

Student Perceptions of the Influence of Servant Leadership at Two Christian Denomination Campuses

Walter M. Jagela

Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive single-case study was to explore student perceptions of servant leadership, how servant leadership influences involvement within their campus community, and their definition of servant leadership. Student subjects were attending two private denominational Christian universities in a Mid-Atlantic Appalachian state. The theoretical foundation of this study was Greenleaf's theory of servant leadership. Purposive sampling included 20 participants pursuing an undergraduate degree and the three sources of data included semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and a researcher's journal. This study relied on six steps of thematic analysis for data analysis. Findings showed evidence that students were aware of servant leadership on their campuses and they were influenced by and responsive to servant leadership.

Keywords: Servant leadership, case study, student perceptions, Christian universities.

Dr. Walter M. Jagela, Ed D, MS.Ed, M.Div is at Pastor at Saint John University Parish/West Virginia University. He can be reached at justwalt40@comcast.net

Leadership is not simply the actions of the leader but the relationship and interactions between the leaders and the followers (Spears, 2010). While Greenleaf (1977) has been recognized as the founder of servant leadership, following exploration of human motivation to lead rather than be led, this form of leadership has been further developed and expanded upon over the last several decades (Bowman, 2005). According to Bowman (2005), servant leadership is as old as the scriptures; as the scriptures contain references to human motivation to care for and serve fellow human beings. This form of leadership emphasizes the necessity for servant leadership to include communication and collaboration amongst leaders and servants (van Dierendonck, 2011) and requires a person to make a conscious choice to lead and serve (Spears, 2010).

Servant leaders are self-motivated and internally driven to implement the behaviors and exhibit the characteristics of servant leadership (Spears, 2010). Robbins and Coulter (2005) studied servant leadership at the academic level and across organizational disciplines. Through their research, they concluded that specific situations dictate the leadership style necessary to address the needs of the followers. However, researchers continue to identify servant leadership as appropriate and effective in religious organizations including educational settings (Thompson, 2014).

Traditional leadership styles notoriously emphasize a top-down hierarchical structure and have been the mainstream style of leadership for centuries (Goldman Schuyler & Branigan, 2003). Contrary to hierarchical leadership models, servant leadership requires shared values, mutual trust, and an intrinsic desire to transition from self-serving to serving others (Greenleaf, 1977). Servant leadership has been identified as a shared leadership model that researchers advocate for use in organizations, including educational institutions (Thompson, 2014). Van Dierendonck (2011) cited a need for exploration on servant leadership, as perceived by

stakeholders through multiple forms of research and analysis. As such, this study was designed to implement the recommendation of Van Dierendonck (2011) through a qualitative single case study design exploring how servant leadership influences the perceptions of students at two private Christian denominational campuses.

While leadership has been well documented within the literature, further exploration of leadership resulted in the development of several leadership styles and models (Choi, 2014). Additionally, leadership emerged as a specific field of study in need of further exploration (Campbell, 1977; Northouse, 2007; Rost, 2000). Leadership affects individuals and groups directly and/or indirectly. In making the attempt to understand how ordinary people become great leaders, Bateman and Snell (2002) studied both good and bad managers in relation to leadership influence concerning work performance and job satisfaction. Results of their study concluded that the influence of a leader is central to followers in goal identification and attainment and that each leader influences his or her followers based on their individual management style (Bateman & Snell, 2002). Further, Robbins and Coulter (2005) found that leadership is situational within academic and organizational disciplines with the leadership style subject to change based on follower needs.

Transactional leadership is one model frequently used in organizations and relies on direct supervision, group performance, and the implementation of rewards and punishments (Northouse, 2007). The relationship of leader and follower in this model is compared to a business transaction in that tasks are delegated, and followers are expected to perform accordingly (Nazim, 2016). Additionally, relational leadership theories align with organizational driven practices (Northouse, 2007).

