A Quantitative Examination of the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Age on Organizational Commitment in Faith-Based Organizations

By

Frank Deno

Doctoral Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Business Administration

Liberty University

August 2017
Abstract
Servant leadership has grown slowly over the past four decades as an organizational style of leadership. Servant leadership is an excellent style for developing followers into their full potential, as it focuses first on the individual, while simultaneously developing capacity to achieve organizational goals. The workforce is constantly circulating, with older workers retiring and younger workers coming into the workforce. There are many factors influencing workers’ commitment to their organization, age is one of these factors and perception of leadership is another. Younger workers have different needs and different motivations than older workers. Faith-based organizations are a smaller segment of organizations with unique characteristics that effect servant leadership and commitment; potentially differently in different age workers. The purpose of this quantitative research was to examine servant leadership with paid and volunteer workers of different ages in faith-based organizations for relationship with organizational commitment. Data was collected through an anonymous survey of faith-based organizations in the Northeast United States (U.S.) and analyzed through multiple regression (and ANOVA for generational cohorts). The analysis used age (birth year – current year) and servant leadership as independent variables and organizational commitment scores as the dependent variable. The findings indicated that age does not have a significant relationship with commitment in faith-based organizations, but servant leadership is predictive of commitment in faith-based organizations. These findings lead to several suggestions for practice and future research.

Keywords: servant leadership, commitment, faith-based, Northeast, age, generational cohort, volunteer workers
A Quantitative Examination of the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Age on Organizational Commitment in Faith-Based Organizations

Frank Deno
Liberty University

Doctoral Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Business Administration

Liberty University
August 2017

Dr. Eric Richardson, Chair
Date: _________

Dr. Scott Quatro, Committee Member
Date: _________

Dr. Gene Sullivan, DBA Program Director
Date: _________

Dr. Dave Calland, Dean, School of Business
Date: _________
I dedicate this project to my family, Christa, Jasmine and Jared, who I love more than anything else on this earth. To my wife, Christa, who shouldered the burden for our family while I was temporarily distracted with my studies and research. To my daughter, Jasmine, and son, Jared, who sacrificed weekend excursions so I could complete this work. Jasmine and Jared, I pray you see the value of education and hard work to achieve your goals. I am grateful for the patience and sacrifices you extended for me as I completed this work.
Acknowledgements

I am thankful for so many who encouraged me and influenced my work as I completed this project. Thank you, Jesus! All I am and all I have is because of You. To my wife, Christa, thank you for constantly encouraging me and especially for managing our home and family while I completed this project, I could not have done this without you. To my daughter, Jasmine, thank you for just sitting in my office with me and providing quiet company in what could have been a lonely stretch. To my son, Jared, thank you for waiting for me – I know you missed more than you realize, we have good days ahead.

I am thankful for our DBA cohort who have become friends and confidants in the challenges of completing the DBA, I hope these friendships are lifelong. I am thankful for my advisor, Dr. Richardson who was patient as I stumbled through so much of the process, your gentle redirections kept me on the right track. I am thankful for Dr. Sullivan, our program director, who spent time with us during each intensive and was very encouraging. I am thankful for Dr. Quatro and Dr. Candy who, I am sure, spent many hours reading and commenting on this project, your input shaped this project into what it is.

Finally, I am thankful for my co-laborers in ministry. I am thankful for the New England Executive Pastor group that has provided more insight than they will ever know, and was instrumental in collecting data for this project. I am thankful for my local Executive Pastor group who spent hours biking with me and listening as I developed this project; Gareth, I miss pedaling with you. I am thankful for Dr. Keener, whose patience and provision allowed me to complete this project. I am thankful for Dr. Stone; an endless source of encouragement and insight into the doctoral journey as I traveled through it. Finally, I am thankful for all my coworkers and the amazing volunteer teams at Grace Fellowship church, who provide an endless source of context.
# Table of Contents

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

- Background ........................................................................................................... 1  
- Problem Statement ................................................................................................. 5  
- Purpose Statement .................................................................................................. 6  
- Nature of the Study ................................................................................................ 7  
- Research Questions ................................................................................................. 8  
- Hypotheses ............................................................................................................... 8  
- Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................... 8  
- Definition of Terms ............................................................................................... 10  
- Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations ......................................................... 12  
- Significance of Study ............................................................................................. 14  
- Literature Review .................................................................................................. 16

Section 2: The Project ............................................................................................. 69  
- Purpose Statement ................................................................................................. 69  
- Participants ............................................................................................................. 70  
- Research Method and Design ............................................................................... 70  
- Population and Sampling ....................................................................................... 72  
- Data Collection ...................................................................................................... 75  
- Reliability and Validity .......................................................................................... 77  
- Transition and Summary ....................................................................................... 79

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change ........ 80  
- Overview of Study ................................................................................................. 80  
- Presentation of the Findings ................................................................................. 81
Applications to Professional Practice ................................................................. 89
Recommendations for Action .................................................................................. 91
Recommendations for Further Study ...................................................................... 92
Reflections .............................................................................................................. 94
Summary and Study Conclusions .......................................................................... 95
List of Tables

Table 1. Generational Boundaries........................................................................................................................55
Table 2. Contemporary Leadership Commitment Research..................................................................................66
Table 3. FBOs by State ............................................................................................................................................72
Table 4. Percent of Nonprofit Workers by State .................................................................................................73
Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables and the Dependent Variable ..............................81
Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for Regression Model .........................................................................................85
Table 7. Regression Model Summary ..................................................................................................................85
Table 8. Regression Model Coefficients ................................................................................................................86
Table 9. Descriptive Statistics of Generational Cohort .......................................................................................86
Table 10. ANOVA of Commitment and Generational Cohorts ........................................................................87
List of Figures

Figure 1. Age distribution probability plots............................................................................. 82
Figure 2. Servant leadership scores distribution probability plots. ........................................ 83
Figure 3. Commitment scores distribution probability plots. .................................................. 83
Figure 4. Covariance between age and servant leadership scores. ........................................ 84
Figure 5. Generational Cohort Boxplot. .................................................................................. 87
Section 1: Foundation of the Study

For the first time in U.S. history, there are four generations in the workforce (Lowe, Levitt, & Wilson, 2011), creating significant diversity between the youngest and the oldest workers. Though the current challenges with younger workers are often attributed to generational cohort differences, generational cohort alone is not an adequate identifier of worker behaviors (Parry & Urwin, 2011); age and generational cohort are intricately intertwined (Inceoglu, Segers, & Bartram, 2012). The youngest workers (Millennials) are currently between 17 and 37 years old, represent over 75 million citizens and are potentially the largest population to ever enter the workforce (Carman, Leland, & Wilson, 2010; Clemons, 2014; Eisner, 2005; Spiro, 2006). This demographic shift affects all organizations including charities such as faith-based organizations (Elson & Tarpley, 2015). Salamon and Sokolowski (2006) identified that faith-based organizations (as charities) witness the same age demographics as for-profit organizations. Charities rely on two classes of workforce: paid and volunteer. The volunteer workforce is roughly half the size of the paid workforce (as measured in Full Time Equivalents, FTE), combined totaling approximately 14 million workers (compared to 130 million for-profit workers U.S. wide) (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2006). Younger workers pose a new challenge for the secular and faith-based organization (Deal, Altman, & Rogelberg, 2010; Ferrero, 2002; Jenkin & Martin, 2014; Lowe et al., 2011). Today’s organizations, both for-profit and faith-based, need to adopt new leadership theory and practices in order to engage younger workers (Balda & Mora, 2011; Lowe et al., 2011) and foster organizational commitment (Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010; Raja & Palanichamy, 2011).

Background

Elson and Tarpley (2015) reported that there were more than 2.3 million nonprofit organizations (NPO) in the United States as of 2010, of which only 1.44 million are registered with the IRS (Blackwood, 2012). Of these 1.44 million, 963,234 are identified as 501(c)3 charitable organizations (accounting for two-thirds of all NPOs) (Blackwood, 2012). According to Giving
USA, Americans contributed approximately $335 billion to charitable organizations in 2014, and religious organizations were the largest benefactor of these funds, receiving about 31% of the funds. IRS (2016) data identified that there were 1,581,445 registered nonprofits, of which 17.83% or 282,008 are faith-based (religious related) (“National Center for Charitable Statistics,” 2016). Charities engage over 14 million workers, of which approximately 32% are currently between 17 to 37 years old (Arellano, 2015; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2006). Accounting for these statistics, there are at least 282,000 (registered) faith-based organizations engaging about 2,500,000 workers (17.83% of 14,000,000), of which at least 798,887 (32% of 2,500,000) were Millennial (age 17 to 37) workers who influence more than $103 billion. With the youngest generation in the workforce projected to increase from 21% in 2005 to 75% in 2025 (Arellano, 2015; Spiro, 2006) (making 75% of the workforce younger workers) the challenge to engage younger workers will continue to grow. Organizations are realizing they must adapt leadership practices to be effective with the younger workers (Balda & Mora, 2011; Lowe et al., 2011; Ng et al., 2010; Raja & Palanichamy, 2011).

Age

While much of the literature attributed the current challenge with younger workers to generational cohort differences, generational cohort alone is not an adequate identifier of work behaviors (Parry & Urwin, 2011). Age and career stage also have an effect on worker motivation (and therefore commitment) (Hitka & Balazova, 2015; Inceoglu et al., 2012; James, McKechnie, & Swanberg, 2011; Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004; Kooij, De Lange, Jansen, Kanfer, & Dikkers, 2011; Parry & Urwin, 2011). The literature revealed consequential differences in behavior between relative age (younger and older workers). Yet, Inceoglu et al. (2012) argued convincingly that age and generational cohort effect cannot be disentangled when considering worker motivation.

As the workforce ages, the range of ages in the workforce is expanding. This expanding age range is due at least in part to the size of the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations. In addition
to generational cohort, workers age, and a lack of retirement incentives also contribute to the age span of workers (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). Similarly, the literature argued that age and generational cohort are intricately intertwined (Inceoglu et al., 2012). For these reasons, relative age was used in this research to identify characteristics between age and organizational commitment, but generational cohorts (defined by age) was considered as containing interesting and descriptive characteristics which apply to age and commitment.

Research has not agreed upon the precise titles for the four generational cohorts in the workplace today, but generally accepts that, from the oldest to youngest, generations be referred to as the Veteran or Traditionalist generation, the Baby Boomers, Generation X (Gen X), and Millennials (also known as Gen Y, Echo Boomers, Internet, or Digital generation, Entitlement generation, or Nexters) (Eisner, 2005; Spiro, 2006). The exact date where each generation ends and begins is debatable and there does not appear to be an authoritative description for these dates.

Younger workers encapsulate Millennials and a portion of Gen X. Gen X is currently moving into leadership roles and Millennials are the next generation of leaders for organizations, but this shift in generational management and leadership styles may cause tension between people of different ages (Hagemann & Stroope, 2013; Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Organizations need to address these tensions and put systems in place to allow the organization to grow and foster the younger workers into leadership (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011).

**Leadership**

There are many styles of leadership and different reasons why a specific style of leadership may be used (Northouse, 2015). The literature suggested that servant leadership may be an effective style for leading and managing younger workers (Balda & Mora, 2011; VanMeter, Grisaffe, Chonko, & Roberts, 2013). Servant leadership possesses many of the characteristics that younger workers expect from leaders and when practiced, leads to effective leadership in secular organizations as well as faith-based organizations (Hyatt, 2010; Mueller, 2011; Savage-Austin &
Honeycutt, 2011; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Spears, 2004; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Younger workers appreciate more flexibility in their work schedule, desiring more direction, they are not as independent as older workers, expecting decisions to be more collaborative, and expecting more to be performed as a team (Deal et al., 2010; Fenich, Scott-Halsell, Ogbeide, & Hashimoto, 2014; Kapoor & Solomon, 2011; Lowe et al., 2011; VanMeter et al., 2013). Particularly in the nonprofit sector, which includes charities and faith-based organizations, younger workers are hesitant to step into new leadership roles (Cornelius, Moyers, & Bell, 2011; Froelich, Mckee, & Rathge, 2011; Johnson, 2009; Kunreuther, Kim, & Rodriguez, 2008), due to differing perspectives on leadership.

Organizational Commitment

Though there are many definitions for organizational commitment, Allen and Meyer (1996) defined organizational commitment as “a psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization” (p. 252) or more generally “a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to one or more targets” (González & Guillén, 2008, p. 402). Organizational commitment is realized as a combination of individual attitudes and behavior towards an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991) or occupation (Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Attitudes and behaviors combine to create three forms, or dimensions, of commitment: affective, continuance, and normative. Affective commitment relies on an individual’s desire to remain and be part of the organization. Continuance commitment is defined by an individual’s need to be committed because of the perceived cost associated with leaving. Normative commitment describes a perceived obligation to an organization through which individuals feel obliged to stay with the organization. These forms of commitment are not mutually exclusive; a person may simultaneously experience all three or only one or two subsets. All three dimensions of commitment are affected by work experience and affect organizational effectiveness, turnover and employee wellbeing (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002). One work-based factor that appears to have a
significant effect on commitment is leadership (Çelîk, Dedeoğlu, & İnanir, 2015; De Lima Rua & Costa Araújo, 2016; Erben & Güneşer, 2008; Gillet & Vandenbergh, 2014; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015; Rimes, 2011); how workers perceive leadership and their leaders affects commitment to the organization.

**Faith-based Organizations**

For the purpose of this research, the focus was on a specific classification of organizations, specifically faith-based organizations. As is true with so many scholarly topics, there is not a single definitive definition for faith-based organizations. One of the most researched perspectives comes from Bielefeld and Cleveland's (2013) study of 889 books and scholarly articles on faith-based organizations (FBO) dating back to 1912. Instead of a definition for FBOs, Bielefeld and Cleveland provided a typology outlining the broad set of characteristics defining many types of FBOs. Cnaan and Curtis, (2013) looked specifically at religious congregations as volunteer associations fitting the description of an FBO under Bielefeld and Cleveland's (2013) typology. Cnaan and Curtis agreed with Bielefeld and Cleveland, stating that “Providing an overview of one of the world’s most common and diverse social organizations is not an easy task” (p.7), and likewise provided a framework instead of a definition for understanding congregations as FBOs. What should be understood from both of these articles is that FBOs are organizations that provide a service based on their religious values, including, but not limited to churches. Terry et al. (2015) identified the ambiguity in understanding FBOs and eludes to a simple definition of FBOs as professional or paraprofessional religious organizations that formally provide social services or programs as part of their role as social service organizations, or in short, a religious organization that provides social services. This understanding of FBOs guided the current research.

**Problem Statement**

There are at least 282,000 (registered) faith-based organizations engaging about 2,500,000 workers, of which at least 798,000 are young (Millennial) workers, whose commitment to the
organization influences more than $103 billion (Arellano, 2015; Elson & Tarpley, 2015; National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2016; Roeger, Blackwood, & Pettijohn, 2011; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2006). The problem to be addressed was that younger workers are not seeking leadership positions (showing commitment) in faith-based organizations (Cornelius et al., 2011; Froelich et al., 2011; Johnson, 2009; Kunreuther et al., 2008; Rainer & Rainer, 2011), which will leave organizations without the experienced workers / leadership needed as older workers retire [at a rate of 10,000 every day (Herbison & Boseman, 2009)] Leadership affects organizational commitment (Çelîk et al., 2015; De Lima Rua & Costa Araújo, 2016; Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014; Ismail, Mohamed, Sulaiman, Mohamad, & Yusuf, 2011; Keskes, 2013; Leroy, Palanski, & Simons, 2012; Maheshwari, 2013; Pierro, Raven, Amato, & Belanger, 2013; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015; Rimes, 2011; Serim & Dikmen, 2014). Organizational commitment is indicative of higher performance, organizational effectiveness, lower turnover rates, and employee wellbeing (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996; Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Meyer et al., 1993, 2002; Zargar, Vandenberghe, Marchand, & Ayed, 2014).

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this quantitative research was to test Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) leadership theory of servant leadership characteristics and age of workers (paid and volunteer) in faith-based organizations, against organizational commitment based on Allen and Meyer’s (1990, 1996) commitment theory. The first (of two) independent variables was age (identified by birth year). The second of two independent variables, perception of servant leadership characteristics, was based on Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) servant leadership survey. The dependent variable was self-reported organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996). All variables were collected from a single survey.
Nature of the Study

The research was a nonexperimental, quantitative research design utilizing survey methodology based on faith-based workers’ age, servant leadership perception, and organizational commitment. The population for the survey was paid and volunteer workers of faith-based (religious nonprofit) organizations. The use of quantitative methods was appropriate, as a large group of people forms the population in which a generalization about the perceptions of leadership behaviors among faith-based workers of different ages was drawn (Creswell, 2013). Theory on leadership practices and organizational commitment already exists, ruling out the need for a qualitative study to develop theory (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2010).

A nonexperimental approach to this research was appropriate, as only current perceptions were being assessed, there was no treatment applied to the population (no manipulation of the independent variables) (Creswell, 2013). A fixed, correlational survey design (Walliman, 2006) was used to gather the data from faith-based workers (paid and volunteer) based on demographics and two survey instruments: Servant Leadership Survey (SLS) (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and the Three-Component Model (TCM) Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer & Allen, 2004). The independent variables (age and servant leadership effectiveness) were tested against the dependent variables (organization commitment) to assess the relationship between the independent and dependent variables using multiple regression. Linear regression is the best method to show a correlation between the independent and dependent variables, while multiple regression is the preferred method for identifying predictability in continuous (interval) data (age, SLS scores, and TCM scores). Additionally, generational cohorts (as defined by year of birth) were tested against organizational commitment with an ANOVA to determine if there was a specific interaction between cohorts and commitment. The population for the survey was paid and volunteer workers of faith-based (religious nonprofit) organizations in the Northeast US.
Research Questions

The following research questions were investigated:

R1: What is the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations?

R2: What is the relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations?

Hypotheses

The corresponding null hypotheses (H0) and alternative hypotheses (HA) for each research question were:

H01: There is no statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations.

HA1: There is a statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations.

H02: There is no statistically significant relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations.

HA2: There is a statistically significant relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations.

Theoretical Framework

The literature identified that there were differences between age in the workplace, that organizational commitment differs between younger and older workers, that leadership practices effect organizational commitment and that leadership practices affect younger workers differently. Leadership has a significant effect on organizational commitment (Çelîk et al., 2015; De Lima Rua & Costa Araújo, 2016; Erben & Güneşer, 2008; Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015; Rimes, 2011). Research identified that leadership creates a high level of commitment through empowering (enabling) followers to act (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Murari & Gupta, 2012;
Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). Leaders who cast a compelling vision for the future have the potential to build trust and enhance organizational commitment (De Lima Rua & Costa Araújo, 2016). Erben & Güneşer (2008) identified that encouragement from a leader fosters organizational commitment and Hyatt (2010) identified that there is a relationship between leadership practice and organizational commitment. From an inverse perspective, research conducted by Maheshwari (2013) found a negative relationship from a lack of productive leadership practices on organizational commitment.

