

HOW MIGHT SERVANT LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES IMPACT EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

AT A SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT FIRM?

by

Clifton B. Thacker

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Liberty University, School of Business

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Abstract

This study analyzed the impact servant leadership had on employee turnover at an SWM firm. Many authors were reviewed with literature pertaining to leadership, servant leadership, and SWM. Multiple interviews were conducted with current personnel at an SWM firm that utilizes servant leadership in order to gain a better understanding of the experiences of these employees. The results of the study indicate that servant leadership has a profoundly positive impact on employee satisfaction and, consequently, decreased turnover. The researcher developed many themes based on data analysis, which included culture, accountability, support, and commitment.

Key words: Servant leadership, retention, serve, culture

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all of the individuals who lingered through grade school with mediocre results, barely got into and completed an undergraduate program, crept into and finished graduate school, and are looking to earn a terminal degree. It can be done!

This project is also dedicated to entrepreneurs everywhere who invest insane amounts of time in developing not only their enterprises, but also their continuing education and business acumen.

Finally, this paper is dedicated to all of the family members, friends, and acquaintances that have consistently checked in on me and followed my progress through this lengthy journey. The words of encouragement and subtle nudges you have offered mean more to me than mere words can express.

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To God: What a sense of humor You have! You have permitted a young man who performed subpar in grade school to accomplish a terminal degree, fumbled for words in speaking to adolescent girls to marry his high school sweetheart and create an incredible family, and who had an unexceptional work ethic to become a successful entrepreneur. Your grace and love towards an undeserving degenerate like myself is awe-inspiring and worthy of the highest praise!

Table of Contents

Section 1: Foundation of the Study.....	1
Background of the Problem	1
Problem Statement	2
Purpose Statement.....	3
Nature of the Study	4
Discussion of Method	4
Discussion of Design	5
Summary of the Nature of the Study	7
Research Questions.....	7
Conceptual Framework.....	8
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs	9
Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Theory	9
Motivation-Hygiene Model	10
Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory.....	10
Discussion of Relationships between Concepts.....	11
Summary of the Conceptual Framework	13
Definition of Terms.....	13
Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations	14
Assumptions.....	14
Limitations	15
Delimitations.....	15

Significance of the Study	16
Reduction of Gaps.....	16
Implications for Biblical Integration.....	17
Relationship to Field of Study	18
Summary of the Significance of the Study	19
A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature.....	19
Leadership.....	19
Elements of leadership.....	20
Authenticity.....	20
Conflict Resolution.....	20
Emotion.....	20
Ethics.....	21
Organizational Identity	21
Spirituality.....	21
Storytelling.....	22
Trust	22
Redemption.....	22
Teams	23
Summary of Elements of Leadership.....	23
Servant Leadership.....	23
Elements of Servant Leadership	25
Calling.....	25
Altruistic calling.....	26

Listening	27
Empathy	27
Healing.....	28
Emotional healing.....	29
Awareness.....	29
Persuasion	30
Conceptualization	30
Foresight	31
Stewardship.....	32
Organizational Stewardship.....	33
Community Building	35
Humility	36
Agape Love.....	36
Wisdom.....	37
Persuasive Mapping.....	37
Summary.....	38
Other Leadership and Supporting Theories	38
Hierarchy of Needs Theory.....	39
Motivation-Hygiene Theory	39
Situational Leadership	40
LMX and LMX-T Theory.....	40
Transformational Leadership	42
Spiritual Leadership.....	43

Summary of Other Leadership and Supporting Theories	44
Foundations of SWM	44
Operations	44
Time	45
Network.....	46
Commodities	46
Facility capacity	46
Economies of scale	47
Waste transformation	47
Objectives	48
Management.....	48
Costs of SWM Employee Turnover.....	49
Summary of Foundations of SWM.....	49
Employees.....	50
General Costs of Employee Turnover.....	50
Market Measures to Combat Employee Turnover.....	51
Tangible benefits.....	52
Intangible benefits.....	52
Summary.....	53
Potential themes and perceptions.....	53
Summary of the Literature Review	55
Transition and Summary of Section 1	57
Section 2: The Project.....	58

Purpose Statement.....	59
Role of the Researcher	59
Participants.....	60
Research Method and Design	60
Discussion of method.....	61
Discussion of design	61
Summary of research method and design	62
Population and Sampling	62
Discussion of population.....	63
Discussion of sampling	63
Summary of population and sampling	64
Data Collection	65
Instruments.....	65
Interview guide	66
Data collection techniques	67
Data organization techniques	67
Summary of data collection	68
Data Analysis	69
Summary of Data Analysis	70
Reliability and Validity.....	70
Reliability.....	70
Validity	71
Summary of reliability and validity	72

Transition and Summary of Section 2	73
Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change	74
Overview of the Study	74
Anticipated Themes/Perceptions	76
Presentation of the Findings.....	76
Theme 1: Culture	83
Theme 2: Accountability.....	86
Theme 3: Support.....	88
Theme 4: Commitment	90
Relationship of themes to the research question.....	92
Summary of the findings.....	92
Applications to Professional Practice	95
Recommendations for Action	98
Individual investment.....	98
Action step for individual investment.....	99
Cultural education.....	100
Action step for cultural education.....	100
Recommendations for Further Study	101
Broaden the sample size.....	102
Expand the market	102
Employee separation.....	102
Reflections	102
Summary and Study Conclusions	104

References.....	106
Appendix A: Informed Consent Letter	124
Appendix B: Interview Guide for Servant Leadership Survey at SWM Firm.....	126
Appendix C: Recruitment Letter.....	127

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Every homeowner and business throughout the world generates considerable solid waste and recyclable materials. Numerous organizations are tasked with the responsibility of retrieving the trash and recyclables with equipment designed to minimize environmental impact while maximizing operational efficiency. Private waste firms, unlike public sector entities, have the additional undertaking of recruiting and retaining customers in a highly competitive atmosphere. The organization with the best assortment of sensible prices, product offerings, and an emphasis on service will likely be the industry leader. Waste and recycling firms that employ servant leadership principles may provide the differentiation necessary to successfully vie in the market.

Background of the Problem

Solid waste management (SWM) has an increasing presence on society today, both needing to be properly handled and disposed of in a safe environment. Prior to the last half-century, many people burned, buried, or simply discarded their trash in a careless manner (Sekerka & Stimel, 2014). In today's environmentally conscientious atmosphere, SWM involves many different strategic, tactical, and operational decisions to determine the most efficient means of managing waste (Ghiani, Lagana, Manni, Musmanno, & Vigo, 2014). The operational SWM complexity mandated by the market requires unique leadership skills to succeed as an industry leader.

Leadership skills are embedded in every firm, both in company strategy and in supervisory personnel. A burgeoning managerial philosophy centers on servant leadership, where a leader is servant-first, beginning with the instinctive feeling that one wishes to serve and serve others first (Otero-Neira, Varela-Neira, & Bande, 2016). Servant leadership is hierarchically horizontal, rather than vertical, differing in its primary emphasis on others in

comparison to other managerial styles focused on the leader (Williams, Brandon, Hayek, Haden, & Atinc, 2017). The servant leader in business first addresses the concerns of stakeholders, including employees and executive leadership, prior to satisfying his or her own needs.

SWM firms that incorporate servant leadership aspects within their operational and management philosophies will fundamentally alter the way they organize their affairs. A company-wide incorporation of servant leadership principles will permeate all levels of the business, from the executive level to the truck driver, emphasizing the needs of others first and foremost. The growth experienced from a change in philosophy to servant leadership will assist in identifying both the needs of the employees, as well as those of the current and potential customers (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). The introduction of such a dramatic integration of a radical philosophy must begin with a department within the SWM that has impact on nearly all aspects of the firm.

Problem Statement

The general problem explored was a lack of understanding of the impact of servant leadership principles on employee turnover in the solid waste industry. The specific problem to be explored is the impact of servant leadership on employee turnover within a nationwide SWM firm. Dutta and Khatrri (2017) linked servant leadership traits with employee turnover intentions through positive organizational behavior attributes, but stated that there is a pronounced dearth of focused research in the literature. Kashyap and Rangnekar (2016) identified extant literature positively connecting servant leadership with employer branding, but could not directly associate servant leadership with current and potential employees in a firm that emphasized branding.

The recruitment of capable operational employees is critical; it is considerably more efficient to keep quality employees than to hire, train, and acclimate a new hire of the same

quality (Mertel & Brill, 2015). The servant leadership principles of teamwork and community would allow SWM firms and their operations to engage their followers and subordinates in the planning and decision-making processes involved (Yigit, & Bozkurt, 2017). For operational staff in particular, the cost to replace an existing driver may surpass \$10,000 due to driver shortages and that more than one recruit will likely be recruited in an effort to find a stable replacement for the outgoing driver (Sersland & Natarajan, 2015). The goal of SWM firms is to pick up the trash and recyclables quickly, often resulting in the hires of lower-quality temporary drivers to get by in the interim until a permanent hire is identified (Baylor, 2016).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to comprehend the impact of servant leadership on employee retention within a leading national waste company. The focus of the case study was to explore the perceptions of servant leadership through key leaders within a leading SWM firm to gauge the influence servant leadership has on the day-to-day operations. The results of this study may compel other leading SWM firms to employ servant leadership principles in their organizations in an effort to better retain quality personnel and reduce turnover-related expenditures.

The focus of this study was to determine if a servant leadership style would be effective in employee retention within the SWM industry. A servant leadership framework focused on effective management and ethical responsibility is currently relevant as businesses strive to find a societal advantage in their respective sectors (Krog & Govender, 2015). Greenleaf (1977) stated, “Businesses are asked not only to produce better goods and services, but to become greater social assets as institutions” (p. 147). A foundational structure within SWM centered on

servant leadership and its underlying principles may be the key in improving personnel retention and reducing the costs of employee attrition.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative research method was utilized for the study. Stake (2010) suggested qualitative studies are interpretive, experiential, situational, and personality-driven. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a qualitative research design allows for a focus on a particular topic that is garnering attention. Stake (2010) opined qualitative research is a collection of approaches, from interpretive to situational. The subjective nature of leadership methods coupled with the lack of concrete data points towards the use of a qualitative method of research. A qualitative research method was chosen over a quantitative or mixed methods approach. This will be discussed in the following sections.

Discussion of Method

Qualitative research has been used extensively in studying leadership traits. Graça and Passos (2015) posited a qualitative approach towards leadership evaluation is preferable due to the context sensitivity and the ability to further examine the complexities and subjectivity of leadership. Qualitative research allows for a more profound investigation of servant leaders and their interactions, giving the researcher the ability to investigate and collect data on a more intimate basis (Jit, Sharma, & Kawatra, 2016). Qualitative data collection can present a narrative theme of leadership characteristics, allowing for stories and interviews to play a key role in the research gathered (Auvinen, Lämsä, Sintonen, & Takala, 2013). A characteristic of qualitative research as opposed to quantitative research is the ability to have detailed and descriptive accounts of organizations, management, and leadership (Cornelissen, 2016). Research using

qualitative methods, as opposed to quantitative methods, allows for emerging and dynamic themes to be captured within a study (Graça & Passos, 2015).

A quantitative research method is routinely centered on statistics and probabilities, often ignoring the reality and human elements behind the data (Zyphur & Pierides, 2017). Both qualitative and quantitative methods can be used to examine relationships; however, a qualitative method allows for a more nuanced examination of a single behavior being researched (Stake, 2010). Given that a single company was examined and the general nature of the discipline of leadership principles, a qualitative method was more appropriate.

A mixed method approach was specifically excluded because there are no clear reasons for using both qualitative and quantitative research when a qualitative approach alone is appropriate (Harrison, 2013). Mixed methods research is not commonly used in management and leadership disciplines, with little attention and acceptance of this methodology as compared to other fields (Cameron & Molina-Azorin, 2011). Often, the use of qualitative research acts only as an aid to the quantitative portion of a mixed methods study, negating the requirement for both approaches (Hurmerinta-Peltomäki & Nummela, 2006).

Discussion of Design

A qualitative research design using a case study will be utilized. A case study design allows for one central issue to be researched amongst multiple subjects (Creswell & Poth, 2018). According to Yin (2014), the case study is a common research method used in many situations such as business and, in particular, the structure within a unique industry such as SWM. Creswell and Poth (2018) also opined case studies might involve a decision process as well as a choice about what is precisely to be studied. Antunes and Franco (2016) suggested qualitative case study research as a means of understanding and contextualizing human behavior. Ponelis

(2015) recommended case study research for establishing rapport with research subjects, gaining rich descriptions, and acquiring in-depth insight.

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Phenomenology is the study of a unique phenomenon, appearing to an individual in his or her actual experience (Gill, 2014). The immediate experiences of phenomena are valued within phenomenology over immaterial knowledge or reflection (Berglund, 2015). Phenomenological studies have been described as lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018), sensory experiences (Stake, 2010), and becoming closer in contact with social and individual realities (Küpers, Mantere, & Statler, 2013). Phenomenological designs are intended for subjects who have experienced a particular event; while this design would fit the study, a singular case study would work better in studying the company as a whole, not just the individuals within.

A narrative qualitative design often involves storytelling, where ownership of the story and the particular version of the story may be difficult to interpret in a corporate setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). A narrative design can present deep-rooted values and various perspectives within individuals through life experiences (Jit, Sharma, & Kawatra, 2017).

