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# The Perceptions of Saudi Arabia Higher Educational Leaders on Servant Leadership: The Use of Authority and Power

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The University of San Francisco

THE PERCEPTIONS OF SAUDI ARABIA HIGHER EDUCATIONAL LEADERS ON  
SERVANT LEADERSHIP: THE USE OF AUTHORITY AND POWER

A Dissertation Presented  
To  
The Faculty of the School of Education  
Department of Leadership Studies  
Organization and Leadership Program

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirement for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

by  
Areej Shafai  
San Francisco  
December 2018

# THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

## Dissertation Abstract

### The Perceptions of Saudi Arabia Higher Education Leaders on Servant Leadership: The Use of Authority and Power

With the rapid changes occurring in Saudi Arabia toward achieving Saudi's 2030 vision, more opportunities and developments will emerge in education and leadership, as one of the main orientations of the vision. The Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia seeks to raise the quality of higher education and its features to provide outputs that contribute to serving the community and economic development. Responding to the requirements of the labor market, the Ministry of Higher Education is seeking to make higher education in Saudi Arabia competitive with higher education systems in other developed countries. Thus, improving leadership in higher education institutions has become more essential than ever. This study explored the perceptions of higher education leaders on servant leadership as a leadership style. It also aimed to define their practices of authority and power as a significant pillar of servant leadership.

A qualitative method was used to collect and analyze the data for this study. Ten department chairs from various regions of Saudi Arabia were interviewed to gain their perspectives and stories regarding their practice of servant leadership. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed, then coded and analyzed with Dedoose web-based qualitative data-analysis software. The major findings from this study emerged around the five main themes that answered the five research questions: experience of leadership, characteristics of servant leadership, service, authority and power, and challenges of applying servant leadership in Saudi Arabia.

One major finding of this study was that Saudi higher education leaders lack leadership education and training. They were unfamiliar with various leadership styles in general, and the term *servant leadership* in particular. Findings also demonstrated a tight link between servant leadership and Islamic principles, as Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) embraced the leadership approach that puts people and their needs as a top priority. The findings clearly indicated that Saudi higher education leaders use formal authority and still perceive formal authority as a major controlling element. Formal authority and moral authority complement each other. More importantly, servant leadership is an appropriate method of leadership to be applied in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. However, shifting from a traditional style of leadership that relies on authority to servant leadership needs to be gradual to reduce potential risks as a result of this significant transition.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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November 2, 2018  
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Dr. Walter Gmelch

November 2, 2018

Dr. Richard Johnson, III

November 2, 2018

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to everyone cares about improving higher education leadership in Saudi Arabia, to every educational leader who is seeking to thrive in his/her career.

I dedicate this work to my wonderful parents for being the most influential people in my life.

I also dedicate this work to my sisters and brothers, and to everyone who supported me and just made me smile.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foremost, I would like to thank ALLAH for everything he has given me to make this work possible. Without the faith I have in you and the belief that you are always there for me, I could never have accomplished this dissertation successfully.

A great thank to the government of Saudi Arabia for providing me a King Abdullah Scholarship to study abroad and gain unique skills and knowledge that cannot be gained in another place. Their generous support throughout my educational path is much appreciated.

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My parents, Abdullah and Salha: thank you for your continued prayers for me, and for providing the love and support that I really needed to successfully complete this

process. As ALLAH blessed me to live a long life, I will do whatever it takes to return back to you a simple part of what you have given me. My parents, I love you.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

#### Statement of the Problem

Leadership is an interactive process of influencing others to achieve organizational goals. Each process consists of different orientations and methods, as those methods can be seen as a series of attitudes, behaviors, characteristics, reactions, interests, values, and reliability of workers' in different situations (Manning & Curtis, 2012). No one style of leadership is better than another; rather how leaders can act differently in different situation defines their leadership style (Spears, 2010). In 1970, Greenleaf coined the term *servant leadership*, describing a new leadership style, giving service his primary focus (Spears, 2010). This method calls leaders to shift their minds from being served to serving others first. Leaders today rely heavily on their authority and position in running organizations and people, diminishing the value of service (Russell & Stone, 2002). Russell and Stone (2002) stated:

As long as power dominates our thinking about leadership, we cannot move toward a higher standard of leadership. We must place service at the core; for even though power will always be associated with leadership, it has only one legitimate use: service. (p. 145)

Servant leaders use their potential power and moral authority rather than their formal authority (Serrat, 2014). They realize that people listen, agree, and respect the leaders who have legitimate power and act ethically. Mooney (1985) indicated that effective leaders are those who do not rely on power, because it prevents from creating a positive environment with followers, which is important in providing services and directions. "The more that power is concentrated in the office of a leader, the more inevitability that later will become isolated" (Mooney, 1985, p. 82). However, several

researchers discovered how servant leaders use power and avoid relying on formal authority in a way that does not hurt the organizations or the people. However, researchers studying this topic conducted their research in countries outside of Saudi Arabia.

Every nation faces challenges in leadership practice and focus in leading people and moving entire organizations toward achieving organizational goals. Saudi Arabia is one region seeking to create more effective leaders who meet the highest needs of individuals without using their authority to complete tasks (Al-Yousef, 2012). Metcalfe and Mimouni (2011) revealed that in Saudi Arabia, “there is a remarkable scarcity of solid studies on leadership theory and practices in Saudi Arabia” (p. 180). In particular, the problem is the lack of studies about servant leadership and its effectiveness in Saudi Arabia. Further, as Al-Yousef (2012) discovered, many researchers ignored or did not give sufficient attention to the effect of this style on the factor of employees’ satisfactions. Generally, researchers discarded the concept of servant leadership, as they believed traditional leadership prepares leaders to motivate and lead others. However, servant leadership creates leaders motivated to serve others, rather than to lead, providing an alternative concept to leadership (Al-Yousef, 2012).

Saudi Arabia has significant ignorance about the servant-leadership style (Al-Yousef, 2012). In their study, Shmailan and Wirbaa (2015) revealed that the majority of managers in Saudi Arabian universities are transformational leaders and transactional leaders, and fewer are laissez-faire leaders. The general concept of servant leadership remains undefined as a practical leadership model in Saudi Arabia (Al-Yousef, 2012; Shmailan & Wirbaa, 2015).

Salameh, Al-Wyzinany, and Al-Omari (2012) determined the absence of important servant leadership principles among academic administrators in Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Researchers found a lack of research in the area of servant leadership not only in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, but also in the research world in general (Russell & Stone, 2002). In addition, the number of years of teaching experience one achieved identified to what extent one practiced the principles of servant leadership. Faculty with more experience perceived the level of practice of “develops other” and “building community” higher than those with less experience (Salameh et al., 2012). Previous studies (Al-Yousef, 2012; Salameh et al., 2012; Shmailan & Wirbaa, 2015) concluded that servant leadership needs more attention in the area of research across countries generally, and in Saudi Arabia specifically.

Gonaim (2017) investigated the leadership characteristics and behaviors of department chairs in higher education in Saudi Arabia. Very few studies measured the leadership approaches used by department chairs in higher education in general and in Saudi Arabia in particular. “The academic department is a fundamental unit for transforming the university’s visions and goals into reality” (p. 1). The findings demonstrated that department chairs are distinguished by their attitudes such as appreciation, respect, and trust, in addition to their knowledge and skills such as clear communication, listening, convincing, problem solving, time management, and adopting change. More importantly, according to department chairs’ perspectives in Saudi Arabia, a tendency exists to call for more collaborative leadership approaches that urge common effort, shared authority, ethics, and collective interest (Gonaim, 2017).



Higher education leaders in Saudi Arabia still practice the oldest forms of leadership that focus on the performance of workers, not the workers themselves (Alamri, 2011). Although the majority of Saudi higher education leaders (e.g., deans) received their education internationally, they tend to use bureaucratic leadership styles that heavily rely on formal authority. Bureaucracy is still the major challenge for the higher education system in Saudi Arabia (Alamri, 2011). Alsufyan's (2002) study focused on the perceptions of principals in secondary schools in Saudi Arabia, and the barriers these principals faced that prevented them from being effective leaders. One aspect of the major findings resulting from Alsufyan's study was the lack of authority and power of principals that disabled them from engaging in the whole process of decision making. Another challenge principals in Saudi Arabia experienced was the centralized bureaucratic operation of the Ministry of Higher Education.

In addition, researchers conducted very few studies that examined leadership styles of managers in universities in Saudi Arabia (Shmailan & Wirbaa, 2015). The researchers found that significantly more leadership development and training for managers was taking place in universities in Saudi Arabia because increasing demands of higher education in Saudi Arabia requires successful educational leadership that brings positive change to the organizations. The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia revealed that school principals suffer from unfamiliarity with leadership education. They receive no leadership education before they receive leadership positions (Mathis, 2010). When teachers or administrators finish 8 years in teaching or administration, they are eligible to advance their career and become school principals without prior engagement in any

professional-development activities that prepare them professionally for their new leadership position (Mathis, 2010).

Because servant leadership is not yet known and practiced by some leaders in Saudi Arabia, no known studies assessed the nature of the authority used by Saudi higher education leaders. For instance, some Saudi leaders may embody the characteristics of servant leadership but do not think of themselves as servant leaders. Their potential lack of knowledge about servant leadership may cause a failure to recognize themselves as servant leaders. The type of authority of those leaders who are servant leaders still needs to be defined. Currently, no study explored servant leadership in higher education in Saudi Arabia. Researchers need to determine the level of the use of moral authority as an essential pillar of servant leadership.

#### Background and Need for the Study

Today, leaders face more challenges than ever before, due to globalization and diversity. These challenges lead organizations to think and perform globally in a way that cultivates productivity in the workplace, creates independence of employees, improves job satisfaction, and opens communication for everyone (Al-Yousef, 2012). By achieving this goal, not only will stakeholders feel that they belong to the organization, but followers will perform effectively, having found their identities in this environment.

Leadership is the heart of organizations. People need good leaders who can empower them professionally and personally, and support them emotionally and psychologically to reach the goals of the organization. Leadership is a “reciprocal process of mobilizing be persons with certain motives, and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals

independently or mutually held be both leaders and followers” (Northouse, 1997, p. 4). Whenever the leadership style fits the nature of the organization, goals, people, and effective outcomes become apparent (Northouse, 1997). Servant leadership records effective results in organizations. Servant leaders care about the interrelation between followers, because interrelationship is a critical factor to ensure the success of leadership (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Northouse, 1997; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). The advantage of building a healthy environment goes beyond achieving goals; it is about creating a bond of ethics, respect, trust, integrity, and honesty (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Influencing employees is a primary issue that proves the effectiveness of leadership, because leaders should acknowledge that “employees became more educated and articulate, and less likely to accept command, as they prefer to be more involved at work” (Al-Yousef, 2012, p. 21). Thus, effective servant leaders are able to use factors that can raise the level of influence and participation, so followers accomplish their work with excitement and satisfaction rather than obedience and submission.

Today, workplaces experience many problems and turnover of employees (Harris, Hinds, Manansingh, Rubino & Morote, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002). Embodying a model such as servant leadership places leadership focus primarily on people, as it puts followers before leaders (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). When employees are led by leaders who care about their growth, understand their circumstances, listen to their needs, and spread their love and sense of safety, organizations experience reduction in conflict and employee turnover. Instead, employees become creative and innovative and are less likely to leave that organization.

Spears (2010) demonstrated the need for the servant leadership method in profit and nonprofit organizations. Those organizations shifted their practices from traditional, autocratic, and hierarchical methods of leadership to servant leadership, as they recognized the value of building relationships, empowerment, and the undesired consequences of practicing coercive leadership. Whitfield (2014) stated,

leading as usual with traditional tyrannical styles is not only anachronistic it is also potentially dysfunctional, given the fast pace of globalization, the complexity of transnational corporations, the addition of global educational entities, and the demographical changes in the workplace. (p. 50)

Using moral authority and power to lead is a significant dimension of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977/2002; Northouse, 1997; Sipe & Frick, 2015). When leaders use legitimate moral authority in a way that does not prevent them from providing service, and, at the same time, allows them to earn acceptance from followers, leaders are serving as true servant leaders. The need for servant leaders who are ethical is of utmost importance, as traditional leaders believe in power and authority more than service and ethics (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Shekari, Mahmood, and Nikooparvar (2012) supported this conclusion by revealing, “the world is crying out for ethical and effective leadership that serves others, invest in their development and fulfill a shared vision” (p. 1).

Saudi Arabia is one region that seeks to improve education. Since King Abdullah assumed the throne in 2005, education is a top priority in Saudi Arabia. In King Abdullah’s first year on the throne, the government spent 25% of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s total annual budget on education (Saudi Arabia: Kingdom tops world in education spending, 2013). Because Saudis, Western media, and U.S. journalists scrutinized the Saudi education system, King Abdullah made improving education a top priority (Mathis, 2010). Because the numbers of universities, technical colleges, teachers’

colleges, and institutions for health increased dramatically, the government of Saudi Arabia realized the necessity to develop the higher education system, faculties, and students to reach a world-class standard (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). The government considers the development of effective leadership a driving force and a prime aim in Saudi Arabia's government-reform agenda (Shmailan & Wirbaa, 2015).

However, Saudi educational leaders need to be educated in some of the bases and foundations of leadership, which are critical in reforming and developing higher education and its system in Saudi Arabia (Mathis, 2010). Educational leaders need more accessible and available opportunities and programs that prepare them to be effective leaders and teach them different leadership styles. The impact of each model of people and organizations needs to be taught before leaders hold their positions.

#### Background of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia

The general goal of education in Saudi Arabia is for students to understand the true Islam, the dominant religion of Saudi Arabia, and follow it in a comprehensive manner, to provide students with necessary skills and knowledge, and to prepare them to develop their behaviors as individuals and improve their communities (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011). Education at all levels in Saudi Arabia rests on the Islamic code of ethics, the essential ideology that shapes the lifestyle in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Gonaim, 2017). Education in Saudi Arabia is segregated by gender, including general education for boys, general education for girls, and traditional Islamic education. Both genders follow the same curriculum and take the same annual examinations (Sedgwick, 2001). The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, established in 1952, created a clear vision of education:

Engendering of a new generation of male and female youth who embody the Islamic values in their persons, both theoretical as well as practical, are equipped with necessary knowledge, skills, and endowed with ease and comfort. They should be able to face international competition both at the scientific as well as technological levels to be able to meaningfully participate in overall growth and development. (Saudi Arabia, 2007. p.1)

This vision means that education is an investment aiming not only to meet societies' demands, but also to provide Muslim individuals better quality, creativity, and success for their lives. Saudi Arabia invested approximately \$160 billion in the education budget (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013).

The Ministry of Education is responsible for three types of education: general education (elementary, intermediate, and secondary), special education, and adult education and literacy. The Ministry of Education divides educational institutions into three stages: the primary stage (6 years), intermediate stage (3 years), and secondary stage (3 years; Yamani, 2006). The Ministry of Education is only in charge of schools, not the field of higher education. The Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for institutions' systems, including universities, general colleges, teacher-training colleges, girls' colleges, or any 4-year higher education institutions (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011). The Ministry of Higher Education, the Technical and Vocational Training Cooperation, and the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties for health instruction recognize all educational institutions in Saudi Arabia (Clark, 2014).

The Ministry of Higher Education existed under the general Ministry of Education. Due to tremendous growth in the number of universities and colleges in the last decade in Saudi Arabia, many considered it necessary to establish the Ministry of Higher Education to address issues related to higher education (Alamri, 2011). Higher

education institutions provide a wide range of programs and specialists in many fields. Undergraduate programs lead to a bachelor's degree in approximately 4 years (5 years for architecture, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine; 6 years for dentistry, medicine, and law). Graduate programs lead to a higher diploma, such as a master's or doctoral degree (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2011). The number of universities and colleges increased significantly and the enrollment in universities doubled between 2010 and 2014 (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). The system of higher education witnessed marked development in expanding higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia, including 23 public universities, 18 primary teacher's colleges for men, 80 primary teacher's colleges for women, 37 colleges and institutes for health, 12 technical colleges, and 33 private universities and colleges (Alamri, 2011). Education is free at all levels for Saudi students, except for those who choose to attend private institutions. According to Ministry of Higher Education statistics (2017), 1,527,769 students enrolled in higher education institutions during the 2014–2015 academic year.

The King Abdullah scholarship program was established by the Ministry of Higher Education in 2005. The government of Saudi Arabia not only provides free education for Saudis, but also provides opportunities for qualified students to study abroad in various countries to meet the requirements for the labor market in Saudi Arabia (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). More Saudi students study abroad than students from any other country in the world (Alamri, 2011). Previously, Saudi students studied in the United States, Canada, Jordan, the United Kingdom, and Egypt (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). This study-abroad program is considered the biggest scholarship program in the history of Saudi Arabia. It started with an agreement between King Abdullah and

President G. W. Bush to increase the number of students in the United States. The number of Saudi students studying in all states of the United States exceeds 71,000 students (Saudi Arabia Cultural Mission, 2013).

The Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for funding, development of curriculums and systems, recruitment of faculties, and improvement of the higher education sector at all levels (Clark, 2014). The Ministry of Higher Education is committed to preparing teachers and faculties to best serve universities and students. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2011), the full role of the higher education system is to “prepare and graduate qualified staff; upgrade the educational and professional standards of the current general education teachers, principals and administrators by offering various training courses in cooperation with the Ministry of Education” (p. 13). The minimum requirement for teachers is a 4-year bachelor’s degree. A higher level of diploma is required to teach university and college students.

Higher education in Saudi Arabia is destined to meet “world-class” standards of education by creating quality innovative programs and initiatives that ensure the success of students and prepare them to be successful as individuals and as members of communities. Allowing the changes and developments to happen will contribute to overcoming several challenges and obstacles facing the higher education system in Saudi Arabia.

### The Purpose of the Study

The purpose for this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia regarding servant leadership as a leadership



model, specifically in their ways of employing authority and power. This study also aimed to identify whether higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia implement servant-leadership principles.

### Research Questions

Five research questions were designed to guide this study:

1. What are the perceptions of higher education department chairs of servant leadership as a leadership model in Saudi Arabia?
2. To what extent have servant-leadership characteristics already been or are being used by higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia?
3. To what degree do higher education department chairs value service and define themselves as servants first, then as leaders?
4. How do higher education department chairs explain their practice of authority and power?
5. What challenges do higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia face to change their formal authority and traditional leadership style to use moral authority and a servant-leadership style in leading others?

### Theoretical Framework

This study was rooted in two theories: Spears's (1998) 10 characteristics of servant leadership and French and Raven's (1959) five bases of power and influence. These theories were formulated to explain, predict, and understand the two major related concepts of this study: servant leadership and the use of power. The first theoretical framework is the 10 characteristics of servant leadership developed by Spears (1998). Spears became expert at analyzing Greenleaf's writings, and because of this, became the

CEO of the Greenleaf Center. Spears (2010) identified 10 characteristics that provide insights into the behaviors and values of servant leaders. These characteristics of servant leaders provide a specific lens to measure and analyze the behaviors and values of leaders in Saudi Arabia to determine their level of practice of servant leadership.

Spears (1998) identified the following 10 characteristics:

1. listening: successful leaders are those who value the communication skill, and possess a deep commitment to listen to others intently (Spears, 2010);
2. empathy: the ability to put oneself in the shoes of others and to see the issue from others' points of view (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2015; Spears, 2010);
3. healing: "there is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share" (Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 50);
4. awareness: this includes awareness of oneself and others. Being aware of oneself means being aware of one's knowledge and familiarity with one's own strengths so people keep improving and overcoming their weaknesses to find solutions to address them (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2015; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004);
5. persuasion: "the true measure of leadership is influence; nothing more, nothing less" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 11);

6. conceptualization: how leaders look and think beyond day-to-day operations and focus on the big picture (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004);
7. foresight: “all activities that organizations and governments undertake to make assumptions about the future that, in turn, drive policies” (Sipe & Frick, 2015, p. 106);
8. stewardship: holding an organization in trust for the greater good of community (Northouse, 2016; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004);
9. commitment to the growth of people: leaders treat everyone in an organization as unique and the most important person with special intrinsic value (Russell & Stone, 2002); and
10. building community. Greenleaf (1977/2002) said,  
  
All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his or her unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group. (p. 53)

See Figure 1 for an illustration of the 10 characteristics.



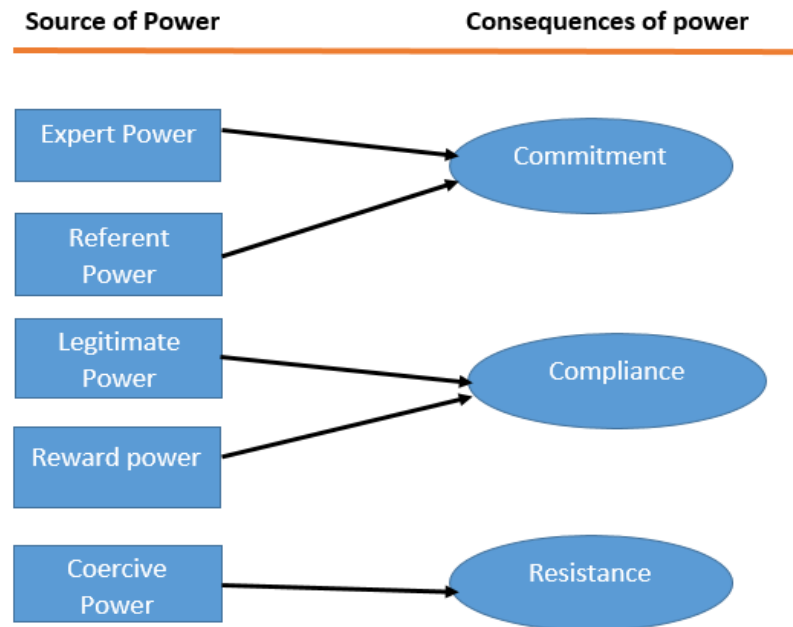
*Figure 1.* Characteristics of servant leadership.

Another theory chosen to frame this study is French and Raven's five bases of power and influence. In 1959, French and Raven explored the phenomenon of power and influence, discerning why some leaders can influence people and others cannot. They studied the essential tools of power that leaders use to get the most from followers (Raven, 2008). French and Raven classified power into five bases: legitimate, rewards, expert, referent, and coercive. Six years later, they added one more base of power, informational power, as they observed some leaders to use rational reason as an effective influence (French & Raven, 1959). These five essential types of power follow:

1. legitimate power: a belief that a person holds a legitimate right to influence others and make demands and to expect others to accept this influence (French & Raven, 1959);

2. reward power: the ability to reward and compensate;
3. coercive power: the belief that one can manipulate and punish others for noncompliance;
4. expert power: a high level of knowledge and skills; and
5. referent power: the ability to cultivate the admiration and respect of followers so leaders can influence others because of others' friendship, admiration, and loyalty (French & Raven, 1959).

According to French and Raven (1959), three consequences arise from practicing these five bases of power. Followers can react and respond with commitment, compliance, or resistance, based on the types of power they observe and receive from their leaders. Leaders who use expert or referent power experience commitment from their followers because the followers perceive the knowledge and attractiveness of their leaders. Leaders who tend to use legitimate or reward power expect others to be compliant and obedient. Coercive-power users expect resistance from followers because they believe their leaders can punish them for noncompliance (see Figure 2). By understanding these five bases of power, leaders in Saudi Arabia can identify their own types of power, then manipulate and choose the one that best describes a servant leader.



*Figure 2.* Types and consequences of the five bases of power.

### Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Although this study aimed to obtain broader perceptions of higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia of servant leadership and the use of power, the study was not without limitations and delimitations that limited the breadth of the field of the study. This study was limited to higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, generalizability was limited to department chairs among all staff members; the study had limited generalizability to other settings and groups. Leaders employed only in educational fields also limited this study. Organizational leaders from other fields, who may hold different perceptions of servant leadership and power, were not included in this study. Also, not all department chairs in all universities or colleges were interviewed, which was a potential limitation of this study. Only 10 department chairs from universities and colleges participated in this study. A lack of empirical research on

servant leadership exists in the literature (Van Dierendonck, 2011), and the body of knowledge of servant leadership needs more empirical research than other methods of research.

The first delimitation of this study was the sample of the study. The sample was limited to ten higher education department chairs who may not represent the perceptions of other staff members, such as professors and managers, in lower levels of management, and who may hold different perceptions of servant leadership and power. Moreover, this qualitative study included eight participants from different educational environments (universities and colleges), which implies the sample size was small. The final delimitation in the study was that the ethnicity and socioeconomic status were not considered when selecting participants for the study. In other words, participants were chosen based on their position in a university or college, gender, and number of years of experience. Other variables were not considered in this study.

#### Significance of the Study

The Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia seeks to raise the quality of higher education and its features to provide outputs that contribute to serving the community and economic development. Responding to the requirements of the labor market, the Ministry of Higher Education is seeking to make higher education in Saudi Arabia competitive with higher education systems in other developed countries (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010). Saudi Arabia's government increased the number of its universities and colleges, doubling university enrollment between 2010 and 2014. This change required the Ministry of Higher Education to focus on the inputs and outputs of

education and make more funds available for higher education expenses (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013).

Saudi Arabia is enthusiastic about improving its higher education system at all levels (Smith & Abouammoh, 2013). Saudi Arabia invested approximately \$160 billion into the education budget. Subsequently, exploring leadership practices in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia is essential to ensure the quality, productivity, and effectiveness of education that can make a difference in Saudi communities. Badawood (2003) explored the perceptions of private boys' school principles regarding the leadership concept. Badawood reported that the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia acknowledged the need for leadership programs that help school principals understand the different orientations and methods of leadership.

This study is important due to its contribution to the improvement of higher education in Saudi Arabia. This study will reflect leaders' behaviors and attitudes and translate what is happening in practice regarding servant leadership and its impact on others. Through this study, leaders' challenges and concerns in shifting their formal authority to moral authority and implementing the servant-leadership style, will be determined. This study can help address those concerns and pave the way for leaders to be more effective in their positions.

The concept of servant leadership is not given enough attention and support in the workplace (Russell & Stone, 2002). This study adds global and international insights into the body of servant-leadership knowledge. Saudi Arabia is one of the regions that diminishes and ignores the value of the servant leadership method, because no definition or determination of its use as a practical leadership style exists (Al-Yousef, 2012). No



known studies conducted in Saudi Arabia assess servant leadership in terms of using authority and power. Very few perceptions exist in scholarship of Saudi leaders about servant leadership, specifically, with regard to their ways of using power. Conducting this study can be helpful in exploring the perceptions of higher education leaders of servant leadership, and analyzing their strategies in practicing authority and power. This study can also determine the behaviors and values of Saudi leaders and to what extent they can or cannot be servant leaders.

Because the limited literature on servant leadership described what is happening in practice (Van Dierendonck, 2011), interviewing leaders from different universities and informing their stories, experiences, insights, and challenges regarding servant leadership will convey the behaviors and attitudes of educational leaders aligned with servant leadership. By identifying and applying servant leadership in Saudi Arabia, and analyzing the use of power by leaders, organizations can experience a healthier environment, where service is valuable and appreciated and power is employed properly. More attention can be given to the servant-leadership style, more research about this leadership model can be performed in wider fields, and more programs can be designed to enable leaders to embark on germinating this concept of leadership and enjoying its results in an entire organization.

#### Definitions of Terms

For this study, the following terms were operationalized:

*Authority*: The right given to a manager or leader to accomplish certain tasks (Serrat, 2014).

*Ministry of Higher Education:* “The Ministry of Higher Education was established by Royal Decree No. 1/236 dated (19/5/1975) to execute the Kingdom’s Policy on Higher Education. The Minister of Education is responsible for the implementation of the Government’s Educational Policy” (Ministry of Education, 2017b).

*Perception:* The ability to become aware of something or someone through the senses; the way of thinking or understanding something or someone (*Oxford Dictionaries*, 2017).

*Power:* “The ability to influence the actions of others, individuals or groups. It is understood as the leader’s influence potential” (Krausz, 1986, p. 69).

*Servant leadership:* A leadership style that is best defined by Greenleaf (1977/2002),

the servant-leader is servant first. ... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. (p. 27)

*Spears’s 10 characteristics of servant leadership:* Listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Spears, 2010).

*The five bases of power:* Legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, expert power, and referent power (French & Raven, 1959).

### Summary

Saudi Arabia faces major challenges in practicing leadership in higher education. Researchers conducted very few studies observing the leadership approaches used by department chairs in higher education in Saudi Arabia. Although a majority of higher

education leaders received international education, they still practice old forms and approaches of leadership. Servant leadership is being ignored in Saudi higher education, as it remains an undefined leadership style.

In addition, Saudi higher education leaders rely most on their authority. They practice leadership approaches, such as bureaucratic leadership, that rely heavily on formal authority and the workers' performance rather than the workers themselves. A lack of research exists assessing the nature of the authority used by Saudi higher education leaders, whether or not they are servant leaders.

The significance of this study was not solely limited to adding global and international insights into the body of servant-leadership knowledge, but also contributed to the improvement of the Saudi Arabian higher education system. This study helped in determining the behaviors and values that shape the practices of leadership of department chairs in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, department chairs' ways of using authority were defined, as that definition is the first significant step in changing their mindset from being served to serving others. This study helped department chairs understand the value in serving others, its impact on others, and how to employ the type of power and authority that does not hurt the organization or its people.

The next chapter provides a comprehensive review of related literature on the following areas: (a) servant leadership, (b) characteristics of servant leadership, (c) authority and power in servant leadership, (d) shifting from formal authority to moral authority, (e) the relationship between the five bases of power and servant leadership, (f) servant leadership across cultures, and (g) servant leadership in higher education. Chapter 3 contains details about how this study was conducted, population and sample,

setting of the study, the research design, instrumentation, ethical considerations, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the findings and the data gathered from this study. The final chapter discusses the findings from an analytical view, application and implications, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Restatement of the Problem

No studies took place in Saudi Arabia regarding servant leadership that assessed the type of authority used by higher educational leaders. Saudi educational institutions ignore the concept of servant leadership (Al-Yousef, 2012). Bureaucracy is still a major challenge facing higher education in Saudi Arabia. Higher education leaders, such as deans, still practice the oldest forms of leadership that heavily rely on authority rather than influence (Alamri, 2011). In addition, very few researchers examined leadership styles of managers in universities in Saudi Arabia (Shmailan & Wirbaa, 2015).

#### Overview of Servant Leadership Literature

Organizations seeking success and excellence shifted their focus onto the human workforce, as civilizations progressed across the world. To improve organizations, human beings should engage a process in which certain people influence, empower, support, and motivate others to achieve an organization's goals; a process known as leadership (Yukl, 1998). *Process* implies that leadership is not focused on characteristics or traits; leadership is not a one-way interaction, but rather a transactional event, composed of steps between leaders and followers.

