020).

**Washington State Native American Assessment Data**

Long before the newly formed country of the United States ventured westward, Native American people resided in the territory, which is now known as Washington State. Currently, there are 29 federally recognized Native American tribes in Washington. The Washington State Legislature passed Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill (E2 SHB) in 2013. E2 SHB gave the Superintendent of Public Instruction the authority to enter into state-tribal education compacts. Furthermore, the act exempts state-tribal compact schools from all existing state statutes, policies, and procedures traditional school districts and school boards of directors have to follow. The state-tribal
compact schools can make their own regulations for hiring teachers, staff, and developing curriculum (Thompson, Wood, Neuenswander, Heim, & Watson, 2019).

With the state-tribal compact schools, the Native American students in Washington State continued to struggle. Native American children score lower on standardized assessments compared to White and Asian students, as reported by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES; 2015). According to the OSPI, in Washington State, Native American students make up 6.2% of the total student population in public schools. Due to federal reporting regulations, several Native American students may consider themselves as multiracial; however, for national testing data, the first race the student identifies is the race that is reported as the primary race of the student (OSPI, 2019).

**Theoretical Foundation**

The theoretical foundation is the portion of this 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 focused on leadership, specifically transactional leadership, management leadership, behavioral leadership, contingency leadership theory, and servant leadership.

**Leadership**

The term leadership has been expressed in many different methods and on several platforms. Kruse (2013) described leadership as “a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, toward the achievement of a goal” (p. 2). Green (2013) claimed leadership should be a social process that involves building purposeful
relationships, individuals working collaboratively, cultivating an environment of mutual respect, and everyone working together for a shared goal. Additionally, Owings and Kaplan (2012) expressed characteristics of great leadership should include courage, optimism, integrity, support, humility, and empathy. For an organization to achieve goals and objectives, leadership is essential and necessary (Hamza & Abdelmonem, 2018). Two popular leadership styles that are often studied when considering organization leadership are transactional leadership and servant leadership.

Maxwell (2002), a megachurch pastor, author, and renowned conference speaker on leadership stated, “Leadership ability is the lid that determines a person’s level of effectiveness. The lower an individual’s ability to lead, the lower the lid on his potential. The higher the leadership, the greater the effectiveness” (p. 1). Maxwell (1993) also defined leadership as influence—nothing more or nothing less. Leadership appears in many forms; a popular leadership style in use is transactional leadership.

**Transactional Leadership**

Maxwell (1993) quoted James C. Georges from the ParTraining Corporation’s definition of leadership as, “What is leadership? Remove for a moment the moral issue behind it, and there is only one definition: Leadership is the ability to obtain followers” (p. 1). Dartey-Baah (2015) posited leadership is a concept very difficult to define because it has such a dynamic nature. However, Brymer (2006) referred to transactional leadership as the traditional structure of leadership. There is a leader-follower relationship; the leader gives the follower instructions, and the follower follows those instructions. Additionally, there is often some type of reward, promise, or praise the follower receives when the assigned task has been completed (Odetunde, 2013).
Management Leadership Theory

According to Amanchukwu, Stanley, and Ololube (2015), management leadership theories look at the role of the supervisor, the groups’ performance, and the organization as a whole will review the relationship between the leader and the followers. Riccucci (2005) went on to say managers play a crucial role in influencing the success of the organizations. Furthermore, Lamb (2013) claimed in management leadership theory, a leader’s job is to establish structure with the employees and to ensure they are aware of the consequences and rewards for achieving the goals and objectives of the organization. Managers can shape the attitudes and actions of their followers. Oberfield (2014) went on to say managers make decisions about staff work schedules, promotions, communication, and promote organizational rules.

From the perspective of Behn (2006), managers assist with building the operating systems of the organizations that allow the followers to follow their directions and thrive in the company. March and Olsen (1984) expressed managers matter because they work directly with the people who are on the frontline, and managers set the tone for how the employees behave. Also, managers should model the type of behavior they want to see in the other employees in the company. In the arena of education, DeMatthews (2014) believed building school principals have to use a hands-on management approach because several people will be working on various projects with lots of deadlines and expectations.

Behavioral Leadership

According to Parangan (2020), the behavior and interaction of the leader with the followers determines the success of the leader and the organization. Vasilescu (2019)
suggested behavior leadership consists of people and task-orientation that will encourage people to learn and grow through training and observation. Bass (1990) stated “supervisors do not directly cause subordinates’ behavior; they merely set the occasion or provide a discriminative stimulus for the evocation of it” (p. 49). Moreover, behavioral leadership influences the leader’s norms, attitudes, and the intent of how the leader will act in implicit or explicit processes (Westaby, Probst, & Lee, 2010). Besides, Murtic (2018) argued the behavioral leadership approach does not guide leaders on how to act. Still, their actions in the organization have a great influence on others they might be supervising.

In the 1960s, Blake and Mouton (1964) conducted a study that looked at behavior’s leaders displayed. The researchers assumed a leader’s actions determined his or her leadership influence and how successful the leader will be in the organization. Furthermore, the study concluded behavioral leaders demonstrated high work performance; therefore, resulting in the followers committing to high-quality work and the overall achievement of the organizational goals (Blake & Mouton, 1964).

**Contingency Leadership Theory**

Merritt (2017) suggested in contingency leadership, the leader is competent in certain situations and with specific employees. Fiedler (1972) studied leaders’ behaviors during different situations, and he was able to generalize that leaders are task-motivated, or relationship orientated. Also, Walter, Caldwell, and Marshall (1980) stated “flexible and balanced use of task and relationship behaviors is beneficial for both organizational productivity and personal satisfaction” (p. 621). Kassarjian (1988) defined contingency
leadership as the variables and influences in situations that are on a leader’s effectiveness in an organization.

During a study organized by Williams and Hoy (1971), the researchers looked at the relationship between elementary school principals and the teachers in the school. The findings of the study concluded task-oriented leadership was considered effective leadership with building principals when the classroom teachers supported them. Yukl (2011) offered, “Most contingency theories of effective leadership use broadly defined 29 categories of behavior that were identified in the early research on leadership behavior, including task-oriented behavior, relations-oriented behavior, and contingent reward behavior” (p. 287). Additionally, Yukl went on to say the impact of the situation on that leader’s influence and effectiveness over their followers in the organization that the leader has a minimal effect over.

**Servant Leadership**

In the early 1970s, Greenleaf coined the phrase servant leadership. Greenleaf (1977) described servant leadership:

The servant-leader is servant first . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions . . .

The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them, some shadings and blends are part of the infinite variety of human nature. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult
to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 4)

Autry (2001) referred to leadership as a calling, and servant leadership is an approach that includes leading with honesty, respect, love, and spiritually encouraging and empowering followers to achieve their personal callings and assignments. Furthermore, the term spirituality is a philosophical foundation of servant leadership but feeling spiritual is not all that servant leadership in composite (Autry, 2001). Spears (2002) identified 10 characteristics of a servant leader:

- **Listening**: Leaders have traditionally been valued for their communication and decision-making skills. These are also important skills for the servant leader, but they need to be reinforced by a deep commitment to listening intently to others. The servant leader seeks to identify the will of the group and helps clarify that will. He or she seeks to listen receptively to what is being said (and not said). Listening also encompasses getting in touch with one’s own inner voice. Listening, coupled with periods of reflection, is essential to the growth and wellbeing of the servant leader.

- **Empathy**: The servant leader strives to understand and empathize with others. People need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits. One assumes the good intentions of coworkers and colleagues and does not reject them as people, even when refusing to accept certain behaviors or performance.
The most successful servant leaders are those who have become skilled empathetic listeners.

- **Healing**: Learning to heal is a powerful force for transformation and integration. One of the great strengths of servant leadership is the potential for healing oneself and others.

- **Awareness**: General awareness, and especially self-awareness, strengthens the servant leader. Awareness also aids one in understanding issues that involve ethics and values. It lends itself to being able to view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position. As Greenleaf (1977) observed:
  - Awareness is not a giver of solace—it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity. (p. 36)

- **Persuasion**: Another characteristic of servant leader is the reliance on persuasion, rather than on one’s positional authority, in making decisions within an organization. The servant leader seeks to convince others rather than coerce compliance. This element offers one of the clearest distinctions between the traditional authoritarian model and that of servant leadership. The servant leader is effective at building consensus within groups. This emphasis on persuasions over coercion probably has its roots within the beliefs of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the denomination with which Greenleaf himself most closely identified.
• Conceptualization: Servant leaders seek to nurture their abilities to dream great dreams. The ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective means one must think beyond day-to-day realities. For many managers, this is a characteristic that requires discipline and practice.

• Foresight: Closely related to conceptualization, the ability to foresee the likely outcome of a situation is hard to define but more comfortable to identify. Foresight is a characteristic that enables the servant leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future.

• Stewardship: Servant leadership, like stewardship, assumes first and foremost a commitment to serving the needs of others. It also emphasizes the use of openness and persuasion rather than control.

• Commitment to the growth of people: Servant leaders believe people have an intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers. As such, the servant leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within his or her organization.

• Building community: The servant leader senses much has been lost in recent human history as a result of the shift in which larger institutions, rather than local communities, have become the primary shaper of human lives. This awareness causes the servant leader to seek to identify some means for building community among those who work within a given institution.

Spears (2002) stated, “these ten characteristics of servant leadership are by no means exhaustive” (p. 6). Moreover, servant leadership encourages team effectiveness by
establishing productive, shared governance. Also, a servant leader listens, persuades, heals, and empowers people until those people realize their full potential (Allen et al., 2016).

According to Spears and Lawrence (2004), people who operate in servant leadership styles are not just transformational, but those leaders can effectively transform the lives of the individuals following them personally and professionally. Likewise, Black (2010) stated leaders who practice servant leadership, in the boardroom, school hallways, or church pews, had developed a culture that is cultivating a positive and productive environment. The way to ensure followers succeed is to empower the people by putting them first (Black, 2010).

Furthermore, Laub (1999) developed six clusters of servant leadership; each cluster assumed a servant leader would have the following characteristics:

- Values people by believing in people, by putting others first and by listening.
- Develops people by providing learning and growth by modeling and by encouraging.
- Builds community by enhancing relationships by working collaboratively and by valuing the differences of others.
- Displays authenticity by being open to being known, by being a learner, and by maintaining integrity.
- Provides leadership by envisioning the future by taking the initiative by clarifying goals.
- Shares leadership by sharing power by sharing status.
Servant leadership is a term many people may consider to be an oxymoron—servant and leader. Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) agreed a leader can act as both a leader and a servant to subordinates and followers. Moreover, Sipe and Frick (2009) advocated for seven pillars of servant leadership and stated “A Servant Leader is a person of character who puts people first. He or she is a skilled communicator, a compassionate collaborator who has foresight, is a systems thinker, and leads with moral authority” (p. 4). Van Dierendonck (2011) described servant leaders as people who empower and develop those around them. The servant leader provides direction, shows humility, and do everything for the good of the organization. Figure 1 displays the design model developed by Van Dierendock, a conceptual model of servant leadership.

![Figure 1](image_url)

**Figure 1.** A conceptual model of servant leadership. Reprinted from “Servant Leadership: A Review and Synthesis,” by D. Van Dierendonck, 2011, *Journal of Management, 37*, 4.

Russell and Stone (2002) suggested servant leadership allows the leader to develop interpersonal working relationships with their followers, which will increase the
overall outcome of the organization. As for school building principals and teachers, Tomlinson (2017) expressed those individuals embody servant leadership, and they make a difference that will change lives forever.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study is Patterson’s seven servant leadership constructs. Patterson’s dissertations were based on the theory building of servant leadership theory as a logical extension of transformational leadership theory. Additionally, the constructs consist of the leader having agapao love, being humble, acting altruistically, being trusting, empowering others, providing service, and being visionary for followers (Patterson, 2003). Patterson (2003) defined the term servant leader to “signify those leaders who lead an organization by focusing on their followers, such that the followers are the primary concern, and the organizational concerns are peripheral” (p. 5).

Agapao Love

The Greek term agapao love means moral love, doing the right thing at the right time and for the right reasons. Additionally, Gunn (2002) expressed love is a power that allows the spirit’s wisdom and energy to be rekindled, this love is not romantic passion or parental love, it is agape. Templeton (1999) posited God is love, and the primary focus and themes of the Bible demonstrate God’s love for humankind. In Mark 12:28-34 (Authorized King James Version), there is a story where a scribe asked Jesus what the most excellent command of all is? Jesus replied, “Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all they strength.” Jesus continued, “love thy neighbor as thyself.” The term love appears in the Bible on
numerous occasions, and in, the scripture acclaims “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy; it does not boast; it is not proud” (1 Corinthians 13:4 New International Version).

Mattison (2012) conducted a study focused on two dimensions of love—eros and agapao. Eros is “acquisitive desire and longing, upward longing, that is man’s way to God, and egocentric love which is willing to get and possess which depends on want and needs. Eros finally recognizes the value in its object” (Mattison, 2012, p. 43). Agapaois totally different according to Mattison (2012); apagao love is sacrificial giving. Additionally, apagao “is an unselfish love that gives itself away. It comes down and is God’s way to man. It is God’s love; indeed, God is apagao. It is freedom in giving” (Mattison, 2012, p. 43). To put it another way, Templeton (1999) defined agapao love as feelings that express pure and unselfish love for all human beings without exception to race, creed, or sexual orientation. Moreover, Van Dierendonck and Petterson (2014) claimed leaders who demonstrate agapao love consider the needs of their followers first and the leader sees the followers as hired hearts and not just hired hands.

Humility

According to Tangney (2000), humility is defined as the ability to reflect on one’s strengths, accomplishments, and limitations. Likewise, Van Dierendonck (2011) defined humility from the perspective of a servant leader who understands they are strong and weak, and also can maintain perspective and admit one’s mistakes. Additionally, Kouzes and Posner (2006) declared humility comes when a person realizes their legacy is built on the legacy of who did the job before them and the people who are working beside the
leader. When servant leaders demonstrate humility, they are able to have better relationships with their subordinates (Hanse, Harlin, Jarebrant, Ulin, & Winkel, 2016).

Scheffler (2017) evaluated the teachings and practices of Jesus and how he placed focus on poverty, tolerance, and humility. In 1 Kings 3, King Solomon offered God over 1,000 burnt offerings, and later that evening, while Solomon was asleep, God spoke to him in a dream and asked Solomon what is it that he wanted? In the act of humility, King Solomon asked God for wisdom to help him govern the Nation of Israel. Throughout the Bible, there are several other incidents where people showed humility, and God granted them favor (The Holy Bible, New International Version).

Furthermore, Scheffler (2017) explained “a humble person becomes unselved, forgets the self and focuses on the larger community, whereas self-deprecation still represents a focus on the self” (p. 98). Humility must be present in a leader’s DNA, though it is not to indicate a leader cannot have pride and honor in their work, but they should not be arrogant, boastful, or self-serving. Also, a good dose of pride should manifest from the leader to shine a light on the success of the team or organization (Redman, 1995).

**Altruism**

Altruism is a term that is new to many people in leadership; however, the act of altruism has been around for a long time. Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary defined altruism (2020) as “unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others.” Furthermore, altruism can be considered behavior in which a person acts helpfully and that help or support increases the outcomes in the lives of those individuals who are receiving the help (Egilmez & Naylor-Tincknell, 2017). Consequently, Egilmez and
Naylor-Tincknell (2017) indicated if a person does not demonstrate altruistic behavior, there will be dysfunction and destructive behavior in the organization. Additionally, the lack of altruism from a leader will result in social dynamics becoming isolated, confused, and biased.

Matthias (2016) conducted a study that reviewed altruism and the burnout rate in public school teachers in the United States. Matthias’ research was based on the study conducted by Higgins (2010), who claimed altruism is a factor that contributes to Christian teachers’ burnout, which results in a flourishing teacher being an oxymoron. Higgins (2010) defined altruism as “acting to benefit another person with no benefit whatsoever to the actor” (p. 347). Higgins (2010) continued to say, “we find ourselves defining duty in opposition to inclination and judging altruism by its distance from self-interest” (p. 347).

Research has suggested since a particular act can be considered to be selfless or have self-interest intent it should be seen as altruistic behavior. Newman and Cain (2014) went on to say decisions to make selfless donations to specific organizations can be seen as weaker signals of altruism; however, altruistic behavior should involve giving without any expectations of receiving any praise or other forms of recognition. Consequently, de Waal (2008) suggested altruism is produced through the mechanism, which is empathy and bonding that results in helping someone else, ultimately resulting in improving oneself.

**Trust**

Trust (2020) is defined in Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary as having confidence, hope, or faith in someone or something. Blanchard, Olmstead, and Lawrence
(2013), in their book *Trust Works*, used an allegory that displays the dysfunctional relationship around trust between a cat and a dog. The relationship between the cat and the dog is affecting everyone in the house, including the adults. Consequently, a wise parrot introduces the ABCDs of trust, which are ability, believability, connectedness, and dependability. Together these can be used to establish a trusting working relationship.

