

Investigating the Link Between Essential Servant Leader Behavior and Employee  
Engagement in the Knowledge Economic Era: An Autonomous Motivation  
Critique of Servant Leader Behavior

Submitted to Regent University

School of Business & Leadership

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership

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**INVESTIGATING THE LINK BETWEEN SERVANT LEADER  
BEHAVIOR AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN THE KNOWLEDGE  
ECONOMIC ERA: AN AUTONOMOUS MOTIVATION CRITIQUE OF  
SERVANT LEADER BEHAVIOR**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this quantitative exploratory research was to investigate the influence of essential servant leader behavior on the organizational environment. In the knowledge-based economy, the organizational environment requires members with a reciprocal sharing behavior. Without the sharing of unique talents (i.e., knowledge) among organizational associates, employee skills cannot be recognized and developed, and reduced competency thwarts worker engagement. This study tested the predictive capabilities of essential servant leader behavior (Winston & Fields, 2015) to develop reciprocal expectation and knowledge sharing among coworkers. Hierarchical regression analysis revealed a significant mediating influence for both anticipated reciprocal relationships and knowledge sharing on the relationship between essential servant leadership behavior and worker engagement but failed to reveal any noticeable moderation effect from worker discernment. The results of this research show servant leadership theory offers the prospect of a moral-based leadership model through which multilevel (i.e., individual, group, and organizational) activity is positively influenced. A new research area linking organizational climate to servant leadership behavior emerges through Parris and Peachey's (2013) conceptual support extending servant leadership as a positive influence on the work climate. This study established relationships linking essential servant leader behavior, organizational climate, employee sharing behavior, and worker engagement. Grounded in theory suggesting servant leadership as a leadership style with a moral underlining, this study offers a new way of thinking about follower motivation.

## **Dedication**

Without God and my wife, Kim, this would not be written. I dedicate this to Christ whose grace and adoration persists and sustains even through this process. Also to my wife, Kim, who has strengthened me through encouragement when energy and desire waned, I love you and our conversations.

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## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships between essential servant leadership behavior (SLB), individual knowledge sharing, and employee engagement. For some years, Greenleaf's (2002) conception of servant leadership did not garner much interest until Graham (1991) pointed toward the moral underlining of servant leadership as a different starting point in thinking about follower motivation. Understanding worker motivation and determining the model of leadership most appropriate in guiding individuals, institutions, and enterprises is one of the most daunting challenges facing organizational leaders (De Sousa & Van Dierendonck, 2010). This is an important quest, considering a Gallup (2015) study that concluded merely a third of U.S. employees are motivated toward engagement in their job with the number collapsing to 13% on the global scale (Mann & Harter, 2016).

Organizations of the 21st century are quite different from the production organization of the late 20th century. As operators on a global scale, the 21st-century firm has transitioned to a knowledge-based institution. A transition of the archetype from production to knowledge creates new pathways of study involving the knowledge worker and their task. For instance, without the sharing of unique talents (i.e., knowledge) among organizational associates, employee skills cannot be recognized and developed, employee engagement is thwarted, and reduced competency development threatens organizational competitiveness (Gruber, 1995; Ipe, 2003; E. A. Smith, 2001). The current empirical study investigates lived leadership experience through survey data collected via a sample of a healthcare organization. Through statistical analysis of quantitative data collected through existing validated instruments, this study extends knowledge of servant leadership theory.

This study tests the predictive capabilities of essential servant leader behavior on individual decision making to share knowledge with coworkers and the positive influence expected from this sharing in employee engagement. Servant leadership theory offers the prospect of a moral-based leadership model through which multilevel (i.e., individual, group, and organizational) statistical analysis

identifies the servant leadership attributes (Winston & Fields, 2015) that affect individual decisions (Traüffer, Bekker, Bocârnea, & Winston, 2010) to engage in knowledge sharing (Lin, 2007) and/or work to increase employee engagement (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006).

### **Background of the Problem**

Drucker (1999) pointed out the study of productivity involving the manual worker and production equipment is displaced by the productivity of knowledge workers in the 21st century. While the task of production work is well defined, the tasks accomplished by knowledge workers is self-defined. While research of knowledge creation and development has garnered interest, a gap exists concerning leader influence. This project investigates leader behavior influence on organizational climate and examines the leader–follower relationship.

SLB has seen a resurgence in interest alongside an emerging interest in positive organizational scholarship (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). The conceptual research on servant leadership theory (e.g., Bass, 1985; Reinke, 2004; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004) commonly compares and contrasts servant leadership with transformational leadership. Winston and Fields (2015), however, made an interesting contrast to previous research, suggesting a closer relationship between SLB and transactional leadership. Recently, others (e.g., Patterson, 2003; Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012) have suggested predictor elements of transformational leadership do not apply to servant leadership, and other leadership styles gaining interest (e.g., ethical, spiritual, and charismatic) fail to explain servant behavior (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Deal and Kennedy (2000) pointed out that the era from the mid-1980s until the millennium is one dominated by short-term managerial actions, brought forth by the emergence of the leveraged buyout in the late 1960s. The rise of leveraged buyouts preceded the rise of institutional investing brought on largely, according to Deal and Kennedy, by the rapid growth of individual investments through organizational tax-deferred pension schemes that by 1990 had shifted institutional equity, which tumbled into widespread “highly sensitized management attention on

short-term detail” (p. 54). This was a time of business downsizing, outsourcing, globalization, mergers, and acquisitions—it was a dismal period with executive pay increasing nearly 500% in contrast to a paltry 70% in factory wages. Corporate cultures were bent on cutting costs, which gave rise to such management plans as reengineering that some (e.g., Creech, 1994) have claimed created a spirit-crushing work climate. With worker and public confidence shaken, the *suve qui peut* brought on by the disastrous tendencies of impropriety and lack of moral courage, similar to what Lincoln faced in 1834 (see Stahr, 2012) and again nearly a century later in 1933 when, following the banking collapse, Roosevelt declared a day of national consecration and uttered “the money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization. We may now restore that temple to the ancient truths” (Roll, 2012, p. 33). What Lincoln and Roosevelt turned to was the moral courage of specific leaders.

Desperately seeking success, the firms of the 1990s looked for solutions to competitive challenges through unproductive means treating businesses as if they were merely sectors to be bought or sold as some sort of niche and failing to recognize the collective value of its people (Pfeffer, 1998). By the turn of the century, Bennis (2009) aptly indicated leadership had become valueless, and amidst the backdrop of economic ruin and the downtrodden worker, a reawakening occurred. Cameron et al. (2003) introduced the phenomenon of positive deviance, which shifts the focus of leadership from organizational survival and success toward the means of organizational results. Cameron et al. distinguished the domain of positive organizational scholarship as a “focus on positive processes and states that occur in association with organizational contexts” (p. 5). This paradigm dictum contrasts worker productivity and morale through a lens to examine work as a calling, a broader inclusion of relationships, stakeholders, and community (Cameron et al., 2003). Finally, leadership interests moved along the continuum from personal power, which leaves constituents feeling weak and alienated, to giving power away to foster *their* personal power such that others are strengthened through increased self-determination and development of competence and thus “exceed their own expectations” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 22).

Relationships are important; a detached style leadership will not be successful in the 21st century (George, 2003). Through shared goals, knowledge, and respect carried out through relationships, the coordination of interdependent work is accomplished. The current researcher shifts the investigation of leadership theory and leader behaviors toward organizational climate development and encouragement of individual self-expression through the work environment such that meaning in work motivates knowledge sharing and engagement. The areas studied here are SLB, individual decision to share knowledge, and worker engagement.

### **Leadership, Organizations, and Social Identity**

Servant leadership theory advances from Greenleaf's (2002) notion that leaders work in wondrous ways framed by environmental awareness and perception. Greenleaf suggested the sense of intuition for the unknowable with the ability to see the unforeseeable, which appears highly speculative as an influence on the reciprocal nature of the leadership process. The current research acquiesces servant leader behavior creates an organizational climate through which coworker perception and reciprocal behavior develop, the result of which is the positive influence on individuals' decisions to share knowledge at deeper levels and to become engaged in their work. This study extends the servant leadership theory in testing the influence of a new business ethics, which suggests essential servant leader behavior encourages the autonomy of all potential decision makers and creates a cultural dynamic of institutional engagement (Greenleaf, 2002).

#### Leadership

Leadership plays a significant role to the extent to which organizational members share knowledge (Lam & Lambermont-Ford, 2010; Nonaka, Toyama, & Konno, 2000; Osterloh & Frey, 2000). Knowledge is understood as a strategic resource for sustaining and creating business (Drucker, 1995; Ribi re & Sitar, 2003). Burns (2003) described the process of leadership as the inversion of the leader's self-actualization outward such that the leader leads through being led. According to Burns, the one-sided nature of the typical approach toward followers

by leadership scholars and practitioners is “superficial, fails to alter the relationship, and the balance of power remains unchanged” (p. 183). Empowerment research has shown that the organization’s effectiveness grows through power sharing (Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998), and increased empowerment influences a stronger individual sense of competence and willingness to engage.

In contrast, Menon (2001) suggested it may be speculated the absence of power transfer reduces individual willingness to engage. The leadership literature has referred to effective leadership as being empowering (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) with participative styles of leadership being antecedent to individual effort and organizational commitment. Ultimately, according to Zhu, May, and Avolio (2004), it is the follower’s perception of leader transparency concerning values and morals that lead to behavior. The present research examines the influence of characteristics of servant leader behavior on the organizational climate.

A critical question for leadership research (see Graham, 1991) and practice is how moral-based leadership styles, such as SLB, affect employee engagement. Through the extant literature, there appears to be a connection between leader behaviors and the individual’s decision to engage at greater levels of effort. Conceptual interest in knowledge as an organizational asset (Spender, 1996) and possibly a strategic advantage (Nonaka, Von Krogh, & Voelpel, 2006) is emerging though remains minimally studied. The current study takes a closer look at the apparent relationship between leadership style, individual decision to share knowledge, and engagement.

McCullough, Kilpatrick, Emmons, and Larson (2001) posited a moral emotion argument whereby the experience of gratitude motivates prosocial behavior, sustains moral behavior, and is inhibited from disruptive interpersonal behaviors (see also Emmons, 2003; Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008; Van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Morally, one expects individual conduct to impinge either directly as an obligation or indirectly as the expectation (Goffman, 2005). For example, one may feel it an obligation for an airline pilot to fly an aircraft within a prescribed limitation, according to regulation, and to safely take



off and land the aircraft; on the other hand, it is expected that the passenger pays attention to the emergency preparedness instructions explained prior to flight. Certain organizational research (e.g., McDonald & Makin, 2000) has referred to such phenomena as the psychological contract in linking normative commitment to a sense of moral obligation to stay with an organization driving higher levels of work engagement (Lin, 2007).

According to Lock and Strong (2010), problems arise when actions fail to fit with what has come to be expected. In this regard, morality rests in the consistency of people sustaining the established ways of interacting and holding others responsible for moral acts as a matter of social order. Through prosocial behavior, a leader's actions benefit others more so than him or her (Batson & Powell, 2003). Thus, it follows that prosocial behavior may be inclusive of altruism when the well-being of others is considered first (Brief & Motowidlo, 1986). When perceived by the employee the altruistic behavior of the leader is expected to have a positive influence on individual knowledge sharing.

Interest in the positive dimensions of leader behavior focused on what people need instead of on individual weaknesses emerged in response to deviation of the moral fabric and shortsightedness of organizational leaders (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Hoyt, Price, and Poatsy (2013) indicated moral failures as a matter of role expectation appeals to beliefs held concerning the means (i.e., group goals) toward ends. In short, this points to the leader's social orientation more so than the effects of power to blame for ethical failure. The point considered here is Schein's (2010) argument of the reciprocal nature of unethical leader behavior working as justification for like behavior from workers. Contrast within emerging theory regarding triggers of individual action leads to obscurity concerning follower behavior as a reciprocal response (Dasborough, Ashkanasy, Tee, & Herman, 2009) to the actions of the leader or as a matter of mere social expectation (Hernandez, Montaner, Sese, & Urquizu, 2011). One might expect that through the lens of prosocial theory an organization with a higher level of follower focus (i.e., servant leadership) that employees grow to expect support through resource allocation and

personal development opportunities that develop a sense of obligation to share knowledge on a personal level.

This study examines the effect of particular leadership actions on the integrating nature of the organization through follower behavior. As Sendjaya (2010) suggested, from a set of core values, ideals, or causes stirs the moral courage to be a servant first. The essence of the servant leader's action is to transform others to become their ultimate self; however, the question remains concerning the foci of servant behavior first emerging as a deliberate and recognizable action: How does this seemingly act of followership influence others? This study tests the moral response through follower discernment of exhibited values through leader behavior for expected multiplying effects in anticipated follower relationships and intention to share knowledge.

Follett (1919) suggested that integration creates community through the interweaving of the wishes of the group rather than the will or coercive power of one. Considering that modern leadership consists of two ideas—trust and power (Ciulla, 2010)—it is surmised that a relationship exists between leader moral behavior and empowerment defined as the giving of power to enable individuals to be responsible for their work. The way Manville and Ober (2010) advanced building corporate citizenship through empowerment is centered on moral reciprocity where shared engagement is achieved through the day-to-day integration of individual and community. Each individual has the chance to grow wiser and develop talents through a shared belief system. Economic-based performance measures, such as knowledge sharing, has not yet been linked to positive organizational or moral-based leadership styles such as servant leadership. The current study takes a close examination of the organization and member influence through follower perception of essential servant leader behavior.

Greenleaf (2002) brought forward empowerment as entheos defined as “the power actuating one who is inspired” (p. 118). Greenleaf's view includes servant leadership as a stewardship through which openness and persuasion rather than coercive control operate as a commitment to serve the needs of others and toward the growth of people. In today's complex institution-centered society, power is

sometimes coercive and at other times persuasive by example, thus the thesis develops that the servant leader model contrasts the predetermined path of coercion through leader intuitive insight to empower and engage employees. The overarching goal of the current work is to extend knowledge in the lightly studied application of servant leadership theory. It is believed when the leader's ethos exists in the spirit of service, follower transformation occurs through the reality of moral truth, which as Foucault (1988) pointed out, becomes ethos defined as character guided by moral beliefs and values.

Follower response to servant leader behavior lacks priori (Winston & Fields, 2015). From a parsimonious perspective, the current investigation posits the nature of servant leadership creates an open environment, which enhances communication, thus a greater sharing of knowledge. Through measuring the extent to which behavior is perceived by employees and the subsequent individual decision in positive response and quantifying the level of absorption in job, this research extends knowledge concerning performance outcomes, meeting 21st-century knowledge era management challenges and the reality-shaping nature expected in follower response to higher levels of perceived essential servant leader behavior.

### Organizations

The study of leadership and organizational structure are conjoined. According to Senge (2006), deep within the mental models of managers is the belief they must know the answer to what is causing an organizational problem; thus, they internalize an answer through an air of confidence. Recognizing the inherent fallibility of humankind (Sah & Stiglitz, 1985) and the tendency of position to encourage narcissism in the occupant (Graham, 1991) inspires interest to look through the rhetorical paradox supposed in servant leadership (Andersen, 2009; De Sousa & Van Dierendonck, 2014; Winston & Fields, 2015) and toward a larger ideal of leader-modeled service inspired by the calling to lead.

Giberson, Resick, and Dickson (2005) reasoned organizations achieve homogenization in terms of the personality of its leaders, the decisions they make, and the selecting of their image. In contrast, cultural values in higher-performing or

prosperous organizations influence leaders more so than leaders influencing culture (Yukl, 2010). Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, and Tsai (2004) argued profession manifests in respect to similarity with another individual within the context of social network patterns noting an individual is similar with another in relation to dissimilarity with others. According to Scott (2003), the social structures of the organization exist with rules for governing behavior and expectations. In addition to the rules of behavior and role expectation, Scott pointed out the presence of an organizational “cultural-cognitive” (p. 19) structure concerning beliefs and understandings members share about the nature of their work. Patterns of work behavior emerge revealing rationalized approaches to work, which can be studied through applied research and are important in extending the general knowledge of the collective nature of organizations.

Leadership, described by Brass and Krackhardt (1999) as an influence process, can be described as a network phenomenon that along with leader reputation works to influence the performance of an organization and its subunits or departments. Tsai (2002) argued while organizational knowledge sharing occurred through the strength of informal lateral relations, a hierarchical structure is required. By contrast, Mehra, Dixon, Brass, and Robertson (2006) pointed out it is the density of the social network that influences behavior; they found only partial support that informal relationships positively relate to performance, yet centrality in the hierarchy within the network of supervisors had no influence on performance. The influence of follower-focused moral based leadership behavior on lateral relationships has not been studied. Developing from Mehra et al., the thesis of the current study builds upon a framework that servant leadership positively influences leader development through reciprocal relations and commonality in behavior shown through knowledge sharing across unit lines. It is expected that as shared follower perception of servant leader behavior by supervisors increases, worker sharing of knowledge and organizational engagement increases.

March and Olsen (1983) suggested organizational customs change and emerge from social movements through restructuring into relationally complex social structures formed through political ideology conflict. This is a complex

interactive social process through which human action within social contexts form meaning. From a social network, perspective organizational study holds theoretical significance (Scott, 2003). Krackhardt and Hanson (1993) suggested the formal structures of the organization are merely the “skeleton of a company” (p. 104) with the nervous system consisting of the informal relationships driving the collective thoughts and actions of the organization. In still another perspective, Shaw (2002) suggested the organization with the manager outside the organizational structure with the autonomous individual as the dominant voice through which autonomous networks emerge as complex adaptive systems. Mehra et al. (2006) showed no correlation between external networks and internal social networks, which suggests that perhaps employees adapt to organizational cultures once they accept employment. If this is so, the current study suggests that the level of shared interorganizational collaboration exhibited through sharing knowledge significantly influences employee engagement.

Brass (1984) argued that dominant coalitions exceed organizational influence through workflow requirements between organizational subunits. This contrasts Maturana and Varela’s (1987) suggestion that from a biological perspective love as the foundation of all social phenomena. Thus, an alternative view is that without love we live in indifference, and in the indifference of love social phenomena relationship cannot exist. Therefore, it is inferred that follower discernment of leader servant behavior may influence anticipated reciprocal support and openness to intentional knowledge sharing.

Denison, Hooijberg, and Quinn (1995) contended, “Effective leaders are those who have the cognitive and behavioral capacity to recognize and react to paradox, contradiction, and complexity in their environments” (p. 525). In contrast, Graham (1991) suggested self-accountability and a responsibility to encourage the intellectual and moral development of others “diffuse the apparent paradox of servant leadership; it is a real phenomenon” (p. 117). Greenleaf (2002) pointed out that servants must be willing to study, experience, and hypothesize, always leaving doubt to be looked into, and it all begins with individual initiative—in other words,

the very essence of leadership is the world “propelled by the thoughts, attitudes, and action of individual beings” (p. 28).

If Maturana and Varela (1987) are correct, leadership is not a behavioral response to follower behavior, rather the leader needs to be more than an inspiration. The leader of Greenleaf’s (2002) servant leadership thesis is shaped from a willingness to use insight and through love forge forward, leading others with an openness to inspiration. The servant leader initiates action with an idea and structure and the willingness to accept the risk of failure with the chance of success in creating community. It is expected that when followers perceive a greater level of essential servant leader behavior, relational power increases and is exhibited through knowledge-sharing behavior. The question approached in the current investigation concerns the individual openness to (i.e., decision to accept) leader inspiration.

### *Social Identity*

According to Braye (2002), the servant leadership concept consists of self, relationship, and tasks. Braye argued leadership starts with self. Foucault (1988) argued a philosophy of self not obtained through the renunciation of reality but rather through the Stoicism tradition of acquisition and acclimatization of truth. Kierkegaard regarded self as spirit described as a synthesis of the infinite and finite with an existence at the variance of his ideal nature and its opposite (Bretall, 1946). If this is so and the nature of self is spirit and reality are the achievement and adaptation of truth, then the search for individual truth involves lived experiences, which, includes organizational acculturation through prolonged social contact. This raises the argument that an egalitarian and encouraging spirit emerges through the moral framework of the leader’s truth. Graham’s (1991) conceptual thesis that the paradox of servant leaders through follower focus for the good of fulfilling follower needs tends to be transmissible.

Starting with E. A. Smith’s (2001) dialogical characteristics of Argyris’ (1982) model of orientation and practice for double-loop learning, the current study looks at the way people jointly construct maps that manifest as organizational knowledge-based memory. As E. A. Smith posited, individual members engage in

attempting to learn the organization and in knowing themselves within the context of the organization. This is to say that organizing consists of a reflexive nature through which individual knowledge is the subject of inquisitive inquiry.

Bakker (2011) posited that fully connected employees are engaged in their work. Engagement is related to, yet is beyond, the concept of mere job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior (Markos & Sridevi, 2010); it involves self-efficacy (Consiglio, Borgogni, Di Tecco, & Schaufeli, 2016), perceptions of the social work environment (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009), and is a more comprehensive depiction of self in work roles (Rich, Lepine, & Crawford, 2010). Johns (2006) defined context as “situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and meaning of organizational behavior as well as functional relationships between variables” (p. 386) and pointed to a gap in organizational research concerning the role of context in the individual decision making toward sharing implicit knowledge.

The current research intends to fill the gap through investigating the influence of essential servant leader behavior through the perspective of the follower. Contrasting Mowday and Sutton’s (1993) characterization of organizational context as stimuli and phenomena that surround the environment external to the individual, Johns (2006) argued context may have subtle or profound effects on results given the disposition to serve as an effect to interact with personal variables. This work’s interest lies in the leader behavior influence as perceived by the follower’s and member’s sense making of the organizational environment and the social context effect on employee work behavior (Winston & Fields, 2015) or the propensity for the individual decision to share tacit knowledge across the organization.

### **Servant Leader Behavior, Knowledge Sharing, and Engagement**

According to Thompson (2004), leadership in the context of social power is “fundamentally a moral endeavor” (p. 28) with the employee as a seller of labor; power is constituted by a “moral universe of meaning” (Clegg, 1989, p. 98). Thompson pointed to organizational cultures of moral clarity as a creation of

human spirit. Through focusing on serving followers, Whetstone (2002) distinguished servant leadership from other morally connected theories of leadership, such as transformational leadership, which include organizational goal achievement and success as a driving purpose. According to Whetstone, servant leadership as conceptualized by Greenleaf fits a normative leadership theory grounded in personalism with the person both a spiritual and material creature.

The current work is grounded in the personalist philosophy as postulated by Whetstone (2002) that a person flourishes in development through a relationship with others developing knowledge. Servant leadership theory concerns developing new collective capacities through collective learning (Greenleaf, 2002). Greenleaf warned against neglecting innovation by failing to understand the complexity of the situation or the problem, referring to such as a failure of conceptual leadership. Conceptual leadership involves listening with the intention that followers have the capacity to think, to deal with predicaments, and to consider outcomes. Servant leadership involves seeing the complex situation and make sense of it, while being vulnerable as a leader, and presuming whom you listen to is interested gives validity to follower capacity to grow (Greenleaf, 2002).

Organizations increasingly find a competitive advantage when workers are engaged in their work and being fully connected to their role. The discretionary behavior of the engaged employee promotes the effective functioning of the organization; therefore, it is important to understand the leadership skill that enables follower development. The present study extends understanding of motivating followers to engage in future thinking to encourage social support through knowledge sharing to increase engagement.

### **Purpose of Study and Hypotheses**

The purpose of the current study is to investigate servant leadership theory within the context of a knowledge workplace and its influence on individual engagement. This work is important to fill the gap in extant research concerning servant leadership theory within the workplace context (Winston & Fields, 2015). Similarly, studies concerning the relationship between leadership style and the



application of knowledge are scant (Teece, 1998), and engagement as a performance variable remains underinvestigated. Only the work of De Sousa and Van Dierendonck (2014) and De Clercq, Bouckennooghe, Raja, and Matsyborska (2014) could be found concerning studies of the relationship between servant leadership and engagement. Only two articles—De Sousa and Van Dierendonck’s (2010) investigation of knowledge-driven organizations and Rai and Prakash’s (2012) conceptual model of knowledge creation—were found concerning the relationship between servant leadership and knowledge within the organizational context. Servant leadership theory within the organizational context and employee discernment and engagement have not been integrated into the empirical examination.

Greenleaf’s (2002) servant leadership theory emerged conceptually as a way of life as opposed to a technique (Parris & Peachey, 2013), theoretically linked to morals (Graham, 1991; Russell, 2001), examined for key characteristics (Russell & Stone, 2002) and to greater extent for behavior (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Liden, Wayne, Meuser, et al., 2015; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Reed, Vidaver-Cohen, & Colwell, 2011; Winston & Fields, 2015), and studied for a theoretical framework (Dannhauser & Boshoff, 2006; Focht & Ponton, 2015; Ling, Lin, & Wu, 2016), but little is known concerning servant leadership within the organizational context. The current work’s thesis develops the conceptual framework of servant leadership as a strong provisioning agent for creating a group-aligning climate. Figure 1 depicts the model guiding the research question and subsequent hypotheses.