Leadership is a complex process with several meanings. It can be characterized as social influence or "showing the way and influencing the behavior and others by ideas and deeds" (Manning & Curtis, 2012, p. 2). Maxwell (2005) created a definition of leadership:

people more than projects; movement more than maintenance; art more than science; intuition more than formula; vision more than procedure; risk more than

caution; action more than reaction; relationships more than rules; who you are more than what you do. (p. 113)

This literature review presents a review of several themes. The first theme offers an overarching picture of leadership including its multiple definitions and how it impacts leaders, organizations, and followers. Next, a historical background of servant leadership demonstrates the birth of the servant-leadership model by Greenleaf in 1970 and the inspirations that drove Greenleaf to create the servant-leadership concept. Additionally, the literature review includes empirical studies conducted by researchers who elaborate on the concept of servant-leadership presentation. The fourth theme exhibits characteristics and attributes of servant leadership extracted by Spears (2010), the CEO of Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, from Greenleaf's writings, along with a comprehensive interpretation of each characteristic as an essential quality of servant leaders. The following theme specifies the nature of authority and power, the difference between those two concepts, and how servant leaders employed this type of authority. Shifting from formal authority to moral authority is a significant transition that ensures the success of modeling servant leadership.

Researchers described in the literature also show the relationship between authority, morals, and legitimacy in a way that illustrates the importance for servant leaders to be ethical and legitimate. The following theme is a brief clarification of the five bases of power classified by French and Raven in 1959. Those types of power include legitimate, reward, expert, coercive, and referent power. The theme also presents the consequences and reactions of each type of power. The following theme gives an extensive overview of servant leadership across cultures, including several studies conducted in different regions, and how different cultures, traditions, and values can

impact the creation of servant leaders. The final theme gives a broader understanding of servant leadership in higher education.

### Definitions of Leadership

The concept of servant leadership could indeed be traced back 2,500 years ago to ancient Greece and Rome, flourishing most naturally in democratic institutional environments (Valeri, 2007). People have varying definitions of the word *leadership*, based on their perspectives and experiences. Leadership has multiple dimensions and orientations according to the difference in centuries, generations and events associated with time. From 1900 to 1929, the leadership concept emphasized control, centralization of power, and the ability to “impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation” (Northouse, 2016, p. 2). In the 1930s, the focus of leadership shifted toward traits, redefining leadership as the influence of individuals with specific persuasion over others to change their activities and behaviors. The 1940s brought a similar orientation as scholars viewed leadership as the behaviors of individuals to seek direct group activities.

Three themes dominated leadership definitions during the 1950s. During this decade, leadership focused on leaders’ performance in groups, relationships between workers and leaders to achieve shared goals, and the effectiveness of leaders to influence a group (Northouse, 2016). In the 1960s, the world witnessed a tumultuous time that encouraged scholars to focus on behaviors—acting a certain way to influence others—as a prevailing concept of leadership. During the decade of 1970, leadership received a redefinition. Burns (1978) defined leadership as a “reciprocal process of mobilizing persons with certain motives, and values, various economic, political, and other

resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held be both leaders and followers” (p. 425).

Due to the increase in the formalization of the global marketplace, the 1980s and 1990s housed the development of more leadership models (Al-Yousef, 2012). Thus, scholars brought leadership to the apex of the academic and public consciousness and came up with four themes: following leaders’ wishes, noncoercive influence, traits scholars brought back from the 1930s to the spotlight, and transformation (Northouse, 2016). Transformational leadership is a process that engages a number of people with each other in an environment where motivation and morality occur. Into the 21st century, the debate of whether leadership and management are different processes occurred first, but the emphasis remained on leadership, as emerging research defined different leadership models adopted as new approaches of leadership based on their effectiveness in organizations (Northouse, 2016).

Because each decade holds its own events and needs, and because the marketplace became more complex than ever, organizations in the 21st century realized they urgently needed to experience different lenses of leadership according to current issues in the workplace and to find proper leadership models that brought solutions and better change to organizations (Al-Yousef, 2012). Four approaches emerged:

- (a) authentic leadership: focusing on authenticity;
- (b) spiritual leadership: using values and motivation;
- (c) servant leadership: using caring and service principles; and
- (d) adaptive leadership: requiring leaders and followers to adapt to changes, problem solving, and challenges (Northouse, 2016). These new styles of leadership provided great



results to leaders, workers, and organizations as a whole. Still, there is no universal approach to leadership.

After viewing different trends in leadership during various decades, one is able to clearly identify some similarities and differences between leadership definitions, as researchers discovered. One significant similarity between definitions mentioned, is the interrelationship between leaders and people (Yukl, 1998). Some researchers discussed this point in terms of influence, behaviors, motivation, and interactions with people. These factors reflect some aspects of building an effective relationship between leaders and workers to reach organizational or team goals. In contrast, one difference observed between leadership definitions is that some researchers see it as a concept of control and power. Others consider leadership to be a variety of processes of change. Still others looked at leadership from lenses of influence, such as how to gain the ability to influence. Furthermore, scholars designed those definitions of leadership according to their perspectives of leadership, and each definition reflects one of the leadership theories aligned with organizations' needs today (Yukl, 1998). All leadership definitions are helpful and meaningful in their application. However, their value lies in the method of applying them. Scholars of leadership concluded that it is impossible to maintain one definition of leadership due to rapid changes, generational differences, and globalization in all aspects of life. However, all agree that "leadership is a complex concept for which a determined definition may long be in flux" (Northouse, 2016. p. 5).

Leadership is the ability owned by leaders or individuals to influence others, to motivate them, and encourage them to complete a set of objectives for organizations (Northouse, 2016; Yukl, 1998). Leadership can be described as a set of activities

practiced by leaders in all areas that require making decisions and issuing orders to subordinates. Because leaders play a key role in controlling workflow problems, they must be familiar with varieties of intrinsic methods of leadership to ensure they run the organization in an effective and satisfactory manner for all parties. Each century established and recognized different focuses and styles of leadership. Each style holds unique strengths and some leaders are good at certain styles but may not be good at another. Yet, the smartness translates into how leaders can navigate and manipulate between those styles and choose the one that best fits in a situation (Yukl, 1998).

In 1970, a new leadership style was servant leadership. This approach became the most challenging, not only in its application, but also in understanding and processing it, because it forced leaders to shift their minds and experiences from being served to serving others. Greenleaf originally coined the term servant leadership in 1970 and described the nature of servant leadership:

The servant-leader is servant first. ... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons: do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived? (Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 27)

The need for servant leaders is at its apex, to combat leaders' belief in power and authority more than service.

### Historical Background of Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (1977/2002) established servant leadership in 1970. Born in Terre Haute, Indiana, Greenleaf performed most professional work in field development, education, and management research (Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Greenleaf worked for AT&T for 40 years and for several institutions such as Ohio University, Ford Foundation,

Mellon Foundation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the American Foundation for Management Research, and others (Spears & Lawrence, 2004). After retiring, Greenleaf started researching how organizations service their communities.

Three factors inspired Greenleaf, creating a vision that gave birth to servant leadership: (a) a person taught Greenleaf to “see things whole,” (b) Herman Hesse’s novel *Journey to the East*, and (c) Greenleaf’s father’s life. *Journey to the East* heavily inspired Greenleaf, as it tells a story about travelers and a servant. The servant used to do menial chores for the travelers and sang to them, which kept the travelers stable and inspired. After the servant disappeared, the travelers failed to continue their journey, as the presence of the servant made a great impact on the stability and cohesion of the whole group (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). At the age of 66, in 1970, Greenleaf published the first essay on servant leadership *The Servant as Leader* (Spears & Lawrence, 2004).

The statement of servant leadership centered on how Greenleaf lived life, what the author learned from experiences, and more importantly, what the world needs to be a better place to live (Valeri, 2007). Greenleaf strongly opposed relying on authority and power in leadership, especially coercive power, believing that leaders should shift authority to those who are being led (Northouse, 2016). Greenleaf realized that the need of humanity in the 21st century was for servant leadership because inequality and social injustice existed in many institutions, and servant leaders advocated for those who are less privileged (Northouse, 2016). Decidedly, Greenleaf initially envisioned how to create better organizations and societies by serving and helping each other. Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora (2008) stated:

That “servanthood” defines servant leadership is an idea recorded much earlier in the Bible where seven key Greek words are often used to denote the term

“servant” while referring to leaders, namely diakonos, doulos, huperetes, therapon, oiketes, sundoulos, and pais (Getz, 1984). None of these words insinuates a lack of self-respect or low self-image. Instead, voluntary subordination is manifested in the willingness to assume the lowliest of positions and endure hardship and suffering on behalf of other people. (p. 406)

### The Concept of Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (1977/2002) did an extensive job in identifying servant leadership as a mindset of leadership. It is a belief that convinces conscious and subconscious process to believe that servant leadership is about one’s values and how one lives life, rather than an approach to instill. Organizations, profit and nonprofit, are shifting their practices from more traditional, autocratic, and hierarchical methods of leadership to servant leadership because they recognized the value of building relationships and empowerment (Spears, 2010). Servant leadership is about serving others, the desire to serve, and the want to provide help (Baggett, 1997). Servant leadership describes how leaders can find a true moral authority and power to lead. Servant leadership is a lifestyle rather than a characteristic that can be gained. Some leaders are more naturally servants than other leaders (Spears, 2010). Although servant leaders are born with the internal desire to serve, but everyone can learn how to be a servant leader (Northouse, 2016). Valeri (2007) reported that “servant leaders voluntarily choose to take on in their journeys through life. Its source is not egoism but a selfless regard for others” (p. 2). Ideally, servant leadership is about the natural internal feeling of serving others and being the giver and servant for others.

Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) enriched the term servant leadership, purifying the inferior and weak meaning that some leaders or scholars might hold:

It is important to note that the servant leader’s deliberate choice to serve and be a servant should not be associated with any forms of low self-concept or self-image, the same way as choosing to forgive should not be viewed as a sign of weakness.

Instead, it would take a leader with an accurate understanding of his or her self-image, moral conviction and emotional stability to make such a choice. (p. 33)

Servant leadership rests on looking for others' needs and interests before considering one's own, empowering others to perform better, caring and serving others to influence them to achieve common goals (Spears, 2010). Servant leaders best serve others when they first identify the needs of individuals in order to meet them. Second, servant leaders advocate for those who have less or are followers (Grogan, 2013). Spears (2010) stated that in recent years, more writers tend to write about servant leadership and advocate for it, such as Autry, Bennis, Block, Carver, Covey, DePree, Jaworski, Kouzes, Matusak, Palmer, Peck, Senge, Vaill, Wheatley, and Zohar (Spears, 2010). However, the servant leadership style still lacks attention and support in institutions.

Servant leadership is not an approach that can be instilled quickly. "Servant leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work—in essence, a way of being—that has the potential for creating positive change throughout our society" (Spears & Lawrence, 2004. p. 12). Servant leadership is a long process of transitions and exchanged behaviors between leaders and followers. Servant leadership focuses on the service itself, rather than the results (Al-Yousef, 2012). This method keeps employees engaged in the environment by providing the service and support they need for continuous improvement. Servant leaders focus on people first, discerning how to create a moral relationship with others, leading to achieve goals, rather than emphasizing results. Servant leaders work to reach the best results, rather than focusing on the results themselves. Servant leaders can also be described as coaches who push others to succeed, who support others to perform well, and who help "close the gap between potential and

performance” (Stanley, 2003, p. 122). Their first wish is to see others succeed. The real measure of a good leader is not, as Pollard (1997) concluded, the “person with the most distinguished title, the highest pay, or the longest tenure ... but the role model, the risk taker, the servant; not the person who promotes himself or herself, but the promoter of others” (pp. 49–50).

The business book, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't*, provides an excellent example of some leadership scholars who wrestled with the paradox in leadership and service concepts, as many objected to the term due to its weakness and servitude. Service and leadership are two concepts with seemingly opposite meanings, and this is where the challenge of servant leadership lies. Northouse (2016) talked about the criticism of the title of servant leadership, because the name seems contradictory and creates a noisy sound that diminishes the true value of the approach. Furthermore, the name servant leadership suggests the concept of following, and following is completely contrary to the concept of leadership. These limitations of the term are partly logical for some thinkers, but the tenets behind servant leadership are that it combines leadership and service, power and influence, and decisions and participation, enabling leaders to be effective servants.

In a traditional concept of leadership, a person lower on the chain of command is expected to serve. In servant leadership, however, “the paradoxical concept of serving from a leadership role seems just the natural way it should work. Servant leaders often feel they are called to serve” (Tureman, 2013, p. 9). Many leaders enjoy a sense of authority over others, as it is one of the perquisites of a leadership position. Such leaders naturally put themselves first because this is part of human nature. In servant leadership,

the natural desire brings one to serve, to serve first, then to lead, especially for those who are in lower levels of performance (Tureman, 2013). Servant leaders delegate authority to followers by empowering them to make the best decisions and solutions. Servant leaders stand next to followers and provide a helping hand when it is needed. Servant leaders no longer act as the “headmaster”; rather, they serve as “head learner” (Grogan, 2013, p. 377), engaging in the enterprise of the organization by modeling, celebrating, displaying, and serving to make sure individual’s needs are met.

Servant leadership, most of time, calls for bringing about change. Keeping old ways of performing one’s work is enough to stifle innovation and creativity in the workplace.

Leading as usual with traditional tyrannical styles is not only anachronistic it is also potentially dysfunctional, given the fast pace of globalization, the complexity of transnational corporations, the addition of global educational entities, and the demographical changes in the workplace. (Whitfield, 2014, p. 50)

Most organizations prefer to stay with their traditional approaches to accomplish work. Change is an elusive and alarming idea for most organizations, as they are unaware of the expected results and the effort needed to implement this change (Tureman, 2013). However, organizations must be ready to employ any change needed for the good of the organization, and employing servant leadership can be one effective change that can bring unexpected positive outcomes. Change may take time, effort, and perseverance but is worthwhile. Theodore Roosevelt, who discussed the art of leadership, summed up this idea well:

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring

greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat. (Manning & Curtis, 2012, p. 10)

Servant leaders bring the desired change to organizations in shaping the culture, behaviors, values, relationships, and results of the organization. Further, leading change while being a servant to all is incalculably demanding.

Kotter (1996) suggested a number of strategies that can bring change to organizations. To implement change, organizations must establish a sense of urgency. People in organizations must realize why change is important and recognize the problem that calls for change (Kotter, 1996). Leaders should be keenly aware of employees' questions and concerns, and serve and heal them in a way that brings a positive change to the entire organization. In addition, choosing the right group to carry out changes is an effective way to lead the change (Kotter, 1996). First, leaders need to identify the people who can adapt to this change by modeling the behaviors. Effective servant leaders start the process of change in themselves by embodying servant-leadership characteristics; then develop them in others. Establishing and reaching the vision, and empowering employees to start accomplishing it, are other strategies leaders consider when bringing about change (Kotter, 1996), such as modeling the servant-leadership style and acting as a servant.

### Characteristics of Servant Leadership

Servant leadership is a unique form of leadership because the major distinguishing factor of servant leadership is its primary intent: what a servant leader really does (Sendjaya et al., 2008). The biggest concerns of leaders interested in servant leadership are how to implement it and where to find the field guide for instituting it. Leaders should start by learning and considering the servant-leadership attributes



designed by Spears (2010), and by studying the seven pillars of servant leadership formulated by Sipe and Frick (2015). The term servant leadership reflects specific characteristics that distinguish this method from other leadership methods, making servant leaders distinctive. Although the literature on servant leadership is framed in journals, books, and research, all of those studies advocate for the same attributes of servant leaders (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Spears (1998), while the CEO of the Greenleaf Center, determined that Greenleaf's writing incorporated 10 major characteristics of servant leadership. Spears (1998) stated, "these ten characteristics of servant leadership are by no means exhaustive" (p. 6). The writers following Greenleaf, who wrote about servant leadership added nine more attributes to the original 10 created by Greenleaf. Thus, the overall literature revealed 20 distinguishable attributes of servant leadership (Russell & Stone, 2002). Spears's (1998) 10 characteristics are categorized as follows, listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Additionally, nine of the identified attributes are classified and listed along with the references of primary writers about servant leadership, due to their repetitive prominence in the literature. Those additional nine attribute include vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment (Russell & Stone, 2002).

To better understand the characteristics of servant leadership, one may consider the example of a coach and sport team. A coach knows the team and perceives the differences between players in abilities, skills, performance, and personalities. A coach uses these differences to generate more creativity in a team. A coach must understand the

needs of each player in order to meet them. Servant leaders use the same skill set. Servant leaders use the differences of followers to create unity. They value others' perspectives and disparities. Servant leaders "cherish the joy of seeing others succeed" (Baggett, 1997, p. 31). They support each worker and provide all necessary assistance and resources to see others succeed (Stanley, 2003). Coaches and servant leaders do not personally complete the work; rather, they enjoy watching the game or project from a distance, identifying what each worker can bring to the organization and taking pride in their team's effort.

Servant leaders should gain a deepening understanding of those characteristics of servant leadership because they heavily contribute to the meaningful practice of servant leadership. Every characteristic can be learned or gained. Once developed, leaders need to shift the focus from theory to practice. The key to transforming any organization lies in whether leaders can gain the trust of others. By gaining trust, servant leaders inspire followers to become willing to engage in any change in the environment and ready to provide a higher level of performance. The following paragraphs discuss the main 10 characteristics of servant leadership extracted by Spears in 1998 from Greenleaf's writings.

Listening is the first characteristic of servant leadership. "Great communicators are great listeners" (Baggett, 1997, p. 111). Communication is an exchanged process between sender and receiver: the process of talking and listening (Northouse, 2016). Listening is different from hearing. Hearing refers only to the physical measurement of sound waves that come into the brain and ear, and happens without intent or consent. In contrast, listening to someone requires giving one's full intention and attention to what is

being said and what is not being said. Successful leaders value communication skill and have a deep commitment to listening to others intently (Spears, 2010). Listening is a critical method that shows appreciation and respect (Russell & Stone, 2002).

People want to feel that their issues are heard and their voices are important. Listening also means “automatically responding to any problem by receptively listening to what is said, which allows them to identify the will of the group and help clarify that will” (Parris & Peachey, 2013, p. 386). Servant leaders pay attention to the details that the speakers are presenting, not only focusing on the intended message, but also focusing on all words and messages, making sure they understand the issue without distortion (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2015; Spears, 2010). Greenleaf affirmed that listening is the first and most important characteristic that marks a leader as a servant. Greenleaf taught a course titled *Taking with People* to AT&T managers beginning the course with “first, listen. Then, prove you are listening. While you are at it, show empathy” (Sipe & Frick, 2015, p. 57). At the end of the session, Greenleaf recognized that managers showed no interest in learning the listening skill itself. They wanted to learn how to get their ideas out and force others to listen to them. The majority of leaders are not good listeners (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Empathy is the second characteristic derived from Greenleaf’s writings. “If the communication is the joint that holds relationships together, empathy is the connective tissue” (Sipe & Frick, 2015, p. 53). Empathy differs from sympathy, as empathy means the ability to put oneself in the position of others and see the issue from others’ points of view (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2015; Spears, 2010). Empathy does not require that one agrees with others’ perspectives and feelings; rather,

empathy is the awareness of how others feel (Northouse, 2016). When leaders show empathy in their communication with others, they establish bonds of trust that lead to gaining the hearts and minds of others to influence them to follow their leaders (Sipe & Frick, 2015). It is critical for the leaders to not only feel empathy for others, but also to show it to them. Being fully present in the conversation and entering “the private perceptual world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it” is one way leaders can do this (Sipe & Frick, 2015, p.55). Empathy simply means living in another’s life without making any judgment.

Healing is a critical characteristic that distinguishes servant leadership from other leadership styles. Greenleaf (1977/2002) wrote in his essay, *Servant as Leader*, “there is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share” (p. 50). Healing is a powerful skill for integration and transformation (Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). That people may hurt emotionally and may experience broken spirits is part of being human (Spears, 2010). Healing someone means making that person whole. When leaders heal followers, they help the followers overcome personal problems. Servant leaders do not stand silent when they see others suffer (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2015; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Servant leaders try to engage in a two-way process of finding solutions for problems and helping followers become whole. Thus, servant leaders become healed as well (Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004).

In addition, awareness is a significant attribute of servant leadership. Greenleaf (1977/2002) reported:

Awareness is not a giver of solace—it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able leaders are usually sharply awake and reasonably disturbed. They are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity. (p. 41)

Awareness includes self-awareness and the awareness of others. Self-awareness is an essential key for success, helping leaders identify their own position: what they are doing and where they are going (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2015; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Being aware of oneself means being aware of one's knowledge, familiarity with one's strengths so as to keep improving them, and one's weaknesses, in order to find solutions to address them. The awareness of others requires leaders to be aware of what is happening in their lives and the issues raised in the workplace. Servant-leadership awareness is the capability to see a situation from an integrated and holistic position and view the interactions of people in the environment from the balcony (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2015; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004).

Persuasion is an effective resource of power for servant leaders. The success of leadership depends on the ability of leaders and followers to accomplish tasks, applying a strategy to influence others to take action and do their work. Successful servant leaders do not use authority or coercive styles to convince others to take action on the leaders' behalf, even if they hold the authority to do so (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Servant leaders seek to build healthy relationships and consensus with others. Therefore, servant leaders choose the appropriate words, use the appropriate body language, and perform the appropriate actions to convince others to change.

Persuasion is a powerful tool for moving organizations and people forward and inspiring others to go beyond their borders and reach the apex. Maxwell (2005) said, “the

true measure of leadership is influence; nothing more, nothing less” (p. 11). When leaders fail to use influence and persuasion, and rely on the power of their positions, they may accomplish tasks but never gain the excitement and internal desire of the followers to do the job. Using coercion creates people who can do the work, not because they want to, but because they must, thereby diminishing enthusiasm and creativity in the workplace.

Conceptualization is another attribute that demonstrates how leaders look and think beyond day-to-day operations and focus on a more encompassing viewpoint (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). The ability to hold a broad vision of the organization and the directions it is moving, is “an ideal and unique image of the future” (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 95). The difference between traditional leaders and servant leaders can become clear by applying conceptualization. Traditional leaders limit their thinking to short-term goals and day-to-day operational details without creating a future-oriented concept that stretches the vision beyond the present (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004).

Furthermore, foresight is a major characteristic of servant leadership. Greenleaf described foresight as characteristics related to conceptualization. “Foresight is not strategic planning, positioning, economic forecasting or simply forecasting. Foresight is all the activities that organizations and governments undertake to make assumptions about the future that, in turn, drive policies” (Sipe & Frick, 2015, p. 106). Foresight is the ability to expect and predict what can happen in the future by identifying current and past issues. Leaders show foresight when they “have a sense for the unknowable and be able to foresee the unforeseeable” (Greenleaf, 1977/2002, p. 21). Servant leaders are those

who process past events and hold the advantage of reflective hindsight: what is currently happening and what expected to happen in the future. They can reach this level by considering mistakes or failures, so that those moments can be helpful in making better decisions, creating a better future for organizations.

As a result of practicing foresight, leaders gain intuition of future situations. Servant leaders value intuition and learn how to trust it, because it is a combination of past and present situations. Servant leaders trust the deep internal sounds that arise from their brain and heart. They listen to this deep sound to determine whether something is going right or wrong (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Sipe and Frick (2015) described how to harness the power of foresight and listed a number of strategies: analyzing the past, learning everything about the issue at hand, letting the information incubate, not rushing things, being open to breakthroughs, and sharing insights with trusted colleagues. Sipe and Frick also suggested a 10-minute exercise of silence. During this relaxing exercise, pictures and images emerge along with thoughts. Servant leaders do not drive those insights away; instead, they accept and absorb them, finally creating foresight.

Stewardship is an important theme in servant leadership. Stewardship means holding an organization in trust for the greater good of its community (Northouse, 2016; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Servant leaders are committed to pursuing what is best for their organizations by meeting the needs of others through the use of persuasion and openness first, rather than through authority. Stewardship emphasizes the promotion of well-being for each worker in an organization by helping workers become satisfied with their work environment. Creating an environment where individuals can improve their sense of well-being and teams can perform effectively is invaluable in

driving success. Block (1993) highlighted the importance of shifting leadership toward stewardship based on service. Stewardship involves “choosing partnership over patriarchy” and “distributing ownership and responsibility” (Block, 1993, pp. 23, 25). Stewardship also requires accountability and honesty (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Moreover, commitment to the growth of people is a characteristic of servant leadership, implying that leaders treat everyone in an organization as unique and important with special intrinsic value. Servant leaders use a language of appreciation and respect in addressing each employee and hold a marked responsibility to cultivate individuals personally and professionally. They use their own power and resources to see employees thrive, creating opportunities for employees to engage in professional-development activities, making funds available for employees’ professional growth, engaging employees in decision making, allowing employees to express ideas and suggestions, and helping employees acquire new skills and knowledge.

Leaders committed to the growth of others allow followers to feel they are important players in the organization and their prosperity is the key concern and first priority for their leaders (Dambe & Moorad, 2008). Therefore, followers see a servant leader’s distinctive work and engagement, positively affecting the entire organization. Servant leaders can demonstrate trust and confidence in employees by empowering them and delegating responsibility to accomplish work. Servant leaders are those who manipulate their leadership to empower others to lead (Russell & Stone, 2002). Empowering others is an essential element in leadership that makes every person in an organization perform and think as a leader.



The final characteristic of servant leadership is building community. A community is a group of people living or working in the same area that hold a sense of unity and identity toward their environment (Northouse, 2016). Due to significant shifting from a local and small community to broader institutions, building community becomes a primary focus in servant leadership (Spears, 2010). Greenleaf (1977/2002) stated:

All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his or her unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group. (p. 53)

Servant leaders create the time and chances for everyone to connect with each other, build trust, and get involved in accomplishing tasks together. One of the helpful things servant leaders can do to build community in an organization is allocating the first 10 minutes of a meeting to engage in informal conversation. This opportunity gives employees the feeling of home, learning about each other outside of talking about projects and work. This environment, where individuals feel safe and comfortable, is where distinctive results can originate. In addition, servant leaders not only care about building community for employees, but they are also enthusiastic about creating effective networks and relationships with stakeholders to keep them engaged and active. Trompenaars (2011) illustrated that to be sustainable and healthy successful leaders in organizations, the dilemmas and conflicts between stakeholders, employees, and other surrounding organizations need to be reconciled, and servant leaders hold the capacity to do so.

The characteristics described above are the 10 servant leadership attributes that move organizations and people forward toward more caring institutions. Those

characteristics may come more naturally to some individuals than others. Like many natural tendencies, anyone can enhance these attributes by learning and practicing them. Successful servant leaders consider modeling those behaviors and showing others the true meaning of love, care, and trust. This transformation takes time and effort in working to acquire the hearts of people so they become influenced to accomplish tasks with a high level of performance. Covey (1990) explained modeling as a foundation for leader influence. It is quite critical for servant leaders “to demonstrate by their own behavior their commitment to the set of ethics they are trying to institutionalize” (Bennis & Nanus, 1997, p. 173). Kouzes and Posner stated, “leaders model the way through personal example and dedicated execution” (1995, p. 13). By modeling those ethical behaviors, servant leaders not only practice those ethics with followers, but also experience an opportunity to show others which behaviors are acceptable and unacceptable in that environment.

The additional nine attributes, created by those who wrote about servant leadership after Greenleaf, are codified as the following. Vision is the first of the nine additional attributes of servant leadership. Effective leadership always starts with vision. Visionary leaders are those who imagine where they are going, clearly articulating this to their followers, and motivating them toward action so that everyone knows their role in achieving that vision (Wilhelm, 1996). Nanus (1992) defined vision as “a realistic, credible, attractive future ... an articulation toward which you should aim, that in important ways is better, more successful, or more desirable than the present” (p. 8). Vision is the essential characteristic of leadership that organizations today need most. According to Archbald (2013), literature from education and other fields shows an

undersupply of visionary leaders who can create successful visions and exercise it with followers. “The data tell us that what leaders struggle with most is communicating an image of the future that draws others in – that speaks to what others see and feel” (Kouzes & Posner, 2009, p. 21).

Honesty is another attribute of servant leadership. Honesty implies moral character and includes all positive and virtuous attributes, such as truthfulness, straightforwardness, and integrity (Kouzes & Posner, 2009). Honest leaders maintain legitimacy and credibility in addressing others because they are honest in their words, behaviors, communications, and feelings, eliciting the trust and compliance of followers because they view their leaders’ actions and decisions as legitimate and fair (Gentry, Cullen, & Altman, 2012).

Integrity is also an attribute of good servant leaders. It is a concept of ethics, consistency in words and actions, values, and principles. Leaders with integrity speak the truth, act ethically, and present themselves in a genuine and honest way, regardless of any surrounding circumstances (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). Leaders with integrity gain the trust of others by addressing others honestly and without falsification. Integrity is a core factor because it is important at all levels of management and leadership. Leaders build strong relationships and networks with stakeholders, workers at all levels of hierarchy, and other people across organizations (Gentry et al., 2012).

Trust is one of the most important attributes of servant leadership. If a leader holds a great vision and treats others with honesty and integrity, but people do not trust them, the leader is unable to reach their intended result (Mineo, 2014). Credibility, respect, and fairness form the major foundation of trust, leading to success and great

outcomes. Mineo (2014) declared “the trust that leaders place in those they lead allows both the leader and her/his followers to excel. It is not a momentary event but a series of investments over time that truly allows success” (p. 4). Trust takes a great deal of time and effort to cultivate among leaders and followers.

Service is a critical attribute and the core of servant leadership. Service is an action taken in helping or doing something for others (*Merriam-Webster*, 2017). Service is key to servant leadership: “first and foremost, a good leader serves others” (Baggett, 1997, p. 21). Effective leaders meet the needs of others, serving them and ensuring they all succeed. Not all leaders choose to serve others. Some leaders value and practice the concept of being served rather than serving others: “It seems the choice [for service] is rarely made” (Block, 1993, pp. 9, 15). Servant leaders accept the responsibility of serving others and are committed to improving others by giving energy, care, time, and compassion (Enderle, 2014).

Another significant attribute of servant leadership is modeling. Modeling is the foundation of influence. The behaviors of leaders establish an ethical tone for an organization. Successful leaders model the ethics and behaviors that organizations want to see and instill. “Leaders model the way through personal example and dedicated execution” (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 13). Leaders’ behaviors clearly demonstrate to followers the ethics and conduct that are and are not acceptable in organizations.

Pioneering, an interesting attribute of servant leadership, means creating and establishing new ideas and methods that are the first of their kind (*Cambridge Dictionary*, 2017). Pioneering leaders are those “who take risks, create new paths, shape new approaches to old problems, and have strong values and beliefs that drive their actions”

(Beckhard, Hesselbein, & Goldsmith, 1996, p. 214). Leaders act as pioneers when they willingly take risks and initiate new paths, strategies, or ideas that pave the way for the organization and its people to succeed.