Servant leadership was found to be associated with transformational leadership with regards to the relationship and engagement between leaders and followers (Spears, 2004). In this

leadership model, the leader serves the follower directly and, instead of delegating tasks, the leader supports the followers to attain educational or organizational goals (Greenleaf, 1977). Northouse (2007), through exploring servant leadership, sought to identify specific, innate personality and behavior traits including intelligence, self-confidence, integrity, determination, and charisma. Additionally, Northouse (2007) concluded that visionary and charismatic leadership is a throwback to trait theory, as it relates to innate leadership traits that contribute to effective leadership. Through investigating the actions of leaders, behaviorists contended that these traits could be learned (Northouse, 2007), contrary to the findings of Greenleaf (1977). Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggested leadership traits are not restricted to select individuals but that anyone may elicit change and motivate people to better themselves and others. These contradictory findings led to further research and resulted in additional theories (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Further, Laub (1998) recommended studying the characteristics of servant leadership to measure an organization's effectiveness. Absent from the literature are studies involving Christian denominational colleges and universities and how servant leadership is exhibited therein (Lambert, 2015). Van Dierendonck (2001) recommended exploration of servant leadership, as perceived by multiple stakeholders, including but not limited to college and university students, using different research methodologies and designs. A stakeholder perspective not represented in the literature is that of students on Christian campuses. Since there is insufficient research currently addressing students as stakeholders, this study filled the gap relating to the impact of servant leadership, as perceived by students on private denominational campuses.

While this study is not an exhaustive review of the background of the study, it serves to document the necessity to proceed with this study on servant leadership. Leadership has been

proven to identify what elements are missing, how effective an organization is and could be, and measure the possible successes of organizations (Jones & Lioba, 2004). Leadership styles and the implementation of these varying styles continue to advance and evolve in accordance with the needs of organizations (Bashman, 2012).

Servant Leadership Defined

Choi (2014) contended servant leadership emerged as a global phenomenon by the early 1970's. Greenleaf, as the theorist credited for introducing the concept of servant leadership to the mainstream thought of leadership theory, stated that great leaders result from leaders that see themselves as servants (Greenleaf, 1977). Therefore, the primary motive of a servant leader is to serve rather than lead. Greenleaf further suggested that the best test on the effectiveness of a servant leader is on whether they can build and maintain common good within an organization and society (Greenleaf, 1977). It should also be noted that it is not only the leader who has to serve but also the organization in order for servant leadership to be effective (Greenleaf, 1997). Through ongoing research into servant leadership and exploring its application in multiple settings including organizations and businesses, Gandolfi, Stone, and Deno (2017) contended that servant leadership is becoming more widely accepted in organizations.

Servant Leadership in Education

Basham (2012) noted the growth consensus among various constituents in education that educational leadership and education in general must change dramatically in terms of leadership. A differing approach must be implemented to further education and allow its leaders (teachers) and followers (students) to be more innovative and work more collaboratively. Further, Basham (2012) found that the theory of a highly centralized management was ineffective and not relevant today, especially as modern world advances and becomes more inclusive and global. As such,

this section was dedicated to presenting research and findings specific to the implementation of servant leadership in the field of education.

Van Dierendonck (2011) suggested furthering the research into servant leadership through exploring the perceptions of multiple stakeholders. As servant leadership gains recognition in the field of leadership, Van Dierendonck (2011) acknowledged its limitations with respect to its place in businesses, organizations, and education. Additionally, at the time of Van Dierendonck's (2011) work, researchers were still determining the influence servant leadership has on performance and how servant leadership relates to other leadership styles and models.

Further, Basham (2012) acknowledged the growing consensus among a number of educators that educational leadership within academic institutions is in need of reform. Basham (2012) contended that centralized management leadership styles are ineffective and irrelevant in today's society considering ongoing societal evolution. Dyer and Dyer (2017) noted the significance of higher education on shaping and influencing the behaviors of leaders and professionals and suggested higher education also influences societal sustainability, which rationalizes the need to extend servant leadership research to higher educational institutions.