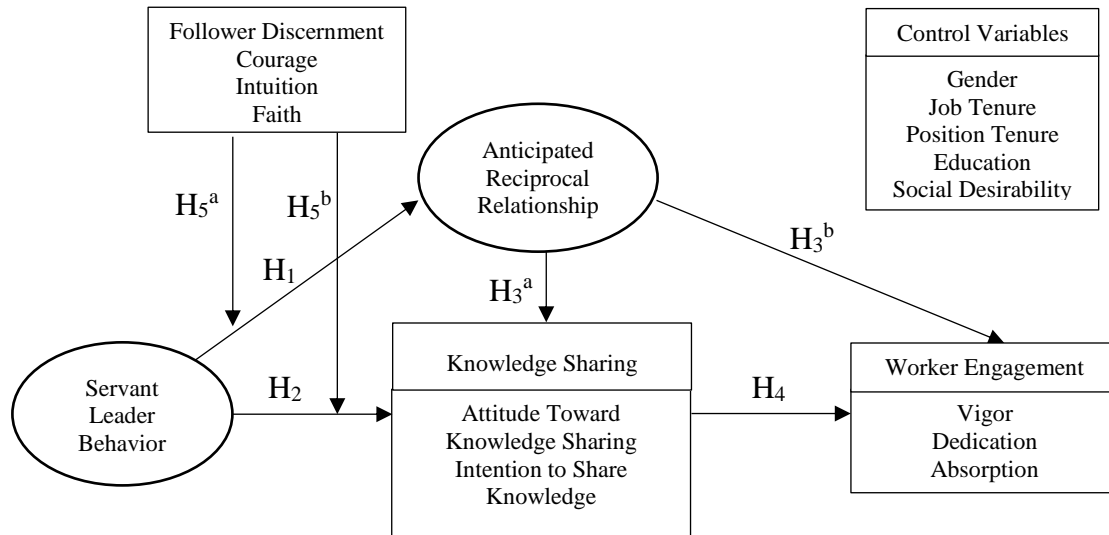


Figure 1: The follower-centric model depicting the hypothesized relationships among study variables.

RQ: How does servant leader behavior influence organizational climate, member reciprocal behavior and expectation, and worker level of engagement?

This study's focus contrasts the passiveness of employee well-being and work-related flow common in job satisfaction theories with a focus on a combination of dedication and vigor or absorption through an extended performance period as postulated in job engagement theory (Bakker, 2011). Where job satisfaction is reflective of the employee's collective level of met job expectations or the perception of the job, Alarcon and Lyons (2011) pointed out that unlike the negative association between job satisfaction and job demands the demands of a job encourage engagement. If this is true, it is likely that work engagement provides a predictor of performance, but little is known about the organizational climate through which engagement emerges. The present study's interest is investigating the influence of essential servant leader behavior in developing a climate whereby employees transcend cultural boundaries and become absorbed in their work. It is argued that the individual decision to engage improves when individuals feel appreciated and involved.

According to the theory of planned behavior (TPB), individual intention determines behavior (Tohidinia & Mosakhani, 2010). Ajzen (1991) argued TPB is designed to explain human behavior within specific contexts and individual intention toward specific behavior. At the most basic level, according to Ajzen, behavior is a function of salient information or beliefs germane to the conduct of performance. In addition to accurate information, people also must be motivated toward behavior performance.

According to De Sousa and Van Dierendonck (2010), knowledge workers achieve global meaning through characteristics including work as a calling, strong peer membership association, and need for autonomy. Krishnan (2003) argued concern for the needs and goals of followers is the “crux of leadership” (p. 345). Hunter et al. (2013) pointed out social influence impacts follower disengagement. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) argued servant leadership precedes positive organizational outcomes, such as worker engagement, and supposes prosocial motivations may affect servant leadership. Similarly, others (e.g., Van Dierendonck, 2011) have added that the self-sacrificing behavior of a leader, as theorized through servant leadership, is linked to positive follower motivations and willingness to help. While Serrat (2010) pointed out that little is known about predictors of engagement, we may infer from Tohidinia and Mosakhani (2010) that the individual may decide at will the level of effort put toward performing a given behavior.

H<sub>1</sub>: Follower perception of SLB has a positive influence on anticipated reciprocal relationships.

De Sousa and Van Dierendonck (2010) suggested knowledge-based organizations create an environment that satisfies individual calling orientation, peer association, and need for autonomy. Others (e.g., Gagné, 2003) have identified knowledge sharing as a prosocial behavior. According to De Sousa and Van Dierendonck, the “fundamental human quest for meaning” (p. 233) provides the researcher an opportunity to understand other aspects of worker motivation (e.g., well-being, transcendence, and personal growth) and raises an important question:

“Which model of leadership is most appropriate for the knowledge organization” (p. 234)?

The notion of Greenleaf’s (2002) servant leadership theory includes that followers grow and that the business exists to provide meaningful work, and through the new business ethic, service toward the follower rises in priority. The current research tests the relationship between SLB and level of employee engagement and the influence on the organizational knowledge-sharing climate and generates conversation concerning organizational culture, environmental dynamics, and outcomes, which extends beyond productivity performance and job satisfaction. The intent of this study is to examine the predictive ability of servant leader behavior on organizational climate.

H<sub>2</sub>: Follower perception of SLB has a positive influence on collective knowledge sharing.

Serrat (2010) conceptualized reciprocal relationships as being shaped by the organization’s environment and willingness to maximize individual and collective performance. In suggesting that organizational climate is linked to the behaviors of members, Bock, Zmud, Kim, and Lee (2005) found behavior is strongly reflective of collective action and subjective norms. Walumbwa, Hartnell, and Oke (2010) argued servant leader behavior creates an environment of situational cues through social context, which enables followers to understand their environment. Others (e.g., Sun, 2013) have indicated very little empirical work has been done to figure out what aspects of the organization’s context influence members to display servant behavior.

Building on Bock et al.’s (2005) assertion that anticipated reciprocal response influences knowledge sharing directly and indirectly, this study’s model tests effective reaction influence (Homer, 1990). According to Homer (1990), individual acceptance of behavior is a peripheral process intertwined with a central process. Therefore, it is expected that anticipated reciprocal behavior has a peripheral effect on knowledge sharing.

H<sub>3</sub><sup>a</sup>: Level of anticipated reciprocal relationships has a positive influence on knowledge sharing.

According to Tohidinia and Mosakhani (2010), the feelings of organizational members create the organization's climate. Others (e.g., Bock et al., 2005) have argued the contextual situation linked to member behavior creates organizational climate. Considering the principle of reciprocity as pointed out by Gouldner (1960), shared values among organizational members create an expectation, which is then argued to complementarily emerge as rights and obligations exhibited through reciprocity. Therefore, what one expects as required of one's role is expected of one's fellow members. According to Serrat (2010), social exchange theory explains the emergence of an enabling environment occurring in the relationship between reciprocal behavior and member perception, which Serrat argued maximizes individual and collective performance.

H<sub>3</sub><sup>b</sup>: Higher employee perceptions of anticipated reciprocal relationships has a positive mediating influence on the relationship between servant leader behavior and employee engagement.

Leadership in the knowledge era is a core factor in the "generative dynamic" (Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007, p. 299) in fostering organizational and subunit adaptability that underlies emergent change and critical to survival. Gagné (2009) suggested a framework for knowledge-sharing motivation based on self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000) and TPB (Ajzen, 1985). Deci and Ryan (2000) suggested TPB influences individual intention, suggested by Ajzen, Joyce, Sheikh, and Cote (2011) as a motivational factor, and SDT is a multidimensional framework through which engagement occurs through foci of autonomous motivation. Deci and Ryan asserted that activity pursued out of interest (i.e., intrinsic motivation) or found personally meaningful (i.e., identified regulation), though lightly researched, has been shown to contrast controlled motivation (i.e., reward and pressure) in triggering a reciprocity orientation. Similarly, De Sousa and Van Dierendonck (2010) conceptualized knowledge-based organizations create an environment that satisfies individual calling orientation, peer association, and need for autonomy. Chiniara and Bentein (2016) suggested autonomy as the most salient psychological need that has been pointed out as vital in fulfilling for intrinsic motivation (Ryan, & Deci, 2006) and

related to feelings (Gagné, 2003). Others (e.g., Huang, Iun, Liu, & Gong, 2010) have viewed empowerment as procedural justice, which includes individual interpretation concerning trustful exchanges between leader, follower, and coworkers.

Knowledge sharing is a prosocial behavior (Gagné, 2003). Walumbwa et al. (2010) suggested the social context created through SLB positively affects followers. Jeon, Kim, and Koh (2011) acknowledged knowledge sharing as a collaboration and result of social interaction through a community of practice. If so, we can expect the helping nature of servant leader behavior to have a positive influence on individual reciprocal response. The social contexts along with individual differences, according to Deci and Ryan (2000), motivate behavior through basic need satisfaction, which facilitates growth processes. Hunter et al. (2013) argued the servant behavior mirrored through coworker helper behavior develops higher service and reciprocated behavior. If this is so, the actual control of behavior is self-evident such that if resources and opportunity exist then to some extent they dictate behavior.

Kahn (1990) suggested engagement a motivational variable spanning the extrinsic and intrinsic continuum, arguing that through engagement, the person's preferred self is expressed in behavior that promotes connections with others through work tasks. In line with social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), engagement exists through the social context and in the reliability of others to focus on whom they turn to for help (Consiglio et al., 2016). If worker engagement motivates a sharing behavior, then we can expect the following:

H4: Higher knowledge sharing exhibited by the organizational membership has a positive mediating influence on the relationship between servant leader behavior and employee engagement.

According to Bennet and Bennet (2004, 2008), discerning among organizational members facilitates learning when events of a chaotic nature exist and develop as wisdom through the shared use of tacit knowledge. Drawing from Bass (1985), we may expect greater discernment by followers to emerge through the intellectual stimulation of greater tacit knowledge. Thus, as has been shown, the

organization's climate achieves congruency through the common discernment of its members (Tohidinia & Mosakhani, 2010). Knowledge in itself is insufficient toward behavior motivation (Ajzen et al., 2011).

H<sub>5</sub><sup>a</sup>: Greater levels of discernment have a moderating influence on the relationship between servant behaviors and anticipated reciprocal relationships.

H<sub>5</sub><sup>b</sup>: Greater levels of discernment have a moderating influence on the relationship between servant behaviors and employee knowledge sharing.

## **Methodology and Design**

### *Participants*

According to Ajzen (1991), the general attitude is shown through aggregating specific behavior across occasions, situations, and forms of action. Through this principle of aggregation, a single sample may reflect the influence of a general disposition and other factors unique to the situation, which may be observed in a given situation or occurrence. Different behaviors show an accurate valid measure of the underlying disposition of behavior.

This cross-sectional quantitative research design studies the predictive power of the relationship between the independent variable essential servant leader behavior and dependent variables anticipated reciprocal relationships, attitude toward knowledge sharing, intention to share knowledge employee engagement, and follower discernment. In addition to the criterion variables, this model includes control variables (i.e., gender, education, position tenure, and career tenure) intended to test the organizational climate (Parris & Peachey, 2013).

### *Sample Size and Sampling Technique*

The purpose of sampling is to estimate an unknown characteristic of the population, which Field (2014) pointed out as a small subset of a population through which data are collected and analyzed as representative of the population as a whole. Because the hypothesized model includes the moderating variable knowledge sharing, this study utilizes a targeted healthcare sample selected for

convenience of access to the author and as a knowledge-based industry through voluntary self-report survey response. Completed web-based questionnaires by working adults are targeted.

According to Field (2014), the statistical power of any test of effect emerges through the sample. Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham (2006) argued a study should achieve .80 of the desired significance level and effect size of .5 or smaller through a 20:1 ratio of responses to the independent, moderating, mediating variable. Consequently, with nine predictor variables within the presented model, a sample of 180 achieves a probability of the desired significance level.

### Measures

This study's methodology draws from Trauffer's (2008) definition of the phenomenon as the ability to regulate one's thinking in the accusation and application of knowledge and human agency (see Bandura, 1986) as the capacity of self-control through self-observation, judgment, and response. This research relies on variable measures through psychometric instruments for which reliability and validity support previously existed.

Tohidinia and Mosakhani (2010) argued knowledge contribution requires management provide an appropriate organizational climate for collective understanding and collaboration at different organizational levels and requires investigation of individual barriers to knowledge-sharing activities. Conceptually, servant leadership juxtaposes the collaborative climate suggested by Tohidinia and Mosakhani as required to achieve collective knowledge sharing through reciprocal and endearing relationships (Stone et al., 2004). Van Dierendonck (2011) argued the self-sacrificing behavior of the servant leader positively influences individual reciprocity. Others have postulated the reciprocal nature of a covenant obligation between "self and organization" (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994, p. 769) exists based on the ties between members. Open to the investigation is the servant leadership theory within the context of a knowledge workplace and in the context of organizational climate and individual engagement. The 10-item scale of Winston and Fields (2015) is employed to measure follower perception of servant leader



behavior. An example item follows: “Sees serving as a mission of responsibility to others.”

According to Blau (1964), social exchange involves “unspecified obligations” (p. 93) in engendering feelings of obligation. Others have argued reciprocity as the preparatory to group structure and interaction (Gouldner, 1960). The model tested in the current study includes anticipated reciprocal relationship as a positive influence on cooperative behavior and is investigated through the Bock et al. (2005) five-item scale (ranging from 1 = *extremely unlikely* to 5 = *extremely likely*). An example item follows: “My knowledge sharing would strengthen the ties between me and existing members of the organization.” As well, on the Bock et al. five-item scale, an example for attitude toward knowledge sharing follows: “To me sharing knowledge with other organizational members is beneficial.” An example for intention to share knowledge follows: “I will always provide my know-where or know-how from work more frequently in the future.”

The dependent variable engagement is measured through the short version Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9), which is recommended by the authors as a single-scale measure of three dimensions (i.e., vigor, dedication, absorption; Schaufeli et al., 2006). The UWES-9 is a self-report measure on a 6-point scale, ranging from 0 if the participant has never felt the stated feeling to 6 if feeling occurs daily for a statement such as “My job inspires me.”

Bennet and Bennet (2004) noted discernment acts as an organizational filtering process that facilitates discrimination to choose those things upon which should be focused. In addition to focusing, Bennet and Bennet argued wisdom reflects the values that allows discerning among organizational members and facilitates learning when events of a chaotic nature exist and develop as wisdom through the shared use of tacit knowledge. Follower discernment is operationalized through the 14-item Traüffer et al. (2010) Discernment Practices Indicator. An example item is: “I am willing to make/have made decisions, based on a hunch.”

### Data Analysis

Data are extracted from SurveyMonkey, imported into SPSS Version 22, and analyzed. An initial analysis of the data through descriptive statistics facilitates

the presentation of data into a manageable format. Quantitative data depicted in a manageable format simplifies investigation and internal examination for missing data, and internal consistency (i.e., Cronbach's alpha) is quickly discerned. Multiple regression and hierarchical regression are employed to test model predictive relationships. Certain demographic variables (i.e., gender, position, tenure in the position, and education) extend servant leadership theory noted by Parris and Peachey (2013) as remaining to be discovered and are examined as control variables.

### **Limitations**

The study's nonexperimental design does not allow for the development of causal relationships between model variables. While causal relationships may exist, the cross-sectional survey design limits the ability to ascribe directional causal relationship. It is possible that, though grounded in theory, confounding variables or alternative explanations may exist to explain relationships between variables. Also, new quantitative scales with limited evaluation across multiple environment and situations used a priori requires expanded use of these scales.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Altruism* is a motivational concept; altruism is the motivation to increase another person's welfare (Batson & Powell, 2003)

*Autonomy* is regulation of the self (Ryan & Deci, 2006).

*Discernment* is the essence of wisdom, "reflecting the values and criteria applied to knowledge" (Bennet & Bennet, 2004, p. 8). The current research adopts Trauffer's (2008) supposition, which concludes discernment as social in nature with the "ability to regulate one's thinking in the acquisition and application of knowledge to make decisions that are right, fair, and just" (p. 265).

*Engagement* has been conceptualized as a "positive, fulfilling state of work" (Alarcon & Lyons, 2011, p. 464); as "the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles" (Kahn, 1990, p. 624); or to be physically, cognitively, and emotionally engaged in one's work. This research tested engagement as

conceived by Bakker and Schaufeli (2008) as the absorption, dedication, and vigorous effort exerted in one's work.

*Ethnomethodology* is the intentional attention given to the mundane stuff people take for granted as they interact. It is constructing common sense views of the world where the focus is on the actions or practice (Lock & Strong, 2010).

*Knowledge*, described by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) as the justified true belief, is defined as the dynamic personal beliefs that inspire truth, which, according to Duguid (2005), develop as mental models that include paradigms, beliefs, and values to help define the world. *Explicit knowledge* tells us what to use; *tacit knowledge* reveals how to use. As described by Fodor (1968), the ability to do but not explain how requires only explicit knowledge but to be involved requires implicit (i.e., tacit) knowledge not possible without being able to explain how.

*Positive organizational behavior* is the study and application of measurable positive-oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities to manage organizational work (Luthans & Avolio, 2003)

*Professional bureaucracy* is the professional knowledge held by highly trained individual experts within an autonomous but highly regulated environment such as a law firm and hospital (Lam & Lambermont-Ford, 2010).

*Self-efficacy* is individuals' belief in their own capabilities to organize and carry out the course of actions required to achieve successful results (Consiglio et al., 2016).

*Servant leadership behavior (SLB)* was conceptualized by Hale and Fields (2007) as follower-oriented leadership—putting the success of followers before self and developing a shared vision. Black (2010) pointed out it is natural feeling (see Greenleaf, 2002) to help employees grow, become autonomous, and be more servant themselves. For the current study, SLB is defined as increased service to others through a holistic approach to work, with a sense of community, and shared decision-making power (Spears, 1995).

*Tacit knowledge* is an automatic expression through a highly personal form of knowledge that energizes action or behavior without thought and helps

organizations make decision and influence collective behavior of members (M. K. Smith, 2001).

*Theory of reasoned action* is the theory that human behavior is likely the consequence of other attributes of the behavior, normative expectation, or other factors that hinder behavior performance (Ajzen, 1985).

## Chapter 2 – Literature Review

To Schein (2010), organizational climate is the feeling conveyed by physical layout and the way members interact with each other. Culture, by contrast, takes on moral overtones and implies structural stability (Schein, 2010) or the collective mental programming (Hofstede, 2001) of the organization. Hofstede (2001) pointed out that culture may be different without objective judgment of one being better over another. On the other hand, however, organizational climate is closely “linked to individual motivation and behavior” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 392); thus, an evaluative association exists. From the literature, it seems that although organizational climate originates through the individual, it is operationalized at the group level; thus, it is inferred that climate through individual perceptions influences how we behave collectively (Dasborough et al., 2009).

According to Bock et al. (2005), organizational climate refers to contextual situations (i.e., thoughts and feelings) of organizational members, which integrate through the theory of reasoned action. In other words, Bock et al., in acknowledging the importance of organizational climate in member feelings toward knowledge sharing, suggested the behavior organizational member experience form as a normative expectation with a reciprocal nature. Drucker (1999) supposed the 21st century to be an era of the organization knowledge worker. Drucker pointed out that the means of production shifts to knowledge workers who, in addition to owning their means of production, are mobile and can leave. In suggesting redefining the task of managing the work of people to managing for people, Drucker explained,

We have known for 50 years that money alone does not motivate to perform. Dissatisfaction with money grossly demotivates. Satisfaction with money is, however, mainly a hygiene factor, as Fredrick Herzberg called it all of forty years ago in his book *The Motivation to Work*. What motivates—and specifically what motivates knowledge workers—is what motivates volunteers. Volunteers, we know, have to get more satisfaction from their work than paid employees, precisely because they do not get a

paycheck. They need to know the organization's mission and to believe in it. They need continuous training. They need to see results. (pp. 20-21)

In suggesting this shift, Drucker (1999) was similar to Greenleaf (2002), who stated, "Work exists for the person as much as the person exists for the work" (p. 154). Drucker contrasted Greenleaf's suggestion of business as a serving institution and leadership dependence on building competence and autonomy when suggesting the task is to lead people, manage for performance; whereas, the boss depends on subordinates for education, which diverges from the follower-centric proposition of Greenleaf's servant leader behavior.

There are two arguments for leadership existence: (a) one postulated by Drucker (1999) that leadership is a partnership and exists for the good of the organization's results and (b) Greenleaf's (2002) paradoxical paradigm that suggests leadership exists for the good of the follower. This chapter reviews the literature and develops the theoretical framework through which servant leadership behavior (SLB) influences the organizational climate for a positive influence on employee engagement. The chapter reviews literature concerning the background of the problem; the role of leadership; organization operations; social identity; the relationship among SLB, knowledge sharing, and engagement; hypotheses; and methodology.

### **Background of the Problem**

Leadership influence of the 21st century, an era Drucker (1999) referred to as a knowledge era, shifts from product-centric to a focus on knowledge as an individual skill in which performance involves sharing and engagement. Drucker pointed out that while the manual worker does not own the means of production, this is not so with the knowledge worker, which develops a symbiotic relationship between workers and leadership. Preservation of organizational assets is a primary concern of management. For the knowledge-based business where the worker is the asset, the emerging questions are: What is performance? How is performance maximized? Drucker suggested knowledge work be structured as part of a system. The present research proposes that knowledge adaptation occurs through sharing

and postulates associated attitude toward and intention to share is influenced by the dual mediation of SLB and anticipated reciprocal relationship.

The emergence of positive organizational scholarship generates debate concerning motivation through egotistical need or altruistic gesture, which has increased interest in the effect of prosocial behavior (Cameron et al., 2003). Cameron et al. (2003) attested that positive organizational scholarship examines positive organizational contexts to explain positive states and positive relationships previously neglected in organizational research. Investigating the climate-developing properties of servant leadership theory, the current study draws on the concepts of positive organizational scholarship to further explain and develop a theory concerning the operationalization of SLB and creation of an engaging work environment.

Winston and Fields (2015) drew a conclusion concerning essential behaviors of servant leadership to produce a parsimonious measure helpful to leadership development. Suggesting servant leaders engage focused on the well-being of the follower, Winston and Fields indicated the leader's undertaking needs to be moral in nature; rather ironically, they acknowledged the contradictory nature of previous instruments using various dimensions to describe the indistinguishable phenomenon. Through psychometric tests, these researchers examined the extent to which leader behaviors influenced follower-reciprocated behavior.

Using a two-stage methodology, Winston and Fields (2015) had a panel of 23 researchers evaluate 116 items gathered through extant operationalization. Following identification of 22 leader behaviors, 443 working adults responded to a devised multidimensional questionnaire of servant leadership. With scale reliability of  $\alpha = 0.96$ , support for positive correlation with alternative measures of servant leadership, distinction from alternative forms (e.g., transformational) of leadership, and significant predictive validity shown through incremental variance contribution shown through regression modeling, the Winston and Fields scale is selected for the current study. The focus of these authors on the phenomenon of follower development through the work environment is considered comparable to the

undertaking this research proceeds with to determine the environmental influence of servant leader behavior on workforce engagement.

In describing the transactional leaders' ability to recognize the needs of subordinates, Bass (1985) suggested transformational leadership augments transactional approaches to leadership. According to Bass, the transactional leader clarifies the performance expectation. Bass argued that transactional relationships positively influence extra effort when supplemented by leader display of transformational abilities. Within the intellectual sphere, the transactional leader's behavior relates closely to the work, remains mindful of time considerations, and maintains focus on limiting risk, which based on knowledge and experience objectives may change as situations arise (Bass, 1985). Drawing from Bass' conception and the relationship between servant behavior and transactional leadership (Winston & Fields, 2015), the current research theorizes that as essential SLB increases, there exists a reciprocal response in engagement.

Conceptualizing SLB through the theory of self as steward of the organization and its members, Reinke (2004) grounded Greenleaf's idealistic vision of servant leadership and contrasted Greenleaf's follower focus through the supposition of achieving organizational objectives with a balanced focus on follower growth. In acknowledging follower development, Reinke argued the servant leader holds the organization in trust while supposing leader responsibilities similar to those of Bass' transactional leadership through developing patterns and norms, which create order and stability in the workspace and enable workers to focus on organizational tasks. Acknowledging the difference with transformational leadership, Reinke brought forward servant leadership as an independent variable that produces culture. Along these lines, the current study investigates the organizational climate developing properties possible through SLB.

Stone et al. (2004) examined transformational and servant leadership for the difference in leader focus. These researchers posited a primary difference in leader focus, suggesting leader focus through transformational leadership is directed toward the organization's objectives, which contrasts with a follower focus through servant behavior with organizational outcomes a subordinated objective. Stone et



al. juxtaposed transactional leadership with follower needs satisfaction through an exchange process and compared the difference in transformational leadership with the primary focus being fixed on progress through goal accomplishment and follower development. In drawing similarities between servant and transformational leadership behavior, Stone et al. acknowledged the propensity for SLB to allow extraordinary follower freedom to exercise their own abilities. If this untested hypothesis is true, we can expect that within the knowledge organization the propensity and expectation to share knowledge and achieve employee engagement at high levels is positively influenced by higher perceptions of SLB.

Patterson (2003) presented love as the cornerstone of the servant leader–follower relationship in defining servant leadership theory as a virtuous follower-centric leader behavior. The love Patterson proposed is *agapao*—a Greek term for moral actions in a social sense, such that judgment and the deliberate assent of the will toward selfishness is a matter of principle. Emerging from the leader’s values, the leader seeks to build up without pretense and through listening, which Patterson extended to humility, through which the leader sets the needs of others above self-centered desires. With humility comes vulnerability; when a leader’s behavior reveals vulnerability, others may discern love and perhaps increase their willingness to share and expect coworker reciprocal action. The current work includes examining for the moderation influence of follower discernment between SLB and follower reciprocal behavior and sharing of knowledge.