According to Kourti (2016), narratives possess a multi-layered character, which can center on the identities of the behaviors and identities of the people within a firm. A narrative was considered for the study; however, a case study design was determined to work better given the emphasis on the organization and not on an individual, as well the uniqueness of the industry and the organization itself.

Grounded theory and ethnographic designs were not considered for the study. A grounded theory study is the generation or discovery of a new theory (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The principles underlying servant leadership have been researched and defined by many for decades (Greenleaf, 1977; Boone & Makhani, 2012; van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Ethnographic studies require the researcher to become immersed in the daily lives of the subjects and participants, typically through participant observation (Cresswell & Poth, 2018).

Summary of the Nature of the Study

A qualitative method using a single case study design was utilized for the study. Qualitative studies focus on the experience of the participants, with the settings described in great detail (Stake, 2010). Case studies are appropriate when describing a unique situation within a firm with unusual interest within itself and should be detailed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Within a case study design, the focus on a single case is suitable when the subject deviates from industry and theoretical norms, representing a rare opportunity to investigate an experience (Yin, 2014).

Research Questions

RQ1: How do servant leadership principles impact employee turnover rates in an SWM firm?

Employee turnover can be an impediment in all industries. Turnover diminishes the effectiveness of a firm, negatively impacting the productivity rate and weakening the morale of current employees within the business (Devi & Krishna, 2016). Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, and Pierce (2013) defined turnover as an antecedent to unwanted outcomes, such as the loss of human and social capital along with operational disruption, which burdens the remaining employees with training and getting to know newcomers and tasks management with recruitment and other overhead expenditures. Turnover also leads to inadequate customer service, decreased profits and revenue, increased accident rates, and lower output (Hausknecht, 2017).

Within SWM, employee turnover has a huge impact on many different facets within a firm. Commercial drivers play a crucial role in SWM firms, often being the direct link between an SWM company and their customers. When driver turnover occurs, a firm can anticipate losing at least one week of operational ability with the commercial truck, directly resulting in lost revenue and profits (Sersland & Natarajan, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study, centered on the impact of servant leadership is derived from other existing leadership theories that bound and support Greenleaf's (1977) definitions of servant leadership. Contemporary theories of servant leadership include Maslow's 1954 hierarchy of needs, Hersey and Blanchard's 1982 situational leadership model, Herzberg's 1974 two-factor or motivation-hygiene model, and Graen's and Uhl-Bien's 1995 leader-member exchange (LMX) theory. All of these general leadership theories possess qualities that compliment or underlie servant leadership principles.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Lee and Hanna (2015) described Maslow's hierarchy as pyramid-shaped, with basic human needs such as security and safety placed strategically and foundationally at the bottom, whereas self-actualized desires such as cognitive and aesthetic needs are placed at the top; to move towards the top of the pyramid, the lower levels must first be satisfied. Jacobsson and Wilson (2014) used Maslow's theory to address a natural order of needs that must be followed in order, with each subsequent step depending on the prior step to implement successful completion of tasks. The hierarchy of needs model is a succession of desires that begins fully concentrated upon oneself, then spreading outwards towards others (Hatfield, Turner, & Spiller, 2013). It is the branching out of self-focused needs into a focus onto others that brings this model into alignment with servant leadership principles.

Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory. Tortorella and Fogliatto (2016) opined situational leadership as one of the better-known leadership models, grounded in relationship and task behaviors and measuring their levels of effectiveness. Situational leadership requires effective leadership to possess a perception of the situation and create an appropriate response, focusing on the task itself (McCleskey, 2014). Each situation involving leadership to be demonstrated affirms a response from a leader, with an effective leader having the capacity to judge the necessary reply based on the aptitude and willingness of the subordinate to successfully finish the task (Wright, 2017). Despite the support situational leadership has had in management circles over the years, the theory has been assessed many times over the years by researchers, who have acknowledged inconsistencies in measurements, content, and the design of the research itself, specifically in the areas of follower commitment and competence (Thompson & Glasø, 2015). Servant leadership involves unique one-on-one interactions between leaders

and followers, much like situational leadership, but without the assessment mechanisms encompassed within the situational leadership model.

Motivation-Hygiene Model. Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene model indicates sources of personal satisfaction must be viewed as independent from sources that contribute towards dissatisfaction, where satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not opposites; rather, the opposite of satisfaction is no satisfaction and the opposite of dissatisfaction is no dissatisfaction (Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2015). Motivators are located within work itself and are used to describe the feelings of satisfaction, linked to aspects such as responsibility, achievement, and recognition, where hygiene factors are centered on working conditions and are used to describe the feelings of dissatisfaction, such as wages, policies, and interpersonal relationships (Hur, 2017). The sum of the motivators and hygiene factors within the model help lead to what motivates individuals overall; however, the motivators themselves have the most profound impact on motivation itself (Poissonnier, 2017). Servant leadership designs also focus on the tangible, or hygiene, factors, and the intangible, or motivators, to help stimulate followers to serve, with the personal rewards mechanisms occurring after others have been successfully serviced.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory. Originally referred to as the vertical dyad linkage upon its inception in the 1970s, LMX theory uses unique types of exchanges between its leaders and followers, often resulting in higher quality relationships (Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2015). LMX theory concentrates on the quality of the relationship between a leader and follower, with a high-quality LMX relationship consisting of trusts, loyalty, and respect between both parties (Wang, Gan, & Wu, 2016). Within LMX theory, a leader often forms high-quality exchanges with certain group members while resorting to low-quality exchanges with other members, leading to a high LMX differentiation (Kauppila, 2015). Servant

leadership theory, similar to LMX, values the unique relationship between leader and follower, but places no worth on the differentiation of interactions; rather, servant leadership places the emphasis on serving others first, regardless of the value of the transaction itself.

Discussion of Relationships between Concepts

A core belief of servant leadership is the community impact of the business itself. Successful businesses not only generate goods and services that allow for the business and its employees to flourish, but also create a positive societal impact in their respective communities (Greenleaf, 1977). Maslow (1998) commented how jobs at all levels of an organization, when a hierarchically common goal is endorsed by all, can gradually lead to a higher sense of social accomplishment both for the company and for the individual. Within the chain of command, a servant leader sees him or herself within the hierarchical pyramid, not on top (Boone & Makhani, 2012). Guitierrez-Wirsching, Mayfield, Mayfield, and Wang (2015) suggested focusing on the bottom of the pyramid to achieve sustainability through servant leadership within large firms. The encouragement and facilitation of societal behaviors through macro leadership principles within an organization creates a more positive attitude with employees within their employment and externally in the community (Searle & Barbuto, 2013). The societal impact a private waste company can have, via an implementation of servant leadership philosophies, can positively transform the firm, their employees, and the communities they service.

Servant leadership requires differing leadership characteristics and techniques at various intervals within a firm. Coaching is one tool of leadership where an ongoing dialogue occurs between a coach and a coachee to achieve one mind on a particular topic (Greenleaf, 1977). Thompson and Glasø (2015) cited a coaching leadership behavior within Hersey and Blanchard's 1982 pioneering theory on situational leadership as one of the four levels of the development of

followers, which also included directing, supporting, and delegating. Marques (2015) linked servant leadership qualities to situational leadership, where a rewarding relationship between the leader and follower are critical for continued success. The success of any company is contingent upon management providing clear direction to their employees; waste and recycle firms that lead with servant leadership ideologies can provide a more intimate relationship between employees and their supervisors as they strengthen their position within the industry and community.

Servant leadership posits the leader serves and serves first, making those who follow become healthier, freer, and more autonomous (Greenleaf, 1977). A distinct drawback of working for companies is the amount of rules and regulations an employee must follow; Herzberg (1974) listed company policies and administrative guidelines as a major source of hygienic dissatisfaction for personnel, thereby muting their autonomy and creating constraints. Organizational hygiene factors described by Herzberg are of potential equal importance to employees, where the factors rank differently and non-distinctive with each individual. Failure of firms to adequately address hygienic issues within employees will certainly lead to increased job dissatisfaction (Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2015). Waste firms employing servant leadership attitudes can give their employees flexibility, independence, and latitude to service their customers while simultaneously maintaining basic company standards.

Greenleaf (1977) referred to openness as a way to overcome bureaucracy, specifically through communication. LMX theory centers on maturing relationships between leaders and followers within a firm, as well as outside of a firm, using a relational openness as a tool for a more effective way of leadership (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Graen and Schiemann (2013) have expanded the LMX theory to include excellence, where the duty of managing personnel is a privilege and not an entitlement, thus creating an enhanced feeling of openness between

personnel. Openness and a higher quality relationship between leader and member are correlated with many positive outcomes such as a mutual liking and job satisfaction (Liao, Hu, Chung, & Chen, 2017). Private waste haulers that embrace openness through a servant leadership construct are more likely to keep employees, recruit new customers, and maintain existing relationships with clients.

Summary of the Conceptual Framework

Servant leadership has roots in investing in people first, sharing selected characteristics and traits with other leadership theories. According to Greenleaf (1977), firms build up personnel with servant leadership principles that are fundamentally people-centered. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) listed other theories with similar precepts as servant leadership, such as LMX theory and transformational leadership. Nasidi, Kamarudeen, and Bahaudin (2015) listed a firm's willingness fulfill basic needs of their employees and contribute to greater causes, specifically in the waste industry, increases commitment to the leader and to the firm as a whole. The institution of servant leadership's unique principles of putting others first, along with the shared ideals from other similar leadership theories, would have a dramatic impact within a solid waste and recycling firm,

Definition of Terms

Coachee: The individual who is being coached (McCarthy & Milner, 2013).

Macro Leadership Principles: Organizational level principles that impact those on an individual level within a firm (Searle & Barbuto, 2013).

Municipal Solid Waste: Waste that is generated from residential and commercial sources (Ghani et al., 2014).

Solid Waste Management: Various strategic and operational decisions used to select solid waste treatment, location of landfills, expansion capacity, processing waste flow, alignment of service regions, collection days, types of equipment to be used, and routing schedules (Ghiani et al., 2014).

Assumptions, Limitations, Delimitations

Facts considered to be true are known as assumptions; the development of credible alternatives is critical in qualitative research to reduce assumptions and enhance internal validity (Bennett & McWhorter, 2016). Qualitative research is subjective and often difficult to validate, frequently creating limitations within the research (Stake, 2010). Within case studies, the scope of the study itself can be broad, requiring bounds or delimitations to preserve resources and allowing for a more attentive focus (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ways to mitigate these research flaws within the study are outlined below.

Assumptions. The project is based on the impact of servant leadership at an SWM firm in reducing employee turnover. The researcher assumed that participants had experienced servant leadership at an SWM firm and answered the interview questions in an honest manner. If the assumptions prove not to be true, then the study will not effectively link servant leadership with employee retention in the SWM industry, risking the efficacy of the study itself. The researcher selected qualified interview participants within the SWM firm to help mitigate the chance of ambiguity in responses and to ensure that participants can evaluate a servant leadership style. Through a screening process, the researcher assumes the participants all have at least a basic understanding of servant leadership theory and actively utilize the principles in their vocation.

Limitations. A limited subject base may negatively impact generalization of the study results. A study sample may not accurately demonstrate the advantages or disadvantages of a servant leadership framework. Attempts to increase the sample size through expansion of the research criteria are not feasible. There exists a potential of a personal bias from the researcher. The researcher controlled this bias by minimizing voice inflection and thereby reducing any persuasive techniques towards research subjects. All other nonverbal communication that might unduly influence research subjects will be heavily scrutinized for potential biases. The interviewer used bracketing to focus on the experience itself and suspend any preconceived judgments.

Delimitations. Interviews on servant leadership took place with those employees within the SWM firm who responded to the recruitment letter created by the researcher. In order to complete the study in a timely fashion, the researcher limited the total number of employees to be interviewed. The SWM firm's emphasis on servant leadership and the impact it has on the firm's employees was the primary focus. To prevent the disclosure of potential proprietary information, only employees who volunteer to take part in the study were used for the study, not all employees of the firm.

While servant leadership can be linked to many different aspects of business, the study only focused on the impact servant leadership has on employee turnover. Employee turnover is only researched in the study through the prism of servant leadership and not any other leadership theories or organizational aspects. Other SWM firms in the SWM industry were not included in this study. The SWM industry was the only industry considered for the study, which excluded all other industries.

Significance of the Study

The study will add to the growing works of literature signifying the increased importance of servant leadership within organizations. Particularly, SWM companies form a critical component of communities where consumer and commercial waste needs must be addressed in an ever-increasing environmentally friendly fashion. Lapointe and Vandenberghe (2018) found that servant leaders influence the relational bond between employees and their firm, providing a positive environment that creates a sense of obligation by the employee to the firm and a keen awareness of the costs of leaving the organization. Private SWM firms employing servant leadership principles in their operations may gain an advantage over their competitors by retaining valuable employees and reducing the soft and hard costs of attrition.

Reduction of Gaps. Servant leadership principles may offer the SWM industry alternative and imaginative solutions that will better benefit their customers, employees, and communities. Servant leadership provides a path through positive organizational behavior to help firms focus on reducing an employee's intention to separate from the company (Dutta & Khatri, 2017). Kashyap and Rangnekar (2016) posited employers incorporate servant leadership behaviors in their business to develop a culture centered on trust, potentially addressing employee turnover rates. Creative solutions are needed to assist leaders in the SWM industry and their formal business operations. Unrestrained dumpsites, poor communication, and non-standard terminology within SWM firms have lead to a disjointed industry (Sekerka & Stimel, 2014). The concepts that underlie servant leadership offer such a solution.