White, Harvey, and Fox (2016) suggested trust is vital and critical in the high-stake environment that many people work—without trust, the leader has limited power; with trust, the leader can make a significant change in an organization.

Moreover, Kouzes and Posner (2006) implied “leading requires trust” (p. 49). In effective organizations, the leader builds trust to get assignments done and completed with passion and dedication. Fulmer and Ostroff (2017) conducted a study that examined the trust level of employees on top-level leaders in organizations such as CEOs, presidents, the board of directors, and high-level managers. The study determined the trust level with immediate level leaders often determined the trust level that employees would have with higher-level leaders in the organizations. Furthermore, Fulmer and Ostroff (2017) explained people are more willing to trust when they know the person and the purpose of the trust. A study conducted by Campagna, Dirks, Knight, Crossley, and Robinson (2020) looked at the relationship between felt trust and actual trust. It was determined verbal and nonverbal signals that an employee sends and how the leader interprets influence a leader’s perceived trust.

**Vision**

The term vision has various meanings according to who is being asked the question, and in what context the question is being asked. Senge Roberts, Ross, Smith,
and Kleiner (1994) defined vision as a picture of the future that a person or organization pursues to create in the present tense. Also, Senge et al. (1994) stated, “our vision shows where we want to go, and what we will be like when we get there” (p. 302).

Furthermore, Kantabutra and Avery (2010) contended vision is a view of the future that everyone in the organization can believe in and is not current reality but offers a clearer picture and direction for the future.

However, Collins and Porras (2008) offered organizations’ visions are not about what the organization will be in the future, but what the organization has been in the past and what it is today. An organization that has a good vision is an organization that will grow efficiently and effectively. As a matter of fact, Jonyo, Ouma, and Mosoti (2018) expressed a good vision is developing for the team, the organizational members can work to accomplish the vision and the success of the company. Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (2006) argued the future does not belong to the leader of the organization along, and the vision is about articulating the people’s vision.

Perkins, Lean, and Newberry (2017) concluded a vision allows the leader to express their aspirations and directions, which allows the followers to give their suggestions for future growth in the organization. Also, when there is a vision, no matter if the vision is fixed or fluid, the people in the organization can enhance the productivity in the company. Jensen, Moynihan, and Salomonsen (2018) proposed, though a leader may need to create a vision in isolation, the sharing of the vision depends on communication with the employees and they need to see the vision as significant and meaningful. Jensen et al. (2018) stated, “A vision will be more inspiring and motivating
if it is relevant to the values, ideals, and needs of followers and is communicated with colorful, emotional language” (p. 352).

**Empowerment**

The term empowerment became very popular in the 1980s when Rappaport (1984) defined empowerment as “a process, the mechanism by which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives” (p. 2). Over time more scholars developed their own definitions for empowerment. Alsop, Bertelsen, and Holland (2006) defined empowerment as a process that will increase the capacity of individuals or groups to turn their choices into actions and outcomes that will benefit the group. From a political perspective, Craig and Mayo (1995) expressed empowerment should be about collective community and class conscientization, this empowerment will transform the traditional practices of politics.

Additionally, Albertyn, Kapp, and Groenewald (2001) believed true empowerment will only occur when three levels have been established: micro, interface, and macro. Research has shown when employees feel empowered, the work environment is enhanced, the employees are self-motivated, work effectively in teams, and communicate more effectively (Alfadli, & Al-Mehaisen, 2019). In other words, empowerment encourages people to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization, and the management and the lower-level employees are working toward a common goal (Alfadli & Al-Mehaisen, 2019).

Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999) claimed servant leaders empower their followers in a way that will transform the team, and the organization will enhance the teams’ values and objectives. Melrose (1995) indicated when empowerment is
implemented in an organization, it helps to clarify the goals and objectives of the organization. Also, social change begins when people have a common purpose, and they feel their individual roles are important to the overall accomplishment of the organization (Daniele, 2017). Finally, Patterson (2003) explained empowerment as:

letting people do their jobs by enabling them to learn, grown, and progress, and it means allowing for self-direction and freedom to fail; all of this multiplies the followers’ strengths and trust. By empowering followers, servant leaders are allowing them the freedom to proceed toward their goals, helping them make dreams reality. (p. 24)

Service

According to Covey (1990), a foundation for leadership should include the desire to serve those who are under the leader’s leadership. Also, Allen et al. (2016) posited any servant leader should have a desire to serve, and they should keep in mind exemplary leaders serve others. Seeing service as leadership is not a new concept. Greenleaf (1977) said “a great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to the leader’s greatness” (p. 36). Servant leaders build trust with their employees with their actions, and the leaders encourage the followers to emulate their behavior by serving the employees first (Schermerhorn, Osborn, Uhl-bien, & Hunt, 2012).

Dansereau, Seitz, Chiu, Shaughnessy, and Yammarino (2013) claimed service is a part of servant leadership, and a leader should have a proactive leadership style that will sacrifice the needs of the leader for the needs, goals, and interests in the organization. Furthermore, Powe (2020) noted service is about placing the needs of others first, and this style will develop the strengths and weaknesses of the leader and the organization.
Moreover, Patrnchak (2016) defined service as an altruistic approach where leaders unequivocally put the needs of others before their own needs. Also, Powe (2020) said the impact of the servant leadership approach is contingent on leaders’ willingness to take on a subservient role and elevate the needs of employees in order to inspire followers to become servants as well. (p. 33) 

Gloppen (2009) declared service design leadership uses a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary style to solving problems and using innovation in the organization. Service is a method leaders use to enhance those that work in their organizations and to promote a healthy work environment.

**Culture of High Performance**

Culture can be defined as “a set of common values, attitudes, beliefs, and norms, some of which are explicit and some of which are not” (Brown, 2004, p. 4). Robbins (2006) believed culture can be learned, and it is a set of values, knowledge, and attitudes. Along those same lines of reasoning, Luthans (2002) inferred that culture is a set of norms and values that direct the actions of the members in the organization. Consequently, every school and organization has its own unique culture that has been established and modified by the students, teachers, administration, and staff (Teasley, 2017).

**School Culture**

Teasley (2017) stated “positive school culture is conducive to professional satisfaction, effectiveness, morale, and creating an environment that maximizes student learning and fosters collegiality and collaboration” (p. 3). Moreover, Bush (2015) believed teachers, administrators, and staff members must engage in healthy activities to
promote a positive school culture. School culture and climate have often been combined and considered to be the same thing from the perspective of certain researchers. MacNeil, Prater, and Busch (2009) defined school climate as a “total environmental quality within an organization” (p. 75). Furthermore, schools that have a high level of positive culture are considered healthy based on communication, cohesiveness, morale, goal focus, innovativeness, adaptation, and problem-solving techniques (MacNeil et al., 2009).

According to Brown (2004), when a school has an influential culture, there is a high probability the students will strive in academic excellence and social youth development, which will result in less disciplinary actions. In the Glossary of Education Reform (2013), when a school has an adverse school climate and culture, there are specific characteristics such as low trust among colleagues. Also, low academic expectations and support for students, inefficiency, a lack of transparency in leadership, and resistance to collaboration among school-based professionals (Glossary of Education Reform, 2013). Furthermore, Muhammad (2009) believed student achievement is directly affected by the schools’ culture, what the teachers believe, and their pedagogy for the academic achievement of every student.

Boyer (2012) indicated teachers have the most interaction with students and parents; therefore, they have the power to highly effect the culture of a school positively or negatively. Likewise, MacNeil et al. (2009) indicated when a positive school culture has been established between the classroom teacher and the students, it can have an impact on student achievement. On the contrary, when there are poor relationships
between the classroom teacher and the students, the culture of the school is negatively impacted, and student engagement and learning is affected (MacNeil et al., 2009).

**No Child Left Behind**

With schools across the United States falling further behind other countries, there was a national cry for school accountability and lawmakers endeavored to design a plan that would ensure that all students would be academically successful (Koretz, 2009). In January 2002, the ESEA was reauthorized under a catchy title, *No Child Left Behind*, and to the surprise of many people there was a bipartisan agreement (William, 2008). Under NCLB, every public K-12 school received additional funding if the state met a series of student-achievement benchmarks (Heise, 2017). Before NCLB, the federal government requested all states to create, articulate, and implement academic standards for all students in K-12 public education (Heise, 2017).

The states developed standards and tests to assess the students’ mastery in reading and math to determine if the school has met adequate yearly progress (AYP). Additionally, for those school districts and individual schools that did not meet AYP under NCLB, there were negative consequences for schools and teachers to force them to improve the academic progress of the students (Harman, Boden, Karpenski, & Muchowicz, 2016). To achieve the goals of NCLB, 100% of the students in public schools were to pass their states’ standardized assessments, and all schools and students should demonstrate proficient performance in reading and mathematics by 2013-2014 (Harman et al., 2016). Additionally, NCLB forced local school districts and states to meet two significant investments. First, the state and schools had to implement annual assessments of students in math and reading. Second, school districts had to hire highly
qualified teachers and ensure they were teaching in the areas for which they were
credentialed by the state (Hayes, 2015).

Bell and Meinelt (2011) communicated that Title I funded schools that did not
meet AYP for 2 consecutive years were considered to need improvement or “failing
schools.” Under NCLB, Nguyen-Hoang and Yinger (2011) argued the designation of
failing school was an inappropriate title to place on schools, and it had a drastic effect on
the local community and the families that attended that particular school. Vogell and
Gutierrez (2006) recorded the label of failing caused high alarm among the parents whose
children participated in the school because the label deemed the entire school a failure
when maybe only one segment of the student body did not achieve AYP in a certain area.

**Introduction of State Assessments**

The introduction of standardized assessments is over 150 years old, and under the
leadership of Horace Mann, then-secretary of the Massachusetts State Board of
Education, implemented the first written examination (Garrison, 2009). The National
Education Association’s Committee of Ten convened in 1892 to establish a standardized
high school curriculum or to develop a national system that would align common results
for all high school students (Greer, 2018). Throughout the 20th century, policymakers
and school officials reacted to domestic developments that were occurring in the United
Disabilities Education Act (Lawson, 2004). With the passing of these landmark decisions
by the U.S. Supreme Court, several mandates came to be, such as the desegregation of
schools, English language learners support, and accommodations for students with
disabilities. Furthermore, in 1947 President Truman’s Committee on Civil Rights
suggested, “Whatever test is used—expenditure per pupil, teachers’ salaries, the number of pupils per teacher, transportation of students, adequacy of school buildings and educational equipment, length of school term, extent of curriculum—Negro students are invariably at a disadvantage” (Lawson, 2004, p. 98). During the 1980s, the National Assessment Governing Board designed test times that would be more proficient and rigorous to be placed on states’ standardized assessments (Cohen & Snow, 2002).

According to Miller (2018), several states restructured the method in which the state assessments were given to the students. For example, moving from the multiple-choice questions to questions that focus on evaluating inquiry and interpretation of skills, like document-based questions, written-response questions, and thematic essays. In 2010, a majority of states agreed to adopt the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Durand, Lawson, Wilcox, and Schiller (2016) explained the CCSS was designed to focus on specific skills in English language arts, mathematics, and to bring national cohesion to K-12 instruction. With the introduction of the CCSS, all 50 states began to have a uniform set of standards that would represent a significant turn in curriculum and standardized tests across the nation (Porter, Fusarelli, & Fusarelli, 2015).

**Achievement Gap**

In the Glossary of Education Reform (2012) online, the definition of the achievement gap is closely related to the learning gap and opportunity gap, the achievement gap refers to any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance and educational attainment between different groups of students (e.g., White students and minorities or students from higher-income and lower-income households). Furthermore, the achievement gap may vary significantly from groups of students from
place to place, the consistency and persistence of the gap are what defines that there is an achievement gap for a particular group of students. Additionally, achievement gaps are not isolated events that occur occasionally; they are observed with predictable trends that continue over time (Glossary of Education Reform, 2013).

An area that is of great concern in the United States is the disparity between White and Asian-American students and African American and Hispanic students on standardized-test scores (Farkas, Morgan, Hillemeier, Mitchell, & Woods, 2020). Due to poverty and other risk factors, Farkas et al. (2020) reported the historical discrimination against certain racial groups of people has resulted in residential segregation; outcomes for those students who attend schools in a poor community with low-performance test scores. Welner and Carter (2013) suggested the achievement gap has a direct relationship to the opportunity gap; poor students do not have the same opportunities to succeed academically due to the limited number of resources and opportunities available to them in their communities and local schools. Milner (2012) believed the way to address the achievement gap is for school districts officials and other government organization staff to pay closer attention to the opportunity gap.

There is a large group of teachers that believe the achievement gap starts as early as kindergarten when children from poor communities enter school who are not ready for kindergarten (Morton, 2014). According to Plucker and Peters (2018), the achievement gap is not exclusive to students who struggle academically. Poverty has shown to be a significant factor that influences the achievement gap because schools in these communities have lower expectations for the students, less experienced and qualified
teachers, and the students are often distracted by issues that are not school related (Plucker & Peters, 2018).

**High Performance**

The term high performance is broad and has a variety of definitions. Daud Raman, Don, Mohd Sofian, and Hussin (2015) proposed the culture of any organization plays a considerable influence on the overall achievement in the organization. Also, schoolteachers and principals are responsible for students’ progress; however, there are still some leaders in schools who have not entirely accepted their role in designing a culture of high performance. When a school practices positive school culture, it will ultimately enhance school performance (Daud et al., 2015). Wriston (2007) developed a high-performance culture model with four components:

1. Creating a collaborative climate
2. Building a culture of accountability
3. Focusing on outcomes
4. Having robust processes

The 90/90/90 schools consist of 90% of the students receiving free or reduced lunch, 90% of the students are from a minority ethnicity group, and 90% of the students met or achieved standards on the state assessments (Reeves, 2002). While reviewing the success of some 90/90/90 schools, Peters and Waterman (1982) were able to identify five characteristics those schools had in common, which caused them to become high performing schools. When the school principals and teachers implemented the identified characteristics, the schools were able to turn-around from being known as failing to high performance. Those characteristics are:
1. A focus on academic achievement
2. Clear curriculum choices
3. Frequent assessment of student progress and multiple opportunities for improvement
4. An emphasis on nonfiction writing
5. Collaborative scoring of student work (Peters & Waterman, 1982).

Reeves (2002) continued to write that high performing schools had high expectations for all students, and it did not matter in which classroom the student was located; all students were expected to achieve. Also, the school administration and classroom teachers developed common assessments and effective collaboration. The Collaboration for High Performance Schools (2019) developed the six-volume manual they consider essential for high-performance schools. The six volumes are (a) planning, (b) design, (c) new building, (d) modernizations, (e) maintenance and operations, and (f) relocatable classrooms.

**School Principals**

In schools all across the world, school principals work in buildings that are considered to be instructional leaders, and they have the responsibility to guide the academic and day-to-day operations of the school (Cranston, 2016). School principals are vital in the establishing of the school’s vision and mission statement, modeling appropriate behavior, and enhancing the professional community among the staff (Dufour & Mattos, 2013). Pepper (2010) shared that school principals are in charge of the managing of the school building, sustaining school improvement, and promoting student learning.
**History of Principals**

Since the inception of an educational system that allowed children to attend classes, there has been a principal in some form or fashion. Glanz (1994) indicated, during the 19th century, the school principal had limited power and the schools were managed by ward boards. Additionally, as cities and towns increased in population, the role of the teacher principal was introduced. In the early 1900s, the part of school principal began to transition from teacher principal to manager and supervisor (Martin, 2018). Brubaker and Simon (1986) developed a framework that depicted the evolutionary phases of the principal:

1. The Principal Teacher (1647 - 1850)
2. The Principal as General Manager (1850-1920)
3. The Principal as Professional and Scientific Manager (1920 - 1970)
4. The Principal as Administrator and Instructional Leader (1970 - present)
5. The Principal as Curriculum Leader (present - sometime in the future)

Elsbee (1939) reported, in the 1920s, the school principal’s primary responsibility was to oversee the new classroom teachers and ensure they were providing the students’ effective classroom instruction and keep the students in order. As the decades passed, the school building principal became the instructional leader for the school (Glanz, 1994). With the Cold War hovering over the United States, in the 1950s, the U.S. government placed extra attention on student testing, teaching accountability, and principal oversight of teachers and instruction (Glanz, 1994). Within the last 55 years, the Department of Education has introduced five educational reform movements: ESEA, NCLB, Race to the Top, which includes the CCSS and Every Student Succeed Act. These new federal
reforms placed more accountability on local school districts, which in turn required the school principal to try and enforce the new policies with limited funding (Wallace Foundation, 2013). For the principal to accomplish the ever-changing mandates and regulations, the principal is required to become an effective instructional leader with the skills and knowledge to ensure all students achieve academic excellence (Cross & Rice, 2000).

