

Servant Leadership and Job Satisfaction in Higher Education Institutions in PA

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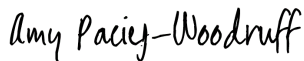
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Abstract

This study examines the relationship between servant leadership practices and job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania. Literature is reviewed that reveals that individuals in the higher education sphere are generally averse to change, and have advanced into leadership by virtue of competence in previous positions. Studies reveal that active, relationship-focused leadership styles such as servant leadership are positively correlated with various forms of success. A survey was conducted that reveals a strong positive correlation between servant leadership and job satisfaction, with supplemental analysis not revealing any singular motivating factor behind this relationship. Recommendations include supervisors having candid conversations with their team in order to assess how their leadership affects those they lead, and consider adopting characteristic servant leadership actions. Future research should expand the

scope of this survey geographically but also seek to understand the perspective of how leaders perceive their actions and motivations.

Keywords: servant leadership, higher education, job satisfaction, Pennsylvania

Chapter One

The Problem and Its Setting

Introduction

Leadership is complicated. This is not a controversial sentiment, but the complications are relative to the context in which we examine leadership. In higher education, leadership is another beast: those in the position to lead must often operate in multiple different capacities, serve wildly varying constituencies (e.g., faculty, staff, students, community, and stakeholders), and constantly adjust to a myriad of evolving standards (Bosetti & Heffernan, 2021).

Because of this degree of complexity, it can be an overwhelming task to begin to tease out where we ought to spend research time and effort assessing leadership in higher education. For example, Kezar (2023) found that many individuals promoted into leadership positions are done so based solely on their merits as faculty or other previous position and leadership training

far more often than not does not occur. This creates the problem of individuals failing as leaders because they lack the tools to lead, which can in turn result in morale issues. Compounding these issues, Hughey (2003) conducted research in which it was concluded that higher education as a whole has long had an attitude of being above some of the calls for change that have affected other industries, and how leadership is conducted and examined is among the affected areas.

One could argue that in today's climate, one of the most critical areas to focus on is how leadership affects job satisfaction of employees. There is previous research that suggests a relationship of importance between these two phenomena. Kasalak (2022) showed that high quality leadership leads to higher levels of job satisfaction.

This study specifically focused on the relationship between servant leadership, a leadership style first described by Robert Greenleaf (1977), and employee job satisfaction. Servant leadership is an active, relationship-based leadership style that emphasizes that a person in a leadership position must have as their first priority serving their followers and therefore the organization or team as a whole. They use their authority and influence to increase autonomy and empower followers to evolve and share in successes in an important and fulfilling way. Jenkins (2021) found that higher education professionals see active, relationship-based leadership styles as the path forward to evolving in higher education in general and in meeting customer and stakeholder demands.

Previous research results have shown that the specific product of servant leadership of fostering a supportive work environment has had a positive effect in educational settings, especially among faculty (Dalati, 2016). Others research has focused on the goals of autonomy, collaborative decision making, and shared governance. Results indicate that some higher education institutions have reporting a better working environment and higher participation

levels overall in conjunction with the presence of servant leadership practices (Diaz et al, 2024). Studies like these above show isolated practices or outcomes of servant leadership that have been beneficial in certain higher education contexts, which provides rationale and encouragement for further investigation.

While there has been a fair, but certainly not exhaustive, number of studies performed on servant leadership in higher education, there has not been enough research conducted on servant leadership practices and behaviors overall at specific institutions/regions. Results, like those above, have been focused on specific aspects of servant leadership in higher education contexts, but this study attempts to understand a fuller picture of those practices and behaviors that constitute practicing servant leadership. Moreover, there has been no concrete examination of how these practices as a whole affect job satisfaction in specific higher education institutions, especially through the lens of individuals assessing their direct supervisor or manager.

Here, employees at two higher education institutions in Pennsylvania were surveyed using two previously-validated survey tools, one to assess servant leadership practices and characteristics in their immediate leaders and another to assess their job satisfaction. One institution is a private university and another is a public university with three campuses situated strategically across the state. These institutions were chosen in an effort to ensure results are as representative as possible and to provide additional variables for in-depth analysis.

Theoretical Framework

Servant leadership is an ideology first presented by Robert Greenleaf in his 1977 essay *The Servant as Leader*. While the essay was a heavily philosophical piece with many analogies and allusions, the central points are quite clear. A servant leader begins with the desire to serve first, and then makes a conscious choice to lead, rather than those who would desire to lead for

ends such as power, influence, or financial remuneration (Greenleaf, 1977). Greenleaf offers several other key points of what makes a servant leader:

- A servant leader ought to approach problem solving by listening first, specifically listening to those around the leader as opposed to pontificating their own ideas first.
- Servant leaders accept realities and empathize with others as opposed to rejecting people and circumstances.
- Servant leaders practice self-care; if they are not functioning well, they cannot serve others well.
- Servant leaders endeavor to constantly assess the now and what is able to be anticipated in the future given the information at hand to avoid becoming reactionary except in instances where this is unavoidable.
- Servant leaders use authority and power to create opportunities so that others can make choices of their own volition rather than making choices for others, diminishing autonomy, even when the leader believes they are “doing what’s best” for others.

Ultimately, servant leaders are most concerned with reaching goals as a whole with their followers, but are equally willing to accept and take on the risks of a given path themselves.

Figure 1 below illustrates how the characteristics and practices above comprise servant leadership and how they affect the goals and desired outcomes of servant leadership.

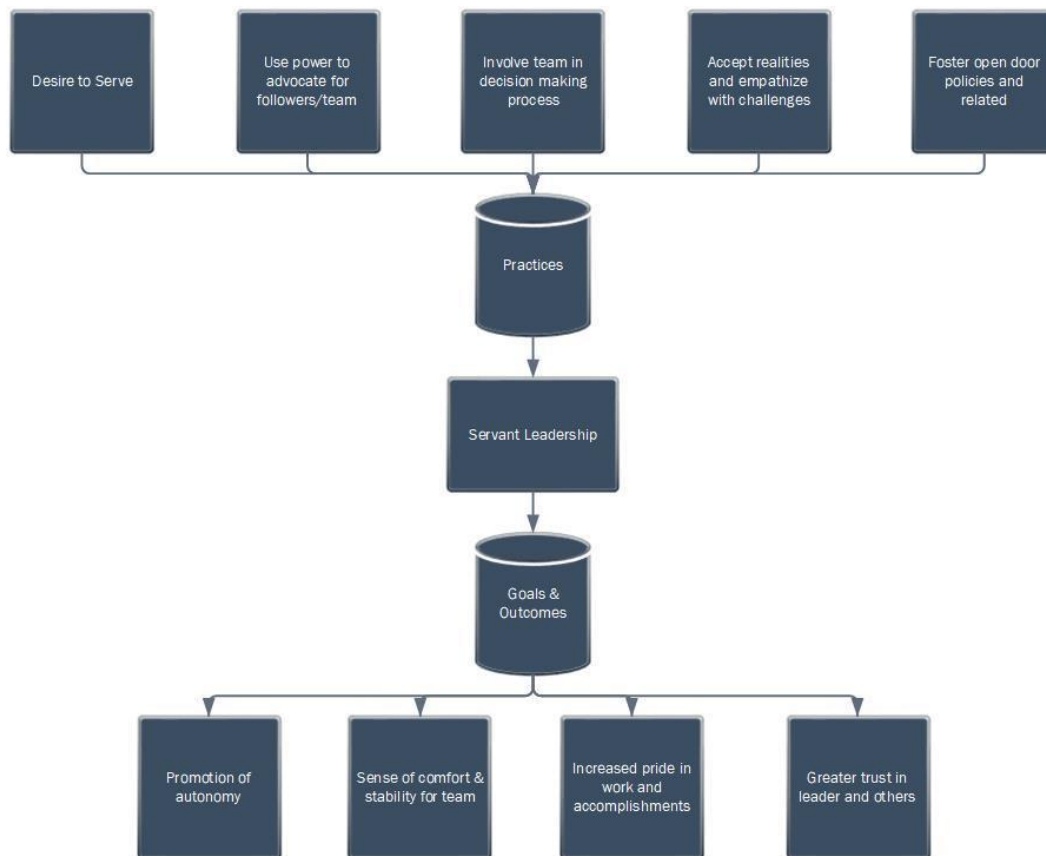


Figure 1: Servant Leadership

It is important to define job satisfaction in this framework from a theoretical perspective to define why one would bother assessing the effect of leadership on such a variable. There are many competing theories to define job satisfaction which heavily depend upon the medium or context in which it is being explored. From a psychological perspective, some have referred to job satisfaction as a function of environmental factors and cognition (Zhu, 2012). Job satisfaction here can be understood as a person's attitude toward their job. This concept is more deeply explored in Chapter 2.