Perceived leadership practices are a legitimate antecedent to predict organizational commitment across all ages (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, & Gade, 2012). Of the four generations in the workplace (Lowe et al., 2011), much of the literature agreed that the future leaders (younger workers) think differently about leadership and organizations than older workers (Balda & Mora, 2011; Carman et al., 2010; Clemons, 2014; Downing, 2006; Hagemann & Stroope, 2013; Penney, 2011; Valk, Belding, Crumpton, Harter, & Reams, 2011). The evidence seems conclusive; leadership, as perceived by the follower via leadership practices, impacts organizational commitment, potentially differently at different ages. In this context, this research investigated age and servant leadership as independent variables and organizational commitment as a dependent variable in faith-based organizations to determine if servant leadership practices effect organizational commitment differently at different ages.

This research was based on the Servant Leadership Survey (SLS) (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and the three-dimensional model of organizational commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). Meyers et al., suggested that attitudes and behaviors combine to create three forms, or dimensions of commitment: affective, continuance and normative. Affective commitment relies on the person’s desire to remain – the person wants to be committed. Continuance commitment is defined by the persons need to be committed – it is too costly to leave. Normative commitment describes a perceived obligation to an organization – the person believes there is an obligation to
be committed. These forms of commitment are not mutually exclusive; a person may experience all three or some subset of these simultaneously.

Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) identified eight characteristics of servant leadership: empowerment, accountability, standing back, humility, authenticity, courage, forgiveness, and stewardship. These eight servant leadership characteristics are what workers expect from credible leaders and when evident lead to effective servant leadership in secular organizations as well as faith-based organizations (Van Dierendonck, 2011). The literature suggested that leadership perception affects organizational commitment and that younger workers perceive leadership differently than older workers. The Servant Leadership Survey and the Three Component Model of Commitment Survey were both appropriate instruments to collect the data needed for this research. By comparing the age and servant leadership survey results with the commitment survey results of the participant, this research identified if a relationship exists between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

**Definition of Terms**

_**Affective commitment:** A commitment which relies on the person’s desire to remain – they want to be part of the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

_**Baby Boomer:** The generation with ages ranging from 53 to 71 years old (born between 1946 and 1964) (Arellano, 2015).

_**Commitment:** “a psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization” (Allen & Meyer, 1996, p. 252).

_**Continuance commitment:** A commitment defined by the persons need to be committed – it is too costly to leave (Allen & Meyer, 1996).
Culture: “The pattern of shared values and beliefs that help individuals understand the organizational functioning and thus provide them with norms for behavior in the organization” (Pinho, Rodrigues, & Dibb, 2014, p. 375)

Faith-based organization: A religious entity that provides social services and is exempted from income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC), but is registered with the IRS with National Taxonomy of Exempt Entity Core Code (NTEE-CC) X (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2016).

Gen X: The generation with ages ranging from 38 to 52 years old (born between 1965 and 1979) (Arellano, 2015).

Generation cohort: A group of people whose lives are impacted by the same historical events, having ages in the same range. The current generation cohorts in the workplace are the Veteran or Traditionalist generation, the Baby Boomers, Generation X (Gen X), and Millennials (as used).

Leadership: “Leadership is the process by which leaders and followers develop a relationship and work together toward a goal (or goals) within an environmental context shaped by cultural values and norms” (Perruci, 2011, p. 83).

Millennials: The generation with ages ranging from 17 to 37 years old (born between 1980 and 2000) (Arellano, 2015). Also known as Gen Y, Echo Boomers, Internet or Digital generation, Entitlement generation, or Nexters (Eisner, 2005; Spiro, 2006).

Motivation: An inner force that drives individuals to accomplish personal and organizational goals (Lindner, 1998).

Normative commitment: A perceived obligation to an organization – the person believes they ought to stay with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

Older workers: Workers who are 46 years old and older.
Organizational commitment: A force that binds an individual to a course of action with an organization (González & Guillén, 2008).

Servant Leadership: The drive of a person to serve first, followed by a propensity and need to lead also (Greenleaf, 1970).

Servant Leader: A leader who embodies to some degree eight characteristics: empowerment, accountability, standing back, humility, authenticity, courage, forgiveness, and stewardship (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

Worker: An individual who applies their time, either on a paid or voluntary basis, as part of an organization (as used).

Younger Workers: Workers between the ages of 18 and 45 years old.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Several assumptions were present at the outset of this research. It was assumed that participants answered the questions honestly; every effort was made to communicate the anonymity of the survey to encourage honest answers. To mitigate this assumption, the data was monitored for consistency during data analyses. There was also an assumption of a high rate of survey results, as the survey instrument was short, easy to use and administered on the Internet. If enough responses could not be acquired, the data analyses plan would need to be modified.

There were two other assumptions that foundationally influenced this research. First was that there would be a relationship between servant leadership and age (the two independent variables), such that younger workers would be more responsive to servant leadership. This assumption is founded, it was established by both Artley (2008) and Walker (2012) in their research with nonprofit and for-profit organizations that leadership styles impact younger and older workers differently. Though the existing research identified that different leadership practices
impact younger and older workers differently, this research was not based specifically on servant leadership. This assumption directed the design of the research towards correlation and regression.

Second was that faith-based organizations have a higher propensity for servant leadership than for-profit organizations, and therefore a better inherent understanding of servant leadership. Christian, faith-based organizations were the largest population to participate in the research. Christian leadership is strongly influenced by Jesus, whose style of leadership appeared to be servant leadership. It is therefore assumed that faith-based organizations are the most likely organizations to embrace servant leadership as an effective leadership style. This assumption did not lead to any apparent consequences during the research, but does limit the scope of the research to Faith Based Organizations. If this assumption were proven to be false, then this research would identify that there may be less apparent benefit on faith-based organizational commitment of employing servant leadership with younger workers.

Limitations

This research was limited to faith-based organizations, with the largest population from churches, and therefore may not be generalizable to other industries. In this population, the research focused more narrowly on paid and volunteer workers. The worker population posed a challenge for sampling, as there is no known list of volunteers for faith-based organizations. This challenge resulted in a convenience sample being used to collect survey data. Because convenience samples are non-probabilistic, the sample does not guarantee an unbiased sample of the population (Fricker, 2008; Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2002; Kothari, 2004). The research focused specifically on servant leadership, and therefore may not apply to other styles of leadership. The research was based in NY and drew largely from the New England and Atlantic states. Thus, the results may not be indicative of the entire U.S.A. or international population. FBOs are loosely defined, and not all FBOs are required to register with any authoritative or official organization,
leading to a challenge in quantifying FBOs. Therefore, the population for this research is limited to religious organizations that have filed with the IRS (the tightest definition of FBOs).

**Delimitations**

This research addressed topics that are multi-faceted and far too expansive to cover comprehensively in a single research project. Therefore, the boundaries of this research were limited to servant leadership, TCM commitment, workers in faith-based organizations in North East U.S. states, and a comparison of servant leadership behavior perception as self-reported by age on organizational commitment. Faith-based workers were limited to paid staff and volunteer workers, with no delineation between tenure, career stage or roles of workers. Servant leadership responses were based on the respondent’s perceptions of leadership, and were not intended represent an objective measure of leadership success. The TCM commitment scores were the aggregate score of the three components of commitment, each component was not considered individually. Age was relative to the year of birth, and was not intended to reflect the actual age of the respondent based on the month of birth. The analysis of the data was limited to ANOVA and multiple regression to identify relationships between the variables and collinearity between independent variables.

**Significance of Study**

**Reduction of Gaps**

Although there is ample research on servant leadership and organizational commitment there is less research that combines these variables with age and no specific research that applies these topics together to faith-based organizations. If the literature is correct, there is and will continue to be a shortage of leaders from the younger workers in secular as well as faith-based organizations, leadership perceptions impact organizational commitment (and therefore the decision to lead) and younger workers perceive leadership practices differently. The results of this research have the potential to inform practitioners on how leadership practices affect the
organizational commitment of younger workers in faith-based organizations, providing necessary understanding for current leaders and managers to affect leadership practices to attract younger workers. This is an important understanding and practice for leadership in the current climate and the research of leadership overall.

**Implications for Biblical Integration**

Jesus demonstrated servant leadership throughout all four gospels, and subsequently throughout the remainder of the New Testament, we see the disciples following that example. Jesus preached and practiced servant leadership long before Greenleaf (1970) made servant leadership popular. Christians strive to follow Jesus in all his ways, making servant leadership an obvious choice for Christian leadership style. Though the Christian leader may use other leadership styles as necessary, servant leadership should be the foundation of leadership behaviors for anyone following Jesus.

From a biblical worldview perspective, passing the leadership baton to the next generation is the responsibility of the previous generation. The early Christian church provides a significant example of this in practice (Hollinger, 2013). In both of the letters from Paul to Timothy and Titus, Paul spends considerable time exampleing leadership practices and preparing the next generation of leaders for the church (a faith-based organization). Examples of these practices are also found in the book of Acts, as the missional trips of Paul and the apostles describe their interdependence on their understudies. Acts 13 identified Paul and Barnabas working closely together, while Acts 15 identified a conflict between Paul and Barnabas over what seems to be a leadership practice concerning Mark. Clearly, Mark must form an opinion of both Paul and Barnabas’ leadership practices that had some impact on his commitment to the work at hand. Each of these examples illustrates the challenges that exist as Christians try to work together across generations and the importance of leadership practices in passing the baton.
Relationship to Field of Study

This research investigated how leadership impacts today's workers, both volunteer and paid. The pragmatic application of leadership in organizations produces a team that is engaged and committed to their organization (Davis & Rothstein, 2006; Lather & Jain, 2015; Maheshwari, 2013; Miao, Newman, Schwarz, & XU, 2014; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Employees who are more engaged and committed are more effective and efficient (Ismail et al., 2011; Kaur & Sharma, 2015; Khan, 2015; Maheshwari, 2013). As the next generation of leaders enters the workforce and begins to move into management and leadership roles (whether paid or volunteer), it is incumbent on existing leaders to provide leadership which engages and encourages commitment among younger workers to ensure continued effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. This research examined leadership behaviors that potentially lead to younger worker engagement and commitment.

Literature Review

There is plentiful literature on the topics of organizational commitment (the dependent variable), servant leadership (an independent variable), age of workers (an independent variable) and faith-based organizations (the population). This literature review attempts to bring these topics together in the context of how age and servant leadership relate to faith-based organizational commitment. The literature review begins with an overview of the relevant literature on faith-based organizations to lay the foundation for understanding faith-based workers, both paid and volunteer. With an understanding of faith-based workers established, an overview of leadership is presented from a historic and theoretical perspective. Under leadership, there is a focus on servant leadership as an independent variable of this research. The review then continues with a discussion of the other independent variable, age, and an interesting aspect of age – generational cohorts. The dependent variable organizational commitment is covered next from the aspect of traditional theories of motivation and theories of organizational commitment. The final section of
organizational motivation covers the Three-Component model of commitment. The literature review concludes with a review of contemporary studies on these variables.

**Faith-based Organizations**

The population for this research was based on faith-based organizations. While statistical information on nonprofit organizations (NPOs) is plentiful, there is limited data available regarding faith-based organizations (FBOs). Much of the research conducted on nonprofit organizations applies directly to FBOs as a subset of the nonprofit domain. McGrew and Cnaan (2006) stated that social science research has neglected researching religion and religious-based services for almost a century. Faith-based organizations are outlined and categorized in scholarly literature as religious organizations which provide social services, congregations, and other house of worship organizations (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013). There were several challenges in quantifying and researching FBOs. The first major challenge faced in categorizing organizations as faith-based were that not all religious organizations are explicitly religious, and the conceptualization of religion varies within organizations (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013; Smith & Sosin, 2001). In this case, Smith and Sosin (2001) suggested considering faith-based as faith-related organizations. Faith-related organizations are those that have specific funding from, historical ties with, a specific commitment to act as, or a specific commitment to work within a particular established faith. This notion of faith-related relaxes the adherence to a specific set of beliefs, instead defining that the faith-based organization has some relationship with faith.

A second significant challenge is that not all faith-based organizations are required to file with any authority (Elson & Tarpley, 2015). Cnaan and Curtis (2013) suggested that the faith-based community is one of most common and diverse social organizations in the world, resulting in faith-based groups defying most generalization. This makes it difficult to establish a complete, authoritative database of religious organizations and the total number of nonprofit organizations established in the United States is unknown (McKeever & Pettijohn, 2014). There are
approximately 2.3 million nonprofits (NPOs) in the U.S. (Elson & Tarpley, 2015), of which only 1.44 million are registered with the IRS (McKeever & Pettijohn, 2014). Of these 1.44 million, 963,234 are identified as 501(c)3 charitable organizations (accounting for two-thirds of all NPOs and $1.65 trillion of NPO revenue) (Blackwood, 2012; McKeever & Pettijohn, 2014). The most recent 2016 IRS data identified that there are 1,581,445 registered nonprofits, of which 17.83% or 282,008 are faith-based (religious related) organizations (National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2016). McKeever and Pettijohn identified that only charitable organizations with over $5,000 in receipts are required to file with the IRS, which is estimated as roughly 40% of charitable organizations. With these filing estimations, there may be as many or more than 600,000 charitable organizations not registered and therefore not accounted for in any statistics (although some register even though not required). These ambiguities in defining FBOs makes it difficult to count and measure the services they provide (Terry et al., 2015). In order to obtain quantifiable resources for research comparison, faith-based organizations were limited to IRS-registered charities in this research (including faith-based organizations with over $5,000 in receipts).

Even without firm definition over the last two decades, faith-based organizations have grown in prominence due to the availability of funding from government programs such as Charitable Choice, 1996 and the Faith-Based Initiative, 2009 (Bielefeld & Cleveland, 2013; “Faith-based programs,” 2011). Bielefeld and Cleveland suggested that most FBOs have three structures in common: organizational control, expression of religion, and program implementation. Organizational control defines how power is used and decisions are made in an FBO. Expression of religion is identified as organizational self-identity, participation in religious practices and organizational measures of success. Finally, program implementation is defined as the services the organization chooses to provide, the integration of faith into these services and the voluntary or required participation in specific religious activities. These are the structures that allow the FBO to grow and succeed at its purpose. The focus on FBOs in the last two decades have allowed scholars
to identify these structures and practitioners to improve on how these structures are implemented, leading to more success in FBOs.

**Legal boundaries.** In the U.S., the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) maintains the formal definition of what constitutes a nonprofit or not-for-profit organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). This code defines the nonprofit as an organization which must be organized and operated exclusively for exempt purposes, which includes: Charitable, religious, educational, scientific, literary, testing for public safety, fostering national or international amateur sports competition, preventing cruelty to children or animals (Exemption Requirements - 501(c)(3) Organizations, 2015). Additionally, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit may not inure (exist for the benefit of) any private shareholder or individual and may not engage in political activity. In addition to the 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, the IRS also provides another category for not-for-profit political organizations under IRC 527. The IRS uses the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entity Core Code (NTEE-CC) created by the National Center for Charitable Statistics to categorize nonprofits, NTEE-CC X identifies registered religious-related organizations (“National Center for Charitable Statistics,” 2016). The discussion herein is focused on the nonprofit which falls under U.S. IRC 501(c)(3), hereafter nonprofit with NTEE-CC X hereafter faith-based organization (FBO). From a legal standpoint, FBOs are a specific category of a nonprofit organization (NPO), and in the case of churches, has a separate set of legal requirements, that are subservient to the more generic nonprofit laws. From this perspective, it makes sense to consider FBOs as nonprofit organizations and also consider a broader perspective to observe a complete picture of the FBO as an organization.

FBOs (and nonprofits in general) are required to maintain bylaws or a constitution that identifies how the organization is governed. It is most often the constitution or bylaws which hold the FBOs governance structure, including mission (or purpose), vision statement, membership statement, statement of beliefs and any others governing artifacts. These artifacts are legally
binding for the FBO under the nonprofit and religious law and define the structure and design of the FBO as an organization.

**Measuring effectiveness.** A significant amount of research has been conducted on effectiveness in nonprofit organizations, and FBOs as a subset of the nonprofit domain. Daft (2016) provided a simple definition of effectiveness: the degree to which an organization accomplishes its goals. This definition relies on the organization having ascertainable goals. Starting with the purpose and mission of the organization, through the objectives defined from the strategic planning process to the individual goals of an employee, how effective an organization is will rely on how well its goals are identified, defined and communicated. While Daft focused on the academic definition of effectiveness, Mitchell (2013) approached the definition of nonprofit effectiveness from a practitioner's perspective.

Mitchell (2013) conducted research based on 152 U.S. nonprofit organizations and derived a multidimensional model to define nonprofit effectiveness. In Mitchell’s model, most leaders identify effectiveness as outcome accountability, with a minority of nonprofits identifying effectiveness as overhead minimization. Whereas outcome accountability can be considered as Daft’s (2016) definition of accomplishing the organization's goals (outcomes), overhead minimization is similar to efficiency. Efficiency is concerned more with *how* an organization accomplishes its goals than with *how well* an organization accomplishes its goals. To further complicate the understanding of effectiveness, other research disagrees on how to measure effectiveness and introduces other constructs like reputation (Liket & Maas, 2015).

Liket and Maas (2015) suggested that in spite of the difficulties in defining nonprofit effectiveness, there is an increasing demand for nonprofits to be transparent and held accountable for their performance (effectiveness). This demand for transparency causes nonprofits to fall back on the easiest data to find, financial data, further reinforcing the expectation that effectiveness is based on overhead. Liket and Maas conclude by agreeing with the findings of Mitchell (2013),
nonprofit effectiveness is measured by a multidimensional definition. Liket and Maas asserted that due to a lack of consensus on definition and measurements for nonprofit effectiveness, it is not possible to empirically validate a set of best practices for achieving nonprofit effectiveness. This conclusion leads the reader to believe that determining and improving nonprofit effectiveness is more of an art that a science. In spite of that understanding, there is evidence that organizational structure has an impact on every organization's effectiveness (Daft, 2016).

**Organizational structure.** Organizational structure is a strong influencer in organizational effectiveness. Organizational structure determines how the organization acts, relates and reacts both internally and externally. Understanding organizational structure is an important consideration for understanding how leadership works in an organization. Daft (2016) explained the tenets of organization structure as:

1. Organization structure designates formal reporting relationships, including the number of levels in the hierarchy and the span of control of managers and supervisors.
2. Organization structure identifies the grouping together of individuals into departments and of departments into the total organization.
3. Organization structure includes the design of systems to ensure effective communication, coordination, and integration of efforts across departments (Daft, 2016, p. 88).

These tenets of organizational structure apply to both vertical and horizontal organization structures in for-profit, nonprofit, political or hybrid organizations [a hybrid organization is one that straddles the for-profit and nonprofit structures (Haigh, Walker, Bacq, & Kickul, 2015)]. Not all organizations with the same structure perform equally as there are additional organizational variables that work within these structure principles to produce different levels of output.