SWM operations involve servicing customers. Servant leadership within SWM operations has been demonstrated to give credibility towards the managers and employees as servants, supporting both the organization and the customer (Otero-Neira et al., 2016). A typical

SWM operations department relies on the coordination and abilities of a varied group of drivers, laborers, dispatchers, and other key personnel to execute the appropriate services necessary to each customer. Servant leadership allows for a more effective synchronization of services, allowing for more effectual teamwork, which is a chief component of organizational success (Mahembe & Engelbrecht, 2014).

Implications for Biblical Integration. Principles of servant leadership permeate the Scriptures. One of the best and most popular illustrations of servant leadership occurred when Jesus washed the feet of the disciples prior to His crucifixion (Jn. 13:5). Bucci and Lewis (2016) noted the term leader is referenced only six times in the KJV bible: 1 Chr. 12:27, 1 Chr. 13:1, 2 Chr. 32:21, Isa. 9:16, Isa. 55:4, Mt. 15:14. Contrastingly, the term servant is used 885 times, specifically in the Old Testament with the Lord referring to both Joshua and Moses as servants: Ex. 33:11, Josh. 9:24. The Apostle Paul was also an unabashed servant of Jesus after his transformation on the road to Damascus, preaching to all who would listen (Rom. 1:1, Phil. 1:1, Titus 1:1). Servant leadership provided a foundation of significance to leaders thousands of years ago, and those same principles are needed just as much today to help leaders effectively guide their followers.

Servant leadership foundations have been linked to scriptural excerpts by other authors, as well. Coetzer, Bussin, and Geldenhuys (2017) listed in the Gospel of Mark verses 10:42-45 in citing Jesus as wishing to serve others and to not be served. Mabey, Conroy, Blakely, and de Marco (2017) espoused the Gospel of Luke 22:26 as a biblical example of servant leadership, where the individual in charge should be the one who serves. Thomas, Hebdon, Novicevic, and Hayek (2015) used the book of Nehemiah to characterize servant leadership when he absconded the benefits of his position as a palace official to serve the needs of the Jews in Jerusalem.

Relationship to Field of Study. The incorporation of servant leadership attributes within SWM operations is directly correlated to a leadership cognate. According to Westaby, Probst, and Lee (2010), innumerable daily decisions are made by leaders, which impact organizations at all levels. Leadership and leadership styles are not made up of a singular trait or characteristic; rather, a set of attitudes, skills, and actions comprises leadership (Boone & Makhani, 2012). Servant leadership possesses eleven unique operational scales and measurements that help define the model: “Calling, listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, growth, and community building” (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Servant leadership principles dovetail perfectly with the concept of leadership and would likely elevate SWM companies in the market who employ this strategy.

There exists a general lack of literature linking SWM operations with servant leadership qualities and measurements. Uncertainty related to SWM stewardship and community building, currently missing in research, can be addressed with servant leadership principles (Ghiani et al., 2014). Servant leaders exude confidence in their role as both leaders and servants organizationally, leading others by fulfilling their emotional and spiritual needs (Gutierrez-Wirsching, Mayfield, Mayfield, & Wang, 2014). Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2014) indicated servant leadership builds a positive climate and environment that creates the sense of employee empowerment, building community towards mutual goals. Servant leadership principles can bridge the divide between uncertainty and a creation of lasting, positive effects on an SWM firm, their employees, and its stakeholders.

Listening attentively to SWM customers can lead to persuasive behavioral adjustments for both SWM companies and the customers they service, such as waste reduction techniques, allowing for better foresight and planning within the communities SWM companies operate

(Jalil, Grant, Nicholson, & Deutz, 2016). An emphasis on increased awareness of practices by SWM firms towards those in the informal sector, free of systemic and operational constraints, may shed light on differing and more effective methods of SWM (Sekerka & Stimel, 2014).

Summary of the Significance of the Study

The bond between servant leadership and scriptural foundations is clear. Incorporation of these principles within SWM may help mitigate concerns experienced by the SWM industry as a whole. A single case study focused on a company in the SWM using servant leadership philosophies will gauge the effectiveness and impact of servant leadership.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

This study attempted to align servant leadership principles with SWM operations and employee retention. This review takes both of these subjects into consideration, along with a host of topics related to both servant leadership and SWM. The servant leadership model is based on Greenleaf (1977) and his seminal book outlining the principles of servant leadership. SWM and SWM operations have many differing adaptations (Ghiani et al., 2014; Jalil et al., 2016; Kirakozian, 2016), but the concepts of servant leadership integrated within an entire firm would have a profound impact on all aspects of an organization, including retention. Leadership, servant leadership, elements of servant leadership, other leadership and supporting theories, foundations of SWM, and employees are all reviewed in determining whether or not servant leadership principles has an impact on employee turnover at an SWM firm.

Leadership. The concept of leadership has been studied and researched for many years; yet, a clear understanding of what comprises leadership and how it can be applied remains a mystery (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Leadership has been referred to as individualistic, as well as a dyadic relationship between the leaders and subordinates (Turner & Baker, 2017). Leadership

effectiveness is contingent on the fit between the characteristics of leaders and their particular context within a firm (Graça & Passos, 2015). A paradigm adjustment has been recognized in recent years that altered the definition of leadership from the prime efforts of a singular leader to the overall achievements of the collective (Peterlin, Pearse, & Dimovski, 2015). Graen and Schiemann (2013) noted the current traditional leadership of individuals is not satisfactory in engaging millennials in the workforce.

Elements of leadership. Leadership is a comprehensively researched process within behavioral sciences due to the economic, political, and organizational structure accomplishments that rely on the efficient and successful guidance of their leaders (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) named the basic elements of leadership as the relationship between a leader and a follower. The following are common characteristics of elements found in various leadership theories.

Authenticity. Leaders subscribing to an authentic leadership model have the option of demonstrating charisma while building lasting relationships and working with enormous determination (Antunes & Franco, 2016). If a leader is identified as partial towards one particular follower, he will lose authenticity and credibility as both a leader and a mediator (Jit et al., 2016).

Conflict Resolution. Leaders often resolve conflict between organizational members by intervening and reducing the conflict to minimal damage or harm, then facilitating the restoration of an affable relationship between the parties (Jit et al., 2016).

Emotion. An emotional leader takes on differing facades, leading to differing types of leadership that necessitate diverse emotional capacities within followers (Antunes & Franco, 2016). Flynn, Smither, and Walker (2016) intimated leaders within organizations should

demonstrate they truly care, through emotional support and treatment on a professional and a personal level.

Ethics. Leaders possess moral values and ethics when they behave in a virtuous manner, demonstrating the fundamental reasoning of a morally good leader (Auvinen et al., 2013). Through ethics, leaders can heal others and lessen the suffering of many (Davenport, 2015). Firms and their leaders, through corporate social responsibility, have an ethical obligation to operate beyond mere economic incentives and regulatory requirements in an effort to benefit society (Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2015).

Organizational Identity. The development and strengthening of the concepts within organizational identity by leaders can help exemplify a followers' identity, thereby reducing turnover and increasing their constructive organizational behavior, ultimately leading to a positive impact upon the firm (Akbari, Kashani, Nikookar, & Ghaemi, 2014). Otero-Neira et al. (2016) posited when employees sense an organization directly supports them and shares their concern about their well-being, a stronger sense of connection and identification occurs between the employee and the employer. Organizational identity can often be tied to organizational resiliency, where significant time and efforts dedicated to planning for crisis management can help to enhance the infrastructure and identity of the firm (Davison, 2015). It is essential for organizations to focus on developing leaders, namely servant leaders, to meet the demands of the ever-changing workforce (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016).

Spirituality. A spiritual leadership model contains many elements of servant leadership, but also includes concepts like intrinsic motivation that servant leadership does not emphasize (Franscoise, 2016). Spiritual leadership negates the need for self-regulation within an organizational backdrop (Antunes & Franco, 2016).

Storytelling. Storytelling is a function within leadership where leaders communicate stories, which contain anecdotes, refrains, and memories that become part of the narrative within a firm (Auvinen et al., 2013). Leadership is entrenched in stories and cases recounting profound impacts from the leaders who advanced their roles with a focus on the success and growth of others within the firm (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). Research identified by Küpers et al. (2013) proposed narratives within storytelling help to enable situated decision-making in multifaceted environments. Leaders must be capable of describing future stories, describing in detail where the group of followers is going, why they must or must not alter their ways, and how they will arrive at their destination (Boone & Makhani, 2012).

Trust. Trust reverberates the confidence that a person has in some else's abilities and willingness to operate in an ethical manner (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015). Leaders who take active roles in inspiring their subordinates are effective in building trust with their followers and thereby creating a higher level of job satisfaction (Chan & Mak, 2013). Leaders can create a foundation of trust by working diligently to recognize their subordinate's unique talents and committing to the accomplishments achieved by each follower (Boone & Makhani, 2012). Du Plessis, Wakelin, and Nel (2015) found that trust within followers is considerably and positively impacted by a leader's level of emotional intelligence.

Redemption. Studies have indicated up to 75% of all employees have participated in various forms of malfeasance, including theft, sabotage, and unexcused absenteeism; redemption offered by leaders may give estranged employees an opportunity to consider the bigger picture and undo previous harms (Bucci & Lewis, 2016). Redemption helps to overcome manipulation, which is an adverse technique used by leaders to influence subordinates so they do not recognize the true intent of the manipulator, who often publicly supports decisions while secretly opposing

them (Auvinen et al., 2013). Manipulation occurs frequently when corporate objectives need to be reached; when pursued in the guise of a specific religious belief, the manipulation is even more sinister in nature (Mabey et al., 2017).

Teams. A leader's main job within a team is to ensure that all facets that contribute towards the successful completion of the team's task are handled properly (Graça & Passos, 2015). Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2014) defined team effectiveness as the realization of common goals and objectives achieved through the completion of team participants' group activities. The formation of unique strategic alliances between leaders, team members, and other relevant stakeholders will improve communication and handle difficulties easier (Graen & Sciemann, 2013). Managers have great influence over the members of a team and their remuneration, acknowledgment, and potential opportunities for development (McCarthy & Milner, 2013).

Summary of Elements of Leadership

The aforementioned elements of leadership are general in scope, applying to many different leadership theories. All aspects listed have some level of involvement and varying degrees of influence with employees and, specifically, employee retention. Each firm uses a direct or indirect variety of leadership; companies must individually determine how to best utilize the leadership elements outlined. The researched SWM company uses their own type of leadership style: Servant leadership. Servant leadership not only incorporates common fundamentals of leadership, but also adds in many unique characteristics exclusive to servant leadership.

Servant Leadership. The beginnings of servant leadership commence with Greenleaf's 1977 book *Servant Leadership*, where the leader is a servant and a servant first. Servant leaders

refrain from utilizing their given power as a means of accomplishing tasks; rather, the use of interpersonal communication and persuasion is exercised primarily to better understand their followers' needs (Mehembe & Engelbrecht, 2014). The actions a servant leader takes coupled with the self-concept of who a servant leader is lead to not only performing a unique service but, more importantly, to being a dedicated servant (Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora, 2008). Lacroix and Verdorfer (2017) detailed servant leaders as positive role models, demonstrating an ideal vision of what a leader should be. Looking towards the future, servant leaders aim to embolden their followers to provide a constructive and helpful contribution to their organizations (Yigit & Bozkurt, 2017).

Servant leadership is one of the more popular leadership theories being undertaken by companies today. Contrary to other leadership theories, servant leaders are characterized by their willingness to follow first, adhere to organizational requirements next, and satisfy their own demands last (Jit et al., 2016). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) posited servant leadership is closely aligned with transformational leadership, including service, trust, and vision, but differs when considering the alignment between the motives of the leader and follower. A horizontal focus on followers, rather than a typical vertical leader-focused perspective, makes servant leadership unique amongst all other leadership styles (Williams et al., 2017).

Servant leadership has become appealing to millennials, with characteristics including frequent and frank performance reviews, a desire to develop a friendship with their superiors, and an insistence on levels of support and personal interests not found in many other leadership theories (Barbuto & Gotfredson, 2016). Servant leadership goes well beyond a management style, incorporating a unique set of attitudes that must be developed by leaders who elect to adopt servant leadership principles (Boone & Makhani, 2012). The deliberate choice of leaders who

desire to service others first through servant leadership creates a passion and desire for leadership (Akbari et al., 2014).

Elements of Servant Leadership. Servant leadership contains many characteristic elements that are depicted differently by various scholars. Krog and Govender (2015) focused on Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) five servant leadership dimensions within the servant leadership questionnaire (SLQ) of altruistic calling, wisdom, organizational stewardship, emotional healing, and persuasive mapping when emphasizing the effect of employee empowerment through servant leadership on project management. Barbuto and Wheeler listed the following eleven potential aspects of servant leadership: Calling, listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, growth, and community building. The various elements within servant leadership underscore the act of serving, which is the central tenet and moral imperative of servant leadership (Akbaru et al., 2014). Despite the many different descriptions and attributes of servant leadership, there is no consensus, clear definition, or theoretical framework behind servant leadership (Davenport, 2015).