Conceptual Framework

The outcomes illustrated in Figure 1 above on servant leadership are all components of or contributors to job satisfaction. The promotion of autonomy allows creativity and establishes that a leader trusts their team. The sense of comfort and stability allows team members to good work without fearing for their jobs or that their livelihood is under threat. Increased pride in work and accomplishments encourages people to feel ownership over good outcomes (and bad) as well as urging participation in shared governance. Greater trust in a leader allows team members to feel confident in the direction a team is headed in conjunction with other outcomes previously mentioned.

The conceptual framework below (see Figure 2) illustrates how the concepts in the Theoretical Framework section fit together with the variables under study. The central points and characteristics of servant leadership theory flow into the theory itself, which as a whole influences job satisfaction. Expected and actual environmental factors aggregate into the additional influential factors acting upon job satisfaction.

In the left box are characteristics and behaviors that are indicative of or crucial to practicing servant leadership. It begins with a desire to serve others, accept others' differences, and exercise empathy for their circumstances/lives inside and outside of work. Servant leaders need to build autonomy in their teams to give their followers the ability to be involved in and make decisions on their own. There is a focus on the "right now" and how the right now affects the future of the team and organization. Rather than using power to achieve their own ends, servant leaders dispense power to advocate for their people and their team's initiatives.

On the right are factors that are not directly related to immediate leadership, but interact with it in crucial ways. Everyone has an expectation of their job environment, and that perception is informed by an individual's personal ethics and values, the information they take in

from society, and what they’ve experienced in other workplaces. All of this aggregates into how they view their workplace. Other environmental factors that are more concrete and immediate also contribute, such as what an employee is actually asked to do on the job, how well they are (or aren’t) paid, who they work with, how safe they feel both physically and emotionally, and where they believe they can take their career. Both of these boxes integrate to influence how satisfied an individual is with their job.

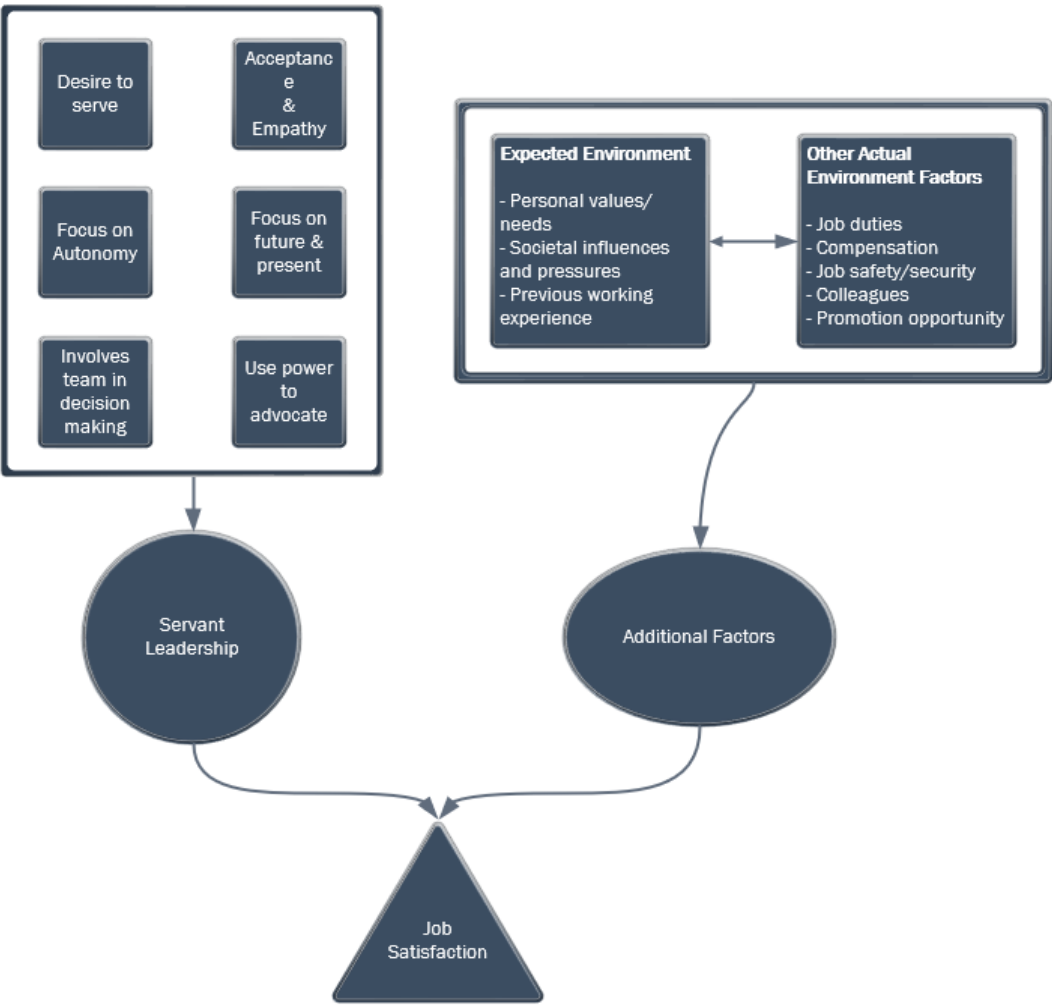


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative study was to test how the theory of servant leadership relates to job satisfaction in higher education by examining employee satisfaction by leadership characteristics in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania. The independent variable of leadership style was defined by the characteristics and practices that leaders exhibit via the perception of their followers/team. The dependent variable, employee satisfaction, was defined as the level to which an employee believes they are happy with their job and its attendant environment. This satisfaction is colored by how an individual feels about their leader's behavior, their coworkers, working conditions, autonomy, and other factors.

Research Question

What is the relationship between leadership style of supervisors and employee job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania?

Sub Problems

1. What is the servant leadership score of supervisors in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania?
2. What is the employees' overall satisfaction with their job in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania?
3. What is the relationship between leadership style of supervisors and employee job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania?

Research Hypothesis

Null hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between servant leadership style and employee job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania.

Alternative hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between servant leadership style and employee job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania.

Definitions

Leadership style refers to the way in which a person in a managerial or authoritative position guides, motivates, incentivizes, and otherwise leads others in their sphere of influence. This is coupled with creating and executing strategy and tactics (NSLS, n.d.). In this study, leadership style was assessed by the score on the SLQ leadership questionnaire (see Chapter 3 Instruments).

Job satisfaction is the feeling or level of fulfillment, contentment, even enjoyment that a person derives from their job and the workplace in which that job exists (Zhu, 2012). In this study, job satisfaction was defined as participants' responses to the job satisfaction survey instrument (see Chapter 3 Instruments).

Higher education institutions can theoretically be defined as any location that offers post secondary education including community colleges, technical and professional schools, online organizations in addition to more traditional four-year colleges (Britannica, n.d.). For this study, higher education institutions specifically referred to four-year universities in Pennsylvania.

Supervisor is defined as an individual in charge of a unit or operation or generally one that oversees other workers (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). For the purposes of this study, a supervisor was someone employed by a higher education institution whom others report to/is responsible for others on a team or in a department. Additionally, supervisors are those that respondents to the SLQ survey refer to in their responses.

Employee is defined as an individual working for compensation and is not at the executive/ownership level (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). In this study, an employee can be sufficiently narrowed to anyone working at a higher education institution.

Pennsylvania refers to the state, also known as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, but here also was defined as the higher education institutions from which the survey data is collected.

Delimitations

- This study will not take place over time, but rather offer a snapshot of responses from participants at one point in time.
- This study is delimited to higher education institutions in Northeast and Central Pennsylvania.
- Data will be self-reported through the perceptions of participants.

Assumptions

- It is assumed that participants answered honestly.
 - Specifically, it is assumed that participants placed trust in the anonymity of the survey process and that expressing any discontentment about a leader that they interact with would not have adverse consequences.
- It was also assumed that participants did not manipulate their answers in order to influence the findings of the research positively or negatively.