Appreciation of others is an effective attribute of servant leadership. Relationships with others enrich one's life. Leaders need to show appreciation for others, letting them know they matter, their contributions to the organization are seen, and their ideas and values are respected. Leaders appreciate others by giving them unconditional love, hope, encouragement, and inspiration (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Giving and showing appreciation motivates people and gives them energy to create and work harder. Appreciating each other builds self-confidence and self-esteem, critical characteristics to ensure the effectiveness of leadership. "Leadership is not about controlling people; it's about caring for people and being a useful resource for people" (Autry, 2007, p. 20).

The last of the nine additional attributes of servant leadership is empowerment. Empowerment is the skill of making resources, authority, power, opportunities, and information available and accessible to others, enabling them to make decisions, improve performance, and solve problems (*Business Dictionary*, 2017). "Wise leaders lead others to lead themselves" (Manz, 2005, p. 99), delegate responsibility, and share their vision with others so they become responsible and accountable for their actions and decisions. Empowerment is about being aware of others' wishes, needs, and desires to provide them with what they need to take their actions to a higher level of performance. Effective servant leaders must learn, possess, model, and practice each of these characteristics and behaviors in a way that embodies the meaning of service.

### Authority and Power in Servant Leadership

Some people want power to live a better life, make money, or create a good reputation and image in other people's eyes. In a workplace environment, leaders and employees seek to gain this power; leaders need power to run an organization and its employees, and employees desire power to gain the ear of their bosses to, for example, change some of their daily worklife (Fuqua, Payne & Cangemi, 2000). Of consequence is how leaders use their power without hurting the organization and its members.

To better understand how servant leaders should use power, it is helpful first to understand the concept of power. Scholars hold different definitions of power based on their perspectives and perceptions. They defined power as a relationship between people, control over people, use of resources, and access of information. Van Der Toorn et al. (2014) stated, "power is typically defined as asymmetric control over valued resources in the context of social relations" (p. 2). Researchers (Van Der Toorn et al., 2014) illustrated that power holders make decisions, establish goals, and process information in a way that maintains their position in the hierarchy and increases their degree of control over resources (Van Der Toorn et al., 2014). Cangemi (1992) asserted: "power is the individual's capacity to move others, to entice others, to persuade and encourage others to attain specific goals or to engage in specific behavior; it is the capacity to influence and motivate others" (p. 2). Still other researchers defined power as the "ability to influence the actions of others, individuals or groups. It is understood as the leader's influence potential" (Krausz, 1986, p. 69). Despite these different dimensions of power, scholars agreed that power is the ability to influence others toward better accomplishments of organizations. Power can be understood as *power over* and *power to*,

as Grogan (2013) described. Power overemphasizes controlling people and outcomes, such as what, when, or how people do things. Power to is goal bound, viewed as a resource of energy for achieving shared purpose and goals.

When considering power and servant-leadership concepts, the traditional perspectives of leadership seem more male oriented, whereas servant leadership is closer to the female tradition of leadership (Grogan, 2013). Generally, men and women focus differently when fulfilling goals. Men often care more about individual relationships, individual achievement, and power over another as a resource in controlling events and people. Women tend to use authority less and emphasize affiliation, building mutual relationships, personal creativity, and power as a source to achieve shared goals (Grogan, 2013). Men are less likely than women to value the concept of servant leadership (Hampel, 1988): “In our culture, serving others is for losers, it is low-level stuff. Yet serving others is a basic principle around which women’s lives are organized; it is far from such for men” (p. 18). However, men and woman accept and value the ideas of building communities, empowerment, collaboration, and adopting the stance of servant leadership (Hampel, 1988). Both genders possess the sociological, psychological, and mental abilities to gain and earn such skills and strategies that can move their personal and professional lives forward and address their own gaps to bring better change.

Power can be summarized in two simple statements: do the right things and cultivate the right people (Hawks, 2009). Doing the right things includes performing well at work, being an extraordinary person, being willing to create opportunities and do what no one else wants to or is able to do, and being visibly active by presenting works at conferences and meetings. Choosing the right people, another key element of power,

means taking advantage of appropriate people, such as peers, superiors, and subordinates who are helpful in sharing power and providing constructive feedback.

Starting from the beginning of the 20th century, the power and authority of leaders dominated leadership theories. This mindset of leadership created authoritarian, commandeering leaders, unwilling to share some of their power with their followers (Dambe & Moorad, 2008). Greenleaf's introduction of servant-leadership theory in 1970 became a historically important turning point in leadership. Servant-leadership theory called leaders to shift their practice of authority and control to empowerment and influence. Powerful leaders use their power effectively and employ their personal power, helping others cooperate willingly and freely, not relying on their position or title. Jamieson and O'Mara (2000) argued that leaders naturally become more powerful when they empower others and award their power to others. "As a manager who empowers others, you will act as a colleague more than a boss, relying on influence, respect, and relationships to work with employees" (Jamieson & O'Mara, 2000, p. 163).

Fuqua et al. (2000) highlighted eight primary sources of power that prove the ability of someone to influence: support systems, information, credibility, visibility, legitimacy, persuasiveness, charisma, and agenda setting. Support systems include opportunities to network formally and informally. Information refers to how fast one can decipher data; people trust others who are more knowledgeable. Credibility refers to how much respect one can procure. Visibility means doing a hard job so people take notice. Legitimacy refers to how people view others' behaviors and values as legitimate. Persuasiveness means that one holds power if they can convince others to do certain things, identifying how a person uses emotional and rational appeals. Charisma includes



one's reputation, sincerity, expertise, ethical qualities, and dynamism. Finally, agenda setting is the skill of organizing agenda details and being on time in meetings (Fuqua et al., 2000). Powerful leaders not only possess those sources of power, but also manipulate them and choose the one that best fits their need and their employees to drive more effective change.

Authority and power seem similar, but each one provides certain resources and focus. Power is the ability to influence others to achieve an organization's goals (Christman, 2007). Authority is not an ability; rather, it is the right given to the manager to accomplish certain tasks (Serrat, 2014). Every leader holds authority to give orders to accomplish tasks, but any individual—not necessarily leaders—can hold power when they are able to influence others to do, avoid, or change things (Mooney, 1985). The major difference between power and authority rests in the notion that authority aligns with social position, whereas power ties to personal characteristics. Power is a factual relation whereas authority is a legitimate relation (Coleman, 1997/2013).

As authority is one of the perquisites of leadership, Serrat (2014) wrote about authority and power in terms of function, application, and comparison. Formal authority is a type of authority used by leaders to control and change certain objects.

Formal authority—the power to direct—is the defining characteristic of societal and organizational hierarchy. Charting a chain of command, one eventually locates somebody, or some group, who administers an organization's collective decision rights, and enjoys the perquisites ascribed to the function. (Serrat, 2014, p. 10)

Serrat (2014) argued that formal authority is best described as power held because of one's position. Although the 21st century needs to expand this type of authority by leveraging mutual influence, “the power of formal authority is eroding as its utility becomes less evident” (Serrat, 2014, p. 10). Greenleaf turned down many promotions

because of a fear that the formal authority would interfere with the moral authority that Greenleaf admired (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Legitimate and moral authority need to be practiced and inherited in today's organizations (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

A majority of leadership writers acknowledge leadership as a position, not as a function, whereas position does not mean leadership. Servant leadership recognizes that leadership is a function and mindset that shapes an organization and its people. Servant leaders cherish the resulting behaviors and ethics, and carefully using the position to allow this paradigm and its values to be realized, then practiced (Christman, 2007). One requires position to easily and quickly accomplish tasks, but position is not necessarily required to lead (Christman, 2007). Power is extremely important if one wants to lead, regardless of its types. The difference between position and power is evident: one can lead others by using one's potential and personal power, even if one holds no leadership position. Leading is about employing the ability and skill to influence people, such that leaders wield their authority and position in hierarchy, which may occur without the need for positional power. Northouse (2016) stated: "people have power when they have the ability to affect others' beliefs, attitudes, and courses of action" (p. 6). Greenberg and Baron (2003) also defined power as "the potential to influence others successfully" (p. 443). Robbins (1998) added that position is not a prerequisite for power. Some people prove their abilities and power to change others' behaviors but they do not hold a position that allows them to control others.

Christman (2007) argued that power is often perceived as a negative force, and Karp (1996) listed three perspectives of power: good, evil, and natural. Christman stated: "power isn't good and it isn't bad; it simply is, just as electricity isn't intrinsically good

or bad, it just is. It is how it is used that makes a difference” (p. 13). Robbins (1998) enhanced the understanding of power by stating, “power refers to a capacity that A has to influence the behavior of B, so that B acts in accordance with A’s wishes” (p. 396). Leaders need to realize that personal power is an optimal source for the development of a servant culture and authority is autonomous from providing service. Effective leaders grow their personal power by actually growing and empowering others in the organization. Fuqua et al. (2000) illustrated, leaders who exercise authority over others most of time are seen as untrustworthy, because their employees feel the need to avoid arguing, dominating, and engaging in any informal conversation with them.

In contrast, servant leaders do not rely on their position, but rather, rely on their legitimacy and ethics in addressing followers and meeting their needs (Spears, 2010). Greenleaf strongly opposed relying on authority and power in leadership, especially coercive power, believing leaders should shift authority to those being led (Northouse, 2016). Effective leaders do not rely heavily on power because it prevents them from creating a positive environment with followers, which is important to provide services and directions (Mooney, 1985). “The more that power is concentrated in the office of a leader, the more inevitability that later will become isolated” (Mooney, 1985. p. 82). Further, Russell and Stone (2002) demonstrated the danger of viewing leadership as an authority or power and diminished the value of the service-in-leadership concept. They stated,

as long as power dominates our thinking about leadership, we cannot move toward a higher standard of leadership. We must place service at the core; for even though power will always be associated with leadership, it has only one legitimate use: service. (p. 145)

Servant leadership seeks to meet the highest needs of individuals without using power as leaders to get things done (Al-Yousef, 2012). Servant leaders use the appropriate power and authority to make resources and assistance available and accessible to everyone.

Servant leaders use positive influence, rather than authority, to get others to listen, agree, and follow orders. Hawks's (2009) work emphasized influencing without using authority. Hawks identified three essential foundations of influence: ethics, psychology, and power. Ethics and morals are the basic pillars of influence. For leaders to use the right influence, they must model six essential ethics: honesty, authenticity, intentions, consequences, respect, and transparency. Psychology is the second foundation of influence. Social psychologist Cialdini described six psychological principles of influence: reciprocity, social proof, consistency, liking, authority, and scarcity (as cited in Hawks, 2009). Reciprocity means that relationships build on some level of exchange. For example, when one receives something from someone, they feel obligated to give something back in return. Social proof tells us which behavior is acceptable, unacceptable, appropriate, inappropriate, safe, or unsafe in an environment. Leaders need to be consistent because people tend to trust others who behave consistently. Liking means that people are easily influenced by others whom they like, and who share the same beliefs and values. Also, leaders use authority to influence others, but the means of this authority is expertise not formal power. The final principle is scarcity, meaning that people listen closely to exclusive information and act quickly when time is limited. The final foundation of influence is power. Power lies in doing the right things and choosing the right people (Hawks, 2009). Those are the main foundations of influence that servant leaders use to influence others without using authority.

Greenleaf (1977/2002) encouraged the idea of sharing power and control in practicing servant leadership. According to Greenleaf, this idea may sound alarming because people with power give away some of their power to those with less, preventing the people with power from controlling outcomes. In fact, sharing power increases the likelihood of a successful mission and increases power for everyone (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Servant leaders serve, teach, support, listen, and arrange teams to take on responsibilities at a higher level so followers feel powerful, responsible, and accountable for their tasks. Sharing power translates the existence of a unique mutual trust among leaders and followers, enabling leaders to place trust in the abilities of individuals, and for followers to trust their leaders' wishes and concerns to improve each follower and see them become powerful, successful future leaders. Delegating and sharing authority with followers increases followers' initiative or incentive to acquire information on potential projects, which in turn reduces the leaders' overload (Aghion & Tirole, 1997).

The study by Gonaim (2017) emphasized the significance of the delegation of power and responsibilities by department chairs in Saudi universities. The researcher demonstrated that delegating authority is one successful tool effective leaders use to prevent the escape and avoidance of responsibilities, and to build trust and collegiality in academic environments. Followers need to feel they are part of the decision-making process and their opinions matter. Servant leaders can establish building this trust by delegating and sharing their own authority because they devote their time not to practicing authority or making decisions, but rather, to influence others to make them effective leaders and decision makers (Gonaim, 2017).

Leaders can only practice servant leadership by modeling moral authority. To establish moral authority, one's authority must be viewed as legitimate. (Grogan, 2013). Christman (2007) reported some types of power servant leaders could practice. One of these types is rooted in followers viewing their leaders as legitimate, dubbed *legitimate power*. Legitimate power is the type of power viewed as fair. People do what they are asked to do under a sense of volunteering because they see their leaders' behaviors and decisions are legitimate. Leaders never receive obligation if their power is seen as illegitimate (Tyler, 2006).

#### Shifting from "Formal Authority" to "Moral Authority"

Ethics is the core value of the development of leadership. Leadership scholars realize that although servant leadership and other leadership theories—transformational, cultural, and ethical—emphasize ethical behaviors and values; "the world is full of the selfish, non-transparent and greedy leaders" (Dambe & Moorad, 2008, p. 585). Thus, embracing leadership ethics, modeling ethical behaviors, and shifting leaders' practices of authority from formal authority to more moral authority is critical in today's workplace more than ever before.

An effective leadership style does not depend on formal authority. Often leaders who avoid relying on their authority create it into a seeming necessity (Serrat, 2014). Leaders who heavily use their authority and power seek to get conformity without acceptance and to issue a chain of commands without influence, giving them a feeling of clutching the reigns and controlling others' performance (Serrat, 2014). Servant leaders do not use formal authority. They recognize that formal authority may prevent them from providing service that is the core element of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977/2002).

Moral authority is character strengths that are considered a primary greatness, whereas formal authority is a secondary greatness that can be defined as wealth, reputation, and position (Covey, 2006). When people with formal authority or a position of power (secondary greatness) use their authority or power as a last resort, their moral authority tends to increase because they use persuasion, empathy, reasoning, and trust instead of subordinating their ego.

Leaders with moral authority act as servant leaders (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Sipe and Frick (2015) detailed that moral authority does not come automatically with position. Earning moral authority depends on following the six pillars of servant leadership because those pillars represent the essential moralities that align with servant-leadership attributes. The six pillars are (a) leaders need to act as people of character with integrity, humility, and spirituality; (b) putting people first through serving, caring, concerning, and mentoring; (c) being skillful, empathetic communicators who appreciate feedback; (d) collaborating compassionately and building diverse teams; (e) exercising foresight and inspiring and supporting an audacious vision; and (f) being a systems thinker, who considers the greater good and effectively engages in a complex environment (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Greenleaf (1977/2002) wrote the following famous passage summarizing the moral authority in servant leadership:

A new moral principle may be emerging which holds that the only authority deserving one's allegiance is that which is freely and knowingly granted by the led to the leader in response to, and in proportion to, the clearly evident servant nature of the leader. Those who choose to follow this principle will not casually accept the authority of existing institutions. Rather, they will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted as servants. (p. 10)

The significance of moral authority goes beyond the advantage it brings to an organization and its people. It can be considered a survival tactic or the demise of an

entire organization (Sipe & Frick, 2015). Every institution should adopt enduring moral principles rather than rules because moral principles are the critical indicators of the health of the environment that ensures continuity and productivity.

Moral authority leads to formal authority. Leaders who use moral authority earn the power and freedom that are given by people to expand their voices. When they become advocates for their people, they naturally gain formal authority that enables leaders and followers to share a common vision. Exercising formal authority leads to the accomplishment of the required tasks, but through exercising moral authority and leading by example, leaders strengthen their power and see followers' potential and worth.

#### Relationship Among Authority, Legitimacy, and Morals

Managers, teachers, administrators, principals, parents, and all individuals play leadership roles in a certain environment with certain people. Teachers are leaders for their students. They play a critical role in helping students achieve high performance and in making the classroom an effective environment where students can better learn and accomplish their goals. A significant correlation exists between teachers' styles of using power and classrooms' morals. Teachers create moral or immoral classrooms, depending on their leadership styles, which can shape their legitimacy of using power. This is because classrooms exhibit resistant behavior depending on the teacher's ability to control students through use of the power in their inherent roles.

White and Lippitt (1960) focused on the participation theory of leadership, which demonstrates that a group's performance depends on the extent to which leaders can share or retain authority in their decision making. They characterized leadership styles as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire and studied the extent to which these leadership



styles are legitimate in creating classroom morals and climate. Autocratic leaders use authority and control in decision making and retain responsibility rather than using complete delegation. Democratic leaders use consultation and welcome feedback on decisions, assigning tasks and giving control to committee members rather than retaining responsibility. The last style, laissez-faire (let go), requires that leaders give authority to committee members in creating goals, making decisions, and solving problems on their own. The results of White and Lippitt's study showed that only democratic teachers who shared power achieved legitimate power in their performance. Authoritarian autocratic teachers used high power, and laissez-faire teachers used low power; each held no legitimacy in their roles. This lack of legitimate authority plays a significant role in diminishing moral attitudes and increasing aggression in classrooms.

Blase and Blase (2002) focused on the "dark side" of school leadership and the effects of principals' behavior that teachers perceived as mistreatment, illegitimate, and abusive, causing serious harm over time. Incivility, mobbing, bullying, harassment, abusive disrespect, interactional injustice, emotional abuse, mistreatment, and aggression are terms and possible types of mistreatment conducted by school principals and caused harmful consequences for school life, affecting the legitimacy of the practice of leadership. According to Blase and Blase, scholars developed theories of boss abuse. One of these theories is a supervisory disrespect that depends strongly on organizational justice and interaction in organizations. These scholars argued that "people's feelings of both self-worth and security are affected by how respectfully others treat them; and feelings of self-worth and security, in turn, affect one's mental health and well-being" (Blase & Blase, 2002, p. 676). Disrespect is always an inappropriate behavior, regardless

of the circumstances of the organization, because it violates one's legitimacy and dignity and generates distress and lack of self-confidence. Boss abuse or mistreatment leads to many harmful consequences that make leaders' roles and power illegitimate, such as effects on physical well-being, emotions, work performance, and social aspects. Examples of the effects on physical well-being are headaches, illness, and exhaustion. Some examples of emotional effects are depression, helplessness, and embarrassment. Effects of work performance include reduction in job effort, attrition, and dissatisfaction. Additionally, some social effects are loss of friendship and isolation (Blase & Blase, 2002). These examples show the long-term effects on people who experience mistreatment from their bosses through bosses' use of power and leadership practices clearly stray from ethical values.

Mooney (1985) focused on the legitimation deficit in higher education leadership naming the work *A World is Always At Risk*. Mooney examined leadership attitudes of the ethical imperatives of top executives, steering mechanisms of the implementation of power. Mooney reported that executive officers in higher education experienced risk as they "combat leaders without troops" (1985, p. 10). Legitimacy and morals ensure effectiveness of work, maintenance of authority, and control of a moral surrounding. Ethical leaders engage in any legitimate battle without any assurance of the safety of success. Their roles require talent, wisdom, courage, and a great deal of legitimacy, which is not the case for many chief executives. The legitimation deficit in U.S. institutions has increased. "One is chosen for leadership because of the ability to inspire confidence. That quality is a moral dimension arising from a perception of integrity and a sense of justice that most presidents struggle to embody" (Mooney, 1985, p. 65).

The real meaning of legitimation appears in a higher education leader's relationship with faculty, being able to be a colleague of faculty, as "faculty must also feel that they are appreciated and that the governance processes do not abuse or deny anyone of rights" (Mooney, 1985, p. 78). The risk is high for chief executives in higher education, where feedback is discouraged, trust is nonexistent, leaders largely use power, and a lack of legitimacy appears in chief executives' interactions with others. However, legitimation, integrity, and morality do not come easily to most leaders; they need a great deal of time for interaction with people, learning from past experiences, embodying desired ethics, and engaging in self-reflection (Mooney, 1985).

Sendjaya et al. (2008) categorized servant leadership into six dimensions of behavior, including voluntary subordination. Many servant leaders seek chances to serve others and provide support and assistance, but they need to be very careful with the dimension of this style when it comes to legitimacy. Volunteer service must be sincere and genuine, and in the interest of the organization and its people; not to gain personal interest. Leaders need to be eschew bias. "Servant leadership is a willingness to take up opportunities to serve others whenever there is a legitimate need regardless of the nature of the service, the person served, or the mood of the servant leader" (Sendjaya et al., 2008, p. 406). Because the concept of servant leadership is slightly different from the general understanding of the concept of leadership and some people may understand it to mean being servile, leaders are challenged to be legitimate servants who provide legitimate services to those in need. Servant leaders are those who use personal power as an optimal platform and source for practicing servant leadership and develop a servant culture in an organization. They become legitimate leaders because they behave ethically

and focus on the needs of others and the organizations, which is a major form of morality of leaders, and of servant leaders particularly (Sendjaya et al., 2008).

### The Relationship Between the Five Bases of Power and Servant Leadership

Processes of power are varying and complex in our society. The five bases of social or organizational power and influence comprise a theory developed by French and Raven in 1959. Those bases started from the premise that power and influence involve relations between at least two parties. The recipient is the most important party who can explain and determine the phenomena of social influence and power. Each base of power holds its own consequences and reactions. These bases of power include legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, and referent.

#### *Legitimate Power*

To enrich legitimate power and fully understand it, it is critical to be familiar with the dimensions of the word *legitimacy*. Leaders need to obtain their positions through a process considered “fair” and fulfill the leadership role in a way that is ethical, legal, and consistent with an institution’s values. When leaders successfully reach this level of treatment, they create legitimacy in their roles. Tyler (2006) defined the term legitimacy as “psychological property of an authority, institution, or social arrangement that leads those connected to it to believe that it is appropriate, proper, and just” (p. 375). Because of legitimacy, people feel they can follow rules, obey orders, agree with decisions, and do what they are asked to do in a satisfactory manner, without fear of punishment or anticipation of rewards, but rather under the feeling of obligation and through volunteering. To influence others most of the time, it is impossible to rely on the use of power and possession without being legitimate (Tyler, 2006). This concept is

advantageous for leaders, people, and institutions in any social and political system, especially at a time when conflict, crisis, and opposition have dominion.

Fuqua et al. (2000) revealed, “people with legitimate power fail to recognize they have it, and then they may begin to notice others going around them to accomplish their goals” (p. 2). This notion supports Greenleaf’s perspective about servant leadership, in which leaders embody moral behaviors and ethics that, in turn, acquire the hearts of followers so they become willing to give acceptance to do whatever it takes to please their leaders (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). According to French and Raven (1959), legitimate power is “that power which stems from internalized values in P which dictate that O has a legitimate right to influence P and that P has an obligation to accept this influence” (p. 265). Cultural values play a role in constituting one common belief of legitimate power because legitimate power rests on one’s values and how one views the case as fair, according to cultural beliefs. Legitimate power is a belief that a person has a legitimate right to influence others and make demands, and to expect others to accept this influence (French & Raven, 1959). According to Petress (2003), legitimate power can have disadvantages in practice. Legitimate power is not always effective in organization. By using legitimate power, employees can have “power over” because of their roles and cultural beliefs rather than because of their skills and talents, especially if they have a common belief that their actions and reactions are legitimate.

#### *Reward Power*

Reward power comes from individuals who have the ability to reward and compensate, and to mediate the reward, as perceived by others (French & Raven, 1959). Reward power is the ability to give either positive consequences or to remove negative

consequences for doing what is wanted and expected. Powerful leaders can provide tangible and intangible rewards to employees to keep them influenced. Tangible rewards are physical items such as salary increases, bonuses, and certificates. Intangible rewards are moral rewards such as recognition, positive feedback, and praise (Petress, 2003). This type of power has some risks. Employees may engage in an unethical procedure or task to complete work, no matter how, to meet the criteria and earn the reward. Another risk is the possibility of losing the attention of employees because their only focus is on obtaining the reward not on accomplishing tasks effectively (Petress, 2003).

#### *Coercive Power*

Coercive power is an inappropriate tool in addressing others because it results in distrust, fear, lack of loyalty, and satisfaction toward the powerful (Petress, 2013). Leaders use coercive power when they force or threaten others for noncompliance. Force includes emotional, social, and political force. Leaders who use this power punish others because they do not conform with leaders' ideas and demands.

Rewards power and coercive power are somewhat similar. In both types of power, employees seek to finish the work to either get a reward or to avoid punishment. They also differ in one point.

With Reward Power, it will be to the advantage of the target to let the agent know that the target has complied; with Coercive Power, there may be a tendency for targets to hide the extent of their noncompliance, so the agent may require, in addition, that the target clearly demonstrate his/her compliance. (Raven, 2008, p. 3)

#### *Expert Power*

Expert power is the faith that a person is more knowledgeable and has more insights and expertise in certain ways (French & Raven, 1959). Expert power is very similar to informational power, which was added 5 years after developing the five bases

of power by French and Raven in 1959. Informational power implies the control of information and knowledge needed by others to reach specific goals (French & Raven, 1959). Expert power can have some negative consequences. Powerful leaders can be bossy or overconfident they hold information that is not available to others. Sharing this information can diminish the value of this power, whereas keeping this information and not sharing it may prevent an organization from being effective (Petress, 2003).

### *Referent Power*

Raven (2008) described referent power as a basis of identification of a person with others.

Referent Power stems from the target identifying with the agent, or seeing the agent as a model that the target would want to emulate. (“I really admire my supervisor and wish to be like him/her. Doing things the way she believes they should be done gives me some special satisfaction.”). (p. 3)

Referent power is the ability to cultivate the admiration and respect of followers, so leaders can influence others because of others’ friendship, admiration, and loyalty (French & Raven, 1959). Only people who create a strong interpersonal relationship with others can gain referent power because it heavily relies on the mutual perspectives between people and power (Raven, 2008).

In this taxonomy, Christman (2007) defined the types of power used by servant leaders through the lens of the two major categories of power: positional power and personal power. Positional power is the authority bestowed by a position to whoever is occupying this position. The individual who has positional power is using the rights to exert power in the scope of a particular position, which means this category of power is limited to the boundaries of the title or position, and its advantages do not go beyond this exact position (Greenberg & Baron, 2003). Positional power emerges in the form of a

CEO or vice president who takes their role seriously and uses their given rights to create a safe and growth-oriented environment so employees and stakeholders can be served better. Greenberg and Baron (2003) divided positional power into four possible subcomponents, originally classified by French and Raven in 1959. These four types of power are legitimate, coercive, reward, and information power, described in previous paragraphs.

The second main category of power is personal power. Personal power is the power one has based on the ability to influence. Effective leaders are those who rely on their personal power more than their positional power (Christman, 2007). Personal power is what “one derives because of his or her individual qualities or characteristics” (Greenberg & Baron, 2003, p. 445). Those qualities are the predominant source of influence. One realizes personal power by establishing deep relationships with others that in turn creates a bond of trust, honesty, ethics, and collaboration. Leaders who use their personal power tend not to use their title or position to influence others to encourage them to do their work; instead, they seek to build trusting and long-lasting relationships that make followers feel secure and engaged. Personal power can be actualized by a position-holder by practicing the last two types of power defined by French and Raven (1959): expert power and referent power (Greenberg & Baron, 2003).

Servant leadership can only be practiced by those leaders who consider personal power as an optimal resource for the creation of a servant culture in an organization (Christman, 2007). Positional power is not an optimal platform for development of servant leadership because it may be a deterrent to its actualization. Not all who use



personal power are servant leaders but all who are servant leaders use their personal power.

Personal power, utilized by a position-holder within an organization, simply becomes an optimal platform for actualizing servant-leadership. In some respects, positions, like power, are a neutral value, neither positive nor negative. It simply becomes a vehicle of opportunity for a servant-leader. (Christman, 2007, p. 12)

### Servant Leadership Across Cultures

Culture shapes the practice of leadership and has a marked impact on how leaders are expected to behave (Hofstede, 2001; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004; Shahin & Wright, 2004). The body of research (Carroll & Patterson, 2014; Hofstede, 2001; Shahin & Wright, 2004) reported that culture does not derive from one's genes but derives from one's social environment. Culture is "all of a collective society's normative behaviors and traditions" (Carroll & Patterson, 2014, p. 20). Culture could also be defined as "the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a human group's response to its environment. Culture determines the uniqueness of a human group in the same way personality determines the uniqueness of an individual" (Hofstede, 2001, pp. 550–551). Culture clearly affects leadership. Leaders need to understand how cultural differences affect leadership and life in and across organizations (Whitfield, 2014). Embracing servant-leadership characteristics and cultural dimensions is a smart strategy that creates successful servant leaders who can effectively better serve employees and organizations.

Servant leadership is a model of leadership employed globally. Considering the perspectives of servant leadership cross culturally gives a broader understanding of how different cultures can shape servant leadership more naturally than others, and how others' values, behaviors, and traditions impact the creation of effective servant leaders.

Shahin and Wright (2004) analyzed the concept of leadership in the context of culture. They stated that understanding and research on leadership itself is a “tricky endeavor, adding a cross-cultural component to the mix in leadership research makes the whole process even more complex” (p. 731). However, Spears (1998) discovered that, considering servant leadership with global eyes, throughout history, organizations that are more successful and viable and more caring about their employees and their growth professionally, used servant leadership. Although servant leadership was developed by Greenleaf in the United States, this model is applicable to leaders worldwide. Servant leadership is suited to all leaders from varieties of cultures and workplaces.

Carroll and Patterson (2014) focused on comparing Patterson’s model of servant leadership across two cultures; India and the United States. This model consists of seven characteristics: love, trust, vision, humility, altruism, empowerment, and service. India has more than a billion citizens and exceeds developed countries politically, economically, and socially, containing immense resources and a highly educated workforce. The researchers used the same method to collect the data from Indians and Americans to examine the level of leaders practicing the seven characteristics of Patterson’s model of servant leadership. Study findings revealed that this model is appropriate for both cultures and no significant difference emerged among the two cultural samples in perceptions of servant leadership, except for the characteristic of vision. Visionary leaders are those who focus on the future of the organizations and followers, and create imaginations and insights of the future. Indians practice vision differently from Americans, perhaps due to the difference in philosophies of the two cultures and the cultural dimension of future orientation.

Another study that showed servant leadership from a global perspective was Winston and Ryan's (2008) work, as they revealed servant leadership as a global rather than a Western model. The authors used the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program (GLOBE), which constructs the human orientation and cultural concepts from Africa, East Asia, the Mediterranean, and India. GLOBE attends to specific characteristics of leaders that are part of the servant-leadership concept: humility, concern, altruism, service, care, fairness, and friendship. By analyzing the relation between the GLOBE study and servant leadership, the general score of valuing human orientation is factually higher than practicing human-oriented behaviors. This implies that the practical model of leading with human orientation is lacking, and employing a servant-leadership model may help leaders be more human-oriented leaders. More importantly, the study of GLOBE showed that the regions that scored higher for human orientation were Southern Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Anglo regions; the middle scoring regions were Confucian Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Germanic Europe; the lowest scoring regions were Latin Europe and Nordic Europe. Thus, "overlap between servant leadership and the global acceptance of the humane orientation is evidence that servant leadership can be presented as a global rather than a Western concept" (Winston & Ryan, 2008, p. 220). Nelson's (2003) study focused on Black South Africa leaders and Serrano (2005) looked at Latin American leaders. The practices of both cultures supported the viability of servant leadership in various global cultures, as it is an appropriate style that should be practiced and learned more in Africa, Asia, and the Mediterranean (Winston & Ryan, 2008).