Peterson et al. (2012) revealed a negative relationship between leader narcissism and servant leadership and argued the practitioner’s need for employing servant leadership for the organization’s benefit. Similarly, these authors pointed out the business interest in more responsible leaders and a shift in organizational scholars focus toward “relational styles of leadership” (p. 566). Peterson et al. suggested that servant leadership adds a moral dimension to the idea of transformational leadership, encouraging followers to use moral reasoning. Peterson et al. hypothesized SLB triggers the reciprocal exchange process, further supposing the reciprocal behavior extends toward extra effort applied by employees in performance. Controlling through transformational leadership variables, Peterson

et al. found significant support for firm performance through regression modeling. The present hypotheses postulate that when the expectation of reciprocal behavior is higher, employee intention to share knowledge increases.

Avolio and Gardner (2005) conceptualized servant leadership includes explicit and implicit recognition of the role of leader self-awareness. Avolio and Gardner contrasted servant leadership theory with authentic leadership, arguing servant leadership includes leader awareness, empathy, and foresight, while authentic leadership draws from the clinical and positive psychology literature. Missing from the literature, according to Avolio and Gardner, is recognition of the mediating role of follower regulation and self-awareness or for positive organizational, context. The current research examines the climate development capacity of SLB for a reciprocal relationship and follower attitude and intention influence.

According to Deal and Kennedy (2000), following the workplace turmoil of the 1980s and 1990s, core assumptions have been rewritten with long-standing implicit contracts between the organization and the employee annulled. Mergers changed the corporate landscape, technology revolutionized the workplace, and innovations in the computer and communications changed behavior patterns and working relationships. The changes of the 20th century shifted the traditional views of how culture forms and left the workforce cynical of leadership and developed subcultures. However, people are social. As Deal and Kennedy acknowledged, the need to for an existential anchor and culture give meaning to work. Culture defines the rules of the workspace, helps rationalize and justify the hours spent at work, and perpetuate corporate and individual well-being. One assumption of the current study is that SLB creates a sharing organizational climate and a culture of information sharing.

Creech (1994)—the popular press author writing from the practitioner's perspective—mentioned the savvy leader approaches organizational matters through a practical blend of knowledge and humility while being shrewd, discerning, and intelligent while remaining grounded in reality, seeing what is in people. Creech described a leadership style that parallels servant leadership theory.

Creech wrote of the leadership challenge and responsibility to “establish organizational character” (p. 356), supposing the leader character inclusive of integrity and honesty reflected in all his or her actions and with the expectation of the same in others. This closely resembles Greenleaf’s (2002) thesis that the natural servant is a servant first and, while going out ahead to show the way, helps others grow to become healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous; thus followers are more likely to develop as servant leaders themselves. This reciprocal activity can be expected to reflect the level of engagement in knowledge sharing with an environment or climate of expectation throughout an organization with higher levels of discerned SLB.

Complaining of the “Jacksonian scheme” (p. 40), in the biography of William H. Seward in *Seward Lincoln’s Indispensable Man*, Stahr (2012) suggested a time of panic and disorder brought on by the greed and selfish acts of certain leaders in the turn of the 19th century. Seward claimed leadership existed without moral courage (Stahr, 2012). This scenario replays through the closing decade of the 20th century and the shift of equity ownership through stock holdings (Drucker, 1999) creating greed and immoral leader behavior. The thesis of the current study rests on the framework of SLB, which is expected to have a positive influence on individual performance and organizational climate.

Pfeffer (1998) pointed out a 1994 survey that revealed that 40% of a 2,000-person sample selected a desire “to a long-term job you will stay in” (p. 166); another 20% selected the statement “an opportunity for advancement in this company” (p. 166) as the best selection of four options concerning their current job. One may infer from these results that despite rhetoric to the contrary, people generally desire stable long-term employment with an opportunity to develop and grow. According to Pfeffer, factors such as skill development and job participation are central elements of high performance, along with receiving meaningfulness and appreciation in job tasks, which enhance motivation and performance. Pfeffer is considered to support the hypothesis that through the moral framework of SLB a helpful climate emerges through which there is an expectation to share knowledge and higher levels of engagement.

Bennis (2009) supposed leaders as unique in how they use what they learn to shape the future. According to Bennis, leaders develop their understanding of their experiences and the application of those experiences. Likening leaders to collaborators, Bennis noted that leaders and followers are engaged in the same activity; through vision, inspiration, empathy, and trustworthiness manifested through the leader's character, trust develops through faith. This is to acknowledge trust as a reciprocal thing to be given not received; without the faith of the follower, trust does not exist. The current researcher examines the strength of the leader–follower relationship through the follower's discernment of SLB. It is supposed that when followers ascribe to leader behavior as servitude, performance emerges through job engagement.

With research stretching greater than 25 years, Kouzes and Posner (2012) argued that when at their best, leaders model the way, inspire through a shared vision, challenge the process, enable, and encourage others. Kouzes and Posner noted that the best organizations expect leaders to emerge, and everyone regardless of position is encouraged to behave like a leader. In strengthening others by giving away their power and through fostering the follower's power, these authors argued they reciprocate by exerting greater effort and exceeding their own expectations. Statistical analysis of the responses of nearly 2 million people to the Kouzes and Posner's 360-degree instrument, the Leadership Practices Inventory, showed that workplace engagement is significantly related to leader behavior. Further, Kouzes and Posner reported workplace engagement is influenced by leader behavior regardless of employee demographic factors. With characteristics similar to Kouzes and Posner's exemplary leadership, the current work investigates servant leadership theory for influence on engagement within a knowledge-based organization.

George (2003) contended the detached style of leadership will not succeed in the 21st century. According to this popular-press author and former CEO of Medtronic, maker of specialty medical products, today's employees desire a personal relationship with their leader prior to fully engaging in their workplace. Suggesting that businesses have evolved from maximizing the output of their workers to engaging the minds of their employees and going a step forward in the

21st century, great companies have worked to engage the hearts toward a deeper purpose to garner results vastly exceeding those who use only their bodies. In the knowledge-based organization, this is essential to capturing and sustaining the competitive advantage. The current research examines the level of engagement achievable through servant leader behavior.

### **Role of Leadership**

Greenleaf (2002) lamented higher education for creating and perpetuating an intuitive gap between objective knowledge and what is required to make a good decision. Education, Greenleaf argued, when focused on analysis disregards intuitive power and the ethic that might guide decision making. Business exists to serve those who produce and those who use; Greenleaf theorized a new ethic through which service to those who produce rises above those who use giving work more significance and joy of doing. Within the institution, Greenleaf pointed out the process of leading accomplished through practicing without the preaching provides a context and clear focus of purpose. This purpose is through leader servitude toward the organization's employees. Greenleaf's conceptualization of servant leadership manifests itself through the care taken to make sure the highest priority needs of others are served and suggesting that through being served followers develop and grow becoming servant themselves. The current study extends the servant leadership theory by examining the climate-developing characteristics and level of engagement influence through SLB.

Lam and Lambermont-Ford (2010) argued that individual willingness depends on the importance an individual attributes to being engaged in such activity and is derived from the context of the task and perceived task characteristics. According to Lam and Lambermont-Ford, an enriching environment provides the basis for task context, which provides the underpinning for the ethos of knowledge sharing. Lam and Lambermont-Ford noted the concept remains poorly understood, acknowledging the lack of willingness of an individual to share knowledge forms a central barrier to integrating organizational knowledge. What Lam and Lambermont-Ford conceptualized is the emergence of an

autonomous work environment when a professional bureaucracy forms through the framework of shared and standardized professional knowledge. The social dilemma cannot be overlooked in the discovery of individual motivation to share tacit knowledge (Lam & Lambermont-Ford, 2010). The current investigation presumes an employee's willingness to share knowledge is positively influenced by the supportive nature of SLB.

According to Nonaka, Toyama, et al. (2000), knowledge without being put into context is merely information. To transform information into something useful, a setting is required and an event must take place, or, as Nonaka, Toyama, et al. pointed out, the continuous development of knowledge takes place through a reshaping process involving the interaction and action of people. For the organization to exceed more than merely being an information-processing center requires interaction between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Because tacit knowledge is shared only through direct experiences, self-transcendence of any boundary layer between self and others inside or outside experience is required through a socialization process (Nonaka, Toyama, et al., 2000), and it is here, these authors suggested, "the sum of the individuals' intentions and ideas fuse" (p. 13) and shape the group's mental world. In a world where knowledge is considered an important asset, the firm, according to Nonaka, Toyama, et al., depends on harnessing tacit experiential knowledge for its competitive advantage. Nonaka, Toyama, et al.'s conceptualization is significant to the present study. If they are right, the competitive advantage is revealed in the attitudes and intentions of the employees to share knowledge.

Osterloh and Frey (2000) argued tacit knowledge is stored within individuals, is unobservable, and cannot be treated as a public good for trade. In evaluating individual motivation, Osterloh and Frey introduced the crowding theory in pointing to the inadequacy of extrinsic reward in driving up individual motivation. These authors examined intrinsic motivation through the framework of cognitive evaluation theory, suggesting intrinsic motivation emerges through the perceived locus of control. Investigating various organizational motivational devices, Osterloh and Frey contended that certain organizational forms crowd out

intrinsic motivation, creating a detrimental effect on knowledge sharing. Specifically, when an expectation is attributed to an external influence, perceived cognitive self-determination is undermined. Conversely, these researchers identified support for the positive influence of psychological contracts through which feelings of fairness increase reciprocal appreciation through performance. The present study presumes perceived leader support to influence follower knowledge sharing within and across group functions. Osterloh and Frey suggested that teamwork improves the reciprocal action. On the other hand, the absence of relationship results in perfect competition.

Ribi re and Sitar (2003) addressed the importance of leadership within organizations desiring to develop a knowledge-supporting culture. Ribi re and Sitar conceptualized leadership skills that build confidence and engagement. Postulating that leadership initiates direction, motivates, and inspires the initiation of knowledge activity, Ribi re and Sitar identified support for leadership through a knowledge lens requiring skills to build dialogue and engagement as opposed to completing specific tasks. The act of transactional leaders identifying and satisfying follower needs supports organizational change found successful in leveraging knowledge. Identifying positive correlation between knowledge sharing and leader support of employees reflects leader behavior influence on culture such that perceived leader vulnerability acts as a positive influence. Within the current study’s model, reciprocal member response facilitates knowledge sharing and engagement across the organization. SLB may be critical to capturing member “confidence and engagement” (Ribi re & Sitar, 2003, p. 39).

Burns (2003) postulated the variables of the process of causation—such as human motivation, people’s wants and needs, leader ambition, and the “nature and interaction of agency” (p. 21)—are simply too complex for a simplistic explanation. According to Burns, the qualities that motivate a person’s behavior toward self-actualization, including creativity, capacity for growth, and learning, are near those of the call to leadership. In describing a resolution for the “Burns Paradox” (p. 171), Burns suggested is the distinction between unrealized wants and predispositions on one hand and strong motivations to act on the other hand—in

this space relationship exists. Burns' thesis includes leader actions to ignite follower interaction through which follower leadership may emerge, thus developing follower expectations and act as an enhancer in the continuing evolution of followers. Through Burns' framework, it is expected that SLB greatly influences follower expectancy.

Leaders with self-transcendent values, more specific values of understanding, and appreciation are more likely to demonstrate concern for employees (Whitener et al., 1998). In agency terms, according to Whitener et al. (1998), transcendent leaders involve employees in the decision, making and being more likely to release control as well reducing their risk to opportunistic behavior. The question emerging from this conversation concerns the motivations of the follower once empowered. The current study flows from the leader to the employee and concerns the cognitive state of the follower influenced by leader behavior.

Menon (2001) differentiated empowerment as an act from the sociological tradition, considering the leader's release of power as a granting activity. Menon conceptualized the goal internalization dimension of employment through which perceived control occurs intuitively. Finding a strong correlation between goal internalization and perceived control, Menon extended the domain of psychological enabling conceived by Conger and Kanungo (1988) to include the perception of control over the work environment. The significance of this judgment through the leadership perspective is the energizing aspect of empowerment. According to Menon, the internalization of goals includes an organizational aspect through the positive influence of organizational goals on energizing individual behavior. The current study investigates the characteristics of essential SLB influence on the internal process and tests the employee's felt response to leadership influence and the organizational climate.

Conger and Kanungo (1988) pointed out the importance of a leader's release of discretion to the subordinate in transferring power. Conger and Kanungo hypothesized power has its base within the individual's motivational disposition; thus, supervisory style may contribute to lowering the self-efficacy beliefs of organizational members. Within the context of leader behavior, particularly through



change, any strategy that reduces self-determination increases feelings of powerlessness, thus, hypothesized to influence employee engagement.

Zhu et al. (2004) suggested shared values structure the social situation. These researchers, drawing from Simons' (1999) acknowledgment that the leader's behavior reveals his or her actual values, postulated an authentic leader ensures consistency between actions and rhetoric through the employee's perception. Zhu et al. presented a theoretical model that supposes ethical behavior moderates the relationship between leader behavior and feelings of self-determination, which positively influence employee engagement. That is to say there is congruency between moral intentions and behavior. The current model conceptualized follows Zhu et al., supposing that employee engagement is important and investigates the influence of interpersonal relationships on performance.

Graham's (1991) analysis of charismatic leadership sought a model of inspirational and moral leadership to illustrate a model for the emerging servant leadership theory. Graham argued that when leadership exists through moral underpinning, leader self-sacrifice is a natural occurrence, and leader-modeled service inspired is a calling to lead. Graham's conceptual thesis that the paradox of servant leaders through a follower focus for the good of fulfilling their needs suggests moral-based leadership tends to be transmissible through self-accountability and the sense of responsibility to encourage others. This is an important consideration in extending Greenleaf's (2002) idea that leader behavior is self-initiated and influences the work environment.

Spender (1996) approached organizational knowledge as a "leadership theory of the firm" (p. 52) through which collective learning occurs and collective knowledge is retained. Spender argued collective knowledge as a process as opposed to an intangible asset. Going beyond information as an operational requirement of organizational members, Spender supposed a culture embedded as a background practice that is not consumed when incorporated. The competitive advantage posed by Spender derives from the incommensurability of knowledge, thus the creation of collective learning. In essence, this is the whole organization

collectively creating knowledge culture, which is shown through the collective attitude and intention to share knowledge.

Nonaka, Von Krogh, et al. (2006) argued providing decision-making information as a critical leadership task. According to organizational knowledge creation theory, visionary ideas and lived reality develop from middle leadership's translation of top management's articulated vision, thus it is the middle management of a hierarchical structure that promotes, or hinders, organizational knowledge sharing. Nonaka et al. proposed that for the knowledge-based firm, organizational concepts and relationships explain firm differences and provide the framework for knowledge-based theory and point out the uniqueness of organizational knowledge systems due to the intersubjective nature of knowledge. Worded differently, it is the level of agreeableness in sharing among organizational members that creates competitive advantage.

McCullough et al. (2001) conceptualized gratitude as a moral effect by proposing gratitude emerges through moral behavior and generates reciprocity. Moral behavior may have motivational value as a prototypical effect experienced when individuals perceive action is taken for their well-being. McCullough et al. argued that the felt feelings of gratitude prompt prosocial behavior. According to Van Dierendonck and Rook (2010), SLB enhances follower sense of well-being through building a group culture of gratitude, thus an environment of reciprocity is expected to thrive.

Extending McCullough et al. (2001), Emmons (2003) contended that non-self-report data concerning people with strong dispositions toward gratitude consistently engaged in prosocial behavior and informants indicated they would more likely use collaboration to resolve any conflict that may arise in their interactions. According to Emmons, gratitude may be important in organizations for its nature of improving organizational climate and for improving the sense of well-being by lowering toxic emotions in the workspace. Through self-awareness the leader's moral inventory may sustain and grow interpersonal benefits (Emmons, 2003).

Examining servant leadership theory for ethical disposition in ensuring the ends sought and means employed are morally legitimized while suggesting gratitude as a spiritually based characteristic, Sendjaya et al. (2008) investigated SLB inclusive of a moral–spiritual emphasis. Sendjaya et al. hypothesized a servant leader is a servant to a higher being in supposing obedient gratitude to the greater being takes on the nature of resolute conviction and strong character.

Following Laub (2003), Wong and Page (2003) and Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) argued willingness to serve as a fundamental component of servant behavior, suggesting in contrast with a natural occurrence emerging through the leader’s spiritual insights. Sendjaya et al. (2008) argued toward spirituality and morality as the “*sine qua non* of servant leadership” (p. 410), which is provisional to the ends and means of serving. Finding internal consistency with their servant leader subscales, these researchers argued a priori structure. The present study draws from Sendjaya et al. in suggesting servant leadership theory exists through a leader’s internalized moral framework, which emerges through expressed values and observed behavior.

Taking a virtues perspective, Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) argued servant leadership may encourage greater “humility, gratitude, forgiveness, and altruism through a leader’s propensity for compassionate love” (p. 119). Through an integrated synthesis, Van Dierendonck and Patterson proposed compassionate love (i.e., doing acts of kindness intended for follower benefit) as a motivational factor of servant behavior. According to their proposition within the competitive context, love exists through the leader’s acts of love, making it part of the organizational culture. Through a focus on employee worth and potential trust emerges a reciprocal positive influence on the leader that extends the basis of organizational relationships beyond mere contracts. For the current study, this is presumed to result in positive engagement as the perception of SLB increases.

Goffman (2005) defined a rule of conduct as a guide for action because it is suitable or just and rules of conduct affect individuals in direct and indirect ways. According to Goffman, individuals are imposed upon directly as an obligation and indirectly as an expectation. An expected rule of conduct establishes a moral

binding or constraint in how others act regarding one another. The current research considers that the de facto felt obligation may strike the individual as a positive or a negative; thus, it is inferred to influence the social structure of the organization and individual determination to engage in knowledge sharing.

Pointing out the important consideration of psychological employment contracts, McDonald and Makin (2000) suggested the psychological contract is highly subjective given that these behavior-creating promises of future behavior are largely defined by the employee as opposed to the organization. The nature of employment relationships shifts between relational and transactional (see Rousseau, 1990) with relational characterized as employee-perceived obligations of the organization for long-term considerations such as job security. This contrasts with the transactional psychological contract with a short-term nature characterized by higher competitive wage concessions and the absence of long-term commitment. This is a particularly important consideration for certain leaders of knowledge organizations, which may experience a critical shortage of certain skilled positions (e.g., nursing) where workforce shortage occurs. The current researcher considers a healthcare sample, which may include members, which given multiple market options for employment, may self-determine permanent employment as a temporary condition.

According to Lin (2007), despite increased access to networked information, systems, and online information, the willingness to share information may be regarded as a proxy to a certain system of moral standards or values. Lin characterized knowledge as an “icon in the new global economy” (p. 411) in bringing forward knowledge sharing as an ethical behavior. Lin studied for a theoretical understanding of the framework for tacit knowledge sharing, theorizing that organizational success is related to having workers who are willing to share information. Identifying a significant relationship between cooperativeness between workers and organizational commitment, Lin suggested instrumental ties exist between organizational and employee relationship. The current study suggests that the leader–follower relationship is positively influenced by specific leader

behavior and the resulting organizational climate, which emerges from employee discernment of perceived leader behavior.

Lock and Strong (2010) acknowledged heuristic practitioner value in ethnomethodology in becoming attuned to how thoughts and actions sustain social practices. A heuristic guide that, while not optimal, provides a pathway to inferring morality as trusted interactions people come to expect including their own social behavior in interacting with others. The current researcher suggests local ways of acting go beyond the protocol of established policy or regulatory compliance. Competitive advantage is mediated by coworker discernment of leader behavior and an expectation to engage in knowledge sharing.

Batson and Powell (2003) pointed out that for many centuries the most proposed source of altruistic motivation is congruency between the other-oriented emotional response and the perceived welfare of another. These researchers suggested that through the framework of empathy, the empathy–altruism hypothesis is one person helps improve the welfare of another. Batson and Powell acknowledged the empathy–altruism theory contrasts with universal egoism hypotheses that human behavior is ultimately aimed toward self-benefit. If these researchers are correct, then we are forced to investigate why empathetic feelings exist and reexamine human nature and potential. In short, empathy-induced altruism increases cooperation in competitive situations. According to Batson and Powell, moral principles serve as the ultimate goal in defining motivation free from ego and provide the basis in transcending self-interest when responding to the needs of others. The present study supposes that the prosocial behavior of the leader underpinned by moral principles is explained through the characteristics of servant leadership theory (see Winston & Fields, 2015) and is provisional in employee engagement.

Brief and Motowidlo (1986) acknowledged acts such as cooperating, sharing, and helping are prosocial behaviors and important for generating patterns in organizations. These authors broadly defined prosocial behavior as behavior, which (a) performed by a member of the organization, (b) directed toward an individual, group, or organization with whom he or she

interacts while carrying out his or her organizational role, and (c) performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group, or organization toward which it is directed. (p. 711)

Brief and Motowidlo presented prosocial organizational forms that vary according to the functional or dysfunctional influence on organizational effectiveness.

Included within these factors are helps others with a heavy workload, orients others even when not required, and helps others who may have been absent. Brief and Motowidlo indicated that these factors are generally discretionary and intended to help coworkers or supervisors carry out work and may require extrarole effort.

These authors suggested further research focus on the contextual factors and organizational conditions that affect the incidence of prosocial behavior. The current study suggests SLB positively influences organizational prosocial behavior such that organizational members anticipate a reciprocal environment where they expect others to share and they intend to share their knowledge.

Luthans and Avolio (2003) drew from transformational and ethical leadership theories to bring forward the theoretical foundation for the authentic leadership process. Luthans and Avolio argued that the examination of state-like condition creates a contrast between positive organizational behavior and charisma, with organizational behavior being open to the development of psychological capacities as opposed to a trait-like characteristics. Of particular interest to Luthans and Avolio was that trait-like characteristics study does not lend itself to leadership development. These researchers postulated that trigger events (e.g., working with a new associate or developing a new project) stimulate positive development. Luthans and Avolio pointed out the importance of integrating context into predictions of leadership, determining the context best suited for leader development, being culturally self-aware, and self-regulating relying on an ethical underpinning to flex core values across disparate cultures. The current research considers the moral fabric as the answer to the paradox of SLB. It is hypothesized that when servant behavior is discerned by associates, extra effort through engagement is achieved.

Hoyt et al. (2013) theorized the leader central role expectation of organizational goal achievement contributes to moral permissibility in the means pursued in achieving those goals. Hoyt et al. investigated leader role influence on expectancy to obtain group goals finding evidence that those assigned a leader role to assign the central role of goal attainment or achievement. Investigating further through a one-way between-subject univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA), these researchers showed that simply assigning a person the role of leader influences greater valuation and contributes to leader motivation to reduce aversive psychological state through elevating group structure. Finally, examining goal importance and leader role through between-subjects ANOVA found that making goal attainment is the salient function that threatens the ethical decision-making process. The present research examines SLB for influence on associate engagement supposing that follower-focus behavior displaces concern for organizational priorities.

Schein (2010) argued, in its broadest sense, process refers more to how things are done rather than what is done. For progress to occur through a process, something must be initiated, but processes may be elusive and difficult to define. Most often, the process initiation falls to the leader, and in the learning culture, communication and information are central such that the leaders develop a highly integrated and diversified culture (Schein, 2010). Schein's idea mimics Greenleaf in acknowledging the paradox of learning leadership is the ability to listen. For leaders to influence change, they must recognize that cognitive redefinition occurs within the heads of many organizational members; this is possible only through follower involvement in the process (Schein, 2010). As Schein suggested, the world is a turbulent and unpredictable environment; thus, the leader and organizational members must be perpetual learners. Recognizing the dynamic of change, the current research investigates the influence of SLB on the organization's climate and the intention of members to share individual knowledge.

Sendjaya (2010) argued the practice of servant leadership emerges from an internal conviction with an element of gratitude in serving others. According to Sendjaya, motivation, if not from a higher being, emerges through a "set of core

values, ideals, or causes” (p. 45) that give life meaning. Sendjaya pointed out the leader’s conviction is to transform and develop others through moral courage, suggesting the leader is entrusted to elevate toward better selves and to fulfill their potential. For the present study, servant leadership is examined for the multiplying effects on other people toward positively influencing a sharing environment.

An early writer on leadership, Follett (1919) considered group psychology theory in arguing the self is always in flux emerging through relationships. For Follett, community is the result of intermingling that results in creative power from which purpose and will develop. When you put people together, a collective will and freedom emerge, transferring the consciousness from a single I to the group I. This unifying activity changes the quality of the community each moment such that as a process the community forgoes hierarchy (Follett, 1919). If we gain an understanding of the nature of the community, we shall see the fallacies of a preexisting purpose, which remains as insidious today as in the time of Follett. The present study examines the incidence of discernment, intention, and expectation according to individual perception of leader behavior and across work groups, which is expected to develop a quantitative measure of the climate development process. As Follett suggested, the goal is to study the challenge of achieving employee engagement in light of the climate as a process as opposed to an end state.