**Who are the Principals?**

Clark, Mortorell, and Rockoff (2009) suggested the literature on the principal is very sparse because it is challenging to define the character of a competent school principal based on empirical data. Clark et al. (2009) stated:

There was a time when principals were expected to do little more than ‘hold’ school. Superintendents and school boards were satisfied if every classroom had a teacher, if every student had a set of textbooks, and if every class moved from one grade to the next at an orderly pace. (p. 6)

Hughes and Karp (2004) posited the position of the school principal is visible, and the actions and behaviors of these individuals are under high levels of scrutiny. Chirichello (2003) expressed that the school principals’ jobs have evolved from a traditional role of manager/lead teacher to an administrative model, which has to demonstrate characteristics such as visionary leader, inspirational leader, team builder, and a coach.

Wells (2013) implied school principals have to accomplish the great task of instructional leaders and keep up with the governmental rules and regulations being forced on state and local school districts. With the high demands forced on school principals, longevity is vital to the success of the school and the ability for the leader to
instill and transform change in the organization (Wallace Foundation, 2013). Grubb and Flessa (2006) said, “In an era of accountability, policymakers have imposed new requirements, and the principal is responsible for enhancing progress on multiple (and often conflicting) measures of educational achievement” (p. 519).

**Roles and Responsibilities of School Principals**

The roles and responsibilities of a school principal vary from school to school, but overall, there are certain characteristics all school principals must process in the position (Louis, Dretzke, & Wahlstrom, 2010). Furthermore, a principal has the responsibility to establish the school culture; ensure teachers are teaching the curriculum with fidelity; guide the academic achievement of all students; keep the faculty, students, and staff; and promote a constructive learning environment (Louis et al., 2010; Ogens, 2008). In a research study conducted by Child Mind Institute (2016), it was determined school principals are under tremendous pressure from students, parents, teachers, and the school board to ensure all students meet standards on state assessments. Also, to assure all the students and staff feel welcome in the building (Child Mind Institute, 2016).

Hoy and Miskel (2008) offered other characteristics school principals must possess, such as being calm and able to maintain their integrity in all situations. Additionally, Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2015) believed principals are the instructional leaders for the school, who encourage all the students, teachers, and faculty to strive for excellence and high levels of academic achievement in the school. Trust-building is a tool the principal has to master as the lead decision maker in the school (Ogen, 2008). Also, as the instructional leader, the principal is responsible for ensuring
active learning takes place in every classroom in the building every day (Silverman, 2018). Neumerski et al. (2018) expressed:

The expectation that principals should be instructional leaders is now deeply ingrained in our understanding of effective school leadership. Managing the daily operations of their schools is insufficient; present-day principals are expected to engage closely with teaching and learning. (p. 270)

Honig, Venkateswaran, and McNeil (2017) conducted a study that determined for school principals to achieve the goals and objectives outlined by the school board and other governmental agencies, the school district leadership team must partner with the principal. “Never before has a school principal’s job been more important and never before has the job been more difficult” (Pepper, 2010, p. 43).

**Summary**

Native American people have lived in what is known as the United States since the beginning of time. The educational process for Native American children has evolved from colonial missionary and boarding schools to the BIA schools and other measurements that have been implemented in public schools all across the country. Furthermore, the theoretical foundations for this study showed the concept of leadership and a variety of other leadership theories such as transactional leadership, management leadership, behavioral leadership, contingency leadership, and servant leadership. Patterson’s (2003) seven leadership constructs was the theoretical framework for this study. In the last two sections of the literature review, the researcher focused on the culture of high performance and school principals.
**Synthesis Matrix**

A synthesis matrix (see Appendix A) summarizes the variables that were presented in this literature review. The matrix was developed by the researcher to organize the references and assist with identifying the numerous themes throughout the literature review. Additionally, the matrix was used to help to identify the relationship between the subjects addressed in the literature.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This research study was designed to explore and describe the lived experience of the impact of servant leadership for establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by principals of Native American schools. Chapter I concentrated on the background of Native American education and the organization of the study. Chapter II focused on the literature, which brought attention to various leadership styles and the theoretical framework for this study, Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs. This chapter presents the methodology used for this research study.

This phenomenological study focused on the lived experiences of principals of Native American schools. The purpose statement, research question, and sub questions are addressed in this chapter. The research designed for this phenomenological study is explained. Next, the population and sampling frame are identified and explained. Also, in this chapter there is a description of the data collection instrument and the process used to collect the data. Lastly, this chapter ends with identifying the limitations and a summary of this methodology.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe principals’ of elementary, middle, and high school of Native American students in Washington State perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

**Central Research Question**

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by principals’ of elementary,
middle, and high schools with a student population of 40% or higher of Native American students in Washington State on high-performance schools?

**Sub Questions**

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

**Research Design**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), there are two primary types of research that researchers traditionally implement when collecting data and analysis: qualitative and quantitative. Patten (2012) explained quantitative research is often presented as numbers and quantities. Qualitative research is shown as themes or trends and not statistics. Additionally, there is a third research method that combines qualitative
and quantitative approaches, and this style is becoming very popular with researchers as mixed methods.

Phenomenological studies consist of the perception of the individual and their lived experiences. Also, most qualitative studies use the participant’s perception as vital to the outcomes of the study (Patten, 2012). Phenomenological studies focus on “the meaning, structure, and the essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people” (Patton, 2015, p. 98). Also, this methodology defines how people experience a certain phenomenon. Patton (2015) posited the researcher has to conduct personal interviews with individuals who have direct experiences with the phenomenon; lived experience, in contrast to what they have heard or seen in the lives of other professionals. Furthermore, Patton (2015) continued when he cited the work of Adams and Manen (2008), which defined lived experience as the experience an individual lives through and acknowledges the experiences as a particular type of experience.

Creswell and Poth (2018) gave several characteristics typical for phenomenological studies. First, the study is phrased in concepts and ideas which are explored. Secondly, the researcher explores the phenomenon with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon in their careers or lives. Also, the researcher removes themselves from the study as much as possible, so the individuals that have experienced the phenomenon can freely express their experience. Along with the characteristics, there are two major types of phenomenological studies—hermeneutical and transcendental. The phenomenological approach used in this study is hermeneutical, because it focuses on lived experiences and interpreting life (Creswell & Poth, 2018).
The rationale to use the phenomenological approach was chosen due to the research question asking: what is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by principals of Native American schools? Furthermore, the principals of Native American schools will be interviewed and asked a series of questions about their lived experiences and how they believe or perceive the impact the constructs have on establishing a culture of high performance.

**Population**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined population as “the total group to which results can be generalized” (p. 129). Creswell (2005) stated a population is a specific group of individuals who share certain characteristics and criteria that separates them from another group the researcher will be studying. The group in which the researcher is ultimately interested in researching is the population (Patten, 2012). According to the BIA (2019), there are 313 Native American schools in the United States, 183 K-12 schools are under the oversight of the BIA and 130 K-12 schools are tribally controlled. In an attempt to address the purpose statement and central question in this study, the population for the study was the principals of all 313 Native American schools.

**Sampling Frame**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated a sampling frame is a group of individuals that can be used because they meet the criteria of the study. Creswell (2005) referred to the sampling frame as the target population and stated it is “a group of individuals or a group of organizations with some common defining characteristics that the researcher can identify and study” (p. 142). The sampling frame for this study was
narrowed down to 32 principals of Native American schools in Washington State with a Native American student population of 40% or higher (OSPI, 2019). This sampling frame of 32 principals included eight BIA and state tribally compacted Native American schools in Washington State and 24 non-BIA schools with a student population of 40% or higher of Native American students (OSPI, 2019).

**Sample**

Patton (2015) described a sample as a target population that could be a representation of the whole population. In phenomenological research studies, the researcher typically uses purposive sampling because the individuals chosen met specific criteria for the study (Merriam, 2009). McMillian and Schumacher (2010) explained purposeful sampling is when the researcher chooses particular individuals from the total population to represent the specific topic of interest. Also, in purposeful sampling, the researcher chooses specific individuals because of their experience with the phenomenon that is being studied. The sample for this study consisted of eight principals of Native American schools in Washington State purposively selected from schools with a student population of 40% or higher of Native American students and identified as leading a high-performing K-12 district. For the purpose of this study, high achievement is defined by the Washington State School Recognition Board for schools who have demonstrated being exemplary in either closing gaps, growth, or achievement and meet the identified selection criteria. The researcher used purposeful sampling to choose principals of Native American schools who represented five of the seven following criteria:

- The principal was employed as a principal in a public school within the State of Washington, with a minimum of 30 staff members.
• Evidence of leading school with a culture of high student performance.
• The principal has a minimum of 2 or 3 years of experience at their current site with a population of 40% or higher Native American students.
• A minimum of 5 years’ experience in the K-12 profession.
• Membership in professional associations in their field, such as WSPA.
• Articles, paper, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings.
• The principal was willing to be a participant and agreed to the informed consent form.

**Instrumentation**

In this qualitative phenomenological study, the researcher is a part of the study since they will be collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) argued since the researcher is instrumental in the study, it could lead to bias from the researcher since the researcher may have personal experience with the phenomenon. Patten (2012) believed in almost all qualitative research; the researcher is a phenomenologist. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), “the researcher ‘brackets,’ or puts aside, all prejudgments and collects data on how individuals make sense out of a particular experience or situation” (p. 24). In this study, the researcher works in the field of education and with Native American students; therefore, the researcher implemented bracketing. Overall, the researcher conducted extensive interviews with the informants to gain a better understanding of their perspective and everyday experiences with the phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).
The instrument used for this study was a set of semi-structured, open-ended interview questions. Semi-structured interviews have open-ended questions that allow the interviewer to develop new ideas during the interview process (Patton, 2015). The researcher developed a synthesis matrix of the literature (see Appendix A) for the seven servant leadership constructs to support the process used by the thematic team to develop the interview questions, as discussed in the next section.

Validity

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated that validity is “the degree of congruence between the explanation of the phenomena and the realities of the world” (p. 330). Also, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) said “validity of qualitative design is the degree to which the interpretations have mutual meaning between the participants and the researcher” (p. 330). To have validity in this study, an expert panel was established to review the interview questions and the items were field-tested by eight of the thematic team members. Roberts (2010) posited the findings of the study have to be factual; therefore, validity is necessary. Field testing assists with limiting the bias of the researcher.

Expert Panel Validity

This study is a part of a thematic team dissertation process with two faculty advisors that are cochairing the group. An expert panel of the two faculty advisors reviewed the interview questions for continuity and consistency and ensured the interview questions aligned with the research question of the study. Furthermore, the faculty advisors divided the thematic team members into working groups of two, each pair was responsible taking one of the seven constructs from Patterson’s (2003) servant
leadership constructs. Semi-structured, open-ended questions were designed for the interview questions and were used during the probing process to probe the questions. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) explained the questions should be neutral and bring clarification to what the study is suggesting. An alignment table (see Appendix B) was developed by the thematic team to ensure the interview questions were aligned to the research question. Afterwards, all the members of the thematic team presented their probe questions to the collective group and a discussion took place to confirm the questions were in alignment to the standards table. Furthermore, the two faculty advisors, who are considered experts, reviewed the protocol and approved the use of the probe questions in a field test were an effective tool.

**Pilot Interview (Field Test)**

Each member of the thematic team conducted a pilot interview with a person who met specific criteria of being a servant leader and who works with a demographic or in a position similar to the group that was part of the study. Along with the interviewee, another person served in the role of an observer for the pilot interview. The observer must have completed a doctoral program or taken coursework in the field of qualitative research on the doctoral level. The pilot interview was conducted over Zoom and the interviewee was aware of the presence of the observer. The observer did not participate in the discussion and that individual was responsible for providing feedback on the researcher’s interview skills to the researcher.

During the pilot interview process, the interviewee was asked a series of questions that were proposed for use with the interviewees during the actual study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggested a field test assists with the reliability and validity of the
instrument the thematic team intended to use for the study. All members of the thematic team used the same set of interview questions. The expert faculty developed a feedback form for both the field test participant (see Appendix C) and the observer (see Appendix D). Furthermore, the feedback forms were used by the thematic team to ensure all of the interview questions were clear and precise. The interviewees did not have any concerns with any of the items from the interview questions.

Reliability

Reliability is essential in any research study because the “degree to which your instrument consistently measures something from one time to another” (Roberts, 2010, p. 151). Joppe (2000) stated:

reliability is the extent to which results are consistent over time, and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability, and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable. (p. 1)

Internal Reliability

Internal reliability is defined by Creswell and Poth (2018) as the ability of another researcher to assist with the development of the data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of the study. The eight members of the thematic team, along with the two faculty advisors, developed the instrumentation of the research and the purpose statement, variables, definitions of variables, and central research questions. With the thematic team members developing all the components of the research study together, it “reduces the possibility that the results of qualitative research represent only the idiosyncratic views of one individual researcher” (Patten, 2012, p. 157).
Data Collection

The data collection process consists of semi-structured interviews, transcription of the interviews, and sharing of the transcript with the interviewees to ensure accurate information was transcribed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Patton (2015) stated qualitative data collecting during the interview process is when “we interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe and to understand what we’ve observed” (p. 426). Before any interviews were performed, an application to the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) was submitted for review and approval. After BUIRB approval (see Appendix E), emails were sent to the eight participants outlining the interview process (see Appendix F). After participants responded they were willing to participate, a follow up email was sent containing the participant’s bill of rights (see Appendix G), the informed consent form (see Appendix H), and request to schedule a date and time for the interview.

For this study, the interviewer served as an instrument because he asked the interview questions to the interviewee. The researcher conducted the interviews over Zoom asking questions using a detailed script to gain the responses from the individuals based on their lived experiences as principals of Native American schools. The questions and the answers to the items from the respondent were recorded with Zoom, and a transcript of the conversation was provided to the researcher from the Zoom recording. The researcher also scanned participant websites to identify artifacts that would support their perceptions regarding Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leader constructs.

Patton (2015) stated semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to maintain balance during the interview process by using the flexibility to ask follow-up questions.
when necessary. There were a total of 14 items the thematic team developed, along with a few follow-up questions if the researcher felt the need to ask more engaging questions. All of the eight transcripts were coded for themes and analysis using NVivo, a web-based software program. The data collected during the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher the ability to clearly gain insight from the principals’ of Native American schools perceptions of servant leadership on establishing a culture of high performance.

Data Analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined data analysis as “the systematic process of coding, categorizing, and interpreting data to provide explanations of a single phenomenon of interest” (p. 367). The process of outlining, organizing, and preparing the data, which was later coded, is defined as data analysis by Creswell (2005). Furthermore, the method used by the researcher to determine patterns, ideals, beliefs, and influences of behavior (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Patton (2015) implied the information collected during the research study is used by the researcher to gain valuable insight used for the data analysis.

Data Coding

The data were coded based on frequency, patterns, and the characteristics of themes that were common during the interview process (Creswell & Poth, 2018; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Lombard, Snyder-Dutch, and Bracken (2002) stated, “Inter-coder reliability is a widely used term for the extent to which independent coders evaluate a characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusion” (p. 2). Patton (2015) acknowledged “interrater reliability” may be acceptable when “everyone is asked the same question in the same way; yet, what constitutes coherent passages for
coding is more problematic and depends on the analyst’s interpretive framework” (p. 667). The researcher asked a thematic team member familiar with the study and theoretical framework to serve as an independent intercoder to analyze and code data for the purpose of comparing the results to the researcher’s coded data to establish more consistency in the findings.

To analyze the data collected during the interview process, the researcher used a qualitative data software NVivo to develop frequency tables to identify the teams that immersed from the interview transcript. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) suggested to use themes predetermined based on the topics or variables embedded in the interview questions to get units or nodes.

1. The codes were scanned looking for a theme that explicitly supported the theoretical framework used by Patterson’s seven constructs agape love, humility, trust, altruism, vision, empowerment, and service.

2. The software NVivo was used to scan for frequency. When certain codes are frequent, it is an indication the theme is strong and should be used to develop a code.

3. The codes, themes, and frequencies of codes were used to analyze the data to determine if the impact of servant leadership had an effect on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by principals of Native American schools.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), authentic narratives should be considered as “one that may be read and lived vicariously by others. A narrative is authentic when readers connect to the story by recognizing particulars, by visualizing the
scenes, and by reconstructing them from remembered associations” (p. 337). Therefore, the interview questions were asked in a manner where the researcher could develop narratives from the interviewee’s answers to the questions.

**Limitations**

Roberts (2010) defined limitations as “particular features of your study that you know may negatively affect the results or your ability to generalize” (p. 162). Additionally, limitations usually are areas the researcher has no control (Roberts, 2010). There are several limitations for this phenomenological study on the impact of servant leadership on the development of establishing a culture of high performance from the perspective of principals of Native American schools.

**Researcher as Instrument of Study**

The researcher currently works as the education director for an Indian Tribe and has served in several administrative positions in local schools. Therefore, the bias of the researcher could possibly affect the outcomes of the study. Additionally, the researcher is African American and is considered to be a part of a racial group of people such as the Native Americans who have been racially discriminated against and marginalized by those of other races. Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2006) warned the personal feelings of the researchers could result in bias and have an adverse effect on the study.