Hannay (2009) studied the application of servant leadership in a cross-cultural context using Hofstede's (1993) five cultural dimensions as a framework to identify differences and similarities across cultures: power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation. Hannay identified the best cultural fit for the servant-leadership concept. As a result of the study, Hannay discerned that servant leadership is best applied in a culture with low power distance, low to moderate individualism, low to moderate masculinity, low uncertainty avoidance, and a moderate-to-high long-term orientation. According to Hannay's study, power distance and uncertainty avoidance seemed to be the most important to the success of servant leadership. Hofstede evaluated the United States, Germany, Japan, France, the Netherlands, Hong Kong, Indonesia, West Africa, Russia, and China, researching their manifestation of each of these five dimensions in their cultures. Chhokar, Brodbeck, and House (2008) defined power distance as "the degree to which members of an organization and society encourage and reward unequal distribution of power with greater power at higher levels" (p. 4). Uncertainty avoidance appears to be consistent with the servant-leadership characteristic *conceptualization*. Scholars defined uncertainty avoidance as "relying on established social norms, rituals, and bureaucratic practices to decrease the probability of unpredictable future events that can adversely affect the operation of an organization or society" (p. 4). One significant finding of Hannay's (2009) study was that none of these 10 countries provided a good environmental fit for the application of servant-leadership theory. In addition, the United States was the only country of these 10 that ranked low on power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Germany, the Netherlands, and the United States ranked high on individualism. The

United States and Germany ranked high on masculinity whereas the Netherlands ranked low on this factor. Also, both Germany and the Netherlands ranked in the moderate category on the long-term orientation factor whereas the United States ranked lowest.

However, considering the application of servant leadership in one country is clearly a limiting factor that diminishes the value of the servant-leadership model and its impact on an organization as a whole. The culture of a country influences leadership and the broader culture in an organization. The results of research (Carroll & Patterson, 2014; Hannay, 2009; Hofstede, 2001; Shahin & Wright, 2004; Spears, 1998; Whitfield, 2014; Winston & Ryan, 2008) indicated an obvious correlation between cultural characteristics and the probability of the successful adoption of servant leadership in the workplace. Scholars need to pay closer attention to “increase intercultural leader capacity to lead in culturally mixed organizations, be they domestic or international, which resulting in minimizing or avoiding institutional or organizational failure” (Whitfield, 2014, p. 48). Servant leaders can effectively navigate cultural differences and similarities, and play around the major attitudes of servant leaders to be a good fit with the nature of different cultures.

### Servant Leadership in Higher Education

Research studies lack knowledge of servant leadership in higher education institutions (Keith, 2010). After working in various universities and colleges after retiring from AT&T, Greenleaf realized the needs of campuses and students to achieve a high level of performance. It is unsurprising that Greenleaf cared about the growth of students, universities, and colleges (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). Greenleaf found that colleges and universities were not preparing young people to lead. To best prepare young people to

lead, colleges must have faculty members and leaders who devote themselves to serve others. In *Teacher as Servant* in 1979, Greenleaf did not emphasize classroom teaching, but creating an environment called “Jefferson House.” This was a residence for students who were committed to service, and who grew through conducting service projects and engaging in internships (Keith, 2010). Greenleaf called upon university and college leaders to build campuses that value service and make it a core mission to be achieved.

Higher education is an academic setting that seeks to be more effective in preparing students to have better lives in the future. Satyaputra (2013) reviewed the work of Wheeler (2011) that speaks about servant leadership in higher education. Wheeler observed that most current leadership models in higher education are unsuccessful, unsuitable, and short-term models. Without intensive effort to adopt proper leadership models in higher education, higher education will face a heavy burden and potential obstacles that prevent colleges and universities from fulfilling their desired goals. Wheeler recognized that the primary aim in higher education is to provide service to others and averred that the servant leadership is the best model to enhance the culture of service in higher education. Higher education institutions will function in a more powerful way by embodying the servant-leadership model that brings a long-term commitment to organizational effectiveness because it is a way of living and leading that creates servant leaders who care about thriving people and organizations (Satyaputra, 2013).

Scardino (2013) examined the extent to which full-time professors at three Franciscan institutions of higher education exhibited servant-leadership qualities, and whether their practice of servant leadership impacted student engagement. The author

used two types of surveys to gather the required data. Full-time professors at three institutions of higher education completed the Servant Leadership Questionnaire, which measures their levels of embodying servant-leadership characteristics. Also, Scardino used the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement to measure the engagement of students with the faculty. The results of the study revealed a direct correlation between servant leadership and deep approaches to learning. Those deep approaches to learning were explained by the linear combination of altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship. The most significant finding was that only emotional healing contributed significantly to the model. Thus, emotional healing was considered a vital characteristic of full-time professors at Franciscan institutions of higher education, and these types of learning environments. Emotional healing helps students at higher education institutions maximize their learning process.

Erkutlu and Chafra (2015b) investigated the relationship between servant leadership and voice behavior by testing the role of psychological safety and psychological empowerment as two essential scales that measure how servant leadership affects voice behavior. The authors recognized that study of how the mechanisms of servant leadership impact voice behavior has been lacking. They focused on the psychological safety of employees in speaking up and discussing issues openly. Erkutlu and Chafra (2015a) used the Psychological Empowerment Scale, which measured meaning, competence, impact, and self-determination. To examine how servant leadership affects employees' voice behaviors, 793 faculty members from 10 state universities in Turkey completed the voice-behavior, psychological-empowerment, and psychological-safety scales. Of those faculty members, 64 deans were asked to complete

the servant-leadership scale. Results revealed a significant relationship between servant leadership and voice behaviors. Servant leadership of faculty deans positively related to the psychological safety and psychological empowerment of faculty members. This implies that “given the risks associated with employees’ voice and due to the power that leaders hold over employees’ resources and outcomes, trust in leader may play an important role in employees’ decisions to voice their opinions” (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2015b, p. 31).

Jordan (2006) studied the impact of servant-leader professors on students’ learning and success on campuses. The researcher hoped to contribute to preliminary discussions of servant leadership as an educational-leadership paradigm for faculty in higher education in the 21st century. Jordan recognized that “teacher quality is one of the most powerful determinants of student achievement and virtually every category of educational outcomes” (2006, pp. 16–17), and specifically faculty members were one of the most powerful educational forces. Faculty members not only play a significant role in the academic paths of the students they teach, but also in the universities they serve and the community as a large. To investigate this issue, Jordan conducted a qualitative case study of selected self-identified servant professors who could provide information about a real-life higher education classroom situation regarding servant leadership. Several themes emerged from the faculty members’ participation: (a) integrity of belief and practice; (b) a commitment to studentcentered learning; (c) a commitment to the development of learning communities; (d) a commitment to personal growth; (e) a commitment to the greater common good; (f) courageously pursuing innovation;



(g) displaying a passionate dedication to their students; and (h) establishing equality and justice.

Clearly, results from the Jordan (2006) study lay in reporting answers to the three research questions. The first question was, What is the praxis of servant professors? Findings showed that the perspectives of servant professors about servant leadership in classrooms summarized “a process in which a collaborative community of learners learned with passion and excellence” (Jordan, 2006, p. 197). The second question was, How does a higher education servant professor define servant leadership? The characteristics of the three servant professors are the same 10 characteristics of servant leadership created by Spears, CEO of Greenleaf’s writing center. Those qualities include listening, empathy, foresight, awareness building, persuasion, conceptualization, healing, stewardship, community, and commitment to the growth of people. The last question was, How does a servant professor apply servant leadership in her or his classroom? The three faculty participants agreed that balancing among leadership, learning, and service is important to ensure the success of the application of the servant-leadership model in higher education classrooms. Furthermore, empowering each individual to become a leader and a follower—a teacher and a student at the same time—is a critical practice of servant leadership. Jordan concluded that “educators, as leaders, impact and influence the students entrusted to them in a powerful way, whether for good or evil. Teachers can inspire and empower students or devalue, ridicule, and stunt intellectual, social, and emotional growth” (2006, p. 7).

## Summary

This chapter reviewed the previous literature related to servant leadership. First are presented various definitions of leadership; the shared point in those definitions is that leadership is a process of change and influence (Yukl, 1998). The 10 main characteristics of servant leadership that distinguish servant leaders from other types of leaders were discussed. Those characteristics include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (Spears, 1998). Additionally, the chapter presented the authority and power in servant leadership, which provided a deep understanding of the nature of those two concepts. Authority is one of the perquisites of leadership that is defined as the right given to a manager to accomplish certain tasks (Serrat, 2014). Power is an ability to influence others to achieve the organization's goals (Christman, 2007). Also, the difference between formal authority and moral authority was presented, confirming that servant leaders are ethical leaders. Moral authority comprises character strengths, considered as a primary greatness, whereas formal authority is a secondary greatness that can be defined as wealth, reputation, and position (Covey, 2006). Servant leaders do not use formal authority in influencing others because they believe that employing a formal authority can prevent them from providing service (Greenleaf, 1977/2002). Leaders with moral authority act as servant leaders.

The review of literature included the five sources of power and their relationship to servant leadership: legitimate, reward, coercive, expert, and referent power (French & Raven, 1959). Also, international and global studies about servant leadership illustrated how culture has a marked impact on leaders' practices and behaviors (Hofstede, 2001;

House et al., 2004; Shahin & Wright, 2004). The last area described in the review of literature presented an overall view of servant leadership in higher education, concluding that a lack of studies reflects the status of servant leadership in higher education institutions (Keith, 2010). The next chapter presents details of the methodology for this study including the research design, setting, sample, data collection, data analysis, and the background of the researcher.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain the perceptions of Saudi Arabian higher education department chairs on servant leadership, and to explore the level of their characterization of servant-leadership practices. In addition, this study aimed to determine their ways of using authority and power.

#### Research Design

To explore the servant leadership and authority perceptions of Saudi Arabian higher education leaders, a qualitative methodology was employed in this study. Kothari (2005) defined a research methodology as a way to “systematically solve the research problem” (p. 8) and to answer the research questions that guide the study.

The qualitative approach is suitable for the objectives of this study because the researcher aimed to explore the stories of Saudi Arabian higher education leaders on servant leadership and their practices of authority and power, aligned with Creswell’s (2014) suggestions about a qualitative approach. According to Creswell, the researcher interpreted the meaning of the data and completed a report that contains the themes that emerge from participants’ narratives. The qualitative method is a type of scientific-research method that seeks answers to research questions, collects evidence, produces findings that were not determined in advance, and produces findings that are applicable for further studies (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The qualitative method is more effective at gaining specific information about experiences, behaviors, values, and social contexts, which are the main objectives of this study. This research approach contributed to the

body of knowledge on servant leadership. It also aligned and met calls by Siebold, Hollingshead, and Yoon (2014) to use research designs that give more attention to contextual and cultural factors as moderators in the workgroup.

An interview approach was used to collect and analyze the data qualitatively. Structured and in-depth interviews were designed to follow a system of research questions and standardized techniques of recording information. Kothari (2005) determined that a structured-interview method “involves presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses” (p. 97). In-depth interview provides an opportunity for the interviewer and interviewees to have some freedom and the possibility of talking about additional points to capture rich data about people’s attitudes and behaviors (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Data accrued from unstructured interviews often do not match the nature of research questions (Kothari, 2005).

One outstanding advantage of a qualitative study in exploratory research is that it gives an opportunity for participants to respond to open-ended questions using their own words and expressions rather than forcing them to choose one of the fixed responses, as a quantitative method does (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). This method not only elicits meaningful responses from participant, but also is a unique chance for the researcher to gain unanticipated responses from participants, which in turn enrich the narratives and data of the study. In addition, narrative inquiry is an appropriate form of qualitative study for this study because the study focuses on the lives of individuals told through written or spoken words (as suggested by Creswell, 2014). In line with the objectives of the study, the researcher used this qualitative approach to

collect unheard stories and experiences of Saudi Arabian higher education leaders on servant leadership and their ways of using authority.

### Research Setting

The study was conducted in the Middle East, specifically, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia has historical and cultural overlaps with its neighbors because it shares the Red Sea coast and the Persian Gulf with the Persian Gulf states, such as Yemen and Jordan (Metz, 1992). Islam is the dominant religion in Saudi Arabia. The population holding Saudi citizenship was 20 million in 2000 (Metz, 1992). This number is increasing by rate of 3.3% each year. Higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia are the setting for this study. Saudi higher education institutions include universities, community colleges, girls' colleges, technical and vocational training corporation technical colleges & institutes, industrial and vocational institutes, colleges of technology, higher technical institutes for girls, and private colleges (Clark, 2014).

The number of universities and colleges in Saudi Arabia has increased significantly and the enrollment in universities has doubled between 2010 and 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2017a). The system of higher education has witnessed marked development in expanding the number of higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia, now numbering 23 public universities, 18 primary teacher's colleges for men, 80 primary teachers' colleges for women, 37 colleges and institutes of health, 12 technical colleges, and 33 private universities and colleges (Alamri, 2011). Education is free at all levels for Saudi students, except for those who choose to attend private institutions. According to the statistics of Ministry of Education (2017a), the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions in 2014/2015 was 1,527,769.

As the number of higher education institutions and the number of enrollments has increased significantly in the period between 1990 and 2009, the number of faculty also has markedly increased by 192% in this period. Based on the Higher Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Indicators and International Comparisons (Ministry of Higher Education, 2010), the number of female faculty has been increased more than that of men, which implies that the opportunity and the orientation of this field is more open to women than men.

### Population and Sample

Population is a cluster of people to whom the study results will apply. McMillan (1996) defined population as “a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research” (p. 85). To explore the perspectives of Saudi Arabian higher education leaders on servant leadership and their ways of using authority, the targeted population of this study was department chairs in Saudi Arabia who have accessed leadership positions in a variety of universities and colleges.

A research sample is the number of participants from whom researchers collect data (McMillan, 1996). The sample in this study was department chairs from different universities and colleges in Saudi Arabia. Participating were 10 chairs of different departments from different regions in Saudi Arabia. These 10 were interviewed to gain their experiences and stories about authority and servant leadership. Researchers use three types of sampling: probability, purposive, and no-rule sampling (Barreiro & Albandoz, 2001). In purposive sampling “the person who is selecting the sample is [the person] who tries to make the sample representative, depending on his opinion or

purpose,” thus, the selection was subjective (p. 4). Also, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to choose the participants based on their abilities to provide rich and meaningful data (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, purposive sampling was the best fit in this study. The researcher selected the appropriate higher education leaders in Saudi Arabia who could give the necessary perspectives and data for this study. To ensure the generalizability of the research results, chairs from different departments, educational institutions, and cities took part in this study. The researcher had personal relationships with some potential participants, and participants suggested others to be interviewed.

After selecting appropriate participants who were able to give meaningful and fruitful data, the researcher collected some of the variables and demographic information about them (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Sample of Participant variables and Demographic Information*

Name	# of years of experience as a department chair	Previous job	Marital Status	Gender	City
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### Instrumentation

Interview is a two-way method of social interaction between interviewer and interviewee. It allows a free mutual exchange of ideas and creation of respective impressions of the person concerned (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). In-depth interviews were used as the instrument of this study. In-depth interviews are “a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation” (Boyce & Neale, 2006, p. 3). This type of instrument allowed the researcher to gather



data directly from participants through phone interviews. Because some participants were from various cities in Saudi Arabia, it would be hard for the researcher to travel to conduct face-to-face interviews. Thus, phone interviews were the best instrument for collecting the required data for this study.

To accomplish the data collection, several open-ended questions were designed and asked of interviewees to gain the data needed to answer the research questions. The researcher created simple, clear, and relevant questions, allowing participants to engage in a flowing process that reflected their experiences and practices as higher education leaders. Only related and necessary questions were asked to avoid collection of ambiguous and unwanted data (aligned with Creswell, 2014).

To better use the interview instrument and to better develop the interview questions, the researcher created questions that fit each major area and theme included in the research problems (Boyce & Neale, 2006). “How” questions were used rather than “why” questions to elicit stories of leaders’ process of practicing leadership and authority, rather than getting acceptable “accounts” of behavior (as suggested by Creswell, 2014). The researcher considered the logical flow of the interview by arranging the questions in an appropriate order. Questions about the 10 servant-leadership characteristics and ways of using authority and power were asked to 10 Saudi higher education department chairs to collect the needed data to answer the research questions of this study. The interview protocol can be seen in Appendix A. However, before conducting the interviews, participants received a letter that includes a brief definition of servant leadership, so they become more familiar with the nature of the topic and interview questions (see Appendix B).

To ensure the credibility, accuracy, and validity of this study, the researcher created a validity panel that includes a number of experts in the field to be studied. “The judge panel is selected on the basis of knowledge of content or knowledge of the research project” (Brink, 1993, p. 37). This panel determined that the methodology type is appropriate to answer the research questions, ensured the research questions are valid, the nature of the interview questions matches the nature of the research questions, and the sampling and desired approach are appropriate for the desired outcome. Table 2 shows the qualifications for each validity panelist.

Table 2

*Qualifications of the Validity Panelists*

Name	Profession/Qualifications
1-Dr. Patricia Mitchell	Former chair of Leadership Studies Department in School of Education at University of San Francisco/ Faculty in School of Education at University of San Francisco
2-Dr. Walt Gmelch	Professor in the Department of Leadership Studies in School of Education at University of San Francisco
3-Mr. Mahmoud Lamadanie	Former executive vice president of the Center for International Affairs and Programs at Grambling State University in Louisiana/ Former Director of International Studies Department in California State University Stanislaus.
4-Ghadah Al-Mansour	A graduate from California State University-East Bay with a Master of Arts in English/TESOL

### Validity and Reliability

Reliability and validity are ethical considerations when conducting research that entails collecting and analyzing data. In qualitative research, validity requires that the “researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures” (Creswell, 2014, p. 190). Validity of information has a direct impact on the findings of the study. Qualitative reliability includes the “researchers’ approach [to be] consistent across different researchers and projects” (Creswell, 2014, p. 190). In this study, the

researcher considered these issues by aiming to provide the most accurate data from the participants. A chain of evidence was established to secure the data: interviews were recorded carefully, member checking applied, transcribed data had read several times before exporting them, and interpretation of the data truly reflected what participants meant and said in the interviews.

The interview instrument was validated by the researcher, professors, and peers to ensure the appropriateness of the method type used in answering the research questions, and whether the interview questions matched the nature of the research questions (see Table 2). Each validity panelist provided helpful comments and feedback about the interview questions to help the researcher make some revisions, enabling the interview questions to be more leading, understandable, simple, and clear. The research questions were the five questions that guided this study. Three to five questions were created aligned with each research question to be considered interview questions. The interview questions systematically answered the research questions in a coordinated way that could yield broad information about participants' perspectives, stories, and lives.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted a pilot test for the interview by performing an interview with an educational leader from Saudi Arabia to test the process, the protocol for the interview, the time needed to conduct the interview, and any possible problems that could occur during the interview process. The researcher found that the interview took approximately 50 minutes to complete. One major finding from the pilot study was that, although the researcher asked for the participant's age, the participant ignored this question and did not attend to it as an introductory question. Thus, the researcher recognized that this question might be a sensitive one for participants, which

led the researcher to exclude it. Also, the pilot study helped the researcher identify the components and the tone that are most important and appropriate for the facilitation of the transition between the questions. Additionally, the researcher believed the questions were clear and no confusion arose from the interview questions, as the participant answered them clearly and moved from one question to another smoothly.

### Ethical Considerations

Ethics are the core in conducting valid research. All ethical issues that involve human subjects were considered in this research including getting approval from the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Beings (IRB) involved in the study, informed consent elicited from participants, acknowledgment of participants' rights in engaging in the study, and ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of participants' information and data.

#### *Protection of Human Subjects*

To ensure the protection of human beings involved in the study, approval from the IRB was obtained before conducting the study and collecting any data. The primary aim of IRB is to ensure that the human beings involved in a study are protected, and the study is not harmful to them. The IRB ensures the rights and welfare of human beings.

#### *Informed Consent*

Obtaining informed consent for a research study is required to ensure honest communication between the study's participants and the researcher. The informed-consent form clearly explains participants' rights when participating in the study and their freedom to withdraw from the interview process at any time (Creswell, 2014). The participants in this study had adequate time to review the consent document prior to any

procedures in collecting the required data. Their questions were answered, and their concerns addressed before engaging in the interview process. Attaining informed consent from participants means they agree to provide the information needed for the study of their personal free will.

### *Anonymity and Confidentiality*

Maintaining confidentiality of information collected from research participants is one of the essential ethical considerations for any study. Every effort was made to maintain confidentiality and prevent participants' identities from disclosure. The participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities, and all records were destroyed after transcribing the data.

### *Data Collection*

After obtaining approval from the IRB, the researcher started the process of collecting data from the participants. As a first step, the researcher contacted the people who had close relationships with the selected participants from different cities to help the researcher reach those participants. After getting their contact information, the researcher contacted them by e-mail and phone calls and invited them to participate in this study. An interview-request letter was sent to them through e-mail in the Arabic language so they got an idea of the topic and the purpose of the study (see Appendix C). Those who agreed to participate received a consent form to sign, to determine their agreements to voluntarily participate in the study (see Appendix D). Those who chose not to participate were excluded at that time. When the researcher collected all the consent forms from participants, the researcher started the process of making appointments with each participant to conduct phone interviews, based on a time of convenience for them.

Before starting the phone interviews, the researcher gave a brief introduction of the researcher and the purpose of the study. In addition, a letter that contains a brief definition of the servant-leadership style was e-mailed to participants to ensure their understanding of the term servant leadership about a week prior to the scheduled interview (see Appendix B). After they had read the interview-request letter, the brief definition letter about servant leadership, and sign the consent forms, they were ready to engage in the interview process and share their experiences and stories in a satisfactory manner. All letters and forms were translated into the Arabic language, so participants could easily understand the study and its values, to more effectively engage in the interview.

### Data Analysis

To analyze the data of this study, several questions were devolved under each research question to serve as productive interview questions. Those interview questions helped in gathering credible evidence, clues, and aspects that were relevant to the research questions. Following are the research (numbered) and interview questions (bulleted).

1. What are the perceptions of higher education department chairs of servant leadership as a leadership model in Saudi Arabia?
  - What came to mind when you first heard the term “servant leadership”?
  - Based on my previous description of servant leadership, how does servant leadership differ from other leadership styles?

- How do your followers describe your leadership style? What impact does the style have on your university?
  - How do you think the servant-leadership style is helpful and effective for your students and faculty?
2. To what extent have servant-leadership characteristics already been or are being used by higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia?
- How do you ensure that you are truly listening to others? (Listening).
  - How do you exhibit behaviors that demonstrate empathy? (Empathy).
  - What practices do you demonstrate that ease the burden of others? (Healing).
  - How to evaluate your awareness of yourself and of others? What are the practices you do that help you to be more aware of yourself and of your followers? (Awareness).
  - How do you get others to agree with the decisions you make? (Persuasion).
  - What is your vision of the future of your department? Where does this vision comes from? (Conceptualization).
  - What practices do you demonstrate to show a commitment to the growth of all individuals? (Commitment to the growth of people).

- How do you encourage teamwork among colleagues? (Building community).
  - What factors/characteristics do you think are important to influence others to achieving the organization's goals?
  - What are your top five characteristics of servant leadership (listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, foresight, conceptualization, commitment to the growth of people, building community)? What characteristics do you think you need to improve?
3. To what degree do higher education department chairs value service and define themselves as servants first, then as leaders?
- What kind of services do you provide for students and your department as a whole?
  - How do you know what needs to be improved in your department/university?
  - Do you believe in the importance of meeting the needs of others? What practices do you do that show you care about others' needs and concerns?
  - As a leader, what do you think about considering others' needs and concerns before considering your own? How do you feel about putting yourself second and your followers first?
4. How do higher education department chairs explain their practice of authority and power?



- Do you think that authority makes your jobs easier? How?
  - Do you often rely on your authority to influence others? Do you think the use of authority is important to influence others? How?
  - How do you maintain authority while remaining humble?
  - How do you describe the difference between formal authority and moral authority? How different or similar are they?
  - How do you think a person can have power without a leadership position?
5. What challenges do higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia face to change their formal authority and traditional leadership style to use moral authority and a servant-leadership style in leading others?
- Do you believe that the traditional leadership styles rely mostly on authority? How?
  - How easy/difficult is it for you and for leaders in general to shift their traditional-leadership styles to the servant-leadership style?
  - If you want to start applying servant leadership, what are the potential risks and challenges you may expect from your team and students?
  - Do you think servant leadership is an appropriate style for Saudi culture and universities? Why?

Analyzing qualitative data requires a researcher to take a wider view of the study and use the collected data to describe the phenomenon and its meaning. Several themes

and codes needed to be created to professionally interpret those data and draw conclusions from the study (Creswell, 2014). In this qualitative study, after collecting the interview data from participants, the researcher used Dedoose, a web-based qualitative data analysis software application that allowed the researcher to import transcriptions of the interviewees' responses and analyze these data. Dedoose was used to document the interviewees' responses and code themes to determine the most frequent codes that relate to this study.

### The Researcher's Background

The researcher is a Muslim woman who was born and raised in the Middle East, specifically in Makkah City, which is city with the most pilgrimages by Muslims, due to the ability to perform some religious practices that cannot be performed elsewhere. The researcher's family is the greatest support, as they have a persistent belief in the importance of pursuing more education. After earning a bachelor's degree in Islamic law from Um-AlQura University, the researcher attained professional experience as an elementary teacher for a year. Being a student in the university and being a teacher in a private elementary school have shaped the researcher's perspectives of the education field and what school settings are like. Those two experiences have had a huge impact on the researcher's thoughts about leadership and working in an educational organization. The researcher realized what it means to have an authoritarian leader who uses authority and power, and who only cares about the end result without paying attention to others' needs and concerns. Because the researcher graduated with high grade-point average from the university, the Saudi Arabia government offered a scholarship to study abroad, after they affirmed that the researcher had met the standards set by the organization.

The researcher came to the United States in 2011. To improve English-language facility, the researcher enrolled in an English school, teaching the Arabic language and Islamic studies on the weekend at Al-Salam Mosque to young children. The researcher obtained a master's degree in education administration from California State University, Stanislaus, choosing this major to explore the nature, factors, challenges, and problems that face educators. The researcher worked with the International Students Office at California State University, Stanislaus, assessing them by addressing their questions and concerns, helping them complete procedures for their admission process, and recruiting new international students. To continue reaching academic goals, the researcher transitioned to attend the University of San Francisco (USF) to obtain a doctoral degree in Organization and Leadership. This major supports perspectives on the educational organization, broadened the researcher's thinking on leadership and administration, and taught how to lighten the potential dark side of educational organizations. During the journey in pursuing the doctoral degree, the researcher worked as an assistant in the Organization and Leadership department in the School of Education at USF. Now, the researcher is working as an assistant to the Director of Assessment in the School of Education at USF. Those experiences clearly have improved the researcher professionally and personally, as each course has provided preparation not only to be a good leader, but also to be an effective member of the community.

The researcher chose dissertation topic without hesitation, wanting to discover servant leadership in Saudi Arabia specifically through the lens of using authority and power. Addressing Saudi leaders who heavily rely on their position, title, and authority

has provided greater passion to more deeply understand this issue and its impact on followers and on entire organizations.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to gain the perceptions of higher education department chairs on servant leadership in Saudi Arabia. This study also aimed to explore the level of implementing servant-leadership characteristics by Saudi department chairs. In addition, the study was designed to determine educational leaders' ways of using authority and power.

In this study, 10 Saudi department chairs in higher education shared their stories and practices of leadership. They were engaged in interviews that reflected their perspectives on servant leadership as a leadership model. Through answering the interview questions, they described their levels of implementing the characteristics of servant leadership. More importantly, their participation in the study reflected their practices of authority and power in everyday operations.

#### Demographic Data: Overview of the Participants

Ten department chairs from Saudi Arabia who have different experiences in leadership participated in this study. All participants were Muslims and married: six participants were women. The number of years of experience varied from 2 to 10 as department chairs. Participants areas of specialization differed significantly and included mathematics, history, English, Arabic, biology, community service and continuing education, computer technology, telecom technology, and foundations of education. This study intended to gain the perspectives of department chairs from different educational environments and cities. All universities and colleges were public, located in various parts in Saudi Arabia including the cities of Makkah, Jeddah, Madinah, Taif, and Riyadh.

Some participants had obtained their highest education from universities in Saudi Arabia, and four had been educated internationally, obtaining their highest degree from the United States, Ireland, and Egypt. All the participants were given anonymous names to protect their identities from disclosure. Table 1 provides a summary of the demographic information of study participants.

Table 3

*Participant Demographic Data*

Participant	# of years of experience	Highest level of education	Gender	City	Department
Um-Abdullah	5	PhD from KSA	Female	Taif	History
Um-Majed	4	PhD from KSA	Female	Makkah	Fundamentals of religion
Um-Yasser	2	PhD from KSA	Female	Madinah	Arabic
Um-Mohamed	7	PhD from KSA	Female	Jeddah	Foundations of education
Um-Sara	3	Master's from USA	Female	Madinah	Mathematics
Um-Heba	6	PhD from Egypt	Female	Madinah	Biology
Abu-Ali	10	PhD from KSA	Male	Makkah	Community Service and Continuing Education
Abu-Omar	4	Bachelor's from Ireland	Male	Jeddah	Telecom technology
Abu-Faris	7	Master's from KSA	Male	Jeddah	Computer technology
Abu-Yousef	3	PhD from USA	Male	Riyadh	English

*Note.* KSA = Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

### Emergent Themes: Answering Research Questions

Several themes and subthemes emerged from participant interviews. Participants shared meaningful stories and ideas that successfully answered the research questions of this study. After importing participants' transcribed interviews into "Dedoose," the web-based qualitative data analysis software used in this research, five major themes emerged. Under each theme, a number of subthemes emerged, based on the richest topics or ideas manifesting in the interviews: experience of leadership, characteristics of servant

leadership, service, authority and power, and challenges of servant leadership. Table 4 demonstrates the major themes and subthemes extracted from study findings.