Ciulla (2010) argued that leadership attempts to engineer appropriate attitudes undercut actual feelings concerning the organization. The issue leadership addresses for most businesses is not developing freedom for employees, it is simply competitiveness. According to Ciulla, economic efficiency creates divisive values within workspaces, and the market makes the value of getting the job done more important than how people may be used to getting the job done. Ciulla acknowledged the people programs of the 20th century (e.g., scientific management and total quality management) implemented as systems assert control of production. Ciulla pointed out, however, that when moral action displaces economic intervention, business outcomes improve and are longer lasting. Power is a defining aspect of the moral relationship between people through the leadership



process, thus modern leadership consists of managing conflict between trust and power (Cuilla, 2010). Cuilla argued moral concepts are reciprocal, which exist only if inclusive in the leader–follower relationship. The present research tests the supposition that essential SLB influences a reciprocal nature through coworker sharing of knowledge.

Manville and Ober (2010) posited that today we live in a knowledge economy with the core assets of business being the understanding, skills, and experience of employees. Manville and Ober pointed out that worker autonomy is greater than a generation ago; however, limits to making decisions beyond their direct job function create feelings of disenfranchisement. Suggesting a leadership model based on the democratic structures of ancient Athens, these writers acknowledged three elements of ancient Athens community that provide a model of the organizational community: a right to self-determination, people are the state, and moral reciprocity. Moral reciprocity, according to Manville and Ober, is the essence in linking individual engagement and individual development with the organization's practices in how work is done, emerging and defined through its culture. If this is true, it is suspected that essential SLB through a moral framework positively influences employee engagement.

Foucault (1988) opposed a response to the Greek Delphic philosophical precept to know yourself, supposing its technical advice to know one's place. Foucault contrasted the Delphic thought, arguing to know yourself is through taking care of yourself within the context of the modern world, thus transforming knowledge of oneself because of knowing oneself to the knowledge of oneself as the fundamental principle. Foucault argued to know oneself is the work toward determining at what plateau self-identity occurs and how to care for the principal activity of the self, which Foucault persisted is the soul. Setting the practices by which an individual acquires and transforms into permanent action includes the character and moral behavior Foucault referred to as ethos and argued is the subjective process an individual puts himself or herself through to verify suitability to confront events. This is important to the current research in explaining intuitive powers. Follower-focused leadership serves to prevent gaps between objective

knowledge in a given situation and a probable good decision, which may limit a person's fulfillment and willingness to engage.

### **Organizations**

Senge (2006) argued that knowledge without collaboration is useless for it is how people work together that creates new value for the organization. Collaboration aids reflection, and reflection legitimizes the knowledge network (Senge, 2006). Through reflection, the knowledge network strengthens, and collaboration justifies existence; thus, the organization as a living system thrives. Senge pointed out that the biological sciences have gained interest in the knowledge age through the viewing of organizations as living systems and argued this shift moves the focus, overall, on integration, on interactions, and on systems inclusive of the observer. Pivotal to the present work is the supposition that Senge presented that love acts as the cornerstone in legitimizing the organization. A knowledge network exists through cognition, and collaborated action is created in social systems through which members legitimize others through acceptance. The present research evaluates the climate development capacity of SLB and tests knowledge networks for discernment and engagement.

Sah and Stiglitz (1985) pointed out to err is human while acknowledging all decision making is imperfect. Sah and Stiglitz described organization decision making occurs through polyarchy, hierarchy, or committee-type process, which leads to either acceptance or rejection by each individual, by all levels in a lockstep process, or through collections of individuals with clear decision-making rule through which they operate. These authors argued through complex organizations made up of polyarchy-hierarchy teams more good projects are accepted and bad projects rejected than can be expected through a single decision maker. As central to the servant leadership theory, the servant leader first listens and then serves the strongest needs of the follower, which Greenleaf (2002) hypothesized gives rise to the emergence of many decision makers; thus, as discernment of servant leader behavior increases the organizational of reciprocal behavior in knowledge should increase as well.

According to Andersen (2009), there is an organizational expectation of servant leadership, such as responsiveness and flexibility, which remains untested. Andersen suggested that as a transformational force, servant leadership adds a moral dimension to buffer the excesses of charismatic leadership and is provisional toward follower learning, growth, and autonomy. Andersen acknowledged the link between servant leadership and trust (see Joseph & Winston, 2005) in pointing out that the servant leader's supportive behavior is not reported in the extant literature. That servant leadership theory remains a concept often tested for leader characteristics has remained undervalued for contexts and influence, which may contribute to the languishing condition in achieving consensus in defining this construct. The present study investigates follower discernment, response, and effort that emerge under a perceived level of servant behavior exhibited by the leader.

De Sousa and Van Dierendonck (2014) studied servant leadership theory through an external context in a high uncertainty environment. Exploring to understand the potential detrimental effect of job demands on engagement during a merger, these researchers found that organizational identity and psychological empowerment act as mediating variables, indicating social identification and task motivation mechanisms. De Sousa and Van Dierendonck pointed out the discontinuous change occurring within complex organization environments increase job demands significantly and argued the servant leadership style positively and development of leadership skill in others. De Sousa and Van Dierendonck found that member discretionary effort influenced the relationship between servant leadership and engagement. The present study refines what De Sousa and Van Dierendonck proposed with a look through the lens of discernment. The predictive power of SLB on individual engagement remains veiled by follower discernment of the organizational context, which this investigation examines more closely through individual intention and expectation.

Giberson et al. (2005) argued organization homogeneity is achieved through member selection based on similarity in character and values. According to Schneider's attraction-selection-attribution theory, Giberson et al. supported the notion an organization may become homogeneous through the leader's personality

and the quality of interpersonal relationships with each other. These researchers investigated variability between member personality traits of the organization finding significant support for agreeableness and marginal support for values through intraclass correlation coefficients index, which compares within-group variability to the within-unit hypothetically, that is the expected variance. Additionally, Giberson et al. examined organizational model score related to leader scores through regression finding leader scores accounted for 21% of the variance in organizational personality and value scores. From the significance of the relationship between leader personality and organizational agreeableness, personality, and value, one may infer organizational environmental forces influence individually held values (Giberson et al., 2005). The thesis of the present study rests on the framework of essential SLB and its influence on the organizational environment. It is expected that the environment of the servant-led organization is helpful through sharing, and as sharing occurs employee effort is engaged.

Yukl (2010) noted leadership behavior through espoused values and visions, attention, and reaction to crises influence organizational culture. All organizations look to solve problems of internal integration (Yukl, 2010). Without a cooperative effort and reasonable stability, Yukl argued strategies cannot be initiated and objectives obtained. The underlying beliefs and assumptions of organizational members are largely implicit; thus, it is difficult to influence change. Yukl pointed out that the set of beliefs concerning distinctive competence, which differentiates an organization, is particularly important. The current study adds rich understanding of the environment-creating characteristics of SLB. It is expected that SLB has a positive influence on member reciprocal behavior.

Brass, Galaskiewicz, et al. (2004) defined a network as a “set of nodes and the set of ties representing some relationship or lack of relationship between the nodes” (p. 795). Brass et al.’s extensive review of network research highlights the importance of embedded networks of interconnected behavior causing social relationships. Within organizational contexts, the similarity in a relational concept only occurs through the similarity an individual has in respect to another individual and in relation to dissimilarity with others. Brass et al. noted that organizational

performance exists and is influenced by patterns of relationships and acknowledges interaction frequency and network size and diversity influence performance following change. Following the thought of Brass et al, that leadership is essentially an influence process and can be described as a network phenomenon, the present research evaluates the influence of SLB on the phenomenon of knowledge sharing across organizational functions expecting that stronger networks of knowledge sharing exist where follower discernment of servant leadership is strongest.

Brass and Krackhardt (1999) presumed that a person's communication, sense making, and behavior is based on his or her environment. Brass and Krackhardt conceptualized leadership from a social capital perspective through which change, coordination, and mission are completed through the level of leader relationships within social networks. These authors posited that the reciprocal nature of strong ties requires interpersonal skill in building relationships; however, the competitive advantage for organizations requires weak ties with individuals that help move information through organizational networks. Phenomenologically, leadership is an influence process described as including an entrepreneurial interest; thus, it is inferred that the leader's interest extends to leader skill to influence the performance of an organization and its subunits or departments (Brass & Krackhardt, 1999). Servant leadership theory has not been studied through the social network perspective, but the present study presumes SLB develops an open organizational climate and an environment through which information is shared through groups across the organization's structure.

Scott (2003) suggested organizations are diverse and complex entities consisting of patterned behavior (social structure); contributors who participate in exchange for some inducement and stakeholders with a variety of participation (social actors); conceptions of desired ends (goals); a place of some type of work (technology); and a specific physical, technological, cultural, and social environment (environment). Figure 2 depicts Leavitt's (1965) four internal elements of an organization with the addition of Scott's external environment. Scott argued viewing organizations as open systems concern the interactivity of tightly

connected activities and as components of the larger interrelated structure. Scott's open system narrative stresses the cultural–cognitive elements in the construction of the organization, which denotes the ideas, models, and schemes of expectation important in the current research. It is theorized that SLB, in fulfilling the most basic need of followers, positively influences shared reciprocal behavior of knowledge sharing. Leavitt's four-element model with Scott's addition of the environment model is useful in explaining the strength of relationships through an organization's interdepartmental relationships such as a healthcare or public safety system. The present research expects stronger interdepartmental knowledge sharing to have a positive influence on worker engagement.

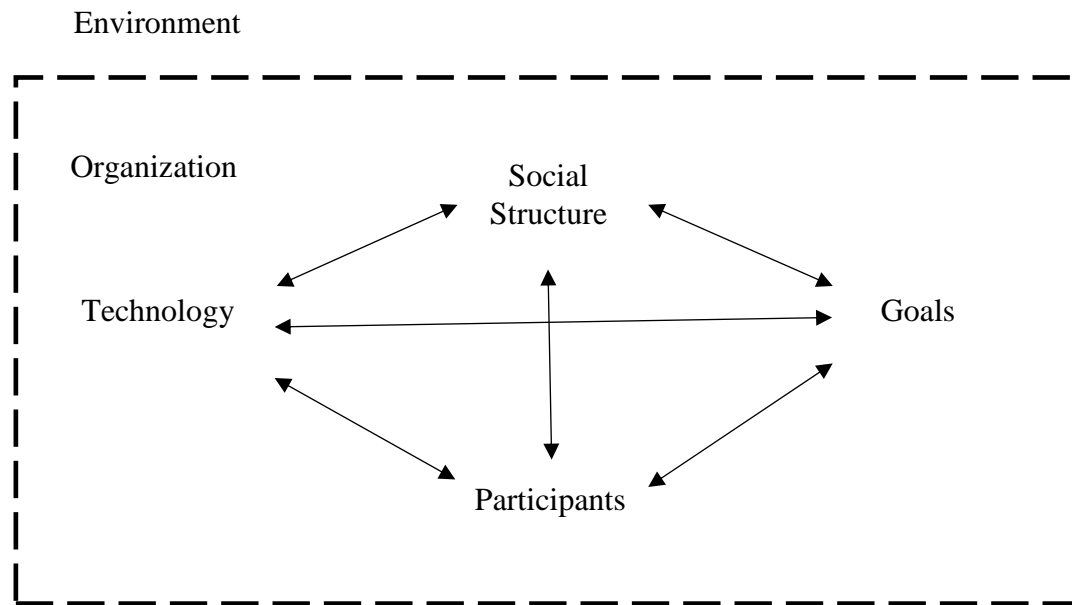


Figure 2: Leavitt's interaction diamond: A model of organization. From *Organizations: Rational, Natural and Open Systems* (Figure 1-1, p. 18), by W. R. Scott, 2003, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Through qualitative techniques, Tsai (2002) examined coordination mechanisms on knowledge sharing within intraorganizational networks. According to Tsai, centralization is a fundamental dimension of organizational design and exists through the authoritative relations of a hierarchical structure. The pattern of interunit social interaction occurred through a sociometric questionnaire to counter the systematic interdependence and autocorrelation tendency in relational data. Tsai

used the quadratic assignment procedure multiple regression technique, which confirmed a positive relationship between informal lateral relations and member sharing of knowledge. This contrasts with Tsai's finding on the negative influence between centralized hierarchical communication and knowledge sharing. This is contradictory to the conventional wisdom finding that centralization facilitates the flow of information through organizations. Coordinating the flow of knowledge is critical to enhancing organizational competitive capabilities. Through the paradoxical recollections of servant leadership, the current study proposes an alternative to hierarchical-guided organizational communication to create a climate open to the expectation of sharing knowledge.

Mehra et al. (2006) studied the influence of leader centrality on organizational social networks based on the perception of subordinates, peers, and supervisors. Acknowledging information flows more naturally within than across a group, Mehra et al. pointed out it is the density of informal relationships within the social network more so than centrality in supervisory hierarchy that influenced performance. The influence of follower-focused moral-based leadership behavior on lateral relationships has not been studied. Developing from Mehra et al., the thesis of this study builds upon a framework that servant leadership positively influences leader development through reciprocal relations and commonality in knowledge sharing across unit lines and through groups. It is expected that as shared follower perception of SLB by supervisors increases, worker sharing of knowledge and organizational engagement increases.

March and Olsen (1983) suggested organizational customs change and emerge from social movements through restructuring into relationally complex social structures formed through political ideology conflict. March and Olsen argued within organizations social forces emerge as political phenomena, which through their analysis of extant literature concerning political theory suggest function through the organizational climate. March and Olsen suggested the role of leadership is that of the broker is implicit within political processes acting as provisional in facilitating coalitions and interacting with others to co-opt new beliefs. The present research acknowledges the complex nature of the organization

in suggesting SLB is helpful in assisting followers to form meaning within social contexts.

Krackhardt and Hanson (1993) acknowledged some leaders attempt to exert position power over informal networks within organizations. Using network analysis to investigate employee participation in decision making, Krackhardt and Hanson argued, develops autonomy, creates trust that facilitates trust links, and assists leader-developed relationships. Leader relationships create conjoined leader–follower behavior, which must exist essentially throughout the network to develop nodes of task-force members to achieve mutually agreed-upon strategies (Krackhardt & Hanson, 1993). Believing the servant leader’s behavior is discernable as moral through the employee’s observation, the current research presumes the existence of network trust nodes emerge through which reciprocal behavior in knowledge sharing and engagement is expected.

Shaw (2002) presented the idea that social practices, culture, and politics are merely social constructs understood as maps, which develop as intentions through systems thinking. According to Shaw, systems thinking becomes a theory of the observer and develops as specific models to explicate worldview within specific situations. Rather than identifying a specific truth, these models contrast blueprints of design by acting as conceptual models helping people picture their socially created environment. Pointing out the organization as an autonomous self-organizing entity, Shaw acknowledged the emergent properties of an organization from the interaction of individuals and groups. Within the present study, it is expected that SLB positively influences systems thinking and emerges through a high occurrence of shared expectation.

Brass (1984) examined the relationship between structural position and individual influence as conceptualized from the social network perspective. Defining structure as the “enduring characteristics of an organization reflected by the distribution of units and positions within an organization and their systematic relationships with each other” (p. 519), Brass pointed out task positions created through labor division and the interrelationships or interdependencies among positions are central to this definition. Concerning workflow networks, the



interdependencies among individuals are established by recurring inputs and outputs as workflows through the organization. Through the sociometric method, Brass found that within the workflow network reciprocated behavior was high among network members and is often identified as inputs and outputs between departments. According to Brass, the access measures reflected direct relationships with others and indirect relationship mediated by the direct relationship indicating a person with high access may be associated individually as well as integrated with a reference group. From a structural perspective, strong support exists for individual influence. The present project includes a sample population performing patient care functions within a healthcare facility. It is presumed that employees must share knowledge within unit workgroups and other units across the organization. It is expected that when the individuals and groups rate a high instance of knowledge sharing by others it will have a positive influence on reciprocated behavior.

Writing from the biologist perspective, Maturana and Varela (1987) described the altruistic behavior as actions that benefit the group. Maturana and Varela postulated altruistic behavior is geared toward adaptation within the environment. According to these authors, the behavior is learned through observation and experience to be transformed into knowledge, which through reflection contains an ethical element. Through the biological perspective, Maturana and Varela pointed out the uniqueness of being human entails the dynamic of reflective reasoning in the acceptance of others known as love. Surmising that anything that undermines acceptance, ranging from competency, possession of the truth, to ideological certainty, undermines the social process, love is the biological foundation of social process (Maturana & Varela, 1987). Important to the thesis of the current research is love as the cornerstone of SLB. The structural patterns of the organization include every emotion (e.g., fear, anger, and joy) and are stepping stones to interactions that lead to operational coherence. Thus, it is expected that higher levels of servant behavior have a positive influence on employee engagement in reciprocal helpful behavior.

Denison et al. (1995) described leadership as “the ability to perform the multiple roles and behaviors that circumscribe the requisite variety implied by an

organizational or environmental context” (p. 525) in presenting the behavioral complexity skills required for appropriate leader response. Denison et al. argued the complexity of leader behavior exists through a paradox theory, which suggests a leader who is able to respond appropriately to a wide range of situations requiring contrary or opposing behavior is more effective. Thus, effective leaders draw on a variety of behavioral repertoire in performing their jobs and achieve higher levels of subordinate follower perception of leader roles. The present investigation looks through the lens of behavioral complexity and brings fresh knowledge to Denison et al. through the test of follower discernment of leader behavior. It is hypothesized that higher levels of servant leader style when discerned by followers positively influences the relationships between SLB and anticipated reciprocal relationship and affect attitude and intention to share knowledge.

### **Social Identity**

Braye (2002) argued leadership starts with self. Self-awareness creates the framework within which one can be in touch with reality (Braye, 2002). Acting on perceptions, foresight, along with self-awareness, forms a framework through which ideas and knowledge can be shared. To help followers learn to lead as servant leaders from a systems perspective, it is important to be aware of these characteristics relative to the social structure and the situation (Braye, 2002). The current study’s design tests the influence of servant behavior on the organizational design and posits that an expectation of reciprocal helping expectation aligns with follower perception of SLB.

Kierkegaard regarded self as spirit described as a synthesis of the infinite and finite with an existence at variance with his or her ideal nature and its opposite (Bretall, 1946). Kierkegaard supposed of the self in relation to how one related to one’s self, which Bretall (1946) explained as an investigation of self and extends to the individual’s will with a nature of despair. For Kierkegaard, hope emerges through the individual’s soul, through spirit emerges from God’s power, and exists through faith. Conceptually, the present study presumes ethical leader behavior emerges through individual spirit and exhibits as servant behavior.

M. K. Smith (2001) pointed out that demands for intuitive leaders capable of managing human capital resources such as human intellect and knowledge application and converting it to growth have overtaken the organizational need for managing capital, raw materials, and labor. According to M. K. Smith, the ability to acquire and retain tacit knowledge are hallmarks of leadership success. With as much as 90% of organizational knowledge embedded in peoples' heads, risk of loss exists through retention rates. M. K. Smith argued the sense of identity and shared understanding of the type of world lived in are key to organizations dominating emerging technologies. Knowledge management is a social process, which M. K. Smith pointed out is technical or cognitive and made up of mental models, values, beliefs, and perceptions. The implicit mental models and perceptions of cognitive tacit knowledge are so ingrained they affect how individuals make sense of the world, are used to convey meaning, and are shared using metaphors and analogies. M. K. Smith argued it is easier to transform explicit knowledge into tacit knowledge when people cooperate and willingly contribute their own valuable knowledge resources. The present study theorizes SLB facilitates and reinforces openness and trust such that followers anticipate a sharing environment.

Bakker (2011) pointed out the positive influence of increased social support, autonomy, learning opportunities, and feedback on future work engagement. According to Bakker, an individual's sense of ability to control and have an impact on his or her environment is linked to positive self-evaluations. Positive evaluation furthermore predicts goal setting, motivation, and performance. Stated differently, the more positive the individual's self-regard, the more self-concordance is expected, which influences intrinsic motivation to accomplish goals, thus they trigger performance and satisfaction (Bakker, 2011). Bakker acknowledged little is known of how leaders influence follower engagement, which the current research contributes to filling the gap through investigating the influence of SB on the employee's contribution to the environmental development and ultimately job engagement.

Markos and Sridevi (2010) pointed out that concepts such as total quality management and business process reengineering endeavored through the last half

of the 20th century to focus on developing operational process improvements. Nowadays the knowledge worker with advanced skills expects operational autonomy and management tools of controlling operational excellence do not work well. According to Markos and Sridevi, organizations realize focusing on employee engagement has a positive influence on organizational efficiency, and engagement touches all parts of human resource management. Clearly, the employee–organization relationship in achieving employee engagement is understudied—a gap this research closes through evaluating essential SLB influence on organizational motivation and employee engagement.

Consiglio et al. (2016) argued work engagement is a determinant in employee well-being and performance and related to both job resources and personal resources. According to Consiglio et al., through social cognitive theory, self-efficacy may be the pervasive element of primary personal resource to promote engagement. Drawing from social cognitive theory, Consiglio et al. found through two-wave methodology, self-efficacy is strongly linked to the perception of social context at T1 and work engagement at T2. To emphasize the role of self-efficacy, it is hypothesized work engagement is relative to changes in the employee’s perception of the organization’s social context. The self-directive nature of self-efficacy has intrinsic motivation characteristics, which Consiglio et al. posited direct employee effort and persistence, thus the present study presumes higher levels of employee perception of ESLB positively influence employee self-efficacy and are shown through higher engagement.

Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) described work engagement as an “effective motivational, work-related state of fulfillment” (p. 235) in their examination of a reciprocal model of the relationship between job and relational resources and work engagement. Finding a positive relationship between employee feelings of job autonomy, supportive coworkers, proper coaching, and quality feedback and engagement, Xanthopoulou et al. argued relationships formed through quality exchanges explained through social exchange theory produce effective behavior and positive attitude among workers. Xanthopoulou et al. posited a reciprocal occurrence in a resourceful job environment where employees feel competent and

valued. In such an environment, these researchers found job satisfaction and personal resources are reciprocal such that through learning experiences individuals may form stronger positive self-evaluations and form a more resourceful work environment. This research draws from conservation of resources theory evaluating how employees mobilize their knowledge resources through the stressful environment of healthcare. It is believed that when employees perceive a higher level of essential SLB, work engagement increases through a helpful environment of reciprocal knowledge sharing.

Rich et al. (2010) conceptualized engagement as an individual's complete investment of self into a role. Rich et al. argued work and organizational factors related to roles are the primary drivers in job meaningfulness. In acknowledging individual perception of their work context and their own characteristics foster emotional energy, which has a positive influence on work performance, these researchers pointed out results in improved coworker relationships that help meet greater job role demands. Rich et al.'s investigation included the mediating role of engagement in the relationship between value congruence and core self-evaluation. Finding strong statistical support, they evaluated further discovery statistical support in the indirect influence of variables with little statistical support, such as self-evaluations and performance—this implies engagement as explanatory in organizational performance. It is not clear through Rich et al. the influence of engagement across organizational functions or in out-of-role activities. The present study evaluates cross-unit engagement within the context of SLB, which is expected to develop a positive social climate.

Johns (2006) defined context as behavior constraints and opportunities that construct meaning in organizational behavior and functional relationships between variables. This makes an essential point concerning context, which Johns acknowledged as a subtle interaction with personal variables or a powerful effect on organizational characteristics. The point here is to develop an understanding of the situation, which according to Johns, occurs through the context of the organization. If we do not understand the situation, we lose understanding of the person–situation interactions. Social structure is through differentiation (i.e., tenure,

gender, and in-group/out-group). Johns pointed out knowing someone's occupation permits reasonable inferences about his or her task and social environment and can be used to predict behavior and attitude; thus, research designs should be employed to better reflect contextual influence. The present study examines how behavior unfolds through the self-reported occurrence of knowledge sharing and designed to be evaluated as an individual expectation. It is felt a picture of situational strength emerges through multiple dependent variables within the study's design.

Mowday and Sutton (1993) pointed out that organizational context proximity constraints shape behavior understanding of an organization. For instance, radiology technicians who operate in the static department interact mainly with themselves while their counterparts who operate throughout a hospital and interact across functions have a profound effect on their interdepartmental behavior. Mowday and Sutton acknowledged the mere presence of contextual variables does not mean they will develop behavior. They pointed out context must be noticed and construed as important by individuals and groups if it is to influence behavior. This does not mean that context should form behavior, for importance in a research perspective it is important to confirm contextual variables, which does not shape behavior as those who do power behavior. The current research focuses on cohesiveness and interaction patterns and expects that according to the attraction–selection–attrition model, negative reaction within organizations may emerge from demographic dissimilarities.

### **Linking Servant Leader Behavior, Knowledge Sharing, and Engagement**

Thompson (2004) argued leaders turn to the assumed qualities of respect and tolerance in reason to cultivate an organizational culture of moral clarity. Thompson conceptualized moral clarity inclusive of genuine respect and tolerance as a framework through which the human spirit emerges. Thompson conceived leadership as a moral endeavor through the exercise of power in the constructive effort to engage others in an environment, which encourages individuals and groups to “discern and actualize the right and the good” (p. 28) in fulfillment of purpose. Thompson pointed to identity (i.e., understanding who one is) and agency

(i.e., understanding what one does) as the two primary dimensions of human self-understanding. The nature of the way humans is materially and socially enmeshed form legitimacy through culture, which shape moral consciousness (Thompson, 2004). The present research exists through a framework of follower-focused leadership established through calling, which implies a spiritual basis of self-identity. Thus, it may be inferred that leadership behavior as an independent variable is not legitimized until follower discernment occurs.