**Time**

According to Roberts (2010), the time in which the data were collected can affect the number of participants and the availability of the participants to engage in the study. For example, the months of September, December, and June may not be a great time to interview people that work in school buildings or in education because of the busyness of
their schedules during those months (Roberts, 2010). The interviews for this study were conducted during September and October, which was a significant limitation to the research and the availability of the respondents. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in most schools in Washington State reopening in September in an online model. Several building principals are very busy trying to develop an online curriculum and how the school year will operate online. Hence, the time allocated for interviews caused a strain on the study.

**Sample Size**

Creswell and Poth (2018) believed sample size is not only to study a few sites or individuals, but to gain insight about each site and individual. With over 90,000 school principals in the United States, it is impossible to interview all of those principals, and a majority of them do not meet the sample frame for this study. Furthermore, there are approximately 30 schools in Washington State with a student population of 40% or higher of Native American students or a Native American school. The sample size for this study is eight principals of Native American schools. The sample size is a limitation regarding the ability to generalize findings to the greater population. Though, it is important to consider the depth of the knowledge gathered from the interview process, rather than sample size (McMillan & Schumacher 2010).

**Geography**

The focus of this study is on establishing a culture of high performance from the perspective of Native American principals in Washington State. Since this study was interviewing principals of Native American schools in Washington, the geographical location of the study limited the number of participants to gain insight on establishing a
culture of high performance. Also, with the COVID-19 virus continuing to spread, the interviews were conducted over Zoom, and the interviewer did not have the ability to observe the participants in a face-to-face conversation or observation.

**Summary**

The purpose of the phenomenological study focused on the impact of servant leadership on establishing a culture of high performing from the perspective of principals of Native American schools. This chapter outlined the central research question along with the seven sub questions. The sample for this study was eight principals of Native American schools in Washington State. Interviews were conducted over Zoom using the interview questions designed by the eight members of the thematic team and the two faculty members chairing the committee. Data were coded from the interviews using NVivo to organize the themes and codes. Despite the limitations to the study, the information was collected and analyzed.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

This research study was designed to explore and describe the lived experience of principals of Native American schools and their perceptions on the impact of servant leadership for establishing a culture of high performance. Chapter I concentrated on the background of Native American education and the organization of the study. Chapter II focused on the literature, bringing attention to various leadership styles and the theoretical framework for this study, Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs. Chapter III outlined the research design and the methods used to develop the study through the interview process. This chapter continues with the purpose statement’s preview, central research question and sub questions, methodology, population, sample frame, and sample. Furthermore, demographic data from the participants are displayed in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter ends with the post interview data analysis and a summary of the findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe principals’ of elementary, middle, and high school of Native American students in Washington State perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

Central Research Question

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by principals’ of elementary, middle, and high schools with a student population of 40% or higher of Native American students in Washington State of high-performance schools?
Sub Questions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Research Methodology and Data Collection Procedure

Phenomenological studies consist of the perception of the individual and their lived experiences. Most qualitative studies also use the participant’s perception as vital to the study’s outcomes (Patten, 2012). Phenomenological studies focus on “the meaning, structure, and the essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people” (Patton, 2015, p. 98). Also, this methodology defines how people experience a particular phenomenon. Patton (2015) posited the researcher has to conduct
personal interviews with individuals who have direct experiences with the phenomenon; lived experience, in contrast to what they have heard or saw in other professionals’ lives.

Furthermore, Patton (2015) continued when he cited the work of Adams and Manen (2008), which defined lived experience as the experience an individual lives through and acknowledges the experiences as a particular type of experience. The thematic research team decided to use the phenomenological approach because it allows the researchers to gain a variety of lived experiences from principals of Native American schools. Interviews were conducted with the eight principals of Native American schools using Zoom to record and transcribe the interview process, demonstrating how the seven servant leadership constructs establish a culture of high performance in their school buildings. The interviews were used as the primary sources of data collection for this study. Additionally, other data sources, such as observations and artifacts, were used to gain further insight from the study participants’ experiences.

Data Collection and Participants

For this qualitative phenomenological research study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight principals of Native American schools to gather information from their lived experience of serving as building principals of a school where the majority of the student body are Native American students. The researcher ensured all of Brandman University’s interview guidelines were kept to safeguard all participants’ confidentiality.

After receiving approval from the BUIRB (see Appendix E), the researcher contacted the participants either by telephone or email asking them to participate in the study (see Appendix F). With the participants’ agreement, an email was sent that
included the interview questions, Brandman University Participants Bill of Rights (see Appendix G), and Participants Informed Consent Form (see Appendix H). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all of the interviews were conducted using the virtual Zoom application. All of the interviews were between 30 to 45 minutes, and they were recorded. After the interviews were transcribed, the transcripts were sent to each participant to check for accuracy.

Triangulation of the data were collected with the use of observations and artifacts along with the interviews. During the interviews, the researcher observed the body language, facial expressions, and gestures. Additionally, artifacts were collected from the various school’s websites and other social media platforms that showed evidence of high performance in the Native American schools. Some of the items collected as artifacts consisted of meeting agendas, newsletters, photos of school and community celebrations, and school vision statements. All of the collected information was downloaded into NVivo and used to identify connections and emergent themes.

Population

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined the population as “the total group to which results can be generalized” (p. 129). Creswell (2005) explained a population is a specific group of individuals who share certain characteristics and criteria that separates them from another group that the researcher will be studying. Also, the group in which the researcher is ultimately interested in researching is the population (Patten, 2012). According to the BIE (2019), there are 313 Native American schools in the United States. In an attempt to address the purpose statement and central question in this study, the study population was the principals of the 313 Native American schools comprised of
183 K-12 schools under the oversight of the BIE and 130 K-12 schools that are tribally controlled (BIE, 2019).

**Sampling Frame**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) stated a sampling frame is a group of individuals that can be used because they meet the study’s criteria. Creswell (2005) referred to the sampling frame as the target population and stated it is “a group of individuals or a group of organizations with some common defining characteristics that the researcher can identify and study” (p. 142). This study’s sampling frame was narrowed down to 32 principals of Native American schools in Washington State with a student population of 40% or higher Native American (OSPI, 2019). This sampling frame of 32 principals included eight BIA schools consisting of State tribally compacted Native American schools and 24 non-BIA schools with a student population of 40% or higher of Native American students (OSPI, 2019).

**Sample**

Patton (2015) described the sample as a target population that could be a representation of the whole population. In phenomenological research studies, the researcher typically uses purposive sampling because the individuals chosen met specific criteria for the study (Merriam, 2009). McMillian and Schumacher (2010) stated purposeful sampling is when the researcher chose particular individuals from the total population to represent the specific topic of interest. Also, in purposeful sampling, the researcher chooses specific individuals because of their experience with the phenomenon that is being studied. This study’s sample consisted of eight principals of Native American schools in Washington State purposively selected from schools with a student
population of 40% or higher of Native American students identified as leading a high-performing K-12 district. For the purpose of this study, high achievement is defined by the Washington State School Recognition Board for schools who have demonstrated being exemplary in either closing gaps, growth, or achievement.

**Sample Criteria**

For this study, the thematic team developed the following criteria to determine who would be eligible to participate in the study. The researcher used purposeful sampling to choose principals of Native American schools who represented five of the seven following criteria:

- The principal was employed as a principal in a public school within the State of Washington, with a minimum of 30 staff members.
- Evidence of leading school with a culture of high student performance.
- The principal participant has a minimum of 2 or 3 years of experience at their current site with a population of 40% or higher Native American students.
- A minimum of 5 years’ experience in the K-12 profession.
- Membership in professional associations in their field, such as WSPA.
- Articles, paper, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings.
- The principal was willing to be a participant and agreed to the informed consent form.

**Sample Demographics**

This qualitative phenomenological research study used interviews completed via Zoom with eight principals of public schools with students in elementary, middle, and
high school levels. Each of the 32 principals of Native American schools in Washington State received an email, and some also received a phone call requesting their participation in this study. During the initial phone call, the potential participants were asked clarifying questions to determine if they met five of the seven criteria to become a part of the study. Table 1 shows the criteria met by each of the eight participants in this study.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal was employed as a principal in a public school within the State of Washington with a minimum of 30 staff members.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evidence of leading school with a culture of high student performance.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal participant has a minimum of 2 or 3 years of experience at their current site.</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>A minimum of 5 years’ experience in the K-12 profession.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership in professional associations in their field, such as Washington Schools Principal Associations (WSPA).</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>Articles, paper, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings.</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal was willing to be a participant and agreed to the informed consent form.</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study Participants

Eight principals of Native American schools from the elementary, middle, and high school levels agreed to participate in the study. Demographic data were collected and documented without identifying any individual, tribe, or school district. Therefore, each participant was assigned a number 1-8, their age, gender, and the number of years at their current school site. Table 1 identified the participants and their qualifications for meeting the six criteria designed by the thematic team. All eight of the participants met
or exceeded the criteria level of five to participate in the study. Five of the eight participants were male and three were female (see Table 2).

Table 2

Demographic Information of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age in years</th>
<th>Years at the current site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5 Males</td>
<td>40 - 45</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Females</td>
<td></td>
<td>45 - 50</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50 - 60</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis

The interviews, observations, and artifacts were used to collect the data that helped the researcher gain the perspective of the principals of Native American schools. These findings described and explored the principals’ perceived impact on servant leadership constructs (i.e., apapao love, altruism, trust, humility, vision, empowerment, and service) created by Patterson (2003) for establishing a culture of high performance.

The eight interviews were recorded using a digital transcription service, then reviewed for accuracy by the researcher and the interview participants. After which, the transcripts were downloaded into NVivo, a qualitative software coding application. The NVivo software was used to assist the researcher in recognizing and identifying emerging themes and sources from which the themes were collected. The number of times individual themes were referenced throughout the interviews was coded as themes. Additionally, each theme was coded for the number of times a participant referenced it in terms of percentage representation of the data.

Validity
The qualitative phenomenological research study was conducted in a thematic team of eight doctoral candidates led by two expert members of Brandman University faculty. For the purpose of the study, the research design used multiple elements to ensure validity. For example, multiple researchers were used to develop the purpose statement, research design, and interview questions and protocol. The expert faculty members were present throughout the process to give guidance and support. Along with the expert faculty members’ direction, the thematic team developed the definitions for the constructs, the definition of high performance, and the criteria for selecting interview participants.

**Data by Research Questions**

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs (i.e., agapao love, altruism, empowerment, humility, service, trust, and vision) for establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by principals of Native American schools?

**Sub Questions**

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

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

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

When a researcher uses phenomenology as a research study method, the attempt is to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of the subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patten, 2012). This study examined the lived experience of principals of Native American schools or schools with a 40% or higher student population of Native American students enrolled. The seven constructs of servant leadership developed by Patterson (2003) are agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. The number of times individual themes were referenced throughout the interviews was coded as themes. Trust and vision each had three themes that were coded, while apapao love, humility, altruism, and empowerment all had two themes. Service only had one emergent theme.

The coding process resulted in a total of 15 themes and 247 frequencies from all of the data sources. Furthermore, the frequency count was collected from the interviews, observations, and artifacts. The following sections analyze the qualitative interview data to answer the central research question, which focuses on principals of Native American schools perception of the seven constructs of servant leadership by Patterson (2003) to establish a culture of high performance.
Rationale

For a theme to be included in the study, they needed to reference by a minimum of four (50%) of the total participants. Additionally, a theme needed to represent a minimum of 10% of all data coded within a construct. These criteria resulted in a total number of 15 themes qualifying to be included in the study results. Figures 2 and 3 offer an aggregated visual representation of the distribution of themes and frequencies. There are a total of 15 themes that resulted from interviews, observations, and artifacts; and 247 frequencies developed from the seven constructs of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. The interviews produced the highest number of frequencies at 240; artifacts had 7 frequencies. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, there was not observations conducted at the school sites, nor perceived from the interviews.

Figure 2. Number of themes from each construct.
Figure 3. Number of frequencies from each construct.

There were a total of 247 frequency counts from the seven constructs. Empowerment had the highest frequency with two themes and 56 frequencies, which was 23% of the data collected. The second highest frequency was trust, which had three themes, a total of 18% of the data collected. Service and altruism had the same frequency count of 36. However, service had 15% of the data and Altruism had 14% of the data collected. Vision had three themes and a frequency count of 34, which was 14% of the data. Furthermore, agapao love had two themes and a frequency count of 25, which was 10% of the data collected. Lastly, humility had the lowest frequency count of 6% with 2 themes.

**Agapao Love**

According to Patterson (2003), agapao love:

is consistent with servant leadership to the extent that the leaders, or servant leaders, must have such great love for the followers that they are willing to learn
the gifts and talents of each one of the followers. The leader that leads with agapao love has a focus on the employee first, then on the talents of the employee, and lastly on how this benefits the organization. (p. 11)

The findings demonstrated principals of Native American schools displayed agapao love during the COVID-19 pandemic, which all schools were facing during the spring of the 2019-2020 school year. Out of the eight participants, two themes received a total of 25 frequency count. The theme of In The Best Interest of Students was cited by four of the eight participants. Actions Speak Louder Than Words was cited by five of the eight participants (see Figure 4). Table 3 displays the number of respondents who referred to the theme during their interview and the reference’s total frequency, which included observations and artifact sources.

![Agapao Love](image)

*Figure 4. Agapao love themes and frequencies.*
Table 3

_Agapao Love Themes_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on ( n )</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Interest for the students</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions speaks louder than</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. \( n = 8 \).*

**Best Interest of Students.** Four of the eight principals (50%) identified the belief that agapao love is best displayed in their school when the leader does what is in the best interest of the students. When the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools all across the United States to close their doors, the principals had to make some tough decisions but had to keep in mind they were required to do what was in the students’ best interest. One of the participants who served at his current school for 8 years, and started as a basketball coach and now is the school principal stated:

I took my cues from the principal that hired me. She definitely did things for the students and their best interest as opposed to just worrying about test scores. She was always looking to like, before she left what’s good for kids. We went from traditional education to what is it is. Wow. Project-based learning, and she could have just stayed status quo. But she knew her children were hands-on learners and felt that it was better for them to try to learn in this manner, as opposed to the traditional ways. I mean, things weren’t that bad, but I mean, she was always looking to make them better. I operate the same way as our original principal; I took my cues from her. I mean, I’m always putting my students first because you...
got to get them to trust you. First of all, once you get them to trust you and let them know that you care about them and you willing to do things for them, not because you’re getting any benefit out of it, other than the joyous and they succeed.

Often leaders learn strategies and techniques from other leaders they have worked under. Another participant believed principals regularly have to do work that might not be a part of their job descriptions but is in the best interest of the students. With that being said, one of the participants stated:

Okay, the first one would be doing something for a student or staff that’s not even in your job description is not, it’s not going to show up in any tally sheet when you get evaluated. It is when you’re doing something for a student, just because. I was dealing with a student, and usually, you know, you get those kids who got a wild streak and sometimes don’t always agree with teachers. When they are 17 or 18, they have already formed their own opinions about life, and you know you sit in the classroom, and they might be raising themselves. So, when you come up against an opinion that you might not agree with, they don’t get, you know, mouthy and sometimes as, you know, for me, they showed in the form of disrespect. When they come to my office, I got to kind of talk them off the ledge and, you know, usually with this one student, in particular, I was able to do that.

Agapao love is unconditional love that gives leaders the ability to lead from a place of unselfishness and doing what the leader believes is in the best interest of the students and staff (Patterson, 2003). Van Dierendonc and Patterson (2012) revealed the greet term for agapao love means moral love, to do the right thing at the right time and
for the right reason. They continued with “this type of love applies to today’s leaders; in that, leaders must consider the needs of their followers” (Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2012, p. 3).

**Actions Speaks Louder Than Words.** The phrase actions speak louder than words is a common phrase used in so many settings and situations. When the COVID-19 virus hit the United States overnight, the ways we have been doing education in the country for 100 plus years changed. On a Friday in March 2020, several states governors told school districts they would have to close their school doors for a few weeks, and the school principals had no idea the students would not be coming back into their buildings that year. During the interview, a participant stated it best about actions speaking louder than words:

Agapao love should be demonstrated by showing genuine love and support for everyone in the school building. The principal is leading the school by example. The principal should be seen at the front of the line. During this COVID-19, I have been out front, showing my staff that I am committed to ensuring that all of our students have access to Chromebooks and internet services. I was in the parking lot passing out laptops, talking to parents, and making sure that they had everything they needed. Some of my teachers were a little nervous about seeing the students and their families face to face, but I encouraged them to wear their PPE covering and stay 6 feet away from everyone. This is a very difficult time, but we are all working together to make sure that everyone is safe, and all of the students will achieve academic excellence.
Leaders led by example and their actions spoke louder than the words they were expressing. Van Dierendock and Patterson (2012) posited leaders who lead with love focus on their employees first, then on talents of those individuals, and lastly on what they can do for the organization. With 62.5% of the participants in this study stating actions speak louder than words, the principals are out front leading the way for their followers.