Table 4

*Major Themes and Subthemes*

Experiences of leadership	Characteristics of servant leadership	Service	Authority and power	Challenges of servant leadership
Unfamiliarity with the term “servant leadership”	Listening	Service provided	Relying on authority to influence	Shift from traditional style to servant-leadership style
Services as a religious and traditional principle	Empathy	Strategies for department improvement	Practicing authority while being humble	Potential risks and challenges
Servant leadership in Islam	Healing	Followers first, then leaders	Formal/moral authority	Servant leadership in Saudi culture
Followers’ satisfaction	Awareness		Power derived from personal qualities	
Effectiveness of servant leadership	Persuasion			
	Conceptualization and foresight			
	Stewardship			
	Commitment to the growth of people			
	Building community			
	Area of strengths			
	Area of improvement			

*First Theme: Experiences of Leadership*

To answer the first research question of this study—What are the perceptions of higher education department chairs of servant leadership as a leadership model in Saudi Arabia?—a major theme emerged, dubbed *Experiences of leadership*. Participants answered several questions, clearly reflecting their practices of leadership as educational leaders, as well as their perspectives on the servant-leadership model. Five subthemes

were extracted from this dominant theme: unfamiliarity of the term servant leadership, service as a religious and traditional principle, servant leadership in Islam, followers' satisfaction, and effectiveness of servant leadership.

#### *Unfamiliarity With the Term Servant Leadership*

A majority of participants were unfamiliar with servant leadership as a leadership model. They had not heard of this term due to a lack of knowledge of leadership styles in general, and servant leadership specifically. Um-Sara stated "Frankly it is the first time I hear about it. I might not have the background knowledge in the subject of leadership even though I read Al-Gosaibi's book about the life of the administration which is a beautiful book." Um-Mohamed and Abu-Omar shared that although they never heard of the term servant leadership, they thought this leadership style was what they implement in their departments. Um-Mohammed stated,

A leader is the server that initiates any work and completes it. This is the true meaning of a leader I have known. I realized that it is the same meaning of a servant leader, which everyone I worked with, all my colleagues, have blamed me for, and told me that is not the way the management before me ran things in the department. I told them that this is the way I run things in the department, by being a servant leader, which is a source of pleasure for me to serve people.

Abu-Omar expressed a similar thought:

As for the term Servant Leadership, I do not conceal that it is entirely new to me, but after your clarification and explanation of the term, it became clear to me that those leadership skills are what I really do.

Um-Heba believed that leaders in Saudi Arabia suffer from limited knowledge of leadership, and from the mindset that leaders are those who should be served.

Servant leadership may exist in a small percentage in Saudi Arabia and Arab countries due to lack of awareness of the culture of servant leaders. People have limited knowledge, believing a leader is someone who expects others to serve him/her. Servant leadership is a very huge responsibility that faces large obstacle without expanding one's mind and making great effort.



After participants gained a clear understanding of servant leadership and what servant leaders value, some found that this model represents their own practices of leadership. Because they had not learned or heard about this model before, they failed to recognize themselves as servant leaders. Still others found it to be an interesting method that was totally new to them as a theory and practice.

*Service as a Religious and Traditional Principle*

When the participants expressed their opinions about servant leadership, most linked the concept of service to their own religion and tradition, and how Islam values service and perceives the servant as a master of people. Um-Yasser and Um-Abdullah reported that the Prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him) is an ideal example of a servant leader, saying,

servant leadership before it is a leadership style is an ethic that our religion [Islam] urges. In Islam, the rich help the poor, the great guide the young, the privileged help the marginalized, the father leads the children, the best of them all is the one who serves others, and we have in the Messenger of God [Allah] a good example. (Um-Yasser)

Um Abdullah stated,

The words servant leader remind me of the prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him), and how he spent all his life serving others, although he was not only a leader of a specific community or group of people; rather, he was a leader of all Muslims, a messenger of Allah, and the person who was responsible for every issue and challenge that faced Muslim society.

Abu-Ali explained the traditional meaning of the word “service” in Arabic culture, and how its meaning has developed and changed to include leadership and management practices:

The first notion that came to my mind was this Arabic proverb “The master of the people is their servant.” In Arabic, the meaning of sovereign “leadership” in this concept is that leadership of the people and society derive from the service of society and the abilities of a person to solve the problems in society, along with proper management of this tribal community so these actions make him worthy of

a leading rank in the tribe. They make him presenter of the tribe wherein members seek him for issues and matters. He becomes the chief, based on the benefits he achieved for the tribe. This concept has continued since the pre-Islamic era that the master is a person who serves the tribe and is responsible for the hospitality of guests and he receives a sum of money or something of cattle in return for his work. This meaning has developed and changed later to cover administrative work in the modern form.

It is possible that although Saudi leaders are unfamiliar with servant leadership as a style in which leaders serve followers, they clearly know that service is a humanitarian and religious deed. Muslims serve and care about others and never attend to their own interests first. Um-Mohammed shared: “we should apply the style of servant leadership because this term is not borrowed from a different culture, but does exist in our religion.” Um-Mohamed believed Muslims should sanctify the culture of service because they would never be true Muslims without the sense of caring and serving others without seeking gain.

### *Servant Leadership in Islam*

Another important topic came from the participants who offered their views on servant leadership: servant leadership in Islam. This subtheme arose in most interviews, reflecting a strong relation between servant leadership and leadership religiosity and spirituality. Throughout the interviews, participants quoted from the Quran and the Prophet’s Speech (Hadith) in answering the interview questions. For example, Om-Majed responded with her own experience in leadership:

One of the difficulties we face as leaders is the lack of appreciation from others for our efforts and giving. We are human beings, in the final analysis, and we love to hear a simple word of thanks, as in the Hadith of Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him): “Those who do not thank people, do not thank Allah.” But we need to remind ourselves to not expect appreciation and praise for our efforts from others.

Abu-Yousef shared his opinion of significant factors in leadership, and mentioned collaboration as one of them:

My vision is optimistic, and it involves future development to take service forward, and this emerges through our culture and our religion when ALLAH said “and cooperate in righteousness and piety.” This definition includes cooperation in scientific achievements because cooperation has a positive impact on our country and our community and this is only the start.

Abu-Yousef also found that humility is a critical factor in influencing others, and quoted from the Hadith as follows:

I always take from our culture and our religion the term humility in Hadith as “one who displays humbleness toward another seeking the pleasure of Allah, Allah exalts him in ranks.” As I have witnessed from scholars who I studied with in America, if a scholar gains more knowledge, the more he becomes humble.

Further, when Um-Mohamed spoke about moral authority and its impact on people, she was reminded of part of the Quran that speaks about being ethical and sympathetic as a smart method to gain others’ hearts and minds:

Moral authority is only observed by ALLAH, the sergeant, and you are to do it on the basis of moral duties and as in the Qur'anic verse when Allah taught his messenger (Mohamed) that the appropriate way to influence others was by stating “If you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would disband from around you.”

Participants agreed that servant leadership values and principles already exist in Islam, and both the Quran and Hadith urge adherence to those principles that are the characteristics of servant leadership.

#### *Followers’ Satisfaction*

Most participants believed that the level of followers’ satisfaction was high in their departments, and colleagues were happy with their department chairs’ leadership methods. For instance, Um-Majed revealed that, after finishing the first 2 years as a chair of the Fundamentals of Religion department, the faculty and colleagues recommended she continue in this position and reassigned her as a chair for the coming years. Um-Majed stated, “I feel that I left a good mark based on the evidence that the faculty

requested me to be reassigned to this position even though I submitted a written letter to resign.” Um-Yasser also shared colleagues’ praise of her ethical attitudes. They found that Um-Yasser is a unique leader who is just and does not discriminate against other group such as non-Saudis:

They were satisfied with me and they used to tell me that I was the only one who took care of non-Saudis because they had this idea that some Saudis are biased; but on the contrary, I see them as my colleagues and peers. Once, one of my colleagues that I was the only Saudi woman who did not discriminate between Saudi and non-Saudi women.

Abu-Faris demonstrated that transparency is a critical component in spreading satisfaction among members, stating,

things are clear and there is system that we follow, and everyone is familiar with it. As for me, there are no comments on the style of leadership I use or any complaints about certain shortcomings; only in particular cases for specific people

In addition, Um-Heba thought that building good relationships with followers helped her gain satisfaction from members of the department:

Thankfully, I have never had problems or issues with others because I always consult them. Even if their opinion is contrary to mine, I still hear them first. All of these practices give a space to build a good relationship in the department.

In contrast, some participants believed it challenging to please everyone in the department. Every member had different perspectives about how the department is being run. Abu-Omar said that, quite frankly, sometimes he is attacked by some members of the department, arguing about decisions he makes:

When the leader is really interested in the members of his/her department and puts their interests first, he/she finds personal satisfaction in what he/she is doing. The reality is not always ideal and exemplary because sometimes I get attacked by the members of the department. I excuse them because their motive in the attack is justified, and I have no authority to change it.

Um-Mohamed seemed satisfied about her leadership style. She spends her time and effort serving the department and its members. She believed she is a servant leader.

However, she feels assured that people perceive this style as an inferior method that leaders should not use. She stated,

If you asked anyone in the college about me, they will tell you that I am the first to arrive at the college and the last to leave. I don't do this for praise and compliments but because I am committed to my work. If it happened that I made a mistake, I would admit that I was wrong. My method of leadership wavers between those followers who pay tribute to my method and some people who are against it and think of it as defective, because they consider it as a sign of weakness, even though I see it a sign of power, because I am in this position to serve the students. My colleagues are among the supporters of my style of leadership and management, while some of them reject it because they think of a leader as someone who should be strict and give orders and commands, which is something I do, but I do it in a different way that helps my point to cross across without hurting or affecting another.

Um-Abdullah was extremely transparent when sharing her followers' opinions about her style of leadership. She had awareness of her own personal characteristics as a leader, which is highly appreciated, regardless of whether those characteristics are ideal. She illustrated,

As a department head, and to be honest with you, my character is somewhat dictatorial. I would like to have the first and last opinion on things, but that doesn't mean I deny hearing the thoughts and the opinions of other people. However, ultimately, I love in all things to return the subject to myself and to know all the viewpoints around me, whether members of the faculty or students. I think this is human nature. Everyone wants to have a voice and wants to know every little thing, whether among family members, friends, or colleagues and staff. I will not lie to you and tell you that everyone is accepting of my style of leadership, because some people think it does not fit them and they see it as unfair to their ideas; they think of it as me practicing my authority over them. However, other people like this style because they think I am being fair and beneficial to the department and members of the faculty and students.

Abu Faris, Um-Mohamed, and Um- Abdullah shared similar experiences in followers' satisfaction. They agreed that in a department, some people will disagree or be unhappy about what department leaders are doing and how they are addressing issues. Still others are satisfied and perceive their leaders' attributes as fair.

### *Effectiveness of Servant Leadership*

Participants raised the last subtheme of the first major theme when asked if they perceived servant leadership as an effective method of leading. They all agreed that the consequences of this style of leadership are quite effective. Abu-Omar provided an interesting vision of practicing servant leadership in higher education. He believed that by employing servant leadership, leadership and the academic practices will shift to improve outcomes.

Often, humans tend to be satisfied with the person who puts others first, taking their needs into account. If we can really apply the concept of servant leadership, the reality of students and faculty members will shift from a daily routine schedule to satisfy their conscience or obtain a degree with effort that stems from internal satisfaction. This is the dream that I hope we can reach one day.

Abu-Omar continued his insights about the importance of considering this style by the Ministry of Higher Education to start seeing results at a lower level in the hierarchy. He reported,

Our hierarchy of work is the president > the vice president > the dean of the college > the general manager of the region > Deputy Governor > Governor > The Minister of Education. Here I think that the application of servant leadership, if it is not one of the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Education, cannot be applied to yield the best results. Even if one of the officials in the hierarchy has made some effort and worked hard, he may reach a satisfactory result to some extent, but not to the level of perfection.

Um-Abdullah and Um-Heba shared the same thought and believed the needs of followers to have their voices heard and their concerns addressed was the main focus of servant leadership. Um-Abdullah stated, "I see servant leadership as an effective method with good results; because followers only want their voice to be heard and their demands to be met. I see it as an effective method with faculty members and students." Um-Heba found that leadership is not a position; rather, it is a function that creates a bridge between followers and their needs.

I am responsible for their comfort, their needs, and bringing their voice to the administration; therefore, I address any problem I cannot solve personally to higher administrators, which means I am the link between them. Thus, it benefits them to have a voice and a leader; not someone who is just a name on paper or a name on a chair, but someone who is there to connect their message to others.

Um-Majed revealed that servant leadership is an effective method to be applied in educational institutions. It allows leaders to focus on the main elements of the faculty and staff of the department, rather than focusing on authority. She indicated,

What I like about this leadership style is that when a person becomes a leader, she/he does not become the center of authority, but distributes tasks to everyone so this type leadership can succeed. Servant leadership is different from other types leadership such as autocratic leadership, which suppresses the rights of subordinates.

Um-Mohamed's perspective about the main focus of servant leadership differs from that of Um-Majed. Um-Majed believed that servant leadership emphasizes faculty and staff, whereas Um-Mohamed assured me that service should be directly provided to students:

In our academic field, I believe a servant leader has a bigger role with the student. Everyone believes a manager and a servant leader is necessary to be standing and supportive of members of the teaching staff over the students, but I do not agree with this principle or consideration. We are here to serve the student. Even the administrative department next door says that you give more attention to the students; that this is their right, which they should be given without asking.

Abu-Ali also perceives that servant leadership was an effective model in department leadership. His vision of servant leadership was to have "students and members in a department fill out questionnaires and forms to figure out their needs and requests. These questionnaires measure the needs of students, the curriculum, the community, and the labor market." Abu-Ali continued that servant leadership is most effective when "Achieving equality and participation from all parties would yield full advantage and not be biased in favor of one party over the other to avoid boredom from

this neglected party.” Regardless of whether or not participants apply servant leadership in their leadership practices, they all agreed that this method of leading is helpful for students, faculty, staff, and their department.

### *Second Theme: Characteristics of Servant Leadership*

In answering the second research question of this study, “To what extent have servant-leadership characteristics already been or are being used by higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia?,” characteristics of servant leadership was the major theme discussed by the participants. Several subthemes emerged from this major theme: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, conceptualization and foresight, persuasion, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, building community, areas of strength, and areas of improvement.

#### *Listening*

Listening is the first characteristic identified by all participants. Some participants perceived themselves to be good listeners. Still others found that listening is a challenging skill that needs to be practiced and learned. Abu-Ali worked hard to ensure students’ requests and complaints are addressed. In addition to assigning supervisors to listen to students, he created an online method that allows students to easily raise their requests without the need to come to the department. Abu-Ali stated,

Means of communication with the student is direct and open. I have created brochures for the department about the tasks performed by the department and created an electronic page on the department’s website about the tasks and forms to offer services electronically so the student does not need to visit the department to get what they need. I have created a special e-mail for complaints and grievances. I also assigned supervisors in the department to listen to students and their problems; these supervisors are directors who coordinate between students and faculty members, and colleges and universities in financial and administrative matters.



Um-Sara averred that listening does not mean merely to be present; rather, it means to carefully hear what is being said.

Listen to their words and take notes on the points that I was not convinced of and after that tell them about my points and comments. I give them time to finish their speech and open areas for discussion and hear from all because it is not important to be in attendance only; rather, the most important thing is that I have heard and discussed the topic with them.

In contrast, participants revealed their struggles with listening. Um-Abdullah was very open when talking about experience with listening. She was honest with herself and had no issue admitting her weakness. Her overload of responsibilities prevented her from creating enough time to listen to others.

As a department head, I can tell you that this is almost impossible. It is impossible because my tasks are too many and the number of members of the teaching staff are so many and so are the students. Also, I have responsibilities for my home, my children, my husband, and my family. Yes, it is quite hard to perfectly listen to all those parties. Let me tell you something. Leaders find it hard to admit their weakness. They are not honest with themselves. Listening is not just hearing your words. No. When you truly listen to someone, you give this person your ears and your hearts, as they speak about their own issues. And because I know this, I am telling you that I do not see myself as a good listener.

Listening requires filtering the mind from any distraction or issue. Um-Mohamed suffers from difficulty refraining from distractions:

This point is one of my flaws, which doesn't mean I am not a good listener, but sometimes my brain is too busy to hear something good because my mind is distracted. For example, if I concentrate with you, I listen well to everything and nothing distracts me. But if there are things on my mind, my brain is distracted. Like now, I do not see myself as a good listener to you because I am busy thinking about this administrative transaction, which distracted my attention from you. I am speaking to you, but my ears and feelings are elsewhere. Attendance must be present mentally and physically and this is my perception of a good listener.

Abu-Omar believed listening is important, but he is unsure if he is considered a good listener. He said,

listening is the most important skill a leader must have. I think by allocating a daily time to listening and trying to reach to members of the department and students, and listening to them before they reach my office is something that satisfies me. Honestly, I'm not sure that I'm a good listener.

Additionally, Um-Yasser seemed to feel badly that her department has no meetings or time scheduled to meet with students to hear their issues and concerns. When a student wants to talk about an issue, a student needs to schedule an appointment to meet the leader at her office; otherwise, the door is not open:

If any of the students have a problem or an issue, they can come in at a specific time to talk to me, to enlighten me about the problem or issue at hand, to understand and solve it. In other words, there are no special meetings but only individual cases. I think group meetings is a good idea as a method to listen to all the problems or suggestions from all students, if it was held every month or 2 months.

Participants had various experiences with listening. Some were transparent, as they admitted that they are not good listeners. Other participants did well in listening to others.

### *Empathy*

Some participants shared practices that ensured they were empathetic. Other participants refused become empathetic at work. Still others found that, when practicing empathy, it was important to balance firmness with flexibility. Um-Yasser sought to understand others' circumstances and address them properly:

I listen to them and their complaints. I deal with them in a respectful manner whenever anyone enters my office; I try my best to be in good spirits to hear someone's problem, such as a family issue at home such as a child's illness. In these circumstances, I empathize and ease their workloads and teaching schedules.

Abu-Faris saw humanity as a method of empathy. His department has a culture of humanity, as everyone feels and understands the others. Abu-Faris demonstrated how one can practice empathy.

By treating students and people well, meeting their needs, and empathizing with their special conditions or circumstances, such as an illness of a spouse or mother, or a family issue. The side of humanity in the college is above all considerations and it is an aspect we consider and practice in the department, which is something good and satisfactory to all members of the teaching staff.

However, some participants felt empathy needed to be practiced carefully. Some limitations and balance are required when showing empathy. For example, Um-Majed believed that empathy is important factor in leadership, but leaders need to balance firmness and flexibility well.

I ensure empathy by coexisting and assisting students with their specific academic needs or limitations, due to their social or family circumstances. For example, sometimes it is not in my authority to help a student change her section or class schedule, but I try to speak or send a letter to the dean of admissions and the registration office to help alleviate the problem. Other times, I need to directly interfere and address a problem a student is facing with a faculty member by having a discussion with the particular professor. Empathy is important, but it needs to be an average of firmness and flexibility.

Um-Abdullah recommended using empathy with limitations, as some colleagues take advantage of their leaders' empathy. She shared,

I am trying to meet their desires and needs. For instance, members of the teaching staff might need my help to relieve pressure in their teaching schedule. Therefore, I distribute their schedules so they can be happier. As for students, I see if they need to retake an exam or take an extra lecture to help them improve. However, this process has limitations. Sometimes I do feel sympathetic to others and their circumstances, but also, if I leave this door open and allow them to limit their responsibilities and not do their required tasks, everything will fail. We all have issues and problems, right? So, we need to separate our personal lives from our professional lives. As I said before, some people see that I'm too practical and have no place for feelings. I do have feelings, but I know when to use them.

Practicing empathy by leaders sometimes leads to exploitation. This is what Um-Sara reported when asking about her practices of empathy:

I do not open the door of empathy with them because it opens the door of exploitation and everyone needs you to engage with them on subjects that may not have relevance to study and the section is a problem because the section has a large number of students. I use it only for serious problems; I meet the person to hear from him and I know their situation and I try to provide solutions and help.

The use of empathy seems controversial and participants' perspectives about empathy varied. Some participants believed in practicing empathy with no conditions. Others practiced empathy under limitations and conditions. Still others did not use empathy at all.

### *Healing*

Participants provided perspectives on the methods they use to heal others. The majority of participants demonstrated that the biggest problem faculty face is the pressure of the teaching schedule. To make followers happy, they try to reduce their schedules and make some adjustments to fit their special circumstances. For example, Um-Heba tried to ease the burden and heal her followers, as she stated,

I take into account any member of the department who has conditions and try to take the burden from them. Similarly, I maintain the principle that as the leader, as long as you hold this position, you have to take the burden of subordinates. If you cannot, then you need to give up the position. For example, I have someone who is responsible for distributing and managing the teaching schedule, such as lecture monitors who are not responsible for other problems, but as a leader you are in a place of responsibility and must take the burden without grumbling. I could take care of those issues. If time allowed me to adjust the schedule, I would. For example, I have a colleague who cannot come to morning classes because her children do not have daycare. I have another colleague who cannot stay late because she must pick up her children from school or daycare. As is possible, as the leader, I try to ease their burden.

Abu-Ali used a reward system to encourage faculty who have more teaching hours than others. "I distribute the materials among colleagues to relieve the pressure equally for all. Furthermore, I pay a financial reward as an encouragement to those who take on more than the required teaching hours in a semester." Another example is Abu-Omar, who shared some strategies he used that help in healing.

Editing the term clarifies the question. Does burden mean the tasks assigned to people or the burden of additional work the person offers as initiatives and serves others, or is it temporary emergency work. ... In each case, we find a method to use. For example, in the first case, the solution may be to transfer the tasks to

another person and assign those tasks to them. In the second case, I try hard to offer logistical support from human or material needs. Finally, I might offer my time to complete the emergency work.

To better heal, as Abu-Yousef professed, it is important to show others respect on their issues and concerns before even thinking of a solution. Abu-Yousef mentioned: “I have to respect them and reassure them with good words and this is the first aspect. Second, by helping them find the right solutions to their problems or guiding them toward the solution.” Further, Um-Mohamed served as a follower rather than a leader, for which she was chastised. She believed that a leader is responsible for creating a culture of collaboration in which everyone helps and takes initiatives to facilitate others’ work, so everyone is healthy. Um-Mohamed said,

Administrative practices include the distribution of routine tasks such as timetables, tests, and postgraduate students; this distribution is not mandatory. The role of a faculty member is to teach but also, we are supposed to realize that this work is for everyone and this culture is spreading. This place is not for me but for all the members who will one day take a leadership role in this place. I think that as long as I am the leader in this place, we all have to work as one hand and once we distribute the work among us, I do not want to hear one of my staff say she is always the initiator, and the one who is always doing the work, so I do not use this method. If I have a meeting, I do not sit in the chair as the head of the department; rather, I sit with them so I feel near them. Once, I received blame from them that as head of the department and its supervisor, I should sit in the leader’s chair, but in my opinion that gives the clear impression that I do not like them to feel that I am a person of authority.

Strategies for healing differ from one participant to another. They all feel responsible for finding solutions for others and facilitating the work of followers.

Workload is a major pressure on faculty. Participants used several methods to ease the burden of faculty such as reducing teaching hours, distributing tasks to others, rewarding those who have more teaching hours, and providing tangible and intangible support.

### *Awareness*

When participants shared the practices they use to ensure their awareness of themselves and others, they identified several strategies. Those practices can be used throughout and are not limited to coexistence, professional development, analysis, and listening to others. Um-Yasser believed that listening to others and coexistence with them were the best ways to be aware of ones' surroundings.

My method is to be present with them and coexist in the department atmosphere by hearing their problems and following up on instances between professors and students. To put it differently, the head of the department should always be present in the department and persistent about their coexistence and presence in the department, to associate with their staff and students to meet their needs and to solve their problems; It is like being physically and spiritually available in the department. For example, if the head of the department is always absent, he/she can be psychologically distant from understanding the department's needs and problems, unlike those who are always present every day.

Abu-Yousef agreed that being close to others is what gains awareness.

Awareness requires the presence of a human as a leader in the work of the department, to be aware of all things small or large, and to be close to colleagues and students; therefore, when the leader has awareness and knowledge of what is happening in the department, he/she will be able to respond to any question or issue, based on his/her awareness of what is happening in the department.

Engaging in professional development activities such as workshops, seminars, lectures, and conferences is a professional way to make leaders more aware of themselves and of others. Um-Majed and Um-Heba each described this perception. Um-Heba stated that "a leader should be ready and willing to attend lectures and be aware of his/her needs in those courses." Um-Heba opined it is not suitable for a leader to remain in the same place over time and not be updated with the latest knowledge. In addition, Um-Majed found that attending some professional-development activities helped her better address the needs of others.

To gain more awareness, I try to take part and attend any seminars or conferences; they helped me a great deal in developing as a leader; as these practices of attending seminars and conferences were useful. Sometimes, if I could not personally attend any of those seminars, I got advice from people with experience in leadership. Furthermore, I took a course in the art of dealing with others so I could deal with my peers and faculty, because, for me, dealing with people is harder than departmental duties because people are very sensitive; especially if you are among same-age peers.

Abu-Omar's perception of awareness was to first be good listener; then to use an analytical method to evaluate department outcomes.

Awareness is very important through listening to all members of the department because listening is the best way to know what is on every person's mind. To put it differently, there are some situations we can predict and other situations that are difficult to predict; that is why we need to listen to people. The second point is my decisions, and sometimes I have difficulty with decisions because the self always falsifies to its owner: not to be stubborn, to be fanatic, and to stick to his opinion; because it stems from his/her logic and perception of the concept. Thus, it is always a problem I face, but I try to keep in my mind to analyze and see the results of my decisions, which I cannot share with others: evaluate each stage of the application of the change being implemented. All these are helpful practices to help me to reach awareness and consciousness.

Participants shared various practices that have proven significant results in gaining awareness of themselves and others. Some of those shared practices are listening, professional development, building relationships, and evaluation.

### *Persuasion*

When participants described how they get others to agree with their decisions, participants used various methods for persuasion. Some participants persuade others through open communication and discussions; other participants use motivation to convince others; and some participants found it difficult to please everyone in the department. Thus, they made decisions that benefited the department and then presented those decisions to others. Um-Heba was flexible in decision making, opening communication with others and engaging them in the process:

First, through the discussion method, I introduce the subject to the faculty and staff and meet with them to listen to their opinions. We either agree on a decision and we have finished, or we do not agree, and hold a discussion to find common ground.

Um-Yasser suggested an idea to convince others of the efficacy of her decisions.

She said,

At first, I make the subject optional; then, I let them share their opinions on the matter before I say my opinion. After I hear all the staff's opinions, I connect with the one that is similar or compatible with my personal opinion and share my opinion with them as the right one.

Um-Mohamed mentioned another effective method of persuasion:

I use crooked methods where I make them say yes themselves to a decision or a task. I make them reach a place where they say why our department is so or why not so. To put it differently, you cannot tell people, "I want you to do this task for me or do that."

Um-Majed used a motivational method to get others to agree with her decisions:

"I motivate my faculty and staff to follow those decisions through incentive certificates that can help them in building their resumes." Um-Majed said persuasion is a tricky skill for leaders because even when leaders practice persuasion, followers still perceive it as a way of practicing authority. Um-Majed revealed,

This point is difficult because sometimes you can not convince your subordinates to follow the administrative decisions you make, especially if they see them as a display of authority. In this case, I resort to those who are higher than me in authority in the administration department to send an official letter of those administrative decisions.

Also, Um-Abdullah indicated that getting satisfaction from everyone in the department is a challenge.

I have a difficult personality when it comes to authority. For instance, if I have clear view and decision on a subject or a matter, then I share it with my staff and they go with my choice, I considered it a blessing; but if they don't agree with my choice, I try to give them a second choice. If I don't gain acceptance or agreement on the two options, I don't look for approval, because you cannot satisfy everyone. In other words, seeking satisfaction from everyone is a difficult task. I



give two options and most of the time, I choose what is in the best interest for the faculty members and students. I won't bluff and tell you that I follow this method with students because when it comes to them, I have a clear view of everything that benefits them, but I follow this method with members of the faculty because they are mostly older than me and hearing from them seems to be a sign of respect and appreciation.

Um-Abdullah believed she knew what was good for the department and the students. Thus, she did not wait for an approval from everyone in the department regarding the decisions she made. Again, "seeking satisfaction from everyone is a difficult task."

### *Conceptualization and Foresight*

Participants responded to the question "What is your vision of the future of your department? Where does this vision come from?" to test their level of conceptualization and foresight. Um-Majed and Um-Abdullah had similar visions of their departments. They each declared that although their departments are critical, many have tried closing the department of history and Qur'anic recitations. Um-Majed illustrated that the outcomes of the department of Qur'anic recitations are outstanding and required by the job market. But still others found the department unnecessary anymore.

Many have tried to close this department and division, perhaps not in our university particularly, because they see the Qur'anic Recitations division is not necessary anymore and that students are not obliged to memorize the Quran and take the four general required courses, as that is religious division that isn't compatible with the job market. However, statistics showed that graduates of this section are successful and greatly needed in the job market. I see the future of this major and division as booming and desirable in the future and the job market.

Um-Abdullah also had a clear vision of the history department and its direction:

The sad thing for this department is that next year or the year after, it will get shut down because there are sufficient numbers of graduates from this department and limited job vacancies. Also, the number of equipped graduates exceeds the needs of society and that is why they want to shut it down. Our history requires a lifetime of learning, filled with culture and wonders. In fact, our Islamic history has millions of civilizations and things to learn. No matter how much we evolve,

our Islam and the history of the Islamic state are a source of pride for the societies to learn from and we can benefit from the rich experiences of many before us.

The vision of Abu-Faris for his department seemed obvious. He recognized the improvements that have been made recently in the department, understood the current situation, and had foresight about what to expect will happen in the future of the computer-technology department.

In the department, there was a diploma and two majors only in technical support and networks; but over time, the major in the diploma extended to include network systems and multiple media, and also, we started to offer a bachelor's degree in networks. The department has expanded to include multiple options for students and the rate of acceptance became more thorough in contrast to the past, when we would accept anyone. We have become more accurate in choosing the best students because we want to provide a master's degree in the college in the future. Thus, things are moving in the right direction and the situation will become better, especially now that technical education has become the direction of every country. Our government has been supporting technical and vocational training because I expect prosperity in the coming periods. The situation is now excellent and will become increasingly better.

Abu-Omar's conceptualization of the telecom-technology department was evident. His study in Ireland has affected his vision of the expected role of a university. Abu-Omar not only determined the goal, which is to see the department serve the entire community, but he has worked to achieve his goal.

We are a government sector and we have been hearing about the topic of privatization, which means you have to specify or assign local people from inside the college. My vision is that I see my services belong to the outside community as much as I can, and this is the goal I am working on: that I move from local administration to an administration serving the entire region and reaching out to other communities outside of the local one. One reason I was preoccupied with this vision is my conviction since the days of my studies abroad in Ireland, where I witnessed that the role of colleges in Ireland is not local, only targeting students, but also makes many contributions and initiatives to society. Thus, that was the spark and the beginning of this vision.

Also, Um-Heba determined the needs of the department and created her vision of the biology department. She reported,

My vision is first, to have human resources from Saudi citizens. Second, there should be graduate studies and scientific research. Third, attention should be given to research laboratories. This vision accrues from the notion that these things are unavailable and do not exist.

Consistently, Um-Heba demonstrated that a university is not like a school. It is a place of scientific research, which needs increasing development and attention.