Extending the work by Van Dierendonck (2011), Satyaputra (2013) stipulated that higher education emphasizes the notion of "serving" and recommended institutes of higher education shift towards a servant model since it is considerably more viable. Further, Satyaputra (2013) suggested that servant leadership be incorporated into higher education due to its ability to promote, motivate, and positively influence students to become servants. Moreover, Saglam and Alpaydin (2017) emphasized the notion that servant leadership provides a modern approach to leadership within the educational sector. Research by Saglam and Alpaydin (2017) investigated the relationship between school administrators' personalities and their behavior

consistent with servant leadership, thus furthering the current literature about servant leadership in higher educational institutions.

Further, the implementation of servant leadership, as suggested by Satyaputra (2013), was found in a study by Lambert (2015). It was noted that the servant leader, or servant teacher, implements an alternative approach to teaching that emphasizes the needs of the learners through providing supports according to the needs of the students. Teachers, utilizing the servant leadership model and becoming servant teachers in educational settings were found to positively influence the academic performance of the students as well as foster personal and academic growth (Lambert, 2015). Additionally, these students were also found to serve their peers. This study also relied on Greenleaf's theory of servant leadership and utilized the qualitative methodology to explore how teachers incorporated servant leadership into their practices (Lambert, 2105).

Methodology

While leadership has been well documented within the literature, research into servant leadership continues to emerge as researchers continue to identify the application of servant leadership across settings. While Dyer and Dyer (2017) acknowledged the influence that higher education has on students and developing leaders and, as such, recommended furthering the research on servant leadership in higher educational settings. Further, research by Lambert (2015) concluded that teachers utilizing the servant leadership model were effective at influencing the student performance and noted an increase in student engagement. However, Lambert's research was taken from the perspectives of the professors. Thus, student perceptions on servant leadership implemented within higher educational settings remain absent in the literature.

The theoretical foundation of this study relied upon work by Greenleaf (1977) in the development of the servant leadership model. Greenleaf (2002) asserted that the Christian church is potentially the best proponent of servant leadership considering servant leadership is founded on the principle that the servant leaders are responsible for serving, rather than just being served. Van Dierendonck (2011) documented the need for research on servant leadership from multiple stakeholder perspectives. Since the perceptions of students in higher educational settings remained unexplored, the researcher furthered the literature by exploring how the application of servant leadership on denominational campuses influenced students' understanding of servant leadership, involvement and behavior within their campus community. The subjects were 20 university undergraduate students from two private Christian denominational campuses in a mid-Atlantic Appalachian state with students ranging from freshman to seniors. Research on how students at two private Christian denominational campuses experience servant leadership filled the gap present in the literature and provided recommendations for implementing servant leadership in other organizations.

In this study, the central phenomenon was how the application of servant leadership on denominational campuses influenced students' understanding of servant leadership, involvement and behavior within their campus community. Therefore, this study explored the perceptions of students regarding how servant leadership leads to increased involvement and participation in their campus community. Additionally, this study investigated how servant leadership influences students at their respective campuses.

To conduct the single-case study design, the researcher relied upon the use of three sources of data including interviews, questionnaires, and a researcher's journal. The three sources of data were selected based on the purpose of this study, phenomenon, and the posed "how" research questions. Further, interviews, questionnaires, and a researcher's journal are

common when conducting single-case study designs and when answering “how” questions (Yin, 2014). Additionally, the phenomenon for this study aligns with the qualitative methodology in that this researcher explored the perceptions of individuals within the natural setting of the phenomenon (Stake, 1995).

Research Questions

Three research questions were generated to understand and explore the phenomenon. In this study, the three research questions were “how” questions designed to explore the perceptions of students with regard to the influence of servant leadership on student involvement and behavior on campuses and how servant leadership leads students to become involved in activities and such on their campuses. Research questions included:

RQ1: How does servant leadership influence the perceptions of students at two private Christian denominational campuses?

RQ2: How does servant leadership lead students to be involved in their campus community?

RQ3: How does servant leadership influence student behaviors in campus life?