Calling. A calling within servant leadership is crucial as a desire to sacrifice self-interests and serve others first (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). A higher calling motivates servant leaders, endorsing values beyond their own personal interests (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Beck (2014) stated the behavior of a servant calling is unique amongst leadership characteristics. The initial motivations to serve likely transfer into observable attitudes of humility and trust, empowering others to witness the leadership attributes (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2016). Franscoise (2016) linked calling to the organizational effects a leader can make including effort, reward, and performance. The servant leader experiences a calling to take on the exceptional role of leading others first while putting aside their own needs indefinitely.

Altruistic calling. Altruism is often described as a focus on others, behaving selflessly, and possessing the desire to encourage others by serving their individual needs (Coetzer et al., 2017). Jit et al. (2017) cited an altruistic calling as a critical and conscious choice of servant leaders in easing the pains of their followers. Servant leaders are aware of the importance for their followers to possess a balanced personal and professional life, cognizant of the fact that excessive employee activity does not always lead to additional productivity (Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015). Servant leaders who perform an altruistic calling tend to prioritize the desires and needs of their followers over those of the organization and over their own (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). Beck (2014) defined an altruistic calling as a profound desire to make an impact in others' lives.

Altruism within servant leadership involves the sacrifice of personal reward in an effort to meet the needs of followers, serving others without the expectation of recompense, and having the preference of serving others and placing their interests over any personal predilection (Jit et al., 2016). Unfortunately, when leaders get the choice between serving others and achieving their own self-interests, they routinely opt for self-interest over altruism (Akbari et al., 2014). Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) listed compassionate love as the foundation of altruism, which then builds greater cultural and community ties within servant leadership. A positive self-concept through servant leadership attributes increases the likelihood of an altruistic calling, thereby decreasing the pursuit of approval and self-gratification when attempting to lead (Flynn et al., 2016). Servant leadership enhances an altruistic calling by fostering positive behaviors within all stages of personal and professional levels, including individual, dyadic, and societal (Searle & Barbuto, 2013).

Listening. Listening involves a deep commitment to pay attention actively and with respect, to ask questions in an effort to elicit knowledge, arrange for time to reflect and create stillness, and becoming aware of what is unspoken (Coetzer et al., 2017). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) described listening as the capacity to effectively hear and value the thoughts of others. Servant leaders are keen and profound listeners (Jit et al., 2017). Mertel and Brill (2015) stated leaders develop into servant leaders as they learn to listen intently to their followers, serving and connecting to their values.

Davenport (2015) cited listening as essential to the growth and development of the servant leader. Listening is the active acceptance and valuing of others, accepting and identifying the unique talents of followers (Jit et al., 2017). Servant leaders listen and understand their followers, abstaining from a continual issuance of commands (Boone & Makhani, 2012). Active listening, with an openness and acceptance of empathy, is the key characteristic of effective management (Jit et al., 2016).

Empathy. Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) defined empathy as a motivational portion of servant leadership while also a component of compassionate love. Empathy is the capacity to understand the circumstances others must face (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Jit et al. (2017) advocated empathy, an altruistic calling, and compassion as the impetus for servant leaders to try something to ease the pain and sorrow of followers. Chan and Mak (2013) stated servant leaders have a prerequisite of being attentive to the needs of their subordinates, empathizing with them as needed. Guitierrez-Wirsching et al. (2015) intimated servant leadership use empathetic language in praising their followers' accomplishments and achievements, as well as provide support and comprehension related to any personal challenges they are facing.

The beginning of moral leadership lies with empathy, where a leader enters into a followers' perspectives and feelings (Davenport, 2015). The characteristics of empathy and compassion are actively used by servant leaders to relieve the suffering experienced by their followers (Jit et al., 2017).

Healing. Previous studies on servant leadership have demonstrated the power of healing. Jit et al. (2017) observed servant leaders use a compassionate approach in handling followers' personal suffering, creating an organizational environment where employees can begin the healing process through positive emotional health. The presence of servant leadership had a negative association with the emotional exhaustion of employees, while having a positive relationship with personal learning, benefitting followers' work-family balance and minimizing the need for healing (Tang, Kwan, Zhang, & Zhu, 2016). Healing can be fostered through the practice of empathetic language of servant leaders, reinvigorating followers and assisting in making people whole again (Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015). Servant leaders attend to the needs of their followers in a personal manner through consideration and empowerment to facilitate healing (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Healing through servant leadership has the ability to help align the standards of leadership with a firm's long-term interests in an effort towards the common good (Peterlin et al., 2015).

The act of healing, an underappreciated characteristic of leadership in general, separates servant leadership from many other leadership theories (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Barbuto and Gottfredson (2016) defined healing as the recognition by leaders to help their employees regain hope, conquer broken dreams, and repair torn relationships. The use of healing by servant leaders empowers followers to overcome their negative emotions and restore their ability to develop (Jit et al., 2017). According to Peterlin et al. (2015), servant leaders serve others in a

style that deals with personal anguish, rejection, and brokenness, in the pursuit of the healing of followers.

Emotional healing. A leader's ability to discover how to initiate the healing process during the right time is known as emotional healing (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). Jit et al. (2017) implied the uniqueness of servant leaders and their focus on emotional healing is potentially linked to their own abilities of empathy, compassion, and listening. Beck (2014) defined emotional healing as a dedication to nurture spiritual recovery from adversity and trauma. Emotional healing through servant leadership is the ability to identify precisely when and how to initiate the healing process, fostering spiritual recovery from adversity and trauma (Searle & Barbuto, 2013).

Awareness. Awareness is the ability of a servant leader to observe situations holistically (Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015). Servant leaders must not only behave as servant leaders, but also promote themselves in an effort to increase the perceptions and awareness of employees of the principles within servant leadership (Otero-Neira et al., 2016). A servant leader's ability to rationally self-evaluate their own behaviors will positively impact their followers' perceptions of servant leadership (Flynn et al., 2016). Du Plessis et al. (2015) stated leaders who are aware, understand, and manage their emotions portray a worthy role model for their followers.

The development of leaders should include a self-awareness of manipulative behavior and the negative impact it would have amongst their followers and the organization (Auvinen et al., 2013). Successful servant leaders use a 2:1 ratio for asking questions versus giving commands to followers, allowing for an increased capacity of awareness from their subordinates (Boone & Makhani, 2012). Servant leadership necessitates the ability to be aware of others' concerns through seeking and valuing their followers' sentiments (Flynn et al., 2016). A servant

leader uses self-awareness to determine and measure their strengths and weaknesses, possessing the ability to gain insight through the exposure to others (Searle & Barbuto, 2013).

Persuasion. Du Plessis et al. (2015) hypothesized servant leadership exhibited by managers can persuade and influence followers, increasing positive perceptions and overall trust. The act of persuasion is enacted by an ability to lead and influence others outside of the scope of any formal authority (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Servant leaders are more likely to support their followers during vexing situations while fostering an atmosphere of mutual trust, thereby persuading and gaining the confidence of their followers (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015). Auvinen et al. (2013) specified an overt and discursive attempt at persuasion is manipulation, where the desired effect is disguised so that the real purpose behind the influence is concealed.

Servant leaders persuade their followers to fully employ their potential while encouraging them to achieve career success (Chan & Mak, 2013). During times of conflict between followers, servant leaders are known as fair leaders, persuading the clashing followers to accept the leader's seldom-used authority to restore unity between the parties and within the firm (Jit et al., 2017).

Conceptualization. Conceptualization is the reasoning exhibited by servant leaders beyond daily routines and realities (Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015). Sun (2013) argued two variations of servant leadership. Servant-integrative leaders tend to borrow aspects from other leadership theorems, while servant-compartmentalized leaders are more inclined to stay exclusively within servant leadership principles, allowing for better conceptualization of their own identities and self-worth. The idea of conceptualization manifests itself through an environment that uses mental archetypes and encourages imaginative thinking (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Servant leadership encourages followers' conceptualizations of their

employment through increased job satisfaction, which can enhance work attitudes (Chan & Mak, 2013).

Prior studies on conceptualization have shown servant leadership to exist on a personal level through self-efficacy, on a group level by team-efficacy, and to foster creativity and conceptualization within followers (Yang, Liu, & Gu, 2017). Yoshida, Sendjaya, Hirst, and Cooper (2014) demonstrated the importance servant leadership in encouraging the trust of followers and producing creativity and team innovation within employees. Jaiswal and Dhar (2015) revealed servant leadership, through the trust of a leader and the ability of an employee to thrive, is positively correlated to follower creativity. Williams et al. (2017) found self-determination, through servant leadership, allows leaders to become politically skilled, impacting their followers and their intrinsic motivation to help cultivate employee creativity.

Foresight. Foresight is the competence to predict the probable outcome of a particular situation, anticipating a result based on a combination of lessons from the past and the present reality (Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015). Foresight is also closely linked to conceptualization, where the servant leader aims to nurture their ability to create great visions (Davenport, 2015). A servant leader with foresight has the ability to anticipate what may happen in the future and any consequences therein (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Parris and Peachey (2013) used servant leadership principles as a means of addressing the unique challenges of the 21st century in stark contrast to an individual-first approach.

Servant leaders possess a vision for the future, communicating the preferred direction for the firm in accordance with its mission, vision, value, and beliefs (Boone & Makhani, 2012). Employers wishing to foster the precepts of servant leadership within their firm should consider screening employees during their evaluations to identify the desired principles of servant

leadership (Flynn et al., 2016). Servant leaders use foresight to comprehend and execute continuity of ongoing matters, developing a long-term strategy that acknowledges obligations to future generations (Peterlin et al., 2015).

Stewardship. Stewardship is the act of taking and accepting personal and professional accountability, leaving a constructive and lasting legacy while maintaining a caretaker's role, as opposed to an owner's role (Coetzer et al., 2017). Stewardship through servant leadership will guarantee that followers will feel a stronger bond to those in their scope, satisfying their need for belongingness (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Winston and Fields (2013) stated the willingness of servant leaders to serve their followers by demonstrating honesty stimulates followers to apply additional efforts towards their own success. Servant leadership is differentiated from other leadership theories by its focus on stewardship and the idea of sustainable development (Peterlin et al., 2015). Davenport (2015) stated servant leaders practice stewardship within firms in an effort to place it in a trust for others.

Stewardship has also been defined as the responsible oversight of something entrusted, typified as a commitment towards serving others' needs (Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015). Otero-Neira et al. (2016) linked a servant leader's behavior with stewardship as a mechanism to increase the organizational membership within their followers, allowing them to better identify with the firm. Servant leaders enact stewardship in an effort to uphold a legacy of an organization so that it may continue to contribute positively to a society (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Stewardship is exhibited by servant leaders through behavioral practices, which emphasize socially responsible behaviors and actions, encouraging the common good (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). The influence and use of stewardship by servant leaders allows followers to act in the mutual interest of all stakeholders, not just themselves (Peterlin et al., 2015).

Organizational Stewardship. Beck (2014) listed organizational stewardship as the act of assuming responsibility for the upkeep of an organization or community. A distinct interest in the advancement of servant leadership principles in employees by firms demonstrates a large investment in the development of leadership principles (Winston & Fields, 2013). Barbuto and Gottfredson (2016) described those practicing organizational stewardship as leaders who can produce a desire to focus on a societal and community impact, all the while looking past their own needs. When positive relationships exist between servant leaders and their followers, organizational citizenship and stewardship are certain to follow (Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015).

Servant leadership constructively influences the organizational stewardship and citizenship of followers through positive perceptions of self-efficacy, dedication to the leadership hierarchy, emotional fulfillment, and a positive work environment (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Servant leaders possess the capacity to emphasize to others the positive contributions within society their organization is able to make within society (Searle & Barbuto, 2013). Organizational stewardship allows a servant leader to create an awareness of community within a firm while exemplifying his or her desire for positive societal impact (Krog & Govender, 2015).

Previous studies have demonstrated organizations that support training programs focused on the advancement of genuine, transparent, and open dialogue between leaders and followers increase the likelihood of the development of servant leaders (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2016). Otero-Neira et al. (2016) discovered leaders who employ servant leadership principles increase their followers' levels of organizational support and identification within the firm. Servant leadership enhances organizational support through the followers' need for satisfaction, a sharp

focus on the individual, and the enhancement of psychological needs (van Dierendonck, Stam, Boersma, de Windt, & Alkema, 2013).

Zhang, Lee, and Wong (2016) confirmed the five factors of servant leadership first created by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) are all positively associated with job satisfaction. Servant leadership is more effective in firms with lower levels of organizational hierarchy and an absence of a cost leadership strategy, allowing servant leaders to interact with their followers to help in creating clear goals and augmenting job satisfaction (Eva, Sendjaya, Prajogo, Cavanagh, & Robin, 2018). Chiniara and Bentien (2016) outlined a positive association between servant leadership and satisfaction through autonomy, competency, and relatedness.

Growth. Servant leaders are not born as servant leaders. Any leader with a clear system of values can grow into a servant leader (Mertel & Brill, 2015). Jaiswal and Dhar (2015) proposed servant leaders allow creativity to grow in their followers through mutual trust, permitting subordinates to exhibit additional positive and creative behavior. The emphasis by a servant leader on the growth of their followers helps to foster the subsequent generation of leaders (Boone & Makhani, 2012). Chan and Mak (2013) posited servant leadership as the ability to focus on the followers' personal needs, allowing for growth by goal setting and helping them to prosper and develop. Franscoise (2016) stated servant leadership is centered on the values of followers, exhibiting belief in them without undue judgment, and allowing them the flexibility to learn and grow.