### *Stewardship*

Participants implemented successful ideas that made their departments more effective. They took initiatives help their department reach higher levels of performance. For example, Um-Sara implemented some regulations that improved the department of mathematics, even if those rules seem strict. Um-Sara sought to provide continuing support and feedback to the faculty, which in turn, positively impacted their practice and the students' success.

During the 3 years of my leadership so far, I improved the academic levels of students and began to learn about first-year students myself, working to know their levels for the following year. After that, I harvested the fruits of my labor in that they were called the best class of students so far. Also, I set rules and regulations for exams in the department. For example, I had a member of the faculty create exams using the objective method of multiple choice, which is not appropriate for mathematics. The majority of the faculty depend on luck and end up with a number of students who need their grades adjusted and improved, which they do because the faculty fear students' complaints. Another example: a student may submit empty test papers requiring taking a retest. Accordingly, I set rules and regulations that may not be in my authority, but I want my department to be better. Therefore, I put a limit on the use of multiple-choice questions on the test not to exceed 25% because students were weak in writing. I also encouraged teachers to use other types of questions, despite students' reluctance to use this method, which is important in improving their levels. No matter how strict these controls, rules, and regulations, they benefited a new order, which received the approval of the vice dean and helped amend the level of the department.

Continuously, Um-Sara holds herself accountable for the outcomes of the department.

She feels responsible for the learning goals, and whether students actually learn.

Mostly, I rely on observation and advice. For example. I have noticed that one member of the department had a stack of low-level or failing students; therefore, I

advised and encouraged her to unify the questions. I did not let the fact that I am not the teacher of this course or one who knows the method of teaching the course to stop me; nonetheless, I gave feedback. If she refuses my observation and feedback, I try to find a solution with her. In fact, I have a professor whose students passed a test even though I am aware of their level, which is lower than that. I asked the professor about the reasons for their success and she told me that she gave her students the same test model in the retest if they did not succeed the first time. With understanding, I declined her method and technique and advised her to use the method of extra/bonus grades through research assignments, which she did not prefer due to students' lack of proper English usage. Instead, she let them pass, but I refused and advised her to give them office hours to provide additional explanatory references such as YouTube videos to help them understand and pass the exams on their own, with effort, instead of passing them without competency.

Um-Mohamed focused her energy on creating an online magazine for the department, which empowers the students and the faculty to present their work and make it visible and accessible to everyone.

When I started leading the department, I wanted to establish a magazine and I expressed my wish to members of the department to create a website where I can publish the plans of my students, but they did not want to cooperate with me. And because I know this will benefit the students, alumni, faculty, and the department as a whole, I did not give up. I advised them but they did not listen, and I couldn't force them to do this task because, you know, it's not required. Thus, I plan to remedy this by choosing unexpected activities to surprise them every semester. This semester, which is the last for me to teach, as it was one of the goals that I set up for me to complete before the end of my presidency of the department to create an electronic magazine, plans and procedures for the master's and research students, and to publish them all on the site. Thus, I have commissioned the students enrolled in the diploma program to help set up this e-magazine by collaborating with each other. I had three class divisions that I assigned this work and each division has to set up the magazine; the one with the best magazine design will get the highest score. So I divided each division into groups so they could distribute the tasks among themselves: a group will be responsible for the magazine, a group will do the research, and a group will watch YouTube videos that relate to education so we can perform studies related to it and know its purpose.

Further, Um-Heba is willing to share any useful materials with students and followers, so the department becomes more productive and successful.

My experience from the scientific side and the research side requires me to look to the interest of others. So, when we sit with the students alone in an activity, we

have many suggestions for any proposals or ideas. I have a book named *Science Intelligence* and publish it to share with students and members as a training and guiding tool. Similarly, I share anything I owned from research and scientific experience, books, or anything.

Um-Heba established a biology library of not only books, but its goal was to become a destination for extra books at home that people could donate. She wanted to create a welcoming environment that brought people together and gave them space to engage in formal and informal conversations.

### *Commitment to the Growth of People*

Participants were asked about the methods that show their caring about their followers' growth. To provide the appropriate support to grow others, it is important first to understand their strengths, weaknesses, and potential. This is Abu-Omar's opinion about the commitment of the growth of others:

At this point, the leader must be knowledgeable and fully aware of the potential of each person in the administration. In other words, if I know my employees' potentials, level of knowledge, strengths, weaknesses, and fields of creativity, I can design the proper development and training courses for each person, which could lead them to meet the goals of the department. Thus, reaching their goals and potential can benefit the department because in the end, this administration and department are not an individual effort, which is the reason I need to develop them on some occasions more than I develop myself. In this way, we need to understand them from the beginning, until we know their potential and how to work with them and develop them in the right way.

The majority of participants raised the issue of professional-development activities as the best way to develop others. Those activities—workshops, trainings, and conferences—seem insufficient in number. Um-Abdullah shared,

I try to develop the department through training courses, even though I can tell you frankly that we have a lack of those type of courses in our university. Therefore, I try my best to get my staff to access training courses like these even when they are in another city, and try to maximize the number of people from my staff who can attend sessions to improve our work environment, because we can't stay on the same level, lacking development or change for a long time, but we must improve from time to time. These types of courses for improvement or

development should not be only on the curriculum, but also possibly on teaching methods.

Participating in professional-development activities depends on others' willingness and desires. This is what Um-Mohamed witnessed as department chair. Um-Mohamed openly reported,

I search for any training sessions that offer development for faculty members. But if a person does not want to develop and improve him/herself, it won't happen. In fact, a small percentage, like 2%, in my department want to develop themselves, and the rest they do not want to participate to be an associate professor by themselves. Here, we have the right concept but people only seek improvement to get a higher career rank and do not think of participation and working in the department because all their concern is how to reach the rank of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. However, in the department I have no participation in development, but when they found out that rank takes into account personal development, achievements, and community service, they developed and took part in development in one semester in hopes of reaching a higher rank and getting a promotion.

Also, Um-Abdullah indicated that, although historical sites are all over Saudi Arabia, the school lacks historical activities that teach about Saudi civilization.

As for our department, there is a shortage from official bodies of activities, training programs, and courses that show interest in this matter, even though our country is filled with historical sites and places imprinted with our cultural and religious history that can be seen on field trips, which we lack. Although recently, students who came back from studying abroad have shown interest in our country's history and have discussed their wish to explore that side but were shutdown in that further discussion was closed.

Participants recognized the importance of developing others because, ultimately, development leads to the growth of the entire department. They agreed that engaging in professional-development activities is an effective method to improve others personally and professionally. The lack of those activities is a critical issue they face in their departments.

### *Building Community*

Participants shared effective practices that spread the spirit of work at their departments. Some participants believed that faculty and staff only care about getting their required tasks done, despite the presence of a culture of collaboration. Om-Yasser and Abu-Omar believed that appreciation and praise are helpful in creating a community among followers. Abu-Omar indicated that followers are willing to do difficult work just so administrators will be nice to them and praise them. Om-Yasser also agreed that “it is important to appreciate their effort, which will lead to encouraging the rest of the educational staff.” Um-Mohamed used an emotionally effective idea that helped her gain the hearts of others, which in turn, taught others that spreading love among people comes before anything else.

The first work I did after I started working in the department is, I made folders for our first meeting where I put in front of each person a bouquet of flowers. The purpose of this gesture was not to persuade them to work with me, but my goal was to spread the spirit of love because I love those things that show the meanings of roses according to their colors: white is for purity and red is for love. I chose red to express love and sent a message that I love them and I am here for them. Thus, if you begin like this, it will help them appreciate you as a new leader who took this position to serve them and the department not for the sake of the chair and position title, but to develop the department. I tried to make this gesture to help me win people to my side, as I already suffer from faculty members who don’t appreciate management, meetings, and initiatives, and now I found them slowly approaching after I showed them love. I realized that love comes before work and any achievement, if there is love, there is work and performance. Therefore, it was my role to plant the seed of love before I asked them to work with me.

Abu-Ali believed that providing financial reward is a helpful strategy to encourage others to work. Abu-Ali reported that building community can happen “through incentives to stimulate and encourage healthy competition among them, especially if there is a surplus of hours that need to be completed.” Abu-Yousef values openness among colleagues. He believed that justice should be practiced in the

workplace. Being able to express opinions, participate in decision making, and easily communicate with each other creates a welcoming environment where everyone wants to work.

I encourage them by cooperating with them, making them feel that I am with them, and that we are working together as a team, and involving them in the decision-making process through committees as a gesture of respect of them, of the work, and of scientific opinion. There is a positive atmosphere for all that allows members to participate and provide opinions or recommendations. When our colleagues see practices in the workplace that show justice, respect for specialization, scientific opinion, and colleagues in general, it encourages productivity.

Um-Heba also shared building community value by saying,

We as a department must agree that we work as one unit which is something that always remind them of. Similarly, if we have a work and activity in the department I don't point to with a certain name, but in the name of the department.

In contrast, some participants, such as Om-Sara, figured out that the real motivation of faculty and staff to work is simply to get some exchange of personal interest.

The system here in the college is knowing your duties and what not. What I mean is that they only do their assigned tasks as their limited duty and other than that, they do not want to be assigned extra tasks. In other words, they do not have the spirit of cooperation in work and If they cooperate, it is from the angle of mutual interest. For example, if you do something for me work, I will return the favor and do something in exchange.

Participants had different experiences in ways to build community in their departments. They shared some effective strategies that helped them spread the spirit of work among followers. Other participants shared the challenges they have faced when encouraging others to work. They found a lack of willingness to cooperate with others and involve themselves in the department community.



### *Area of Strengths*

Participants talked about the top three characteristics they considered to be areas of strengths. Based on their answers to this question, three characteristics emerged as of major importance. The highest ranked characteristic that appeared in participants' transcripts was healing, followed by building community, and vision. Figure 1 shows the rank-order of the greatest common areas of strengths.



*Figure 3.* The greatest common areas of strengths.

*Healing.* Most participants found healing to be the area of greatest strength. Abu-Omar stated, “finding solutions (healing) is one of the characteristics I practice most often. I am a firm believer that for every problem there is a solution.” Um-Yasser shared the same thought, “I believe finding solutions is a necessary characteristic because it is important as a leader to solve the problem after hearing them.”

*Building community.* The second ranked area of strength among other traits was building community. Abu-Faris appreciated working as a team:

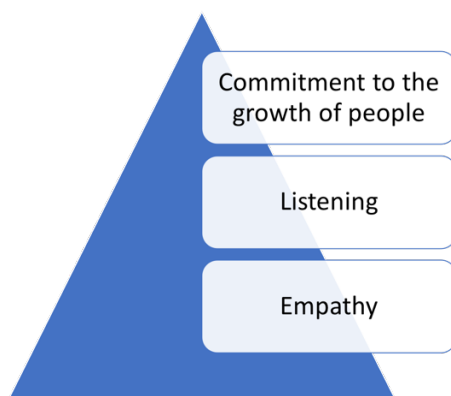
One of the characteristics I have is encouraging the spirit of working as a team as I do not love to credit work and effort to myself, but give credit to them. I refer the efforts of colleagues to the vice president.

Um-Majed also found that building community and spreading the spirit of work is one of the practices she does in the department: “spreading the spirit of work between followers is something I implement in my department where we have all worked with each other to reach our goal and objectives together instead of through personal effort.”

*Vision.* The third characteristic most practiced by participants is vision. Abu-Yousef stated: “I think I am good at vision. My vision is optimistic, and it involves future development to take the service forward.” Also, Abu-Ali reported, “my vision is clear so that all team members know my way of thinking and my vision, which is to achieve the best.”

#### *Area of Improvement*

The last extracted subtheme from the first major theme is *area of improvement*. Through participants’ transcripts, three top areas of improvement emerged. The top three characteristics in which participants need to improve are empathy, listening, and commitment to the development of people. Figure 2 shows the rank-order of the greatest common areas of needed improvement.



*Figure 4.* The greatest common areas of improvement.

*Empathy.* the most challenging characteristic participants face is empathy. Some participants believed they are too empathetic, which has a negative direct impact on their decisions. Still others perceived their personalities as a tough and strict; thus, they need to learn how to use empathy in a proper way. For example, Om-Yasser struggles with being too empathetic. She stated, “the characteristic that I feel that I need to control is my empathy. I feel that I am too empathetic, which often has an impact on my mood and my decisions.” Also, Abo-Yousef expressed needing to rethink the way he uses empathy:

Sympathy, because I am a person who is sympathetic to everyone socially, affects my work. It is a characteristic in my personality that might be required as a leadership characteristic, but sometimes people may see that sympathy affects making decisions. I sympathize with colleagues, students, and everyone, which is something I need to review.

In contrast, some participants believed they needed to be more empathetic and to give more attention to their feelings when making decisions. Um-Abdullah revealed, “I am a practical person. I think I need to learn how to use my emotions when making decisions because they are also important, too.” Furthermore, Um-Heba expressed needing to balance between flexibility and toughness: “I want to be an empathetic because sometimes I’m tough. I need to be flexible.”

*Listening.* the second highest area that participants have a difficulty applying is listening. Um-Abdullah recognized that listening is a critical trait for a leader that challenges her:

listening is one that I see does not exist in my qualities as a leader and a department head, which is a problem that I am not a good listener, which I am trying to be, but it is very difficult to apply.

Additionally, Um-Mohamed shared that listening is an area to which she needs to pay more attention: “and the things that I need to work on improving are listening to others.”

*Commitment to the growth of people.* The third ranked area of improvement is commitment to the growth and development of people. Some participants found that commitment to the growth of people requires a leader to engage in continuous arguing with higher administration to convince them to provide more learning for faculty. Abu-Omar struggles with this commitment:

Commitment to the growth of people is another characteristic I need to develop in myself because the commitment to the growth of others sometimes needs a leader who argues and negotiates in issues and matters for the department and staff until we get or win them. This form of negotiation and arguing with the administration is something I do not like to get involved in because it entails much back and forth discussion, which is the point that I need to evolve myself in, so I can sit in those meeting and demand what is right for my department.

Um-Mohamed clearly declared that if participants are not willing to participate in professional development and do not want to develop themselves, a leader can do nothing about that. The main motivation for her colleagues to engage in professional activities is to gain a tangible reward such as advancing their career. Otherwise, only a few have an internal desire to improve their professional skills. Um-Mohamed stated,

If a person does not want to develop and improve him/herself, it won't happen. In fact, there is a small percentage, like 2% in my department, that want to develop her/himself, and the rest they do not want to participate to become an associate professor. Here, we have the right concept, but people are only seeking this improvement to get a higher career rank and do not think of it from the viewpoint of participation and working in the department because all their concern is how to reach the rank of assistant professor, associate professor, and professor.

### *Third Theme: Service*

To answer the third research question, To what degree do higher education department chairs value service and define themselves as servants first, then as leaders?, service is the major theme identified and discussed by study participants. Three subthemes emerged under the major theme, based on the most common topics that arose

in participants' transcripts: service provided, strategies for department improvement, and the followers first, then leaders.

### *Service Provided*

Service provided is one of the areas raised by participants when talking about the value of service. Participants shared various types of service they provide for their department. The main focus for some participants is students, so they provide service directly to students. Others believed that service should be provided for the entire department for it to thrive. For instance, Abu-Omar is willing to provide whatever is necessary to help his department reach higher levels of performance.

The term service in my department is how to give back, to help them and stand with them. I consider services to be a sacrifice offered from a person; therefore, I am willing to offer my time, effort, and finances for the sake of my administration and my followers in the administration.

Um-Sara worked hard to see the department of mathematics become distinctive because the success of the department is a success for every individual in it.

I try as best I can to do everything, even if it is not in my duties, because it is in the interest of the department to serve and improve the image of it such as activities, because I think that can we do the activity in the best way possible for the sake of the name and picture of the department section, which encourages a spirit of competition in them.

Abu-Yousef summarized that his service orientation is to help the students achieve their academic goals and to help the faculty to be more productive and effective.

My service is in helping students achieve their goals. My goal is to facilitate the work and help them achieve their goals; students achieve their goals to achieve educational attainment, and colleagues achieve their goals as members of the faculty of teaching in scientific research, teaching, and production.

The service provided by Abu-Ali is obviously for the benefit of the students and the members of the department. He explained his goal is

to give the best advanced curriculum that is useful for the labor market. For assigning my faculty staff, I choose the best and most efficient in delivering lectures, such that this choice of teaching staff is not random, so they are able to serve students on the best level of learning, as well as ensure the rights of students to have their needs met and keep them from being lost, helping them solve the problems and difficulties that they might face, empathize, and understand their circumstances that might prevent them from attending classes or completing their education.

Um-Abdullah distinguished between service and demands, saying, “Services and demands vary here and you have to separate the services in which you can be of aid from other services that need to be the delayed or directed to the right and proper place.” Um-Abdullah directed services to students, describing herself as a public servant of students: “I am like a public service provider and any service or help that I can offer to students, I consider this place and the department is here to serve the student and I am a guest hired here.” Um-Abdullah also provided

Anything that is useful to them from all level, or anything I can do and see is in their interest, I do not hesitate to work for a second for the sake of the students and members of the faculty, as long as it is it benefits them all but not for only an individual.

Although the service provided varies from one participant to another, they all wish to see their departments be as effective as possible. Thus, they are willing to provide any kind of service that improves their departments and helps students.

### *Strategies for Department Improvement*

When participants shared the services provided to their departments, they also shared some strategies they used to help improve their departments. Participants used various methods to measure students’ development and the departments as a whole. Methods included visiting other departments, analyzing students’ outcomes, observation, and opening communication with students and members of a department. Um-Yasser and

Abu-Omar visit other departments to evaluate their own performance compared with others. Um-Yasser stated,

The other way to improve the department is through the conclusion of an evaluation and comparison process undertaken by visiting other departments and universities to see if they have more equipment, sophisticated laboratories, and large libraries. As a result, I try to find a remedy for this shortage in my department by making adjustments, creating a library, and establishing a language lab.

Abu-Omar also valued the idea of comparing his department with others to identify areas needing improvement.

We have a specific form for the actual necessities we need, but the method I use is that I always try to see how other departments and colleges in the same department and in other universities are operating and offering services. Accordingly, I can change existing needs and routine requirements that are repeated frequently for longer periods, which we need to develop to offer the best.

Other strategy used to improve departments is through analyzing students' outcomes. Um-Abdullah and Um-Sara relied on students' outcomes to discern problems and challenges facing the department in order to address them. Um-Abdullah indicated that improving the department "could be through results such as the number of students who failed an exam. We hold a meeting so we can know the reason behind this failing ratio and try to find the source of the issue." Um-Sara also found that outcomes are as an effective method to evaluate the performance of students and faculty.

I know what needs to be improved from observation to make a change. For example, when I found out the level of students was weak and did not produce anything extracurricular, I concluded that there was a defect. Thus, I asked the students about the faculty teaching those courses where they have a low level of competency and productivity. After finding out the name and the style of the faculty member, I tried to point out the issue to her in meetings without naming or pointing the finger at this professor.

Other participants, such as Abu-Ali, Abu-Yousef, and Um-Yasser believed that opening communication with students and department members and listening to them is a

useful strategy that helps determine the needs of the department. Abu-Ali illustrated that department improvement can be accomplished.

For instance, when a problem occurs, it presents its solutions along with it. I also take proactive steps through means of regulations and rules that prevent them from happening through my vision and understanding of students and members and their interest in preventing the occurrence in the future.

Abu-Yousef agreed with the importance of listening to others to be aware of the issues and needs of a department. He stated, “when I go on departmental rounds or listen to students and colleagues, I examine things with my experience and take my time and do not rush into the decision.” Additionally, Um-Majed used an effective idea that facilitates communication between a department chair and others:

We have set up a box for suggestions and complaints in the department for those who want to put what they want. Furthermore, through the use of administrative communication, each member of the teaching faculty and staff send their complaint directly to the head of the department or the dean or the vice president.

Participants employed a variety of methods to determine the needs of their departments in order to meet them. Those methods included observation, analyzing students’ outcomes, and communicating and listening to others.

#### *Followers First, Then Leaders*

Participants had varying perspectives about putting followers ahead of their own needs. Some believed that meeting others’ needs first and seeking to answer their interests is a critical factor for any leader. Other participants thought that putting others’ needs first is important as long as it doesn’t harm their own interests. Still others believed that meeting the needs of followers and the needs of leaders are complementary to each other. They walk on the same line or are parallel to each other.

Um-Majed believed that looking at others’ needs makes a department successful: “putting my followers’ needs and concerns before my own needs is evidence of my total



supervision of the department and successful leadership. This strategy proves successful leadership.” Um-Mohamed feels proud of herself when she works for others’ needs: “I enjoy and am proud of putting others’ need first without thinking of myself and I have never had a bad feeling about it; on the contrary, it gives me more motivation and greater self-esteem.”

Abu-Omar believed strongly in the importance of serving others and working on their concerns. When assigned as department chair, he questioned himself about the real benefit of being a leader: is it a personal or a departmental achievement? Abu-Omar stated,

This is one of the things that was difficult for me when I was hired as the head of the department. I thought a great deal about who is the beneficiary of this goal: is it the management or is it me personally? And the achievements in the department: are they personal or for the employees? Because an employee needs to achieve a great deal, he benefits from it. Sometimes, the achievement is personal and at other times, it is an administrative one. Most times, achievements are necessary to show they represent the members and employees of the administration. I am proud to put any employees in my administration at the front and kindly before me and to be better than me; this is a source of pride.

In contrast, some participants, such as Um-Abdullah, indicated that the concept of putting followers first, then leaders, does not exist in Saudi society. Um-Abdullah clearly illustrated that shifting from practicing authority to putting others before the leaders themselves is not an easy thing to adapt to:

It is a difficult thing that needs practice in our society, due to general ideas about the heads of departments, conceptualized as the notion that I am as a leader and I need to be at the center of authority on all subjects and matters when it comes to decisions making. Also, the fact that I should put myself last while my followers are first strips the meaning of authority and leadership, which is not applied in our society, but it could be when it comes to the term servant leadership.

Another participant had no issue with the idea of meeting the needs of others before themselves as long as it had no negative impact or harm to them. Um-Sara had no

issue with “putting their needs first because I know it won't hurt me; so, why not attend to their needs and help them?” Also, Abu-Yousef had a vision about putting himself second, as he stated,

This can be done if there is no harm. There is an old rule. According to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), “There should be neither harming nor reciprocating harm.” Similarly, I have no objection to putting myself second to my followers in anything that does not cause harm to me. If the question is from the perspective of altruism, to put my colleagues and department first and it does not cause any harm on me, I prefer this method. Especially if it has a general benefit for the department, college, and university, then I will put myself last. However, if putting myself second has a harmful impact or damage to me personally, such as to my financial status, to my workflow, or any kind of damage, I am sure I will take care of this matter and I will prevent things that cause any harm either to me or the rest.

Abu-Ali had a unique analysis of putting people's needs as the first priority. He believed this can vary among leaders who were assigned based on their career scale and the one who was chosen by others:

Honestly, the person in authority works to serve others in a leadership position, whether he deserved an administrative promotion or was chosen as a candidate by people, where they chose someone well who will fulfill their wishes and ambitions in this position. However, if the leader has deserved this position through the academic career scale, here you find the differences in giving. Not everyone who is a leader is a positive one necessarily because they might be a negative leader due to their view of the concept of management and leadership, the privileges he obtained by being a leader, and that others need and seek him constantly.

Being a leader does not mean being an effective one. A leadership position could be given to someone who does not deserve this role. This is what Abu-Ali reported when he talked about putting followers first, then leaders. He concluded “the true essence of prominence and leadership is the ability to perform this service and create leaders after you who are on the same level.”

#### *Fourth Theme: Authority and Power*

To answer the fourth research question of the study, “How do higher education department chairs explain their practice of authority and power?” a major theme emerged from participant interviews of authority and power. Four subthemes arose according to the most common topics discussed by participants: relying on authority to influence, practicing authority while being humble, power derived from personal qualities, and moral and formal authority.

##### *Relying on Authority to Influence*

All participants demonstrated that authority is an effective tool to influence, as it helps accomplish tasks much more easily than other methods. Participants rely on authority when practicing leadership because they believe authority has a major role in accomplishing goals. Abu-Ali revealed that using authority is the only method that works in Arab societies:

Absolutely I rely on my authority. Arab societies do not listen to those who don't have power or authority; therefore, I draw my strength often from my authority and many of the things that I offer in the development or creativity in the place where I work clash with the supreme authorities in the university. Thus, I learned from these practices that authority has the supreme word no matter if you are leader, a thinker, or a creator. You will not succeed or accomplish goals in your field except through the authority and approval of the supreme authority to achieve your goal.

Um-Majed uses her authority to influence others, as people who are manipulators can be controlled only by practicing power over them:

Sometimes in some situations, you need to use the power of authority to influence others and to run the department smoothly. To put it differently, you might have an evasive teacher that needs to complete her work and meet a deadline and, in this case, you use your authority with her in a form of a letter or inquiry. In some ways we need to use the power of authority to influence others, as the situation requires, because many of them have a negative effect.

Authority is important especially when addressing rebelliousness. Um-Yasser explained her ways of using authority and power.

I have to use authority if people are rebellious and don't do their work. In this case, you have to be strong and use your authority over them. Authority has a role, but you have to use it moderately and it may be a necessary tool to use with people who are not doing their work.

Abu-Faris illustrated that practicing authority depends on one's type of personality. Some people work only through orders, as Abu-Ali explained:

Using authority to influence people depends on the people because they differ from each other. Some people's personalities or colleagues depend on absolute power and others depend on humanitarian work and friendships outside of the work environment. Dealing with these friendships can be easy because he is a friend whereas some love authority, power, and order.

When talking about relying on authority to influence, Abu-Omar believed that authority and wisdom are two critical factors in influence as long as they are balanced properly.

There are administrations and departments that are forced and blinded to use authority as the controlling element whereas in other administrations, wisdom is the form of control. If we put authority in one hand and wisdom in the other hand, then it is necessary to balance the times when we need authority and the times we need wisdom.

Participants employed authority when influencing others. They believed that authority has a major role in facilitating the work and executing most of their objectives and goals quickly. In Arab communities, some people only accomplish their tasks through orders and demands. Thus, practicing power over them is indispensable.

#### *Practicing Authority While Being Humble*

Participants offered their perspectives about practicing authority while being humble. A majority believed no contradiction exists between authority and humility. Um-Mohamed explained that more humble leaders are, the more authority they gain.

It is a matter of balance. Humility and power have nothing to do with being human; it is in one's qualities, possessions, actions, and performance: all of these are authority, power, and humility. The humbler you are, the more authoritative you can be is my idea. To put it differently, the more modest you can be, the more your authority, your personality, and motivation emerge. You can not simply demand something of people and expect them to answer and listen.

Um-Abdullah shared the same thought saying,

Authority doesn't interfere with humility. I deal with the people at work with moral ethics and I only use my authority at work as a strategy to manage things. My compassion, my morality and my humanity are supposed to be the method to use to deal with people.

Abu-Faris explained how one can employ authority and humility at the same time.

Some leaders use unlimited authority that destroys relationships with others, which in turns, affects their humility:

The authority to which I am referring is not the power that destroys others but the authority which means that everything passes through me. I do not mean executive authority or authority of any other style of leadership. Humility is meeting the needs of colleagues and through the flow of the work, which involves them being flexible with the fact that the head of the department who meets their needs has the authority and at the same time is modest. The subject depends on a balance between the two parties and the fact that the second party is an assistant to the head of the department, who is a modest person. Sometimes a leader gets outside his humility and uses authority with no complacency. This is the danger.

Abu-Yousef spoke from his experience studying in the United States, as he observed that the most successful scholars are those who are humble:

I see no contradiction between these. I always derive from our culture and our religion in the term humility in the Hadith "one who displays humbleness towards another seeking the pleasure of Allah, Allah exalts him in rank." As I have witnessed in the scholars with whom I studied in America, if a scholar gains more knowledge, he becomes humbler. In fact, the power of authority could be shown as evident in the way you are humble, speak well to others, the way you take what you need and facilitate the workflow smoothly and with an eye to the future. Authority does not contradict the existence of humility in addressing colleagues and students; we find justice in treating others well, in speaking softly, and in speaking well about everyone. These, are more positive than that leader being authoritarian and strict without modesty. I think humility comes with power, which has a positive impact that I witnessed personally.

In addition, Um-Heba added that authority can end by ending the leadership position, but morals last forever:

Humility is a principle and the origin of authority because authority is temporary; it exists today but tomorrow it won't. Authority is an assigned position, not an honorary one, and not all people aspire and love to be an authority figure, because it is a responsibility we are held accountable for and it is a period where we perform service. Therefore, humility is the character that distinguishes the leader from people in general. Humility earns people's love and respect for the leader, which is a blessing.

Being humble has nothing to do with practicing authority. They are complementary, as both are needed to maintain the position of department chair. Abu-Omar stated, "humility is the base that things are built on and if the basis is humility and power is based on it, then we can combine the two." Effective leaders are those who run their departments with moral principles, and especially humility.

#### *Formal and Moral Authority*

When participants distinguished between formal and moral authority, they shared important perspectives. Some participants viewed formal authority as different from moral authority. Formal authority relies on using the power of one's position to give orders, whereas moral authority relies on ethical attitudes. Um-Mohamed and Abu-Yousef perceived formal authority and moral authority as two styles of applying power. They had the same insight that in moral authority, the person is responsible for watching his/her behaviors and adjusting them based on their ethics and values. Um-Mohamed stated,

Moral authority is only observed by ALLAH, the sergeant, and you are to do it from ground of moral duties and as the Qur'anic verse that states "If you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from around you." Official authority or administrative authority is the power in which you are held accountable for the decisions you make. Moral authority is between you and your Lord whereas official authority is between you and human beings where you are

directly held accountable and responsible for your delays, procrastination, lack of commitment, and inefficiency.

Abu-Yousef said that moral authority can be applied based on personalities, culture, and education:

Official authority is issued through the system and has mechanisms and controls and complies with human rights and action. I believe that moral authority differs from formal authority as it is a personal issue, controlled by the human him/herself. To put it differently, people are responsible for their morality with others and in the use of their authority, which depends on personality, culture, and education.

Um-Heba and Um-Abdullah looked at the difference between formal authority and moral authority, suggesting that formal authority lacks the ability to express opinions and discuss decisions, but moral authority welcomes appreciation and the sharing of ideas and opinions. Um-Abdullah said,

There is a big difference between the two and the better one is the moral one, because by virtue, everything can be appreciated where you can discuss and accept opinions. Moral authority is soft, polite, and ethical and has no similarity to formal authority.

Um-Heba shared,

Both are a management styles, but moral authority is characterized by qualities such as humility and encouragement of team spirit, which are considered the attributes of successful leaders and successful authority. However, official authority is the authority of the administration, mandating what to do and don't do at work and possibly lacks the choice to give one's opinion.