Research Design

This qualitative descriptive single-case study sought to explore student perceptions of servant leadership, how servant leadership influences involvement on campuses, and the students’ definition of servant leadership based on students attending two private denominational Christian universities in a mid-Atlantic Appalachian state. Since this study explored a rare phenomenon absent from current available literature, the descriptive case study design was considered most appropriate (Yin, 2014). Further, the researcher examined how the implementation of servant leadership and behaviors was exhibited by servant leaders. These are consistent with the use of descriptive case studies, as Yin (2014) noted that investigating individual behaviors is one rationale for choosing the descriptive case

study over other options. While the other types of case studies were considered, including exploration, explanation, and evaluation studies, the descriptive case study best aligned with the purpose and phenomenon.

The case study design was utilized for its ability to explore a qualitative phenomenon that posed “how” questions in alignment with a qualitative methodology intended to gain in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon (Stake, 1995). The sample size for this study included 20 undergraduate students from two separate, private denominational universities. To research the phenomenon and answer the research questions, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews and utilized questionnaires and a researcher’s journal to attain the data. The use of interviews, questionnaires, and a researcher’s journal are considered appropriate for conducting qualitative case studies (Yin, 2014).

This study relied on the single-case study research design since this study was holistic with no subunits identified (Yin, 2009). The study was bounded due to the exclusion of all other students by limiting the study to undergraduate students at two private denominational campuses. Additionally, Yin (2009) established that a case study should be utilized when the research questions are “how” or “why.” In the case of this study, only “how” questions were posed to explore this phenomenon. Moreover, according to Yin (2014), “the case study has been a common research method in psychology, sociology, ... business, education, nursing, and community planning ...[since] the distinctive need for cases study research arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomenon” (p. 4). Further, this was a descriptive single-case study to present on a “rarely encountered situation or one not normally accessible to researchers” (Yin, 2014, p. 215). Therefore, this study used the descriptive single-case study research design.

Population and Sample Selection

The sample for this descriptive single-case study was comprised of 20 participants from undergraduate students from each of two pre-selected private, denominational universities. This study included students ranging from freshman to seniors pursuing an undergraduate degree. Through the selection of only students attending two particular Christian universities, the unit of analysis was isolated to a specific group and within a certain time period distinguishable from other similar groups, which established and bounded the case (Yin, 2014). Yin (2009) contended that data saturation, the point in which the researcher would no longer glean further data exploring the phenomenon, would be reached through the participation of 12-15 individuals. Therefore, the researcher sought and attained data saturation through identifying 20 potential participants, using purposive sampling. By gathering 20 potential participants, the researcher was able to protect against attrition.

A case study conducted by DeMatthews (2015) relied upon one participant and was able to gather enough data to answer the research questions using only two sources of data. Additional qualitative researchers, including Watson et al. (2016) conducted case studies relying on fewer than 20 participants while Haber-Curran and Tillapaugh (2014) utilized a mixed-methods study by included 26 participants for the qualitative phase of the study. Therefore, based on similar research and the case study design, the researcher concluded 20 participants to be appropriate for this study. The 20 students who participated comprised the sample population enabled the research to ensure a bounded case, as participants were attending specific unique universities, as opposed to state and public universities.

Since this was a descriptive single-case study design, participants were requested to participate in semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. They were notified of this participation required in the Informed Consent document. These two sources of data were used

to answer the three posed “how” questions for the study while the researcher’s journal added valuable information to each research question as well. The researcher’s journal recorded additional information pertaining to the research questions and phenomenon with an emphasis on participant behaviors, mannerisms, intonation and inflection, and facial features during the interviews. The researcher also documented comparisons between and amongst the participants, common phrases and words used by participants, and similarities and differences in the ways in which participants answered the interview questions and questionnaire.

With regards to the interview questions, the researcher constructed the interview questions with the intention of ensuring interviews would last no less than 30 minutes in length but expected interviews to be completed in approximately one hour. The semi-structured interviews included a total of 15 questions while the questionnaire had 20 questions, primarily seeking demographic information but also contained questions designed to answer the posed research questions. The use of three sources of data enabled the research to conduct methodological triangulation (Denzin, 2009).