Significance of the Study

This study was timely and important in that there is not a wealth of previous literature and exploration of servant leadership's effect on job satisfaction in higher education. To be sure, work has been done in this area/industry on both concepts individually, more so on job satisfaction, but the relationship between the two has not been exhaustively examined. Research has been reviewed relative to specific aspects of servant leadership positively affecting higher education in both faculty and administrative contexts. An examination of the behaviors of servant leadership in supervisors through the lens of employees coupled with a job satisfaction

survey of those same employees has not been conducted, but the positive results seen previously in narrower studies encourages this type of research.

New generations of students are demanding to be educated in a different way, and higher education is no longer an industry that is immune to the pressures that others face. More conclusive and exhaustive research is needed to elucidate if servant leadership meets the changes that are needed, both from a behavioral perspective and that of how happy people are working in higher education. Indeed, several of the research studies that will be referenced here call for future research that focuses on helping reveal the qualities and practices that will allow strong leaders to emerge in this industry to match the needs of constituents, customers, and employees. All of these factors imply that we need to take a critical look at how individuals are led and the effect of that leadership on employee job satisfaction.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Introduction

A large percentage of the people employed by higher education institutions (faculty) have demonstrated a significant amount of endurance in pursuing their own education and areas of study. After years of pursuing an entirely self-based goal that is incredibly difficult, they are then expected to transition neatly into being leaders or role models for others. Leadership in higher education has been described as “a continuous struggle between competing values and unattractive options” (Smith & Hughey, 2006). Universities hold some of the most well-educated individuals in the working world in the classroom as a large part of their makeup, juxtaposed with others who perform rote yet critical administrative work, all together serving young,

ambitious, and impressionable individuals. It is critically important to elucidate and appreciate the uniqueness and inherent difficulties of the scenario in which leaders in higher education find themselves.

Leadership Mechanisms in Higher Education

Some have argued that the mechanisms that perpetuate leadership, or perhaps that propel people into leadership positions, are inherently flawed (Kezar, 2023). The traditional and most common mechanism of administrative advancement in higher education is when faculty are promoted into leadership positions (Deans, Chairs, VPs, and higher). The general assumption is that if they have been quality faculty, they are clearly intelligent, they should be able to fill a leadership need and would learn to do so as they went. Some programs were eventually developed in some cases to train these ascended faculty, but the focus was almost exclusively on operations, financial concerns/fundraising, et cetera.

There's nuance in why that ideology is flawed. Clearly, individuals with doctoral or other graduate-level degrees fill the intelligence quotient, and in some cases, they not only may be experts in how to run departments or teams (in theory), but they may naturally turn out to be good leaders. This occurrence, however, is a distraction that seems to promote the process. The type of development that Kezar (2023) refers to is purely managerial and tactical; the implementation of actual leadership training, managing people and handling those types of issues are shunted to the side or ignored. To be sure, operational efficiency and fiscal responsibility are critical to the mission of any institution, but that competency does not create leaders.

This is all not to diminish the unique challenges of higher education leadership, particularly that of the transition from faculty to administration. They must simultaneously be able to address many complex, multifaceted issues at any given moment; their staff's individual

concerns, enrollment, external relations, and budgeting as well as program/college/institutional identity are quite suddenly all on their shoulders as opposed to course load and everyday student interface (Bosetti & Heffernan, 2021). To further complicate matters, these former faculty administrators must now interface, work with, and in some cases report to with other administrators without their background and who don't necessarily share their point of view and concerns. This is an example of the competing values and unattractive choices mentioned previously. Viewing all of this through that lens illustrates the challenges these individuals face; learning to become a leader, the type of leader that is required in today's landscape and possibly without much institutional support, is extremely difficult to say the least.

History of Leadership in Higher Education

Examining leadership's place in higher education also requires the examination of the industry as a whole and the transformations it has gone through in recent times. Of course, an assessment of changes brought on by the Coronavirus pandemic is also necessary, and will be addressed later. Colleges and universities faced significant challenges in the 1960s and 70s with higher demand, expansion of institutions both in scope and number (Smith & Hughey, 2006). That expansion continued, and the sheer number of universities that exist today as a result of that boom could be considered part of the preconceptions for the challenges that higher education faces. Hughey (2003) found in a previous study that these same institutions have typically viewed themselves as the exceptions to the rule, even transcendent to the waves of change and requirements to adapt to current conditions.

This posture hasn't done higher education any favors, but as learning has long been enforced as a noble pursuit (at least in the United States and other developed, industrialized

countries), it could be argued that this complacency is not entirely the fault of the industry itself (Smith & Hughey, 2006). In more recent years, however, college education has become something viewed as a right rather than a privilege. There is often disappointment among many parents whose children either aren't up to the task of attending college or that decide to forgo it of their own volition. This is important mainly because of its contribution to the current conditions, including the rebellion against that "requirement" to attend college especially given the rising costs now associated with attendance.

There have now been many calls for new direction and changes in leadership despite the long-time exception to the rule mindset, partially in response to the conditions described above. The question then becomes: what are the challenges that leaders are facing and what is that way forward? While relevant to the impact they have on leadership, the previously demonstrated industrial challenges in and of themselves are outside the scope of this study.

First, consider the attitude of the individuals in leadership positions, regardless of whether they arrived there through academic or previous professional means. Research has shown that many survey respondents in higher education leadership positions consider themselves leaders purely based on the job position they find themselves in, whereas others see a need to expand that mindset using practical theory and ideas on leadership (Eddy, 2006). Much of that positional conception of leadership relies on the organizational structure and complex hierarchies that exist within higher education. With many different academic and administrative departments reporting to other oversight departments (such as the President's Office, Provost, et cetera), how authority is laid down in any given institution plays a major role in the perception of leadership. There is evidence that individuals at colleges want more participatory and collaborative leadership, but for that to become a reality, some of these convoluted reporting

lines may need to change or at least soften. Silos do not create themselves; people orchestrate control over what they perceive is within their authority to do so, and many naturally want to prevent outside influences from impinging on that control for fear of losing it. That, however, is not a positive outlook on leadership (or management).

There are debates throughout essentially every industry in existence with regard to how much or how significant the impact of leadership is on direct report and overall job satisfaction. Recent information suggests that in the case of higher education, the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction is indeed direct and significant; higher quality leadership traits and practice equaled higher job satisfaction (Kasalak, 2022). Further, job satisfaction has been shown as directly and positively correlated with program or department goal accomplishment and good outcomes within the department. This suggests that not only does higher quality leadership make people happy at work, but also that achievement of goals and positive outcomes in respective departments is also important to faculty and staff.

These findings lend themselves intuitively to other findings discovered in the same study. Kasalak (2022) also examined active and participatory leadership styles alongside passive and transactional leadership, and findings suggest that active/participatory leadership styles such as transformational and servant leadership have strong, positive effects on job satisfaction, and significantly more of those affects than traditional passive and/or transactional leadership. Some might wonder about how servant leadership might impact faculty specifically.

Change is difficult in general, especially in industries and/or organizations that are steeped in tradition, or perhaps more baldly put: set in their ways. Jenkins (2021) interviewed 23 higher education professionals in executive or administrative positions where they are expected to be high-performing leaders, it was discovered that transformational, adaptive, and

participatory leadership styles were the clear path forward in their opinion. However, it was also determined that there were significant roadblocks to wide-spread or universal adaptation and acceptance of that reality and practically executing it. Risk aversion, fear, and the unwillingness to change after becoming comfortable were cited as the biggest issues at play. These issues are not simple competency problems that can be solved with training and education; rather they are more deeply ingrained emotions that are difficult to bypass. Fearing the loss of control of one's team or pushback against change, for example, is something that requires not only a strong commitment from the leader, but also buy-in from who they lead that this change is both going to happen, and is necessary to happen.

Jenkins (2021) also noted that study participants were of the opinion that these new active perspectives/practices of leadership are required for meeting customer needs and demands in today's landscape. Customer needs can be defined here as students who are receiving the educational service provided by the university, the employers that hire the students as the product of the university, and even the local community that each institution is a part of. It's important here to not lose sight of any of these key stakeholders of what a higher education institution actually tries to accomplish. Leadership will mean different things to each of these and impact them in different fashions. Leaders in higher education need to protect and advocate for students, produce education in such a way as to maximize benefit for potential employers, and be organizationally responsible to their respective community.