Organizational variables inform structural design decisions which orchestrate organization leadership. Marquez (2015, p. 5) suggested that functional differentiation, professionalization, and
decentralization are three such variables for the nonprofit organization. Functional differentiation describes the level of specialization present in the staff. Professionalization refers to the experience and qualification of staff. Decentralization connotes the dispersion of authority to make decisions. How an FBO adapts these variables differ from FBO to FBO, but there is increasing pressure for the FBO to adapt structures and variables that reflect for-profit business structures. In order to sustain viability, civil society organizations develop a professionalized model that challenges their capacity to enhance participation and democracy. In doing so, they are compelled to organize themselves according to hierarchical business principles intended to maximize the efficiency of operations (Marquez, 2015). The adoption of hierarchical business principles is creating professionalized FBOs, characterized by expert staff, centralized governance and passive membership (Marquez, 2015). Marquez noted that leadership could be considered a fourth variable, but none of the literature accounts for how leadership and structure interact. Overall structural design, along with these three structure variables is deterministic in forming and managing the FBO's culture, decision structure, ability to innovate and change and infrastructure of process and technology as further described in the next sub-section.

**Culture.** As a significant influence in employee commitment, an organization’s culture has a dramatic impact on staff performance. Culture can be defined as “the pattern of shared values and beliefs that help individuals understand the organizational functioning and thus provide them with norms for behavior in the organization” (Pinho et al., 2014, p. 375). Pinho et al. suggested that culture plays a majority role in setting values and creating understanding, which leads to engaged workers. Culture can be assessed in four quadrants of competing values: collaborate, create, control, and compete (Cameron, 2009). This four-quadrant theory is used as the basis of the Organization Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) (Suderman, 2012). Suderman explained that the OCAI identifies whether an organization’s culture is externally or internally focused and focused on stability (control) or flexibility. Cameron and Quinn (2005) suggested that there is not
an ideal culture in one quadrant of the OCAI model, but that effectiveness is the result of matching an organization's culture to its strategy, value, and vision. The OCAI is useful in helping leaders understand and align organizations culture to enhance worker commitment. Worker commitment promotes retention, improves organization performance and increases stakeholder value (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2013).

Leadership plays another significant role in defining and molding organizational culture. Lutz Allen, Smith, & Da Silva (2013) provide an interesting study on the impacts of different leadership styles on organizational culture. Lutz Allen, Smith, & Da Silva suggest that leaders create culture by binding employees around a common purpose. Leaders who attempt to work within a given culture (and not affect significant change) are considered as transactional leaders, while the inverse (leaders who affect significant cultural change) are considered transformational leaders. Additionally, the literature identified that leaders set the psychological climate, which is a key indicator of culture and that is an antecedent for innovation (DeLia, 2011; Haigh et al., 2015; Mcdonald, 2014; Yoshida, Sendjaya, Hirst, & Cooper, 2014). The leader’s ability to set culture and implement organizational change is consistent throughout the leadership and culture literature, identifying the importance of leadership practices to organizational culture.

**Decision Structure.** FBO structure dictates how decisions are made. Centralization is the structural dimension of the organization, which determines the hierarchal levels that have the authority to make decisions (Daft, 2016). Daft explained that when an organization is centralized, its communication flows vertically up and down the chain of command and decisions are made near the top of the chain. When an organization is decentralized communication flows horizontally between divisions and decisions are made at the division level. Centralization allows for tighter control and efficiency while decentralization allows for learning and differentiated response. As an organization grows, particularly in geographic dispersion, it is likely to decentralize to allow for
regional decisions to be made. Organizations can combine the desired benefits from a centralized and decentralized structure into a hybrid structure (Daft, 2016).

Another way to conceive centralized versus decentralized structure is on a two-axis continuum (Taylor & Lansley, 2000). The vertical axis moves from local to central and the horizontal axis moves from standardized to non-standardized. Local control decentralizes decision toward the area of the organization that is responsible for implementing the decisions while central control draws all decisions in towards top management. Standardized activities are those activities governed by a tight set of rules while non-standardized activities have few rules and often require problem-solving. These two axes form four quadrants:

1. Hierarchy (upper left): standardized and central control
2. Federated (upper right): central control and non-standardized
3. Trade association (bottom right): non-standard and local control
4. Franchise (bottom left): local control and standardized

Hierarchy structure represents a vertical distribution of power up the chain of command in centralized organization and activities are governed by many rules. This hierarchy structure is effective when high efficiency is needed. The Federated structure represents an organization where major decisions are centralized, but work is non-routine and activities are influenced by decisions being made during problem-solving. The Federated structure results in greater autonomy existing at the local level (this structure most resembles the hybrid structure). Members of the Trade Association are more autonomous and have full decision-making authority for their organization. The Trade Association structure results in a network of related entities with no central power. The Franchise structure allows for autonomy, such that most decisions are made at the local level, but the activities are standardized enough that the local organization is using a product or service model dictated by the central organization. The autonomy of a franchise can make it difficult for local franchise managers to commit to super-ordinate goals of the central franchise management
(Berkowitz & Wren, 2013). It is important for franchiser and franchisee to come to a mutual understanding of the strategy, requiring good communication between the franchiser and franchisee.

Faith-based organizations today can be found using each of these four structures defined by Taylor and Lansley (2000). The small and international FBO would both be a common example of diverse hierarchy structure; whether central control rested with the constituents (small FBO) or the leadership (international FBO). FBOs that exist as part of a network example the trade association model, these FBOs are autonomous but usually, contribute to a central fund to provide for funding for the network. The newest addition to the FBO (particularly church) structure is the multi-site model. Multi-site FBOs can be implemented as a federated structure, a franchise structure or a hybrid of the two. FBOs in the franchise model engages in expansion by adding new locations and brand protection by maintaining concept uniformity (Piot-Lepetit, Perrigot, & Cliquet, 2014). FBOs engaging in the federated model of multi-site have a central governance that determines the design for services. These FBOs may have central staff to provide oversight for service, but staff residing at the local level implement the services. Each structure can be effective for the FBO if it is aligned with the organization's goals. An FBO’s structure determines the work environment for workers.

**Faith-based Workers**

Success attracts talent, which is at least partially accountable for the growth in the number of FBOs and the estimated 8.1 billion hours of volunteer time contributed (to all nonprofits) as of 2013 (McKeever & Pettijohn, 2014). Literature outlines the confluence of the non-profit employee and the volunteer workforce of both religious and secular organizations. Faith-based workers differ from for-profit workers in several specific ways. First, faith-based organizations have a unique set of stakeholders that differ from for-profit organizations. Also, faith-based organizations have the unique challenge of crossover between workers (staff and volunteer) and customers.
(constituents); it in not unlikely for the same person to be a worker and a consumer of the services provided by a faith-based organization.

**Stakeholders.** FBOs have a common set of stakeholders that differ from for-profit organizations. These stakeholders can be categorized into four groups: Donors, volunteers, customers, and members (Rupp, Kern, & Helmig, 2014). Rupp et al. suggest that these stakeholders divide into two categories: supply stakeholders and demand stakeholders. Supply stakeholders provide needed resources for the FBO; demand stakeholders consume the goods and services produced by FBOs. Often stakeholders can move between these categories, for example, donors may also be customers. Daft (2016) identified that one of the unique challenges for nonprofits is that they must market services that attract clients (customers), volunteers, and donors alike. Unlike for-profit businesses, FBOs rely on donors for income and volunteers for the workforce, providing a unique challenge for leaders attempting to build organizational commitment in FBOs. Rupp, et al. suggested that this diverse set of stakeholders complicates the decision-making process for the nonprofit, which may directly impact performance and commitment. In this context, customers may equate to the community who receives benevolence services from the FBO, or the casual attendee of a weekend service at a church, while a member is one who has accepted a formal relationship and obligation to partner with the FBO to further its mission - often as a donor. This example is complicated when the member is a customer and a donor, as each of these stakeholder roles engages with a different expectation. Two of these stakeholders have an intricate and complicated relationship with the FBO: board members and volunteers. Both board members and volunteers as unpaid workers are likely to be both supply and demand stakeholders, which can add to the challenge of managing this relationship.

**Board members.** All nonprofit organizations in the U.S. are required to have a board of directors (Janes, 2014) and this board of directors has the primary legal and fiscal responsibility for the organization. Bai (2013) argued that the board of directors plays a key role in the performance
of the nonprofit organization. There is evidence that characteristics such as the number of women on the board, board independence, board diversity, and whether directors are employee elected affect the overall performance of the organization (Bai, 2013). In Bai’s research, Bai provides evidence that boards’ size, as well as the background of board members, has an impact on nonprofit organizations. The involvement of the board in strategy and management also impacts nonprofit performance (Zhu, Wang, & Bart, 2014). It is incumbent on the board and FBO leadership to identify the appropriate size of the board, the correct level of involvement, and the right makeup of board members to ensure desired performance of the organization.

Volunteers. Volunteers are stakeholders. In many FBOs, volunteers are relied on as an extension of the paid staff, accomplishing a significant portion of the work that needs to be done in order to achieve the FBO’s mission. Volunteer roles can be varied and at times indistinguishable from paid staff roles (Bittschi, Pennerstorfer, & Schneider, 2015). For a small FBO, volunteers may be the majority of the staff, providing everything from janitorial services to supervision of other volunteers. Volunteers leading other volunteers can encounter excessive stress due to their management responsibility (Camplin, 2009), leading to volunteer attrition. These types of volunteer challenges decrease volunteer commitment and engagement, which has a negative impact on organizational performance (Vecina, Chacón, Marzana, & Marta, 2013). Vecina et al. suggest that it is common for nonprofits to increase the percentage of paid staff to facilitate organizational effectiveness. This tension between paid staff and volunteers leads to a decreased rate of volunteer commitment and engagement, which leads to reduced volunteer performance and further volunteer attrition, requiring more resources to be consumed to hire and pay regular staff. Such a dynamic makes volunteers an important stakeholder in nonprofit organizations; nonprofits rely on volunteers to accomplish the mission and, therefore, need to ensure the commitment and engagement of volunteers.
**Outsourcing workers.** One potential solution to the competition for staff and other resources is cooperation through outsourcing. Resource dependency theory is helpful in understanding the behaviors of a nonprofit as they pursue needed resources (Pope, Saigal, & Key, 2014). Resource dependency theory can be used to analyze how managers obtain crucial resources such as materials, money, people, support services, and technological knowledge (Rainey, 2009). Abdul-Halim, Ahmad, and Ramayah (2012) identified there is a considerable benefit for the small business to outsource non-core functions. In this way, small businesses that have not developed an expertise in a certain area can gain expertise from other organizations. This allows the small FBO to focus its constrained resources on core competency while still providing the perception of high quality with a lower cost for the outsourced function (Abdul-Halim et al., 2012). This concept is directly applicable to the FBO in managing worker commitment; outsourcing non-core competencies can focus the FBO on developing core competencies in workers, which aligns with the organization's purpose. Adopting an outsourcing strategy can assist FBOs in obtaining the perception of not competing while controlling the expenditure of critical and constrained resources, leading to improved worker commitment.

**Volunteer leaders.** The literature reveals several challenges with developing a volunteer workforce and feeding a leadership pipeline from this workforce. One challenge in developing volunteers as leaders comes with the lack of authority in a volunteer position. Most volunteers acting in a leadership position rely on influence instead of authority for their leadership (Camplin, 2009; Lockett & Boyd, 2012). This is a challenge when the volunteer leader doesn’t recognize that others follow them because they choose to, not because they have to (Camplin, 2009). Several leadership models can be used to attract, develop and retain volunteers by defining a structure for relationships between volunteers and leaders. Additionally, there are three areas where volunteer leaders benefit greatly from organizational development efforts: developing self, developmental influences, and group influences. Incorporating these needs into a volunteer leadership program
will promote the growth of an organization's volunteer leadership pipeline (Lockett & Boyd, 2012). Such leadership models are considered hereafter.

**Leadership**

Before discussing servant leadership (an independent variable of this research), an understanding of leadership theory in general is necessary. Winston and Patterson (2006) scanned 26,000 articles, identifying 160 unique documents with more than 1,000 constructs that they categorized into 91 discrete dimensions and which resulted in an almost 700-word definition of leadership. While the definition is complete, it may be challenging to apply this definition to the daily practice of leadership. Northouse (2015) suggested that there are as many definitions of leadership as there are people who have tried to define it, and asserted that there is no universal consensus on the definition of leadership. Yukl (2012) suggested that the essence of leadership is simply concerned with efforts to influence others to accomplish shared objectives. Although Yukl’s definition may provide a practical working meaning for leadership, it falls short of completeness when taken out of context. Instead of attempting to craft a complete definition for leadership, Northouse drew upon existing theories of leadership practice to build a more complete understanding. Northouse (2015) identified at least 12 separate leadership theories and approaches, several of which account for additional theories under one heading. Northouse’s work is a staple for the practitioner and the academic alike, identifying the current common theories and models of leadership, but like the definition of leadership, it is complex. The complexity of the field of leadership leads the practitioner and the scholar to search for simplicity, which may partially explain why leadership is decomposed into styles.

**History of Leadership Theory.** Though leadership as an acknowledged concept dates back to some of the earliest writing of societies (Abramson, 2007; Baron, 1999; Landis, Hill, & Harvey, 2014), the current understanding of leadership as an academic discipline deserving its own field of study is a relatively new concept. The debate has continued as to whether or not leadership should
be considered its own academic discipline (Riggio & Harvey, 2011). The literature identified the understanding of leadership in the early 1900’s as “the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation” (Ramsey & Moore, 1927, p. 124). This perspective stems from early writings such as Carlyle’s (1907) depiction of heroes, based on the Great Man perspective of leadership. This primitive perspective of leaders identified leadership as embodied by men who possessed inborn gifts; such as the biblical examples of Abraham (Abramson, 2007) and Moses (Baron, 1999). This perspective historically assumed divinely given gifts that made the leader capable of leading others. These gifts emerge as traits in more recent studies on leadership, leading to one of the first academic theories of leadership, the traits theory in the 1930s and 1940s (Abramson, 2007; Northouse, 2015).

Leadership theory moved from a focus on traits to a focus on behaviors as it matured into the 1950s and 1960s (Abramson, 2007), identifying significance in group leadership (Hemphill, 1949) in the 1940’s and leadership as relationship and leadership effectiveness in the 1950s (Northouse, 2015). Katz (1955) introduced the skills approach to leadership as yet another leader-centered paradigm, but unlike the traits approach, the skills approach argues that leadership can be developed. The 1960s brought the theories of situational leadership to expand on the trait and behavior aspects of leadership (Fiedler & Chemers, 1967). Early in the 1970’s Hersey and Blanchard (1972) built on the concept of situational leadership, while House (1971) simultaneously developed the Path-Goal theory of leadership. Situational leadership identifies that different situations require different forms of leadership, and Path-Goal theory focuses on influence with and motivation of followers. In parallel, Greenleaf (1970) developed the first organizational concept of servant leadership. Through the 1970s all leadership theory had been focused on the leader, or the follower (Northouse, 2015), until Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975) introduced the concept of vertical dyad linkage. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) expanded vertical dyad linkage into the Leader-Member Exchange theory in the 1990s. The remainder of the twentieth century saw the
development of transformational leadership, transactional leadership (Burns, 1978), visionary leadership (Westley & Mintzberg, 1989), strategic leadership (Mintzberg, 1994) and the beginning of the great debate over the difference between management and leadership (Mintzberg, 1989).

The first decade of the twenty-first century brought about the theories of authentic leadership (leading from the perspective of who one is) (Chan & Chan, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005) and adaptive leadership (how leaders and followers adapt to changing circumstances) (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009). The current decade (2010 – 2020) is marked by the pioneers of complexity leadership theory (CLT) (Hazy, 2006; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2002) and leading in organizations as complex adaptive systems (CAS) (Lichtenstein et al., 2006; Schneider & Somers, 2006). CLT and CAS explore leadership as more than the leader, more than traits or behaviors or relationships; rather the paradigm focuses on leadership as an emergent phenomenon of a non-linear system. CLT combines the theories of the leader, the follower, the relationship, and organizational structure with complexity and system theory to produce a unique outcome of the interactions between the actors and the organizational structures. CLT allows for different leaders to be effective in different organizational situations, while not necessarily being effective in other organizational situations. CLT as a theory of academic study is still in its infancy, there is as of yet no known empirical assessment instrument. From its historical beginning as a “great man” perspective to its current inception as a non-linear interaction between actors and a complex adaptive system, leadership theory continues to expand and grow deeper based on a scholarly foundation of research.

**Leadership Theory Based on Traits.** The trait approach to leadership is foundational to leadership theory. As one of the first systematic attempts to define leadership (Northouse, 2015), leadership traits theory assumed that leaders were born, not made, and the challenge for leadership was finding people with the right traits to lead (Horner, 1997). Traits refer primarily to a leader’s inborn character and personality (Landis et al., 2014). Some of the traits that have been identified
in the literature are: flexibility, resilience, and creativity (Hennessey, 1998), extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness (Cherry, 2017), emotional intelligence (Chopra & Kanji, 2010), cognitive abilities, emotional stability, extroversion, intelligence, motivation, openness, problem solving, self-monitoring, and social intelligence (Zaccaro, Kemp, & Bader, 2004), alertness, initiative, insight, persistence and responsibility (Stogdill, 1948), achievement, cooperativeness, influence, self-confidence, and sociability (Stogdill, 1974), drive, and integrity (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). These are only a small sample of traits used to assess leadership; Allport listed 4,000 personality traits (Pettigrew, 1999), not all of which are suggested as leadership traits but providing a framework for the psychology of personality traits.

There is no definitive list of leadership traits agreed on in the literature. Early scholarship argued that leadership was inherent in the psychological makeup of personality and motivation (Burns, 1978). In this fashion, the “great man” theory focused on the innate qualities of leaders, giving no credence to a person’s aptitude or propensity to develop as a leader. Many examples of leadership throughout history are attributed to the traits of the leader. As an example, Baron (1999) attributes Moses’ ability to lead to his personal traits. In contrast, Stogdill (1948) argued that there was not a consistent set of traits that differentiate leaders from non-leaders, opening the door for new explanations of leadership. The traits theory falls short by not considering situational and environmental factors that affect leadership (Horner, 1997), but continues to impact leadership theory as it provides a foundation for many (if not most) other theories of leadership. The introduction of skills and behaviors to traits leadership theory marks the next generation of leadership research.

**Leadership Theory Based on Behaviors.** The behavioral approach to leadership shifts leadership theory from focusing on the nature of the leader to what can be nurtured to produce better leadership. The skills approach bridges the traits approach with the behaviors approach. Katz (1955) suggested that there are 3 primary skills required for leadership: technical, human, and
conceptual. The leader can accomplish higher levels of competence in each of these skills with training and practice, mastery of these skills does not rely solely on the leader’s inborn traits, therefore leaders can develop aptitude and competence in leadership. The skills approach to leadership theory marks the historical departure from leadership being dependent on the Great Man perspective and suggests that skills (unlike inherent traits) can be learned. The adoption of newly acquired skills shapes behaviors, which affect leadership outcomes. Neuroscience indicates that regions of the cortex can be developed to assess risk and guide behaviors in anticipations of emotional consequences (Waldman, Balthazard, & Peterson, 2011), lending to the understanding that behaviors, like skills, can be developed.