Growth within servant leadership extends beyond the leader and into each follower. Servant leaders possess a vision for the development and growth of their followers, gaining trust and credibility to help create their best outcomes (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015). Servant leaders are able to effectively identify their followers' needs, providing developmental activities and

opportunities for them to grow (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Growth also occurs when servant leaders freely give away their power, believing matters should be decided on a more local level with the least centralized authority structure (Boone & Makhani, 2012). Servant leaders encourage their followers to grow in their own personal and professional development (Chan & Mak, 2013).

Community Building. Servant leaders can build communities using empathetic and meaningful language, resulting in increased performance by followers, augmented job satisfaction, and a decrease in absenteeism (Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015). Coetzer et al. (2017) suggested building relationships through a trusting partnership between all stakeholders, an environment of encouragement, effective communication, a broad understanding of needs, collaborative work, and a conceptualization of higher visions to help create value within a community. The servant behavior exhibited by a servant leader should be aimed immediately towards new employees or followers, helping them to build and reach their full potential (Chan & Mak, 2013). Servant leadership is rooted in a spiritual foundation of reciprocating caring and an appreciation of community, which allows great things to transpire between the leader and follower (Marques, 2015).

Boone and Makhani (2012) pointed to the ability of servant leaders to be cognizant that their successes originate from an attitude that spearheading organizational efforts leads to developing productive communities. Servant leaders are required to employ a positive impact on their followers and those in their respective communities (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Davenport (2015) posited the servant leader must seek to identify a method for building community within those who are employed inside a firm. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) presented community building as the capacity to instill an awareness of community spirit within a firm. Servant

leaders are not simply responsible for those in the organization, but also for outside stakeholders, including those in the community impacted by their leadership (Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015). The application of sound reasoning and mental contexts allows servant leaders to positively contribute towards their communities through developmental programs (du Plessis et al., 2015).

Humility. Humility is defined as remaining modest and stable, possessing an acute awareness of personal strengths, maintaining a humble attitude, persisting in seeking new opportunities, and being cognizant on personal ability and achievement while keeping them in perspective (Coetzer et al., 2017). Gotsis and Grimani (2016) suggested humility forces servant leaders to admit the benefits of others' expertise through integrity, honesty, and vulnerability. Humbleness in servitude is conceivably the most distinctive feature of servant leadership (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2016). Akbari et al. (2014) explained humility as a lack of superiority and inferiority towards others.

Servant leaders use humility as a means to exercise their impact on followers, emphasizing growth and assuaging self-doubt over their personal development (Flynn et al., 2016). Humility through servant leadership encourages empowerment, accountability, and stewardship by servant leaders (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016).

Agape Love. Servant leaders' ability to demonstrate agape love commences from their personal values and virtues, inspiring courage and hope (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2015). Franscoise (2016) cited love as an attribute that is related to effects a leader can have which will positively impact organizational commitments among followers. Love distinguishes servant leadership from other leadership models by enabling the developmental success of all stakeholders and prioritizing the growth of their followers (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015). The

relationship between the servant leader and their followers is one rooted in love with social, moral, and intellectual attributes (Akbari et al., 2014). Servant leaders are often in a position to demonstrate compassion and love towards the anguish their followers experience within the workplace (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016).

Wisdom. Guitierrez-Wirsching et al. (2015) revealed servant leaders demonstrate wisdom by fostering creativity within their followers through dignity and empowerment. Leaders possessing wisdom have a sense of awareness and a keen ability to relate knowledge gained through life experiences (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). Servant leaders demonstrate wisdom by being observant and being anticipatory across many different contexts, allowing them to fittingly apply their accumulated knowledge into action (Searle & Barbuto, 2013). Beck (2014) cited wisdom as a blend of awareness of surroundings and the expectation of consequences. Wisdom within servant leadership involves the ability to respond to cues in the environment, taking the cues that are most relevant and making pertinent decisions based on a thorough understanding of what consequences may occur with that decision (Krog & Govender, 2015).

Persuasive Mapping. Barbuto and Gottfredson (2016) defined persuasive mapping as a leader's ability to both use and convince others to use logical reasoning when encouraging similar thinking in others. Leaders have a need to influence employees often through a narrative method in an effort to engage followers and make legitimate a leader's distinct roles and ideas (Auvinen et al., 2013). Persuasive mapping through servant leadership allows leaders to astutely identify the followers' needs, providing the needed feedback to the followers in an effort to express the importance of their contributions (Krog & Govender, 2015). Beck (2014) mentioned

persuasive mapping as the ability to persuade others using firm reasoning and frameworks to theorize greater potentials.

Servant leaders do not elicit force to provoke subordinates to follow; rather, they walk and move amongst their followers in a direction that can bond all in a common visualization within a firm (Boone & Makhani, 2012). According to Jit et al. (2016), servant leaders favor a persuasive, humble, patient, and follower-centered approach to resolving conflict between followers. Servant leaders with high levels of persuasive mapping abilities are capable of articulating issues and realizing possibilities that are convincing by imparting their thoughts (Searle & Barbuto, 2013).

Summary

Servant leadership principles have been shown to positively impact leaders, followers, and stakeholders in many organizations. An implementation of servant leadership within SWM firms may have a constructive impact in recruiting, training, and retaining quality employees. An SWM company may incorporate servant leadership values in all aspects of their business, and reap the benefits of the standards encompassed within servant leadership. The incorporation of servant leadership principles at an SWM firm may assist in retaining quality employees and reducing costly turnover.

Other Leadership and Supporting Theories

Servant leadership is a prevalent theory in leadership circles, but shares many elements and principles of other similar managerial theories. Predecessors of Robert Greenleaf and his servant leadership theory include Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and Frederick Herzberg's motivation-hygiene, or two factor, theory. Contemporaries of Greenleaf include Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory, Graen and Uhl-Bien's leader-member

exchange theory, and Downton's transformational leadership theory. Finally, spiritual leadership is broached, as spiritual and servant leadership share many features.

Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (1998) addresses principles often contained within servant leadership: Self-actualization, esteem, and love/belonging. De Gieter and Hofmans (2015) associated the importance of a reward and need by an employee from a firm positively contributed to their behavior, attitude, and lead to increased satisfaction and a decreased chance of separation. According to Soni and Soni (2016), intrinsic values such as truth, understanding, and purposefulness comprise the final stage of self-actualization, transcending individualistic self-interest.

In contrast to servant leadership, unambiguous concepts must be developed for each scale of the hierarchy, requiring precise definitions for measurement purposes (Taormina & Gao, 2013). Maslow and other authors who have researched Maslow give no focus on how a leader can directly establish these philosophies. Conversely, a servant leader's primary emphasis is on the well-being of their followers, thereby increasing the likelihood of both a positive relationship between the leader and the follower as well as the followers' intent to stay with the firm.

Motivation-Hygiene Theory. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (1974) presents options for firms and leaders to assist with job satisfaction with current employees. Employees satisfied with their employer are more likely to stay in their current firm. Within the theory, sources of satisfaction are distinct from those that contribute towards dissatisfaction, indicating that the two are not opposites but continuums, instead (Lacey & Kennett-Hensel, 2015). According to Vijayakumar and Saxena (2015), motivating factors of job satisfaction include recognition, advancement opportunities, achievement, and responsibility, while hygienic factors include salary, supervision, corporate rules and guidelines, interpersonal relations with

coworkers, job security, and working conditions. Servant leadership takes into consideration all of the factors of the motivation-hygiene theory in retaining employees, but does not differentiate them between continuums; rather, servant leadership uses any factor that would directly lead to a servant mindset of both the leader and their follower or followers.

Situational Leadership. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) developed situational leadership theory as a way of measuring four distinct styles of leadership: Instructing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. The leadership styles contained within situational leadership can assist in maintaining and retaining positive relations with current employees. According to Thompson and Glasø (2015), enthusiastic beginners should receive a directive or instructive style of leadership, followers with low commitment level may benefit from coaching, capable employees could respond to a supportive style of leadership, and high achievers would react best to a delegating leadership style. Situational leadership requires an evaluation of each employee at a precise point in time in determining the appropriate leadership style.

Situational leadership focuses on the particular situation at hand in dealing with employees. Situational leadership provides an opportunity to effectively alter followers' working habits by increasing cooperation and communication to augment productivity (Tortorella & Fogliatto, 2016). As opposed to what is going on at the moment with situational leadership, servant leadership can use any or all of the four situational leadership styles in any variation at any time. The emphasis of a servant leadership construct centers on increasing the servant behaviors of both the leader and the follower and thereby increasing the likelihood of retaining valuable employees.

LMX and LMX-T Theory. LMX theory emphasizes the different relations between followers and leaders, which can help or hurt employee retention efforts, contingent on the

exchange between the two parties. LMX and servant leadership theories share many commonalities, such as high-quality exchanges between the leadership and followers and the development of trust and relationships (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). Servant leadership is often compared to LMX theory, with the chief difference being the moral purpose of serving others first (Boone & Makhani, 2012). The work results of LMX differentiation, where the relations amongst leader and member are varied in strength, are contingent on boundary conditions between the leader and follower (Kauppila, 2015).

LMX theory intimates leaders have unique relationships with employees, prompted by the expectations and fulfillments between the leader and the follower (Liao et al., 2017). The strength of a strategic alliance between an employee's boss and their immediate supervisor contributes significantly to job performance and a securing of resources is a critical element of LMX theory (Graen & Schiemann, 2013). Servant leadership would posit a strong alliance between all parties, given an alignment of servant leadership principles, necessitating strength of professional relationships and an elevated job performance and satisfaction over other leadership theories.

A strong bond in emotional healing exists within both LMX theory and servant leadership (Jit et al., 2017). LMX theory fosters improved teamwork in globally decentralized teams, incorporating inclusion of members through heightened decision-making processes, mirroring the focus on others first and away from managers through servant leadership (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). Graen and Schiemann (2013) suggested both servant leadership and LMX-T assert the responsibility of managing subordinates is a privilege and not an entitlement, providing employees a professional and knowledgeable individual who is an accepted leader by all. Leaders are characterized as having a high LMX differentiation when high-quality exchanges

with select group members are formed, whereas some members are confined to low-quality transaction-based relationships (Kauppila, 2015). Servant leadership acknowledges no such differentiation. All relations between a leader and a follower, regardless of their hierarchical differences, are valued at the maximum degree in order to consistently maintain a position of servitude.

LMX and the similar LMX-T both focus on the fundamentals, styles, and behaviors of managerial leadership between leaders, followers, and their relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Graen & Schiemann, 2013). However, neither concept theorizes the leader as a true servant, aiming first to satisfy the needs of the follower. Evolving leadership theories, such as servant leadership, advocate that the power lies in a leader's ability to alter an organization and its employees, not in a leader's hierarchical position within a firm (Krog & Govender, 2015).

Transformational Leadership. Transformational leadership is often effective in maintaining positive relationships with employees, but differs from servant leadership in one critical way. According to Searle and Barbuto (2013), transformational leadership uses four distinct dimensions: idealized influence where a leader is the role model, inspirational motivation where the leader stimulates and inspires their followers, intellectual stimulation where the leader allows for and fosters new ideas, and individual consideration where leaders take into account the unique needs and skills of their followers. Transformational leadership possesses many similar traits to servant leadership; one missing component from transformational leadership that is an underpinning of servant leadership is the moral factor, which measures the character of people exclusive of the firm itself (Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015). Servant leadership and transformational leadership overlap when considering their mutual emphasis on people and the significance of valuing, listening, and emboldening their

followers (Otero-Neira et al., 2016). While servant leadership focuses on others first, transformational leadership emphasizes the goals of the firm (Akbari et al., 2014). Antunes and Franco (2016) stated transformational leadership is linked to the sustainability of a business and its social responsibility through a leadership style rooted in responsibility.

Otero-Neira et al. (2016) presented a study that showed, while highly correlated, servant leadership and transformation leadership diverge because servant leadership was a more effective predictor of satisfaction, commitment, and an intention to stay. Servant leadership and transformational leadership both give power to followers for enhanced performance and communication, but servant leadership mandates an additional emphasis on the psychological well-being of the individual (Gotsis & Grimani, 2016). According to Jit et al. (2016), both servant leadership and transformational leadership highlight the role of the leader as a facilitator, but servant leadership is stimulated to serve followers, whereas transformational leadership possesses no traits in particular to serve followers for the sake of the followers.

Transformational leaders use persuasive strategies to empower followers, increase their performance, and alter their values, norms, and behaviors to coincide with the leader's concepts (Marques, 2015). A transformational leader is charismatic, raising a followers' level of consciousness concerning the value and importance of outcomes and the strategies involved in achieving those particular outcomes (McCleskey, 2014).

Spiritual Leadership. Unlike many other leadership theories, spiritual leadership has a core focus on the individual and away from the firm, creating a unique opportunity for employee fulfillment. Spiritual leadership is the application of spiritual issues within the workplace, which is an alternative to the traditional productivity-centered perspective routinely held by many employers (Franscoise, 2016). Spiritual leadership keeps vision, altruism, and faith in mind

when motivating followers towards high performance and an increased organizational commitment; servant leadership uses the same three qualities conceptually, as well (Jit et al., 2016). Meng (2016) stated spirituality within leadership circles has many conceptions but lacks clarity in definitive constructs. While agnostic in its origins, servant leadership seamlessly can use elements of spiritual leadership to impact followers and help build their approach towards servitude, increasing the probability of retaining valuable employees.