**Humility**

According to Patterson (2003), humility is the ability of the servant leader to realize they do not have all the answers. She continued to say an excellent gift for the servant leader is when they are able to give themselves to their followers. Throughout the interview, several principals stated they put the needs of their students, staff, and families before their individual needs on many occasions. As shown in Table 4, 4 of 8 participants in this study identified they put the staff and other’s needs come first. Additionally, 4 of 8 participants quoted in some fashion that doing things outside of their comfort zone is how they demonstrate humility in their school, and it helped to cultivate a culture of high performance in these Native American schools. Table 4 and Figure 5 represent the themes and frequencies of the themes that emerged from the interview transcripts’ analysis.
Table 4

**Humility Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on n</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff and others needs come first</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing things outside of comfort zone</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = 8.*

![Humility](image)

**Figure 5.** Humility themes and frequencies.

Two themes rose to the top over all the other themes under humility. Staff’s and Others’ Needs Come First was cited by 50% of the participants. Furthermore, the participants felt when they put their staff’s and others’ needs in their building first, it had an effect on establishing a culture of high performance. Also, the frequency count for staff’s and others’ needs come first was referenced nine times.

Under humility, the two emergent themes were staff’s and others’ needs come first and doing things outside of your comfort zone. Both themes combined had a total
of 16 frequency counts, which came directly from the interviews. No observations or artifacts were collected to show evidence for humility.

**Staff’s and Others’ Needs Come First.** One of the principals expressed a time during the COVID-19 pandemic he used humility to put the needs of his staff and others first. He said:

Okay, let’s say last March when we shut the school down because of COVID, in order to keep the school running, I had to be here with a skeleton crew to keep things going. Because we still had to give meals out to the community. Because I mean, when you shut the school down in our community as, as you know, working in native communities, that’s two meals that those kids aren’t getting. COVID or not, I was here, and that first from March 13th to March 31st, I put in over 257 hours until we got a good flow that will carry us the rest of the way. April, May, and to the end of the school year. But that first 2 weeks was kind of crucial of having building closed, but still being here.

Several principals referred to their ability to demonstrate humility and how it helped to establish a culture of high performance in Native American schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and the closing of their schools. Another participant stated he demonstrated humility by putting the needs of others before himself. He stated:

When you have a staff member that is chronically not here, chronically not calling in, and there are some underlying health and family issues. In the humility piece of it is working with that person. I gently defending them to their peers. Right. I mean, I have both been in situations where it’s like just holding them accountable makes them do their job, and how do you share that there’s
underlying, and you are doing your job by supporting them and making sure you want them back healthy.

**Doing Things Outside of Your Comfort Zone.** Four out of the 8 participants stated to establish a culture of high performance in Native American schools, doing things outside of their comfort zone was necessary. Moreover, the frequency count for doing things outside of your comfort zone appeared seven times throughout the eight interviews. One of the participants talked about an event at her school, where she was asked by some of the students to join in on the traditional dance, and she was very uncomfortable. That participant said:

I think, ah, well there was last year when COVID was nothing we were able to host a drumming club event at our school and in the drumming club. There were also dancers, and I was invited to participate in the dance. That was really out of my comfort, just because I didn’t know what would be appropriate and what would be viewed as okay to do as an outsider. And I kind of, you know, sucked it up and did it. And I know that after that particular moment, there were other dancers that invited me into the drum ring, and we were dancing, and I think I’ve created some positive relationships. Even though I’m sure I looked ridiculous because I didn’t know what I was doing, and they were glad that I was, you know, able to do that.

Another participant spoke about having to be at the school early in the morning to make sure a survey would go to the special education students’ homes when the school bus drivers delivered food to the homes of the students. That participant believed he needed to be in the building to support his staff even though it was very early in the
morning and outside of his comfort zone, but it helped to establish a culture of high performance when the principal did things outside of their comfort zone. This participant shared:

I came in 2 hours early yesterday morning because I just didn’t want to send the parent survey out. I wanted to talk to the drivers. Because parents if they don’t understand something. They’re not going to think it’s important and so I want to present to the drivers because they’re my direct line of communication to families. Now, because they go out every day and talk to the parents when they drop the food off. I wanted them to be able to explain how important the survey is. It’s compliant or noncompliant for our special education department.

Altruism

Altruism is demonstrating unselfish concern for another’s welfare, 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 (DeYoung, 2000; Kaplan, 2000; Monroe, 1994; Patterson, 2003). Furthermore, DeYoung (2000) declared altruism an unselfish concern a leader has for others, which may involve personal sacrifice by helping others succeed.

Findings from principals’ interviews determined principals who use the altruistic leadership style help to establish a culture of high performance.

Table 5 and Figure 6 represent the themes and frequencies that emerged from the NVivo analysis of the data collected. Two common themes surfaced from the construct altruism and how principals use altruism to establish a culture of high performance in
Native American schools. Table 5 displays the number of respondents out of eight participants and the interview sources, observations, and artifact sources.

Table 5

*Altruism Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on n</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lead with selfless attitude</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief that every student can succeed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* n = 8.

*Figure 6. Altruism themes and frequencies.*

Two themes stood out under altruism. Lead with selfless attitude was cited by 6 out of the 8 participants: 62.5% of the responses. Also, the belief that every student can succeed was the second theme under altruism, and it was referred by 4 of the 8 participants. Between the two themes, there is a total of 36 frequency counts. Out of the
36 frequency counts, one of the frequency counts came from an artifact, while the other counts were from the interviews.

**Lead with Selfless Attitude.** Six principals of Native American schools stated to demonstrate altruism in their school, the principal has to lead with a selfless attitude. Several of the interviewed principals acknowledged the building principal has to lead with an attitude of doing whatever is necessary to ensure the staff’s, students’, and family’s needs and concerns are addressed. One of the principals declared:

Altruism sounds like selfless service. You serve the community; you serve the children. You serve the school, and you’re not expecting anything in return. You want to give everything you have. In your spirit to help the child, to help the staff, to help the school on a successful path, but you’re not doing it to make yourself famous or make yourself highlighted or build up your ego. Because that’s not why you’re here. You’re here because you love students, and you love families. And you love the teachers and staff, and it is because it’s in your heart.

Furthermore, during the COVID-19 virus outbreak, most schools had to provide meals and academic supplies to the students. While many schools had never experienced transporting or dispersing such a large quantity of educational supplies such as laptops and classwork packages, the building principal had to lead the way. Therefore, one principal proclaimed, when asked if altruism had an impact on establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools:

I would have to say. The way that I lead this building is definitely. I definitely do it in a selfless manner. When there are problems, a lot of times I will investigate the situation, and when I met when I was what I say mean by that is if
there is a problem that needs to be solved, instead of just, hey, you guys need to do A, B and C. We were right now we’re on a distance learning format. We still have to deliver food and not just food, but we do curriculum as well. And there was a problem with not being able to get all the food out in a timely manner with one person on the bus. So instead of just like I said, just telling them how you need to do this. I actually went on the bus run. After that trip, it was evident that when you send out food. You got to have a bus driver and two people. So instead of just like, oh, just go-ahead ones enough. I really took time to put myself out there and really investigated that problem, and then I came up with that solution. And the reason why I mentioned that is like, I mean, I do that from time to time.

**Belief That Every Student Can Succeed.** Four out of the 8 principals (50%) of the total participants interviewed, acknowledged during the interview process they believed the leader could impact the culture of high performance when they believe that every student can succeed. One of the participants talked about how she had to change her perception of high performance, and she felt doing things differently can ensure every student succeeds. During the interview, that participant replied:

I think the performance of kids in school, and again when I first got here, I perceived that differently. I really did look at it because the State said here’s where your kids are, and this is why they’re low performing and all of that kind of stuff. But I think the impact is when I look at high performance. I have to redefine high performance.
Several Native American schools in Washington State are considered to be low performing, and their principals have to develop strategies and new approaches on how to encourage the students to learn. Another principal went on to say:

Like right now, when we’re having a hard time engaging with kids, we’re trying to find ways of seeing what they’re doing. In their community, that would count for learning. Right. So, for me, one of the biggest impacts is more around changing our perception on what we believe to be high performance and looking at what kids and families are doing, which is some really great stuff, and determining how we can capture that in a learning moment a standard or whatever.

One principal talked about providing love and support to students as a way to show every student can succeed, and the leader has to demonstrate to the students they can be successful. Likewise, the impact altruism has on the belief that every student can succeed is when the schools show the students they care about them. The students are allowed to strive as individuals, and then the school can achieve a culture of high performance. A principal participant referred to their belief that every student can succeed:

I think it sends the message to kids that you know, they’re worth the work and that we as a school, family care about them as individual kids and want what’s best for them and are willing to, you know, go to a lot of effort to see that their needs are met. That they’re safe, that they feel loved, you know, communicate that they’re loved.
While searching the online website of one of the principals who participated in the study, the researcher reviewed the school’s vision statement. During the interview process, the principal referred to the statement. Since this high school is located on a Native American reservation, the school has adopted a vision statement, preparing our students to walk successfully in “Two Worlds.” Within Native American communities, Native American students have several opportunities to be successful and earn a great career. However, many students will move outside of the reservation, and they have to be able to operate in what is known as a White man’s world. Therefore, the school is endeavoring to ensure all of the students can function successfully in the Native American community and the outside world.

Moreover, it can be concluded from the perspective of principals of Native American schools, altruism has an impact on high performance when the principal leads with a selfless attitude. Additionally, the belief every student can succeed has an impact on establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools.

Vision

The definition for vision is a bridge from the present to the future created by a collaborative mindset, adding meaning to the organization, sustaining higher levels of motivation, and withstanding challenge (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Landsberg, 2003; Méndez-Morse, 1992; Nanus, 1992). Patterson (2003) stated:

when the focus is on the individual member of the organization; however, as is the case with servant leadership, the servant leader’s focus is on the individual. Thus, the vision aspect becomes something different. In servant leadership theory, vision refers to the idea that the leader looks forward and sees the person
as a viable and worthy person, believes in the future state for each individual, and seeks to assist each one in reaching that state. (p. 25)

Findings from the principals of Native American schools interviews concluded vision establishes a culture of high performance when the school is continuously moving in the same direction, building individual things, and a belief that all students succeed—college and career ready.

Table 6 and Figure 7 represent the themes and frequencies developed from an NVivo analysis from the interviews. Three emergent themes were identified from the construct of vision. Four out of the 8 participants (50%), recognized vision is prioritized when the school moves in the same direction. The frequency count for how many times moving in the same direction was referenced was nine times. Building individual thinkers and problem solvers were also referred to by 5 of the 8 or 62.5% of the interview participants. Finally, all students succeed—college and career ready were referenced by 6 of the 8 participants (75%) of the interviewees.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision Themes</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on n</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moving in the same direction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual thinkers and problem solvers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students succeed, college and career ready</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = 8.
Figure 7. Vision themes and frequencies.

From the three themes that emerged from the vision data collected, there is a total of 33 frequency counts. Moving in the same direction received 27% of the total frequency counts. Individual thinkers and problem solvers received 39% of the frequency counts, and all students succeed—college and career ready were 36% of the total count. The findings identified the construct of vision has an impact on establishing a culture of high performance from the perspective of principals of Native American schools.

Moving in the Same Direction. Four out of the 8 principals interviewed referenced vision as essential to everyone moving in the same direction. There is a total of 9 references, 27% for moving in the same direction. One of the participants stated:

We have a vision statement that I often state during staff meetings to remind my staff what we are trying to accomplish. I believe when there is a vision, the people will know where they are going and have some kind of an idea on how to get there. I have worked in lots of school buildings, where they had a vision
statement, but the teachers did not know anything about it, and each teacher and administration had their own vision for how they believed this school should be headed. Vision is so important to help the school become high performing.

When Washington State’s educational system labels schools as failing schools, the staff in that school often takes on an attitude of defeat, and recovery is a long process. One of the principals talked about her experience as a new principal in a Native American elementary school labeled a failing school. She expressed when she got there, the teachers were depleted and did not have hope; therefore, the idea of a shared vision was necessary to establish a culture of high performance. The principal said:

I think, especially in a staff that feels depleted and maybe underappreciated, having that shared vision gives them hope. It gives them something to look forward to. That they believe they can achieve and kind of get their eyes out of the forest. I should say it allows them to see the forest for the trees.

**Individual Thinkers and Problem Solvers.** Five out of 8 or 62.5% of the participants interviewed acknowledged the building leader should encourage their teachers and other staff members to become individual thinkers and problem solvers. Additionally, this theme was referenced 13 times during the interview process with the principals of Native American schools. For example, one participant noted:

Well, I see people because of the way I am. I see people willing to put themselves out there and problem solve; people just want to have all the problems worked out for them, but when they see the type of leader I am, people are willing to put themselves out there. They often say, you know what, this happened. This is what I did to try to fix the problem. And now this is what’s
going on in the room; you can go check on them. If you want, but I think I got it handled. So, I just think that my type of leadership inspires people to be independent thinkers and be able to problem solve.

Principals of Native American schools located on Native American reservations often include some of the departments from within the community to help the teachers develop their ability to become individual thinkers and problem solvers. Native American tribes have governmental systems that give educators the ability to be creative and innovative. During the interview, one participant expressed:

So, we purposefully create times and opportunities for school district personnel to interact with and engage with tribal departments. So, our language and culture teachers partnered with the tribal language department, and they bring in traditional speakers to teach the language to our students. For example, most Native American tribal traditional language is no longer spoken by a majority of the members. Therefore, we brought that into the school, and our teachers were able to be creative and inspire the students to continue to learn their historical language. And so, a school is a great place for that, and we now have Salish in our school.

Furthermore, another principal expressed teachers would become individual thinkers and problem solvers when they all work together. For instance, the participant indicated:

The teachers and other staff members will all be working together to achieve the vision of the school. I am not sure, but I would like to believe that when vision is prioritized in our school, we will see teachers going over and above the call of
duty to ensure that every student in their classes is successful. Teachers will stay late, come in early, call parents, and begin to work together for the academic success of that child.

**All Students Succeed—College and Career Ready.** Six out of the 8, 75%, of the principal participants expressed that vision helps to establish a culture of high performance in Native American schools when all students succeed and are college and career ready. All students succeed—college and career ready were referred to 12 times 36% by the six participants. One school principal talked about the school’s vision statement is for their students to be successful in both worlds. Historically, Native American students do not graduate from high school and go off to college (BIA, 2020). Therefore, this school has made it their vision and purpose to equip the students with the tools to be successful in the Native American community and society. The principal went on to say:

I think in this school. We are just establishing that it’s, it’s all about. Okay, so our vision is help. How can we help our kids be successful in both worlds? I think we’ve got a great vision for that; we’ve got five areas pathways now CTE classes where we’re connecting to the tribe. So, it’s like, okay, you can go into fisheries, you can go into what is whole science world. You can go into the health and medicine world. You can go into the catering food industry or the casino type of business. You can go into the technology side of the world or audiovisual. The marketing industry. Several of our students are starting to ask themselves which of the five pathways do I want to go into? Where am I going to land, that’s the vision, like so. We want them to be successful, but we also
don’t want to step over their tribal community. We encourage them to be successful as a member of their tribal community. That’s means to be successful as a person that has learned and is respecting their culture, elders and having community values at the same time as they are competing in the real world. So that’s a trick. I mean, it’s really hard, we want success for our kids in two worlds, and it’s not an easy task, but that is our vision.

The impact of historical trauma and current issues facing students of color, make it hard for schools to inspire Native American students to be successful in both worlds. Another principal expressed her concerns about Native American students’ inability to be successful based on the results of standardized test scores. Therefore, she believed students can be successful in other areas, and she practices those ideas in her school, which contributes to establishing a culture of high performance for Native American students. That principal participant revealed:

It sounds like I am almost like this broken record. But again, it is the vision that everybody that comes here is successful, regardless of what their background is, and maintaining not only the academic but the cultural piece of that right. How important that is for never forgetting who you are, where you come from, that also that you’re going to walk out of here, even if it’s by kicking and screaming until you decide you can do with it, with a high academic success rate that you can do anything you want, you know, vision of the school. I mean, our team vision is we want years in a row 100% graduation rate. We want to be the school where students are on the waiting list that is so long that the tribe has to increase capacity because we’re such a great place to be, that not only do natives want to
come here. And again, that is our vision. But it’s that mindset. It is that growth mindset that you can do it. We can do it not giving up culture, not giving up who you are, but you know, it is working with your teachers.

It can be concluded from the perspective of principals of Native American schools, the construct of vision helps to establish a culture of high performance for Native American students. Also, the construct of vision displayed a total of 33 frequency counts from 6 of the 8 participants.

**Trust**

Trust is the level of confidence one individual has in another’s competence and their willingness to act in a fair, ethical, and predictable manner. Trust is essential to organizational culture; the leader and followers value integrity and care for others (Joseph & Winston, 2005; Patterson, 2003). According to Chan and Mak (2014), a servant leader has the ability to motivate their followers to plan for future opportunities, which will build trust with the followers. Furthermore, when followers believe they are receiving benefits from the leader, they are encouraged to trust their leader. Patterson (2003) explained trust is a building block for servant leaders; it is an element that causes the leader to believe in others, which promotes healthy relationships within the organization.