Servant Leadership

At several points above, the literature has pointed toward more active forms of leadership, specifically toward transformational and servant leadership, as being the needed change in perspective and practice to further advance leadership in higher education. Servant

leadership is not a new concept, but one that has gained equal popularity recently. The concept of servant leadership flattens the hierarchy in a sense, as it requires the leader to operate from the perspective of using their position to help others, usually specifically those on their team or direct reports, but this also extends to stakeholders such as customers and surrounding community if applicable (as it indeed is in higher education). Wilson (1998) writes that this model emphasizes the need to provide service and support to peers, create a sense of well-being and belonging in a community, and foster an environment that empowers all to be involved in decisions. The goal for servant leadership is to create a supportive environment that is conducive to security, collaboration, and free of the normal worries of transactional leadership styles, allowing employees and thereby teams and organizations to achieve more than they would while hamstrung with those worries.

There has been some discourse on the positioning and importance of power as it pertains to servant leadership. In the work that essentially created the concept of servant leadership, Robert Greenleaf (1977) philosophized that servant leaders are those whose first priority is service to those around them rather than for personal advancement or edification. This can conjure a vision of a selfless monk who is benevolent in all things and perhaps be off-putting to some. Others, expanding on Greenleaf's original concept, have refined this concept a bit in a more functional or practical way. Servant leaders are not primarily motivated by the desire for power, though that power is still a reality that exists (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). McLelland and Burnham (1976) propose that power can be used differently by servant leaders as a tool for the entire team or organization rather than promoting simply the interests of the leader. Power, then, is not wielded as a warhammer to silence opposition and drive forward, but instead is distributed thoughtfully in order to enrich and protect the team. There are roots of Kantian ideology here in

the sense that the leader must own responsibility to provide autonomy for his or her team, and authority is used as a means through which that is accomplished. It is also important to note here that the need or desire to serve in this way also doesn't imply weakness in the leader or that followers are the locus of power (Dierendonck, 2011).

Active Leadership in Higher Education

The effect of leadership style on faculty who directly interface with students, who have been alluded to as both customers and products-in-process, is also worthy of note here. Previous research has determined that organizational leadership has a significant and practical effect on lecturers, particularly on their ability and desire to innovate in the classroom (Putra et al., 2021). Prestige of their jobs, autonomy at work, and general self-esteem greatly contributed to that innovation desire, and the positive development of those traits increased job satisfaction. The researcher found that there is an increasing expectation to bring visionary and uplifting leaders and leadership styles into higher education. Transformational leadership has a goal of promoting all of the ends listed above.

It should not be a surprise that faculty lecturers, highly educated, opinionated, independent, and generally proud, are motivated by things like increased autonomy and positional importance. When faculty are satisfied and uplifted and encouraged to innovate in this way, students in the classroom benefit directly and critically. Further on the score of active styles of leadership, research has been conducted to not only determine the efficacy of that perspective on leadership versus traditional transactional leadership, but to take it another step further into encompassing the competence with digital skills (e.g., online course instruction, asset management through digital means, computer based organizational skills, etc.). Results have shown that, first and interestingly, higher education professionals with less than 20 years of

service are statistically significantly more likely to practice or exhibit behaviors of active leadership, and professionals with more than 20 years of service in the industry and significantly more likely to practice passive or transactional leadership (Antonopolou, 2021). This correlates well with the previously mentioned idea that barriers to needed leadership style changes are rooted in fear to change and the unwillingness to do things differently.

Dalati (2016) found that because a central tenet of servant leadership is to promote a positive, supportive work environment, this style had a significantly positive effect of faculty development. This means that educators in a servant leadership environment are becoming better in the classroom, which naturally benefits students. On the administrative side of things, Diaz et al found recently in 2024 that as servant leadership also focuses on autonomy and transparency of decision making, some Universities reported a better workplace environment, greater overall participation in institutional decisions, and a diverse representation of opinion.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a concept that sounds incredibly simple and, as many concepts that sound simple do, is affected by a broad swathe of complex interactions. On the surface, one hears the question of “are you happy with your job?”, and the responses are typically yes, no, sort of, I could be happier if (insert qualifier). The underpinnings of those short answers have tangled roots, and those roots are the source of seemingly endless research and discourse, a possible solution to which is beyond the scope of what can be accomplished here.

It is important, nonetheless, to have a working understanding of what job satisfaction should be thought of here. Simply put and defined, job satisfaction can be thought of as one’s attitude toward their job, or when prompted, their effective response to the question of if one is satisfied with their job. Mishra (2013) does an excellent job laying out the factors that act upon

the job satisfaction concept and separating them out into categories. Personal factors include: sex, age, education level/background, and tenure at the job. Factors in a job include: type of work being performed, skill(s) required, occupational status (similar to social status in perception of job), and level of responsibility. Finally, factors controlled by management are: wages/salary, working conditions, benefits, job security, and advancement opportunity.

This is not to say that the factors or variables laid out above are in any way wholly representative of all possibilities, but they are a well-constructed general representation. Perhaps the most interesting dynamic about the concept of job satisfaction is that each factor above is a sliding scale that will shift and change according to any job, any company, any person. It is for this exact reason that it can be argued that one would be wasting time trying to pin down the most critical or influential factors that make up job satisfaction in general or overall that is not itself a research study attempting to understand the phenomenon of job satisfaction in and of itself. Rather, since this study is geared toward understanding how leadership impacts job satisfaction, a working understanding is important and the factors above will help determine secondary analysis of what underlying factors best apply in this specific scenario.

Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction

There have been studies done in other fields that sought to understand the correlation (or lack thereof) between leadership style and job satisfaction. Stephanie Brook (2006) analyzed this phenomenon in non-profit child care settings and found a significant correlation between employees' perceptions of leadership style and job satisfaction. The specification of perception of leadership style is important here because, frankly, managers do not walk about with tattoos of

their leadership style on their foreheads. Instead, their style is exemplified by the practices they engage or do not engage in.

There is evidence at least as far back as 1939 that leadership styles that encourage autonomy and participation are effective. Lewin (1939) found through several studies that while groups subjected to this sort of leadership were not always the most productive, they consistently produced the results with highest quality. McKinnon et al. (2003) found that these same styles of leadership that emphasize good communication and participation are correlated to employee satisfaction. Others found specifically that servant leadership, with its focus is primarily on relationships rather than outcomes, makes employees feel valued and positively impacts job satisfaction (Stone et al., 2003)

Conclusion

In summary, higher education as an industry is changing and needs to evolve in order to fit the needs of students as customers, consumers (organizations and their end users) as customers, and community stakeholders. It becomes evident that progress in how higher education is led is warranted, and previous work has shown that active, relationship-based leadership styles can be a path forward despite reluctance to and fear of the unknown. Servant leadership has emerged as a potential avenue to carry through those winds of change, and so research is necessitated in order to understand how effective servant leadership practices have been in instances where they have been practiced already. It is in this way that it can be understood if universalizing or at least increasing this type of leadership's prevalence is recommended.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to introduce and detail the methodology used in this quantitative study in an effort to understand if leadership style affects job satisfaction at higher education institutions in Pennsylvania. This chapter discusses the design of the research, sampling, instrumentation used, procedures, and data analysis.

Research Design

This quantitative study using a survey examined the relationship between leadership style and job satisfaction among higher education professionals in two Pennsylvania institutions across four campuses. Creswell (2018) notes that quantitative research is indicated when a researcher is attempting to understand relationships by seeking answers directly from a group of individuals (Creswell, 2018). This study was cross-sectional, taking a single snapshot of the data at one point in time from one survey.

Sample

The target population of this study was faculty and staff employees at two higher education institutions across four distinct campuses in Pennsylvania. A census of approximately 3000 faculty and staff were invited to participate.

Inclusion Criteria

The criteria for inclusion were that individuals are employed at one of the two institutions and work primarily in one of the following areas: academic departments, athletics, or student affairs departments. Additionally, respondents must have been employed at their respective institution for a minimum of one month.

Exclusion Criteria

This study excluded employees in IT, maintenance, and policing departments. Individuals without computer or smartphone access will also be excluded given the medium of survey distribution.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through university email services distributed by the researcher and/or the respective institutions. Informed consent was obtained via a form that accompanied the survey (See Appendix A). The researcher was not employed either institution from which the sample was drawn, but was employed by an organization that provides services for one of the institutions.