Clegg (1989) defined organizations as arenas where agencies, powers, networks, and interests are construed. Clegg argued the relations of production are relations of meaning constituted by a moral universe of meaning, which may merely exist in a struggle for autonomy and control. According to Clegg, power argued as anything other than as a property of relations becomes confused with causal mechanisms. Speaking of the control of assets, Clegg referred to skills and knowledge as ownership of the means and product of production as a contractual resource of employee empowerment. The implications of Clegg advance a double focus of the organization in two prototypical forms—one with the person as the agent of signification and another as the person as an agent of production—implying employees as sources of discursive and bodily capacities of resistance. The present study contrasts Clegg's supposition of employees as subjects of organization contractual power where the action is an indeterminate outcome of struggles through investigating the positive influence of follower-focused leadership observed by employees. It is expected that the knowledge organization consists of employees with the way and means of organizational performance; thus, employees are better seen as the loci of decision and action.

According to Whetstone (2002), servant leaders understand their calling to lead is to serve, to listen first, and cultivate trust may be viewed as a weakness and open to manipulation. Whetstone conceived that servant leaders abandon their own preconceptions of how best to serve others, wait, and listen, allowing others to fully develop and articulate their own needs. Conceptualizing servant leader behavior as a person-centric action and inclusive of subjectivity, autonomy, and dignity termed *personalist style leadership*. Whetstone suggested this is reactive to the intellectual

and social–political tendencies of an individual. Servant leadership involves embracing the power of responsible relationships with oneself and those within other areas and departments of the organization. The current study investigates the development of individual relationships within the context of organizational climate.

### **Hypothesis**

Teece (1998) acknowledged the study of knowledge transfer remained background theory through much of the 20th century and has since modified the nature of strategy within the economies of developed countries. Teece pointed out that in this century developed economies have transformed from material production to the processing of information and transfer of knowledge. Seizing opportunities involve cognitive and management skills to discern and act upon a developing technology or response to an occurrence. Teece argued recognizing strategic errors, navigating a correction, and adjusting accordingly is key to remaining successful. Specifically, according to Teece, there appears to be a relationship between the codification of knowledge and the cost of its transfer, conversely uncodified tacit knowledge is slow and costly to transfer. The current work considers knowledge for expertise and competence as Teece suggested assets as a competitive advantage only as far as they are uncontainable through trade. This research seeks to extend knowledge as a renewable resource through reciprocal behavior and as a performance extender through employee engagement.

Drawing from research on work engagement, contingent leadership, and social capital, De Clercq et al. (2014) investigated the relationship between servant leadership and work engagement, hypothesizing that a positive relationship should be moderated by level leader–follower goal congruence and social interaction. Through moderated multiple regression analyses, they found the significant statistical support that when followers perceived higher levels of servant leadership they exhibit stronger work engagement; similarly, as leader–follower relationship gained goal congruency, the effectiveness of servant leadership increased. Plotting for interaction effects of the moderators reflected as servant leadership strengthened



with goal congruency and social interaction has a positive influence on work engagement. Showing the potency of servant leadership influences discretionary effort and leader–follower relationship through goal congruency and interaction acts as an enabler of servant leadership enhancement. De Clerq et al. provided insights into the environment creating capacity of servant leadership, which the current study extends through investigation of coworker relationships and specific performance in sharing of knowledge through the organization.

Rai and Prakash (2012) acknowledged a shift toward leadership as a relational process and a gradual acceptance of the idea of a relational self and rejection of humans as primarily individual beings and indicated the significance of a relational approach to leadership. Rai and Prakash conceptualized a servant leadership model linking servant leadership to knowledge creation through a process of shared leadership and proposing servant leadership is positively related to caring relationships that stimulate knowledge creation. Through a framework of shared leadership facilitated and enhanced through SLB, these authors postulated achieving a collective influence and directional process among members. The work presented here tests Rai and Prakash’s proposed model precipitated on organizational relational ties and achieved through factors including a bidirectional influence process between leaders and followers and emphasizing participation, trust, empowerment, and autonomy.

Parris and Peachey’s (2013) systematic literature review explored the organizational context of servant leadership. Utilizing the matrix method for organizing research articles and then grading out systematically giving an A, B, or C based on the quality of study found qualitative and quantitative support for servant leadership as a tenable theory with viable and valuable on the individual and organizational level. Parris and Peachey acknowledged conceptual and empirical support extending servant leadership as a positive influence on follower well-being through creating a positive work climate, positive work outcomes, and encouraging helping behaviors. Parris and Peachey’s review highlights a conspicuous gap in literature pertaining to the organizational outcomes of servant

leadership. The current paper adds to the knowledge concerning the nature of the organizational climate established through the influence of essential SLB.

Russell (2001) argued values as the core element of servant leadership with humility and respect for others as primary functional elements. According to Russell, interpersonal relationships and organizational trust emerge from leader values, such as honesty and integrity. Leaders who appreciate others and reflect love in behavior are able to incorporate empathy, patience, and encouragement into their leadership style. Ultimately, according to Russell, empowerment emerges within the trusting climate. The current research proposes to test the climate-forming properties of essential SLB and posits that higher levels of follower discernment of essential SLB have a positive influence on employee engagement.

Conceptualizing leader integrity emerges from humility, Russell and Stone (2002) proposed servant behavior rests on four essential values: (a) truthfulness, (b) promise keeping, (c) fairness, and (d) respectfulness. Through integrity, Russell and Stone pointed out servant leaders establish appropriate power, which exists visibly through interactions with followers. Russell and Stone acknowledged the power in terms of influence toward change through reciprocal relationships, which produce power and influence. The model conceived by Russell and Stone suggests servant leaders as an independent variable emerging through leader value attributes that conceptually have a governing effect on performance. The current research proposes to extend Russell and Stone's research by examining the influence of servant leadership on organizational behavior and investigates engagement as a performance variable.

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) reviewed the extant literature to develop servant leadership characteristics in a framework of awareness. Barbuto and Wheeler argued that through selflessness servant leadership emerges as a calling with a behavior pattern, which increases follower commitment and develops as positive relationships. The prosocial behaviors, which are reciprocal in nature, create and sustain organization environment, which Barbuto and Wheeler postulated demonstrate a commitment to follower development and growth. Finally, Barbuto and Wheeler developed servant leadership characteristics that

provide a better predictor of leader–member exchange quality, demonstrating a positive influence on organizational relationships. The present study infers that servant leadership develops a climate of reciprocal expectation, such that follower intention to share throughout the organization is favorably influenced as followers rate their leaders higher in essential SLB.

Liden, Wayne, Zhao, et al. (2008) acknowledged servant leadership is an ill-defined construct; extant literature has failed to provide consistency of dimensions. These authors pointed out servant leadership as a multidimensional construct and contended that the relationships that form are central to servant leadership theory. Through hierarchical linear modeling, Liden, Wayne, Zhao, et al. determined the leader's ethical behavior positively influences follower's in-role task performance. Liden, Wayne, Zhao, et al. developed support for a set of behavioral dimensions and suggested leader behaviors accepted by subordinates are useful to follower development. These researchers left open the question of follower acceptance of servant leadership; the present study extends knowledge of SLB through the investigation of follower discernment of leader behavior.

Reed et al. (2011) investigated the executive-level leader from the follower's perspective. Examining servant leadership for yet an additional scale, these researchers operationalized servant leadership theory through the shared dimensions of ethical leadership. Reed et al. suggested ethical leadership is more consistent with transactional-style leadership (see Winston & Fields, 2015) than transformational but closely related to transformational due in part to the act of setting expectations. Looking to identify practices that characterize positive ethical climates, these writers found through meta-analysis that commitment develops through caring climates and acknowledged that when followers perceive self-interest, it permeates the climate concern for their other members, leaders, and the organization. Through a practitioner's perspective, the present writer contrasts Reed et al.'s suggestion that executive leaders as a second-order factor operationalize servant leadership separately from first-order factors as indicated by high correlation among first-order factors. This research expects to find direct

supervisors drive climate and show that when caring leadership through SLB is perceived, employee involvement in knowledge sharing and engagement increases.

Dannhauser and Boshoff (2006) studied the relationship between the level of servant leadership as perceived by the follower and trust in management, organization, and coworkers. Dannhauser and Boshoff also investigated the influence of demographic variables on these relationships. Multiple regression analyses indicated team commitment achieved greater influence through coworker trust than through trust in the organization or manager. According to Dannhauser and Boshoff, gender had no significant influence on any examined variable. The current research extends Dannhauser and Boshoff's findings by exploring leader behavior influence on coworker response and expectation of a reciprocal climate between workers and supervisors.

Distinguishing the servant-first mentality as an act, Focht and Ponton (2015) separated this action from any form of leadership. To form a definition of greater clarity, Focht and Ponton identified the primary characteristics of servant leadership through a Delphi study. Using a series of questionnaires distributed to multiple samples and through multiple iterations, Focht and Ponton identified humility as a primary characteristic of servant leadership along with valuing people, listening, trust, caring, integrity, service, empowering, service attitude, collaboration, unconditional love, and learning. The present study investigates the characteristics of essential elements of servant behavior for distinction in forming follower sharing behavior and worker engagement.

Ling et al. (2016) investigated the trickle-down effect of servant leadership from top to mid-level leaders within China. Ling et al. continued a trend within servant leadership literature to reject established measures for their study opting to develop new interpretations of the phenomenon. Interestingly, these researchers initiated conversation concerning shared perceptions of behaviors and climate as a variable, suggesting organizational outcomes result as a function of situational attributes during interactions. One may infer from this that it is not research for cause and effect but more so an investigation of contributing factors or influence on the organizational climate. Examining employee ratings of supervisors through

aggregation of survey results across individuals within the same group and hierarchal linearity regression revealed a significant positive relationship between SLB and group service climate. Similarly, the current research investigates the phenomenon of service level in coworker exchange supposing that as SLB strengthens the individual exchange of knowledge across the organization and individual engagement increases.

Pointing out that job resources satisfy human needs such as the need for autonomy and to belong, Bakker (2011) argued these variables play a motivational role in work environments. Bakker posited that the engaged employee creates his or her own resources. That is, when an employee meets feedback through exposure to coworker support or feedback from his or her supervisor, the employee experiences a higher state of work engagement. The present study theorizes the organizational climate is an important determinate of worker engagement. If Bakker is right when individuals discern the essential SLB of their supervisor, then engagement through higher levels of knowledge sharing is expected.

Hypothesizing engagement as a positive relationship with one's work comprises the constructs of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Alarcon and Lyons (2011) examined engagement as a construct separate from satisfaction. Through a series of fit tests on a split sample, Alarcon and Lyons determined the factor structure containing vigor, dedication, and absorption had adequate fit with Sample 1 ( $N = 530$ ) and Sample 2 ( $N = 531$ ) with chi-square difference testing indicating the three-factor solution better fit the data than did a single-factor solution. Noting that job satisfaction has to do with one's perception of the job one does, whereas engagement has to do with the work one does, Alarcon and Lyons, through structural equation modeling and hierarchal regression, determined engagement and job satisfaction are distinct constructs. The current study seeks to add knowledge concerning the predictors of engagement within a knowledge industry through essential SLB and the desire of coworkers to interact and share knowledge.

Tohidinia and Mosakhani (2010) examined factors of influence on knowledge-sharing behavior within organizational context through the theory of planned behavior (TPB) evaluating elements, including attitude toward the

behavior, perceived behavioral control, and intention to share knowledge. Through structural equation modeling, Tohidinia and Mosakhani examined self-efficacy, anticipated relationships, and expected extrinsic rewards on individual attitude toward the intention to share knowledge. Finding a positive and significant influence on perceived self-efficacy and attitude toward knowledge sharing, they found no significant influence between extrinsic rewards and attitude toward sharing. The present study expects to extend the findings of Tohidinia and Mosakhani by investigating the effect of essential SLB on intention to share knowledge. The higher the servant behavior, as perceived by the employee, the greater a sharing organizational climate is expected.

Arguing that knowledge is neither necessary nor sufficient for effective action, Ajzen et al. (2011) conceptualized that TPB predicts intentions and behavior. In TPB, Ajzen et al. acknowledged that individual beliefs may be faulty, mere dreaming, or unrepresented of available information; however, these beliefs guide behavior and intention. Specifically, the consequences of behavioral beliefs are assumed as causation toward behavior attitude. Suggesting information within certain domains as central to decision making does not make it necessary that the information be accurate for the decision to be made, Ajzen et al. found the support that knowledge can be predictive of attitudes and behavior. These authors argued TPB focuses on the proximal antecedents of the behavior and has a high degree of predictive accuracy concerning attitudes, norms, and perceptions of control. By testing the intention of organizational members to share knowledge, the present study should more accurately reflect the effect of leadership style on organizational climate and the intentional behavior of organizational members.

Studying intentions and perceived behavioral control through the theories of planned behavior and reasoned action, Ajzen (2002) noted that intention to perform a given behavior is captured through motivational factors. Ajzen suggested behavior involves salient beliefs relevant to the behavior, which are indications of how much effort individuals are willing to exert to perform the behavior. Achieving the behavior, according to Ajzen, depends on motivation and ability; as such, intentions are expected to influence performance to the extent the person has

control over behavior and the felt likelihood of success. This is helpful in explaining the intentions and expectation of coworker discernment within the present research. If given resources and SLB opportunities are recognized, there is a higher likelihood of engaging performance.

Supposing moral leadership presupposes an understanding of the needs of others, Krishnan (2003) argued that perception match between leaders and others affect the impact of moral leadership on power. Examining for the extent of leader perception–other perception agreement, Krishnan found that self-reports underestimate the degree of concern for others exhibited through transformational leadership behavior. Krishnan noted that leaders who underestimate their transformational leadership behavior may be motivated through humility. If this is true, I expect greater follower perception of essential SLB to reflect in greater leader power to influence the environment such that an expectation of sharing will exist at greater levels.

Hunter et al. (2013) evaluated the relationship between servant leadership, personality, and follower and organizational outcomes. Hunter et al. proposed that leader agreeableness and extraversion have a positive influence on coworker helping behavior, which emerges through reciprocated behavior and decreased withdrawal. Applying role modeling and social exchange theories, these researchers found statistical support for the beneficial effects of SLB on follower helping behavior. Hunter et al. suggested through mimicking the servant leader's humble service and reciprocation through social exchange, followers act in response to the service they have received. Using aggregation statistics, strong interrater agreement was found for performance behavior, and regression modeling showed a positive relationship between follower-perceived servant leadership and follower helping behavior as well as partial mediation between leader servant behavior and service climate. The present research expects that when the follower discerns essential SLB, it has a mediating effect between servant leadership and a willingness and expectation to share knowledge.

Van Dierendonck (2011) noted a shift in research emphasis from a notable focus on transformational leadership toward a shared relational perspective focused

on the leader–follower relational element. Van Dierendonck acknowledged the servant leader being motivated beyond the need for power by the need to serve. This counterintuitive notion of a servant before command has left the servant leadership theory in a quagmire of characteristics emerging from within a myriad of operational measures and theoretical insights, which Van Dierendonck pieced together attempting to develop a common core conceptual model and theoretical framework. Unique to servant leadership when compared with similar leadership styles (e.g., authentic, ethical, spiritual, empowering, and Level 5), according to Van Dierendonck, is its combined motivation to become a leader with the need to serve. Van Dierendonck highlighted the innate psychological needs of feeling competent, feeling connected to others, and autonomously developing a sense of self-determination essential to servant leadership. For the present research, it is posited that SLB creates a sharing environment, and when followers rate leaders higher in servant behavior, coworkers share knowledge and engage at a higher rate.

According to Serrat (2010), people engage when they feel appreciated and involved—Serrat’s supposition cannot be forced and includes a cognitive, emotional, social, and physical dimension. Serrat acknowledged organizations are communities in which employer–employee relations matter. The reciprocal nature of the relationship between perceptions of the organization’s climate and the collective motivation to perform is explained through social exchange theory. The current research explores the collective effort of an organization through the lens of a servant-led organization. It is proposed that SLB has a positive influence on the collective will of an organization to perform.

Developing from TPB and self-determination theory (SDT), Gagné (2003) presented a model of knowledge-sharing motivation described as “the process of mutually exchanging knowledge and jointly creating new knowledge” (p. 572) and suggested this implies collaboration of individuals working toward a common goal through conjoined knowledge sharing, helping, and prosocial behavior. Gagné’s conceptual model proposes that autonomous motivation predicts the intention to share knowledge and is consistent with TPB; attitude toward knowledge sharing predicts intention, and autonomous motivation predicts intentions. In other words,



people's attitudes toward sharing are positively influenced when they internalize value in sharing knowledge. The present research contributes to sparse quantitative research concerning the social relationships of organizational knowledge sharing.

Walumbwa et al. (2010) noted that servant leaders transcend self-interest and act to develop the skills, knowledge, and abilities of followers, creating a social context in which followers reciprocate through extrarole prosocial behavior. According to Walumbwa et al., when leaders engage in selfless and supporting behavior, followers engage through supportive exchange with coworkers. These authors supposed servant leadership may influence specific workgroup climates through an implicit process through which workers develop views based on the source of leader behavior data. Suggesting that the workgroup climate influences behavior through revealing group values and expectations, Walumbwa et al. found support through ANOVA investigation that aggregating work climate indicated significant group effect. This is important to the present research methodology, which includes cross-level examination through follower discernment and attitude and intention to share knowledge on the relationship between SLB and anticipated reciprocal relationship.

Through a sociocognitive theoretical framework, Sun (2013) presented servant leadership through an organizational context that influences the behavioral disposition of leaders with the servant identity. According to Sun, servant leaders cognitively refer through humility, empathy, and agape love to process socially relevant information to form their sense of self. Situational cues trigger action and engagement within organizations, which Sun argued is through the context of leader behavior influence. According to Sun, organizational context encompasses the structure, climate, and culture of the organization characterized by discipline, collective identity, and support. The current research examines the organizational climate developed through SLB; it is expected that follower discernment of SLB influences coworker sharing of knowledge.

Bock et al. (2005) acknowledged individual knowledge does not easily transform into organizational knowledge. Knowledge sharing takes time and effort, which exist with the dilemma that knowledge contributed to the good of the

organization can be used by others whether they contribute or not (Bock et al., 2005). Bock et al. investigated the underlying factors of worker attitudes toward and regarding the intention to share knowledge. Through two second-order variables (organizational climate and knowledge sharing intention), these authors found the support that organizational climate influences intention to share knowledge.

Gouldner (1960) noted two points concerning the social functions of the norm of reciprocity: this norm serves as a group stabilizing function, and the norm operates as a stabilizing and starting mechanism. Gouldner argued that the principle of reciprocity is the basis for all social and ethical life. According to Gouldner, social equilibrium exists through the reciprocity of service. This implies that the norm of reciprocity imposes social obligations in so much as the individual actors are capable; however, it does not necessarily mean there is agreement in the individual's ability to reciprocate. Gouldner acknowledged the norm of reciprocity may lead to relation only with those who can reciprocate; thus, the possibility exists that the needs of those unable to do so may be neglected. The current project investigates the possible risk-limiting property of essential SLB in reciprocal behavior postulating that SLB has a positive influence on coworker reciprocal behavior.

Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) developed a framework for the study of complexity leadership theory as a leadership paradigm and adaptive capacity of the complex adaptive system within the context of knowledge-producing organizations. According to Uhl-Bien et al., complex adaptive systems are “neural-like networks” (p. 299) bounded in a cooperative dynamic, such as common goal, outlook, and need, which emerges in social systems. The condition, however, must exist for a complex adaptive system to emerge, such as individuals must be capable of interacting with each other, within the environment, and be interdependently related. The current study supposes that complex adaptive systems explain the path of servant leadership theory, which enables conditions for and facilitates the flow of knowledge through an organization.

Deci and Ryan (2000) argued that social contexts along with individual differences motivate behavior through basic need satisfaction, which facilitates growth processes. Deci and Ryan point out that activity pursued out of interest (i.e., intrinsic motivation) or found personally meaningful (i.e., identified regulation) and though lightly researched has been shown to contrast controlled motivation (i.e., reward or pressure) in triggering a reciprocity orientation. Deci and Ryan wrote that SDT explains the consideration of innate psychological needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Deci and Ryan explained phenomena of basic psychological need and provided a framework for integrating findings and deriving new hypotheses, which the present author finds useful in explaining the follower-felt response to essential SLB.

Chiniara and Bentein (2016) suggested autonomy as the most salient psychological need and identified as vital in fulfilling intrinsic motivation. Chiniara and Bentein proposed the attentive nature and development of follower focus of servant leadership theory have a positive influence on psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which fuel individual performance. Adapting a version of Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, DeWitte, Soenens, and Lens's (2010) study to operationalize and investigate basic need satisfaction at work, Chiniara and Bentein found support for the positive influence of autonomy need satisfaction related to task performance. The current research extends Chiniara and Bentein's research by investigating essential SLB on helpful knowledge exchange expectation between coworkers.

Ryan and Deci (2006) argued that autonomy is essential not only to individual mental health but critical to optimal functioning of organizations and cultures. According to Ryan and Deci, SDT distinguishes autonomy, considered a basic psychological need, from independence, noting that one can be autonomously dependent or forced into independence. The encounter of individuals is motivated by the need to be recognized, which Ryan and Deci argued is contingent upon meeting their expectations or sharing a particular view, which might be viewed as cost in the form of control. These authors contended that well-being is influenced by experienced autonomy support versus control. Given the variation in how

individuals experience autonomy or effort to control, it appears evident that autonomy is a central human concern (Ryan & Deci, 2006). The approach taken by the current research proceeds presumes that autonomous support through essential SLB positively influences the individual choice to engage in performance through the greater expectation of coworker knowledge sharing.

Arguing that the motivational model holds that the greater the opportunity to participate in decision making the greater the intrinsic reward from work, Huang et al. (2010) pointed out that participative leader behavior reflects leader confidence, concern, and respect for followers. Haung et al. explained the positive association between participative leadership behavior and performance focus on reciprocal exchange relationship. According to these authors, the intention to accept vulnerability based on the intentions or behavior of another is a psychological state; thus, leader behavior influences the extent to which followers are willing to accept leader action. Haung et al. acknowledged people tend to develop causal schemas or perceptions of cause-and-effect relationships based on lived experience, which is useful in assessing reciprocal behavior. This is important in explaining follower response to essential SLB and coworker shared expectation currently studied.

Kahn (1990) argued people engage or disengage through expressions of themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally in their work roles. Kahn's qualitative research focused on people's motivation, delineating the psychological conditions or experiences of work contexts. Kahn assumed individual perceptions mediated rational and unconscious decisions to engage or disengage. Kahn included meaningful interactions with coworkers, suggesting meeting relatedness need allows individuals to achieve mutual appreciation and respect. Management style and process, according to Kahn, includes creating different degrees of supportiveness and openness. Supportive management styles allow people to take risks without fear—unsupportive management extends to the tone of management, such as how leaders deal with members during meetings or in response to project work. When ambivalence exists, management by organizational members may perceive distrusted messages. The current research investigates the influence of essential SLB on organizational norms and environment for coworker engagement.

Bandura (1986) argued social cognitive theory as a causal determination treats self-efficacy more so as a human action and effect than a human trait. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is conceptualized “in terms of self-referent judgments arrived at through cognitive processing of diverse sources of efficacy information” (p. 362). According to Bandura, self-efficacy emerges when a person is fully confident in his or her abilities and remains consistent in his or her perceived self-efficacy even through repeated failure. Bandura noted that perceived self-efficacy encompasses more than effort, suggesting many factors govern performance. Ultimately, performance as a capacity for challenging activities emerges through the adroit use of specialized knowledge more so than on effort (Bandura, 1986). Drawing from Bandura, the present research model investigates knowledge sharing and develops engagement as a performance measure within knowledge organizations.

Bennet and Bennet (2004) suggested that learning and knowledge go together. These authors acknowledged organizational memory includes soft knowledge such as expertise, experiences, and tacit knowledge in arguing organizational advantage is gained, among other things, through acquiring, storing, interpreting, and manipulating information. Bennet and Bennet addressed organizational culture and shaping its evolution as primary leadership responsibilities and argued to do so leaders must model appropriate behavior; however, their research did not otherwise address leader behavior. The present research investigates relationship between essential SLB with coworker sharing and closes the gap within extant literature concerning servant leadership theory and organizational behavior.

In their conceptual paper on wisdom and knowledge, Bennet and Bennet (2008) argued tacit knowledge is in relation to wisdom—the ability (actual) or capacity (potential) to take effective action in dynamic environments or uncertain situations. In acknowledging that all knowledge is in the service of wisdom, it is argued that wisdom as the application of knowledge is mediated by values toward achieving a common goal. To reach tacit knowledge, Bennet and Bennet argued that greater access to information stored within the unconscious is needed. They

posited that further research is needed to understand our awareness of what is tacit. The present research explores the relationship between an intention to share and the reciprocal nature of an engaged workforce bringing rich knowledge toward the theory of servant leadership, coworker behavior, and worker engagement.

### **Study Methodology and Design**

Field (2014) wrote that the sample as a small subset of the population is the foci of statistical power of any test for effect. The values of the sample exist through the sample taken and the statistic of interest; simply stated the resulting distribution of values taken from a sample is provisional of what we can expect from a given population. Field aimed to develop processes to present the statistical story emerging from the sample response to a given quantitative survey. The current linear model consists of multiple outcomes and includes hierarchical data structures, which are tested through Field's presented techniques, such as a bootstrap technique to test the repetitive nature of the sample. Similar to Field, Hair et al.'s (2006) applications-oriented introduction to multivariate analysis is provisional in rule-of-thumb guidance used in managing statistical tests and evaluation of collected survey data. For example, Hair et al. argued a study should achieve .80 of the desired significance level and effect size of .5 or smaller through a 20:1 ratio of responses to independent, moderating, mediating variables.