Much of the recent research on leadership theory is guided by leadership behaviors, most notably in transformational and transactional leadership theory (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011), but also clearly in servant leadership (Beck, 2014). Srivastava, Bartol, and Locke (2006) argued that the relationship between a leader’s behaviors and the performance of the leader’s team is more complicated than simple behavior enactment. Contrarily, Yukl (2012) suggested that behaviors have been linked with a leader’s influence on team performance and outcomes. Yukl noted that a conclusive list of leadership behaviors is not agreed upon. Much of the research through the 1980’s was based on a two component meta-category of behavior, consisting of task-oriented behaviors and relations-oriented behaviors. Yukl develops these meta-categories into a hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behaviors, consisting of task-oriented, relations-oriented, change-oriented and external categories of behavior. Each of these categories has three or four behaviors that influence the performance of a team, and Yukl suggested that when used well and at the right time, provide a necessary framework for identifying leadership behaviors.

A considerable portion of the literature considers individual leadership behaviors and their outcomes. Lorinkova, Pearsall, and Sims (2013) agreed with Srivastava et al. (2006) that empowerment is a crucial leadership behavior for team effectiveness, in contrast to directive
leadership behavior. Likewise, change leadership relies heavily on the behaviors of leaders to guide their organization through change initiatives (BăeŞu & Bejinaru, 2013; Lutz Allen et al., 2013; Mehta, Maheshwari, & Sharma, 2014). In their seminal work on leadership practices Kouzes and Posner (1990) identified five behaviors that followers expect from their leaders in all styles of leadership: challenging the process, enabling others to act, inspiring a shared vision, modeling the way and encouraging the heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Posner & Kouzes, 1990). These behaviors have been assessed by thousands of survey respondents, showing empirically that these behaviors do affect leadership outcomes. Servant leadership is also based on leadership behaviors that align the leaders as a servant first (Greenleaf, 1970; Greenleaf & Spears, 2002; Spears, 1996, 2004). These behaviors are indicative of the practices of servant leadership (Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011; Stramba, 2003).

**Servant Leadership.** Servant leadership is an independent variable for this research. Servant leadership predates the industrial age as a practice. According to Hirschy, Gomez, Patterson, and Winston (2012), servant leadership is recorded as far back as the Zhou Dynasty (111 - 249 B.C.). The teachings of Confucius closely parallel the constructs of servant leadership (Winston & Ryan, 2008), and ancient monarchs acknowledged that they were in the service of their country and their people (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). The traditional tribal leaders of the Bedouin-Arab culture were expected to be both selfless - putting family and guests before personal desires and leader – settling inter-tribal disputes and upholding tribal honor (Cunningham, 2004). Jesus modeled servant leadership for his disciples over 2000 years ago. This history lays a social foundation which encourages and rewards individuals for being fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring, and kind to others (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2004). The current movement of organizational servant leadership that originates in the writing of Greenleaf (1970) and Burns (1978) is built on this social foundation (Polleys, 2002; Vinod & Sudhakar, 2011). The historical view of servant leadership leads to the current theory of servant leadership.
A Biblical foundation for servant leadership. Jesus taught his followers: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many, anyone who desires to be first, must be a slave” (Matthew 20:27-30, NKJV). Jesus contrasted the accepted leadership style to what he was teaching his disciples:

“You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45, NIV).

Jesus’ teachings are both the foundation and the consequence of true servant leadership (Christ-centered leadership).

Blanchard (2003) advocates that Christ-centered leadership consists of four aspects: heart, head, hands, and habits. The heart is the wellspring of life; this is where the leader’s motivation and intent comes from. The head is the command center of the leader’s belief system and leadership perspective. The hands are the outward application of the heart and head. The habits describe the continual practice of realigning commitment to vision and values with disciplines. Christ-centeredness is a foundational call to serve God first and keep Him as the primary recipient of our service. If one is Christ-centered one will follow Jesus’ example of prayer and giving burdens to God, whereby serving others more effectively by serving God first.

Servant leaders operate under the principle that empowerment and support of each person’s accomplishments are the leadership priority (Akuchie, 1993; Boone & Makhani, 2012; Greenleaf, 1970; Spears, 2004). This principle should apply to both life role leadership and organizational leadership as one focuses on Jesus as the leadership role model. Christ-centered servant leadership prioritizes serving God first then serving others, while man-centered servant leadership focuses on the needs of man first. While man-centered leadership is admirable, it misses the mark for the
Christian leader by not making service to God the first priority (Spears, 2004). Two of the primary roles of a servant leader are vision and implementation (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Boone & Makhani, 2012; Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Mueller, 2011; Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008; Stramba, 2003; Vinod & Sudhakar, 2011). As a Christ-centered servant leader, one can rely on God to provide the tools needed to live out these roles. As Christ-centered leaders with an eternal perspective of stewardship (John 10:26–28), leaders should set their sights appropriately on things beyond this world (2 Corinthians 4:18).

**Overview of current servant leadership applications.** Servant-leadership is not a strategy; it is something deeper than that (Boden, 2014). At its core, it is how the leader interacts with others (Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011). Farling et al. (1999) present servant leadership as a combination of behaviors (vision and service) and relationships (influence, credibility, and trust) (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006), identifying its similarity to transformational leadership. Graham (1991) describes servant leadership as the most moral outcome from four classifications of charismatic leadership: charismatic authority, personal charisma, transformational leadership, and servant leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). This alignment of charismatic leadership with servant leadership identifies that servant leaders are both likable and assertive. This perspective can also be seen in Beck’s (2014) research, where he observed that exemplary servant leaders were characterized by interpersonal competence – appropriate action based on care and awareness of others’ emotions, concerns, and behaviors, again showing the similarity between transformational and servant leadership. Though there are many similarities between transformational and servant leadership, the literature clarifies that the primary difference is that transformational leaders put mission before people and servant leadership puts people before mission.

Spears (2004) clarifies the actions of servant leaders, identifying how servant leaders put people first when he defined the first and most complete set of characteristics for servant leadership based on Greenleaf’s (1970) writings. Spears identified ten behaviors that are
identifiable in servant leaders as described by Greenleaf: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth and building community. Spears essentially clarified the concepts proposed by Greenleaf, which enable the consistent practice of servant leadership. Similarly, Boone and Makhani (2012), building off of Greenleaf (1970) and Liden, Wayne, Zhao, and Henderson (2008), identified five attitudes for servant leadership which enable the behaviors outlined by Spears: vision first, worthiness of listening, identify and develop talent, share power and build community. Boone and Markhani (2012) claim that these attitudes are inherent in the frame of mind that must exist for a servant leader to manage an organization. Though Greenleaf’s concept of servant leadership sets the course for leadership as a theory and practice, the expansion of Greenleaf’s concept into identifiable attitudes and behaviors allowed servant leadership to develop into a consistent model capable of future research and practice. These theories are the foundation on how to apply servant leadership in an organization.

The practice of servant leadership. Spears (1996) asserted that since the 1970s, the theories of servant leadership have been applied in six significant ways: as an institutional philosophy and model, as the basis for the role of trustee of education, as a step toward deepening community leadership, as a catalyst for experiential education, as a method in various kinds of education and training programs, and as a method for personal and spiritual growth. While Spears (1996) had a broad focus, encompassing the community, organizations, and individuals, Schneider & George (2011) drew a narrower conclusion from their research that servant leadership was uniquely suited for the management challenges of the volunteer organization due to its focus on empowerment. Likewise, Murari and Kripa (2012) claim that it is the responsibility of an organization to create a work environment where employees can be empowered by employing servant leadership principles. These authors provide a foundational understanding for servant leadership practice in an FBO.
Expanding beyond organizational management, DeSensi (2014) applies servant leadership to the moral improvement of ethos, character, and values in collegiate sports organizations. Similar to DeSensi (2014) and Cho and Kim (2014) apply the concepts of servant leadership to the development of sports teams through coaches as servant leaders via Riek, Hammermeister, and Chase’s (2008) description of servant leadership. Riek, Hammermeister, and Chase’s description of servant leadership included service, humility, trust, and inclusion. Though this description is simplistic, it provides a framework for leaders to practice servant leadership and assess their effectiveness of servant leadership with a simple scale. These authors, along with the history of servant leadership, identify that servant leadership has historically been practice based and is applicable to the leadership of different types of teams and organizations. Servant leadership has grown from a practice into an academic theory. Though servant leadership is still young as an academic theory, Bass (2000) predicts that servant leadership will play a significant role in developing the leaders of future organizations, due to its focus on learning and growth.

**Compared to other leadership styles.** While the goal of most leadership styles is the success of the organization with success of the individual as a byproduct, servant leadership is focused on the success of the individual, providing safe and strong relationships which produce commitment and reliability, producing success for the organization as an outcome. Servant leadership is most often compared to transformational leadership and authentic leadership and associated with LMX (Leader-Member Exchange) theory, as well as the traits and behavioral approach to leadership. Though each of these theories shares leadership as a common bond, they each differs slightly in their distinction of what leadership is and how it is exhibited. Each of these styles can share the definition of leadership we began with, and share a common history, but each style finds its uniqueness in a certain nuance. Transformational leadership’s nuance is based on inspiring followers to put the organization first (for the benefit of the organization), authentic leadership is nuanced by the leader’s transparency in their ability to lead, for LMX it is more about
the relationship between the follower and leader than about the leader’s self, juxtaposed to the 
traits approach - where it is mostly about the leader’s self, and behaviors approach that prescribes 
leadership is a set of behaviors that most leaders can learn (Northouse, 2015). The behavior and 
trait approaches can be applied to many of the theories of leadership; hence they are an approach 
more than a leadership theory.

*Transformational leadership theory.* Though there are several similar and accepted 
definitions of transformational leadership, Schneider and George (2011) encapsulate the meaning 
most succinctly as the ability to motivate and to encourage intellectual stimulation through 
inspiration. Transformational leadership encourages followers to go beyond their self-interest for 
the good of the team or organization, while servant leadership focuses on others’ needs as its 
highest priority, differentiating the intent between servant and transformational leadership (Bass, 
2000). Drawing on the similarity, Beck (2014) suggested that servant leadership is a 
transformational approach to create a more caring and just society. Schneider and George (2011, p. 
62) propose there are four major differences between servant leadership and transformational 
leadership: moral priority, member development, focus on outcomes, and style of influence. To 
contrast Schneider and George (2011), Sendjaya et al. (2008) suggest two primary distinctions 
between servant and transformational leadership. The first distinction is that transformational and 
servant leadership share the distinction of both being value-laden leadership styles, but servant 
leaders display a natural inclination to serve marginalized people. The second distinction is 
evident in the servant leader’s priorities: followers first, organization second, their own needs last. 
These two distinctions dictate the role of servant leaders as serving followers, juxtaposed to 
transformational leadership’s role of inspiring followers to pursue organizational goals (Barbuto & 
that focus is the distinction between servant leadership and transformational leadership. Van
Dierendonck (2011) sums up the differences eloquently in stating that servant leadership adds a component of social responsibility to transformational leadership.

*Authentic leadership theory.* Authentic leadership is a fairly new construct for leadership theory. Finding its place from transformational leadership research, authentic leadership emerged focusing on genuine and real leadership near the turn of the twentieth century (Northouse, 2015). Servant leadership and authentic leadership have many commonalities, including: humility (Winston & Patterson, 2006; Yukl, 2012), follower development (Beck, 2014), value-based and positive modeling (Sendjaya et al., 2008), honesty, altruism, compassion and fairness (Yukl, 2012), authenticity (Van Dierendonck, 2011), and integrity, trust and respect (Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011). Mcfarlane (2011) takes the concept of similarity one step further and claims authentic leadership encompasses shared leadership, servant leadership, and transformational leadership, in this way containing all the exemplary practices of leaders that create and foster satisfaction and positive influence with followers. Leroy, Palanski, and Simons (2012) offer a simple understanding of authentic leadership as being true to one’s self which enables one to be true to others, keep one’s word and not misrepresent oneself. Like servant leadership, authentic leadership exemplifies behavioral integrity, which leads to positive organizational behavior which drives effective performance in the workplace. The primary difference between servant and authentic leadership is that the former focuses on the growth of others, while the latter focuses on being true to one’s self in order to lead well.

*Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory.* The relational aspects of LMX share many commonalities with servant leadership, as servant leadership hinges on the relationship between leader and follower. In general terms, most leadership theory considers who the leader is and how the leader's behaviors affect the satisfaction, performance, and commitment of group members. In contrast, the Leader Member Exchange (LMX) model examines the quality of the relationship between the leader and each individual member of the group (Bass, 2000). LMX theory focuses on
relationship, interpersonally between the leader and the individual, making it particularly well suited for leadership in volunteer organizations. LMX theory also shares the foundational underpinnings based on relationship with servant leadership theories. LMX relationships are identified in two groups: the in-group and the out-group. According to LMX theory, a strong positive relationship with a person places them in the in-group, while a weak or negative relationship with a person places them in the out-group. Leader-member relationships in the in-group benefit from a positive interpersonal relationship, while relationships with individuals in the out-group deteriorate. Leaders will categorize individuals into either the in or out-group based on leadership stereotypes, performance, communication, and personality differences or similarities (Bass, 2000). Similar to servant leadership, even though Leader-Member Exchange theory is over 45 years old, it is less well known than many other leadership theories (Bass, 2000).

LMX began as an alternative approach to improve leadership based on relationships and has grown into a systematic theory of effective leadership through maturing leadership relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). LMX Leadership is represented as concentric circles of three domains: follower, leader, and relationship. In the leader-based domain, the emphasis for leadership is placed on the leader. Skills theory, servant leader theory, traits theory and other similar theories of leadership can be applied to improve the efficacy of the leader. The follower-based domain focuses on issues that affect members of the leader's group, based on the leader. In the relationship-based domain the dyadic relationship between the leaders and the follower is based on the reciprocal influence between followers and leader. Because of the inherent relationship between leaders and constituents, relationship-based theory should have a significant impact on most leadership models, including servant leadership. The continued focus of LMX theory relational, moving from the existence of individual leader-follower relationships, through building those relationships, to applying those relationships in a group context for team formation.
LMX has also been considered a relational leadership theory based on interpersonal trust (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000). Despite the fact that leadership and trust are intricately intertwined, only a small amount of research exists on the differences and similarities between these two constructs. Trust has been identified as a characteristic of dyadic relationships and is, therefore, a common antecedent and/or result of LMX leadership (Brower, et al., 2000). LMX is based on the understanding that (unlike behavioral and situational theories) leaders do not treat all followers the same. This difference in treatment can be associated with trust. The development of trust between leader and follower provides a significant impact on the relationship.

Brower, Schoorman, and Tan (2000) build a model of relational leadership based on four constructs: LTS_L, LTS_S, STL_L, and STL_S. LTS_L is defined by the leader's perception of the trustworthiness of the subordinate. LTS_S is defined by the subordinate's perception of how much the leader trusts in him/her. STL_L is defined by the leader's perception of how much the subordinate trusts in him/her. Finally, STL_S is defined by the subordinate's perception of the trustworthiness of the leader. In these constructs, L represents the leader and S represents the follower (subordinate). For example, LTS_L could be read as “the leader’s perception (subscript L) of Leader to Subordinate trustworthiness”. Brower, Schoorman, and Tan concluded that trust is a relational concept, and when a positive relationship exists LTS_L and LTS_S converge. In other words, a positive relationship between the trustor and trustee (a positive perception of the leader towards the trustworthiness of the subordinate) and the reciprocal will lead to increased trust (willingness to be vulnerable) between leader and follower, which produces healthy risk-taking behaviors such as delegation by the leader and innovation by the follower.

Just as Brower, Schoorman, and Tan (2000) built on Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) work, Werbel and Henriques (2009) expanded LMX to include the concept of the social (relational) exchange within supervisor-subordinate dyadic relationships by comparing social exchange theory and trust. Werbel and Henriques built on Brower’s et al. research to include the STL constructs,
showing how STL and LTS rely on different conditions for trust and how STL and LTS each link the different conditions to LMX. Brower et al. conclude that in social exchange (like LMX) there is little overlap of the conditions of trust between STL and LTS and that trust is often given by leaders based on the ability of the follower to carry out a task. In contrast, subordinates are more likely to give trust when fairly rewarded. Supervisors and subordinates can engage in these activities to develop a trusting relational leadership style that reflects LMX theory. The focus on trust and relationship between the supervisor and subordinate provides a similarity to servant leadership theory.

**Theory and Measurement of servant leadership.** Van Dierendonck (2011) claims that servant leadership is the least well-defined theory of leadership, lacking an agreed upon definition, or framework. Van Dierendonck also laments the confusion about operationalization, identifying that there are at least nine separate instruments for the measurement of servant leadership, stemming from the majority of scholarly writing on servant leadership being prescriptive, not descriptive. Spears (1995) made a significant step in quantifying servant leadership by defining 10 aspects based on Greenleaf’s (1970) writings. Refining his earlier writings, Spears (2004) clarifies the 10 practices of servant leadership as listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community. Spears asserted that these were the characteristics containing Greenleaf’s understanding of servant leadership. Laub (1999) developed a slightly different model than Spears, Laub’s model consists of six servant leadership practices: Valuing people, building community, providing leadership, developing people, displaying authenticity and sharing leadership. Despite the similarity, most of the literature describes characteristics of servant leadership similar to those developed by Spears (Parris & Peachey, 2013), but there have been relatively few attempts to measure antecedents and outcomes of servant leadership to date.
Green, Rodriguez, Wheeler, and Baggerly-Hinojosa (2015) developed a comprehensive review of current quantitative servant leadership instruments. In their research, Green, et al. identified a significant interest in servant leadership theory in the twenty-first century. The number of dissertations published on servant leadership rose from 42 in the 1990s to 294 in the 2000s, peer-reviewed articles rose from 47 to 136 and published books rose from 100 to 265 in the same time period. From these publications, six different instruments emerge to measure servant leadership, each with its own servant leadership model. The earliest instrument cited is based on Laub’s model (described above). The remaining five models and instruments are: The Servant Leadership Scale (Ehrhart, 2004), the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006), the Servant Leadership Scale (Liden et al., 2008), the Servant Leadership Behavior Scale (Sendjaya et al., 2008) and the Servant Leadership Survey (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). While each of the instruments is based on a slightly different model of servant leadership (diverging from Spears’ (1996) model), the most recent model and instrument to measure servant leadership claims to be the only valid and reliable instrument presenting a concise scale representing the essential characteristics of servant leadership within a multi-dimensional framework directly linked to Greenleaf’s ideas (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Van Dierendonck’s and Nuijten’s model is based on eight dimensions of servant leadership: empowerment, accountability, standing back, humility, authenticity, courage, interpersonal acceptance (forgiveness), and stewardship. They suggest that when these dimensions are present in the leader’s behaviors, they are effectively practicing servant leadership.

_Empowerment._ Research has linked leadership, empowerment, and organizational commitment together (Ismail et al., 2011). Empowerment promotes volunteer engagement (Lockett & Boyd, 2012) and the lack of empowerment is a common concern of younger workers (Gallicano, Curtin, & Matthews, 2012). Murari and Gupta (2012) identified that worker empowerment is dependent on the leadership style of the organization. Empowerment can be defined as a process,
which makes the organization flexible, responsive and promotes a climate for continuous learning. Empowerment is further identified as developing a culture that values initiative, honesty and achievement, whereby encouraging the employees to take more responsibility through sharing of power and responsibility by working together (Murari & Gupta, 2012). Murari and Gupta suggest that empowering employees is a leadership path composed of telling, selling, coaching, enabling, and empowering (in that order). Murari and Gupta’s (2012) findings support earlier research in that there was a correlation between listening, empathy, awareness, persuading, conceptualizing, foresight, developing people, and building community and empowerment. These results also align with Greenleaf’s (1970) and Spears’ (1995) behaviors of servant leadership.