Sources of Data

Three sources of data were selected to explore the phenomenon and address the “how” questions generated for this study. While case study research may involve a variety of data collection methods (Stake, 1995), the researcher committed to the use of semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and a researcher’s journal. Since the research sought to explore how students perceived servant leadership and its influence on denominational university campuses, it was necessary to utilize three sources of data to reach data saturation and ensure thick descriptive data was obtained (Yin, 2014).

The research questions were all “how” questions designed to elicit the perceptions of participants to gain insight into the phenomenon. In qualitative studies, it is imperative that the

research examines the perceptions and lived-experiences of the participants (Stake, 1995). As such, the researcher wrote semi-structured interview questions to guide the interviews but also allow participants an opportunity to provide additional information into their experiences and perceptions regarding the phenomenon (Yin, 2014). Further, the researcher constructed a questionnaire for participants that also targeted the phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Through the creation of questions specific to the phenomenon and purpose of this study, the researcher increased the reliability and validity of the study (Yin, 2009).

While the semi-structured interviews included questions pertaining to the phenomenon and the perceptions of the participants, the questionnaires elicited additional insight into the phenomenon as well as demographic information. Questionnaires returned data on: (a) student perceptions of the application of Servant Leadership, (b) how servant leadership influences students, (c) how servant leadership makes a difference in leading students to be involved on their campus community, and (d) how students exhibit the qualities of servant leadership. The third source of data was the researcher's journal that was used to record notes during and after the interviews as well as report on biases, assumptions, observations, and thoughts pertaining to the phenomenon.

For this study, semi-structured interviews provided substantial detail while the questionnaires and researcher's journal contributed additional depth and data that was used to reference against the interview responses during method triangulation (Denzin, 2009). The researcher's journal recorded additional information pertaining to the research questions and phenomenon with an emphasis on participant behaviors, mannerisms, intonation and inflection, and facial features during the interviews. The researcher also documented comparisons between and amongst the participants, common phrases and words used by participants, and similarities and differences in the ways in which participants answered the interview questions and

questionnaire. Validity and reliability were also enhanced through the use of three sources of data, as the sources yielded a sufficient amount of data that aligned with the research questions and phenomenon of this study found after coding and analysis (Yin, 2014).

Results

Literature showed that many have studied leadership and servant leadership from the perspective of academic advisors, faculty and staff (Bodia & Nawaz, 2010) but no studies, to date, have explored servant leadership from the perspective of the student on a private denominational college campus. Thus, research exploring the application of servant leadership on private Christian universities from the perspective of students remained absent from the literature prior to this study. Further, since students represent a different set of stakeholders within the university setting (Van Dierendonck, 2011; Lambert, 2015) and this study relied on students attending denominational universities, their perceptions should be considered unique (Spears, 2004). While Blanchard (2017) contended that role models for the concept of servant leadership can be found in various philosophies and persons throughout history, the perceptions of students attending Christian universities remains absent in the literature and requires exploration.

Participant subjects ranged, in age, from 18-21 years of age. There were 14 females and six males that chose to participate in this study, thus totaling 20 participants. Each participant had either graduated from high school or attained a GED and was pursuing an undergraduate degree. The results yielded by this study enabled the researcher to provide a comprehensive overview of the perceptions of servant leadership held by undergraduate students attending two denominational Christian universities.

Servant Leadership Running in the Background emerged as the theme from the data of this study. This theme was derived from keywords and phrase that comprised codes. Some of

those keywords and phrases included “opportunities,” “background,” “serving,” “influenced,” and campus community.” Students repeatedly shared how they were able to recognize opportunities to exhibit servant leadership on their respective campus communities. The participant responses regarding servant leadership and the frequency of the aforementioned codes, led to the creation of the theme *Servant Leadership Running in the Background*. This theme provided insight into each of the three research questions for the study. However, it primarily answered the first and second research questions regarding how servant leadership influences the perceptions of participants and how servant leadership leads students to be more involved on campus.