Table 7 and Figure 8 represent the themes and frequencies that emerged from the data collected from the NVivo data analysis. The following table outlines the themes that surfaced from principals of Native American schools on establishing the construct of trust, the percentage of respondents for each theme, and the frequency count of responses from the interviews, observations, and artifacts in Table 7. This table displays the themes
identified from principals of Native American schools and their impact on establishing a culture of high performance from the construct of trust.

Table 7

*Trust Themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on n</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making purposeful decisions</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting staff</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never giving up</td>
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<td>62.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. n = 8.*

![Figure 8](image-url)  
*Figure 8. Trust themes and frequencies.*

Three themes emerged from the construct of trust during the interview of the principal participants. These themes were referred to 44 times by the principals of Native American schools and their impact on establishing a culture of high performance. All of the themes recorded a frequency at 50% or higher from the total number of interview
participants. The construct of trust is necessary for establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools.

**Making Purposeful Decisions.** Five out of the 8 participants, 50%, mentioned making purposeful decisions as a component of trust that helps to establish a culture of high performance in Native American schools. Additionally, making purposeful decisions has a total of 19 frequency counts from the interviews. Many studies have been conducted on trust and the impact it has on organizations. Franta (2000) expressed trust as an imperative component in organizations that helps to establish integrity and genuine concerns for others.

One principal participant expressed to build trust in her school, she demonstrated her vulnerability to her staff by making purposeful decisions to establish a culture of high performance. The participant shared:

I would say that yeah. Trust is very important to be able to have a school function; kids and adults alike need to be able to trust you as their school leader. It’s hard to when you’re coming in as a newbie to build that trust. But just like anything, it’s super easy to lose it. If you aren’t transparent, that is a key to maintaining it. Transparency and vital, maintaining and developing it. Like if you are transparent about your decisions. I always remind myself and my students what is best for the students. Even like if I’m thinking about it. I say, Okay, how is this going to benefit kids or is this decision, or is this question, or is this, whatever it is, is this going to benefit kids. And the answer is yes. Yeah, let’s do it. Let us see how we make it happen. So, I think that at least with my staff, if they asked me a question, I kind of put it back on them. I say, how is this
going to help kids. And sometimes they will say, well, we should probably not do that then. It is a two-way process, and like I could be wrong sometimes because no human is perfect. And I also say that. Like if I am wrong, it’s cool. I am not going to get offended. Like, let us talk about it. Let’s figure it out. So that is another trust. And being willing to be vulnerable that even as a school leader because I really don’t. I really don’t know what the heck I’m doing sometimes.

Another principal participant recalled during the COVID-19 pandemic leave, some of the teachers were a little concerned about the decisions he was making when he put specific individuals in-charge of their committee. The principal expressed his choices are purposeful and necessary for the school’s good and their students. During the interview, the principal offered:

We had this group of people that were in a new position due to the COVID, and we are not in school face-to-face. So, I put them in this group of women and men, and it’s like the women feel they do more than the men. What I told them was like, hey, you know what. First of all, put them in the group, and I put one person in charge. And they’re like, why are you putting that person in charge of the group. So, you know, I am like look when I explained it to them. I said, hey, when decisions are made by me. It is not just something that I take lightly. I put deep thought into the decisions that I make. I said, but if I had to stop and go ask everybody what they thought about this decision that I’m getting ready to make, then you know I wouldn’t ever be able to get things done. So, you guys as a group got to realize that I take pride in my work, and I had taken a real careful
consideration and decisions that I made. So, knowing that going forward. When you come across a decision that you don’t like, you got to, you know, have that trust in me. That he has thought about it and we can trust him, so I’m not going to like squawk about this decision, and then I took it one step forward and said, I said when you have you know a discrepancy with your colleagues. You need to not all of a sudden think they you can do everybody else’s job in the building better than they can; you got to trust that they have had enough training.

**Supporting Staff.** Four out of the 8 principal participants, 50%, referred to supporting staff as a tool that impacts the culture of high performance in Native American schools. Also, supporting staff has a total of nine frequency counts. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many principals of schools all across the United States had to show their staff they supported them, and they were willing to put themselves at risk of contracting the deadly virus to ensure the students’ and staff’s needs were addressed.

While interviewing one of the principal participants, he replied:

After we closed the school’s doors in March, we began to deliver food and other supplies to the students. This was something that was new for us, and I was not really sure how we were going to pull it off. However, some of the para-educators and the bus drivers came up with the idea to use the school buses to deliver the food. Some of the para-educators were complaining that we needed two people on the buses to get everything out on time. So, I actually went out on the bus to do those deliveries and came back, and I said, you got to have two people on the bus. Even though it was going to cost the school more money, I wanted to support my staff and put two people on the school bus. The lead para
for general ed. said, “That’s the kind of principal we have, that he would go on the school bus and see what we are doing.” Somebody took my picture and posted it on Facebook.

The principal participant demonstrated his support for his staff by putting himself in their place and riding the school bus to see just how challenging the para-educators’ job was on the bus. Another principal participant talked about how he collaboratively works with his staff to show them he hears their concerns and is willing to do whatever is necessary to provide support. He said:

So, you know, I mean, I think trust is really the basis of anything you can do in a leadership position; without it, you are really. It is the same thing we want to do with kids; we want to move kids from really engaging with something or from being just compliant with something to really engaging with something. And I think if you want your staff members to do it too. Like I can make them be compliant. And so, you know, and when I walk in, and I do my little walkthrough or whatever, and you know, I can do that. But that is not, that doesn’t really get you anywhere. So, it is really moving to be engaged in the process in a collaborative way, in a reflective way, and I think that starts with trust. And so, but trust is an interesting thing. So, with a staff, you know, really engage with individuals. Everybody has things going on in their own lives, and teaching can be a very stressful situation. And so really engaging and understanding people and where they are and providing support for that. But the other part of that is, I think, and again, this is a learning curve for me is that teachers also expect their colleagues to do their fair share. So, it isn’t so much as
just me engaging with individuals and understanding them and supporting them, but they see what they perceive to be an inequality and somebody what they’re doing and what they’re not doing that’s pretty big. So, there’s always this balance between supporting and understanding what is happening and where people are and also still holding some, I guess, high expectations for lack of a better term. That we still have a job to do and it’s a really important job. And we have to figure out how to do it even if we have lots of things going on. And so that part I think is really important, it is not just that we support our staff and make sure we understand but that they perceive, we are trying to build a system that is equitable and fair and people are really working towards that common goals that we have.

One more participant talked about how he supported his staff by being creative and having courageous conversations. However, he was earnest that being the leader, he has to make sure all staff make decisions in the students’ best interest. He stated, “you can’t continue to let people make bad decisions, even with good intentions, if it’s to the detriment of kids without calling them on it.” The data collected from the interviews determined supporting staff can impact the culture of high performance in Native American schools.

**Never Giving Up.** Five out of the 8 principal participants, 62.5%, suggested that never giving up has an impact on establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools. Additionally, never giving up has a frequency of 16, 36% of the total frequency count. Historically, in Native American schools, the principals only stay at the school for about 2 or 3 years until they move on to a bigger or what they considered a
better high school. One principal participant expressed his concerns when other staff members came to him concerning their previous principal not supporting them. The principal voiced:

So, you just got to create the trust first and then, you know, try to help spread that trust throughout the building because one of the things that I had to try to get away from was, we had a principal who wasn’t invested and you know sometimes people will come and talk to me about him and getting passed over for promotions, or he was not doing what was in the best interest of the school. Some of the teachers felt that he had given up on the school, and he was just here for the paycheck. I mean, not that I would always say something occasionally like, you know what, he is not invested in you guys community. So, I mean, probably some I should not have been saying. But I had to express the truth to the teachers, and now that I am the principal, I make sure that I have invested in the school and I will never give up on them. Now, there are teachers who have issues with other teachers, and they feel like those teachers are not invested in the school. As the principal, I have to those teachers that the other teachers are doing the best job they can; we got to be willing to support them because it is only going to help our school. As opposed to when you talk bad about them, then you just turn them down and mess up the environment and school.

In addition to former principals not being invested in the Native American school, teachers often do not believe all students can succeed. On most reservations, the community members are living in poverty or considered low income. When teachers from the outside come to the community, they see the families’ financial struggles and
see the low-test scores, which results in some teachers giving up on the students academically. Therefore, one of the principal participants spoke about the school being in a low-income community, and most of the teachers are middle-class White women.

When asked about trust in his school, he replied:

Because we serve students in low-income communities, the idea of trust has been challenging and difficult to build. Even though this school is located on a Native American reservation, all of our teachers are White women. They do not live in this community, nor do they understand the hardship that students and families have endured. Because our students do not have the opportunity to learn and grow outside of the community, we have offered in the past several opportunities for after-school clubs where students are given the opportunity to participate in enrichment activities such as welding, glass blowing, and homework support.

When teachers and other staff members show the students that they love and respect them, the students then are able to feel comfortable, and they are now able to trust that their teachers have what’s in their best interest and will never give up on them.

It can be concluded that the construct of trust is a vital component from the perspective of principals of Native American schools to establish a culture of high performance. The data presented 44 frequency counts and making purposeful decisions are 43% of the frequency count. Also, supporting staff is 20% of the total frequency count, and never giving up is 36% of the frequency count.
Empowerment

Empowerment is entrusting power to others. Virtually giving away power to followers allows 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 (Melrose, 1995; Patterson, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002). Empowerment is giving others power and authority, which involves active listening, teamwork, and displaying love and equity (Patterson, 2003). According to Stone et al. (2004), servant leadership allows the leader to fully see their followers’ potential and empower them to demonstrate their own leadership.

Table 8 and Figure 9 represent the themes and frequencies that emerged for the data collecting process and using the NVivo data analysis application; the themes were transcribed. The table presents the themes that emerged from the interviews with principals of Native American schools and their perspective that the construct of empowerment has on establishing a culture of high performance.

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Empowerment Themes</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on n</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers as decision makers</td>
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<td>87.5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinking outside the box</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. n = 8.
Two themes surfaced from the data coding process during the interviews for the construct of empowerment. These themes were referenced 56 times with data from the interviews and artifacts. Both themes were referred to by over 50% of the total participants. Therefore, the findings conclude the construct of empowerment is essential in establishing a culture of high performance from the perspective of principals of Native American schools.

**Teachers As Decision Makers.** This theme was referenced by 7 of the 8 participants; 87.5% stated empowerment is used to establish a culture of high performance when teachers are decision makers in the school. The total frequency count from the interviews is 43, representing 80% of the total interviews’ completed. From the perspective of one of the principal participants, he talked about how empowerment allows the teachers to be decision makers in the school. He goes on to say:

A couple of ways we’ve done it in the past. Well, what we do now, we have, like most schools have a building leadership team. This is a group of teachers and

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*Figure 9. Empowerment themes and frequencies.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers as decision makers</th>
<th>Thinking outside the box</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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other staff members who help with the decision-making process for the school. But we always have to remember that when things are successful at the school, you want to recognize the people that made us successful and not recognize yourself. But when things go wrong, and a challenge hasn’t been met, you as the leader have to always got to raise your hand and say, I had that responsibility, no matter what it is, I didn’t meet the challenge that’s on me. You got to accept that and not place blame on somebody else. You want to say I accept that I did not meet that challenge. As the top leader in the school. It is on me. One thing we do to help empowerment is recognizing others.

The same principal participant gave some examples of how teachers as leaders help establish a culture of high performance in Native American schools by giving the leaders a voice in the process. Additionally, he explained how the leadership team led the development of the hybrid schedule for the students to return to school during the COVID-19 pandemic. He gave the following example:

I will give an example about empowerment with the building leadership teams. PBS committees, which is positive behavior intervention, supports student councils, all of those things. Give them empowerment that everyone has a voice, and the students have a voice. We had a hybrid scheduled developed in the summer because we knew we were going out in remote learning but would be able to move to an alternate or hybrid schedule, hopefully sometime in the fall. So, our hybrid schedule has gone to two or three different stages of development and its final stage, which was completed, and it’s gone before the BLT building leadership team. Our team meets to approve it. The hybrid or alternate schedule
goes before the whole staff on Thursday. Once it is approved by the building leadership team. It can be disseminated to the staff on Thursday in an all-school staff zoom session and when we decided to go to hybrid. Everybody knows this is our hybrid schedule. This how we are going to alternate schedules different than other school districts. Staff is empowerment by bringing students and bringing staff in and letting them know that the voices being heard. Their concerns are being heard. We want to lead by consensus; school administrators want to lead by consensus. By getting stakeholders to buy in on what your vision is and what your focus is, and what your direction is. I think you have to remember that the school administrator has to have the final say.

Another principal participant explained empowerment is vital to establishing a culture of high performance when teachers as leaders are given the opportunity to lead others in areas in which they excel. Moreover, it is the principal’s responsibility to recognize which staff members are good in certain areas and allow that individual to lead workshops, training, or small groups on the subject. The principal conferred:

I think since we are a team, I empower my teachers my acknowledging what they are good at doing. I know that some teachers are awesome at teaching reading. I know some teachers are awesome at technology. I know that some teachers can do an amazing job, like if I was sick. I can just say, Hey, can you be the point person for any principal admin. Related issues. In the past, I have allowed those teachers or staff members to take the lead and speak during staff meetings or other events to train the staff in areas of their expertise. For example, our school district is moving to a database system called Skyward. I am not familiar with
Skyward, and I have two teachers in my building that have used this program in another district. So, I let those teachers lead the training with the other staff on how to use Skyward. So, I think that when I show my vulnerability, the things that I’m not good at that empowers others to work as a team and then they feel okay showing what they struggle with and what they’re strong, and we help each other.

**Thinking Outside the Box.** Five out of the 8 principal participants referred to thinking outside of the box as a tool for empowerment that helps to establish a culture of high performance in Native American schools. During the interviews, one of the questions asks about risk taking in empowerment for the staff. One principal participant talked about how she empowers her staff to take a risk in teaching the district provided curriculum and actively participate in their departmental leadership teams. That principal participant said:

> It is very risky to think outside of the box and be creative with the given curriculum that has been provided by the district. However, I have seen teachers do some amazing and innovative things in their classrooms. I saw one teacher take her class outside to do a history lesson on Roman’s battle. She had the students on mini bicycles, and they had toys, swords, and conducted the battle. It was risky, but the students really enjoyed the lesson, and she was able to bring the lesson alive so the student could fully understand and experience the assignment.

Again, we have a school leadership team. The teachers are empowered to be leaders over their various departments. They meet weekly within their departments, and they share the outcomes with the school administration. The
ideas that they come up with during the meeting gives them the freedom to explore greater opportunities to enhance the learning for all students.

Another principal participant spoke about providing the staff with the opportunities to explore their ideas of thinking outside of the box as a method of establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools. Additionally, this principal expressed how before working in a Native American school, she believed all students were the same and what is good in one school would work in every school. After coming to work on a Native American reservation, the students and their families were different, and the staff would have to be very creative and innovate with thinking outside the box. While answering the question about empowerment, the principal participant mentioned:

I think it is kind of along the same lines of thinking outside the box and doing what is best for kids. Being creative running with ideas that you have always wanted to try. In Native American schools, it is important that teachers think outside of the box and implement creative ideas in the classes. They can include some of the traditional stories or legends about the people, or they could teach a lesson on fishing and hunting so that the students can relate to the lesson that the teacher is presenting. Also, I encourage the staff to be creative, which empowers them to be safe in those ideas and then making sure you step in if you do not think it’s going to work. So, it comes back to that trust. Right. You have got to have a relationship with a staff member that if you are letting them go down a road, and you do not think it’s going to work. You have to be able to say, yeah, we need to rethink this; I want you to think in a different way and walk away
with them. Not feeling like they were, you know, squashed or that you know their ideas were not valued, that it is just not working right now, and we need to rethink it.

One of the school’s websites stated the school-centered decision-making team (SCDM) met monthly, and the meeting agenda was available to the rest of the community members. The researcher requested a copy of the last 2 months’ meeting minutes, and the building principal provided the documents. Since the school building has been closed to students and the public since March 2020, the meeting minutes are from the months of January and February 2020. In the minutes, it gave the names of all the meeting participants, and the researcher was able to see one representative from each grade-level, one representative from each department, building leaders, and support staff representatives served on the SCDM. Furthermore, the minutes outlined decisions the committee members were making to plan upcoming events that would help to establish a culture of high performance for Native American students.

It can be concluded from the perspective of principals of Native American schools, the construct of empowerment impacts the establishment of high performance in Native American schools. Under empowerment, teachers as decision makers had 45 mentions, which is 80% of the total frequency count. Besides, the phrase thinking outside of the box was referenced 11 times, which is 20% of the entire frequency count.