In the development of the Servant Leader Survey, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) identified empowerment as a motivational concept focused on enabling people and encouraging personal development, aimed at fostering a proactive, self-confident attitude among followers, giving followers a sense of personal power. Leadership behaviors that facilitate empowerment include information sharing, coaching, and encouraging self-direction. These behaviors stem from the leader’s belief in the values of the follower and recognition of their abilities, competence, and aptitude. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten base the empowerment questions of the servant leadership survey on Konczak, Stelly, and Trusty (2000). Konczac, Stelly, and Trusty refer to empowerment as a management process of granting of power or delegation of authority to a subordinate. Their research defined nine separate dimensions of empowerment, of which one was organizational commitment, whereby loosely correlating servant leadership (via empowerment) to organizational commitment.

**Accountability.** Though provided less coverage in the literature than empowerment, accountability is the balancing factor for empowerment. Accountability provides the boundaries for one to achieve the goals they are empowered to achieve (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Holding people responsible for the outcomes they can control provides the mechanism for
delegating power. Accountability can be defined as taking responsibility for life and decisions (Van Dierendonck, 2011) and practiced as giving people clear goals, providing development for needed skills to achieve those goals and holding them responsible for the outcomes of those goals. Gonzalez and Guillen (2008) define accountability simply as the willingness to account for actions. The balance of goals and accountability with flexibility has been identified as leading to organizational commitment (as loyalty) in younger workers (Spiro, 2006). This is in contrast to Alexander and Sysko’s (2013) claim that younger workers generally lack accountability. Servant leaders bring accountability into their working relationships, both for their subordinates and as a discipline for their own leadership.

Research identified that leaders who are held accountable (by themselves or others) build trust with their teams (Xiong, Lin, Li, & Wang, 2016). Younger workers expect their leaders to be accountable for their decisions (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011) and desire authenticity in their leaders; Sendjaya et al. (2008) pair accountability and vulnerability together as key elements of the leader’s authentic self. Stramba (2003) suggested that most forms of leadership value holding others accountable, but servant leadership values freedom and accountability for service. In this juxtaposition, accountability moves from a thing done to someone else, to a thing done for and with someone else. When considered in this light, accountability becomes an important part of a high quality dyadic interpersonal relationship, proving a sense of accountability to both oneself and others (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Whether providing accountability or practicing accountability, servant leaders ensure accountability is a common value and behavior. Interestingly, even though accountability is addressed extensively in the servant leadership literature, the Servant Leadership Survey is the only instrument that measures it as a dimension.

Standing back. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, (2011) suggest standing back as the ability for the leader to step back and allow their constituents to learn and accept consequences. This may mean that the servant leader coaches a person in doing a task well but allows for the individual to
find their own way to accomplish a task, instead of insisting that it is done the way the leader would do it. The ability to step back removes the leader from focus and places the focus on others, allowing followers to accept responsibility for their mistakes and receive recognition for their accomplishments.

Recognition is a means to express that a worker's efforts are valued (Keskes, 2013), and the worker is cared about and valued as a person (Hyatt, 2010). Appropriate recognition has been positively correlated with motivating volunteers (Bowers & Hamby Jr., 2013; Hager & Brudney, 2011) and younger workers alike (Aruna & Anitha, 2015; Balda & Mora, 2011; Bristow, Amyx, Castleberry, & Cochran, 2011; Martin, 2005). Much of the literature identified praise and recognition as key antecedents for productive younger workers (Alexander & Sysko, 2013; Gallicano et al., 2012; Spiro, 2006). Maheshwari (2013) identified the action of taking credit for others work (not stepping back) as a form of tyrannical leadership and bullying, leading to a toxic workplace and a decrease in worker commitment. Inversely, stepping back and allowing others to receive due recognition increases worker’s commitment (De Lima Rua & Costa Araújo, 2016; Maheshwari, 2013).

_Humility_. Humility is held by some in reverence as a leadership trait. Humility is the ability to keep one's weaknesses and strengths, and accomplishments and failures, in balanced perspective and appreciate other’s abilities, accepting them for who they are (Patterson, 2003; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Collins (2001) identified in his research that humility was the differentiating factor of mature leaders and separated a charismatic leader from a level 5 (mature and able to establish lasting leadership) leader. Humility is also one of the primary differentiators between transformational leadership and servant leadership, allowing the servant leader to focus on others rather than his own issues (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Humility allows the servant leader to admit her limitations and weaknesses and seek contributions of others who offset those limitations (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Humility is often seen practiced by servant leaders in their ability
and preference to work behind the scenes, supporting those they serve (Sendjaya et al., 2008). The ability to believe and express “it’s not all about me” is the hallmark of servant leadership.

Humility is considered within some of the literature as a virtue (González & Guillén, 2008; Mueller, 2011) or a value (Winston & Patterson, 2006; Yukl, 2012) or a human quality (Shiri, 2015). Winston and Patterson include humility extensively in their definition of leadership and identified the paradox posed by leaders in being both confident and humble; Collins (2001) and Mueller (2011) also recognize this paradox in their research. Sun (2013) identified humility as an antecedent to servant leadership and one of the four servant leadership identities, along with calling, empathy, and love. Interestingly, for having such a large part in the literature, all the way back to Greenleaf (1970), and being considered a hallmark of servant leadership, van Dierendonck and Nuijten’s (2011) SLS is the only instrument to include humility as a measure of servant leadership.

**Authenticity.** Authenticity, along with humility and interpersonal acceptance are the primary differentiators between servant leadership and transformational leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Authenticity places adherence to being who one is over adherence to a professional role, or in other words, expressing the true self (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Authenticity is often observed as honesty, vulnerability and doing what is promised (integrity); in practice, it is accurately representing both privately and publicly one’s internal being (Van Dierendonck, 2011). The idea of authentic self is common to leadership literature. Northouse (2015) identified authentic leadership as a newer style that provides followers with the assurance that their leaders are trustworthy, honest and good. Sendjaya et al. (2008) draw out the similarities between authentic leadership as a style and servant leadership in their explicit reliance on positive moral perspective, self-regulation, self-awareness, positive modeling and authentic behaviors. It is often in this characteristic of servant leadership that the leader’s spirituality is evident as a public
practice of an internal belief. Being true to oneself in all practices is encouraged by the servant leader.

The literature identified authentic leadership and behavioral integrity as drivers for organizational commitment (Leroy et al., 2012). Authenticity is seen as the opposite of image management and moderates the relationship between trust in a leader and affective commitment towards an organization (Xiong et al., 2016). Trust stemming from authenticity leads to team cohesion (Rua & Araújo, 2016) and the ability to enact change, which is a concern for Millennials and Gen Xers (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Authenticity leads to inspiration, improves recruitment, taps into emotional drivers as incentive and encourages participation in younger workers (Bond, 2016). Millennials (and Gen Xers to a lesser degree) demand authenticity from their leaders (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011). Authenticity shapes and impacts each relationship of the servant leader, modeling the leader’s integrity and building the necessary trust to lead.

**Courage.** According to Greenleaf (1970), courage is an important distinguisher between servant leadership and other styles of leadership. The servant leader possesses the courage to challenge the efficacy of conventional working behaviors (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Similar to the leadership practice identified by (Kouzes & Posner, 2006) of challenging the process, the servant leader’s courage in challenging the status quo leads to creativity and innovation in the organization. Courage in the workplace is the ability to push through the resistance to change in order to pursue what the leader believes is right, even when the leader’s job is at risk (Yukl, 2012). Stramba (2003) suggested that leading as a servant is not an easy task, and this style of leadership itself requires courage. Servant leaders practice courage in many ways, having the courage to believe in others even when they fail, courage to put others first even when they accomplish the mission imperfectly, courage to be authentic and vulnerable even in the face of criticism, courage to do what is right even when it is not popular and courage to include others even when the leader thinks the solution is clear.
Forgiveness (interpersonal acceptance). This dimension of the SLS began as interpersonal acceptance but during validity testing, the factor analysis showed enough overlap with other dimensions that only the items pertaining to forgiveness were kept in the SLS instrument. Interpersonal acceptance is the seventh dimension of Van Dierendonck’s (2011) model and defines the servant leader’s ability to understand where others are coming from and value them for their differences. Forgiveness relies on the ability to accept people for who they are and forgive their mistakes. Interpersonal acceptance and forgiveness lead to understanding and empathetic behavior in the leader. A leader’s ability to perceive social behavior differently and extend interpersonal acceptance is based on her cognitive complexity. Leaders with higher cognitive complexity can differentiate more dimensions of social behavior and make more accurate judgments on social situations (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Interpersonal acceptance may be the most significant differentiator between servant leadership and all other styles of leadership. The ability to accept and value other’s unique gifts and talents, and appreciate personal differences (diversity) as a needed contributor to the team effort allows the servant leader to serve their team by serving the individual first. The strong sense of empathy needed to forgive and accept would suggest that this dimension of servant leadership may align with Greenleaf’s assertion that servant leaders are empathetic (Spears, 2004).

Stewardship. Stewardship is one of the servant leadership characteristics conceived by Greenleaf (Spears, 1998). Block (1996, p. 6) defined stewardship as “the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating in service, rather than in control, of those around us. Stated simply it is accountability without control or compliance”. This definition lends perfectly to the perspective of servant leadership and underpins Van Dierendonck’s and Nuijten’s (2011) use of stewardship as a servant leadership dimension. The idea that leaders may not be motivated by their own goals (agency theory), but instead are motivated to align with the goals of the organization (stewardship) (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997) gives a unique
Running head: SERVANT LEADERSHIP, AGE AND COMMITMENT

perspective to servant leadership among the leadership styles. Davis, Schoorman, and Donaldson suggest that the motivation which drives leaders to be good stewards is intrinsic, versus an extrinsic motivation to pursue their own utility. Regardless of the motivation, effective stewards provide the perception that they are competently altruistic. Younger workers expect stewardship to be an aspect of their leaders (Arellano, 2015; VanMeter et al., 2013).

Though servant leadership is closely related to LMX and transformational leadership, servant leadership goes beyond transformational and LMX leadership in aligning leaders’ and followers’ motives (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's servant leadership model, derived from their research, suggested leadership is not a position or necessarily a set of traits, but instead a collection of motivations and behaviors. Though there are different models and instruments used to measure servant leadership, the SLS is the most recent and closely aligned with Greenleaf’s inception of servant leadership. The SLS is validated in both criterion and content from surveys in two countries, four studies, eight samples, and 1571 participants (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Through the course of the four studies, the SLS was shown to have good reliability in internal consistency for all scales using Cronbach’s alpha. The SLS is, therefore, the chosen instrument to analyze servant leadership perception in this research.

Age

Age is an independent variable for this research. The literature considers the age of workers as older and younger, with each category being relative to the other (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). There does not appear to be a specific age that delineates older workers from younger workers (James et al., 2011). While relative age is the obvious delineating factor between older and younger workers, there are several other factors that should be considered in age delineation. One delineation between older and younger workers is participation in a generational cohort (Schwadel & Stout, 2012), another may be seniority (as time in position) (Hitka & Balazova, 2015), and yet another may be career stages (Inceoglu et al., 2012; Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004; Kooij et al., 2011).
Finally, a practical consideration for whether a worker is older or younger is found in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FSLA), which protects workers between the ages of 40 and 70 from unfair discrimination. Since younger age and older age are always relative to each other in the literature, it is left to the researcher to define the age barriers for their research. Though younger and older are not used categorically in this research, as a point of reference younger workers will be between the ages of 18 and 45, and older workers will be above 45 years old. This delineation makes sense for this research, since Millennials will be of age 45 by the year 2025, which is one of the statistics considered. At current, this identifies Millennials and a significant portion of Gen X as younger workers.

While there was limited research identified in the literature which correlates (negatively or positively) specific ages with leadership, there was reasonably more research that compares age and motivation in the workplace. Where age is used in leadership research, it is typically a control variable or moderating factor (Oshagbemi, 2004; Walter & Scheibe, 2013; Zacher, Rosing, & Frese, 2011), or aligned generationally. Oshagbemi (2004) suggested that it is important to consider age in the study of leadership because there is no longer a tight correlation between age and leadership roles. While top management teams of many organizations were once homogenous in regard to age, in today's organization's top management teams are often multigenerational. The effect of this diversity in age among top management is evident not only in the different experiences of the generational cohort, but also impacts the leader's style (Korac-Kakabadse, Korac-Kakabadse, & Myers, 1998). Korac-Kakabadse et al. identified that older workers were more mature and often more adept at seeing challenges and initiatives through to the end, correlating to higher organizational effectiveness.

Age has also been identified to affect managers ability to make decisions. Uzonwanne (2016) asserted that the manager's primary role is decision maker. In considering the global economic crisis of the first decade of the twenty-first century, Uzonwanne suggested that at least
some of the crisis was due to irrational decisions of executives in the public and private financial sectors, implicating the executive's lack of experience due to their age. Uzonwanne conducted research that identified demographic differences of leadership style with gender and age in managers. The findings identified that gender has little impact on leadership style and age had a statistically significant impact on leadership style, with older managers/leaders favoring a rational decision-making model and showing more patience with short-term setbacks. Rose and Gordon (2015) identified that these differences in age are due at least in part to cognitive changes that occur with age. Rose and Gordon identified that fluid intelligence is more common in younger managers, while crystallized intelligence is more common in older managers. This difference in cognition allows younger managers to adapt to changing environments more easily while older managers are more adept at reflecting on learned experience. This cognitive difference appears to have little to do with the shared experience of generational cohorts, but instead is specific to age.

In contrast to leadership and specific age studies, there has been an abundance of studies regarding age groups with similar life-defining events (generations or generational cohorts). In fact, it seems the aging workforce is measured in terms of older and younger generations. Generational cohorts provide an interesting way to label age groups and often shows statistical significance between generations in leadership studies. Schwadel and Stout (2012) argued that many of the characteristics (of social capital) attributed to generational cohort may be the effect of relative age, and may shift over time. In short, relative age and generational cohort may both influence behavior.

For the reasons stated above, age is used as an independent variable, both as an interval variable to show relationship of relative age and commitment, and an ordinal variable to identify relationship between generational cohorts and commitment. Age (identified by birth year) has been used successfully as an interval and ordinal variable with generational cohorts in previous research (Fenzel, 2013; Walker, 2012). Using age as a continuous, independent variable will
identify differences within and between the generational cohorts, and allow linear regression to be run on the data. The linear regression may show predictive trends for age and organizational commitment. Using age as an ordinal variable will allow an analysis of variance to be assessed between the four cohorts and organizational commitment.

**Multigenerational Workplace.** As the workforce ages, the range of ages in the workforce is expanding. There is a direct relationship between age and participation in a generational cohort. The literature considers this span of ages in four different generations, each defined by different birth years and characteristics. Much of the literature agreed that the boundaries between the four generations in the workplace today are not mutually exclusive, there is likely overlap between the generations. Much of the literature agreed that future leaders think differently about leadership and organizations than previous generations (Balda & Mora, 2011; Carman et al., 2010; Clemons, 2014; Downing, 2006; Hagemann & Stroope, 2013; Penney, 2011; Valk et al., 2011), but much less of the literature agreed on how to define the generation cohorts. It is certain that for the last decade there have been four generations in the workforce (Lowe et al., 2011), but it is not as certain what these generations are called or when they start and end. According to Arellano (2015), from the oldest to youngest, the generations have been referred to as the Veteran or Traditionalist generation (currently 72 years and older), the Baby Boomers (currently 53 to 71 years old), Generation X (Gen X) (currently 38 to 52 years old), and Millennials (currently 17 to 37 years old) (also known as Gen Y, Echo Boomers, Internet, or Digital Generation, Entitlement Generation, or Nexters) (Eisner, 2005; Spiro, 2006). Millennials defy categorization as a rule; Martin (2005, p. 40) quotes a 22-year-old Millennials as saying

“We can’t name a generation like ours as easily as others because we aren’t as easy to typecast as the Boomers or Gen X. Maybe we should be called X-Squared since our lives seem to be so much more diverse than [those] of our predecessors!”
While the age groups for the Veterans and Boomers were fairly stable in the literature, Gen X starts somewhere between 1964 to 1967 (50 to 53 years old) and ends somewhere between 1977 to 1980 (37 to 40 years old). The Millennials have the least certain time boundaries, starting somewhere between 1978 to 1982 (35 to 39 years old) and ending somewhere between 1988 to 2001 (16 to 29 years old).

Table 1

Generational Boundaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
<th>Gen X</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Fenich et al., 2014)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1979-1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Martin, 2005)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1978-1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ng et al., 2010)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1980-1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sa’aban, Ismail, &amp; Mansor, 2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1980-1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(VanMeter et al., 2013)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1981-2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Baby Boomers begin to retire and Gen Xers consume vacated leadership roles, the youngest workers (Millennials) are looking for their path to future advancement. Arellano (2015) identified that Millennials are currently the youngest workers in the workplace and will comprise about 75% of the workforce by 2025 (when they will be 25 to 45 years old). While considered high maintenance by some (Martin, 2005), the Millennials are known for their “optimism, education, collaborative ability, open-mindedness, and drive” (Spiro, 2006, p. 16). Millennials have lower altruism but higher narcissism, assertiveness, self-esteem and individualistic traits in general; they are individualistic and confident, starting adult life with less knowledge (though more education), motivated (but more likely by offering rewards), looking for balance, and more satisfied with work (Credo et al., 2016; Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010). Research suggested that Millennials use technology differently than previous generations (Arellano, 2015; Deal et al., 2010; Lowe et al., 2011), causing them to adopt a “get it now” mentality for not only information but also decisions and tangible items. While Millennials value relationships, bigger meaning, and trusted guidance (McCrindle, 2006), they have a low tolerance for others who lack technical ability (Kapoor & Solomon, 2011).

More likely to leave an employing company, Millennials appear different in the workplace, lending to a negative perspective from previous generations who lack understanding of the Millennials (Sa’aban et al., 2013). Millennials’ distinct ethical attitude and behaviors are reshaping the organizational climate, specifically regarding business ethics (VanMeter et al., 2013). As the Boomers begin to retire, and Gen X’s small population leaves open leadership positions, organizations (particularly nonprofit) struggle to engage Millennial leaders in executive level positions (Carman et al., 2010). Though Millennials lack critical skills in creative thinking, problem-solving, strategic thinking, and decision-making (Hagemann & Stroope, 2013), the challenge is more about the organization and previous leadership influence than about the
Millennials ability to lead (Clemons, 2014; Downing, 2006). There is still much to be understood about this upcoming generation. As older generations retire and leave the workforce, organizations need to develop strategies to encourage greater mutual understanding of how to collaborate and lead for a sustainable and competitive future.