Participant 2 in the study perceived servant leadership to be “somewhat in the background and not in the forefront of this campus.” While Participant 2 acknowledged the presence of servant leadership, the participant also noted that it existed in the background and attributed this to be because the campus “is small where everyone knows each other.” This participant went on to explain how “you can make friends easily, therefore, you are not just a number.” The size of the campus influenced the perception of servant leadership and its influence on students and their involvement on campus since it was a small school and students knew one another.

Further, Participant 2 acknowledged that servant leadership was present on the campus and exhibited by faculty, staff, housekeeping and other students. Participant 2 shared, “When I think of servant leadership, I think of all the staff in the cafeteria because they are so open, warm, [and] they complement others and they brighten my day when I see them.” For this participant, the servant leadership was revealed to be present on campus amongst faculty and the presence of servant leadership, running in the background, elicited strong positive feelings for this participant.

Additionally, Participant 2 wanted to add, “no one calls it servant leadership, but it is what they are doing; serving others by being kind, open, warm and just wanting to know how your day is going.” She explained, “I see the workers in the cafeteria and actually everyone on campus in some way, shape, or form unselfishly serving others. Isn’t this what servant leadership is all about?” This participant shared how “students know that they are to be leaders and servants, but it is not in our vocabulary.” Participant 2 was able to identify characteristics of servant leaders and share experiences engaging with servant leaders on campus but also acknowledged that the term “servant leadership” was not used on commonplace. This may account for why the participant stated, “Servant leadership exists but, in the background, kind of like on the computer where one program is running in the background of the program, which you are working [on] at present. This was one participant that found servant leadership to be influential on campus but remarked that servant leadership was in the background despite the exhibited behaviors of campus faculty, staff, and students that implement servant leadership.

For Participant 10, it was apparent that servant leadership existed on campus and there were times that it was more prominently noted in the forefront of this participant’s mind and other times when it occurred in the background. This participant shared examples of when servant leadership was present based on their perception and eluded to the influence of servant leadership when the participant said, [it] would encourage servant leadership in front of me.” Further, Participant 10 shared, “It is only after you have been here on campus for a while that you discover that servant leadership is happening.” Based on the perceptions of this participant, servant leadership exists on campus, but it takes some time to see and appreciate it across the campus.

The perceptions provided by Participant 6 echoed Participant 10’s sentiment regarding servant leadership on campus. Participant 6, in fulfilling her role as a resident advisor on campus,

the participant reported seeing servant leadership but found it was not at the forefront of the campus but existed in the background. This participant stated, “I believe servant leadership on this campus is in the background and not the first thing students see when they entertain [the idea of] coming to the campus as a student.” Participant 6 shared, “This is not a bad thing; it is simply reality. The longer you are here on campus the more you’ll see servant leadership being played out [across campus].” Participant 2, Participant 10, and Participant 6 all found noted how servant leadership existed on their respective campuses but remained in the background. Further, Participant 10 and Participant 6 shared that it takes time and exposure to servant leadership on the campus before students begin to see servant leadership in action.

Further, the perceptions of Participant 9 were similar to the perceptions shared by the other participants. In the case of Participant 9, this participant described servant leadership being grounded on their respective campus. According to Participant 9, “Servant leadership works to bring the campus together, especially as it keeps us grounded in a good spirit on campus. I find this campus [and the people] very helpful [and] friendly and [I see] very successful people.” This participant reflected back to freshman year stating, “I also believe servant leadership is in the background of this campus, especially my freshman year, but it is growing through Christian leaders who put into action their faith in the community on campus and off campus.” The perceptions of this participant were similar to other participants in that servant leadership existed on campus but in the background becoming more apparent to students over time.

Implications

This qualitative descriptive, single-case study explored the perceptions of the application of servant leadership at two private, Christian denominational universities. This particular exploration was developed to address a gap in the research literature identified by Van Dierendonck (2011) and Lambert (2015) and to further the current knowledge on this

phenomenon through exploring students attending private Christian denominational universities. The implications included theoretically, practically, and future implications based on the findings of this study.