Instrumentation

Two instruments and a demographic questionnaire were used in this study: the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). The SLQ was developed by Liden et al. (2008) and is a 28-item scale that measures seven major dimensions of servant leadership: conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community (See Appendix B). All dimensions use a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The survey is scored across the seven distinct dimensions mentioned above. Total scores range 28 to 196, with higher scores indicating stronger practice of servant leadership as a whole. Dimensional scores range from an individual low score of 4 to a high score of 28. Higher scores in each of the dimensions translate to greater implementation of the traits or practices of that particular dimension. Liden et al. (2015) used exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, established the validity of the multiple dimensions of this scale.

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, short form (MSQ) was developed by the University of Minnesota (1977). The MSQ goes beyond general satisfaction assessment by asking questions about supervisory competence, extent of autonomy, and ethical concerns that make it ideal for this study and in assessing leadership differences (See Appendix C). The MSQ operates on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from very dissatisfied and very satisfied and contains 20 items. There are three survey dimensions: intrinsic, extrinsic, and general satisfaction. The intrinsic scale contains 12 items with raw scores ranging from 12-60. The extrinsic scale contains 6 items for a raw score range from 6-30. The general satisfaction scale contains all items from the intrinsic and extrinsic scales with two additional items for a total of 20. Raw scores from this scale range from 20-100. The higher the score in each dimension, the more satisfied the respondent is within that particular dimension of job satisfaction. Much like the dimensional scores, higher scores on this instrument overall translate to higher levels of job satisfaction in totality. Scores can either be interpreted as percentiles in reference to a group norm or as raw scores depending on application and context; raw scores are used in this survey. Validity for the MSQ comes from construct validation studies with job satisfaction as the dependent variable and scale scores were independent variables. Study results showed that MSQ scales did indeed predict job satisfaction (Weiss et al 1967). Reliability was demonstrated by high median reliability of scales: .86 for intrinsic satisfaction, .80 for extrinsic satisfaction, and .90 for general satisfaction.

The demographic survey that accompanied the survey instruments contains the following elements: age, gender identity, highest level of education attained, employment status, work location, and work department type (See Appendix D).

Procedure

IRB/facility consent was first obtained from Marywood University and then site authorization was obtained for Commonwealth University IRB, which includes Bloomsburg, Lock Haven, and Mansfield campus locations. The survey, which included an informed consent form (See Appendix A), demographic questionnaire (See Appendix B), Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) (See Appendix C) , and Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (See Appendix D) was distributed via University email servers. The survey itself with the previously mentioned components was hosted on Qualtrics. The survey was sent again in the same manner and medium one week after initial distribution in order to gather as many responses as possible. Response data was then downloaded from the host site. Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 29.

Data Analysis

An alpha level of .05 was used to assess significant relationships and differences. Subproblem one, what is the servant leadership score of supervisors in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania, was analyzed using a frequency distribution and descriptive statistics.

Subproblem two, what is the employees' overall satisfaction with their job in a higher education institution in Pennsylvania, also utilized a frequency distribution and descriptive statistics for analysis.

Subproblem three, what is the relationship between leadership style of supervisors and employee job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania, was analyzed through a Pearson correlation.

Supplemental Analysis

Based on the information gathered through the demographic questionnaire, it was beneficial to analyze cross sections of responses to understand which of those demographics may have had an impact on the variables under examination here. Supplemental analysis of age, gender, education level, department, and years in higher education were performed and analyzed for significance.

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

This section contains the results of a quantitative study undertaken to answer the research question: What is the relationship between leadership style of supervisors and employee job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania? This chapter includes demographics of the sample that was collected via a secure online survey, as well as the results of each step in the analytic process. Tables and charts are used where appropriate to augment the results presented and to give larger context to the results.

The survey instrument returned 183 responses initially. Two cases were eliminated based on a response declining willingness to move forward with the survey (though the response was still recorded). Then, 28 cases were eliminated based on incomplete responses to required survey questions; these were responses that were abandoned mid-survey and therefore unusable in this analysis. No cases were eliminated for lack of complete demographic information as those questions were not required responses. This data cleaning resulted in 153 cases for analysis.

Demographic Information

Figure 3 lists the demographic information of participants (See below). The mean age of participants was 48.21 ($sd = 10.69$), while the median was 50 (range= 22-77). With regards to gender, 62% of respondents were female, with 35% being male, and 3% fell into other or non-response categories. Academic department staff and administrative staff account for a collective 68% of the respondents, compared to a faculty percentage of 31%. The vast majority of respondents were full time employees (95%), and were located on-site (87%).

The majority of respondents hold a graduate degree (64%). The mean number of years of employment in Higher Education was 14.61 ($sd = 9.93$, median = 14) with a range of less than 12 months to 38 years.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	52	35%
Female	92	62%
All Other	5	3%
Employment		
Full-Time	142	95%
Part-Time	7	5%
Work Location		
On-Site	129	87%
Remote	19	13%
Work Department		
Faculty	45	31%
Staff	39	27%
Admin	59	41%
Education		
HS/Assoc	15	10%
Bachelors	39	26%
Masters	46	31%
Doctoral	49	33%

Figure 3: Demographic Information of Participants

Subproblem 1

Subproblem one, what is the servant leadership score of supervisors in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania, was analyzed using a frequency distribution and other descriptive statistics. Participants on the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) returned a mean score of 140.13 ($sd = 41.27$), while the median score was 150 (range = 28 - 196).

The highest percentages of positive responses (strongly agree, agree, somewhat agree) on the SLQ were: “Holds high ethical standards” (82%), “High understanding of organization and its goals” (81%), “Cares about others’ well-being” (80%), “Thinks through complex problems” (80%), and “Takes time to talk on a personal level” (80%).

The highest percentages of negative responses (strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat disagree) on the same scale were: “Doesn’t micromanage decisions” (35%), “Cares about others’ success more than their own” (31%), “Puts others’ interests first” (29%), “Wants to know about others’ career goals” (28%), and “Sacrifices own needs for others’ interests” (27%). See Figure 4 below.

Variable	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Somewhat Disagree		Undecided		Somewhat Agree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
Holds high ethical standards	13	8%	2	1%	2	1%	11	7%	24	16%	39	25%	62	41%
High understanding of org & goals	8	5%	7	5%	5	3%	9	6%	20	13%	40	26%	64	42%
Cares about others' well-being	8	5%	6	4%	6	4%	10	7%	23	15%	32	21%	68	44%
Thinks through complex problems	10	7%	4	3%	5	3%	11	7%	21	14%	39	25%	63	41%
Takes time to talk on personal level	9	6%	8	5%	8	5%	6	4%	25	16%	45	29%	52	34%
Delegates responsibility	11	7%	8	5%	6	4%	7	5%	27	18%	55	36%	39	25%
Encourages autonomy	5	3%	8	5%	11	7%	9	6%	32	21%	56	37%	32	21%
Gives others freedom to handle difficult situations	10	7%	8	5%	10	7%	10	7%	30	20%	53	35%	32	21%
Always honest	12	8%	11	7%	6	4%	11	7%	16	10%	48	31%	49	32%
Wouldn't compromise ethics for success	11	7%	5	3%	9	6%	17	11%	16	10%	45	29%	50	33%
Provides development opportunities	12	8%	7	5%	5	3%	19	12%	27	18%	55	36%	28	18%
Makes others' jobs easier	14	9%	8	5%	10	7%	12	8%	34	22%	40	26%	35	23%
Emphasizes giving back to community	8	5%	9	6%	10	7%	18	12%	35	23%	43	28%	30	20%
Can tell if something is wrong	12	8%	12	8%	12	8%	10	7%	31	20%	47	31%	29	19%
Can solve problems with creativity	11	7%	10	7%	13	8%	13	8%	34	22%	43	28%	29	19%
Values honesty above profits	12	8%	7	5%	9	6%	22	14%	15	10%	43	28%	45	29%
Seek help for personal problems	13	8%	19	12%	8	5%	11	7%	21	14%	47	31%	34	22%