**Service**

Service is the moral equivalent of giving of oneself to serve others. It implies 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, 2003; Russell & Stone, 2002). In service, the servant leader puts others’ interest over self-interest (Russell & Stone, 2002). Service begets service is what Melrose (1995) stated about service and servant leadership, and how it assists with cultivating a culture of service. Finding from principals of Native American schools interviews identified the construct of service is necessary for the Native American community, which will ultimately help to establish a culture of high performance in Native American schools.

Table 9 and Figure 10 represent the themes and frequencies that arose from the data collected during the interviews. Table 9 presents the theme that emerged from the interviews with the principals of Native American schools and their perspective on the construct of service’s impact on establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools. One theme stood out with a response count of seven, which is 87.5% of the total participants.

Table 9

Service Themes

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<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>% based on n</th>
<th>Interview sources</th>
<th>Observation sources</th>
<th>Artifact sources</th>
<th>Frequency of reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff engaging with the community</td>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>36</td>
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</table>

*Note. n = 8.*
One theme transpired from the data collected during the interviews on the construct of service. This theme was referred to by seven of the eight participants, and it has a frequency count of 34 with two sources cited from artifacts, which is a total of 36 frequency count. The findings concluded the construct of service is essential for establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools.

The only theme that emerged from the construct of service is staff engaging with the community. Moreover, 7 out of the 8 principal participants referred to the COVID-19 pandemic and the school closures. The school principal and superintendent had to get out of their offices and engage with the community. Service is a vital component in Native American communities, and when the community sees the school principal and superintendent serving, their creditability in the community is respected. One of the principal participants stated:

While school is out due to the COVID-19 virus, it is all hands-on deck. And I mean, these are strange times. I am at school every morning at 6 o’clock, helping take temperatures and doing all kinds of safety procedures for the staff. Because we are shorthanded, and I feel like, okay, I’m not going to ask somebody else to do something that I wouldn’t already do. Our superintendent is the cafeteria, and he is putting together boxes, and they are being delivered to the students’ homes.
It’s that you have to put your whole self out there so people know that you’re willing to take on responsibilities that will provide a service to the community. Whether it’s at 10 o’clock at night or 5 o’clock in the morning, the people need to know that you are available. You walk the talk about being creative and thinking outside the box. And what’s best for kids. That is what you do. You know you problem solve, and you try to make sure that every decision you make is one that’s not only supportive to students but to staff, to allow them to do their jobs. Right. You can’t just talk about it. You got to do it. Yeah.

Another principal participant addressed the theme of staff engaging with the community from an event that occurs annually in the PNW. During this event, many of the staff members volunteered their time and service to see that all of the participants’ needs were provided during their stay in the community. The principal was so impressed with how everyone came together and worked to ensure the community was served and the guests left their community happy. As the principal participant noted:

During the paddle to, the experience kind of took me back. Because first of all, I was trying to help, and I had to oversee the school building because they were using the school building for showers. We were here for long hours, but just the fact that no one was complaining about long hours or anything. It just blew me away how everybody took care of everybody like the elders were taken care of. It was amazing to see the people bringing in the canoes and things like that; just sitting there allowed me to think about our ancestors. That was one thing that kind of blew me away. All the staff members that I had asked to work at the paddle event all did it without complaining; we would get in here at 7 am and
leaving the event like 12 or 1 in the morning and then being back the next day. You know, people just did it and then being able to see the different traditions and things. What they have for sale and different games, traditional games that I was seeing.

It can be concluded the construct of service when engaging in the community is vital to establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools. Likewise, over 50% of the principal participants referred to engaging in the community is an integral part of establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools.

**Key Findings**

This qualitative phenomenological research study consisted of semi-structured interviews, observations, and artifacts. Using the NVivo qualitative data application, the data were coded for themes developed by using predetermined criteria. Key findings were those which were referenced by 50% or more of the principal participants interviewed. The rationale for using 50% as a basis for determining a theme was chosen because it is half of the interviewed principal participants.

**Key Findings: Agapao Love**

1. Best Interest of the Students was referenced by 50% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the second-highest number of references for agapao love and represented 37.5% of data coded.

2. Actions Speaks Louder Than Words was referred to by 62.5% of the participants. This theme yielded the highest number of references for agapao love and represented 68% of the coded data.
Key Findings: Humility

1. Staff’s and Others’ Needs Come First was referenced by 50% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the same number of references as the other theme for humility. It represented 56% of the data coded for the servant leadership construct of humility.

2. Doing Things Outside of Comfort Zone was referenced by 50% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded an equal number of references for humility and the other theme. Also, it represented 44% of the data coded for the servant leadership construct of humility.

Key Findings: Altruism

1. Leader Leads with Selfless Attitude was referenced by 62.5% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the highest number of references for altruism. This theme represented 56% of the data coded for the servant leadership construct of altruism.

2. Belief That Every Student Can Succeed was referenced by 50% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the second-highest number of references for altruism. Also, it represented 58% of the data coded for the servant leadership construct of altruism.

Key Findings: Vision

1. Moving From the Same Direction was referenced by 50% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the third-highest number of references for servant leadership construct vision. The theme represented 26% of the data coded for the theme vision.
2. Individual Thinkers and Problem Solvers was referenced by 62.5% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the second-highest number of references for the servant leadership construct vision. Also, it represented 38% of the data coded from the servant leadership construct of vision.

3. All Students Succeed—College and Career Ready was referenced by 75% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the highest number of references for the servant leadership construct vision. The frequency data coded from the construct vision was 36% of the total frequency code.

**Key Findings: Trust**

1. Making Purposeful Decisions was referenced by 62.5% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the same number of references as another theme for servant leadership construct trust. The theme represented 43% of the data coded for the theme of trust.

2. Supporting Staff was referenced by 50% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the second-highest number of references for the servant leadership construct trust. Also, it represented 20% of the data coded from the servant leadership construct of trust.

3. Never Giving Up was referenced by 62.5% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the same number of references as another theme for the servant leadership construct trust. The frequency data coded from the construct vision was 36% of the total frequency code.
Key Findings: Empowerment

1. Teachers As Decision Makers was referenced by 87.5% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the third-highest number of references for servant leadership construct empowerment. The theme represented 80% of the data coded for the theme empowerment.

2. Thinking Outside of the Box was referenced by 62.5% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the highest number of references for the servant leadership construct empowerment. The frequency data coded from the construct vision was 20% of the total frequency code.

Key Findings: Service

1. Staff Engaging with the Community was referenced by 87.5% of the principals of Native American schools. This theme is the only one referenced by at least 50% of the participants for the servant leadership construct service. The frequency data coded from the construct vision was 100% of the total frequency code for service.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe principals’ of elementary, middle, and high school of Native American students in Washington State perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance. This chapter addressed the themes and data findings regarding the central research question and the seven sub questions identified for this study. Likewise, Chapter IV restated the purpose, central research questions, and the sub questions. Also, the research methods, data collection
procedures, population, sample, demographic data, along with the data and findings, are all included in this chapter.

The population for this study consisted of eight principals of Native American schools. Each interview was conducted over Zoom and lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. Using the NVivo application, the data were coded for themes and frequency of the themes being referred to by the participants. A total of 15 themes emerged from this study, with a total frequency count of 247.

Chapter V explains the findings in more detail by giving a final summary of the study, including the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future studies. Also, Chapter V presents the unexpected findings, implications for actions, and concluding remarks and reflections.
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research study was designed to explore and describe the lived experience and perceptions of principals of Native American schools on the impact of servant leadership for establishing a culture of high performance. Chapter I concentrated on the background of Native American education and the organization of the study. Chapter II focused on the literature bringing attention to various leadership styles and the theoretical framework for this study, Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs. Chapter III outlined the research design and the methods used to develop the study through the interview process. Chapter IV consist of the data collected from the interviews and artifacts.

This chapter continues with the purpose statement’s preview, central research question and sub questions, methodology, population, sample frame, and sample. Furthermore, demographic data from the participants are displayed in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter will show the post interview data analysis and a summary of the findings.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe principals of elementary, middle, and high school of Native American students in Washington State perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

**Central Research Question**

What is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by principals’ of elementary,
middle, and high schools with a student population of 40% or higher of Native American students in Washington State of high-performance schools?

**Sub Questions**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Methodology**

Most qualitative studies also use the participant’s perceived perception as vital to the study’s outcomes (Patten, 2012). Phenomenological studies focus on “the meaning, structure, and the essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or group of people” (Patton, 2015, p. 98). Phenomenological studies consist of the perception of the individual and their lived experiences. Also, this methodology defines how people
experience a particular phenomenon. Patton (2015) stated the researcher has to conduct personal interviews with individuals who have direct experiences with the phenomenon; lived experience in contrast to what they have heard or saw in other professionals’ lives.

Furthermore, Patton (2015) continued when he cited the work of Adams and Manen (2008), which “lived experience” is the experience an individual lives through and acknowledges the experiences as a particular type of experience. The thematic research team decided to use the phenomenological approach because it allows the researchers to gain various lived experiences from principals of Native American schools. Interviews were conducted with the eight principals of Native American schools using Zoom to record and transcript the interview process, demonstrating how the seven servant leadership constructs establish a culture of high performance in their school buildings. Furthermore, the interviews were used as the primary sources of data collection for this study. Additionally, other data sources, such as observations and artifacts, were used to gain further insight from the study participants’ experiences.

**Major Findings**

The purpose of this phenomenological research study was to explore and describe principals of Native American schools perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) for establishing a culture of high performance. The central research question was answered through an analysis of the sub questions. Chapter IV presented the key research finding and results of the coding of themes, including the interviews’ frequencies. From the findings of this study and supporting research, it can be concluded establishing a culture of high performance depends on principals of Native
American schools ability to implement the seven servant leadership constructs. A summary of the major findings is presented with the sub questions for each construct.

**Research Sub Question 1 Major Finding**

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

The skill of actions speaks louder than words was referred to by 5 of the 8 principals of Native American schools; 62.5% of the data coded to demonstrate the servant leadership construct of agapao love. This theme yielded the highest number of references for agapao love and represented 68% of the themes’ coded data. Furthermore, the principals of Native American schools acknowledged the building principal demonstrates agapao love by allowing their actions to speak louder than their words. Overall, agapao love has a frequency count of 25, representing 10% of the total frequency counts. Examples of how actions spoke louder than words were displayed when the principals put themselves on the front line during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure all students received lunches and had access to technology at home.

This study’s findings align with Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership theoretical model and review of the literature, the leader who focuses on agapao love allows their focus to be on the employee first, then on what the employee can do for the organization, and how it benefits the organization. Patterson (2003) stated love is a foundational value from which all other values follow. Russell and Stone (2002) went on to say servant leaders love unconditionally, really care for their followers, and genuinely appreciate them as individuals.
Research Sub Question 2 Major Finding

*What is the impact of the humility leadership constructs for establishing a culture of high performance?*

The principals of Native American schools who put the staff’s and others’ needs first was referenced by 4 out of the 8, 50%, of the principals. It represented 56% of the data coded for the servant leadership construct of humility. One of the principal participants made a statement during the interview that humility is something he practiced every day. He could not think of just one example of humility. Additionally, half of the participants believed when the building principal of a Native American school put the staff’s and others’ needs first, it helped to cultivate a culture of high achievement in Native American schools. With data showing over half of Native American schools are considered failing or underperforming (BIA, 2020), the principals have to establish servant leadership with humility to motivate the students and the staff.

Covey (1990) remarked one of the greatest gifts a leader can give their followers is the gift of themselves; by doing this, the leader is showing respect, reverence, and humility. Also, Blanchard (2000) stated servant leaders could listen and be willing to accept criticism and accountability. The principals of Native American schools expressed humility by listening and putting their staff’s and students’ needs before their own needs.

Research Sub Question 3 Major Finding

*What is the impact of the altruism leadership constructs for establishing a culture of high performance?*
When the leader leads with a selfless attitude was referenced by 5 of the 8, 62.5%, of the principals of Native American schools. This theme yielded the highest number of references for altruism. This theme represented 56% of the data coded for the servant leadership construct of altruism. There are several leadership styles where the leader is centered focus and does not demonstrate an attitude of selflessness. However, the principals of Native American schools believed it is critical the school principal demonstrates a selfless attitude, especially during crisis times. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, several schools allowed their teachers to stay home and work, but the principals had to put themselves on the line and be in the school building to ensure things would continue to operate for the good of the students.

The theoretical definition of altruism, as developed by the thematic team members, sees altruism as unselfish awareness of others’ welfare in the organization, even when there is a possibility of risk or sacrifice against one’s own interest. It involves deriving pleasure from helping and seeking what was best for others, often with an attitude of humility, modesty, and selflessness (DeYoung, 2000; Kaplan, 2000; Monroe, 1994; Patterson, 2003). It is concluded the principals in this study perceived leading with a selfless attitude impacts the culture of high achievement in Native American schools.

Research Sub Question 4 Major Finding

What is the impact of the vision leadership constructs for establishing a culture of high performance?

The principals of Native American schools that participated in this study agreed when the leader has a vision of all students succeeding, college and career ready, and it is acknowledged and expressed to the staff and other stakeholders, it helps to establish a
culture of high performance in the Native American school. Six out of the 8 principal participants, 75%, referenced all students succeed—college and career ready were necessary as a vision for the entire school to keep in their minds and strive to achieve. This theme yielded the highest number of references for the servant leadership construct vision. The frequency data coded from the construct vision was 36% of the total frequency code.

In many cases, vision is often considered the organizational vision or a vision of where the organization will be in the future. However, the building principal participants lead with a vision that is forward focused and sees things that can be in the near future. Patterson (2003) defined vision as a piece of servant leadership that helps create an environment that is forward focused and recognizes each person in the organization is worthy and necessary.

**Research Sub Question 5 Major Finding**

*What is the impact of the trust leadership constructs for establishing a culture of high performance?*

When the leader is making purposeful decisions was referenced by 5 of the 8, 62.5%, of the principals of Native American schools. The theme represented 43% of the data coded for the theme of trust. The theme of trust has the second highest frequency count, 44, representing 18% of the total frequencies from the data collected. As one of the principal participants stated during the interview, trust is very difficult to establish in Native American community. Once it is established, the leader has to make purposeful decisions that will impact the culture of high performance. With all the information
around trust, Patterson (2003) believed trust is an essential element for the servant leader. Also, Story (2002) agreed trust is an integral component of the servant leader.

**Research Sub Question 6 Major Finding**

*What is the impact of the empowerment leadership constructs for establishing a culture of high performance?*

When the leader is empowering teachers by allowing teachers to be decision makers was referenced by 7 out of the 8, 87.5%, of the principals of Native American schools. The construct of empowerment yielded the highest number of references for the seven servant leadership constructs at 56, which is 23% of the overall frequency count. The theme represented 80% of the data coded for the theme empowerment. All of the principal participants agreed empowerment is vital in Native American schools when teachers are decision makers and know their voices are being heard in the school. Examples given by principal participants included teachers leading grade-level and departmental meetings, teachers training other teachers on new curriculum or new program to support students, and teachers participating in vital decisions on the SCDM committee.

Findings from the study align with Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership theoretical model and review of literature. Patterson (2003) claimed leaders give the teachers power to fulfill their own goals and assist them in making their dreams become a reality. Blanchard (2002) believed servant leaders’ satisfaction comes when they see the growth in others, and the leader will hold themselves accountable for the growth. The data showed empowerment has an impact on establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools.
Research Sub Question 7 Major Finding

What is the impact of the service leadership constructs for establishing a culture of high performance?

Staff engaging with the community was referenced by 7 of the 8, 87.5%, of the principals of Native American schools. This theme is the only one referenced by at least 50% or higher of the participants for the servant leadership construct for service. The frequency data coded from the construct vision was 100% of the total frequency code for service. The principal participants explained when the staff engages with the community during community events and celebrations, it results in the school establishing a culture of high performance. One principal talked about the service his staff provided to the community during an event when several tribes landed their canoes in their community. There were thousands of people using the school building facility, and the principal was leading the way with service to the community by working with his teachers to make sure everyone had everything they needed during their stay in the community.

Findings from this study aligned to Patterson’s (2003) servant leadership theoretical model and review of the literature. All of the principal participants referred the servant leadership construct of service as having a perceived impact on establishing a culture of high performance. Patterson (2003) believed when a servant leader displays agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, and empowerment, the act of service is an overwhelming part of their natural obligation to the organization.

Unexpected Findings

There were two unexpected findings retrieved during the data collection process. First, the servant leadership construct empowerment received the highest frequency count
at 56, 23% of the total frequency count. The researcher was also surprised to see the principals of Native American schools believed, 7 out of 8 (87.5%), when teachers are empowered as leaders in the building, it impacts the culture of high performance in Native American schools. This was unexpected, based on the researcher’s experiences with Native American communities and Native American schools. The researcher has worked in Native American communities for nearly 10 years and has an understanding of how education work in some Native American communities. For example, in most Native American schools, most certificated staff consist of non-Native White women, who are not from the Native American community and often are not familiar with Native American culture. The researcher’s experience and prior studies have concluded students perform better when their classroom teachers and school administrators look like them and have something in common. However, the findings from the principal participants in this study showed when the teachers are empowered in the school building, it has a direct effect on the culture and climate in the building; therefore, resulting in establishing a culture of high performance.