In contrast, a group of participants believed the two types of authority are similar, correlate, and can be complementary to each other. Abu-Omar and Um-Majed illustrated that if a leader is unethical, that leader can never be successful. Abu-Omar explained,

Ethics is the foundation, and authority is used at times when it is needed. Personally, I do not think power or authority is separated from ethics because there is a problem with the concept of power in general; therefore, a leader who is devoid of morality, even if all other administrative qualities are applied to him/her, he/she is not a leader and will not attain the notion of leadership even if

he/she is assigned to this position. Moral authority and formal authority are complementary to each other.

Um-Majed demonstrated the relationship between formal and moral authority:

There is also a strong correlation between the two authorities, because if there is no moral authority, there is no official authority. Because of this correlation, many leaders remained in authority for a long time mostly because of the approval of others.

However, as Um-Mohamed viewed the difference between styles of authority, she also explained the way in which they are related:

Yes, there is a similarity between them because each completes the other. Formal authority does not exist without moral authority because if you do not have morals, you do not have authority. To put it differently, authority can exist, but it lacks morals, the sense of official authority is lost, and everything becomes permissible and corruption starts. A human is the observer of his/her own action and should practice a sense of moral authority on himself first, to be a person of formal authority.

Participants' perspectives regarding the similarity and difference between formal authority and moral authority differed. Some participants perceived them as two completely different styles whereas others identified them as related and complementary to each other.

#### *Power Derived From Personal Qualities*

When participants talked about authority and power, they linked this issue with the power gained through personal qualities without a leadership position. A majority of participants believed that one can have power without a leadership position. This can happen by embodying personal qualities, strengths, and expertise. Um-Yasser explained that a person can have authority,

if a person has social popularity and is loved by his/her peers. Sometimes, this person is not the chair of the department, but a member of the faculty or staff who has high popularity and is loved in the department. People tend to accept his/her opinion and her/his words more seriously than the head of the department because he/she is loved, and he/she affects them through his/her ethics and personality.



Abu-Ali also thought that one's qualities can engender power:

This happens through leadership positions gained from society, such as scientific or social classifications as the chief of a tribe, a scientist, or an intellect. Intellectual leaders succeed in gaining followers without a leadership position, which I see as a personal quality, such that an individual can have the power to influence others.

Um-Sara added that positivity, logic, and persuasion are critical factors that invite others to gather around them,

From the way a person speaks, her/his successes and personality. Moreover, when people are around this person, they feel that she/he is a positive, successful person. Her/his words are convincing, and interventions in topics or discussions are logical, rational and useful. People consult her/him and become interested in this person's opinion.

Abu-Faris analyzed the issue of having a power without a leadership position, and explained that expertise is a logical reason for that:

I expect this person is to have experience in certain areas; for instance, we have some colleagues who have strong experiences in a particular science, which forces people to be respect or consider him as the second head of the department or a secondary reference in the department.

Um-Mohamed explained that a person can be born with leadership qualities that enable him/her to influence others.

These are the attributes of the environment in which you grow up and the education to which you were exposed. For example, there is something called self-leadership and if you had those features since childhood, no one can doubt your ability to be a leader one day. I tell my students that leadership and authority are not the ones that give you power, but it emanates from yourself.

Based on participants' responses, a person can have a power without holding a leadership position if he/she is ethical and has a unique personality that brings people around him/her. For example, if a person, as Abu-Yousef stated, "is a moderate, balanced and unbiased person who shows his/her scientific opinion with respect for all, and has a strong presence," this person can be powerful without being a leader.

*Fifth Theme: Challenges in Applying Servant Leadership in Saudi Arabia*

The major theme that answered the last research question—What challenges do higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia face to change their formal authority and traditional leadership style to use moral authority and a servant-leadership style in leading others?—is *challenges in applying servant leadership in Saudi Arabia*. In responding to this question, participants discussed several topics, here considered to be subthemes: shifting from a traditional style to a servant-leadership style, potential risks and challenges, and servant leadership in Saudi culture.

*Shifting From a Traditional Style to a Servant-Leadership Style*

Participants expressed their opinion as to whether shifting from the traditional style to a servant-leadership style is easy or difficult. All participants stated that this transition is difficult and challenging. Participants shared a variety of insights and perceptions. For instance, Um-Majed said, “It is difficult to move from traditional leadership to servant leadership because when a human hears the word presidency or leadership, she/he links their thought to a formal authority and will let him/her exercise their powers when they want to.” Um-Abdullah shared that Saudi leaders exercise their authority in a negative manner. Thus, it is difficult for them to change the concept of authority to service and practice it. She explained,

It is not easy because we are used to the traditional form of leadership because since we were students, a leader issues everything. To move from this leadership style to servant leadership, where I put myself in the back and my follower in the front is considered a weakness, a characteristic of a leader who is unable to find solutions and make decisions. Thus, it leads people to disregard my values as a leader and this is the view of society, so it is difficult to abandon traditional leadership; however, it is not impossible to mix this style of leadership with the servant style.

Engaging in professional-development activities, such as attending workshops and training, is mandatory for the transition from the traditional style to the servant-leadership style, Abu-Ali, Abu-Faris, Abu-Yousef, and Um-Heba believed. For more clarification, Abu-Faris talked about the importance of attending such professional activities, especially in knowing that the concept of servant leadership is new in Saudi culture.

I expect that the transition should be done by attending courses to gain knowledge about the subject of servant leadership, and attend workshops on this aspect because sometimes if a person reads about this subject without attending workshops on this topic, he/she does not have the familiarity of the role servant leadership. Therefore, I think that the courses in development are important to move to the role of a servant leader.

Abu-Ali illustrated that ignorance is the greatest enemy of people, and they should overcome it by engaging in continuous development.

A man is his own enemy, especially in areas where he is ignorant. Therefore, he needs to learn to keep up with continuous development through leadership courses and study the psychological aspects of leadership so he understands the special premises and the general rule. If he is honest with himself and others, his influence will be stronger to convince people of his ideas.

Um-Mohamed and Um-Sara believed that if a person has no internal convictions about the importance of servant leadership and its effective results, she/he can never be a servant leader. Um-Mohamed stated,

The question or case here is, do I want to be a servant leader or an authoritarian leader? And are people happy with my authority style and look at me with respect? I am humbly assigned to this position whether I work or not and this is a characteristic in my personality that I won't change if I sense it is a good one. Even the authoritarian leader, if she/her believes in his/her own characteristic and likes the way she/he is doing work, I think she/he will not change it.

Um-Sara added that the traditional style is the dominant one, and leaders should be honest with themselves about the consequences of their current styles and the servant style to see the difference and to start considering using servant-leadership style.

Commonly, we view our style as servant leadership but in fact it is traditional leadership. Shifting from the traditional style of leadership to the style of servant leadership depends on personal conviction, which is not easy. A person has to change from within herself/himself if he/she wants to serve others and not deceive himself/herself that he/she is doing that, but the truth is the opposite.

Participants found that moving from the traditional style to the servant-leadership style is not easy. However, some factors can help to the transition smoother between those two styles, such as attending professional-development activities and enhancing internal conviction of the importance of this movement.

#### *Potential Challenges and Risks in Applying Servant Leadership*

Participants found that applying servant leadership can lead to some risks and challenges from students, faculty, or staff. Most reported that servant leadership can be interpreted incorrectly as a weakness in a leader who is no longer able to control the department. Seriousness and rigor are the only styles of leadership that effectively work with students and faculty; otherwise, colleagues and students will see slackness and negligence. Um-Sara stated,

The only method that works with the students in here is seriousness and firmness; otherwise, if they feel that you sympathize with them to offer help and service to them, they view it as a weakness in your personality and believe you are only empathizing with them to gain popularity and win their affection. They do not view this style as your way to develop the department. As for faculty members, I have no problem meeting all their needs.

Um-Abdullah agreed with this opinion, as she said using “servant leadership could lead to disrespect for decisions and authority where the nature of our society needs a tough person and a leader who holds the reins of things.” Um-Yasser added that formal authority is the most appropriate style for a group of people who like to be treated by authority.

Some of the people who are not committed to their work make it difficult for me to be a servant leader. In this case, the only style I have to use with them is the

strict authority style. The servant-leadership style is difficult to use with this class of people. I use only the traditional style of commands. But there is another class of people who follow easily and the servant style here is preferable.

Abu-Omar recognized the potential risks of applying servant leadership and recommended a helpful strategy that can help in reducing those risks. He believed that to avoid the view of weakness of this style, the change and the shift to the servant-leadership style should be gradual.

Gradual change is helpful because servant leadership may be misunderstood or misinterpreted as weak if the change is very rapid. If this concept of servant leadership as weakness spreads out, it will cause greater consequences than those due to the use of official authority. The change needs to be gradual as we address the possible effects and consequences of this change because it is dangerous to shift from the official-authority style of leadership to the moral-authority style of leadership. Thus, it is necessary for humans to change gradually so that everyone can understand that the strategic objectives are clear to all.

Other challenges that leaders can be faced resulting from the use of servant leadership, as Abu-Ali perceived, is that it could create enemies who misunderstand this style as a way of showing that a leader cares about others more than anyone else. Abu-Ali suggested being fully prepared for people's reactions to the new leadership method. Abu-Ali explained.

You might face competition from traditional leaders from similar institutions and departments in the way you manage your department using servant leadership. The existence of these two types of leadership will attract enemies and adversity that will clash with others just because you are a servant leader, which they might interpret as your way of trying to differentiate yourself from them and present yourself as superior to them. They will seek to make you fail, due to their envy; however, if I seek to spread this concept as a culture and a general concept that is a public social service, correcting their concepts may be a nuisance. Understanding these mentalities does not prevent us from excellence and being good leaders, but makes us cautious about this type of person by preparing the answers, trying to win them over as friends, and overcoming difficulties instead of remaining complacent about these obstacles.

Servant leadership can be misunderstood as the weakness of a leader. Participants believed that exercising formal authority and using the traditional style is the most

appropriate method of leadership that can be practiced with students and colleagues to avoid disrespect and the noncompliance of others. Additionally, it could be perceived as a way of showing off among leaders.

### *Servant Leadership in Saudi Culture*

Participants described their view of the fit or match of servant leadership to Saudi culture, and how it exists in some institutions. Abu-Omar explained that as servant leadership is effective in Eastern and Western countries, it is also an appropriate method to apply in Saudi Arabia. He also demonstrated that sometimes the system prevents leaders from being servants:

It is very appropriate because Saudi universities do not differ from other universities. I have studied and lived abroad, and I interacted with more than one university in the East, the West, and in Saudi Arabia. In the end, people are human beings, but sometimes the system rules the person to become a figure of official authority and implement traditional administration, which is most of the time a failed method, even if the leader has fooled people with his/her achievements that are not real, which he/she knows deep within himself/herself.

Abu-Ali strongly believed in the importance of using authority with Saudis because, as he stated, “Arab societies do not listen to those who don’t have power or authority.” He revealed that it is the time to educate leaders about the significance of providing service and to shift minds from the old style of leadership to the servant style.

Abu-Ali said,

We need this model of leadership in our society and we need to reinforce this model and spread awareness through programs that shed light on servant leadership in the community and highlight its role in society. Also, we can achieve this awareness by shedding light on all types of leaders at all levels to serve the community and draw an example of servant leadership in society to correct the concept of precedent that the commander is above the law who is difficult to reach and to communicate to for any request or service. To correct this concept, leadership needs to be reformulated in society by spreading the culture of the servant leader and correcting its concept to an honorary role rather than the traditional one.

Abu-Yousef highlighted that servant leadership can be more appropriate in one culture than another. Its applicability depends on the kind of people who work in the institution. Some culture needs a leader who uses authority, but this method might not work in another culture.

In some cases, servant leadership is mostly successful, but we cannot generalize it as suitable for every place in our Saudi community, which it may be influenced due to the nature of the work and the personalities with which the leader works; people come from diverse nationalities. To put it differently, the leadership might be successful according to their culture and the way they grew up because they might view this type of leadership as a kind of weakness and their authority figure as non-leader. Communities and cultures vary. Some communities need a leader to work successfully and to have the sense of an authority figure with strong personality; in another community implementing servant leadership would succeed brilliantly. I tend to believe that using a specific type of authority in our culture is influenced by the people you work with and the environment you're working in; mostly, servant leadership is successful with Saudis.

Um-Sara valued being a servant leader. At the beginning of her career, she experienced a conflict between her own values and how work was occurring in the department, which led her to go use authority, because this was the only way that worked with others. She shared,

Servant leadership is found in the Western world, but it does not exist here, which I hope they start to apply here but we do not know when. I feel it depends on the person's conviction and how much he/she likes to be a servant leader. Even if he/she likes to be that kind of leader, the only complication is that people do not encourage it and support it. Thus, this person ends up taking a different direction than everyone, which is what I felt at the beginning of my service as the head of department. I was heading against the current and ended up going with the current to seek peace of mind.

In addition, Abu-Faris revealed that the servant-leadership style is not applied in universities and colleges, although it is suitable and effective with colleagues and students. He shared a story that had a frustrating impact on him:

Servant leadership is quite suitable for universities. For example, when I was a student and went to the head of the department or academic supervisor to change the schedule, if I found him dictatorial, I didn't say anything that I wanted to

share or complain about, but I just took my request and left. In contrast, if the leader was a servant leadership and this type of leadership was implemented in our universities, then he/she was more flexible and servant to the students' needs or those of the staff.

Participant found that the servant-leadership style was not being applied at their institutions. They agreed that the results of this method are satisfactory, but it could be a risk at some universities, depending on the nature of the people and the system at those institutions. Some systems prevent a leader from being a servant and do not support this way of leading others.

### Summary

Study findings show the perspectives of Saudi higher educational leaders on their leadership practices in general, and on servant leadership specifically. Five main themes emerged that framed the narratives of participants of this study. Those major themes were experience of leadership, characteristics of servant leadership, service, authority and power, and challenges of servant leadership.

Men and women from different higher educational environments, departments, and cities in Saudi Arabia were interviewed to share their stories that reflect the reality of higher education leadership in Saudi Arabia. From participants' responses, servant leadership is a new and unknown term to Saudi leaders. They recognized the term "service" as a traditional and religious principle that Islam urges. Although a majority of the participants do not practice servant leadership due to a lack of leadership knowledge, they gained satisfaction from followers about their own leadership styles. Participants agreed with the effectiveness of this method and its potential for effective results in their departments.



When applying the characteristics of servant leadership by Saudi higher educational leaders, employing those characteristics differed among participants. Participants identified areas of strengths and needed improvements that help in testing the level of embodying servant leadership as a practical method. Empathy seemed to be the most challenging area that participants need to improve, as they are either too empathetic or too strict and serious. In contrast, healing was the main characteristic about which participants felt effective. They believed they have an ability to address others' problems and concerns and professionally heal them.

Participants were willing to provide any kind of service that improves their departments and helps students be successful. They used various methods to measure their departments' performance such as comparing it with other departments to figure out what needs to be improved, analyzing outcomes, and openly communicating with students and colleagues to be aware of what was occurring in the department. Most participants believed in the importance of meeting others' needs before their own, as long as they experienced no negative impact or harm to themselves. Still, some participants expressed that putting followers ahead of leaders was not easy and not practiced in their universities and colleges because it conflicts with the general understanding of leadership as a source of power.

According to participants' responses about practicing authority and power, they use their authority when practicing leadership because they believed that people in Arab societies do not listen to those who do not have power or authority. Some people only work when someone is practicing power over them, as they perceive working through *influence* and other flexible methods is a weakness in a leader. Participants believed that

being humble has nothing to do with practicing authority. Humility and practicing authority are complementary, as they need to walk through the same line. Participants also differentiated between formal and moral authority, as they reflected that a person can have power without holding a leadership position if the person is ethical and has a unique personality that attracts people.

Servant leadership can be misunderstood as weakness in a leader. Participants believed that exercising formal authority and the traditional style of leadership is most appropriate to practice with students and colleagues in Saudi universities to avoid disrespect and the noncompliance of others. However, participants clearly agreed that servant leadership is a helpful style and they wish to apply it as a practical leadership style in their institutions.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to gain the perceptions of higher education department chairs on servant leadership in Saudi Arabia as a leadership style. It also aimed to explore the level of the implementation of servant-leadership characteristics by Saudi department chairs. In addition, the study determined their ways of using and practicing authority and power in leading others.

A qualitative research method was used to fulfill the purpose of this study and to answer the research questions that guided and framed this research. Ten higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia participated in this study by sharing their voices regarding their leadership practices at their departments at various universities and colleges. Participants' narratives reflected their perceptions of servant leadership as a leadership model and whether it is being applied at higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. Their answers to the research questions clarified how department chairs viewed and perceived authority and power as significant factors in leading others. In addition, by analyzing the shared stories about each attribute of servant leadership, the extent of the application of the 10 characteristics of servant leadership was also defined.

Participants were purposely selected based on differences in their educational environments. Men and women with varying years of experiences engaged in the study by sharing unique points and insights that clearly displayed their values, attributes, thoughts, culture, beliefs, and practices as Saudi educational leaders. This chapter

presents a discussion of the relationship between the findings described in Chapter 4 and the literature review described in Chapter 2. A deep logical analysis of the results of the study are displayed from the lens of the researcher's perspective. Furthermore, application and implication of the findings, recommendations for future research, and concluding thoughts are presented as well.

### Discussion

The discussion and interpretation of this study are organized around the five main research questions to consolidate the relationship among the most common emerging themes, the literature review, and the researcher's perspective. Each research question briefly presents the highest frequency of applied themes discussed by participants when answering the questions. Those highest ranked codes were identified through Dedoose, the web-based qualitative data-analysis software, which has unique features to aid in analyzing qualitative data. Furthermore, some controversial topics are discussed to present differences among participants' opinions and beliefs about servant leadership.

*First Question: What are the perceptions of higher education department chairs of servant leadership as a leadership model in Saudi Arabia?*

Ten Saudi departments chairs shared not only their experiences as educational leaders, but also their perspectives on servant leadership. A variety of topics was discussed in response to this question. Dedoose did an effective job of identifying the highest ranked topics that appeared in the participants' transcripts. The most often-shared theme was *servant leadership in Islam*. Findings showed that participants found a tight link between servant leadership and the Islam religion. They cited the Quran and Hadith, averring that Islam is a religion that urges the principles of caring, serving, helping

others, and meeting their needs. Participants believed that the Prophet Mohammed embraced the leadership approach that put people and their needs as a top priority; thus, Prophet Mohammed's style of leadership led to the spread the Islam not only in Arabic countries, but also around the world. A study by Gonaim (2017) assured the existence of the link between the leadership style of the Prophet Mohammed and servant leadership. The literature revealed that the Prophet Mohammed was ranked first of the 100 most influential people in history (Gonaim, 2017).

The second highest ranked theme that emerged from participants' interviews was *unfamiliarity of servant leadership*. A majority of participants declared that the term servant leadership was new to them. They had not learned or heard about it before. They understood the general concept of service and shared its role in practicing leadership, but they were unfamiliar with servant leadership as a leadership style. This may be due to the lack of knowledge about different types of leadership and their applications, supporting conclusions by Al-Yousef (2012) that no definition or determination of servant leadership use as a practical leadership style exists in Saudi Arabia. Participants may have applied this method in their departments, but because this approach is new to them, they failed to recognize themselves as servant leaders.

When participants shared stories that reflected their ways of leading others, they talked about different issues that related to this research question. They talked about a relationship between their own methods of leadership and the satisfaction of their followers. They believed that pleasing everyone in a department is almost impossible, and sometimes other members of a department can attack a leader. Followers are unlikely to be happy all the time about what their leaders are doing, and they can disagree with

some decisions made in a department. This is human nature; their reactions to others' behaviors and decisions lie between acceptance and rejection. In general, regardless of being servant leaders or not, participants experienced a high level of followers' satisfaction about their used styles of leadership.

*Second Question: To what extent have servant-leadership characteristics already been or are being used by higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia?*

Participants responded to questions about the 10 characteristics of servant leadership. They shared meaningful insights and stories that represented their practices of those attributes including listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, building community, and commitment to the growth of people. The extent to which these characteristics were being applied differed among participants. By analyzing participants' transcripts, it was clear that each participant had a unique point of view in defining these characteristics, how they are applied in their departments, and the factors that have a role in the embodiment of these attributes.

Some participants were quite transparent and clear when they talked about their beliefs and opinions on specific issues, even sharing the negative side of their leadership and the unfortunate attitudes they had experienced. Some participants shared only positive attitudes and only showed what was good and honorable for them as department chairs. For more clarification, two major themes that were the most controversial characteristics of servant leadership are discussed here: *areas of improvement and areas of strength*.

One interview question was designed to identify participants' areas of improvement to determine which characteristics need to be improved. Some participants believed they have no areas needing improvement, as they feel assured that they are applying all the principles of servant leadership. To logically analyze this finding, areas always exist that people need to improve in their personalities or behaviors. Denying the existence of these areas may be due to lack of self-awareness of one's weaknesses and personalities. Still other participants proudly shared their weaknesses as educational leaders, and the justifications for using their current leadership methods. For instance, based on the findings, the characteristic participants expressed they needed to work on most was empathy. Participants believe they were either too empathetic or too serious. Their justifications for refusing to become more empathic at work was that followers might exploit the empathy of their leader in an unethical manner and may perceive it as a weakness of the leaders' personality, which may cause disruptions in work and failure to perform duties. However, balancing between firmness and flexibility was a significant factor in leadership. For those who believed empathy might risk success in their departments and did not agree with the importance of practicing it, the issue may go back to understanding the real meaning of empathy. They may understand that empathy requires one to agree with other people's opinions, whereas empathy means simply living in another's life without making any judgment (Sipe & Frick, 2015).

Areas of strength was another significant aspect in which participants talked about the characteristics at which they excel. Healing was highest among these. Regardless of the ways they communicate and formulate the work, participants have an ability to help followers become whole and find solutions for problems and difficulties they face.

Researchers supported this finding and demonstrated that servant leaders do not stand silent when they see others suffer; rather, they help followers overcome their problems (Northouse, 2016; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2015; Spears, 2010; Spears & Lawrence, 2004). Participants used several strategies to heal others such as rewarding those who have more teaching hours, providing tangible and intangible support, distributing tasks to others, and offering logistical support for human or material needs.

*Third Question: To what degree do higher education department chairs value service and define themselves as servants first, then as leaders?*

The highest ranked theme raised by participants as a response to this question was *followers first, then leaders*. When participants shared their feelings and beliefs about the concept of putting followers first, then leaders, answers varied, aligned along three axes. One group believed that altruism and seeking others' needs is an ethical Islamic attribute and a characteristic that should prevail in society. Considering people's needs and concerns first before considering one's own interest is an internal tendency and feeling that needs to be raised and directed to practical behavior. This group did not have bad feeling about being behind their followers and thinking less of themselves; rather, this method gave them motivation and greater self-esteem. Putting people first is an ethic that leads leaders to gain moral authority. Covey's (2006) study supports this finding, as Covey explained that when people with formal authority use their authority as a last resort, their moral authority tends to increase because they use persuasion, empathy, reasoning, and trust instead of subordinating their ego.

The second group also agreed with the significance of looking for others' interests first, as long as no negative impact or harm accrued to them. However, if they were



negatively affected by this strategy, they would not consider it to be an effective way to lead. The last group has a slightly different opinion, which is that the concept of altruism exists in the Islamic religion but is not applied in practice. Saudi society believes in the importance of formal authority and relies on it. Shifting from practicing authority to putting others before leaders is not an easy transition. The results of research (Carroll & Patterson, 2014; Hannay, 2009; Hofstede, 2001; Shahin & Wright, 2004; Spears, 1998; Whitfield, 2014; Winston & Ryan, 2008) supported this finding and indicated a clear correlation between cultural characteristics and the probability of the successful adoption of servant leadership in the workplace.

As for the *provided service*, the second highest ranked theme under this research question, participants worked hard to see their departments as effective. They serve as public servants to whoever is in need. Greenleaf (1977/2002) declared that the main focus of servant leadership is providing service without conditions. Participants were willing to provide any kind of service that improved their departments and students. They shared some useful strategies that have shown positive results in improving their departments such as opening communication with others and listening to their needs and suggestions, analyzing students' outcomes to figure out areas needing improvement, and observing and comparing their departments with other successful ones. Regardless of their practices of authority, at some level, they would not allow it to prevent them from providing the necessary service. As Enderle (2014) demonstrated, servant leaders choose to serve others and are committed to improve others by giving time, energy, and care. Participants accepted the responsibility of serving others and thriving in their departments to advance them.

*Fourth Question: How do higher education department chairs explain their practice of authority and power?*

The topic raised most when discussing authority and power was *relying on authority to influence*. Participants revealed that practicing authority is significantly important in their positions. They perceived that authority exercised is a kind of legitimate power that their positions demand. French and Raven (1959) drew similar conclusions when they explained that legitimate power is a belief that one has a legitimate right to influence others and make orders, and to expect others to accept this influence. Participants believed that authority gave participants the strength they needed to develop their departments and create better environments. Without authority, they believed a leader's abilities would be limited in accomplishing the required tasks, but without any creativity and excellence. Authority is important if a leader seeks to achieve success. Participants relied heavily on authority more than any other controlling element, such as influence. This may be because a group of manipulators only follow a leader who practices power over them, and does not listen to those who do not have power. Power, as Grogan (2013) concluded, allowed participants to control people and outcomes because this is what they really wanted, rather than serving as a resource of energy for achieving shared goals. A study by Alamri (2011) supported this finding, declaring that the majority of higher education leaders in Saudi Arabia practice the oldest form of leadership that relies on formal authority, although many received their education internationally.

When participants shared their experiences in practicing authority, they did not speak about different kinds of authority that can be practiced by leaders until they were asked about the differences between formal and moral authority. The potential

explanation for this is the lack of knowledge about the types of authority and their application in a workplace. However, some participants found that formal and moral authority are two different ways of practicing authority. Still others believed they are complementary to each other. In Islam, moral authority is only observed by ALLAH, the sergeant, because it stems from a person's moral duties. According to the findings, the two types of authority do not conflict because the leader may use formal authority under his/her own morality. Morality and authority are complementary to some participants and a leader can be successful only by balancing between them.

*Humility and authority* was the second ranked topic discussed by participants when employing authority. They found no contradiction between practicing authority while being humble. They derived this belief from the Islamic religion in Hadith "one who displays humbleness towards another seeking the pleasure of Allah, Allah exalts him in ranks." Humility is a principle and the origin of authority because authority is temporary; it exists today but will not exist tomorrow. Findings ensured that being humble has little to do with practicing authority. They are complementary, as they need to walk the same line. Abu-Omar stated, "humility is the base that things are built on and if the basis is humility and power is based on it, then we can combine the two." Effective leaders are those who run their departments with moral principles, especially humility. As Sipe and Frick (2015) demonstrated, humility is one of the essential pillars of servant leadership that leads to gaining moral authority.

Clearly, participants use formal authority, but they also embody ethical characteristics such as humility that, in turn, lead to gaining moral authority. Thus, they balance between formal and moral authority in a way that agrees with their own practices

and paths of leadership. Covey (2006) explained this balance between formal authority and moral authority. Leaders should consider moral authority as a primary greatness, not a secondary greatness. The concern here is that if participants use their moral authority as a last resort, their formal authority tends to increase because they subordinate their ego instead of using persuasion, trust, and influence.

*Fifth Question: What challenges do higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia face to change their formal authority and traditional leadership style to use moral authority and a servant-leadership style in leading others?*

Participants shared meaningful stories and insights about the potential challenges and risks that can occur as a result of the transition from the traditional style of leadership to the servant-leadership style. The highest ranked topic discussed under this question was *servant leadership in Saudi culture*. Servant leadership is an appropriate method to be applied in Saudi universities and colleges as it goes along with the 2030 vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The literature supports this finding that although servant leadership was coined by Greenleaf in the United States, this model is applicable to leaders worldwide. Greenleaf (1977/2002) illustrated that servant leadership is suited to leaders from a variety of cultures and workplaces because every culture needs service and care, regardless of their practices and beliefs.

Servant leadership is scantily applied in higher education institutions, although the call for it in higher education becomes more important than ever. With the rapid changes happening at all levels, what worked in the past may not work anymore. Wheeler (2011) supported the notion that most current leadership models applied in higher education are unsuccessful, and without considering servant leadership, universities and

colleges will face potential obstacles that prevent them from achieving their desired goals. According to participants' perspectives, if the traditional method and formal authority worked effectively in the past, they are no longer effective with followers and students. Students will not accept the style of firmness; rather, they need trusted, ethical, and flexible leaders. Higher education institutions need to bring good models of servant leaders who show others how it looks to serve others and not care about a title or a position.

Although some participants assured that Saudi society does not listen to those with no power, they strongly agreed with the results of applying servant leadership. Practicing authority and being servant leaders did not seem contradictory to participants. They perceived servant leadership as a suitable method of leadership, but also believed in the importance of practicing authority at some level. In addition, the system of the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia sometimes forces a leader to be an authority figure, and does not support the servant-leadership model. Here, the Ministry of Higher Education can provide necessary education and professional development to higher educational leaders, training them how to serve first, then to lead. Shafai (2014) explained the need of the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia to respond to the current challenges in education institutions.

In terms of the introduction of new approaches in the educational process, the need for changing the traditional pattern in the education process, and the discovery of alternative techniques of teaching, strategies, and methods of modern education, professional development is essential. (2014. p. 4)

Participants talked about potential risks and challenges as a major topic in applying servant leadership. Servant leadership can be interpreted incorrectly as the weakness of a leader who is no longer able to control the department, especially if the

change is very rapid. Shifting from the traditional-leadership style, which is the most often applied leadership style, to servant leadership needs to be gradual to reduce potential risks. Participants believed that seriousness and rigor are the only styles of leadership that effectively work with students and faculty; otherwise, slackness and negligence will be seen among colleagues and students. Participants believed that the consequences of servant leadership are outstanding, but they also know that their culture and environment needs a leader who is somewhat powerful and serious, because they still have the belief that power is the most controlling element to lead others.

### Conclusions

This study explored the perspectives of Saudi higher educational leaders, specifically departments chairs, regarding servant leadership and their perceptions about exercising authority in leadership. The findings showed rich data and information that reflect the leadership reality in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. Ten department chairs from various regions and institutions in Saudi Arabia were interviewed and asked a variety of related questions on servant leadership and the use of power.

In analyzing the narratives of the study, several factors impacted the practices and beliefs of Saudi higher education leaders. Those influential factors include experiences of servant leadership, characteristics of servant leadership, service, the use of authority and power, and challenges in applying servant leadership in Saudi Arabia. From the findings, clearly, the culture, religion, personal values, and beliefs of the Saudi department chairs have a significant role in shaping practices of leadership. Although they may lack knowledge about different leadership methods in general and servant leadership in particular, they appreciated the principle of serving others and providing help.

Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) is an ideal example of a servant leader, as participants cited his speeches many times when explaining the real meaning of serving others and meeting their needs. Saudi higher education leaders retain the mindset that authority is the most powerful factor to control and lead others. Despite their strong conviction that power is a key element in leadership, they are determined to provide any kind of service that is for the good of followers, students, and departments as a whole, believing that providing service is the main reason for occupying these leadership positions. Relying on authority to influence is clearly evident in Saudi higher education as a legitimate power that allows chairs to be heard and followed. Using authority is the most effective method of leading the Saudi community because Saudis respect and listen to those who have power.

However, Saudi higher education leaders agreed that relying on power is an old traditional method that was the most appropriate method in leadership but will be less effective now. With rapid changes happening at all levels, followers can no longer be led through orders and authority; rather, to achieve the desired goals, followers need leaders who are servants, supportive, listeners, empathetic, and willing to meet their wants and needs. People require respect and appreciation, motivating them to do their best. To integrate this idea logically with their practices of authority, the level of power to be used needs to be determined. Higher education leaders use authority to manage conflict fairly, protect the rights of followers, and demand improvement in the departments. The use of authority, persuasion, and discussion complement each other. Leaders cannot rely on one above the other. Each style has its own needs and attitudes. One group of people can only

be led by exercising power over them; another group can only follow those using ethical authority to gain their compliance and obedience.

Greenleaf (1977/2002) revealed that servant leadership may be misunderstood. Saudi higher educational leaders also believed that people are likely to understand servant leader as a weak leader who is no longer able to control others. To reduce this kind of risk and challenge, shifting from traditional leadership to servant leadership needs to be gradual so others can smoothly adapt to this change and understand the method and its outcomes for the entire institution. In addition, and according to the findings of the study, another challenge facing higher education leaders in changing leadership styles is the lack of support from leaders at the top of the hierarchy, as the system and rules have not supported them to be servants. In conclusion, servant leadership is an appropriate method to be applied in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia. The demand for servant leadership in Saudi higher education has never been greater, especially at a time when employees resist coercive power and need a smooth and flexible method of leadership to reach the desired goals.

### Implications

Study findings contributed to the limited research regarding the field of servant leadership in higher education in Saudi Arabia. The findings indicated the impact of culture and authority in practicing servant leadership. Considering authority as an essential pillar of servant leadership, practicing formal authority may prevent higher education leaders from being servant leaders. The results of this study have implications for potential positive educational changes on the individual level, organizational level,



and on the Ministry of Higher Education level. This section provides details about how findings from this study can affect each level.

#### *Individual Level*

Study findings can benefit a variety of individuals in leadership positions in Saudi higher education institutions such as department chairs, deans, and program directors. The results of the study clearly indicated that department chairs embraced different perspectives on servant leadership. Clearly, higher education leaders suffer from unfamiliarity with various leadership styles. This study may help them to gain more understanding of servant leadership and its positive results not only on followers and students, but also on themselves, because giving and providing service has a marked positive effect on the givers. This study can enlighten higher education leaders about the major elements and characteristics of servant leadership and empower them to analyze their own practices to align with the values of servant leadership. This study may encourage them to eliminate formal authority, replace it with moral authority, and educate them about potential risks so they prepare themselves for this change.

#### *Organizational Level*

Greenleaf (1977/2002) claimed that servant leadership has a direct positive influence on followers' performance. Al-Yousef (2012) concluded that a strong relationship exists between servant leadership and followers' satisfaction. Findings from this study can be a fruitful reference to develop organizational performance as a whole. Saudi higher education leaders perceived high level of followers' satisfaction, which implies they embody some servant-leadership characteristics and behaviors. Followers' performance goes beyond their daily duties and helps in the overall function of the

organization (Northouse, 2016). Chairs use their legitimate power and authority, as they described it, to provide service and motivate followers, which in turn helps in realizing organizational goals and turning the organizational vision into reality.

*Ministry of Higher Education Level*

With the rapid changes happening in Saudi Arabia toward achieving Saudi's 2030 vision, more opportunities and developments will occur in all sectors. One major focus of the 2030 vision plan was to develop public service sectors such as education, health, tourism, and recreation. To achieve this vision, Saudi Arabia needs about 1.9 million leaders who can lead the designed plans and projects to build the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Mitchell, 2016). The vision has many essential orientations to improve education in Saudi Arabia including administrative development, educational development, transformation programs, intended objectives of the education system, and professional development. According to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Education's Education and Vision 2030 (2017), some changing trends in Saudi's education sector are "improving and developing the administrative environment in the Ministry and its Education Departments, approving decentralization of the administration, delegating powers to departments and schools to serve the education system" (para. 3). By considering study findings, which include the lack of leadership education and professional development, Saudi educational leaders need to gain essential knowledge and skills about leadership. The Ministry of Higher Education needs to reform the system and the rules to support the development of higher education leadership because, according to the findings, the system does not support higher educational leaders to adapt different leadership styles such as servant leadership.

To be more specific, the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia needs to acknowledge the existence of this gap and address it by designing the necessary trainings and professional-development activities for higher education leaders. Also, by creating opportunities to apply those strategies in real-life situations, reactions and results will accrue for the organizations as a whole. Continuous evaluation of the application of these methods is necessary to ensure their success. Although higher education leadership was productive in the past, it is not an enabler for the future. The traditional methods of leadership that rely on using authority will not be effective in the comprehensive transformation that Saudi Arabia is going through.

By considering study findings, higher education leadership will understand some challenges that higher education experiences and will know that formal authority is heavily practiced in higher education institutions. This reality may threaten the development of Saudi's 2030 education, in which leaders care about the performance of workers; not the workers themselves. When higher educational leaders believe in the importance of authority more than service, they cannot create warm and welcoming environments. Thus, the organization will expect less productivity and high resistance, which will negatively affect student outcomes and employee satisfaction.

### Recommendations

#### *For Future Research*

This study focused on the perspectives of department chairs in Saudi Arabia about servant leadership and the use of authority. One limitation of this study is the small size of the participants pool. The size of a qualitative sample should be expanded to better represent the perspectives of Saudi higher education leaders, which in turn, will yield a

broader understanding of influencing factors regarding their practices of leadership. Additionally, exploring and comparing higher educational leaders from Saudi Arabia and leaders across the globe will be helpful and can generate a deeper understanding of the impact of culture, personal values, and an educational environment in practicing servant leadership and authority. Further studies that compare between Saudi higher education leaders with other group such as non-Saudis will give a deep comprehension of other elements that can affect leaders' behaviors and mindsets of practicing leadership.

The researcher conducted one interview with each participant. A second interview is highly recommended in the future research, which will allow clarification of important points that were not clearly understood in the first interview. Following up with a second interview provides an opportunity not only to participants to add or change some points, but also to the researcher to reflect on what participants said in the first interview. This method offers more consistent, rich, and intensive data that clearly helps in answering the research questions. Further, future studies should gain the perspectives of followers to truly assess the practice of higher education leaders on servant leadership and their ways of employing authority. Because followers' opinions are an important factor in evaluating and assessing their leaders, their voices are highly recommended.

#### *For Future Practice*

As the 2030 vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia focuses on improving education and leadership in Saudi Arabia (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Ministry of Education, 2017), and considering that higher education leaders need additional supports from the Ministry of Higher Education, leadership development has become essential. Leaders in higher education institutions need to engage in leadership-development

activities before assigning leadership positions and they must be mandatory for their career advancement. Leadership education and trainings will teach leaders how to successfully lead and what strategies and methods are available to them. Servant leadership is a new term for them and engaging in some professional development can give them a broader understanding of how to turn servant-leadership theory into practice. Higher education leaders need to understand and accept that traditional methods and relying on authority are not going to work anymore. They need to start considering servant leadership as a best practice that is effective with students, faculty, staff, and universities as a whole.

Higher education leaders should recognize the need to improve in some important characteristics of servant leadership, such as empathy and listening. Areas of improvement always exist, even if some leaders deny it. Acknowledging the existence of those areas is an important indicator that one has self-awareness, which is the first step in effective reform toward better performance. Leaders in higher education in Saudi Arabia should start considering those attributes and apply them in their daily practices of leadership, to enjoy outstanding results.

### Concluding Thoughts

This study can have a positive impact on educational research as it adds knowledge to the field of leadership in higher education in Saudi Arabia. In particular, this study offers important insights to servant leadership in Saudi higher education. Ten department chairs from various regions in Saudi Arabia participated in interviews to share their experiences of leadership as higher education leaders. Gender was one variable considered when selecting study participants. The findings clearly indicated that

no significant difference emerged between male and female leaders in practicing servant leadership. In addition, the variable years of experience did not align with any difference in participants' perspectives on the use of authority and power.

Furthermore, this study highlighted five major themes that were clearly discussed to reflect thoughts of higher education leaders about servant leadership and power: (a) experiences of leadership, (b) characteristics of servant leadership, (c) service, (d) authority and power, (e) and challenges of servant leadership. Based on the most significant findings of this study, the term servant leadership was new to them, although the service value was well known and much appreciated. A tight link exists between servant leadership and Islamic principles. For example, the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) was an ideal example of caring, serving, and altruism. Another major finding of this study was that authority plays a marked role in the practice of leadership in Saudi higher education, as leaders strongly believed in it and heavily used it as a controlling element in leading others, believing that Saudi society does not listen to those with no power and need leaders who holds the reins of power.

In large part, this study indicated that higher education leaders are applying some servant-leadership characteristics at some level, and that some characteristics are challenging for them. Specifically, healing, building community, and vision are the characteristics most applied by department chairs. In contrast, those leaders have faced difficulty being empathetic and listening. What may threaten the improvement of higher education leaders is that some leaders found no areas needing improvements in their ways of leading others, which may prevent them helping their departments thrive. Still other leaders proudly recognized their weaknesses and were willing to make the

necessary change to be better leaders. This study further illustrated rich and fruitful stories and experiences of higher education leaders in Saudi Arabia regarding their ways of using authority and analyzed their stories as significant factors in servant leadership.

Higher education leaders lack knowledge of the various leadership methods available. Also, they believed that one cannot use moral authority alone; rather, it must be used as a complement to formal authority. Although servant leadership is needed and appropriate in universities and colleges in Saudi Arabia, some may perceive servant leadership as a weakness, indicating that a leader is no longer able to control people. However, shifting from the traditional method of leadership and formal authority to servant leadership and moral authority must be smooth and gradual to reduce the potential for risk in this great transition. Such gradual preparation will help leaders be cautious, mitigating the impact of those who misunderstand this new trend, and helping them overcome difficulties rather than attend to obstacles.

In sum, higher education leaders in Saudi Arabia perceived servant leadership as a culture that positively influences all and is beneficial in setting a positive comfortable atmosphere for colleagues and students. This study helped discern what is occurring in higher education institutions and what factors and elements to consider when running departments. This study helped determine the need to improve higher education leadership, and to recognize the challenges leaders face due to a lack of training and support to apply various leadership styles such as servant leadership. In addition, this study revealed the mindsets of higher education leaders about their own practices of authority, seeking effective strategies that can reform inappropriate behaviors and

practices and replace them with attributes needed in the 21st century to align with the 2030 vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



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## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for your participation in this study. I appreciate your valuable time and information. Kindly sign the consent form indicating that your responses will be confidential and that the utmost care will be used to maintain your anonymity in this study. The interview will be recorded and saved on my computer in a password-protected file. After collecting the data, I will destroy all audio-recorded interviews to maintain the confidentiality of data. Also, I will give you the transcribed data to review to ensure accuracy. Do you have any questions before we start the interview?

My name is Areej Shafai. I am a doctoral student at The University of San Francisco, School of Education. The focus of my study is:

- 1- To look at the servant-leadership style in higher education leadership.
- 2- To determine whether department chairs in Saudi Arabia have implemented servant-leadership characteristics.
- 3- To gain the perspectives of department chairs in Saudi Arabia about the use of authority in leadership, and determine their ways of practicing authority.

#### Biographical Questions

What is your full name?

What is your marital status?

What is your highest level of education?

How many years have you been serving as a department chair?

What is your previous job and work experience? Was it related to this job?

### Interview/Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of higher education department chairs of servant leadership as a leadership model in Saudi Arabia?
  - What came to mind when you first heard the term “servant leadership”?
  - Based on my previous description of servant leadership, how does servant leadership differ from other leadership styles?
  - How do your followers describe your leadership style? What impact does the style have on your university?
  - How do you think the servant-leadership style is helpful and effective for your students and faculty?
2. To what extent have servant-leadership characteristics already been or are being used by higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia?
  - How do you ensure that you are truly listening to others? (Listening).
  - How do you exhibit behaviors that demonstrate empathy? (Empathy).
  - What practices do you demonstrate that ease the burden of others? (Healing).
  - How to evaluate your awareness of yourself and of others? What are the practices you do that help you to be more aware of yourself and of your followers? (Awareness).

- How do you get others to agree with the decisions you make?  
(Persuasion).
  - What is your vision of the future of your department? Where does this vision come from? (Conceptualization).
  - What practices do you demonstrate to show a commitment to the growth of all individuals? (Commitment to the growth of people).
  - How do you encourage teamwork among colleagues? (Building community).
  - What factors/characteristics do you think are important to influence others to achieving the organization's goals?
  - What are your top five characteristics of servant leadership (listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, foresight, conceptualization, commitment to the growth of people, building community)? What characteristics do you think you need to improve?
3. To what degree do higher education department chairs value service and define themselves as servants first, then as leaders?
- What kind of services do you provide for students and your department as a whole?
  - How do you know what needs to be improved in your department/university?

- Do you believe in the importance of meeting the needs of others? What practices do you do that show you care about others' needs and concerns?
  - As a leader, what do you think about considering others' needs and concerns before considering your own? How do you feel about putting yourself second and your followers first?
4. How do higher education department chairs explain their practice of authority and power?
- Do you think that authority makes your jobs easier? How?
  - Do you often rely on your authority to influence others? Do you think the use of authority is important to influence others? How?
  - How do you maintain authority while remaining humble?
  - How do you describe the difference between formal authority and moral authority? How different or similar are they?
  - How do you think a person can have power without a leadership position?
5. What challenges do higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia face to change their formal authority and traditional leadership style to use moral authority and a servant-leadership style in leading others?
- Do you believe that the traditional leadership styles rely mostly on authority? How?

- How easy/difficult is it for you and for leaders in general to shift their traditional-leadership styles to the servant-leadership style?
- If you want to start applying servant leadership, what are the potential risks and challenges you may expect from your team and students?
- Do you think servant leadership is an appropriate style for Saudi culture and universities? Why?

#### أسئلة المقابلة:

ما هو اسمك الكامل؟.

ما هو وضعك الاجتماعي؟.

ما هي أعلى درجة في تعليمك؟.

كم عدد السنوات التي تخدم فيها كرئيس قسم؟.

ما هي وظيفتك وخبرتك السابقة؟ هل كان متعلقة بالوظيفة الحالية؟.

(١):

- ماذا خطر أولاً في بالك عندما سمعت بمصطلح “القيادة الخادمة”؟.

- استناداً على التعريف السابق الذي قدمته عن القيادة الخادمة، كيف تختلف القيادة الخادمة عن بقية أنماط

واشكال القيادات الأخرى؟.

- كيف يصفوا اتباعك وأعضاء هيئة التدريس أسلوبك في القيادة؟ وما هو تأثير هذا النمط على الجامعة

ككل؟.

- كيف تعتقد ان أسلوب القيادة الخادمة مفيد وفعال للطلاب وأعضاء هيئة التدريس؟.

(٢):

- كيف تضمن أنك فعلا مستمع جيد؟ (الاستماع).
- كيف تبرز السلوكيات التي تظهر تعاطفك مع الآخرين؟ (التعاطف).
- ماهي الممارسات التي تستخدمها في تخفيف العبء عن الآخرين؟ (الشفاء/إيجاد الحلول).
- ما هي الممارسات التي تقوم بها والتي تساعدك على أن تكون أكثر وعيا لنفسك وأتباعك؟ (الوعي).
- كيف تجعل الآخرين يوافقون على القرارات التي تستخدمها؟ (الاقناع).
- ماهي رؤيتك لمستقبل قسمك؟ ومن اين أنت هذه الرؤية؟ (الرؤية).
- ماهي الممارسات التي تقوم بها والتي تظهر التزامك لتنمية افراد القسم ككل؟ (الالتزام بتنمية الافراد).
- كيف تشجع روح العمل بين الزملاء او الاتباع؟.
- ماهي العوامل/الخصائص التي تعتقد انها مهمة في التأثير عن الآخرين من اجل الوصول الى الهدف المنشود؟.
- ماهي اعلى خمسة خصائص موجودة فيك كقائد (الاستماع، التعاطف، الشفاء/إيجاد الحلول، الوعي، الاقناع، الرؤية، الالتزام بتمنيهِ الآخرين، نشر روح العمل بين الاتباع)، وماهي الخصائص التي تحتاج الى تطويرها؟.

(٣):

- ماهي نوع الخدمة التي تقدمها للطلاب، وللقسم بصفة عامة؟.
- كيف تعرف ماهي الأشياء التي تحتاج الى تطوير في القسم؟.
- هل تؤمن بأهمية تلبية احتياجات الآخرين؟ ماهي الممارسات التي تقوم بها والتي تظهر انك مهتم باحتياجات ومخاوف الآخرين؟.

- كقائد، ما هو رأيك عن النظر في احتياجات ومصصلحة الآخرين قبل النظر في احتياجاتك ومصليحتك الخاصة؟ كيف تشعر تجاه وضع نفسك في المؤخرة ووضع اتباعك في المقدمة؟.

(٤):

- هل تعتقد ان السلطة تسهل القيام بالأعمال؟ كيف؟.
- هل تعتمد في الغالب على سلطتك في التأثير على الآخرين؟ هل تعتقد استخدام السلطة مهم في التأثير على الآخرين؟.

- كيف تحافظ على سلطتك في نفس الوقت الذي تحافظ فيه على تواضعك؟.
- كيف تشرح الفرق بين السلطة الرسمية والسلطة الأخلاقية؟ كيف تصف وجه الشبه بينهما؟.
- كيف يمكن للشخص ان يكون لديه سلطة وقوه بدون منصب قيادي؟.

(٥):

- هل تعتقد ان أسلوب القيادة التقليدي يعتمد على السلطة في الغالب؟ كيف؟.
- كيف هو سهل او صعب بالنسبة لك للانتقال من الأسلوب التقليدي في القيادة لأسلوب القيادة الخادمة؟.
- إذا اردت ان تبدأ في تطبيق القيادة الخادمة، ماهي المخاطر والصعوبات والتحديات المحتملة التي تتوقعها سواء من الطلاب او اتباعك من أعضاء هيئة التدريس؟.
- هل تعتقد ان القيادة الخادمة أسلوب مناسب لثقافة وجامعات السعودية؟.



## APPENDIX B

### BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Servant leadership is one of the leadership styles that has a different focus from other leadership approaches. The term *servant leadership* was coined by Greenleaf and first published in an essay in 1970 called “The Servant as Leaders.” Greenleaf gave the best definition of servant leadership, stating, “the servant-leader is servant first. ... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first.”

The concept of leadership may be the opposite of the perception of some people about leadership, especially in our Arab culture in which the concept of leadership is linked to the presidency and authority. A servant leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. Although traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the “top of the pyramid,” servant leadership is different. The servant leader shares power, puts the needs of others before considering their own, and helps people develop and perform as effectively as possible.

#### نبذة مختصرة عن القيادة الخادمة.

القيادة الخادمة هي واحد من أساليب القيادة التي لها تركيز مختلف عن بقية مناهج القيادة. مصطلح “القيادة

الخادمة” أصيغ من قبل Greenleaf في أول مقال له تم نشره في ١٩٧٠ والذي سمي “الخدم كقائد”. Greenleaf

اعطى افضل تعريف للقيادة الخادم بقوله: “القائد الخادم هو خادم أولاً.. إنه يبدأ بالشعور الطبيعي لدى الشخص أنه

يريد ان يخدم، يخدم أولاً، ثم الاختيار الواعي يجعل الشخص يطمح للقيادة. هذا الشخص يختلف بشكل حاد عن

الشخص الذي يريد ان يقود أولاً”.

مفهوم القيادة قد يكون عكس تصور البعض حول القيادة خاصة في ثقافتنا العربية التي يرتبط فيها مفهوم القيادة بالرئاسة والسلطة. القائد الخادم يركز في المقام الأول علي نمو ورفاهية الناس والمجتمعات التي ينتمون اليها. في حين أن القيادة التقليدية تنطوي عادة على ممارسة السلطة من قبل الشخص الذي في اعلي السلم الهرمي، القيادة الخادمة مختلفة. القائد الخادم يتقاسم القوة، يضع احتياجات الناس أولا حتى قبل احتياجاته ويساعد الاتباع على التطور والأداء بشكل أفضل على قدر الإمكان. مفهوم القيادة الخادمة يقصد بها ام يكون الاتباع هم محور اهتمام وتركيز القائد وان القائد الخادم يضع مصالح اتباعه أولا ثم، يهتم بهم ويمكنهم ويوفر لهم ما يحتاجونه من دعم ليساعدهم الي الوصول الي اعلي قدراتهم.

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW REQUEST

Dear higher educational leaders,

I am presently a doctoral candidate at the School of Education in the Organization and Leadership program. I am writing today to invite you to participate in my dissertation study on “The Perceptions of Saudi Arabian Higher Education Leaders on Servant Leadership: The Use of Authority and Power.”

The purpose of my study is to explore the perceptions of higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia regarding servant leadership as a leadership model, specifically their ways of employing authority and power. It will also aim to identify whether or not servant-leadership principles are being implemented by higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia. I will be interviewing chairs from different departments at various universities and colleges in Saudi Arabia about how you perceive the servant leadership in your institutions. You will be asked to answer the interview questions. The participant in the interview must be kept anonymous and cannot be identified. I sincerely hope you will participate in answering the interview questions and sharing your experiences as higher education leaders.

Please be advised that your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any point. Participants in the study are guaranteed the right of confidentiality and anonymity. There will be no cost to you as a result of taking part in this study. I realize your time is limited and incredibly valuable. If you are willing to participate in this interview, please know your total time commitment will be approximately 50 minutes. Participants will be given this letter and

the consent form 2 weeks prior the interviews. If you are interested, please sign the consent form.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions or comments about the research study, please feel free to contact me at aashafai@dons.usfca.edu.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Areej Shafai

Doctoral Candidate

أعزائي قادة التعليم العالي:

انا حاليا محاضرة دكتوراه في التربية والتعليم، برنامج التنظيم والقيادة. أنا أكتب لكم اليوم لأدعوكم للمشاركة في رسالة الدكتوراه الخاصة بي والتي بعنوان (وجهة نظر قادة التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية عن القيادة الخادمة: استخدام السلطة والقوة).

الهدف من دراستي هو اكتشاف وجهة نظر رؤساء الأقسام في الجامعات والكليات عن القيادة الخادمة كأحد أساليب القيادة، خاصة الطرق المستخدمة في ممارسة السلطة والقوة. تسعى الدراسة أيضا إلي تحديد ما إذا كانت خصائص القيادة الخادمة مطبقة من قبل رؤساء الأقسام في مؤسسات التعليم العالي. سوف أجري مقابلات لرؤساء الأقسام من كليات وجامعات مختلفة في المملكة العربية السعودية لمعرفة تصوراتهم عن القيادة الخادمة في مؤسساتهم. سوف تسأل للإجابة عن أسئلة المقابلة. يجب أن يظل موضوع المقابلة مجهولا ولا يمكن التعرف عليه. وأمل مخلصا أن تشارك في الإجابة على أسئلة المقابلة وتبادل الخبرات الخاصة بك كقائد في التعليم العالي.

يرجى العلم أن مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة تطوعية. أنت حر في رفض أن تكون في هذه الدراسة، أو الانسحاب منها في أي لحظة. وبضمن المشاركين في الدراسة الحق في السرية وعدم الكشف عن هويتهم. لن تكون هناك أي تكلفة عليك نتيجة المشاركة في هذه الدراسة. أنا أدرك أن وقتكم محدود وقيم. إذا كنت على استعداد للمشاركة

في إجراء هذه المقابلة، يرجى العلم أن التزامك في الوقت الإجمالي سيستغرق حوالي ٥٠ دقيقة وسيعطى المشاركون هذه الرسالة واستمارة الموافقة قبل إجراء المقابلات بأسبوعين. إذا كنت مهتما، يرجى التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة.

أشكركم على وقتكم واهتمامكم. إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة أو تعليقات حول الدراسة البحثية، فلا تتردد في التواصل معي

على [aashafai@dons.usfca.edu](mailto:aashafai@dons.usfca.edu)

أتطلع إلى التحدث اليكم قريبا وشكرا لتعاونكم مقدما..

أريج شافعي.

طالبة دكتوراه.

## APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM.



Dear participant,

You have been asked to participate in a research study conducted by *Areej Shafai*, a graduate student in the Department of *Organization and Leadership* at University of San Francisco. The faculty supervisor for this study is *Dr. Patricia Mitchell*, a professor in the Department of Organization and Leadership at the University of San Francisco.

عزيزي المشارك:  
سوف يطلب منك المشاركة في البحث المقدم من طالبة الدكتوراه أريج شافعي في برنامج التنظيم والقيادة في التعليم University of San Francisco في جامعة .

#### WHAT THE STUDY IS ABOUT:

The purpose of this research study is to explore the perceptions of higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia regarding servant leadership as a leadership model, specifically their ways of employing authority and power. It will also aim to identify whether or not servant-leadership principles are being implemented by higher education department chairs in Saudi Arabia.

الهدف من الدراسة هو اكتشاف وجهة نظر رؤساء الأقسام في التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية عن أسلوب القيادة الخادمة، خاصة طرقهم في توظيف السلطة والنفوذ. تهدف الدراسة أيضا الي تحديد ما إذا كانت القيادة الخادمة أسلوب مطبق في التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية.

#### WHAT WE WILL ASK YOU TO DO:

During this study, participants will be asked to participate in an interview through the

phone. They will be asked several questions that answer the research questions. The interviews will be recorded and saved on the researcher's computer in a password-protected file. After collecting and transcribing the data, all the audio-recorded interview will be destroyed to maintain the confidentiality of data.

أثناء هذه الدراسة، سوف يطلب من المشاركين المشاركة في مقابلات عن طريق الهاتف. سوف يسألون عن عدة أسئلة التي بدورها تجيب على أسئلة البحث. سيتم حفظ المقابلات في ملف مقفل برقم سري في الكمبيوتر. بعد جمع وكتابة البيانات، سوف يتم تدمير ومسح جميع المقابلات المسجلة للحفاظ على سرية البيانات.

#### DURATION AND LOCATION OF THE STUDY:

Your participation in this study will involve one interview. The interview will take about 50 minutes to complete. The researcher will conduct each interview by phone.

Participants will have the opportunity to select the time that is most appropriate for them to engage in interviews. The study will take place in California, USA.

مشاركتم تتضمن مقابلة واحدة لكل مشترك. تستغرق المقابلة حوالي ٥٠ دقيقة لإكمالها. سوف يمنح جميع المشاركين الفرصة في تحديد الوقت المناسب والملائم لهم لإجراء المقابلات. يتم تنفية هذه الدراسة في ولاية كاليفورنيا يف الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.

#### POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS:.

We do not anticipate any risks or discomforts to you from participating in this research. If you wish, you may choose to withdraw your consent and discontinue your participation at any time during the study without penalty.

ليس هناك أي مخاطر لمشاركتم في هذه الدراسة. إذا كنت ترغب، يمكنك الانسحاب من المشاركة في أي وقت أثناء المقابلة بدون أي عقوبة.

#### BENEFITS:

You will receive no direct benefit from your participation in this study; however, information from this study will contribute to the development of the higher education system in Saudi Arabia. We hope to learn more about Saudi higher educational leaders'

practices of leadership and authority to make effective changes in the higher education field in Saudi Arabia.

من الممكن انك لن تستفيد بطريقة مباشرة من خلال مشاركتك في هذه الدراسة ،و مع ذلك ،ستساهم في تطوير قيادة التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية. نتمنى ان نعرف المزيد عن ممارسات قادة التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية وطرقهم في توظيف السلطة والنفوذ من اجل تغيير افضل في مجال التعليم العالي في المملكة العربية السعودية.

سيتم الحفاظ على جميع المعلومات التي سيتم تجميعها من أي إفشاء غير لائق بموجب القانون. جميع البيانات سوف تُحفظ في مكان امن.

#### **PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY:**

Any data you provide in this study will be kept confidential unless disclosure is required by law. In any report we publish, we will not include information that will make it possible to identify you or any individual participant. Specifically, after transcribing the data from the interviews, all audio-recorded interviews will be destroyed to maintain the confidentiality of participants. The researcher will save all documented materials in a password-protected file, for privacy reasons. In addition, the researcher will assign pseudonyms to participants rather than using their real names.

سيتم الحفاظ على جميع المعلومات التي سيتم تجميعها إلا اذا تطلب ذلك من قبل القانون. في أي تقرير ننشره، لا يتم نشر أي معلومة قد تكشف هوية المشاركين. بشكل خاص، بعد تحرير وكتابة البيانات المأخوذة من المقابلات، سيتم تدمير ومسح كل المقابلات المسجلة للحفاظ على سرية معلومات المشاركين. سوف يقوم الباحث بحفظ كل الوثائق والبيانات في ملف سري. أيضا، سوف يستخدم الباحث أسماء مستعارة بدلا من استخدام السماء المشاركين الحقيقية.

#### **COMPENSATION/PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION:**

There is no payment or other form of compensation for your participation in this study.

لا يوجد أي مكافآت مادية لمشاركتك في الدراسة.

#### **VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY:**

Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits. Furthermore, you may skip any questions or tasks that make you uncomfortable and may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss



of benefits. In addition, the researcher has the right to withdraw you from participation in the study at any time.

. مشاركتك تطوعيه. رفضك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة لا يتضمن أي عقوبات. يمكنك الانسحاب في أي وقت من دون عقوبات أو فقدان للمصالح. أيضا، الباحث لديه الحق في سحب واستبعاد أي مشارك في أي وقت.

### OFFER TO ANSWER QUESTIONS:

Please ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you should contact the researcher's advisor, Dr. Patricia Mitchell, at (Mitchell@usfca.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

Dr. Patricia Mitchell الرجاء طرح أي أسئلة لديك الآن. إذا كان لديك أسئلة لاحقاً، الرجاء التواصل مع مشرفي الدراسي . إذا كان لديك أي أسئلة بخصوص حقوقك كمشارك في البحث، يمكنك التواصل مع مسؤول لجنة Mitchell IRBPHS@usfca.edu. مؤسسة حماية البشر على

I HAVE READ THE ABOVE INFORMATION. ANY QUESTIONS I HAVE ASKED HAVE BEEN ANSWERED. I AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH PROJECT AND I WILL RECEIVE A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM.

قرأت كل المعلومات أعلاه. كل الأسئلة التي طرحت تم الإجابة عليها. أنا موافق على مشاركتي في هذه الدراسة وسوف استلم نسخة من ورقة الموافقة هذه.

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PARTICIPANT'S SIGNATURE

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DATE