Interested in helping people in community	9	6%	8	5%	8	5%	30	20%	25	16%	41	27%	32	21%
Prioritizes others' career development	13	8%	12	8%	11	7%	21	14%	24	16%	36	24%	36	24%
Makes sure others reach career goals	15	10%	7	5%	10	7%	25	16%	22	14%	43	28%	31	20%
Involved in community activities	6	4%	11	7%	8	5%	38	25%	19	12%	45	29%	26	17%
Sacrifices own interests for others' needs	15	10%	10	7%	16	10%	23	15%	33	22%	28	18%	28	18%
Wants to know about career goals	17	11%	14	9%	12	8%	23	15%	32	21%	36	24%	19	12%
Puts others' interest first	14	9%	9	6%	21	14%	26	17%	22	14%	36	24%	25	16%
Doesn't micromanage decisions	14	9%	14	9%	26	17%	16	10%	40	26%	31	20%	12	8%
Can recognize if others are feeling down	10	7%	11	7%	12	8%	37	24%	25	16%	40	26%	18	12%
Cares about others' success more	20	13%	12	8%	15	10%	25	16%	22	14%	38	25%	21	14%
Encourages volunteerism	13	8%	14	9%	12	8%	39	25%	27	18%	34	22%	14	9%

Figure 4: Servant Leadership Questionnaire Response Frequencies

Subproblem 2

Subproblem 2, what is the employees' overall satisfaction with their job in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania, was analyzed using a frequency distribution and other descriptive statistics. Participants on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) returned a mean score of 74.67 ($sd = 14.75$) while the median score was 77 (range = 21 – 100).

The highest positive responses (very satisfied, satisfied) by percentage for employee job satisfaction questions were: “Having the chance to work alone” (89%) “Having the chance to do things for others” (89%), “Able to keep busy regularly” (87%), and “Job provides steady employment” (85%).

The highest negative responses (very dissatisfied, dissatisfied) were: “The way the organization puts policies into action” (50%), “Employee pay for amount of work done” (36%), and “Advancement opportunity availability” (35%). See Figure 5 below.

Variable	Very Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Neither		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
Chance to do things for others	2	1%	2	1%	12	8%	57	38%	77	51%
Chance to work alone	1	1%	3	2%	12	8%	72	48%	62	41%
Able to keep busy	5	3%	4	3%	10	7%	72	48%	59	39%
Job provides steady employment	2	1%	5	3%	15	10%	52	35%	76	51%
Chance to make use of abilities	8	5%	10	7%	7	5%	63	42%	62	41%
Able to do varied work	5	3%	10	7%	11	7%	70	47%	54	36%
Able to do things that don't go against conscience	6	4%	11	7%	12	8%	67	45%	54	36%
Chance to try own methods	9	6%	7	5%	13	9%	73	49%	48	32%
Freedom to use own judgement	9	6%	10	7%	13	9%	73	49%	45	30%
Feeling of accomplishment	6	4%	14	9%	14	9%	72	48%	44	29%
Supervisor decision making competence	19	13%	12	8%	15	10%	63	42%	41	27%
Coworker coexistence	13	9%	18	12%	18	12%	61	41%	40	27%
Working conditions	15	10%	19	13%	16	11%	68	45%	32	21%
Chance to be somebody in community	7	5%	10	7%	36	24%	64	43%	33	22%
How boss handles workers	17	11%	20	13%	18	12%	52	35%	43	29%
Praise for job well done	13	9%	21	14%	28	19%	57	38%	31	21%
Pay for amount of work done	23	15%	31	21%	13	9%	65	43%	18	12%
Advancement opportunities	25	17%	28	19%	41	27%	42	28%	14	9%
Chance to tell others what to do	5	3%	3	2%	92	61%	34	23%	16	11%

The way org puts policies into action	34	23%	41	27%	30	20%	37	25%	8	5%
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Figure 5: Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire Response Frequencies

Subproblem 3

Subproblem 3, what is the relationship between leadership style of supervisors and employee job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania was analyzed using a Pearson correlation. There was a strong, positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .829$, ($p < .001$). The coefficient of determination was high ($r^2 = .687$). As leadership score increased, job satisfaction increased as well.

Thus, the null hypothesis, there is no significant relationship between servant leadership style and employee job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania, was rejected.

Supplemental Analysis

Pearson correlations were calculated in order to assess the relationship between age and SLQ and MSQ scores respectively. For SLQ, there was no significant correlation with age: $r = -.082$, $p = .353$. For MSQ, there was also no significant correlation with age: $r = .004$, $p = .960$.

Pearson correlations were also calculated to assess the relationship between years in Higher Education and SLQ and MSQ scores respectively. For SLQ, there was no significant correlation with years in Higher Education: $r = -.068$, $p = .422$. For MSQ, there was no significant correlation with years in Higher Education: $r = -.007$, $p = .936$.

Independent-samples t tests were computed comparing the means of SLQ and MSQ scores by gender. For SLQ scores, no significant difference was found between the means of the two groups ($t(142) = -.652$, $p = .516$). The mean score of males ($M = 138.48$, $sd = 40.884$) was

not significant different from that of females ($M = 142.95$, $sd = 38.695$). For MSQ scores, no significant difference was found between the means of the two groups ($t(142) = -.039$, $p = .969$). The mean score of males ($M = 75.25$, $sd = 13.088$) was not significant different from that of females ($M = 75.34$, $sd = 14.917$).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted comparing the SLQ score of participants who were members of distinct work departments (Faculty, Staff, Admin). No significant difference was found among the departments ($F(2, 140) = 1.225$, $p > .297$). Another one-way ANOVA was conducted comparing the MSQ score of participants who were members of distinct departments (Faculty, Staff, Admin). No significant difference was found among the departments ($F(2, 140) = 1.205$, $p > .303$).

A one-way ANOVA was conducted comparing the SLQ score of participants who held differing highest levels of education (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral). No significant difference was found among the departments ($F(2, 131) = 1.075$, $p > .344$). Another one-way ANOVA was conducted comparing the MSQ score of participants who held differing highest levels of education. No significant difference was found among the departments ($F(2, 131) = .762$, $p > .469$).

Independent-samples t tests were computed comparing the means of SLQ and MSQ scores by work location (On-Site, Remote). For SLQ scores, no significant difference was found between the means of the two groups ($t(146) = -.603$, $p = .547$). The mean score of on-site employees ($M = 140.27$, $sd = 41.029$) was not significant different from that of remote employees ($M = 146.26$, $sd = 35.844$). For MSQ scores, no significant difference was found between the means of the two groups ($t(146) = -.864$, $p = .389$). The mean score of on-site

employees ($M = 74.45$, $sd = 15.271$) was not significant different from that of remote employees ($M = 77.58$, $sd = 10.139$).

Chapter Five

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to test how the theory of servant leadership relates to job satisfaction in higher education by examining employee satisfaction by leadership characteristics in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania. This chapter includes discussion of the findings of the study, implications of the study for higher education leadership in Pennsylvania, limitations that may be applicable as a result of the parameters of the study, and finally recommendations with respect to future research into leadership and job satisfaction in higher education.

Discussion

Scores on the SLQ ranged throughout the entire scale from lowest possible score of 28 to highest of 196. The mean score of 140.13 (71st percentile) can be attributed to, overall, nearly three quarters of individual supervisors practicing some servant leadership. However, the wide

range of scores would seem to indicate a fair amount of variability in leadership being practiced. This makes practical and logical sense in an industry that by its very nature attracts a wide swath of individuals from disparate previous careers and experiences. Some of the highest concentrations of positive responses for this sample were related to ethical behavior and problem-solving ability. Considering the skills necessary to function in an academic environment, this is no surprise. Understanding the organizations goals seems quite straightforward where universities are concerned.

The other two highest positive response items were actually at odds with other related items that scored very high in negative response. Caring for others' well-being and taking time to talk on a personal level scored quite high; however, caring about others' success more than their own, putting others' interest first, caring for others' goals, and sacrificing needs for others all were among the highest concentration of negative responses. This would all suggest that there exists a high degree of variability between individual supervisors when it comes to overtly caring for others in their leadership.

A similar story can be seen with the MSQ scores that ranged from 21 (1 point above the lowest possible score) to a perfect hundred with the median falling at 77 (77th percentile), close to the same percentile of possible SLQ scores. The higher concentration of positive responses in the MSQ centered around autonomy of work. This is very much in line with the findings of Diaz et al. in their 2024 study that found that autonomy and shared decision-making lead to higher participation levels in decision-making and positive working environment. Having the chance to do something for others also scored high, which tracks with the nature of most positions in higher education; this is, in fact, a service industry. Also rated highly is steady employment, which is again straightforward and unremarkable.