Summary of Other Leadership and Supporting Theories

While servant leadership theory is unique, it does share many characteristics of other modern and classical management, leadership, and supporting theories. Servant leadership takes many of the positive aspects of other leadership theories and utilizes some distinctive features in serving and retaining employees. The examination of other leadership philosophies often reflects a customary emphasis on leader and their style of leadership, demonstrating the exclusivity of servant leadership and its emphasis on both the leader as a servant and the elevation of their followers. The implementation of a servant leadership design of management within an SWM firm, as opposed to other leadership and supporting theories, may alleviate the common problem of employee turnover and the considerable costs associated with separation.

Foundations of SWM. SWM is a stodgy industry, often overlooked but crucial to the infrastructure of rural counties, cities, states, and countries. SWM requires many levels of management, including maintenance, sales, accounting, and operations. The institution of SWM programs requires direct interaction between customers and employees, which is normally controlled by an operations division within the SWM organization.

Operations. Operational waste collection counts for over 40% of the entire cost of MSW expenditures (Jaunich et al., 2016). de Souza Melare, Gonzalez, Faceli, and Casadei

(2017) identified several operational support systems for SWM, including radio-frequency identification (RFID), geographic information systems (GIS), and global positioning systems (GPS), all of which are designed to monitor solid waste and recycling equipment and containers. SWM is comprised of various tactical, strategic, and operational choices, incorporating solid waste treatment options, treatment facility sites, capacity and expansion capabilities, the flow of waste and recyclables to treatment sites, operational service areas, waste and recyclable collection days, commercial fleet procurement and allocation, and the routing of all collection vehicles (Ghiani et al., 2014).

Sekerka and Stimel (2014) suggested waste professionals, through the outgrowth of production, must deal with the collection of leftovers, refuse, and other unwanted elements involved in SWM. SWM relies heavily on waste collection systems, including residential, commercial, and recycle services (Cortinhal, Mourão, & Nunes, 2016). Given the international scale of MSW generated, improper management of MSW causes hazards to people, with over 90% of all MSW disposed of in landfills, open dumps, and other ways that may harm others (Rawal, Singh, & Vaishya, 2012).

The following facets of SWM operational strategies are described by Ghiani et al. (2014):

Time. Time involves the decisions SWM companies make that involve the expedient construction of building, maintaining, or closing facilities, including landfills, transfer stations, materials recovery facilities (MRF), or other waste and recycling depositories (Ghiani et al., 2014). A lack of time within life-cycle planning and an insufficient infrastructure for the removal of solid waste has led to a sizeable amount of waste that is disposed of in public areas such as non-sanctioned landfills and water streams (de Souza Melare et al., 2017). Time windows are a hindrance in SWM, with routing inefficiencies, federal hourly driving restrictions,

and overall variable costs playing factors in routing SWM equipment (Cortinhal et al., 2016).

According to Jaunich et al. (2016), tip time within SWM operations involves the time spent once a commercial SWM truck enters a waste treatment facility, is weighed, extricates the load, and weighs back out; the quicker the tip time, the sooner the driver can resume the route.

Network. A logistical system that models all operational strategic decisions for SWM firms is known as a network (Ghiani et al., 2014). de Souza Melare et al. (2017) indicated a decision support system (DSS) network can be used as a tool to certify compliance with any local or national regulatory agencies. Within vehicle operations, a network consists of streets and their ability to be traversed based on time of day, whether they have restrictions (one-way, weight limits, road surface), and which accounts require servicing based on the account status, day or week of service, and service interval (Cortinhal et al., 2016).

Commodities. The type of waste or recyclables being transported and how they are processed are known as commodities (Ghiani et al., 2014). Recycling efforts and the appropriate disposal of waste are considerable challenges within SWM (de Souza et al., 2017). Waste and recycle collection within SWM firms involves different types of waste, such as residential household waste, commercial business waste, construction and demolition waste, and recyclables (Cortinhal et al., 2016). Kirakozian (2016) suggested facilitating a system that is conducive to collecting and delivering recycled goods, which includes a suitable operational and financial infrastructure that are required to encourage recycling procedures from businesses, residents, and municipalities.

Facility capacity. A key goal of North American cities and SWM firms for the past two decades has been the conversion of MSW to recyclable materials and the diversion from sanitary landfills to recycling facilities (Wilson & Velis, 2014). de Souza et al. (2017) listed various

options for facilities to accept the disposal of waste and recyclables, including landfills, composting centers, incinerators which include both autoclaves and steam plants, and refuse-derived fuel (RDF) combustion hubs. Each SWM facility has a life cycle based on total time of use, storage capacity, or regulatory restrictions (Ghiani et al., 2014). Given the finite timetable and capacity of landfills, SWM firms generally seek ways to minimize the impact of MSW disposal through recycling and other waste disposal means.

Economies of scale. Economies of scale includes the concave tendencies of operating costs an SWM experiences when considering optimal activity levels (Ghiani et al., 2014). Economies of scale through effective vehicle routing can be realized in three different ways: time minimization, proper partitioning street networks through sectors or sub-regions, and a singular vehicle servicing each sector (Cortinhal et al., 2016). Kirakozian (2016) identified economies of scale as a reason to engage private waste and recycling providers over publicly funded entities, regardless of the population, since capitalistic motives entice private firms to deploy higher capacity waste vehicles and use a smaller staff than that of taxpayer funded alternatives. Since the 1970s, SWM collection practices have been motivated by both reducing risk and increasing profit while picking up MSW and recyclables for less money (Rogoff, 2014).

Waste transformation. When the waste or recyclables are processed, the characteristics of the commodity itself changes. Waste breaks down in landfills while recyclables are routinely crushed and bundled for shipment elsewhere (Ghiani et al., 2014). A reduction of MSW is the most preferred way to sustain MSW management, through waste transformation means such as recycling and composting (Janmaimool, 2017). SWM is a critical priority when dealing with MSW and the conservation of natural resources and the protection of the environment (Rawal et al., 2012).

Objectives. Contingent on the particular area of service, the objective of operational waste collection accounts for approximately 40% of the total cost of MSW management (Jaunich et al., 2016). SWM leaders must make decisions as to where to place facilities, what routes to run, what vehicles to use, and any sociopolitical issues that may impact any decisions made (Ghiani et al., 2014). The rate of waste generation helps to determine the scale of a waste management system, with higher concentrations requiring different treatment options (Tot, Srdevic, & Vujic, 2016).

Kirakozian (2016) recommended waste hauling firms use economic incentives to encourage waste and recycling customers to alter their behavior, through producing less waste, generating more recyclables, or both. The total strength of a service organization, such as an SWM firm, is contingent on the effectiveness and competency of its staff (Sersland & Natarajan, 2015). According to Fehr (2015), MSW is a critical part of urban sanitation, thus carrying long-term reduction or transformational objectives set by local, state, national, and international agencies.

Management. According to Xu, Huang, Cheng, Liu, and Li (2014), management systems within SWM allow the manager to design the most efficient means of allocating waste flow patterns, in accordance with minimizing expenditures and environmental impact. The waste management hierarchy begins with the overall reduction of solid waste streams, followed by an augmented recycling of materials, the introduction of composting, and, if necessary, disposal by utilizing either combustion facilities or solid waste landfills (Janmaimool, 2017). The undertaking of waste and recyclables collections is a distinctive set of tasks that cannot be generalized due to the many interconnected factors involved (Jaunich et al., 2016).

Numerous stakeholders outside of private firms are involved in managing SWM,

including public managers of municipalities, business owners, and regulatory agencies (de Souza et al., 2017). The management of MSW and recycling contributes to local economies through new job creation, business expansion, and the resale of recycled materials (Park, Yi, & Feiock, 2015).

Global population growth and increased wealth has exponentially amplified consumption trends, thereby increasing the generation of solid waste and recyclables, and the increased need for SWM (de Souza Melare et al., 2017). Internationally, 3,532,255 tons per day of MSW was generated in 2012 (Harijani, Mansour, & Karimi, 2017). A strong correlation exists between MSW production and the income levels of residents; as economies strengthen, so does the need for effective SWM programs to handle the additional waste generated by citizens (Wilson & Velis, 2014).

Costs of SWM Employee Turnover

Employee turnover in SWM has expensive and dangerous consequences, specifically within operations. The necessity of consistently retrieving MSW and recyclables from customers often prompts an expedited hiring process when turnover occurs, frequently bypassing safety training or causing an imbalance in employee pay (Baylor, 2016). DeWeese (1999) stated numerous for-hire carriers encounter employee turnover rates near 100% annually. Employee turnover and industry-wide driver scarcity has prompted the use of autonomous equipment at some landfills (Greenwalt, 2017).

Summary of Foundations of SWM

SWM is a complex network of departments and capital-intensive operations designed to effectively handle the removal and transportation of MSW and recyclables. Specifically, SWM operational personnel have the unique task of interacting directly between the SWM firm and the

customer. The enlistment, training, and retention of valuable operational employees is of critical importance, as the tangible and intangible costs to replace these employees ranges far beyond wages and benefits, extending also into customer retention and recruitment.

Employees. SWM consists of varying personnel within different departments, including drivers within operations divisions. The expense to replace a single driver of a commercial vehicle might exceed \$10,000 in total costs, which includes recruitment, new driver training, and potential lost business in the interim (Sersland & Nataraajan, 2015). Turnover is quite costly and presents unique management challenges, thereby making it critical for organizations to be more efficient in retaining quality employees, as opposed to recruiting, training, and orienting a replacement employee of similar quality (Mertel & Brill, 2015). Employee safety is another great concern within SWM, with 74 fatalities in 2015 and the second highest industrial recordable injury rate in the United States (Baylor, 2016).

General Costs of Employee Turnover. Employers are focusing increasingly on Human Resource departments to help combat the negative outcomes of employee turnover. Wang, Wang, Xu, and Ji (2014) stated employee turnover is one of the most serious risks that can threaten stability within a firm due to external and internal factors. High turnover rates negatively impact organizational productivity, efficiency, and aspects of manufacturing through both direct costs, such as remuneration, and indirect costs, such as lowered morale, among remaining employees (Zeng & Honig, 2016). The cost of employee turnover, including losing an employee and recruiting their replacement, averages nearly 20% per employee and routinely exceeds 100% of yearly compensation for each job lost when accounting for the loss of customer revenue and human capital (Spencer, Gevrek, Chambers, & Bowden, 2016). Flint, Haley, and McNally (2013) found a newly hired employee receives an average of 15 days of new employee

training in particular firms, while taking between eight and sixteen weeks to become capable in their new positions.

The loss of an individual and the job they performed are not the only factors in evaluating the consequences of employee turnover. According to van Stormbroek and Blomme (2017), employee turnover may damage a firm's competitive position in the marketplace through the loss of human capital and their implicit knowledge base. Turnover not only costs a firm human capital, but often results in fewer mentors, disruptions of critical work, damaged relationships with clients, and an overall loss of organizational effectiveness (Reina, Rogers, Peterson, Byron, & Hom, 2018). Nelissen, Forrier, and Verbruggen (2017) cited employee development as a means to enhance employee value and create a competitive advantage within the industry, accepting the inherent risk that it may inadvertently stimulate turnover as employees could perceive more opportunistic labor prospects elsewhere. Other critical costs of employee turnover include new-hire screening, training, errors made by inexperienced employees, productivity loss, and the psychological effects on other employees having to take on additional tasks in the interim with an employee either no longer with the firm or in-training (Bandura & Lyons, 2014).

Market Measures to Combat Employee Turnover. Firms have been gradually using more worker-centered tactics to reduce employee turnover and their associated negative consequences. Tangible benefits, such as issues regarding pay or bonuses, are generally easier to market, shorter-term in nature, and are often used to both initially attract and retain critical employees. Intangible benefits, such as words of affirmation by a superior or perceived fairness within the firm, are often even more critical in reducing turnover, with long-term impacts for both the firm and the employee. Historical research, including the Great Depression-era Hawthorne Studies, as outlined by Muldoon (2017), has demonstrated the difficulty and

ambiguity of assessing what variation of tangible and intangible factors make the most impact in recruiting and retaining quality employees while minimizing turnover.

Tangible benefits. Frazis and Loewenstein (2013) suggested the use of fringe benefits by companies, such as pensions and health insurance, lowers the risk of employee turnover. Increased salary adjustments not only add tangibility to an employee's rate of remuneration, but also signal a perceived value of an employee and their ongoing contribution to the firm, along with a gesture of goodwill by the organization (Gevrek, Spencer, Hudgins, & Chambers, 2017). Scaling back or terminating higher-paid employees can have dire consequences in firms, including the loss of company expertise, advanced communication skills, stronger and larger customer networks, and proven work ethics (Perrin, 2016).

Intangible benefits. According to Bandura and Lyons (2014), organizations should emphasize outlining the promotional employment potential available to current workers, as departed personnel cite both remuneration and a lack of career opportunities as primary reasons for leaving their current employer. Kampkötter and Marggraf (2015) implied employees may interpret additional training within a firm as a gift and an investment from their employer, signaling value and importance of the worker by the organization. Training and development through firms and their human resource departments can result in higher levels of employee engagement, thereby reducing turnover (Shuck, Twyford, Reio, & Shuck, 2014). Perceived ethics and the observation of fairness in the workplace is a key reason why employees depart firms (Lin & Liu, 2017).