Blau (1964) pointed out the paradox that social integration lies within the qualities that create value, as a group member likewise constitutes a status threat to others within the group. The support an individual receives from others who share his or her values is important according to Blau for, even if not in agreement, it silences self-doubt and confirms favorable self-evaluation. When a person's social experience grows to expressive involvement and the individual becomes carried away and engrossed such that he or she becomes engaged as an integral part of the work or common task, Blau argued this exceeds impressing one's associates. As long as the impression of others remains the primary concern of the individual, it is not likely he or she can become completely involved; however, according to Blau, social exchange engenders gratitude, trust, and obligation, which serve as a starting

mechanism of social interaction. Concerning the present project, Blau's social exchange shown through individual interest and then discharged as an obligation is useful in explaining the extent organizational members share knowledge.

Schaufeli et al. (2006) argued vigor, dedication, and absorption constitute work engagement. Defining work engagement as "a positive work-related state of fulfillment" (p. 701), these researchers developed a nine-item measure to operationalize work engagement through an acceptable psychometric instrument. Through an iterative process with data collected in 10 different countries ( $N = 14,521$ ) resulted in the original 17-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) being shorted to a nine-item (UWES-9) instrument. The authors found very high internal consistency scores and correlation medians,  $> .90$ , with statistically significant coefficients and a three-factor solution superior to a one-factor solution, which these authors noted as reasonable. Concerning the present study, a primary investigation involves testing for positive states in work engagement, and the nine-item UWES-9 is an adequate instrument to operationalize work engagement.

Van Dyne et al. (1994) studied the construct of organizational citizenship behavior through the application of political philosophy, which supposes a nomological network of related constructs. Van Dyne et al. suggested the political philosophy exists through a framework of covenantal relationship characterized by mutual trust and shared values with an open-ended commitment. The nature of the conventional relationship is described as forgiving and existing through strong community identity (Van Dyne et al., 1994). The characteristics of organizational citizenship behavior suggested by Van Dyne et al., which include a conceptualization of a reciprocated relationship based on binding ties to community and communities to their members, appear similar to the nature of SLB. If the present study finds statistical significance of servant leadership theory to worker engagement and mediation through worker discernment, future studies might focus on the characteristics of the servant leader as an antecedent to organizational citizenship through the political philosophy.

Proposing a four-stage knowledge-creation model including socialization, combination, externalization, and internalization, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995),

viewed knowledge as primarily tacit containing an important cognitive dimension so ingrained we take it for granted, distinctly different from the traditional Western approach, which tends to view the organization as information processors. Nonaka and Takeuchi defined knowledge creation as the transformation of individual skill into knowledge embedded within the organization. Significant to the present research is Nonaka and Takeuchi's acknowledgment of the deeply rooted nature of tacit knowledge by the individual, indicating connection through ideas, values, emotions, and experience. It is expected that individual reality guides behavior such that when a worker favorably discerns helpful essential SLB knowledge is shared through the organization.

Trauffer et al. (2010) operationalized and presented a measure of the concept of discernment. Trauffer et al. argued that discernment is social in nature and embraces one's "body, mind, and soul" (p. 265) and enables the application of knowledge to make just decisions. Drawing from Bandura's self-regulation theory, Trauffer et al., through social cognitive theory, acknowledged human agency has the capacity to regulate one's own functioning through controlling one's own thoughts, feelings, and action. Postulating discernment as purposive and action-driven thought, these authors argued the phenomenon of discernment as a nomological network represented by a single variable influenced by the interaction of several variables. Through a blended mixed-method approach, the researchers developed a 14-item, three-dimension (i.e., courage, intuition, and faith) Discernment Practices Indicator scale. Trauffer et al. found, through qualitative and quantitative studies, that leaders draw on discernment in decision making and intended to establish a baseline for leadership development. The present study enriches extant literature concerning discernment by investigating the hypothesis that the relationship between worker sharing of knowledge and engagement is influenced by worker discernment.



### **Chapter 3 – Method**

This chapter details the methodology for investigating the hypothesized relationships between the independent variable essential servant leader behavior (ESLB) and the dependent variable worker engagement. This examination includes tests for the moderating interacting effect (peripheral effect path) of follower discernment on the relationship between ESLB and anticipated reciprocal relationships and knowledge sharing and examination of the influence of anticipated reciprocal relationships and knowledge sharing as an intervening variable on the relationship between ESLB and worker engagement. This project proposes to extend servant leadership theory through the study of ESLB influence within the context of organizational environment development (i.e., individual knowledge sharing). The design, sample, operational instrumentation, procedure, data collection management, procedure, and analysis are presented, along with limitations of the study.

#### **Study Design and Approach**

This research emerged through the observation that little research exists concerning employee response to ESLB. Individual performance is governed by much more than a person's effort. The discrete judgment of individuals' capacity for challenging activity emerges through their perception of knowledge, level of skill, and resources or strategies at their disposal more so than how much effort they choose to exert (Bandura, 1986). According to Bock et al. (2005), the organizational climate reflects the perception of organizational fairness and equitable practices, which instill trust and is expected to influence organization members to exceed ordinary performance. This research is undertaken following a thorough review of the literature. A quantitative approach is established to examine the influence of ESLB on employee interaction and engagement through data collected through existing and validated instruments.

A self-administered survey is offered through the organization's email system at a medium-sized healthcare facility involved in inpatient acute care, outpatient care, as well as inpatient and outpatient psychiatric care. Data collection

was limited to full-time associates. To generate interest and expedite response, an incentive was offered to participate in the survey. Hypotheses were developed from the research question: How does essential servant leader behavior influence organizational climate, member reciprocal behavior and expectation, and level of worker engagement through vigor, dedication, and absorption? The research question is based on the theoretical constructs and empirical findings reported through the literature. The following hypotheses were tested through responses to survey questionnaires administered through the organization's email system with raw data entered into SPSS 25.

- H<sub>1</sub>: Level of follower perception of leader's servant behavior has a positive influence on anticipated reciprocal relationships.
- H<sub>2</sub>: Servant leader behavior as perceived by the follower has a positive influence on collective knowledge sharing.
- H<sub>3</sub><sup>a</sup>: Level of anticipated reciprocal relationships has a positive influence on knowledge sharing.
- H<sub>3</sub><sup>b</sup>: Employee perceptions of anticipated reciprocal relationships have a positive influence on worker engagement.
- H<sub>4</sub>: The level of knowledge sharing exhibited through attitude and intention to share positively influence employee engagement.
- H<sub>5</sub><sup>a</sup>: Greater levels of discernment have a positive influence on the relationship between servant behavior and worker engagement.
- H<sub>5</sub><sup>b</sup>: Greater levels of discernment have a positive influence on the relationship between servant behavior and employee knowledge sharing.

### **Sample**

With the approval of the organization's senior leadership team, the convenience sample of this investigation included the full-time associates of a medium-size healthcare facility. The facility performs multiple levels of medical and psychiatric care, including service lines (e.g., orthopedics, open heart, obstetrics, and general surgery) within the acute care setting. Patient care may

occur as an inpatient (i.e., admitted as a patient to a patient care unit) or as an outpatient. The employee or associate may be nursing staff, including unit clerks, care team technicians, and nurses or ancillary (e.g., radiology, cardiac catheter laboratory, and respiratory therapy), or in a support role, such as case management, information systems, and patient registration, working in a nontemporary, full-time, greater-than-20-hours per pay period, benefited position for greater than 1 year, and over 18 years of age. Employees classified as traveling, temporary, or as needed are not accepted as part of the population.

### **Procedure**

Following Umbach (2004), a web-based survey was created and data collection managed through SurveyMonkey. Several procedures were employed to maximize response rate and timeliness in replying to the self-report web-based survey. First, available validated short-version instruments were selected to reduce the risk of survey fatigue. As time is of the essence to generate initial interest, an expedited quick response and maximized return-an-incentive plan was implemented. On the initial email, the participants were informed of two incentives to voluntarily participate beginning with a chance for a \$100 Visa card for all respondents within the first 7 days of release. At the conclusion of sampling, a final drawing for a 2-day, 3-night stay at a Brevard, North Carolina vacation rental house was provided. Respondents within the first 7 days remained eligible for all incentive drawings.

### **Instrumentation and Variables**

Data for this study were collected through anonymous and confidential online surveys. The use of preexisting instrumentation with established validity and reliability were used to evaluate the model's five variables along with control variables, including gender, age, job tenure, position tenure, and education. The total survey instrument (see Appendix A) distributed online totaled 43 items.

The independent variable ESLB was measured through Winston and Fields' (2015) 10-item scale, which established a psychometrically valid approach to evaluate individual leader behavior that establishes servant leadership. Winston and

Fields noted leader behavior is the loci, and follower social exchange reciprocal behavior of the leader's behavior is the mechanism of servant leadership. Pointing out that follower development is a byproduct of the work environment and emerges from the leader's service orientation, the Winston and Fields ESLB was used for followers to evaluate the ESLB of their immediate supervisor. Though a recent scale, Winston and Fields' 10-item measure was developed from the examination of 22 items through factor analysis achieving a one-factor solution with the reliability of  $\alpha = 0.96$ . Confirmatory factor analysis for the distinctness of the ESLB from the seven-dimensional operationalization by Liden et al. (2008) revealed a best fitting model supporting the distinction between the ESLB and Liden et al.'s alternative scale,  $\Delta\chi^2 = (7) = 1666.02(p < .001)$ .

According to May, Gilson, and Harter (2004), coworkers who have meaningful and rewarding interpersonal interactions experience greater meaning in their work. Schaufeli et al. (2006) noted engagement as a persistent and pervasive variable in worker development is a positive state characterized by mental resilience and inspired enthusiasm achieved when fully concentrated on one's job. Engagement as an outcome of the present study was measured through Schaufeli et al.'s employee engagement (self-report) nine-item short version Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9).

According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), without conversion of tacit knowledge, organizational knowledge fails to develop. The nature of knowledge, according to these authors, is a dynamic human process and provisional in interpreting personal belief toward the truth. Lakshman (2007) acknowledged information becomes knowledge through a transformation involving interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge and argued that within organizations individual discernment is integral to this process. As Nonaka and Takeuchi pointed out, knowledge sharing is an intentional behavior; it is not always easy to predict individual participation in the process of sharing knowledge. It is clear, however, that the process is a social interaction, thus individual discernment of the environment is important in the decision to share tacit knowledge (Tohidinia & Mosakhani, 2010). The present study hypothesizes discernment is a moderating

variable and suggests the strength of individual discernment positively influences a reciprocal environment and individual knowledge sharing. Follower discernment is operationalized through Traüffer et al.'s (2010) 14-item, three-dimensional solution for courage, intuition, and faith—the Discernment Practices Indicator (DPI) scale. Though no published use of this 14-item scale could be found, Traüffer et al.'s DPI scale developed through a mixed methodology of the interview and purposive sampling technique provides a valid measure of the underlying construct of discernment.

According to Bock et al. (2005), anticipated reciprocal relationships arise from attitudinal and subjective norms and are associated with the theory of reasoned action TRA models, which help us to understand the underpinning of motivational drivers to knowledge sharing as a reciprocal behavior. The present project adapted Bock et al.'s five-item Anticipated Reciprocal Relationship Scale attitude toward sharing and intention to share knowledge items. When an anticipated reciprocal relationship is higher, behavioral attitude and intentions increase the occurrence of a collective action. This study presumed the individual's perception of the formation and development of his or her relationships with other organizational members develops an attitude toward knowledge sharing and results in the intention to share knowledge. Bock's et al. five-item intention (two-item explicit knowledge scale and three-item implicit knowledge) scale toward knowledge sharing was used to collect knowledge sharing data.

### **Data Collection**

The data collection process began with the cooperation of the organization's senior executives. An email to the chief executive officer with a simple explanation of the study's research question and request to access his organization's associates involved with healthcare resulted in an invitation to present the study to the executive team. During the 30-minute allocated time, the research question and model and request for access to the organization's employees were presented. With organizational authority to proceed, Regent University approval was obtained through the Human Subject Review Board.

Invitations to participate were emailed directly to individuals' employee-designated email account with an embedded link to access the survey questionnaire online. This invitation included an overview of the research question and purpose, confidentiality disclaimer, and description of incentive drawings. Data collected through participant responses were downloaded from the SurveyMonkey and exported into Microsoft Excel. Incomplete responses and employment classification identified as being as needed, traveler, or employed less than 20 hours per week were eliminated from the sample. Email addresses collected for incentives next were eradicated. As mentioned by Hair et al. (2006), theory is the guiding factor in evaluating strengths of the research model, and statistical testing through regression tests model hypotheses, enabling variation explanation. Next, results of multiple regression analysis are reported.

### **Analysis**

Although Hair et al. (2006) supposed a general rule for multiple regression analysis should not fall below 5:1 (i.e., five observations for each predictor variable), to be generalizable when the sample is representative, a power level of 80% through a 20:1 response ratio per predictor variable is necessary. With nine predictor variables within the presented model, a sample of 180 achieves a probability of the desired significance level.

To detect patterned responses and present the quantitative descriptions into manageable, practicable, and adaptable format, descriptive statistics were produced. Descriptive analysis provides interpretation of categorical or general demographical data and descriptive statistics of continuous variables. Participant response to the socially desirable response bias the Hays, Hayashi, and Stewart (1989) five-item set was collected and dichotomized (extreme responses coded as 1; all others coded 0) and then transformed into a total socially desirable variable to evaluate the influence of social desirability.

Hierarchical multiple regression was employed after controlling for demographic covariant variables to evaluate whether the essential leadership servant behavior ( $H_1$  and  $H_2$ ) predict anticipated reciprocal and collective

knowledge sharing. Multiple regression analysis tested Hypothesis 3a, which suggests anticipated reciprocal relationship influences knowledge sharing and may respond as a peripheral mediating effect in the relationship between ESLB and knowledge sharing. Similarly, anticipated reciprocal relationship ( $H_3^b$ ) and knowledge sharing ( $H_4$ ) was treated as mediating variables between ESLB and worker engagement, thus evaluated through multiple regression. Testing Hypotheses 5a and 5b (follower discernment) for moderation necessitated the analysis of both the model's independent variable (ESLB) and the moderator (follower discernment), which required the creation of a product variable. To test the interaction effect, first the unmoderated independent variable was regressed on anticipated reciprocal relationships and knowledge sharing and checked for model variation independently. Next, following Baron and Kenny's (1986) recommendation, the product variable (ESLB x follower discernment) was regressed on anticipated reciprocal relationships and knowledge sharing and examined for model variation. It remains to be discovered what demographic variables are related to servant leadership (Parris & Peachey, 2013), and women have been found to more favorably perceive social interaction, which may affect knowledge-sharing culture (Connelly & Kelloway, 2003). Following Lin (2007), dummy variables were developed to examine position tenure, job tenure, education level, and gender in relation to ESLB and knowledge sharing.

### **Study Limitation**

The limitations of this study include the use of self-report surveys, which are argued vulnerable to common method variance, although effects of this have been disputed (Spector, 2006; Williams, Cote, & Buckley, 1989). According to Harrison, McLaughlin, and Coalter (1996), few researchers argue the notion of context effects. Recognizing that context created from earlier responses influencing subsequent answers, the current study drew from Harrison et al. and tested the homogeneity of intercorrelations across context items through analysis of covariance.

It is also possible that social desirability biases exist. The organization had completed a series of educational events, which may result in respondent replies according to organizational expectation. To address social desirability bias, this study controlled for social desirability using the five-item scale developed by Hays et al. (1989). In addition, considering the social construction of leadership through the phenomenological significance people assign to leadership for the organizational experience, Meindl (1995) pointed out a paramount concern for the researcher involves in whose mind and when does leadership construction emerge. In addition to controlling for social desirability, the present study design included lead-in narrative for each measurement scale, which informed the respondent of a focal point and asked participants to respond as they truly felt.



## Chapter 4 – Results

The emphasis of this study was to develop relationships linking essential servant leader behavior (ESLB), organizational climate, employee sharing behavior, and worker engagement. A new research area linking organizational climate to servant leadership behavior (SLB) emerges through Parris and Peachey's (2013) conceptual support extending servant leadership as a positive influence on follower well-being through the foundation of a positive work climate. Developing from Bakker's (2011) acknowledgment of the positive influence of increased social support, autonomy, learning opportunities, and feedback on future work engagement, this study's hypotheses examine relationships between the independent variable (IV) of ESLB, moderating variable (MV) of follower discernment (FD), and the mediation effect variables of anticipated reciprocal relationship (ARR) and knowledge sharing (KS) and the dependent variable (DV) of worker engagement (WE).

### Descriptive Statistics

Data analysis used demographic items collected from members of a midsized hospital in South Carolina. Of 211 respondents, the descriptive analysis revealed 192 complete returns for a 91.5% return rate. Data analysis was initiated through IBM SPSS Version 25; a quick review confirmed the 192 accepted surveys through SurveyMonkey contained complete responses. Further, a quick scan over individual entries confirmed no submissions contained straight-line responses indicative of completing a survey with indifference or without care.

Sample demographics (see Table 1) reveal disparity in gender mix in the research sample (female  $n = 163$ , 84.9%; male  $n = 29$ , 15.1%). Over one third of the sample is aged 45-54 years old with equal participants ( $n = 34$ ) aged 35-44 years old and 55-64 years old with 45 or 23.3% of the sample with less than 5-year tenure in profession and slightly over 42% of the sample with less than 2 years tenure in the position. This research sample includes  $n = 149$  with less than 10 years tenure in the position with  $n = 121$  having greater than 10 years tenure in their profession. Greater than 42% ( $n = 81$ ) of the sample have completed an

undergraduate degree with 78.6% having completed at least 2 years of college work and an additional 13.9% having completed technical or vocational school.

Table 1: Sample Demographics

Variable	%	<i>n</i>
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	84.9	163
Male	15.1	29
<b>Age</b>		
18-24	5.2	10
25-34	19.8	38
35-44	17.7	34
45-54	36.5	70
55-64	17.7	34
65-74	3.1	6
75 or older	0.0	0
<b>Tenure in profession</b>		
0-5 years	23.3	45
6-10 years	13.9	26
11-15 years	13.4	26
16-20 years	11.9	23
21-25 years	10.9	21
26-30 years	10.4	20
Over 30 years	16.3	31
<b>Tenure in position</b>		
Less than 1 year	20.8	40
1-2 years	21.8	42
3-5 years	19.8	38
6-10 years	15.4	29
11-15 years	8.4	16
16-20 years	7.4	14

Variable	%	<i>n</i>
21-25 years	1.0	2
26-30 years	3.0	6
Over 30 years	2.5	5
<b>Completed education</b>		
Graduated from high school	7.5	14
Completed technical/Vocational school	13.9	27
2 years of college	21.9	42
Completed an undergraduate degree	42.3	81
Completed graduate school	14.4	28

Following the development of total score variables for ESLB, ARR, KS, FD, and WE measures of central tendency were evaluated. To simplify data examination, all total scale variables were returned to their original scale using a suitable formula (e.g., ESLB/9) to create new variables with mean and standard deviation presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations for Study Variables

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
ESLB	4.1	0.79
ARR	2.2	0.89
KS	2.0	0.86
FD	4.1	0.52
WE	4.7	0.94

Following Lin (2007), dummy variables were developed to examine position tenure, job tenure, education level, age, social desirability, and gender for relation to ESLB and KS with variable correlations (see Table 3).

Table 3: Correlation Among Study Variables

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Gender	–										
Age	-0.019	–									
Tenure in profession	0.049	0.758**	–								
Tenure in position	0.052	0.496**	0.556**	–							
Highest level of education	0.120	-0.045	0.045	-0.018	–						
Social desirability	0.014	0.069	-0.029	0.057	-0.258**	–					
ESLB	-0.003	-0.034	-0.019	-0.025	-0.036	0.139	–				
ARR	-0.206**	-0.146*	-0.148*	-0.017	0.031	-0.106	-0.246**	–			
KS	-0.060	-0.165*	-0.093	0.034	-0.007	-0.159*	-0.247**	0.551**	–		
FD	0.027	0.030	0.010	0.033	0.130	0.227**	0.223**	-0.057	-0.194**	–	
WE	0.029	0.180*	0.161*	0.143*	-0.135	0.283**	0.337**	-0.293**	-0.416**	0.378**	–

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

As Pallant (2010) recommended, Cronbach's alpha coefficients of each instrument used to operationalize this model were reviewed next to assess scale reliability. The current study reflects good internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .956 through the 10-item Winston and Fields (2015) scale used to measure ESLB. While the three-factor Discernment Practices Indicator (DPI) is restricted by limited use in the literature, Trauffer et al. (2010) found good internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha of .85 for courage factor, .89 for intuition, and .85 for the faith factor. The current study's interest is to investigate the use of discernment in decision making and return a combined scale reliability with Cronbach's alpha of .872. The current study found good internal consistency  $\alpha = .943$  through the ARR Scale. The ARR is a five-item measure of attitude toward KS for which Bock et al. (2005) reported an internal consistency through Cronbach's alpha of .919. Intention to share knowledge measured through two items that measure intention to share explicit knowledge and three items that measure intention to share implicit knowledge; the current study showed Cronbach's alpha of .967, which reflects good internal consistency.

### **One-Way Analysis of Variance**

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to investigate the impact of profession tenure on the DV WE as measured through the Schaufeli et al. (2006) short form Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). Study participants were divided into three group according to years in the profession (Group 1 = 1-15 years, Group 2 = 16-25 years, and Group 3 > 25 years). There was not statistical significance at the  $p = .05$  level in the three tenure groups,  $(2, 190) = 2.8, p = .07$ . The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was small at .03. Post-hoc comparison using the Tukey honest significant difference test indicated the mean score for Group 1 ( $M = .049, SD = .95$ ) was not statistically significant from Group 2 ( $M = .049, SD = .158$ ). Group 3 ( $M = .316, SD = .170$ ) differed significantly from Groups 1 and 2. The one-way between-groups ANOVA continued to investigate the impact of position tenure on WE. The participants were first separated into three groups (Group 1 = 1-15 years, Group 2 = 16-25 years, and

Group 3 > 25 years). Similar to the results for position tenure, there was little statistical mean difference between groups for position tenure at the  $p = .05$  level in the three tenure groups,  $F(2, 190) = 1.12, p = .285$ .

### Mediating Effects of ARR and KS

Referred to as a simple regression model by Hayes (2009), hierarchical regression analyses were used to investigate the mediating effects of ARR and KS on the relationship between ESLB and WE. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), mediation analyzes three relationships: (a) the IV as a predictor of a mediating variable (MV) (Paths  $a_1$  and  $a_2$ ), (b) the MV as a predictor of the DV path (Paths  $b_1$  and  $b_2$ ), and (c) the IV as a predictor of the DV Path  $c'$ . According to Hayes, Preacher, and Myers (2011), assessing mediation ultimately addresses questions of indirect causality. This study's mediation model (see Figure 3) design partitions off the total effect of the IVs into direct and indirect causality paths. Four effects, one direct and three indirect, were tested through study hypotheses.

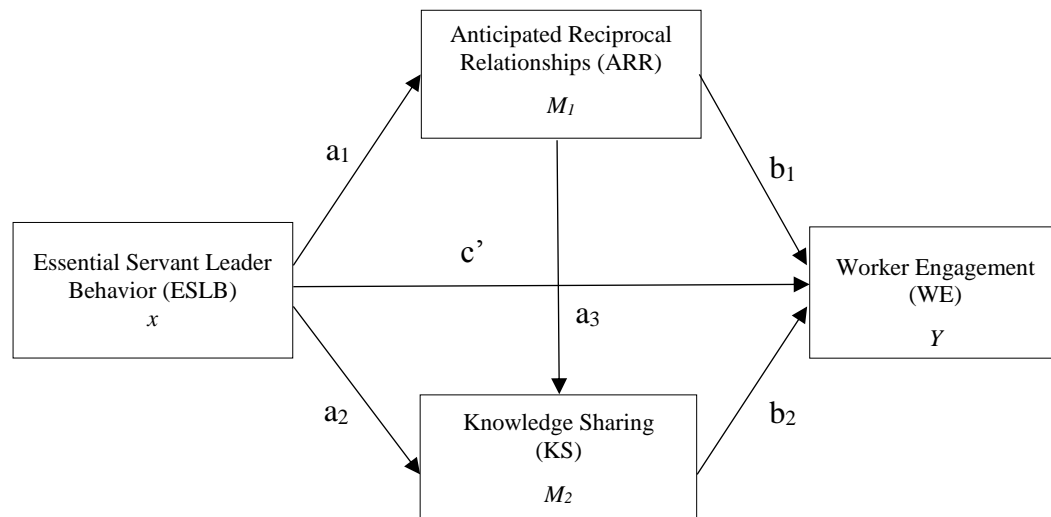


Figure 3: Model of mediation tests.

Tests were done on the mediating effects of ARR on the relationship between ESLB and WE ( $H_1$ ). The first hierarchical regression analysis assessed Path  $a_1$  from ESLB to ARR (see Table 4). In Step 1 with ARR entered as the DV, the control variables (gender, age, job tenure, position tenure, education, and social

desirability) were entered and explained 8.5% of the variance in ARR. In Step 2, ESLB brought the model's total explanation of 14.8% of total variance in ARR,  $F(7, 185) = 4.85, p < .001$ . In the final model, only ESLB ( $\beta = -.28, p < .01$ ) and gender ( $\beta = .54, p < .05$ ) were found significant.