**Organizational Commitment**

Organizational Commitment is the dependent variable for this research. Azman et al. (2011) suggested that leaders help develop organizational commitment by motivating and challenging workers. Motivation appears consistently in the literature regarding organizational commitment. The literature asserted that the behavior of leaders provides a motivating role model for encouraging follower organizational commitment (Leroy et al., 2012; Xiong et al., 2016). People are drawn towards effective leadership and motivated by admirable leaders. Clearly, leadership is a motivator for organizational commitment, and motivation provides a theory for commitment.

**Traditional Theories of Motivation.** Theories of motivation lay the foundation for organizational behavior studies. Understanding organizational commitment first requires an understating of what causes a person to be motivated in the workplace. There is an inalienable link between worker performance and commitment, understanding motivation provides a framework for understanding what drives a worker’s performance (Mitchell, 1982). Though there are many definitions for motivation, Lindner (1998) provides a simple operational definition of motivation as an inner force that drives individuals to accomplish personal and organizational goals. This definition will set the understanding of the motivation for this research.

Contrary to assumptions made during the early industrial age, a set of studies conducted from 1924 through 1932, known as the Hawthorne studies, identified that workers are motivated by factors other than money (Wickström & Bendix, 2000). The Hawthorne studies introduced the human relationship approach to management, suggesting that the needs and motivations of workers
should be considered by management as an antecedent to performance (Lindner, 1998). Shortly after the Hawthorne studies, Maslow (1943) introduced the five levels of needs theory, which was followed by Herzberg’s (1959) two-factor theory. In 1964, Vroom suggested a theory of motivation based on positive and negative rewards known as expectancy theory (Galbraith & Cummings, 1967; Vroom, 1982), which was likely influenced by Skinner’s (1953) simpler theory of reinforcement. The next year, Adams introduced the concept of equity theory, describing the effects of worker equity on motivation (Pritchard, 1969). Theories of motivation can be divided into two categories: Needs based (Maslow and Herzberg) and process based (Vroom and Adams). These four theories provide a necessary foundation for understanding worker’s motivation and implications of motivation on behaviors (Ramlall, 2004).

**Needs Hierarchy Theory.** Maslow suggested that motivation was based on people’s needs. Maslow (1943) suggested that there are some basic human needs that are common to all people, and until these needs are met, there will be little motivation for anything else. Maslow defined a hierarchy that is often visualized as a pyramid, with the most basic needs on the bottom and higher order needs on the top. Maslow suggested that motivation for higher order needs only occurs once lower order needs are satisfied. Maslow defined the most basic need as physiological; those physical needs that must be met to sustain life, such as food, water, and sleep. Safety needs make up the second layer of needs, referring to the need to be free from danger and pain. Safety is followed by social needs (social bonds with other humans), then esteem (the need for appreciation and respect) and finally self-actualization (the need to fulfill one’s potential). Maslow argued that once the basic physiological needs are met, people are free to ensure their safety needs are met. Once safety needs are met, then people are motivated by social needs, and so on through self-actualization. When a level of need is satisfied, a person will be motivated to pursue the next level of the need hierarchy. Though the pyramid suggests a linear progression, it should be obvious to
the casual observer that iterations between the levels of need are situationally immanent. These iterations add complexity to Maslow’s theory and provide for additional theories.

**Two-Factor Theory.** Herzberg (1959) approached motivation from a seemingly simpler perspective, identifying motivation in the context of satisfiers (intrinsic, motivator factors) and dissatisfiers (extrinsic, hygiene factors) as two opposed factors. Hygiene factors are those that are often taken for granted when they are present but are missed when they are absent. A simple example of a hygiene factor might be a comfortable working environment; when an environment is well lit and temperature controlled it goes unnoticed (expected), but when one of these comforts is missing it will lead to dissatisfaction. Some common hygiene factors are safety, supervision, team relationships, appropriate policies, working conditions and salary/benefits. Inversely, motivator factors are those that encourage the worker to strive for higher goals. Some common motivator factors are interesting work, recognition, opportunities for advancement, growth/education, and increased responsibility. Motivator factors, when present, motivate a worker to work harder in order to achieve more. It is conceivable that Herzberg’s theory and Maslow’s theory may be complimentary as opposed to competing.

Combining Herzberg’s two factors leads to four possible states for worker motivation (Dartey-Baah & Amoako, 2011). High hygiene and high motivation: the preferred environment providing workers with high motivation and few complaints. High hygiene and low motivation: less than ideal environment for workers, workers have limited complaints and limited motivation. Low hygiene and high motivation: often leading to a job being seen as only a paycheck, even though workers are motivated (possibly by interesting work) they have many complaints (such as low pay and benefits). Finally, low hygiene and low motivation: creating a potentially toxic workplace, workers have many complaints and few (or no) motivators. These four states identify the possible outcomes of Herzberg’s two factors and provide managers with an understanding of
how organizational factors affect worker’s motivation. Herzberg’s theory and Maslow’s theory together provide a historical understanding of motivation based on needs.

**Expectancy Theory.** Expectancy theory suggests that people are motivated to behave in certain ways that produce combinations of expected outcomes, dependent on the strength of their belief that the behavior will produce the desired outcomes and the desire for that outcome (Ramlall, 2004). Vroom (1982) suggested that there are three cognitive components which direct behavior: valence, instrumentality, and expectancy. Valence refers to the level of perceived satisfaction (emotionally) a person expects to receive from an outcome. A positive valence identifies that a person wants an outcome, or that an outcome is worth the effort. Valence answers the question “how much do I want this outcome?” Instrumentality defines belief as a probability that one outcome is linked to another outcome. Instrumentality ties positive valence to positive outcomes and negative valence to negative outcomes, or stated another way, instrumentality identifies the correlation between subsequent outcomes such as reward to performance; it answers the question “what’s in it for me?” The final component of the theory is expectancy. Expectancy describes how strongly a person believes a particular outcome is possible, and at what level of effort the outcome can be achieved, or in other words is the outcome reasonably achievable or “can I do this”? If a person can answer all three components affirmatively, they are likely to be motivated to take actions which they believe will lead to the desired outcome. Managers can influence each of the cognitive components, leading to improved or decreased motivation (depending on the influence exerted).

**Equity Theory.** Equity theory asserts that workers are not concerned only with the achievement of rewards (and effort of that achievement), but also with the “fairness” of their rewards as it relates to the rewards of others (Ramlall, 2004). Adams (1963) proposed equity as a ratio of input to outcome. The valuation of this ratio is a subjective, social process based on the nature of the inputs and outcomes, the social comparison process, the conditions and effects of
possible inequity and the response to reduce inequity (Pritchard, 1969). Inputs refer to the skills and values the worker brings to the ratio, while outcomes refer to the return on investing the inputs. The social comparison process takes place consciously or subconsciously between the worker and a person or group of people with perceived similar inputs and outputs to the worker (a referent). The condition of equity occurs when the ratio of the worker’s outcome to input is equal to the referent, inequity occurs when the ratio is not equal between the worker and the referent. Though inequity can be in the worker’s favor or in the referent’s favor, a response to reduce inequity is most likely when the inequity is in the referent’s favor, this is perceived as unfairness to the worker. There are several possible behaviors in response to this perceived unfairness. The worker can change perception; for instance, downplaying their inputs, or exaggerating the referents outcomes. The worker can change their referent, choosing to use another person or group of people to assess the fairness of the ratio. Alternatively, the worker can change their ratio; for instance, reducing input or acquiring more outcome to balance the ratio with the referent. Finally, the worker can withdraw from the situation altogether and seek a more equitable circumstance. In most circumstances, the worker will seek to balance perceived inequity in one of these ways, being motivated towards certain behaviors to gain equity.

Each of the above motivational theories identifies perspectives of what motivates workers. Though managers should never use motivational theory to manipulate workers, these theories can lend valuable insight to managers on how to serve their organization by increasing motivation. Ensuring that worker’s needs are met will motivate them to grow and reach their potential. Developing work processes that produce achievable and equitable outcomes will further motivate workers towards success. Considering these theories, it should be clear that motivation is directly related to organizational commitment.
Theories of Organizational Commitment

A brief history. Though organizational commitment shares a deep relationship with motivation, organizational commitment and motivation are separate and unique constructs. In the early 1900s worker retention and loyalty was correlated with the popular motivation theories in research. In the twenty years between Barnard's (1938) work and March and Simon's (1958) research, the foundation is laid for commitment based on motivation from an exchange perspective. Research on organizational commitment emerged historically from two schools of thought (Scholl, 1981). The first school of thought was known as the attitudinal (or rational or organizational behavior) and the second school was known as the behavioral (or irrational or social psychology) school. The attitudinal school focused on commitment as a set of attitudes or (behavioral) intentions based on expectancy theory, from which behavior is based on rewards. The attitudinal school of thought linked worker behavior to commitment. The behavioral school views commitment as a force binding a worker to an organization. Where the attitudinal school of thought correlated commitment with worker’s behaviors such as performance or membership, the behavioral school only focuses on worker membership decision as an investment. In short, the behavioral perspective considered commitment as a force directing behaviors while the attitudinal perspective considered commitment as an antecedent predictive of behaviors. Both schools of thought coupled commitment tightly with motivational theory. These perspectives expanded in the 1970’s with research on organizational commitment and turnover through the works of Kraut (1970) and Porter, Crampon, and Smith (1972), laying the foundation for organizational commitment as a separate field of study.

Maturing from the original schools of thought, Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian (1974) conducted research that provided a turning point for commitment as a field of academic study. Jarka and RuciŃski (2015) and Ramírez Solís and Baños Monroy (2015) consider Porter, et al.’s (1974) landmark research as the most consistent and most cited definition of organizational
commitment. Porter et al.’s (1974, p. 604) definition states that organizational commitment is “the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization”. With this definition, Porter et al. identified three factors that would characterize commitment: an acceptance and belief in an organization’s goals, a willingness to exert effort to acquire these goals on behalf of the organization and a desire to maintain membership in the organization. These three characteristics were seminal in the development of a future multi-dimensional understanding of commitment. In their research, Porter, et al. found results which clearly indicated that attitudes identifying commitment were predictive of worker turnover and retention. Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) published their 15-item scale, the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire, which would become the benchmark instrument for measuring organizational commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002; Solís & Monroy, 2015). The OCQ measured the single construct of attitudinal commitment. Angle and Perry (1981) expanded on the OCQ, adding two sub-scales: value commitment and commitment to stay (which later formed the basis for Allen’s and Meyer’s (1990) three-component model). Porter’s, et al. research on organizational commitment would dominate academic thought until the three-component conceptualization of organizational commitment in the 1990s (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1987, 1991).

The Three-Component Conceptualization of Organizational Commitment

Meyer and Allen (1987) expanded the single scale OCQ with the two sub-scales of value commitment and commitment to stay (Angle & Perry, 1981) into a three-component model of organizational commitment. Meyer and Allen (1990) developed the three-component model into the Three-Component Model (TCM) Survey instrument. The TCM is based on Allen’s and Meyer’s definition of commitment, which is slightly altered from the Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian (1974) definition as “a psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization” (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Consequently, Erben and Güneşer (2008) consider Allen and Meyer’s
definition as the most commonly used definition of organizational commitment. The TCM has
gone through two iterations, both using three scales: affective commitment scale (ACS),
continuance commitment scale (CCS) and normative commitment (NCS) (Meyer & Allen, 2004).
The first (1990) iteration was comprised of 8 questions for each component scale, while the revised
1993 iteration contains 6 items for each of the three component scales. The primary difference
between the two iterations is that the original version included information on the basis for NCS
and the latter only includes information specifically on the feeling of obligation without identifying
the basis for those feelings towards NCS. As NCS is generally considered the least unique
(Bergman, 2006) and least predictive of the scales (Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014; Sharma & Sinha,
2015), the shorter of the two scales is considered adequate.

Allen and Meyer (1991) define organizational commitment as a combination of individual
attitudes and behaviors toward an organization or occupation (Meyer et al., 1993), driven by
motivation. Attitudes and behaviors combine to create three forms, dimensions or components of
commitment, which began as affective attachment, perceived costs and obligation (Meyer & Allen,
1987). Meyer and Allen labeled these components affective commitment, continuance
commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment relies on the person’s desire to
remain – they want to be part of the organization. Continuance commitment is defined by the
persons need to stay – it is too costly to leave. Normative commitment describes a perceived
obligation to stay with an organization – the person believes they ought to stay out of moral
obligation. In this way, affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative
commitment can be thought of as a want to stay, a need to stay and an obligation to stay with an
organization, respectively. These forms of commitment are not mutually exclusive; a person may
experience all three or some subset of these simultaneously. All three dimensions of commitment
are affected by work experience and affect organizational effectiveness, turnover and employee
well-being (Allen & Meyer, 1996; Meyer et al., 2002).
While most commonly considered together as a whole picture of organizational commitment, each component can also be considered individually. The literature reveals that normative commitment is the component least frequently studied. Bergman (2006) suggested normative commitment lags in interest due to its positive correlation with both affective commitment and the OCQ. By comparison, affective commitment is the component most studied, and often considered to have the highest correlation with worker retention and performance. Solís and Monroy (2015) conducted research to determine that the relationship between affective commitment and organizational politics does not negatively affect organizational performance, in contrast to existing literature on corporate politics. Khan (2015) conducted research identifying that while affective commitment was not a positive predictor of worker performance, there was not a positive correlation between affective commitment and retention of under-performers. Xiong et al.’s (2016) research identified a positive correlation between affective commitment, trust, and authentic leadership. Simintiras, Watkins, Ifie, and Georgakas (2012) conclude from their research that affective commitment is influenced by selling skills, the degree of job liking, tenure, and empowerment by sales managers in salespeople. Zargar et al. (2014) researched the relationship between job scope, affective commitment, and turnover, determining that high-scope (complex and challenging) jobs are associated with stronger affective commitment among individuals with strong growth needs. Demirtas and Akdogan (2015) investigate the effect of ethical leadership on affective commitment and turnover, determining that servant leadership has both a direct and indirect impact on both constructs. While this list of examples is not exhaustive, it provides a fair sample of how affective commitment has been considered as an individual component of commitment.

While not receiving the fanfare of affective commitment, continuance commitment is popular in the literature and often studies with affective commitment. Gill, Meyer, Lee, Shin, and Yoon (2011) considered the relationship between affective and continuance commitment in Korean
workplaces and found that affective commitment was negatively correlated to supervisor ratings and continuance commitment was positively correlated. Johnson and Chang (2006) studied the relationship between affective and continuance commitment finding associations between affective commitment and collective self-concept as well as associations between continuance commitment and individual self-concept, concluding that self-concept affects both affective and continuance commitment. The literature also identified that continuance commitment is regularly considered as an individual construct. Taing, Granger, Groff, Jackson, and Johnson (2011) conducted research to establish multiple dimensions of continuance commitment, finding that economic exchanges and job alternatives are positively and negatively correlated (respectively) with continuance commitment. Similarly, Vandenberghe, Panaccio, and Ayed (2011) studied the effects of continuance-sacrifice and continuance-alternatives on worker turnover, finding a negative relationship between continuance-sacrifice and turnover and a positive relationship between continuance-alternatives and turnover. These examples of studies provide a sample of how the different components of commitment are studied together or independently in the literature. For the current research, the TCM will be used and all three components of commitment will be considered to determine overall commitment.

**Contemporary Studies Linking Leadership, and Commitment.**

The literature linking leadership and commitment is extensive. A search of EBSCO Business Source Complete returns 72 titles pertaining to peer-reviewed articles between 2011 and 2016 that studied some form of organizational commitment and leadership (many of which have been referenced previously in this literature review). The following table summarizes the current research.

*Table 2*

*Contemporary Leadership Commitment Research*
The majority of the literature considering the relationship between leadership and commitment focuses on organizational commitment as a construct, as opposed to focusing on the separate components of leadership. Additionally, the majority of the literature focuses on leadership as an overall construct or multiple competing and/or cooperating constructs rather than on a specific style (16 studies in organizational leadership and 10 studies in leadership styles for a total of 26 studies), followed closely by transformational leadership as a style of leadership. There is substantial evidence from the literature that positive forms of leadership are positively correlated with organizational commitment (Keskes, 2013; Raja & Palanichamy, 2011). Likewise, negative forms of leadership (such as toxic leadership or absent leadership) are negatively correlated with organizational commitment (Maheshwari, 2013; Serim & Dikmen, 2014). Of particular interest for this literature review, the relationship between servant leadership and commitment has been well established, in part due to the focus of servant leadership on empowerment (and the direct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Type</th>
<th>Organizational Commitment</th>
<th>Affective Commitment</th>
<th>Normative Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Leadership</td>
<td>13 studies</td>
<td>3 studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>4 studies</td>
<td>1 study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational Leadership</td>
<td>20 studies</td>
<td>4 studies</td>
<td>1 study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Leadership</td>
<td>2 studies</td>
<td>1 study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Leadership</td>
<td>6 studies</td>
<td>2 studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charismatic Leadership</td>
<td>2 studies</td>
<td>1 study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ostrich Leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Leadership</td>
<td>1 study</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Styles</td>
<td>8 studies</td>
<td>2 studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
correlation between empowerment and commitment) (Murari & Gupta, 2012), identification with the organization (Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014), and trust (Miao et al., 2014).

**Summary**

Leadership has a significant effect on organizational commitment (Çelîk et al., 2015; De Lima Rua & Costa Araújo, 2016; Erben & Güneşer, 2008; Gillet & Vandenberghe, 2014; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015; Rimes, 2011). Studies proposed that leadership creates a high level of commitment through empowering (enabling) followers to act (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Murari & Gupta, 2012; Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). Transformational leaders who cast a compelling vision for the future have the potential to build trust and enhance organizational commitment (De Lima Rua & Costa Araújo, 2016). Erben & Güneşer (2008) identified that encouragement from a paternalistic leader fosters organizational commitment similar to the transformational leader and Hyatt (2010) identified the relationship between leadership practice and organizational commitment. From an inverse perspective, research conducted by Maheshwari (2013) found a negative impact of a lack of productive leadership practices on organizational commitment.

Perceived leadership style is a legitimate antecedent to predict organizational commitment across all ages (Costanza et al., 2012). The evidence seems conclusive; leadership, as perceived by the follower via leadership practices, impacts organizational commitment, potentially differently at different ages. It is this context that makes age and servant leadership appropriate independent variable and organizational commitment an appropriate dependent variable for this research. This understanding of the research population, independent variables and dependent variable sets the foundation for the research at hand.
Section 2: The Project

The relationship between leadership and commitment is supported by research and well documented in the literature, as is the relationship between younger workers, organizational commitment and leadership. This research focused specifically on the relationship between organizational commitment with age and servant leadership in faith-based organizations. This quantitative research was based on a convenience sample of the population of paid and volunteer faith-based workers. A convenience sample was used because the definitive population was unknown. The sample was surveyed to gather data about self-reported perception of servant leadership and commitment. Multiple regression was used to identify a statistically significant relationship between age and commitment and servant leadership and commitment. The research relied on previously tested and published instruments to establish reliability and validity of the data. The intention of this research was to address the problem of younger worker commitment to faith-based organizations, via Van Dierendonck’s and Nuijten’s (2011) theory of servant leadership and Allen and Meyer’s (1990) theory of organizational commitment.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative research was to test Van Dierendonck's and Nuijten's (2011) leadership theory of servant leadership characteristics and age of workers (paid and volunteer) in faith-based organizations, against organizational commitment based on (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996) commitment theory. The (first of two) independent variable was age (identified by birth year). The (second of two) independent variable, perception of servant leadership characteristics, was based on Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) servant leadership survey. The dependent variable was self-reported organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996). All variables were collected from a single survey.
Participants

The participants for this research were drawn from workers 18 years of age or older of faith-based organizations in the Northeast U.S. Access to participants was by request to participate in an online survey. No identifying data was captured in the survey and all results were anonymous, ensuring the ethical protection of all participants. The FBOs that were invited to participate were based on a convenience sample determined by the researcher. The invitation to participate included at least seven churches and two para-church ministries from the Northeast, with no intended concentration in any state. A letter of intent and instruction was sent to a contact at each invited organization, with the expectation that the contact would share the address of the survey and instructions with all their paid and volunteer workers. The letter covered the purpose of the survey and offered to share the results when the research was complete.