Recent studies have reaffirmed and emphasized the critical role intangible benefits play in reducing turnover. Firms should examine their company procedures concerning organizational and interpersonal justice to assess how their employees are treated and evaluated

by both the company and management in an effort to reduce turnover (Flint et al., 2013). The use of pressure tactics by management within a firm are often correlated with employee turnover, with last-second appeals by management who employ a pressure approach to retain personnel rendered ineffective (Reina et al., 2018). According to Shuck et al. (2014), employees who feel support in their development while receiving encouragement towards their career goals within a firm have additional advancement opportunities and are less likely to leave their employer.

Summary

Turnover is an issue experienced by almost all firms. The costs of replacing valued employees expand well beyond lost time or wages; rather, the measurements involve many other stakeholders, including other employees, customers, and management. Once the value of retaining high-quality employees has been realized by an organization, the mission then transfers to what balance of intrinsic and extrinsic reward mechanisms should be deployed in reducing turnover. SWM firms have their own unique industry challenges in addressing turnover, specifically regarding continuity in servicing customers, and must establish their own method of employee retention. The incorporation of servant leadership principles by an SWM firm may have a positive impact on not only benefits, both tangible and intangible, but ultimately on retaining quality operational employees and reducing turnover.

Potential themes and perceptions. Leadership theories consist of many various approaches and viewpoints. Individual firms have their own stated or unstated way of managing employees and instituting leadership hierarchies among different levels within the organization. Smaller firms may opt to have a less formal managerial structure due to the multifaceted approach of each employee having to perform every task, thereby negating the need for a prescribed leadership theory. As companies grow in size and in personnel, a more formalized

leadership structure is necessitated. Many small, mid-size, and large companies recognize and employ common leadership theories and their principles, such as transformational leadership (McCleskey, 2014), situational leadership (Thompson & Glasø, 2015; Tortorella & Fofliatto, 2016), LMX theory (Graen & Schiemann, 2013; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Kauppila, 2015; Martin et al., 2015), and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Beck, 2014; Boone & Makhani, 2012; Davenport, 2015; Gotsis & Grimani, 2016).

A prevailing theme of servant leadership is that it contains many unique management principles, as well as numerous attributes from other leadership theories. Several authors compared servant leadership to other contemporary leadership models (Coetzer et al., 2017; Winston & Fields, 2013; McCleskey, 2014), while many others list distinctive characteristics exclusive to servant leadership (Boone & Makhani, 2012; Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015; Jit et al., 2016; Otero-Neira et al., 2016). It is the fundamental traits of servant leadership that not only distinguish servant leadership from other management theories, but also compel firms that utilize servant leadership to devote additional resources towards recruiting, training, and retaining quality personnel in order to avoid the hard and soft costs of employee turnover.

Few themes exist in scholarly and non-scholarly literature directly linking employee turnover avoidance with SWM. Operations departments, which include drivers and administrative support for drivers, are the direct link between the customer and the SWM firm. The continuity and consistency of operations departments is critical to the success of an SWM organization. Operations employees help with the vehicle routing and positioning of drivers and driver's helpers (Cortinhal et al., 2016; de Souza Melare et al., 2017), as well as what facility to use in disposing of or recycling collected materials (Ghiani et al., 2014; Wilson & Velis, 2014; Jalil et al., 2016). SWM relies on consistent service schedules to all customers; employee

turnover not only expends capital when rehiring and training replacement workers, but also interrupts service schedules, thereby potentially resulting in lost revenue through customer attrition, as well.

Themes involving employee turnover appear to focus on not only the compounding negative impact of departing employees, but also the importance intangible benefits play in retaining current employees. Tangible benefits are an important initial and short-term step in recruiting and maintaining employee satisfaction (Frazis & Loewenstein, 2013; Gevrek et al., 2017), but intangible benefits are crucial to sustaining long-term employee contentment and reduced turnover (Shuck et al., 2014; Bandura & Lyons, 2014; Lin & Liu, 2017). It is the balance of benefits offered to employees by firms that helps determine the level of employee retention and turnover.

Summary of the Literature Review

Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy gaining traction in management circles as a way of keeping and rewarding quality employees. It shares some traits with other classic and contemporary leadership theories while incorporating many distinctive principles of its own. The unique aspect of servant leadership that differentiates it from other leadership theories is the emphasis on the elevated status of followers and the servant mindset of the leaders. Listening and empathy are emphasized as key traits within servant leadership, making servant leadership increasingly distinctive from other leadership theories. The act of listening, with an openness and acceptance of empathy, is the key characteristic of effective management (Jit et al., 2016). An SWM firm that chooses to integrate a servant leadership archetype, which includes listening and empathy, will likely experience increased employee satisfaction and, consequently, decreased employee turnover and separation.

SWM is a mature and stable industry that exists in every town, city, and state, and is impacted by every human and business; yet, little has been documented as to what the direct influence and cost of employee recruitment, retention, and replacement is within SWM firms. Turnover and separation in SWM is extraordinarily costly, presenting challenges to organizations to be more efficient in retaining quality employees (Mertel & Brill, 2015). The fundamental concepts that underlie SWM and their operational personnel are both complicated and expensive to supervise, requiring a distinctive combination of management, leadership concepts, and competent employees. An implementation of servant leadership principles companywide may assist not only in recruiting and retaining effectual employees, but also in training existing leaders to serve those employees that directly handle both company initiatives and customer requirements.

Employee turnover has disastrous effects on firms, not only counting the direct costs with hiring, training, and replacing the former employees, but also the indirect costs of added workload to remaining employees, squandered productivity, lost human capital, and potential customer attrition. Effective retention strategies involve an amalgamation of intangible and tangible benefits. Intangible benefits such as training and development can achieve higher levels of employee engagement, thereby reducing turnover (Shuck et al., 2014). Each firm has their own guidelines on how to recruit, retain, and replace employees, exclusive not only to the organization but often in their industry, as well. SWM firms have the unique task of recruiting qualified operational employees, including commercial drivers, which has become increasingly difficult due to scarcity. The onus is on SWM companies to not only recruit and adequately train competent personnel, but to retain them as well through an exceptional balance of tangible and

intangible benefits. Servant leadership offers a backdrop for SWM firms to provide this needed balance through an emphasis on followers and a servant mindset for the leaders.

Transition and Summary of Section 1

The literature points to the possibility that the addition of a servant leadership philosophy in SWM firms may have a positive impact on recruiting quality workers and reducing employee turnover. Through investigation, one SWM firm has been identified as having integrated servant leadership principles within their organization. The aim of the research paper is to determine the impact servant leadership has had on the firm's ability to recruit and retain employees. Section 2 will cover the purpose statement, the role of the researcher, the participants in the study, the research method and design chosen, the population and sampling methods, the data collection methods, techniques, analysis, and the reliability and validity of the study.

Section 2: The Project

The project centered on the role servant leadership has played at a solid waste management (SWM) company and the impact it has had on employee retention. The SWM firm is a large corporation, ranking amongst the largest waste management firms in the United States in 2011 (Fickes, 2011). The SWM industry faces pertinent issues with operational personnel turnover, as the cost to replace a single departed driver and train a new driver often exceeds \$10,000 (Sersland & Natarajan, 2015). If the research demonstrates a proclivity of increased employee retention through servant leadership principles, then other SWM and driver-centered businesses may stand to benefit by incorporating a similar servant leadership approach.

The researcher organized the project in a qualitative manner to examine the situational, interpretive, and experiential characteristics often found in qualitative studies (Stake, 2010) and to clarify the impact of servant leadership at the researched SWM firm. Section 2 of the study focuses on several key characteristics of the project:

- The purpose statement, a refresher as to the purpose of the study
- The role of the researcher
- The participants
- The research method and design, and how they were chosen
- The population and sampling method
- The data collection methods and techniques
- The data analysis
- Reliability and validity

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to comprehend the impact of servant leadership on employee retention within a leading national waste company. The focus of the case study was to explore the perceptions of servant leadership through key leaders within a leading SWM firm to gauge the influence servant leadership has on the day-to-day operations. The results of this study may compel other leading SWM firms to employ servant leadership principles in their organizations in an effort to better retain quality personnel and reduce turnover-related expenditures.

The focus of this study is to determine if a servant leadership style would be effective in employee retention within the SWM industry. A servant leadership framework focused on effective management and ethical responsibility is currently relevant as businesses strive to find a societal advantage in their respective sectors (Krog & Govender, 2015). Greenleaf (1977) stated, “Businesses are asked not only to produce better goods and services, but to become greater social assets as institutions” (p. 147). A foundational structure within SWM centered on servant leadership and its underlying principles may be the key in improving personnel retention and reducing the costs of employee attrition.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher began by contacting a senior member of management of the subject of the case study. The researcher respected all proprietary information provided by the research subjects, screening and removing any communication that was not relevant to the study. Interviews were scheduled with subjects at their convenience in an attempt to protect the privacy of the participant while minimizing any inconveniences caused by the researcher. The researcher

obeyed all rules in safeguarding all human subjects. All interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher onto files located on a single desktop computer.

Participants

The researcher contacted a senior level of management at the firm being researched for a list of potential research participants. The senior manager agreed to distribute, via company email, a recruitment letter generated by the researcher to all employees of the researched firm with company email addresses. The senior manager and the potential research participants were informed that their involvement in the study was completely voluntary. A copy of the recruitment letter created by the researcher can be found in Appendix C of this study.

The researcher initially used both cellular and electronic means of communication with the survey participants. Once an employee agreed to participate in the study, the researcher then primarily used cellular communications to establish a positive, direct, and valuable working relationship with the research participant. Harvey (2017) classified the researcher-participant relationship as a working alliance, requiring conscious, unconscious, and preconscious levels between the two parties. All participants who contributed to the study were informed of the confidentiality concerning their responses. The researcher followed all moral and ethical guidelines in collecting the data. All participants who took part in the research read and signed the informed consent form located in Appendix A.

Research Method and Design

The researcher used a qualitative method for the research. Qualitative methods allow for the acquisition of knowledge from a relatively small sample size. Qualitative research is used to explore a problem or issue (Cresswell & Poth, 2018). Data representing personal experiences in unique situations can be gathered using qualitative data (Stake, 2010). The researcher relied on

feedback and opinions from the participants during interviews as the main sources of information.

A single case study design was used for the research. Through exploration of the available literature, only one SWM firm was identified as using servant leadership principles as an organization. Case studies allow researchers to examine the meanings of situations, conveying to others the complexities contained in the research (Stake, 2010). According to Creswell and Poth (2018), researchers use a single case study design when examining an entire program to illustrate a specific issue. One reason for the use of a single case study design would be when the circumstances of the research represent an unusual case, diverging from industry norms (Yin, 2014). Case studies usually involve more variables of interest than specific data points while using several sources of evidence, requiring the data to converge into a unique fashion (Tsang, 2014).

Discussion of method. Qualitative methods are effective to use when researching leadership elements. According to Graca and Passos (2015), a qualitative approach is preferable over a quantitative approach due to the advantages regarding sensitivity to context and the ability to highlight the complexities of leadership. Designs within qualitative methods allow for stories, interviews, and conversations as sources of data (Jit et al., 2016). A feature of qualitative research is the creation of rich and detailed accounts of a firm's management and unique experiences (Conelissen, 2016).

Discussion of design. A single case study design is efficient in researching a unique situation within a firm or industry. Yin (2014) mentioned single case studies require meticulous examination of the potential case, reducing the likelihood of misrepresentation. According to Cornelissen (2016), case studies combine a pursuit for analytical patterns while taking into

consideration an appreciation of the semantics involved within the case. Single case studies are used when the problem being researched has a very low rate of replication, requires a high degree of tailoring towards the case, and when preliminary research could be useful to show proof of a concept before fielding a bigger experiment (Shadish, 2014). Single case studies can provide dependable information for the direction of where future research can be focused (Boddy, 2016). Management studies often employ a single case study because a single case study design supports the comprehensive analysis of a case and the real-life context contained therein (Leoni, 2015).

Summary of research method and design. Given the limited amount of SWM companies that actively employ servant leadership, a qualitative method using a single case study design is appropriate. Qualitative studies are often used in researching businesses, allowing for deeper insights into the business and the people themselves. Single case studies allow for a concentrated focus on the experience researched within a firm. Thus, a qualitative single case study is fitting to conduct research of servant leadership within an SWM firm.

Population and Sampling

The population of the research included current employees at an SWM firm, which is the subject of the case study. The SWM company has hundreds of branches scattered across North America. Each location has a group of employees that perform the specific tasks the branch is responsible for handling, which may include commercial and residential waste removal, recycling, and waste processing, or a variation of the aforementioned operational duties. The sampling populous included those employees who chose to respond to the recruitment letter submitted by the researcher.

Discussion of population. A population is the total set of information resources that are possibly relevant to addressing the research question or questions (van Rijnsoever, 2017). The total population of the SWM firm to be researched is unable to be determined due to the proprietary nature of private firms and their resistance in disclosing financial or personnel figures. The population to be sampled was decided by those who responded to the recruitment letter created by the researcher and distributed by the SWM firm. All of the participants were located at branch locations within the boundaries of North America.

A random purposeful type of sampling strategy was used to select the participants. Creswell and Poth (2018) identified random purposeful sampling as a way to collect data and add credibility when the potential sample size is too great. Current employees of the SWM firm were considered for the research. All employees must have had a minimum full-time tenure with the company of at least six months, giving the employee an opportunity to not only observe the impact of servant leadership within the organization, but also in comparison to any alternate leadership strategies used by previous employers he or she may have had.