Table 4: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of ESLB With ARR (Path a<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>1</sub>;  $N = 193$ )

Predictor	$\beta$	$p$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$F$ test
<b>Model 1</b>			0.056		2.98
Gender	-.54	.003			
Age	-.09	.019			
Tenure in profession	-.05	.033			
Tenure in position	.05	.017			
Highest level of education	.04	.060			
Social desirability	.20	.022			
<b>Model 2</b>			0.148	0.06	4.58
Gender	-.54	.003*			
Age	-.10	.019			
Tenure in profession	-.04	.033			
Tenure in position	.05	.017			
Highest level of education	.03	.060			
Social desirability	.22	.022			
ESLB	-.28	.000**			

\* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The next hierarchical regression analysis investigated Hypothesis 2 through the model Path a<sub>2</sub> between ESLB and KS. Initially, the control variables (gender, age, job tenure, position tenure, education, and social desirability) were loaded; then, KS was added, as the DV accounted for 5.2% of model variation (see Table 5). In Step 2, ESLB was added and with the model controlled for gender, age, job tenure, position tenure, education, and social desirability accounted for 11.6% of the total model variance,  $F(7, 185) = 3.48, p < .002$ . In the final model only two

control measures were statistically significant with age scale ( $\beta = -.278, p < .05$ ) having a higher beta value than servant leadership ( $\beta = -.254, p < .001$ ).

Table 5: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Servant Leadership with KS (Path  $a_2$ ,  $H_2$ ;  $N = 193$ )

Predictor	$\beta$	$p$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$F$ test
<b>Model 1</b>			0.052		1.71
Gender	-0.18	.329			
Age	-0.19	.019			
Tenure in profession	0.01	.844			
Tenure in position	0.07	.076			
Highest level of education	-0.01	.844			
Social desirability	0.10	.573			
<b>Model 2</b>			0.116	0.064	3.48
Gender	-0.17	.317			
Age	-0.20	.011*			
Tenure in profession	0.01	.785			
Tenure in position	0.06	.075			
Highest level of education	-0.02	.721			
Social desirability	0.11	.510			
ESLB	-0.28	.000**			

\* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The third test of mediation depicted (see Table 6) investigated Hypotheses 3a—the influence of ARR on KS Path  $a_3$ . First, the control variables (gender, age, job tenure, position tenure, education, and social desirability) and ARR were entered with the DV KS explaining 32.7% of the variance. After entry of ESLB at Step 2, the total variance of the whole model was 34.1%  $F(8, 184) = 11.91, p < .000$ . In the final model age, ARR and ESLB measured statically significant with



ARR recording the highest *beta* value ( $\beta = .514, p < .001$ ) and age recording a higher *beta* value ( $\beta = -.207, p < .05$ ) than ESLB *beta* value ( $\beta = -.125, p < .05$ ).

Table 6: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Servant Leadership with KS (Path a<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>3</sub><sup>a</sup>; N = 193)

Predictor	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$	<i>F</i> test
<b>Model 1</b>			.327		12.81
Gender	.045	.477			
Age	-.196	.040			
Tenure in profession	.087	.381			
Tenure in position	.089	.228			
Highest level of education	-.040	.516			
Social desirability	-.003	.960			
ARR	.548	.000			
<b>Model 2</b>			0.341	0.015	11.91
Gender	.038	.545			
Age	-.207	.030*			
Tenure in profession	.087	.378			
Tenure in position	.091	.215			
Highest level of education	-.044	.475			
Social desirability	.002	.970			
ARR	.514	.000**			
ESLB	-.125	.045*			

\* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Next, Hypothesis 3b was investigated through Path b<sub>1</sub> to test the mediating effects of ARR on WE (see Table 7). First, the control variables (gender, age, job tenure, position tenure, education, and social desirability) were entered with the DV WE, which explained .06% of the variance in WE. At Step 2, ARR was added;

the total model variance was 12.8%,  $F(7, 185) = 3.87, p < .05$ . In the final model, only ARR ( $\beta = -.27, p < .001$ ) was statistically significant.

Table 7: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of ARR on DV WE (Path b<sub>1</sub>, H<sub>3</sub><sup>b</sup>;  $N = 193$ )

Predictor	$\beta$	$p$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$F$ test
<b>Model 1</b>			0.059		1.94
Gender	0.038	.598			
Age	0.113	.310			
Tenure in profession	0.051	.658			
Tenure in position	0.056	.513			
Highest level of education	-0.126	.083			
Social desirability	-0.061	.395			
<b>Model 2</b>			0.128	0.069	14.59
Gender	-0.020	.781			
Age	0.079	.466			
Tenure in profession	0.020	.862			
Tenure in position	0.089	.288			
Highest level of education	-0.114	.108			
Social desirability	-0.039	.573			
ARR	-0.274	.000**			

\* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The fourth mediation test (see Table 8) examined Hypothesis 4 through Path b<sub>2</sub> from KS to WE. First, the control variables (gender, age, job tenure, position tenure, education, and social desirability) were entered with the DV WE, which explained .06% of the variance in WE. KS was added at Step 2, accounting for 22% in total model variance,  $F(7,185) = 7.47, p < .001$ . In the final model, KS and level of education were statistically significant with KS having a greater beta value ( $\beta = -6.18, p < .001$ ) than education level ( $\beta = -.133, p < .05$ ).

Table 8: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of ARR on DV WE (Path b<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>4</sub>; N = 193)

Predictor	$\beta$	$p$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$F$ test
<b>Model 1</b>			0.059		1.94
Gender	0.103	.598			
Age	0.087	.310			
Tenure in profession	0.022	.658			
Tenure in position	0.027	.513			
Highest level of education	-0.108	.083			
Social desirability	-0.163	.395			
<b>Model 2</b>			0.22	0.161	7.47
Gender	0.024	.893			
Age	0.003	.968			
Tenure in profession	0.026	.566			
Tenure in position	0.056	.132			
Highest level of education	-0.113	.047			
Social desirability	-0.118	.499			
KS	-0.450	.000			

\* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

The fourth mediation test (see Table 9) examined Path c' from ESLB to WE. First, the control variables (gender, age, job tenure, position tenure, education, and social desirability) were entered then ARR was entered with KS with the DV WE, which explained 22.3% of the variance in WE. ESLB was added at Step 2, accounting for an additional 5.7% in total model variance,  $F(9,183) = 7.91$ ,  $p < .001$ . In the final model, KS and ESLB are statistically significant with KS having a greater beta value ( $\beta = -.333$ ,  $p < .001$ ) than ESLB ( $\beta = .250$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 9: Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of ARR on DV WE (Path a<sub>3</sub>, H<sub>3</sub><sup>a</sup>; N = 193)

Predictor	$\beta$	$p$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$F$ test
<b>Model 1</b>			0.223		6.61
Gender	-.003	.965			
Age	.005	.961			
Tenure in profession	.052	.625			
Tenure in position	.123	.125			
Highest level of education	-.129	.055			
Social desirability	-.041	.540			
ARR	-.068	.400			
KS	-.377	.000**			
<b>Model 2</b>			0.280	0.057	7.92
Gender	.009	.891			
Age	.035	.725			
Tenure in profession	.049	.637			
Tenure in position	.115	.135			
Highest level of education	-.120	.065			
Social desirability	-.051	.424			
ARR	-.023	.766			
KS	-.333	.000**			
ESLB	.250	.000**			

\* $p \leq .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

In summary, assessing mediation consists of analyzing three relationships: (a) the IV as a predictor of the MV—the three conditions for mediation (see Figure 4 Paths a<sub>1</sub> and b<sub>1</sub>), (b) the MV as a predictor of the DV (see Figure 4 Paths b<sub>1</sub> and b<sub>2</sub>), and (c) the IV as a predictor of the DV (see Figure 4 Path c'). All three conditions exist (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

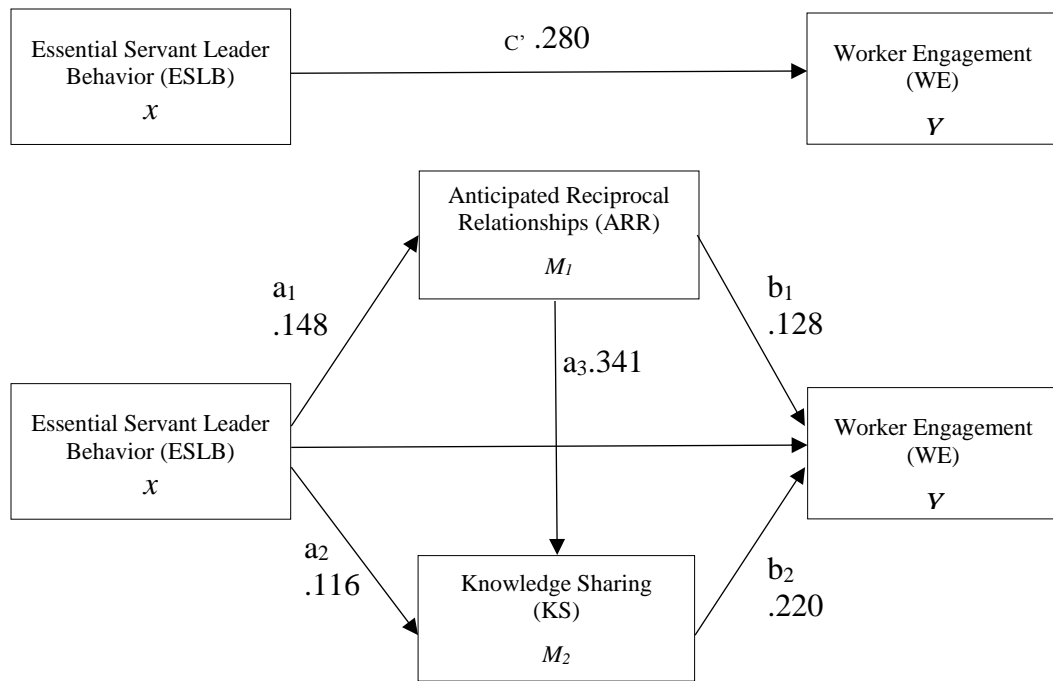


Figure 4: Model of study MV coefficients.

### Moderating Effect of Discernment

This study evaluated discernment as a categorical moderator, which Field (2014) described as either a *they got it* or a *they do not* variable. Figure 5 shows how the moderation of discernment is explored through a statistical model. According to Field, it is important that the predictor and moderator variable as well as the interaction term be valid. According to Muller, Judd, and Yzerbyt (2005), moderated mediation occurs when the effect of the treatment on the outcome depends on the moderator variable. In other words, the moderator is a variable of individual difference. This implies that if the variable is contextual for certain individuals, mediation occurs in some contexts.

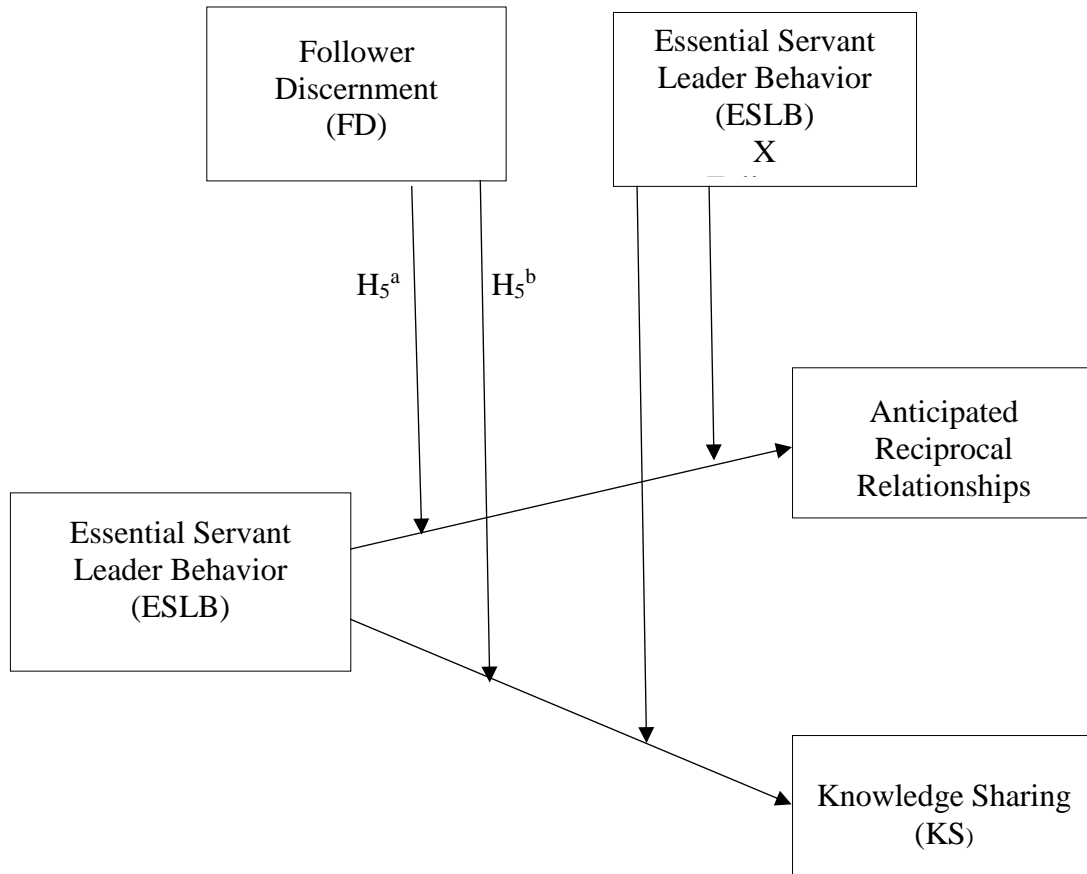


Figure 5: Statistical model of moderation paths examined for the effect of FD.

Considering the two MVs, ARR and KS moderated mediation are examined here for the influence of FD. First, through Hypothesis 5a (see Figure 5), the moderating effects of discernment on the relationship between servant behavior and ARR are investigated; then Hypotheses 5b, which predicts a moderating influence in the relationship between servant behavior and KS, is investigated.

The first analysis examined the effect of FD on the relationship between servant behavior and ARR (see Table 10). First, the control variables (gender, age, job tenure, position tenure, education, and social desirability) were entered in Step 1 and found to account for 8.5% of the variance in ARR. In Step 2, the centered variables ESLB and FD were entered and found to contribute an additional 6.2% of the variance ( $R^2 = .148$ ) to the model. In Step 3, the interaction term (ESLB  $\times$  FD) were entered. The total model explained 14.8%,  $F(8, 184) = 3.99, p < .001$ . The interaction of the product variable, however, did not explain any additional

variance in perceived ARR ( $\Delta R^2 = .000$ ,  $\Delta F(9, 183) p < .001$ ); therefore, Hypothesis 5a is not supported.

Table 10: Regression Analysis of Moderation of FD in the Relationship Between Servant Leader Behavior and ARR ( $N = 293$ ;  $H_5^a$ )

Predictor	$\beta$	$p$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$ test
<b>Model 1</b>					
Gender	-.211	.003	.085		.010
Age	-.126	.254			
Tenure in profession	-.117	.310			
Tenure in position	.119	.163			
Highest level of education	.047	.513			
Social desirability	.081	.260			
<b>Model 2</b>			.148	.062	.002
Gender	-.210	.003			
Age	-.138	.197			
Tenure in profession	-.109	.327			
Tenure in position	.115	.165			
Highest level of education	.038	.596			
Social desirability	.086	.215			
ESLB	-.248	.001			
FD	-.008	.915			
<b>Model 3</b>			.148	.000	.101
Gender	-.209	.003			
Age	-.136	.206			
Tenure in profession	-.112	.320			
Tenure in position	.115	.169			
Highest level of education	.039	.580			
Social desirability	.082	.247			
ESLB	-.248	.001			
FD	-.011	.882			

Predictor	$\beta$	$p$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$ test
Product moderator	.022	.751			

The next analysis examined the effect of FD on the relationship between servant behavior and KS (see Table 11). First, the control variables (gender, age, job tenure, position tenure, education, and social desirability) were entered in Step 1 and were found to account for 5.2% of the variance in the DV ARR. In Step 2, the centered variables ESLB and discernment were entered and found to contribute an additional 13.6% of the variance ( $R^2 = .083$ ) to the model. In Step 3, the interaction term (ESLB x discernment) were entered. The total model explained 14.8%,  $F(8, 184) = 2.42, p < .001$ . The interaction of the product variable explained a slight increase in additional variance in perceived ARR ( $\Delta R^2 = .001, \Delta F(9, 183) p < .05$ ); therefore, Hypothesis 5b is to some extent supported.

Table 11: Regression Analysis of Moderation of FD in the Relationship Between ESLB and KS ( $H_5^b$ ;  $N = 293$ )

Predictor	$\beta$	$P$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$ test
<b>Model 1</b>			.052		1.71
Gender	-.071	.329			
Age	-.265	.019**			
Tenure in profession	.023	.844			
Tenure in position	.155	.076			
Highest level of education	-.014	.844			
Social desirability	.041	.573			
<b>Model 2</b>			.136	.083	8.87
Gender	-.068	.331			
Age	-.267	.014**			
Tenure in profession	.019	.864			
Tenure in position	.156	.062			
Highest level of education	-.006	.936			



Predictor	$\beta$	$P$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\Delta F$ test
Social desirability	.056	.427			
ESLB	-.220	.002**			
FD	-.145	.044**			
<b>Model 3</b>			.137	.001	.188
Gender	-.070	.318			
Age	-.270	.013			
Tenure in profession	.022	.845			
Tenure in position	.157	.061			
Highest level of education	-.008	.909			
Social desirability	.061	.390			
ESLB	-.221	.002**			
FD	-.140	.053			
Product moderator	-.031	.665			

## Chapter 5 – Discussion

There is a great need to understand the leader–follower dyadic relationship in the organizational context. As the production economy is displaced by the productivity of the knowledge worker supposed by Drucker (1999), it is critical that leader behavior is studied for the influence on the social environment of the organization. This research responded to the need to improve theory through the context of individual behavior concerning the nature of sharing knowledge and addressing leader influence through perceived servant behavior. This research improves the application of moral-based leadership (see Greenleaf 2002)—the provision of which is shown to move the organization beyond mere job satisfaction in achieving worker engagement.

The model developed in the current study was based on several sound leadership theories (organizational competitiveness, Gruber, 1995; Ipe, 2003; collective value in people, Pfeffer, 1998; member sharing of knowledge, Nonaka, Toyama, et al., 2000; Drucker, 1995; social networking, March & Olsen, 1983, Tsai, 2002; moral based leadership, Graham, 1991; integration of community, Follett, 1919). Understanding the study of leadership and organizational structure are conjoined, this research builds from the thesis that leader development exists through a framework of reciprocal relationships and that others (e.g., Mehra et al., 2006) have suggested emerges through the context of servant leader behavior. The research question asked, How does servant leader behavior influence organizational climate, member reciprocal behavior, and expectation, and worker level of engagement? It was addressed by testing seven hypotheses developed through an extensive literature review.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 addressed the influence of servant leader behavior on organizational context through anticipated reciprocal relationships (ARR) and knowledge sharing between organizational members. The regression analysis between servant behavior and ARR demonstrated the presence of a significant relationship ( $p < .01$ ), which indicates that an environment of expectation is key and develops a reciprocal expectation to share knowledge. Similarly, the regression analysis investigation of Hypothesis 2 reflected a significant relationship ( $p < .01$ )

as well; however, the coefficient for knowledge sharing was nearly 8% lower than that for ARR. It was expected that servant leader behavior might reflect a strong supporting organizational culture indicated by some (e.g., Ribi re & Sitar, 2003) as critical to the knowledge-sharing organization.

Hypothesis 3a tested the direct path coefficient from ARR to knowledge sharing and showed statistical significance with strong ARR *beta* value ( $\beta = .514, p < .001$ ); thus, Hypothesis 3a is supported. The robust results concerning the ARR indicate an environment of expectation influences individual behavior and might be predictive when servant leader behavior is prevalent. Although this study shows ARR has a positive influence on knowledge sharing, the results explain Greenleaf's (2002) servant leadership theory reflect in the leader's positive influence through stewardship, suggested by some (e.g., Spears, 1995) as a preparatory act toward organizational efficiency. In the context of the theory of planned behavior (TPB), intentions and expectations interact and result in behavior (e.g., the sharing of knowledge shown in this work).

Hypothesis 3b proposed that higher employee perceptions of ARR have a mediating effect on the relationship between servant leader behavior and worker engagement. The results indicate ( $\beta = -.27, p < .001$ ) stronger member perceptions of reciprocal relationships do significantly increase individual engagement. This analysis followed Tohidinia and Mosakhani's (2010) supposition that the feelings of organizational members considering the principle of reciprocity involve shared values among organizational members and, as first theorized by Gouldner (1960), create a reciprocal expectation. Hypothesis 3b is supported and is significant concerning developing networks in organizations. The organic model of the organization as described by Tichy and Fombrun (1979) is characterized by a continued redefinition of individual tasks with communication described as informative advice and may mean reciprocated expectations are indicative of influence from interconnected clusters of individuals in informal relationships and more so than the influence of structured communication or job tasks.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that knowledge sharing will have a mediating effect on the relationship between servant leader behavior and worker engagement.

Regression results indicated knowledge sharing accounted for 22% of additional variance,  $\Delta R^2 = .161$ ,  $\Delta F(7, 185)$ ,  $p < .001$ ); thus, Hypothesis 4 is supported. The significance of these findings replicate Jeon et al.'s (2011) finding that an important motivational factor toward collaborative membership activity emerges with the individual behavior of sharing knowledge. The results indicate knowledge sharing accounts for the relationship between servant leadership and worker engagement.

Following the literature of Macdonald (2002) arguing the process of discernment “requires active dialogue with the self, and with engaged and trusted coworkers” (p. 171), Tohidinia and Mosakhani (2010) maintained that common discernment among members develops the main theme of an organization's climate. As Bennet and Bennet (2008) supposed wisdom a major component of discernment, the current study included testing discernment for moderating the relationship between servant leader behavior and ARR—Hypothesis 5a and servant leader behavior and knowledge sharing, Hypothesis 5b. According to Gouldner (1960), relationship stability emerges through need satisfaction dependent on another's reaction such that when servant leadership behavior (SLB) is acknowledged through individual discernment a felt obligation to reciprocate occurs positively influencing knowledge sharing. Surprisingly, with no additional variation in ARR or knowledge sharing when tested for moderation through individual discernment, Hypotheses 5a and 5b are not supported.

### **Theoretical Implications**

This examination of SLB introduces the likely influence of follower-focused leadership at the individual and organizational level by means of organization environmental stimulus. The full model clearly delineates the mediating power of individual reciprocal expectation to develop knowledge sharing, concluding that employees are likely to become engaged in an environment of positive relationships. Also significant is the finding that worker discernment has minimal, if any at all, influence on individual decision making. This finding provides evidence to support the potential that when servant leader behavior removes individual performance hindrance or barriers to knowledge

worker production, there no longer exists importance in discerning leader behavior motives, rather, social networks form that develop the reciprocal expectation, which manifests in knowledge sharing. Servant leader behavior apparently develops “group environment . . . [and] space of free movement” (Argyris, 1993, p. 9), supposed to close the gap between knowledge and action.

Organizational theorists have adopted a posteriori view suggesting all tenable knowledge is the result of sensory analysis of individual experience. While learning is the process of analyzing experience and knowledge sharing, the current research suggests that employees distinguish to whom they wish to appear competent and reflects that shared profession may be a major contributor to social interaction and expectation between organizational members. Considering the demographics, 62% of the sample had been in their current position less than 5 years, and nearly 77% had been in their profession over 5 years, indicating knowledge workers will likely continue to share their knowledge with their coworkers throughout their career and through position changes when they determine that it is meaningful to contribute. Covey (2004) contended learning as a basic human need, and Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) described learning as an internalized process—both are supported by the current research. There are very few studies concerning the perspective of creating new organizational knowledge and the leadership style through which the subjective and tacit aspect of knowledge might be exploited. The present study develops a correlation between servant leader behavior and knowledge sharing revealing a positive influence on worker engagement.

The present examination approached worker engagement as a proximal outcome of the leadership process. With engagement comes cognitive alertness and connectivity with others (Gruman & Saks, 2011), which is presumed to require less performance management and depend more on the work environment. Regressing essential SLB revealed 17.5% variance ( $p < .001$ ) on worker engagement, indicating performance may be less dependent on supervisory control and closely linked to trust and integrity (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006). Within healthcare’s highly complex, mentally stimulating work environment, being technically skilled

with one's job contributes to seeing opportunities for job engagement, which is heightened when the work environment develops workgroup autonomy. The results of this study denote that within settings of self-sufficiency, reciprocal relationships work to mediate the relationship between servant leader behavior and worker engagement both through formal and informal social networks.

### **Limitations**

There are a few potential research limitations. First, data represent a single healthcare organization, of which 163 of 192 participants (85%) were female; thus, this may not be generalizable. Second is the use of self-report instruments to operationalize study variables; this is susceptible to common method bias. Development of objective scales may provide a more direct response in instruments susceptible to common method bias (Brock et al., 2005). The cross-sectional design of the study only provided for collecting the participant's perception at a single point in time.