In terms of the highest concentrations of negative responses, most were relatively normal workplace concerns that aren't specific to higher education, such as pay for amount of work done, advancement opportunity, and putting policy into action. None of these would seem to suggest the need for further investigation.

This study found that there is indeed a significant relationship between servant leadership and employee job satisfaction. As respondents indicated that more servant leadership practices were exercised, their job satisfaction score increased commensurately. This finding is similar to what Dalati (2016) observed in that servant leadership was correlated to more positive and supportive work environments as well as what Kasalak (2022) showed: active leadership styles (such as servant leadership) lead to higher levels of job satisfaction.

Previous findings such as those mentioned in Chapter 2 by Kezar (2023) and Bosetti & Heffernan (2021) have indicated that the mechanisms that propel individuals into leadership can often be flawed in terms of promotion by virtue of previous performance. This relatively often occurs in higher education with faculty being placed in higher administrative positions. This being the case, one might expect to see conflicted notions of leadership and its correlation to job satisfaction, but that was not present in this study.

Hughey (2003) also found that higher education institutions have viewed themselves as exceptions to the rule of evolution including leadership, but here we see a high concentration of servant leadership being practiced as it has been more and more in other industries. This is, in fact, more in line with findings of surveys such as Eddy's 2006 study that observed individuals in higher education desiring an expansion of mindset and practice of leadership. Jenkins (2021) found through qualitative interviews that higher education professionals view active forms of

leadership, such as servant leadership, as the way forward. Previous findings like this are supported by the findings of this study.

Critically, this survey examined servant leadership actions that were practiced by managers as observed by those that they lead. This gives voice to leadership through its reception rather than its intention. This is to say that, if one is to ask the individual in a leadership role whether or not they practice servant leadership, that question is answered through intention and the eyes of the practitioner, rather than its practical effect on those who are being led. This sort of analysis holds value to be sure; however, in this case, when job satisfaction is being examined simultaneously, the methodology here is more consistent.

The findings here are useful to higher education as an industry and field during a time where universities and colleges are undergoing stark challenges and questions about their place and value in the working world. Industries and institutions that come under this level of inquiry need to ask difficult questions of themselves. Some of those reflections must include: 1) who leads us, and 2) how do they lead us? Findings such as these help strengthen an argument that those that lead in higher education would do well to first serve those that are under their leadership care. University presidents, for example, should consider practicing this within their cabinets, which are comprised of VP heads of divisions and deans of colleges. This style of leadership, proven to be correlated to happier employees, can trickle down based on university structure.

The current study is also quite valuable in the sense that the above results are true across the demographic board. Supplemental analysis results elucidated no significant correlations, relationships, or difference in mean scores between demographic differences such as age, gender,

work department type, location, years in the industry, and scores in servant leadership practice or job satisfaction.

The lack of a significant correlation between age and servant leadership practices observed and/or job satisfaction is interesting in the sense that one might expect generational differences to be a delineator in what creates job satisfaction or how they perceive their leaders. It could also be assumed that younger individuals closer to their own education might be more observant of leadership trends and theories and, therefore, might observe servant leadership practices more accurately, but that was not observed. Previous research has indicated that those working for 20+ years in higher education (and, therefore, older) are more likely to practice transactional or authoritarian leadership and not servant leadership, with the inverse being true for those with less than 20 years of experience (Antonopolou, 2021). Findings here do not agree with that correlation. Gender having a significant correlation to either variable was not something noted in previous literature as any sort of demarcation for either leadership practice observation or job satisfaction, so its lack of significant relationship to either isn't specifically noteworthy here.

Most individuals were, in fact, onsite employees; the lack of relationship with either leadership or job satisfaction isn't shocking. What might be considered most interesting here is the lack of significant correlation between work department type and the other variables. The type of work performed by faculty versus staff and administration is wildly different, and so one could assume that their interpretations of leadership and perhaps job satisfaction would vary in at least some ways, but nothing even approaching significance was noted here. These details have not been examined through previous research, and further in-depth examination tailored to

faculty and staff respectively along the lines of the phenomena studies here would be worth conducting.

Based on these results, there is no single variable or small collection of variables that one could point to being largely responsible for the significant relationship between leadership and job satisfaction. The collected supplemental data is multifaceted and contains both basic information one might expect to influence such a correlation, and industry specific information. These results would support the conclusion that the impact of servant leadership on job satisfaction is true/applicable regardless of other demographics. This is to say that it doesn't matter how old, which gender, or department one works in, the above relationship exists and isn't influenced by anything additional in a significant way.

This study is useful to the overall pool of research surrounding servant leadership in the sense that it examines the interactions of servant leadership practices and job satisfaction. According to a systematic review of servant leadership literature by Eva et al (2019), over 200 studies have been run since 1998, yet upon review of mediating variables that were examined with servant leadership, job satisfaction is not often covered. The same study also noted that there has been a comparatively very low number of servant leadership studies run in the education sphere in contrast to business (200+ v. 10).

While there may not be an overwhelming amount of research regarding servant leadership in higher education (or education overall), it certainly has been examined in other contexts that are relevant here. From a theoretical perspective, Mayer et al (2008) have found support for modeling that links servant leadership to job satisfaction. In a 2010 study in nursing/healthcare, Jenkins & Stewart found servant leadership practices and to have a strong positive correlation on job satisfaction. Another study focused in the national park service also

found that servant leadership significantly influenced job satisfaction (Chung et al, 2010). These previous findings across disciplines are very much in agreement with the findings in this study.

Implications

The implications here for the employees of higher education begin with a potential realization that though much of the work they do on a daily basis is very different, they are similarly affected by leadership. Both types of employees need leadership that has adapted to contemporary circumstances and is willing to meet them where they are, and many of their concerns with what makes them happy at work are, in fact, the same, even if they are expressed differently on a practical level. A generally advisable first step is for supervisors/managers to have a conversation with those that they lead around these topics, both in team settings and one-on-one to solicit honest feedback. Leaders need to ask questions with the goal of becoming aware of how their leadership is being perceived. It isn't enough to know generally that there exists a relationship between servant leadership practices and job satisfaction; individual leaders need to begin with that knowledge and meet their team members where they are to be able to serve their needs. Essentially, the results found here should be a starting point, not an end point.

What this may mean for students as both customer and product of the institution is that they should take notice in how their institution operates, from those that work in offices such as admissions and registrar, to their own academic departments. How content their professors, the people that help them schedule classes, or staffers in operational departments are all an indication of how they are led, which in turn has an impact on the quality of their education. Students should empower themselves to ask questions above and beyond the classroom to understand how their institution is run. Attending college is an opportunity to learn far more than simply in the classroom, and assessing leadership and its impact on those that they interact with

at their university is one avenue for that. It also isn't a purely academic or theoretical exercise: the happiness of professors and administrators has a direct impact on students' education.

Limitations

It is, of course, important to discuss limitations based on the way this study was designed and executed. These results are specifically reflective of only four higher education campuses in Pennsylvania. While it may be true that the same relationship between servant leadership practices and job satisfaction holds true in other locations or more broadly (regionally and nationally), this study cannot make that claim unilaterally.

Further, as previously discussed, the survey relied on individuals' interpretations of their direct leaders. The results cannot speak what influenced their responses, such as a bias for or against their leader for personal rather than professional reasons, fear of speaking out against their manager even in a setting with limited personally identifiable information, or even dissatisfaction with their employment for personal reasons not directly related to their professional lives.

On a similar note, being that this study examined observed leadership practices by employees, it does not provide demographic information about the leaders themselves. Conclusions cannot be drawn here specifically about which leaders practice or does not practice servant leadership, and in turn how that strategically impacts key departments. More nuanced work must be done there, specifically with respect to design of studies that may answer those questions while putting no one in any sort of jeopardy.

Lastly, this survey was a single point in time assessment of both leadership and job satisfaction. At any point in time, an individual can be more positive or negative than they normally are about their leaders and how happy they are at work. This study cannot identify

variation over time or whether someone was feeling one extreme or the other when they undertook the survey here.