Research Method and Design

Method

This research was a nonexperimental, quantitative research design utilizing a cross-sectional survey methodology based on faith-based workers. The use of quantitative methods was appropriate, as a large group of people forms the population in which a generalization about the perceptions of leadership behaviors among faith-based workers of different ages was drawn (Creswell, 2013). Theory on leadership practices and organizational commitment already exists, ruling out the need for a qualitative research to develop a theory (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2010). Much of the existing literature linking leadership and organizational commitment is based on quantitative research of differing demographics (see the list of contemporary studies linking leadership and commitment in the above literature review). This research was likewise based on a quantitative method, but relying on a different demographic population.
Research Design

The research design was a non-experimental survey. The design was non-experimental in that there was no treatment or intervention being applied as part of the research (Creswell, 2013); only data about existing circumstances are being gathered. The method of surveying was used to gather the data from faith-based workers (paid and volunteer) based on demographics and two survey instruments: Servant Leadership Survey (SLS) (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and TCM Employee Commitment Survey (Meyer & Allen, 2004). The independent variables (age and servant leadership) were tested against the dependent variables (organization commitment) to assess the relationship between the independent and dependent variables using multiple regression. Additionally, generational cohorts were tested against organizational commitment with an ANOVA to determine if there were a specific interaction between cohorts and commitment. These were obvious and appropriate variables to address the research “does leadership style and/or age relate to organizational commitment in faith-based organizations?”

The data was specific to the two hypotheses presented in this research: There is (a / no) statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations and there is (a / no) statistically significant relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations. A multiple regression line was calculated, identifying if servant leadership practices and/or age encouraged and served as a predictor for organizational commitment among faith-based workers. Additionally, generational cohorts were tested against organizational commitment with an ANOVA to determine if there were a specific interaction between cohorts and commitment. If servant leadership practices are related to organization commitment among younger workers, then effective servant leadership practices pose a potential solution to the proposed problem statement.
Population and Sampling

The NCCS website identified 282,008 registered religious-related organizations (with NTEE-CC X) in the U.S. from the IRS Business master file (“National Center for Charitable Statistics,” 2016). These were organizations which match the definition used herein to define faith-based organizations. Of the 282,008 registered FBOs, 52,586 were from the Northeast U.S. states.

Table 3

FBOs by State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number of Registered Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>2,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>3,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>6,528</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>7,137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>18,601</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>10,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52,586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NTEE-CC X accounts for 17.83% of all registered nonprofit codes. Salamon and Sokolowski (2006) estimated that there are about 9.4 million paid nonprofit workers and 4.7 million volunteer nonprofit workers in the U.S., while the Northeast holds 30% of the nonprofit paid and volunteer
workforce, accounting for roughly 4,230,000 (14,100,000 x 30%) workers, of which 17.83% (percent of NPO that are FBO) or 754,200 are FBO workers.

Table 4

Percent of Nonprofit Workers by State

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percent of Nonprofit Work Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>2.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Together, these statistics identify that the northeast population of 52,588 FBOs accounts for an estimated 754,200 FBO paid and volunteer workers; this was the estimated population for this research.

Random sampling is the preferred method for choosing a sample from a given population for survey research (Creswell, 2013). Drawing a random sample relies on the researcher being able to identify and access the research population. In the case of this research project, the entire population was not identifiable. There was no inclusive list of all FBO workers, there was only an
estimate (derived for the Northeast in the previous paragraph); making this population “hidden” (Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2002). Additionally, creating such a list would be prohibitive as not every FBO maintains an accurate list of all volunteer workers. In this case, where a random sample was not practical, a convenience sample is suggested (Fricker, 2008; Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2002; Kothari, 2004).

A convenience sample is considered a non-probabilistic sampling method. This sampling method is appropriately named as it draws from participants who are available and willing to participate. The challenge of using a convenience sample is that bias is likely in the sample, and it is not probable (there is no basis for statistical probability) that the entire population is being represented in a convenience sample. Kothari (2004) suggested that if the researcher is impartial, works without bias, and uses sound judgment, the results obtained from a convenience sample may be tolerably reliable, even though sampling errors cannot be reliably estimated. Kitchchenham and Pfleeger (2004) suggested that a convenience sample is used in three cases: The target population is hard to identify, the target population is specific and has limited availability, and/or the sample is for a pilot study. In the case of this research, the target population was hard to identify. There was no existing list of all faith-based volunteers, and not all organizations maintain an accurate list of their volunteers; identifying the entire population would be prohibitive. Therefore, this research relied on a convenience sample drawn from faith-based organizations in the Northeast U.S.

The population for this research was paid and volunteer workers of church and para-church organizations (FBOs) in the Northeast. The survey was drawn from paid and volunteer workers of FBOs in the Northeast U.S. that were 18 years old or older. An online survey was published and an invitation to participate was extended. The sample consisted of workers who were willing to participate in the online survey from the list of organizations selected by the researcher. Though the sample was a convenience sample, it was analyzed as a random sample to best estimate the population outcome. The analysis relied on a probability sample size of at least 384. This sample
size was derived from the sample size equation: Necessary Sample Size = (Z-score)² * StdDev*(1-StdDev) / (margin of error) (Charan & Biswas, 2013). In this equation, the Z-score was based on 95% confidence level, the margin of error was based on a confidence interval of 5% and the standard deviation was estimated at .5. The resulting equation was ((1.96)² x .5(.5)) / (.05) = 384.16; the sample size was rounded down to 384 participants.

Data Collection

Instruments

The 30 question SLS and 18 question TCM surveys were combined with demographic questions of the year of birth (to determine age), gender, ethnicity, education level and work tenure, resulting in a 53-question survey. The SLS was used to identify respondent’s self-reported perception of servant leadership characteristics for leaders they work with. The TCM was used to identify the respondent’s commitment to the faith-based organization for which they work. Each of the questions on both the SLS and the TCM were measured on a seven-point Likert scale. On the SLS, questions 7, 15, and 23 were reverse-coded, meaning that as the scale increases the respondent’s answer becomes more negative towards the questions. Likewise, on the TCM, questions 3, 4, 5 and 13 were reverse-keyed. To produce a score for the survey, the SLS and TCM were tallied separately. Both instruments allow for the sum of the answers or the average of the answers to produce a survey score. The average was used in the case where respondents may have left some of the answers blank, to produce a more accurate score. In the case of this research, the respondents were answering on-line and all questions were required to be completed in order to submit the survey, so the additive method was used. For each of the instruments, the larger sum is a more favorable or positive perspective of what was being measured. No adjustments were made to the TCM or SLS, they were used as developed by the authors and with permission of the authors. The raw data is available by request from the researcher.
Data Collection Technique

The data was collected through an anonymous online survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AgeSSLTCM. Surveymonkey.com was used because it is an affordable service, and accessible by everyone. The response data was kept on the server at Surveygmonkey.com until the survey closes, then it will be downloaded to the researcher’s computer for analyses. No pilot study was needed as both instruments have acceptable validity and reliability scores already. The SLS is composed of separate questions which address empowerment, standing back, accountability, forgiveness, courage, authenticity, humility, and stewardship. The TCM questions address affective commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment, each with six questions in sequential order. The interview questions were included in appendix A.

Data Organization Techniques

The completed survey data was contained in a single comma-separated value (CSV) text file. The analyses data was contained in an SPSS file. Both files were saved locally on the researcher’s computer. Each of the storage mediums was password protected, such that only the researcher had access to the original data. The survey data file was backed up on surveymonkey.com and the SPSS file was backed up to the researcher’s networked drive. The individual data items were organized in SPSS. Each response was encapsulated as a vector with three components, one for the geographic data, one for the SLS data and one for the TCM data. Each vector represented one respondent. All the data from the single CSV file was organized in this way and stored in the SPSS file.

Data Analysis Technique

Data obtained from the survey was coded and analyzed using SPSS. The data collected from the survey was summed for each of the TCM and SLS data, with higher scores identifying a positive perception for the TCM and SLS data. Each birth year can be converted to current age by
subtracting birth year from the current year to identify if there is a relationship between age and commitment. Correlation between age and TCM scores were then identified from the multiple regression data to determine if organizational commitment and age were correlated. In similar fashion, the correlation between SLS and TCM scores was identified to determine if organizational commitment and servant leadership were correlated. Additionally, generational cohorts (as defined and grouped by birth year) were tested against organizational commitment with an ANOVA to determine if there were a specific interaction between cohorts and commitment. Finally, a multiple regression line was calculated to determine the predictability of age and leadership perception on commitment scores. The result of the multiple regression identified if there is (a / no) statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations and if there is (a / no) statistically significant relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations. Identifying the correlation between these variables and the predictive regression line will answer the question “does leadership style and/or age relate to organizational commitment in faith-based organizations?”

**Reliability and Validity**

This research was based on two standard survey instruments (the SLS and the TCM), combined with demographic data from each participant. These instruments will be used in their entirety and original forms. The data from the two instruments will then be analyzed with the geographic data to determine if there was a statistical relationship between the data. As the reliability and validity of each instrument has been previously established, this research was ensured that servant leadership and commitment were being measured reliably and accurately. Both the TCM and the SLS have established reliability and validity, as discussed below.

**Reliability**

The purpose of affirming reliability in an instrument is to ensure the instrument measures consistently every time it is used. In the case of the TCM, the published reliability scores are test-
retest and internal consistency reliability. The test-retest reliability identifies the instrument will produce consistent scores over time, while the internal consistency reliability will identify that each item of the survey is consistent with one another and measure a single dimension (Salkind, 2016). Test-retest reliability is commonly measured by correlation. The TCM test-retest correlation scores all fall within acceptable limits (.38 to .94) (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Internal consistency reliability is commonly measured by Cronbach’s Alpha. The ACS, CCS, and NCS of the TCM all load on separate factors (the three dimension are distinct) with the following alpha scores: affective commitment (.74 to .89), normative commitment (.69 to .79) and continuance commitment (.69 to .84) (Allen & Meyer, 1996). There are no test-retest scores published for the SLS. The SLS eight dimensions all load on separate factors as measured by Cronbach’s Alpha: .89 for empowerment, .81 for accountability, .76 for standing back, .91 for humility, .82 for authenticity, .69 for courage, .72 for forgiveness, and .74 for stewardship (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). The current research uses these two instruments unmodified and therefore accepts the same reliability.

Validity

The purpose of affirming validity in an instrument is to ensure the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Both the TCM’s and the SLS’s authors establish content validity through an extensive examination of their topics. The SLS was compared to and measured against all other models of servant leadership and servant leadership instruments to identify content validity (Van Dierendonck, 2011; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Similarly, the TCM was compared to other constructs of commitment and measured against the OCQ (the only other valid instrument at the time) (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996, Meyer & Allen, 1987, 1991; Meyer et al., 1993). Additionally, the TCM literature provides construct validity, identifying that the TCM measures the underlying construct of commitment as assessed against the OCQ, job satisfaction, job involvement, career commitment, positive affect, and negative affect and positively correlates with each of these constructs (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Similarly, the SLS approaches construct validity with a chi-square test against all other known models, identifying valid limits and
establishing factorial validity (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). The SLS also established criterion validity with vitality, engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and performance measured against all eight dimension of the SLS model (with the exception of engagement and job satisfaction with stewardship), with the exception of forgiveness and vitality, all other comparisons demonstrated acceptable correlations (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

The current research uses these two instruments unmodified, as measured, and therefore relies on these instrument’s validity for the overall validity of the data.

**Transition and Summary**

Drawing from a survey of faith-based workers in the Northeast U.S. this research identified the relationship between servant leadership, age and commitment in the workplace. Statistical significance was identified by multiple regression of the independent variables (age and servant leadership scores as appropriate) organizational commitment scores. Identifying the relationship of commitment with servant leadership practices and age would suggest practices for improved leadership that should increase organizational commitment with the younger workers. This research contributes to existing knowledge and practice of leadership by identifying leadership expectations from younger workers, and if expectations of leadership were changing from generation to generation. This research implies changes for leaders to consider for improving organizational commitment among younger workers. Increased commitment, as identified by the literature, will encourage younger workers to take a more active role in their organization. The next section will discuss these implications.
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

This non-experimental, quantitative research examined the relationship between age, self-reported servant leadership perception and self-reported organizational commitment among employees and volunteers of faith-based organizations in the Northeast. This section starts with a brief overview of the research, followed by the presentation of the results. The results were analyzed to provide a recommendation for application, action and further research. The section concludes with a reflection of the research project and process and final thoughts to summarize the section.

Overview of Study

The relationship between servant leadership and commitment is supported by research and well documented in the literature, as is the relationship between age and organizational commitment. This research focused specifically on the relationship between organizational commitment with age and servant leadership in faith-based organizations in the Northeast United States. The research was based on a sample of the population of paid and volunteer faith-based workers drawn by convenience from faith-based organizations in the Northeast. A survey was published online which combined demographic data with Van Dierendonck’s and Nuijten’s (2011) servant leadership survey and Meyer and Allen's (2004) TCM commitment survey.

Multiple regression was used to identify if a statistically significant relationship between age and commitment and/or servant leadership and commitment exists. ANOVA was used to identify if a statistically significant relationship between generational cohort and commitment exists. The research relied on previously tested and published instruments to establish reliability and validity of the data. The intention of this research was to identify if servant leadership practices and/or workers age affects commitment to faith-based organizations.
Presentation of the Findings

The survey was made available from March 25, 2017 through May 30, 2017 by open invitation, via email sent to faith-based organization leaders and posts on social media. Each of the emails and posts asked the receiver to participate in the survey and share the survey with their organization. Of 621 responses to the survey, 64 were disqualified (under 18 years old or did not serve with a faith-based organization in the Northeast) and 165 did not complete the survey. The remaining 392 responses were complete and used as the data for this research, exceeding the needed 384 participants. All statistical test and analyses were completed using SPSS version 24.0.0.0.

Results

Participants were asked to provide the year they were born. This year was then subtracted from the current year (2017) to calculate the age of the participant. A cohort value was created for each participant depending on their year of birth, consistent with the cohort boundaries discussed above. A servant leadership score was calculated from the sum of each participant’s response to the set of leadership questions and likewise a commitment score was calculated. Once the data was prepared, it was evaluated for model fit. Table 5 below provides a summary of the independent and dependent variables.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables and the Dependent Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skew</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (IV)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>47.38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>14.46</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant leadership Scores (IV)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>134.24</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>18.86</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment Scores (DV)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>61.26</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Though the data was not strictly normal, the normal model provided the best fit, identified visually by the figures below. The top plot for each variable shows a Quintile-Quintile plot and line which runs through the first and third quintiles. If the data were strictly normal, the points would strictly follow the linear line. The bottom plot for each variable shows a probability histogram with a solid density line and a green dotted normalized line. This visually identifies that each dataset was best fit by a normal distribution curve.

*Figure 1. Age distribution probability plots.*

The Age Q-Q Plot shows age values clustered around the linear line, identifying normality. The Normal Probability of Age plot shows probability distribution for each value of age, visually identifying the normal curve and the fit curve.
**Figure 2.** Servant leadership scores distribution probability plots.

The Servant Leadership Q-Q Plot shows servant leadership values clustered around the linear line, identifying normality. The Normal Probability of Leadership Scores plot shows probability distribution for each value of servant leadership, visually identifying the normal curve and the fit curve.

**Figure 3.** Commitment scores distribution probability plots.
The Commitment Q-Q Plot shows commitment values clustered around the linear line, identifying normality. The Normal Probability of Commitment Scores plot shows probability distribution for each value of commitment, visually identifying the normal curve and the fit curve.

**Hypothesis Tests**

Once it was identified that the variables fit a normal distribution model, the independent variables were checked visually for covariation using a scatter plot.

![Covariance between age and servant leadership scores.](image)

**Figure 4.** Covariance between age and servant leadership scores.

The scatter plot shows no apparent relationship between the two independent variables, age and servant leadership.

Next, hypothesis one (H1) and two (H2) were tested by multiple linear regression.

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations.

H<sub>A1</sub>: There is a statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no statistically significant relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations.
There is a statistically significant relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations.

A multiple regression was run to predict commitment from age and servant leadership scores. The results identified that the regression model could statistically significantly predict commitment ($F_{2, 389} = 39.755$, $p < .005$, $R^2 = .170$). Servant leadership was statistically significant to the prediction ($p < .05$), but age was not statistically significant to the prediction ($p > .05$). These results are summarized in tables 6, 7, and 8.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics for Regression Model*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commitment (DV)</td>
<td>61.26</td>
<td>9.123</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership (IV)</td>
<td>134.24</td>
<td>18.863</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (IV)</td>
<td>47.40</td>
<td>14.465</td>
<td>392</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 identifies the mean, standard deviation and number of cases given in the dependent and independent variables for the regression model.

Table 7

*Regression Model Summary*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>Adjusted $R^2$</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.412</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>8.334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 summarizes the SPSS output for the regression model. The $R$ value represents the multiple correlation coefficient. An $R$ value of .412 indicates an adequate level of prediction. The $R^2$ value identifies the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables (Salkind, 2016), in this case the model explained roughly 17% of the variation in commitment.
The adjusted $R^2$ value attempts to correct for overestimation due to the number of predictive variables by dividing the residual mean square error by the total mean square error and subtracting the result from 1. A significant decrease from $R^2$ could indicate that the variable does not improve the model.

Table 8

*Regression Model Coefficients*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>37.533</td>
<td>3.343</td>
<td>11.229</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>30.961</td>
<td>44.104</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant Leadership</td>
<td>.195</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.403</td>
<td>8.721</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.151</td>
<td>.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>-.081</td>
<td>-1.760</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>-.109</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 identifies the model coefficients that describe the prediction equation. The equation for this model was commitment = 37.533 + (0.195 * servant leadership) – (0.051 * age). The statistical significance of each independent variable was identified by the t value and the significance (p). If p < .05, the coefficient was statistically significantly different from 0 (Salkind, 2016). Table 8 identifies servant leadership has p < .05 and age has p > .05, in other words, servant leadership can be considered statistically significant in relationship to commitment, but age cannot.

Finally, a relationship between generational cohort and commitment was tested by analysis of variance (ANOVA). The generational cohort descriptive statistics are listed in Table 9, and visualized in the boxplot in Figure 5.