This study may suffer from challenges. Meindl (1995) described as significance given to reputation. Rather, these reputations concern engaging in an expected behavior or engaging in right practices, participant response may represent achieving the anticipated conduct and performance more so than a follower-centric consideration. Finally, as Winston and Fields (2015) indicated, it is possible that ratings of servant leader behavior could be lower given that participants were asked to consider the supervisor they currently reported to in their response, which has been shown to lead to lower scores.

### **Future Research**

Several directions advance from the present study. First, based on the mediating effects of reciprocal relationships and the significant direct influence of ARR on knowledge sharing, it makes sense to investigate variation in response to servant leader behavior using additional subscales developed by Brock et al. (2005) as they relate to organization member affiliation, subjective norms, and innovation (Wen, 2009). Reciprocity may have a greater moderating role than has been brought forward as it relates to the relationship between the leader, individual in-

role behavior, and job expectations. Specifically, the practical implications in structuring future research around the systematic investigation of reciprocal expectations are central to the development of servant leadership development as well. As pointed out (e.g., Winston & Fields, 2015; Zou, Tian, & Liu, 2015), reciprocal relationships are likely to be driven by the attribution leaders and followers form concerning each other. Yet, the reciprocity described by Gouldner (1960) as a universal principal remains a largely unexplored variable within organizational leadership research and might act as the main element in the formation of servant leader behavior.

Regarding the current study, the reciprocal expectation was shown to have a significant influence on the individual behavior of knowledge sharing. Interest in knowledge beyond the mere management of knowledge management systems is growing, as corporations continue to develop as knowledge economies and competitive advantage emerges through group interaction developing complementary knowledge clusters generating innovation and continuity. A better understanding of reciprocal relationships and their relationship with knowledge sharing formation of organizational intervention may be helpful in processes development.

Worker engagement, it appears, offers an opportunity as an output variable in competitive advantage and competitiveness research of knowledge organizations. Through Kahn's (1990) framework, three questions arise involved with the individual decision to engage: How meaningful is it for me to bring myself into performance? How safe is it for me to enter engagement? How available do I make myself to perform? According to Kahn, the positive answers to these meet the logic of contractual agreement and align with what Spears (1995) referred to as Greenleaf's moral imperative through which the return on investment on capital is employed. In other words, Is Greenleaf's best test concerning the growth of the individual answered?

The breadth of servant leadership theory research develops the dimensions of the observed leader actions and makes considerable effort to achieve a convincing definition. The extant has literature developed various parsimonious

instruments through which observed leader behavior is measured toward certain dimensions of servant leader performance. The theory is ripe for developing organizational-level approaches to developing leaders with a servant heart.

### **Conclusion**

The results of this initial study confirm the influence of servant leader behavior influence on individual reciprocal expectation and partially confirm the effect on individual decision making. Maslow's (1943) seminal work introduced the priori grounds of the importance of unconscious need manifestations as motivations and suggested that through "suitable techniques" (p. 389), these needs become conscious. Maslow presented behavior through psychological terms as existing through various determinants. Stated differently, Maslow suggested multiple causes of behavior are present within the individual at any given time. Inspired by Maslow's notion, the principal goal of this work was to discover the influence of SLB on organization environment and member behavior.

This quantitative study examined human behavior through reciprocal expectations and knowledge sharing showing that servant leader behavior does have a statistically significant and positive influence on follower behavior and is reciprocal in nature. The significance in these findings is far reaching and extends the understanding of organizational environment determinants and behavioral mediating variables (i.e., reciprocal expectation and knowledge sharing) interaction in the relationship between essential SLB and worker engagement. In terms of practical implications, this study extends the conversation for servant leadership theory (Winston & Fields, 2015), prosocial behavior (McCullough et al., 2001), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and TPB (Ajzen, 1985) as these theories relate to individual decision making in displayed behavior.

For the practitioner, this study clearly demonstrates the practical outcome through the framework of moral-based leadership such as servant leadership. To study the social phenomena of leadership is to look into the degree leader behavior influences personal reality subjected through the "social happenings and the result of, and the conditions of physical events" (Lewin, 1947, p. 7). Achieving



congruency between individual reality and the decision to achieve meaningfulness in action is necessary for a member of an organization to discern the safety of the environment such as to be available for work production. Through the independent variable of ESLB, this dissertation has shown the presence of moral-based and others-centric leadership is a positive influence on reciprocal behavior between organizational members, which indicates individual development and emerges as worker engagement in the workplace.

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## Appendix A

### Selected Scales and Measures

**Essential Servant Leadership Behaviors (ESLB):** Winston and Fields (2015) Seeking and measuring the essential behaviors of servant. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 36 (4), 413 – 434.

---

1 = definitely no; 2 = no; 3 = neutral; 4 = yes; 5 = definitely yes

---

1. Practices what he/she preaches
2. Serves people without regard to their nationality, gender, or race
3. Sees serving as a mission of responsibility to others
4. Genuinely interested in employees as people
5. Understands that serving others is most important
6. Willing to make sacrifices to help others
7. Seeks to instill trust rather than fear or insecurity
8. Is always honest
9. Is driven by a sense of higher calling
10. Promotes values that transcend self-interest and material success

Notes: Response scale for the extent to which this statement described the behavior of a focal leader:

**Anticipated Reciprocal Relationships:** Bock, G. W., Zmud, R. W., Kim, Y. G., & Lee, J. N. (2005). Behavioral intention formation in knowledge sharing: Examining the roles of extrinsic motivators, social-psychological forces, and organizational climate. *MIS quarterly*, 87-111.

---

1 = extremely likely; 2 = very likely; 3 = likely; 4 = very unlikely; 5 = extremely unlikely

---

1. My knowledge sharing would strengthen the ties between existing members in the organization and myself
2. My knowledge sharing would get me well-acquainted with new members in the organization
3. My knowledge sharing would expand the scope of my association with other members of the organization.
4. My knowledge sharing would draw smooth cooperation from outstanding members in the future.
5. My knowledge sharing would create strong relationships with members who have common interests in the organization

**Intention to share knowledge:** Bock, G. W., Zmud, R. W., Kim, Y. G., & Lee, J. N. (2005). Behavioral intention formation in knowledge sharing: Examining the roles of extrinsic motivators, social-psychological forces, and organizational climate. *MIS quarterly*, 87-111.

---

1 = extremely likely; 2 = very likely; 3 = likely; 4 = very unlikely; 5 = extremely unlikely

---

Intention to share *explicit knowledge*

1. I will share my work reports and official documents with my co-workers more frequently in the future
2. I will always provide my manuals, methodologies, and models with my co-workers more frequently in the future

Intention to share *implicit (expert ingenuity) knowledge*

1. I intend to share my experience or know-how from work with my co-workers more frequently in the future
2. I will always provide my know-where or know-whom with my co-worker
3. I will try to share my expertise from my education or training with my co-workers in a more effective way

**Discernment Practices Indicator (DPI) scale** Trauffer, H. C., Bekker, C., Bocârnea, M., & Winston, B. E. (2010). A three-factor measure of discernment. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 31(3), 263-284.

1 = extremely likely; 2 = very likely; 3 = likely; 4 = very unlikely; 5 = extremely unlikely

1. I have the mental courage to pursue the goals I set (C)
2. I have the moral courage to pursue the goals I set (C)
3. I seek out new ways to look at old things (C)
4. I see a future that is full of possibilities (C)
5. I believe in the created equality of all people (C)
6. I allow "common sense" to override policy when it is the right thing to do (C)
7. I am willing to accept uncertainty (C)
8. I am not afraid to be firm, but loving, in addressing issues (C)
9. I understand my emotions (I)
10. I am willing to make/have made decisions, based on a hunch (I)
11. I pay attention to whatever thoughts flash across my mind and whatever cues my body gives me (I)
12. I use quiet time (prayer, meditation, etc.) to reflect and find meaning in my life (F)
13. I incorporate my religious beliefs in my professional undertakings (F)
14. Principles of my faith guide me (F)

Note: C = Courage; I = Integrity; F = Faith

**The Measurement of Work Engagement Short Questionnaire** Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and psychological measurement*, 66(4), 701-716.

Never	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy (VI1)
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous (VI2)

3. I am enthusiastic about my job (DE2)
4. My job inspires me (DE3)
5. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work. (VI3)
6. I feel happy when I am working intensely. (AB3)
7. I am proud of the work that I do. (DE4)
8. I am immersed in my work. (AB4)
9. I get carried away when I am working. (AB5)

Note: VI = Vigor scale; DE = Dedication scale; AB = Absorption scale.

### Social Desirability

INSTRUCTIONS: Listed below are a few statements about your relationships with others. How much is *each* statement TRUE or FALSE for you?

1 = definitely true; 2 = mostly true; 3 = don't know; 4 = mostly false; 5 = definitely false

1. I am always courteous even to people who are disagreeable.
2. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.
3. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive and forget.
4. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.
5. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.

Notes: Extreme responses are scored 1; all others are scored 0. Extreme responses are "Definitely True" for items 1 and 5, and "Definitely False" for items 2-4.

## Appendix B

### Human Subject Research Review Form

Please submit *one electronic* copy of this form and any supporting documents to your dissertation chair or to the SBL IRB representative, Dr. Emilyn Cabanda at [ecabanda@regent.edu](mailto:ecabanda@regent.edu).

**1. PROJECT REVIEW**

New Project (The HSRB will assign an ID#) \_\_\_\_\_

Revised Project (Enter ID#) \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal (Enter ID#) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR** Larry D. Phillips

Address 112 Mill House Ln. Lexington, SC 29072 Phone (803) 643-3540

E-Mail larrphi@mail.regent.edu Date August 2017

**List of all project personnel (including faculty, staff, outside individuals or agencies)** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If you are a **student**, please provide the following additional information:

This research is for  Dissertation  Thesis  Independent Study

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor's Name: Dr. Bruce Winston

**3. TRAINING:** The National Institutes of Health Office of Extramural Research offers free self-paced online training at [phrp.nihtraining.com](http://phrp.nihtraining.com).

I have completed human subjects research training. Training Date: 05/15/2013

**4. PROJECT TITLE** Investigating the Link between Essential Servant Leader Behavior and Employee Engagement in the Knowledge Economic Era: An Autonomous Motivation Critique of Servant Leader Behavior

**5. IS THIS RESEARCH BEING SUBMITTED AS PART OF A FUNDED RESEARCH PROPOSAL?**  Yes  No

If yes, please identify the funding source:  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. ANTICIPATED LENGTH OF HUMAN SUBJECTS CONTACT:**

Beginning Date September 20, 2017 Ending Date October 13, 2017

7. **DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS:**

Number +300 Age Range >18

Briefly describe subject population: Employees of a mid-sized healthcare facility in South Carolina performing in-patient and outpatient care or support of care, such as nurse, care tech, information systems, administration

8. **INDICATE THE REVIEW CATEGORY FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING.**

I am applying for an **exempt review**, based on *one or more* of the following categories (check all that apply):

**Note: Exempt review cannot be claimed for any research involving prisoners and most research involving children.**

- Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings and involving normal educational practices such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods
- Research involving the use of survey procedures, educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), interview procedures or observation of public behavior, if information from these sources is recorded in such a manner that participants cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation  
**Note: This category cannot be used for research involving children**
- Research involving the use of survey procedures, educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), interview procedures, or observation of public behavior, if (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter
- Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects
- Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of federal department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or

services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs

- I am applying for an **expedited review**, based on meeting *all* of the following conditions (check all that apply):

*Note: Expedited review cannot be claimed for research involving prisoners.*

- Research poses no more than minimal risk to subjects (defined as "the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves than those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.")
- Research limited to one or more of the following data collection procedures:
- Collection of data through noninvasive procedures routinely employed in clinical practice
  - Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes
  - Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes
  - Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies

*Note: Some research in this category may be classified as exempt; this listing refers only to research that is not exempt.*

- Continuing review of research previously approved by the convened HSRB as follows: (a) where (i) the research is permanently closed to the enrollment of new subjects; (ii) all subjects have completed all research-related interventions; and (iii) the research remains active only for long-term follow-up of subjects; or (b) where no subjects have been enrolled and no additional risks have been identified; or (c) where the remaining research activities are limited to data analysis.

- I am applying for **full board review**.

## 9. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Briefly describe (or attach) the methodology and objectives of your research (including hypotheses and/or research questions), the data collection procedures,

and any features of the research design that involve procedures or special conditions for participants, including the frequency, duration, and location of their participation. The description should be no longer than 3 pages single space. Attach addendums for materials and detailed descriptions of the research if more space is needed. *Please note that complete chapters of thesis/dissertation proposals will not be accepted.*

RQ: How does servant leader behavior influence organizational climate, member reciprocal behavior and expectation, and worker level of engagement through vigor, dedication and absorption?

Hypotheses:

H1: Level of follower perception of leader's servant behavior has a positive influence on anticipated reciprocal relationships

H2: Servant leader behavior as perceived by the follower has a positive influence in collective knowledge sharing

H3a: Level of anticipated reciprocal relationships has a positive influence on knowledge sharing

H3b: Employee perceptions of anticipated reciprocal relationships will have a positive influence on employee engagement

H4: The level of knowledge sharing exhibited through attitude and intention to share will positively influence employee engagement

H5a: Greater levels of discernment will have a positive influence on the relationship between servant behavior and employee engagement

H5b: Greater levels of discernment will have a positive influence on the relationship between servant behavior and employee knowledge sharing

**Summary of Methodology; Design and Approach**

Following Umbach (2004) this quantitative research employs a web-based survey and data collection through SurveyMonkey is developed as one self-report instrument. Preexisting instrumentation with established validity and reliability are used to evaluate the model's five predictor variables along with control variables including gender, job tenure, position tenure, and education. Hair, et al. argues a study should achieve .80 of the desired significance level and effect size of .5 or smaller through a 20:1 ratio of responses to independent, moderating, mediating variable. Consequently, with nine predictor variables within the presented model a sample of 180 achieves a probability of the desired significance level. As time is of the essence to generate initial interest, expedite quick response, and maximize return a two-phase incentive plan is implemented. On the



initial email the participants are informed of two incentives to voluntarily participate beginning with a chance for a \$100 Visa card for all respondents within the first seven days At the conclusion of sampling a final drawing for a two-day, three-night stay at a Brevard North Carolina vacation rental house is provided. The model's independent variable, essential servant leader behavior (ESLB) is measured by the Winston and Fields (2015) 10-item scale, which establishes a psychometrically valid approach to evaluate individual leader behavior and which establishes servant leadership. Schaufeli et al. note engagement as a persistent and pervasive variable in worker development is a positive state characterized by mental resilience, inspired enthusiasm, and fully concentrated to one's job. Engagement as an outcome (DV) in the present study is measured through the employee engagement (self-report) 9-item scale of Schaufeli, Bakker, Salanova (2006) short version Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9).

Nonaka and Takeuchi point out knowledge sharing is an intentional behavior and it is not always easy to predict individual participation in the process of sharing knowledge Tohidinia and Mosakhani (2010), however it is clear that the process is a social interaction, thus the importance of individual discernment of the environment. The present study hypothesizes discernment is a moderating variable and suggest the strength of individual discernment positively influences a reciprocal environment and individual knowledge sharing. Follower discernment is operationalized through the 14-item scale Traüffer, Bekker, Bocârnea, and Winston (2010) discernment practices indicator (DPI). The 14-item discernment, three-dimensional solution for courage, intuition, and faith instrument is selected to measure follower (self-report) discernment Anticipated reciprocal relationship (self-report) according to Bock, Zmud, Kim and Lee (2005) emerges from attitudinal and subjective norms and are associated with theory of reasoned action TRA models, which help us to understand the underpinning of motivational drivers to knowledge-sharing behavior. The present project adapts Bock et al. ARR scale items When anticipated reciprocal relationship

is higher behavioral attitude and intentions increases the occurrence of collective action. This study presumes the individual's perception of the formation and development of their relationships with other organizational members develops an attitude toward knowledge sharing and result in the intention to share knowledge. Bock's et al. 5-item attitude toward knowledge sharing and 4-item scale for intention to share knowledge is used to collect knowledge sharing data. To control for social response bias the Hays, Hayashi, and Stewart (1989) five-item measure of socially desirable response set is included.

### **Data Management**

Invitations to participate are sent directly to individuals' employee-designated email account with a link embedded to access the survey questionnaire online. Data downloaded from the SurveyMonkey and exported into Microsoft Excel with incomplete responses and employment classification confirmed to be as-needed, traveler, and employed less than 20-hours per week are eliminated from the sample. Email addresses collected for incentives next are eradicated. As mentioned by Hair et al. theory is the guiding factor in evaluating strengths of the research model and model hypotheses' progresses through regression testing for variation from sample voluntary participants' response.

### **HSRB Project Description Checklist**

a) Is your data completely anonymous, where there are no possible identifications of the participants.	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Will you be using existing data or records? If yes, describe in project description (#9 above)	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
c) Will you be using surveys, questionnaires, interviews or focus groups with subjects? If yes, describe in #9 and include copies of all in application.	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Will you be using videotape, audiotape, film? If yes, describe in #9	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
e) Do you plan to use any of the following populations? Regent students, Regent employees, Non-English speaking, cognitively	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>impaired, patients/clients, prisoners, pregnant women? If yes, describe which ones in #9</b>		
<b>f) Do you plan to use minors (under 18)? If yes, describe in #9 and give age ranges</b>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>g) Are sites outside of Regent engaged in the research? If yes, describe in #9 and give consent letter or their IRB information</b>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>h) Are you collecting sensitive information such as sexual behavior, HIV status, recreational drug use, illegal behaviors, child/elder/physical abuse, immigrations status, etc? If yes, describe in #9.</b>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>i) Are you using machines, software, internet devices? If so describe in #9</b>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>j) Are you collecting any biological specimens? If yes, describe in #9</b>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>k) Will any of the following identifying information be collected: names, telephone numbers, social security number, fax numbers, email addresses, medical records numbers, certificate/license numbers, Web universal resource locators (URLs), Internet protocol (IP) address numbers, fingerprint, voice recording, face photographic image, or any other unique identifying number, code or characteristic other than “dummy” identifiers? If yes, describe in #9</b>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>l) Will there be data sharing with any entity outside your research team? If so, describe who in #9</b>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>m) Does any member of the research team or their family members have a personal financial interest in the project (for commercialization of product, process or technology, or stand to gain personal financial income from the project)? If yes, describe in #9.</b>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>n) As applicable, do you plan to provide a debriefing to your participants? If written, include in application as addendum</b>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>o) Will there be any inducement to participate, either monetary or nonmonetary? If there is inducement please describe how the amount is not coercive in #9.</b>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>p) Will there be any costs that subjects will bear (travel expenses, parking fees, professional fees, etc. If no costs other than their time to</b>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

participate, please indicate)? If yes describe in #9

q) Will subjects be studied on Regent University campus? If yes, please describe where the study will be done in #9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
r) Will subjects be obtained by internet only? If yes, please describe what internet forums or venues will be used to obtain participants in #9	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes
s) Are you using the Regent University <a href="#">consent form template</a> ? Whether using the template or requesting an alternate form, you must include a copy in your submission.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

#### 10. PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

Describe the sources of potential participants, how they will be selected and recruited, and how and where you will contact them. Describe all relevant characteristics of the participants with regard to age, ethnic background, sex, institutional status (e.g., patients or prisoners), and their general state of mental and physical health.

The participants are employees of a mid-size hospital in South Carolina. Total employment base is about 1000 including an unknown number of PRN (as needed) employees not eligible in the final accepted sample. Respondents include a diverse ethnicity, race, age, and age range but above the age of 18. It is anticipated that this sample is of sound mind with a large population of college educated participants.

#### 11. INFORMED CONSENT

Describe how you will inform participants of the nature of the study. Attach a copy of your cover letter, script, informed consent form and other information provided to potential participants.

An email embedded web-based informed consent statement is read by the participant with a requirement for the individual to select yes to proceed to the survey questions. See attached statement with survey samples.

**\*\* EXEMPT APPLICATIONS SKIP TO QUESTION 17: ATTACHMENTS \*\***

#### 12. WRITTEN CONSENT

- I am requesting permission to **waive written consent**, based on one or more of the following categories (check all that apply):

- The only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document, and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality.
- The research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.
- I will be using a **written consent form**. Attach a copy of the written consent form with this application.

**13. CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA**

What procedures will be used to safeguard identifiable records of individuals and protect the confidentiality of participants?

**\*\* EXPEDITED APPLICATIONS SKIP TO QUESTION 17: ATTACHMENTS \*\***

**14. RISKS AND BENEFITS**

Describe in detail the immediate or long-range risks, if any, to participants that may arise from the procedures used in this study. Indicate any precautions that will be taken to minimize these risks. Also describe the anticipated benefits to participants and to society from the knowledge that may be reasonably expected to result from this study.

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**15. DEBRIEFING STATEMENT**

The two major goals of debriefing are dehoaxing and desensitizing. Participants should be debriefed about any deception that was used in the study. Participants also should be debriefed about their behavioral response(s) to the study. Please describe your debriefing plans and include any statements that you will be providing to the participants.

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**16. DISSEMINATION & STORAGE OF RESULTS**

- a) How and where do you plan on disseminating the results of your study?
- b) For electronic data stored on a computer, how will it be stored and secured (password, encryption, other comparable safeguard)?

- c) For hardcopy data, how will it be stored (locked office or suite, locked cabinet, data coded by team with master list secured separately, other)?
- d) What are your plans for disposing of data once the study is ended (give method and time)?
- 
- 
- 

**17. ATTACHMENTS:**

Attach copies of all relevant project materials and documents, including (check all that apply):

- A copy of your training certificate (required for principal investigator)
- Surveys, questionnaires, and/or interview instruments
- Informed consent forms or statements
- Letters of approval from cooperative agencies, schools, or education boards
- Debriefing statements or explanation sheet

**18. AFFIRMATION OF COMPLIANCE:**

By submitting this application, I attest that I am aware of the applicable principles, policies, regulations, and laws governing the protection of human subjects in research and that I will be guided by them in the conduct of this research. I agree to follow the university policy as outlined in the Faculty & Academic Policy Handbook (available online at [http://www.regent.edu/academics/academic\\_affairs/handbook.cfm](http://www.regent.edu/academics/academic_affairs/handbook.cfm)) to ensure that the rights and welfare of human participants in my project are properly protected. I understand that the study will not commence until I have received approval of these procedures from the Human Subjects Review Board. I further understand that if data collection continues for more than one year from the approval date, a renewal application must be submitted.

I understand that failure to comply with Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46, available online at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm>) can result in confiscation and possible destruction of data, suspension of all current

and future research involving human subjects, or other institutional sanctions, until compliance is assured.

Larry D. Phillips  
Signature of Principal Investigator

September 19, 2017  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Co-Investigator (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



Dr. Bruce E. Winston, Ph.D., o-Regent University, o-  
email-bewinston@regent.edu, c-125  
I am approving this document  
2017.09.19 2055:32 -0400

9/19/2017

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Faculty Advisor (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**To Be Completed By HSRB**

Assigned ID # \_\_\_\_\_

- Approve \_\_\_\_\_
- Recommend Revisions \_\_\_\_\_
- Reject \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
HSRB Member

9/19/2017

Date



Dr. Emilyn Cabanda, Ph.D., o-Regent University, o-  
email-ecabanda@regent.edu, c-125  
I am approving this document  
2017.09.19 2056:54 -0400

\_\_\_\_\_  
HSRB Member (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Informed Consent Form**

The research design includes demographic data collected to serve as control variables in the statistical analysis. WEB-BASED INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Investigating the Link between Servant Leader Behavior and Employee Engagement in the Knowledge Economic Era: An Autonomous Motivation Critique of Servant Leader Behavior

This study of essential servant leader behavior and worker engagement is presented and performed by Larry Phillips. The senior team of Aiken Regional Medical Centers encourages your voluntary participation, which involves completing a set of survey questions intended to test the organization's climate for discernment in decision-making, level of co-worker knowledge sharing and level of engagement in a dynamic environment.

Participation is voluntary and participants must be 18 years or older to participate. This business was selected as a knowledge based organization consisting of several groups, which function at multiple levels. It should take you no longer than about 15-minutres to complete about 43 responses and a few demographic questions needed for this analysis.

As a participant it is important that you answer honestly. Only aggregated workgroup information will be analyzed and communicated to your organization for workgroups containing at least five respondents. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time in the process.

Confidentiality: Your email address may be voluntarily provided and is used only for the incentive drawings. Your email address is not transferred and is not used for any other purpose associated with this survey and is not maintained within any data collection system or software. All information and data collected through the process of this study are maintained on password protected systems or servers accessible only by the researcher.

Compensation: As a survey participant, you will be entered into a random drawing following receipt of a complete survey. Prizes will be one \$100 Visa gift certificate (selected at the end of day seven following survey release) and at the conclusion a final



drawing for a 2-day, 3-night stay at a Brevard NC vacation home.

**Opportunity to Ask Questions:** You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study. You may also call the investigator at any time at (803) 641-5186.

**Freedom to Withdraw:** You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time. You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By selecting "Yes I am over 18 years old, have read the disclaimer and I am employed by this organization" and proceeding with the web surveys, you are certifying that you have decided to participate, having read and understood the information presented. You may print a copy of this consent form to keep or request a copy from the primary investigator.

Name and Phone number of investigator(s)

Larry Phillips, Primary Investigator

(803) 641-5186

Yes I am over 18 years old, have read the disclaimer and I am employed by this organization

No