The second unexpected finding was from the servant leadership construct of service. To the surprise of the researcher, only one theme emerged with a response of 50% or higher from the principal participants. Seven out of the 8 participants referenced when staff engages with the community, it has an impact on establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools. Furthermore, the principal participants were interviewed and asked questions about service during the COVID-19 pandemic closure of their school buildings. All of the principal participants referred to service during the COVID-19 pandemic and how the staff had to engage with the students, families, and
other community stakeholders. Additionally, the researcher did not foresee the correlations between engaging with the community and establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools as a necessary component.

Conclusions

The purpose of the phenomenological research study was to explore and describe principals’ of Native American schools’ perceptions of the impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance. The following conclusions came from the data analysis in Chapter IV that described how the servant leadership constructs of agapao love, humility, vision, trust, empowerment, and service assist principals of Native American schools to establish a culture of high performance.

Conclusion 1: Doing What Is in the Best Interest of Teachers, Support Staff, and Students

Based on the findings from the research and literature, the researcher concludes when principals of Native American schools do what is in the best interest of teachers, support staff, and students, it directly affects the culture of high performance in Native American schools. One of the principal participants stated she has to remember she is a guest in the Native American community, and all of her decisions have to be focused on what in the best interest of the students and the community while not allowing her personal feelings to get in the way of the success of the school. Will (2019) referred to a statement Douglas Reeves made concerning school principals and their ability to make changes in the school building. Behavior precedes belief; most people need to see the leader do things firsthand and put the group’s interest before their interest to help
establish success in the organization. When the principal treats the teachers and support staff as professionals, the principal knows the students and moves to ensure all students are academically successful. Rigsbee (2009) posited great principals are instructional leaders who guide their staff members on what in the best interest of student learning; they do not micro-manage their teachers and are not continuously looking over their shoulders. Great principals give teachers respect and the freedom to provide meaningful instruction for the students in their classrooms.

**Conclusion 2: Selfless Service**

Based on the findings from the research and the literature, the researcher concluded principals of Native American schools who operate with a selfless service attitude have the ability to highly impact the culture of high achievement in Native American schools. Several of the principal participants referred to when they put themselves on the frontline of any situation; they build effective relationships with their staff and students in the building. Rigsbee (2009) expressed great principals are often the first people in the building and the last ones to leave the school building. They spend their days working with teachers on instruction, handling student discipline, and communicating with parents and other community members. Moreover, they can be seen at sporting events and choir and band concerts, while managing their own individual families.

One of the principal participants talked about his selfless service by going out of town to basketball games with the students and driving one of the students several hours to college because the student’s family could not take him to college. Doraiswamy (2013) believed servant leadership is an approach to leadership where the leader
demonstrates they are the servant of their followers, rather than assuming a controlling hierarchical role in the organization. Selfless service is a component vital to establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools.

**Conclusion 3: Student-Centered Focus**

Based on the findings from the research and the literature, the researcher concluded when a school has a student-centered focus, the impact of establishing a culture of high performance can be achieved in Native American schools. The majority of Native American schools do not have principals from their community and often those principals are not committed to the schools’ future success. However, one of the principal participants talked about his ability to care for and appreciate the students and the Native American community where the school is located. Furthermore, the principal went on to say he has built relationships with his staff, and he highly encourages them to have a student-centered focus. Rigsbee (2009) posited great principals know their students. They know their stories, their strengths, their weakness, and most importantly, their names. All of the decisions made by the school administration has a student-centered focus and Rigsbee (2009) went on to say in schools with great principals, the students love the leader; they know when the leader cares.

**Conclusion 4: Purpose-Driven Decision Makers**

Based on the findings from the research and the literature, the researcher concluded when a school has purpose-driven decision makers, the possibility of establishing a culture of high performance will be achieved in Native American schools. One of the principal participants made a comment during the interview that he wants his teachers to know when he makes decision, they are well thought-out and purposeful.
Additionally, when he allows a teacher to have certain power and authority, others should have confidence in him that the person he chose has the ability to complete the assignment. Dorasamy (2010) explained when principals lead with modeling the practice of making purpose-driven decisions, it has a powerful influence on the staff and their ability to practice service. When the building principal makes purposeful decisions, it allows the staff to have confidence in their ability to lead and foster an environment with a holistic approach (Milner, 2014). In Native American schools located on Native American Reservations, it is critical the school principal’s decisions are purpose driven. Additionally, the school principal’s decisions will affect the students in the school and the community as a whole.

**Conclusion 5: Sacred Hoop of Constructs**

Based on the findings from the research and the literature, the researcher concluded Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs (i.e., agapao love, humility, altruism, trust, vision, empowerment, and service), when they are all displayed in a leader, the school will have the ability to establish a culture of high performance in Native American schools. One of the principal participants referred to the seven servant leadership constructs as the sacred hoop of how principals should operate, and not one of the constructs weights more than another construct. In Native American communities, there is a symbol called the sacred hoop, which means all things work together.

Welker (2019) stated:

Hopefully, we can all quickly begin the task of mending The Sacred Hoop of Life in Black Elk’s vision and begin working together to save the Earth Mother, ourselves and all things. Let us stop killing each other and the world around us. . .
Instead, let us become spiritual warriors fighting our greatest enemy—ourselves.

(p. 2)

Native American communities care deeply for nature and their children’s future. When the seven servant leadership constructs are all implemented in a school, the leader will have the ability to effectively establish a culture of high performance. Hipp (1997) recognized the school principal has to be an agent of change, recognizing all variables are important and necessary in a high performing school, and the leader makes changes when necessary.

**Implications for Actions**

When principals of Native American schools implement and use the seven servant leadership constructs of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service in Native American schools, establishing a culture of high performance is developed. Principals of Native American schools who may have difficulties implementing the seven servant leadership constructs will not have the ability to effectively establish a culture of high performance in Native American schools, and those principals may only stay at that particular school for a short period of time. The following are the researcher’s recommendation of implications for action to address the conclusions resulting from this study.

**Implication 1: Proposal to Present the Servant Leadership Constructs at the National Indian Education Association Conference**

The National Indian Education Association Annual Conference (NIEA) is held every year in October. Several months before the conference is held, NIEA sends out a request for conference presenters. Educators that work in Native American schools or
closely with Native American communities from all 50 states attend this National conference. Alaska Natives and American Indians attend this conference to find out the new strategies and techniques that are successful in other Native American schools. Therefore, a proposal should be presented that will outline the seven servant leadership constructs (i.e., agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service), and when these constructs are present in a Native American school, the leader will have the ability to impact the culture of high performance.

**Implication 2: Breakout Session on the Servant Leadership Constructs at the Western Washington Native American Education Consortium**

There are 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington State. Each tribe has its own identity and is able to provide guidance or support to their Native American students in unique ways. Moreover, the Washington Native American Education Consortium (WWNAEC) hosts an annual conference in February to offer educators from public schools and tribal communities the opportunity to learn what is occurring in Native American education and the next steps to assist Native American students achieve academic excellence. During the conference, there are breakout sessions where individuals speak on specific areas they believe are vital to educators’ knowledge of Native American students and how they learn and grow. A breakout session would help teachers and principals related to the servant leadership constructs and how these constructs are imperative in establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools.

**Implication 3: Servant Leadership Constructs Should be Taught in the Principal Certification Programs at Colleges and Universities in Washington State**
With the enormous responsibilities and high demands on school principals, potential principals must have the ability to lead and be certified in Washington State. Moreover, principals are leaders in the community, and they are supposed to be able to strengthen the educational foundations of their schools. To become a principal in the state of Washington, a candidate must meet certain criteria established by the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB). First, they must hold a teaching certification license. Secondly, they must have a master’s degree from an accredited college/university. Lastly, they must complete a state-approved administrator preparation program and then apply for a residency principal certification license. While several leadership styles and concepts are taught in the administrator preparation programs, the seven servant leadership constructs should be taught to educate future principals on how to establish a culture of high performance using the servant leadership constructs. Furthermore, during the first 2 years of principalship, the educational institution where the principal received their training should send out instructors to monitor and coach the new principals on implementing the servant leadership constructs.

**Implication 4: Establishing a Group for Principals of Native American Schools in Washington State and Providing Mentoring to First-Year Principals of Native American Schools Focusing on Servant Leadership**

With over 30 Native American schools in the state of Washington with a student body of 40% or higher of Native American students, the principals are often working in environments and communities where they are not familiar with the school’s culture. Therefore, a group should be established that will offer principals of Native American schools a place where they can share their thoughts and feelings concerning working in
Native American schools and communities and how to lead in a servant leadership style. Additionally, when principals come to Native American schools from public school districts that do not have a majority of Native American students, they often experience culture shock.

One of the principal participants acknowledged she thought all schools were the same, and she could continue to operate as she had done in her former school. However, she quickly learned when a person works in a Native American school, there are a lot of things that are different than operating in a nontribal school. Hence, a mentorship program should be offered to first-year principals of Native American schools, and existing principals of Native American schools should provide the mentoring. Furthermore, the mentor principals should be trained in servant leadership and how to use the seven servant leadership constructs in establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools.

**Implication 5: The BIE Offers Training in Servant Leadership to Principals of BIE Schools**

The BIE has direct oversight of 52 Native American/Alaska Native schools operating throughout the United States. All of these BIE schools have their school board, and building administrators. The BIE’s mission is to provide quality education opportunities from early childhood through life in accordance with a tribe’s needs for cultural and economic well-being, in keeping with the wide diversity of Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages as distinct cultural and governmental entities (BIA, 2020). Based on this study’s findings, the researcher strongly recommends BIE offer training to the
school principals of all of their BIE schools on servant leadership and how it assists in establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

This study focused on the lived experiences of principals of Native American schools and their perception of the impact the seven servant leadership constructs have on establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools. Additionally, the seven servant leadership constructs consisted of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service. Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are made to further the research on the servant leadership constructs and establishing a culture of high performance.

**Recommendation 1: Study Conducted With Bureau of Indian Education Schools Only**

It is recommended this study be conducted with the 52 BIE schools located throughout the United States. With each BIE school being located in different areas of the county, this study would allow the researcher to interact with a larger sample and collect data from different regions of the country.

**Recommendation 2: Replicate This Study With Principals of Schools With a Majority of African American Students**

It is recommended this study be replicated in schools where a majority of the student body is African American. When there is evidence of high performance in a majority African American school, the researcher will determine if the seven servant leadership constructs have an impact on establishing a culture of high performance in majority African American schools.
Recommendation 3: Conduct a Mixed-Methods Study With Native American Schools Located Only on Indian Reservations

It is recommended this study be conducted as a mixed-methods study with Native American schools located only on Indian Reservations. In the state of Washington, there are 29 federally recognized tribes, and several of those tribes do not have their own tribally operated schools located on their reservations. Moreover, the students from those Native American communities that do not have their own school have to attend the local public school in their area. Therefore, some public schools can have a majority of Native American students and not be located on an Indian Reservation.

A mixed-methods study will allow the researcher to collect data from interviews, observations, artifacts, and surveys. With the various options of data collections, the researcher will be able to determine if the seven servant leadership constructs have an impact on establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools located only on Indian Reservations.

Recommendation 4: Meta-Analysis of the Servant Leadership Dissertations

It is recommended a meta-analysis study be conducted from the eight thematic dissertations on the seven servant leadership constructions and the impact on establishing a culture of high performance dissertations. The eight thematic team members conducted studies on public school district superintendents, human resource administrators, and Latina superintendents of Title 1 school districts, two high school principals, public middle school principals, Title 1 middle school principals, and principals of Native American schools. All of these dissertations focused on the impact that their study area had on the establishment of a culture of high performance in their various areas.
Recommendation 5: Study On the Single Servant Leadership Construct Agapao Love in Native American Schools

It is recommended a phenomenological study on the single servant leadership construct of agapao love and the impact that construct has on establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools. Research on the construct of agapao love will continue to contribute to the research on this subject.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

The findings in this study and the review of the literature has shown servant leadership is a necessary component in establishing a culture of high performance in Native American schools. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it was inspirational to see how so many principals of Native American schools went over and above the call of duty to ensure the students had everything they needed to be successful as the students adjusted to the new normal of distance learning. Serving as a principal is a tough and challenging job during a typical school year. However, the eight principal participants interviewed for this study had to lead staff, students, families, and communities during a pandemic that has been life-changing and traumatic for many people. The principals in this study validated Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs of agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service must be present in the leader’s daily operations and lifestyle.

As the education director for a Native American tribe, it has been my honor and privilege to conduct this research study. From the experience of working with principals of elementary, middle, and high schools, I know the difficulty building principals face in a non-Native American school. However, the principals who participated in this study
have a much bigger challenge of coming into a community that might not always be welcoming. The principal always has to set their personal feelings aside and guarantee the students and staff get the best of them every day. Winston Churchill quoted, “If you’re going through hell, keep going.” During this process, it felt as if I was going through hell, but as I interviewed the inspirational school principals, they gave me the courage to keep going and finish the race.
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181


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APPENDIX B

Alignment Table

Alignment of Interview Questions to Research Questions

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore and describe principals of elementary, middle, and high school of Native American students in Washington State perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Corresponding interview questions</th>
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| 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 toward the members of their school staff. Tell me |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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| 1. What is your perception of altruism and its impact on your school 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? |
| 2. How does the use of creating a vision in your leadership impact the establishment of 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? |
<p>| 3. What is the impact of the altruism 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 a school. How do you develop and sustain trust in your school building? |</p>
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<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
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<td>6. What is the impact of the empowerment leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?</td>
<td>Q2: Thinking about your school, please share some examples of how trust has supported a culture of high performance?</td>
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<td>Q1: How do you perceive empowerment in your school?</td>
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<td>Q2: Empowerment often encourages risk taking and self-accountability,</td>
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<td>please describe the opportunities you see staff having within your school to use empowerment?</td>
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<td>Q1: Please share some examples when you have witnessed service within your school and how did that service impact the culture of high performance?</td>
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<td>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?</td>
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<td>7. What is the impact of the service leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance?</td>
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APPENDIX C

Field Test Interviewee Feedback Questions

Interviewee:

Interview:

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

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

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

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

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

Interview Observer Feedback Reflection Questions

Observer:

Interviewer:

1. How long did the interview take?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?
Dear Antonio Sandifer,

Congratulations, your IRB application to conduct research has been approved by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board. This approval grants permission for you to proceed with data collection for your research. Please keep this email for your records, as it will need to be included in your research appendix.

If any issues should arise that are pertinent to your IRB approval, please contact the IRB immediately at BUIRB@brandman.edu. 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 the following link: https://irb.brandman.edu/Applications/Modification.pdf.

Best wishes for a successful completion of your study.

Thank you,

Doug DeVore, Ed.D.
Professor
Organizational Leadership
BUIRB Chair
ddevore@brandman.edu
www.brandman.edu
APPENDIX F

Invitation Letter to Participate

Date: xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Dear Potential Study Participant:

I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University completing research toward a doctorate degree in Organizational Leadership. I am conducting a study on what is the impact of Patterson’s (2003) seven servant leadership constructs on establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by principals of elementary, middle, and high schools with a student population of 40% or higher of Native American students in Washington State of high-performance schools?

I am asking for your assistance in the study by participating in a Zoom interview which will take from 45-60 minutes and will be set up at a time that is convenient for you. If you agree to participate in the interview, you will be assured that it will be completely confidential. No names will be attached to any notes or records from the interview. All information will remain in locked files accessible only to the researcher. No one from your school district will have access to the information obtained during the interview. You will be free to stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any time.

I am available to answer questions via telephone (253) 905-4405 or via email at asandif2@mail.brandman.edu, to answer any questions you may have.
Please email or call me if you are willing to consider being a part of this study. Your participation would be greatly valued.

Sincerely,

Antonio Sandifer
Doctoral Candidate
Bradman University in Organizational Leadership
Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

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

Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form – Interviews

INFORMATION ABOUT: Phenomenological Study on the Impact of Servant Leadership on Establishing a Culture of High Performance as Perceived by Principals of Native American Schools

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Antonio Sandifer, M. Ed.

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Antonio Sandifer, a doctoral student from the School of Education at Brandman University. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore and describe principals of elementary, middle, and high school of Native American students in Washington State perceived impact of servant leadership constructs developed by Patterson (2003) on establishing a culture of high performance.

The interview(s) will last approximately 45 – 60 minutes and will be conducted over Zoom.

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

b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. 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 coaching programs and the impact coaching programs have on developing future school leaders. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study and will provide new insights about the coaching experience 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 xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx or by phone at (xxx)xxx-xxxx or Dr. Doug DeVore (Advisor) at xxxxx@xxxxx.xxx.

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 are 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