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics of Generational Cohort*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Std. Err.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>58.73</td>
<td>9.145</td>
<td>2.361</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boomers</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>61.07</td>
<td>7.995</td>
<td>.659</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The generational cohort boxplot identifies the descriptive statistics for commitment of each generation.

The ANOVA of commitment score means between the generational cohorts did not identify a statistically significant difference between the means, as identified in table 10.

Table 10

ANOVA of Commitment and Generational Cohorts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sum Sq</th>
<th>Mean Sq</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>281.135</td>
<td>93.712</td>
<td>1.127</td>
<td>0.338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>32259.801</td>
<td>83.141</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>32539.936</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The ANOVA results lead to the conclusion that the differences between the cohort commitment means were not statistically significant enough to identify a statistically significant relationship between generational cohort and commitment ($F_{3,388} = 1.127, p > 0.05$).

Analysis

The results of the multiple regression allowed null hypothesis one ($H_{01}$) to be rejected and alternative hypothesis one ($H_{A1}$) to be accepted: There is a statistically significant relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations. In contrast, the results of the multiple regression did not allow null hypothesis two ($H_{02}$) to be rejected: There is no statistically significant relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations. The results were sufficient to answer the research questions:

R1: What is the relationship between servant leadership style and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations?

R2: What is the relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations?

To answer R1; as faith-based workers perceive servant leadership improving, organizational commitment will increase. This increase was statistically significant and quantifiable according to $y = 37.533 + 0.195x$, where $y$ represents commitment and $x$ represents servant leadership. To answer R2; a statistically significant relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations cannot be identified from the data. In addition, no statistically significant difference of commitment can be identified between generational cohorts.

While these answers were not surprising (they do not contradict the literature), they were interesting. Given the plethora of variables that affect commitment, servant leadership affecting roughly 17% of the variation in commitment scores is interesting. Meyer and Allen (1991) (and others) identified that commitment is based on motivation. Even though servant leadership has
been clearly identified as a motivator for organizational commitment (Leroy et al., 2012; Xiong et al., 2016), there seems to be no limit to the number of things that can motivate a person. This research identified that roughly 17% of the variation in commitment scores was caused by servant leadership, leaving 83% of the changes in commitment to be affected by other motivators. While these results may not initially seem like a strong statistical predictor of commitment, the results do suggest that servant leadership is more than one sixth of what influences commitment, leaving less than five sixths for every other motivating influence.

Given the literature’s identification of a relationship between age and commitment and Millennials’ desired attributes in the workplace, identifying no significant relationship between age and commitment in FBOs in the Northeast was interesting. Kooij et al. (2011) suggested that age was one of the largest challenges to work motivation of the decade. Inceoglu et al. (2012) suggested that as age increases, positive work motivation increases. James et al. (2011) suggested that due to differences in motivation, different age workers are differently engaged with work; older workers may be more committed due to ability or desire to change jobs, familiarity, seniority and higher pay. Much of the literature considering generational cohorts in the workplace also suggested that Baby Boomers have molded their workplaces to suit their specific work preferences, suggesting motivation to remain (which is a form of commitment), and state the lack of loyalty (which may be reflected in commitment) Millennials show for their workplace. Parry and Urwin (2011) cited age effect, cohort effect and period effect as influencers in job satisfaction (which affects commitment). Yet, this research identified no significant relationship between age (or generational cohort) and commitment.

**Applications to Professional Practice**

This research added additional data and understanding to the body of knowledge surrounding the effect of servant leadership and what motivates workers toward commitment, particularly paid and volunteer workers in faith-based organizations of the Northeast United States.
This research identified that while age may not have a significant effect on commitment in faith-based organizations, a stronger positive perception of servant leadership increases commitment among paid and volunteer workers in faith-based organizations. While servant leadership has gained popularity since Greenleaf's (1970) writing, it is still less broadly applied than other styles of leadership, such as transformational or traits leadership. As suggested by Schneider and George (2011) and evidenced by the results of this research, servant leadership is an effective style of leadership that encourages organizational commitment. Though these results did not verify that commitment is related to age, nor that workers of different ages perceive differences in how their leaders lead (no covariance among independent variables), it did not refute the assertion that younger workers prefer servant leadership attributes in their leaders (as identified by the literature). In other words, servant leadership behaviors can increase commitment of workers at any age. This information is important and suggestive of how leaders should lead in faith-based organizations, particularly in the Northeast United States.

The results of this research can be applied by leaders in faith-based organizations. Faith-based leaders can improve commitment of volunteer and paid workers of all ages by practicing servant leadership behaviors. This is important when considering the situation of organizations today with growing age diversity and more younger workers. Though it is important to motivate all workers, literature suggested it has been challenging to motivate younger workers, either due to career stage (James et al., 2011) or generation (Inceoglu et al., 2012). The results of this research identified that servant leadership is effective for leading younger workers and older workers alike. Therefore, leaders should practice and use servant leadership behaviors as part of their leadership repertoire to be effective leaders, with paid and volunteer workers in faith-based organizations.

These finding are particularly salient for Christian faith-based organizations. Christians proclaim Jesus as their leader, and vow to follow and model their life after Him. Jesus taught his followers: “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a
ransom for many, anyone who desires to be first, must be a slave” (Matthew 20:27-30, NKJV). According to Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology (Elwell, 1996), the word servant occurs in some form over 1,100 times in the New International Version of the Bible. There is a clear edict from Scripture for Christians to serve, and this applies to anyone who desires to be first or otherwise, as Jesus taught and exampled. The results of this research agree with the Christian as servant biblical framework, and identified that this practice produces commitment to the FBO mission. As is often the case with business principles, mankind did not create servant leadership, mankind discovered a principle that God created and is learning to apply that principle to business.

**Recommendations for Action**

The objective for this research was to test Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) leadership theory of servant leadership characteristics and age of workers (paid and volunteer) in faith-based organizations, against organizational commitment based on (Allen & Meyer, 1990, 1996) commitment theory. The results identified that there was a statistically significant direct relationship between perceived servant leadership behaviors and organizational commitment and no relationship between age of workers and commitment. This indicates that servant leadership should be practiced by leaders to increase organizational commitment in paid and volunteer workers. Since higher commitment is associated with worker productivity and achievement of organizational goals, all organizational leaders can benefit from practicing servant leadership behaviors.

Since servant leadership can be challenging to understand (how can someone serve and lead simultaneously?) for reasons discussed previously, leaders should undertake the study and practice of servant leadership to solidify their understanding of what servant leadership is and how it works. Servant leadership can be practiced exclusively or as one of several leadership styles applied according to circumstances. This should include leaders developing skills for
empowerment, accountability, standing back, humility, authenticity, courage, forgiveness and stewardship (Van Dierendonck, 2011; Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Servant leadership is uniquely suited for volunteer organizations (Schneider & George, 2011) and should be practiced not only by paid leaders, but also by volunteer leaders. As leaders exhibit positive servant leadership behaviors, they can expect to see organizational commitment increase among workers of all ages.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

This research may raise more questions than it answers. Several topics were not addressed by this research. First, there was no defined and documented population of volunteers for faith-based organizations. In fact, not all faith-based organizations are documented. This leaves the researcher with limited options for data regarding participants in faith-based organizations. Though it would appear as a monumental undertaking, research quantifying faith-based organizations in the U.S. and participants in those organizations would greatly increase researcher’s ability to study faith-based organizations. Next, an obvious extension to this research project is to address if these results generalize across the United States, and internationally. Though the Northeast tends to have its own culture (in this researcher’s experience), there was nothing apparent that would cause one to assume a difference in commitment to faith-based organizations in the Northeast, but this hypothesis should be tested. This research also did not differentiate between paid and volunteer workers. It could be useful to know if servant leadership affects volunteer workers differently than it affects paid workers. This knowledge should improve volunteer leadership practices by affording volunteer leaders a better method (servant leadership) of leading volunteers.

Related studies of faith-based organizations should investigate if different leadership styles have a different effect on faith-based organizations commitment. An in-depth study on servant leadership in faith-based organizations could also consider if servant leadership has the same
relationship to commitment in different organizational circumstances, such as start-up conditions, mergers and acquisitions, rapid growth or downsizing conditions. Finally, regarding faith-based organizations, it should not be assumed that these results apply equally to all faiths and therefore all faith-based organizations. Additional research comparing faith-based organizations of different faiths could shed additional light on the acceptance of servant leadership in different faith-based organizations.

Regarding age and commitment, this research identified that a relationship between age and organizational commitment in faith-based organizations cannot be proven, but does not answer the question why. The literature strongly suggested a relationship between motivation and age that would lead to the expectation that age affects commitment to a faith-based organization. The literature also suggested that older generations were more committed to their organizations than younger generations. Both suggestions seem to be refuted by this research. was this due to some difference in faith-based organizations, some difference in the Northeast, or some other reason? Do these results generalize to other types of organizations?

There continues to be a need for further research regarding servant leadership. In general, this researcher found no research studying the effect of servant leadership on normative commitment and only 4 studies on the effect of servant leadership on commitment in general (compared to 20 for transformational leadership). Though this research showed no significant variation between how generations viewed servant leadership practices of leaders, it did not investigate if there was a preference from Millennials for servant leadership. The literature suggested that servant leadership would be a preferred style by Millennials, but the research to verify this is lacking. Finally, the literature suggested that servant leadership is less practiced than other forms of leadership, but there was not a significant body of research identifying why. Additional studies should be conducted to validate that this assumption was true in different types of organizations (this researcher was not convinced it is true in faith-based organizations) and if so,
why. Understanding the growth or lack of growth of servant leadership will lead to recommendations for practice of servant leadership, which can improve commitment in (at least) faith-based organizations of the Northeast United States.

Reflections

This research project provided an exceptional opportunity for learning. Often, researchers are challenged to set aside personal bias and preconceptions about the research topics. This researcher was able to release personal biases and expectations in favor of learning, but struggled to remain focused on the research questions and hypothesis. In letting the literature direct understanding and expectations, each time the literature suggested a counter intuitive point, the tendency was to follow the rabbit trail to learn more. Once the survey was complete and the data unfolded the answers to the research questions and hypothesis, it begged questions that this research was not designed to answer, and the researcher was challenged to stay on task, rather than follow new and interesting concepts. This research has produced a considerable list of additional topics for the researcher to investigate.

One bias that was held and confirmed by the literature was that Jesus practiced servant leadership, and therefore the Christian leader should practice servant leadership. Though this research was not exclusive of any faith, the majority of the participants were likely influenced by the Christian faith (it is impossible to know with the anonymous convenience sample used). The results of the research confirmed that servant leadership is a valid style of leadership to obtain organizational commitment. The literature confirmed that Jesus did practice servant leadership, and many Christian organizations practice servant leadership with some success. As a researcher who prefers and practices servant leadership, this understanding was very satisfying and will strengthen the researcher’s commitment to and practice of servant leadership.
Summary and Study Conclusions

The purpose of this quantitative research was to identify if servant leadership practices could improve commitment in faith-based organizations in the Northeast United States. A particular challenge for this research was the realizations that there was not an established population of faith-based organization workers. Not all faith-based organizations are required to file with a regulatory entity, and therefore as many as 60% charitable organizations are not registered and therefore not accounted for in any statistics (although some register even though not required) (McKeever & Pettijohn, 2014). Even for the faith-based organizations that are registered, there is no requirement to maintain a list of volunteer workers. While some faith-based organizations may maintain volunteer lists, practical experience identifies that many faith-based organizations do not maintain such a list. Given an incomplete list of faith-based organizations and a less complete list of volunteers, a statistical population cannot be identified. Without a statistical population, general faith-based organization research is limited to qualitative research or quantitative research based on a convenience sample. While a convenience sample is valid in unknown populations (Fricker, 2008; Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2002; Kothari, 2004), it is not as statistically rigorous as a random sample, and may leave some questions as to generalizability of the results.

Themes from the literature identified that servant leadership is related to organizations’ commitment, faith-based organizations expect their leaders to practice servant leadership and that younger workers are likely to prefer servant leadership practices in their workplace. To that end, this research confirmed that all workers (young and old) were more committed to their faith-based organizations when they perceive their leaders were stronger servant leaders. In fact, the results suggest that if workers perceive an improvement in servant leadership of their leaders, they will increase their commitment. These are important findings as they close a gap for the research of faith-based organizations, servant leadership and organizational commitment. Likewise, these
results are critical for practitioners and organizational leaders. These results identified that in practice, better servant leaders attain better organizational commitment, suggesting the efficacy of learning and practicing servant leadership in faith-based organizations.

With the introduction of Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) model and measurement instrument, servant leadership continues to progress towards operationalization and acceptance. Van Dierendonck’s model brings together the best of previous models and understanding of servant leadership, based on Greanleaf’s (1970) explanation of servant leadership. This model is equally applicable for the scholar and the practitioner. The availability of the SLS makes it simple for researchers to incorporate a valid instrument in servant leadership research. The eight multi-dimensional characteristics of Van Dierendonck’s model make it valid and manageable for practice. More so than ever before, there is reason to believe that servant leadership is productive for organizations and reason to invest in the advancement of servant leadership practices, especially in faith-based organizations.
References


http://doi.org/10.1177/0899764012460730


http://doi.org/10.0.3.239/s10869-012-9259-4

http://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2016.05.370


http://doi.org/10.0.3.239/s10551-006-9034-4


http://doi.org/10.0.3.239/s10551-014-2196-6


http://doi.org/10.1080/15470148.2014.929993


http://doi.org/10.1111/1467-6435.00190


http://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2015.57.3.5


http://doi.org/10.0.3.239/s10869-010-9160-y


http://doi.org/10.0.15.6/btp.2015.431


http://doi.org/10.0.4.87/j.2044-8325.2011.02035.x


http://doi.org/10.1108/17554211111162435


http://doi.org/10.1109/EMR.2011.5876174


http://scholarcommons.scu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1013&context=mgmt


http://www.amazon.com/dp/047040292X


http://doi.org/10.1108/01437739610148367


http://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.21530


http://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2013.10.003

http://doi.org/10.1108/02683940910996798


study construct of humane orientation to show that servant leadership is more global than western. International Journal of Leadership Studies, 3(2), 212–222.


Appendix A: IRB Stamped Consent Form

A Quantitative Examination of the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Age on Organizational Commitment in Faith-Based Organizations

Statement of Research

Frank Deno
Liberty University
School of Business

You are invited to be in a research study exploring perceived servant leadership and age on organizational commitment in faith based organizations. You were selected as a possible participant because you were identified as an employee/volunteer of a faith based organization located in the Northeast United States. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in the study.

Frank Deno, a doctoral candidate in the School of Business at Liberty University, is conducting this research.

Background Information: The purpose of this study is to better understand the relationship between servant leadership, age, and perceived organizational commitment in faith based organizations.

Procedures:

If you are 18 years of age or older, employed by, or volunteer with, a Faith Based Organization in the Northeast United States (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont) and are willing to participate, you will be asked to complete the attached survey.

Your participation will involve approximately 6-10 minutes of your time to complete the survey. Your participation will be completely anonymous and no personal or identifying information will be required.

Risks of being in the Study: The risks involved in this study are minimal, no more than you would encounter in everyday life.

Compensation/Benefits: There is no compensation or benefits for completing this survey and participation is strictly voluntary.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw prior to completing the survey without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions: The primary researcher conducting this study is Frank Deno. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at fdeno@ liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher’s faculty advisor, Dr. Eric L. Richardson at eradrich@ liberty.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher[s], you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Green Hall 1887, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@ liberty.edu.

Please click "NEXT" to begin...
Participant Appropriateness Questions

1. I am 18 years of age or older?
   □ Yes
   □ No

2. I am currently employed by, or volunteer with, a Faith Based Organization in the Northeast United States (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont)?
   □ Yes
   □ No

Please click "NEXT"...

Leadership and Age on Organizational Commitment Survey

Servant Leadership Survey

Instructions: Respond to each of the statements below by selecting the response that best demonstrates your attitude.

Servant Leadership Questions
Organizational Commitment Questions

Demographic Questions

Gender (please select one)

- [ ] Male
- [ ] Female
- [ ] I prefer not to disclose.

Ethnicity (please select one)

- [ ] Caucasian
What is the highest level of education you have completed?
☐ High school
☐ Undergraduate Degree
☐ Graduate Degree

In what year were you born? (enter 4-digit birth year; for example, 1976)

Considering your service to your current church or other faith-based organization, how many years have you served in this capacity?

I currently reside in (select one):
☐ Connecticut
☐ Delaware
☐ Maine
☐ Massachusetts
☐ Maryland
☐ New Hampshire
☐ New Jersey
☐ New York
☐ Pennsylvania
☐ Rhode Island
☐ Vermont
Subject: IRB Exemption 2783.030117: A Quantitative Examination of the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Age on Organizational Commitment in Faith-Based Organizations

Date: Wednesday, March 1, 2017 at 11:29:49 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: IRB, IRB

To: Deno, Frank

CC: Richardson, Eric (School of Business), IRB, IRB

Attachments: Change in Protocol_Template.docx, Deno_2783Exemption_03_17.pdf, Deno_2783StampedConsent.pdf, image003.jpg

Dear Frank Deno,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:

(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please retain this letter for your records. Also, if you are conducting research as part of the requirements for a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation, this approval letter should be included as an appendix to your completed thesis or dissertation.
Your IRB-approved, stamped consent form is also attached. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

The Graduate School
March 1, 2017

Frank Deno

IRB Exemption 2783.030117: A Quantitative Examination of the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Age on Organizational Commitment in Faith-Based Organizations

Dear Frank Deno,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:

(i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School
Appendix C: Instrument Approval Letters

September 1, 2016

Dr. Eric L. Richardson
Chair, Human Resource Management Program Director, Healthcare Administration Associate
Professor of Business
School of Business

Dear Dr. Richardson,

I received your request to use our commitment measures in your research. You are welcome to use the measures for academic research purposes with the understanding that have registered at http://employeecommitment.com and have agreed to the terms of use as specified. I hope all goes well with your research.

Best regards,

John P. Meyer, PhD
Professor

Western University • Department of Psychology Faculty of Social Science, Social Science Centre London, Ontario • Canada • N6A 5C2
Telephone: 519-661-2067 • Fax: 519-661-3961 • www.psychology.uwo.ca
Request for Permission: Servant Leadership Survey

Dirk van Dierendonck <dvandierendonck@rsm.nl>  Thu, Jan 5, 2017 at 2:08 AM
To: "Richardson, Eric (School of Business)" <elrichardson@liberty.edu>  Cc: "Deno, Frank"
<fdeno@liberty.edu>

Dear Frank and Eric,

Thank you for your interest in using my work. Greatly appreciated. Yes, the survey may be used for Frank Deno’s dissertation research. The survey may be used free-of-charge as long as it is for academic purposes.

Kind regards,

Dirk van Dierendonck

Ps. And as a sideline to the IRB office. I understand the need for integrity. What is surprising is why when an article explicitly states the condition under which a survey may be used, it is still needed to contact the author directly. It is exactly to avoid this extra work that I placed the note under the table.

Verzonden vanuit Mail voor Windows 10