Future Research

The results of this study would naturally recommend additional research. First, it is possible that a similarly-modeled study with a somewhat more robust demographic collection and a broader range of higher education institutions in Pennsylvania would aid in further ratifying these results or, at the very least, adding to the conversation about servant leadership and job satisfaction in Pennsylvania higher education.

Second, it could be beneficial to run a companion or follow-up study to this one assessing servant leadership through the lens of those who lead at these institutions and comparing results found here. This could add a further dimension of assessing how closely intended practices meet real-world results and the reception of those intentions. That study could also examine how satisfied those leaders believe their employees. Examining how narrow or wide those gaps are would be extremely beneficial in further honing critical areas of leadership and employee satisfaction. This is supported by the findings of Chung et al (2010) who observed significant differences in how leadership was perceived by those in managerial positions and those not in such roles, which impacted job satisfaction as well.

Further, additional research is recommended to assess specific categories of leaders that are, in fact, practicing servant leadership or other types of leadership in higher education institutions. This would help further assess the full picture of how these phenomena exist and interact with job satisfaction in higher education. Research at other types of institutions within Pennsylvania and other states would additionally be useful for comparative purposes.

Given the overall context of this study and the previous literature, continued examination of servant leadership in higher education is needed. The meta-analysis by Eva et al (2019) supports this with evidence that the vast majority of servant leadership examination has been done in business.

Conclusion

This study found that servant leadership practices and characteristics have a positive relationship with and effect on job satisfaction in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania. This indicates that while individuals at these institutions come from different backgrounds and collective experiences, leadership is a key part of their happiness at work regardless. While the significance of this relationship is clearly definitive, this is indeed not the last word on this subject. While these findings are certainly encouraging, there is more work to be done to understand these phenomena and the multiple constituencies of people that they affect so that higher education does not throw away its shot to continue being a vital pillar of our society.

Appendix A

Informed Consent

Servant Leadership in Higher Education Institutions in Pennsylvania

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Invitation for a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study about servant leadership and job satisfaction. You were chosen because you are employed at an institution under study and work primarily in one of the following areas: academic departments, athletics, or student affairs departments. Please read this form. Ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose – About the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study is to test how the theory of servant leadership relates leadership style to job satisfaction in higher education by examining employee satisfaction by leadership characteristics in higher education institutions in Pennsylvania.

Procedures - What You Will Do

You will complete an online survey questionnaire that includes questions about the leadership style of your supervisor(s) and your job satisfaction. No identifying questions will be asked relative to you or your supervisor. There will, however, be a demographic questionnaire for the purposes of assessing trends related to age, gender, work department type, time employed in higher education, and level of education attained. Total time commitment expected is 30 minutes or less.

Risks and Benefits

The risks are no greater than the risks in daily life or activities.

A benefit may be that survey findings may contribute to the overall current literature on leadership and job satisfaction in higher education in Pennsylvania.

Payment or Other Rewards

You will not receive a payment or reward.

Confidentiality

The records of this study will be kept private. Information used in any written or presented report will not make it possible to identify you. No web-based action is perfectly secure. However, reasonable efforts will be made to protect your transmission from third-party access. Only the principal investigator and research advisor will have access to the research records.

Taking Part is Voluntary

Participation is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the investigator[s]. It will not affect your relationship with your University. You may withdraw at any time until you submit your answers. There will be no penalty. To withdraw, please exit the survey or close your web browser. Your information will be not be submitted or collected if you withdraw before completing the online survey.

Contacts and Questions

If you have questions about this study at any time, contact the principal investigator or the advisor. Their contact information appears at the top of this form.

If you have questions related to the rights of research participants or research-related injuries (where applicable), please contact the Institutional Review Board at (570) 961-4782

or irbhelp@marywood.edu.

You may save or print a copy of this form for your records.

Statement of Consent

By proceeding to the survey:

- You understand what the study involves.
- You have asked questions if you had them.
- You agree to participate in the study.

Appendix B

Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ)

Key: 1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree somewhat 3 = Disagree 4 = Undecided

5 = Agree somewhat 6 = Agree 7 = Strongly agree

1. Others would seek help from him/her if they had a personal problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. He/She emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. He/She can tell if something work related is going wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. He/She gives others the responsibility to make important decisions about their own jobs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. He/She makes others' career development a priority.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. He/She cares more about others' success than his/her own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. He/She holds high ethical standards.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. He/She cares about others' personal well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. He/She is always interested in helping people in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. He/She is able to think through complex problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. He/She encourages others to handle important work decisions on their own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. He/She is interested in making sure others reach their career goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. He/She puts others' best interests above his/her own.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. He/She is always honest.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. He/She takes time to talk to others on a personal level.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. He/She is involved in community activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. He/She has a thorough understanding of the organization and its goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

18. He/She gives others the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way they feel is best.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. He/She provides others with work experiences that enables them to develop new skills.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. He/She sacrifices his/her own interests to meet others' needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. He/She would not compromise ethical principles in order to meet success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. He/She can recognize when others are feeling down without asking them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. He/She encourages others to volunteer in the community.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. He/She can solve work problems with new or creative ideas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. If others need to make important decisions at work, they do not need to consult him/her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. He/She wants to know about others' career goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. He/She does what he/she can to make others' jobs easier.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. He/She values honesty more than profits.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix C

minnesota satisfaction questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to give you a chance to tell **how you feel about your present job**, what things you are **satisfied** with and what things you are **not satisfied** with.

On the basis of your answers and those of people like you, we hope to get a better understanding of the things people **like and dislike about their jobs**.

On the next page you will find statements about your **present** job.

- Read each statement carefully.
- Decide **how satisfied you feel about the aspect of your job** described by the statement.

Keeping the statement in mind:

—if you feel that your job gives you **more than you expected**, check the box under **"Very Sat."** (Very Satisfied);

—if you feel that your job gives you **what you expected**, check the box under **"Sat."** (Satisfied);

—if you **cannot make up your mind** whether or not the job gives you what you expected, check the box under **"N"** (Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied);

—if you feel that your job gives you **less than you expected**, check the box under **"Dissat."** (Dissatisfied);

—if you feel that your job gives you **much less than you expected**, check the box under **"Very Dissat."** (Very Dissatisfied).

- Remember: Keep the statement in mind when deciding **how satisfied you feel about that aspect of your job**.
- Do this for **all** statements. Please answer **every** item.

Be frank and honest. Give a true picture of your feelings about your **present job**.

Ask yourself: How **satisfied** am I with this aspect of my job?

Very Sat. means I am very satisfied with this aspect of my job.

Sat. means I am satisfied with this aspect of my job.

N means I can't decide whether I am satisfied or not with this aspect of my job.

Dissat. means I am dissatisfied with this aspect of my job.

Very Dissat. means I am very dissatisfied with this aspect of my job.

On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .

	Very Dissat.	Dissat.	N	Sat.	Very Sat.
1. Being able to keep busy all the time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The chance to work alone on the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The chance to do different things from time to time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. The chance to be "somebody" in the community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The way my boss handles his/her workers	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The way my job provides for steady employment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. The chance to do things for other people	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The chance to tell people what to do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. The way company policies are put into practice	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. My pay and the amount of work I do	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. The chances for advancement on this job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. The freedom to use my own judgment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. The chance to try my own methods of doing the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. The working conditions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. The way my co-workers get along with each other	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. The praise I get for doing a good job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Very Dissat.	Dissat.	N	Sat.	Very Sat.

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Age

Please enter your age.

- Manual Text Entry

2. Gender Identity

Please select the gender option you most comfortably identify with.

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Transgender
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

3. Education

Please select the highest level of education achieved.

- High School/GED/Equivalent
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Doctoral Degree

4. Employment Status

Please select your current employment status. Note: adjunct faculty should select part-time.

- Full-Time
- Part-Time

5. Work Location

Please select your current position classification as it pertains to work location.

- Primarily on-site
- Hybrid
- Remote

6. Work Department

Please select administrative departments only if you are in a department that is not directly academic, including (but not limited to) admissions/enrollment, registrar, financial aid, president's office/cabinet, etc. Individuals in *administrative positions* in academic departments should select "Academic Departments: Staff".

- Academic Departments: Faculty
- Academic Departments: Staff
- Administrative Departments
- Athletics

7. How many years have you worked in higher education, at any institution, full time?

- Manual Text Entry

8. How many years have you worked in higher education, at any institution, part time?

- Manual Text Entry

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