Theoretical Implications

Based on the findings of this study, the conceptual framework was proven appropriate based on this study's research questions, purpose and design, which was derived, in part, from Greenleaf's (1977) theory of servant leadership. The data collected resulted in theoretical implications including the appropriateness of servant leadership on university campuses.

Participants shared how servant leadership was influential in motivating and inspiring individuals to serve members of their campus community as well as members of their surrounding community off campus. Based on Greenleaf's (1977) theory of servant leadership, servant leadership inspires and motivates others to serve by the servant leaders serving others before themselves. Further, providing students with the opportunities to serve others became a theme and illustrated how giving student's opportunities to serve increased student involvement in campus resulting in additional students exhibiting the characteristics of servant leadership. Thus, this study has theoretical implications with regards to the necessity to implement and foster servant leadership in higher education.

Practical Implications

The conclusions of this study revealed that servant leadership and the student perceptions of its application have the ability to impact students attending private Christian universities. The study found that students at both campuses recognized the underlying philosophy of Greenleaf's (1977) theory of servant leadership and the philosophical foundations of their respective institutions in regard to servant leadership. For universities, practical implications included providing students opportunities to serve. At universities that do not

currently implement or encourage servant leadership, encouraging students to become involved through creating programs and establishing outreach opportunities with groups or organizations within the community should yield servant leaders. From this study, participants reported opportunities to serve as a gateway to exhibiting servant leadership. Further, participants shared how servant leadership was a domino effect in that seeing others involved in the community inspired them to become more active. Therefore, practical implications emerged from participants reporting the benefits of servant leadership in their lives as well as how servant leaders impacted the communities.

Future Implications

This study revealed that servant leadership, from the perspective of students attending two private Christian campuses, was much needed and beneficial to the participants and the community. Future implications should include an increased number of adults engaging in community service and volunteering their time and energy to serving others. The results of this potential implication include members of the community receiving ongoing supports that may yield to reduced homelessness and starving individuals. Further, for individuals volunteering at schools, there may be an increased interest and passion for volunteering or tutoring, free of charge, struggling students. The result would be higher academic achievement that may yield to more students attending colleges, gaining employment, and/or increased community involvement by school-aged students. Since it was found that observing and witnessing servant leaders providing services, more individuals became active in serving others, the application of servant on university campuses and within the community may result in greater outreach programs to serve those in need.

Conclusions

This study showed several recommendations for future practice in the field of higher education, specifically in terms of student perceptions of the application of servant leadership at private, Christian denominational campuses. At a basic level, higher-educational institutions should provide their student bodies with opportunities to serve on and off campus, thus engaging students in their community while attending their respective universities and propel them to continue serving beyond their college years. Since servant leadership was found to be influential on motivating and inspiring others to serve (Greenleaf, 1977), colleges and universities should promote servant leadership. Further, McKenzie & Swords (2000) concluded the appropriateness of servant leadership in educational institutions since it contributes to the empowering of others.

Further, each institution should, according to the findings of this study, review its philosophical foundations in terms of servant leadership and consider integrating servant leadership into its school's philosophy and purpose. Additionally, each higher education institution should implement elements of servant leadership and encourage faculty and staff to exhibit servant leader characteristics to facilitate the emergence of servant leadership on campus. Servant leadership on campuses should also include opportunities for students to serve the community until students are motivated to expand the university's efforts to increase student involvement and create new opportunities independently.

Finally, each institution should explore if and how students serve other students on campus and if and how students are active members of the community. After assessing the current level of student involvement and levels of serving, the university should investigate opportunities to expand upon work already done and broaden opportunities. It is also suggested that faculty and staff work in unison with students to determine appropriate outreach programs and opportunities to serve based on student interests and community needs. Future clubs and

organizations may arise from university faculty working with students. Universities should also consider the possible impact that students may have on their communities and consider other ways to incorporate servant leadership on and off campuses.

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