Discussion of sampling. The sample size of the population was an accurate reflection of the SWM firm itself, representing a cross-section of different departments within the organization. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested utilizing a sample size that uses multiple sites and is able to gather extensive insight about the sites and the research subjects. Hennink, Kaiser, and Marconi (2017) found that saturation was reached in their qualitative study after nine interviews. Namey, Guest, McKenna, and Chen (2016) through 10,000 random samples of data sets collected, determined a median sample size of between eight and 16 participants to satisfactorily tackle a specific research question.

The appropriate sample size for qualitative studies is usually conjectured, as little attention historically has been paid to approximating or justifying sample sizes within research (Boddy, 2016). According to O'Reilly and Parker (2012), qualitative research is focused with the richness of the data gathered, so the number of research subjects within a sample is contingent upon the nature of the particular topic and the available resources. Van Rijnsoever (2017) stated data collection and analysis within qualitative research should persist until no new concepts or codes exist, demonstrating saturation.

The sample size was eight participants, demonstrating an effective saturation point for a qualitative single case study focused on the experiences of the research subjects. Through interview questions, the saturation point may lie between six and twelve interviews; though, it may also be less (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews with participants will continue until a saturation point is reached. Once the saturation point within coding and data themes is reached, the data should be capable of producing a degree of generalization (Boddy, 2016). Qualitative research measures the adequacy of sample size by the depth of data, requiring samples large enough to contain participants who best characterize the topic being researched, but not too great in size as to become repetitious and oversaturated (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Often, a saturation point within qualitative studies is determined by the researcher, who must use his or her own discernment and experience in drawing this conclusion (van Rijnsoever, 2017).

Summary of population and sampling. The population of the research collected was generated by employees who responded to a recruitment letter created by the researcher. A sample was taken from the population of employees who were employed full-time for a period of six months or longer with the SWM firm and who answered the questions in full by the deadline. Prior employment in at least one other company was also a prerequisite so an evaluation could be

made by the participant between the current SWM firm and their use of servant leadership against the leadership style utilized by other former employers. Once the saturation point was reached within the sampling, the research was concluded.

Data Collection

Interviews for the study were conducted using a list of open-ended, semi-structured questions to begin. If a response from a participant to a question elicited follow-up, a more in-depth question was posed that built upon the initial response by the interviewee to the open-ended question. The list of initial questions asked of each interviewee is available in Appendix B.

Interviews were used as the primary source of data collection for the study. Interview questions are routinely the sub-questions within a research study, expressed in a manner that interviewees can easily comprehend (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Stake (2010) indicated interviews are used by qualitative researchers for a variety of purposes, including the acquisition of unique information possessed by the interviewee, accumulating an aggregation of information from multiple sources, and discovering a characteristic that previous researchers were unable to find earlier.

Instruments. The researcher was the primary instrument for the research. Stake (2010) stated most qualitative researchers favor data or information that can be directly heard by the researcher directly, in contrast to other types of data. Creswell and Poth (2018) indicated qualitative interviewing possesses challenges for the researcher by focusing on the particular mechanics of the interview itself. The questions administered to participants in a case study are oriented towards the researcher first, not to the interviewees, as a reminder of the information

that is to be collected for the study (Yin, 2014). The researcher used questions from the interview guide, a copy of which is located in Appendix B.

Interview guide. The researcher asked questions to each research participant from the interview guide, located in Appendices A and B of the study. Interviews, according to Yin (2014), consist of data collection involving verbal evidence gathered from case study participants. The questions asked were intended to probe as to the impact servant leadership had on their current employment with the SWM firm where they were working. A series of six main questions were asked, each with potential follow-up questions contingent on the initial response by the participant, culminating in the final question asking if the participant is ultimately persuaded to stay with their current SWM firm if another SWM firm offered comparable terms and benefits.

The interview guide contains the introductory statement and consent form, located in Appendix A. A list of open-ended questions asked by the researcher, along with potential follow-up penetrating questions and a closing statement, is also part of the interview guide and is located in Appendix B. The entire interview process was designed to take approximately 30 minutes for each participant. Creswell and Poth (2018) described interview questions in qualitative research data collection as sub questions within the research, phrased specifically so participants can fully understand. Stake (2010) detailed interview questions within qualitative research as uncomplicated and asked in the same manner to all participants in a study if the responses will be tallied, also referred to as semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were designed to evoke responses by the participants in an effort to measure the development of servant leadership within the SWM firm and the impact servant leadership has on retaining current employees.

Data collection techniques. The researcher collected the data from participants utilizing semi-structured interviews that contained open-ended questions designed to provoke rich responses regarding servant leadership. A recruitment letter, available in Appendix C, was emailed to the participating SWM firm, to be distributed to all employees within the company. Eligible candidates for the research must have been full-time, employed for at least six months, and worked for at least one other employer prior to joining his or her current employer. This screening process was intended to ensure participants had sufficient time and opportunity to not only determine the effectiveness of servant leadership within their current firm, but also measure servant leadership against leadership strategies used by a former employer or employers. All participants who elected to take part in the survey read, signed, and dated the consent form located in Appendix A.

The data were collected through interviews conducted over the telephone, with both the researcher and the participant utilizing confidentiality by being unaccompanied during the interview. Throughout the interviews, the researcher, ensuring the information interpreted by the researcher was accurate, conducted member checks. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes and was recorded through an app on a smart phone called ‘TapeACall Pro,’ which generated a digital file for each interview. The researcher conducted interviews with participants until saturation was reached. All digital interviews were then submitted to an online transcription service called ‘Rev.com.’ The coding and data analysis were then input into a qualitative data analysis computer software package called ‘NVivo’ on the researcher’s computer.

Data organization techniques. Once an interview was completed, recorded digitally, and transcribed, each transcription was entered into ‘NVivo’ software located on the researcher’s

computer. Researchers who are familiarized with digital storage of ongoing research should make their reports electronic (Stake, 2010). This qualitative analysis program processes large volumes of data, creating emerging themes and codes for research findings. The 'NVivo' software and the computer terminal belonging to the researcher are both password-protected. All digital files gathered from participants were stored on the researcher's hard drive. All participant identifiers, such as names and birthdays, were removed in advance of submission of the potential participants by the SWM firm to the researcher, eliminating the chance of unintentional disclosure of sensitive data.

The researcher also kept paper logs consisting of hand-written notes and coding information for each participant. Stake (2010) recommended keeping a log as a hard copy backup to data storage. The completed notes were kept in a locked file in the researcher's office. Confidentiality was maintained at all times by the researcher during the coding process.

Summary of data collection. Data were initially collected through interviews of participants via phone calls. Each call was recorded, digitalized into a file, and then transcribed. The transcribed data were entered into a qualitative analysis computer program, 'NVivo,' which generated codes and themes to create new research data. The researcher kept paper logs as well, as a supplement and backup to the digital files. All files, digital and non-digital, were created with complete confidentiality, using numbers as identifiers (i.e., Participant 1) to differentiate between the interviews. Finally, all data were securely stored. Digital data in password-protected files on a password-protected computer hard drive, and paper logs in a locked cabinet in the researcher's office.

Data Analysis

The researcher reinforced the data analysis with a comprehensive process to categorize the data gathered. All data gathered from the interviews were entered into 'NVivo' qualitative data software program. Yin (2014) cited 'NVivo' as a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software tool, converting text and other records into data that can be coded, and allows for an effective starting point in beginning an analytic strategy by searching for patterns, concepts, or insights that contribute to the study. The researcher developed themes within the data compiled using a coding procedure. According to Stake (2010), coding is a customary characteristic of qualitative analysis and research, sorting the data sets by theme, topic, and issues relevant to the study. The coding process used by the researcher assisted in determining patterns in the data collected. The researcher focused on intercoder reliability, where the code schemes created for the study are reproducible by different coders highlighting interviews that are semi-structured (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013).

Once the data were sorted and coded, interpretations using emerging ideas and themes were created from the results. Interpreting qualitative data encompasses making sense of the information collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The researcher used a triangulation method to analyze the data and further interpret the study. Triangulation, according to Stake (2010), helps to understand meanings, become more confident in the evidence itself, and provide an additional layer of checking of the research. The triangulation of the accumulated records, collection methods, and investigators allows for increased credibility of the data (Yin, 2014). The researcher used field notes, interviews, and member check to triangulate the data. After interpretations were made from the coded data and triangulated for credibility, several themes emerged as to the impact servant leadership had on the researched participants.

Summary of Data Analysis. The researcher compiled all of the data collected from participant interviews and inputted the data into ‘NVivo’ qualitative data analysis software to examine. Basic coding was also entered into ‘NVivo’ by the researcher, with the understanding that the data would likely produce additional codes through the software not considered previously. Once analyzed, the original and new codes were interpreted and triangulated for authenticity. The finished data were interpreted for emergent themes that emanated from the research.

Reliability and Validity

The researcher developed procedures to test the reliability and validity of the case study. Creswell and Poth (2018) used reliability through qualitative research by utilizing detailed field notes and using high-quality recording tools, then meticulously transcribing all aspects of the files, including pauses and overlaps, and finalizing by using computer-aided software to assist in analyzing the data collected. Yin (2014) measured validity both externally, where the case study findings can be generalized to circumstances not originally part of the study, and internally, where the strength of the causal link made by the case itself is determined by a lack of false relationships and a denial of a competing theory. Accordingly, the researcher developed the following strategic approaches in the case study to tackle both reliability and validity.

Reliability. The results of the case study were verified for reliability. Yin (2014) defined reliability as the demonstration of the operations within the study, including the data collection procedures, to ensure duplication that results in drawing the same conclusions. Often, reliability refers to the constancy of responses to data sets encompassing multiple coders (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The process of coding is customary in micro research and qualitative analysis, sorting data sets by topic, issues, and unique themes critical to the study (Stake, 2010).

A preliminary coding system was produced by the researcher, based on the results of previous studies in servant leadership, and input into “NVivo” software prior to keying any data collected from the interviews. Additional codes and themes of servant leadership were then created, based on the results from the data processed by “NVivo.”

The researcher, to further certify reliability within the study, created an interview guide. Interview guides within qualitative studies, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), use between five and seven open-ended questions to ask and collect responses from the interview participants. The interview questions were carefully developed based on both the literature review included in this study and other previous studies. The researcher, within the interview guide, also utilized field notes. Yin (2014) described field notes as the most commonly used tool of a researcher, used for interviews, observations, or documentation, and can be handwritten, typed, or electronically recorded. To establish consistency and reliability, the researcher asked all of the participants of the study the same questions located in the interview guide in an identical manner, and recorded the transcribed results in a single database, “NVivo.” All handwritten field notes were kept in a separate log and stored exclusive of the digital results.

Validity. The researcher created a validity test of the collected study data. Validity, according to Creswell and Poth (2018), involves the use of at least two of three validation strategies in qualitative research: the researcher’s lens through triangulation of multiple data sources, the participant’s lens through seeking participant feedback, and the reviewer’s lens through the generation of rich, thick descriptions. The research gathered in the case study generated all three validation strategies: the researcher used multiple data sources, including previous studies and interviews, participants had a critical role via interview data and feedback,

and rich descriptions were produced with the research results, creating data for further examination by reviewers.

The researcher, for validity of the results, used a triangulation method for the case study. The researcher substantiates his or her evidence through triangulation of multiple data resources (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Yin (2014) listed four types of triangulation when evaluating qualitative research: data triangulation to include data sources, investigator triangulation amongst various evaluators, theory triangulation when considering perspectives within the same set of data, and the methodological triangulation of research methods. Stake (2010) outlined triangulation as getting evidential meanings straight, suggesting to look and look again at the results, and to look and listen from multiple vantage points, creating member check. Participant feedback was solicited by the researcher from each of the participants, establishing validity to member check the data.

The researcher continued to conduct interviews with participants until saturation was reached. Creswell and Poth (2018) defined saturation as the point in which all categories being researched provide no new information as to the understanding within the group. Once no new themes emerged from the data compiled from the interviews, the researcher concluded the interview process and began to present the findings of the research.

Summary of reliability and validity. To ensure the reliability of the case study, the researcher formulated an interview guide to maintain consistency within the interview segment. The data were then collected and the files analyzed within the concepts outlined in the study, which include the literature review, the research questions, and the conceptual framework. The researcher also used a triangulation strategy to substantiate the data accumulated during the study, producing thick and rich descriptions of the researched matter. Once a saturation point

was reached during the research process, the interviews were concluded and the summaries of the data were prepared.

Transition and Summary of Section 2

Section 2 of the study outlined how the research for the case study was to take place. The researcher summarized his role in conducting interviews, including who to interview, how they were chosen, what screening measures were to take place, and how the interviews were to transpire. The researcher discussed the method and design of the study, and why a qualitative method with a single-case study design was chosen. Data collection techniques were examined, and included the sampling practices, data collection tools, hardware and software used, and data analysis software utilized. Finally, the researcher reviewed the reliability and validity tests administered to reinforce the tenets of the study in an effort to maintain consistency and replication.

The researcher in Section 3 will provide an overview of the study, accompanied by a comprehensive presentation of the findings based on the analysis of the collected data. Given the themes that transpired from the data analysis, the researcher used Section 3 of the study to present the application of servant leadership in the SWM field to assist with employee retention. The researcher then presented recommendations for action based on the discoveries within the research and provided steps for actions to be taken. Finally, the researcher offered suggestions for further exploration and provided conclusions of the study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

In Section 3, the researcher provided an overview of the study, discussing how and why the study addressed the potential of servant leadership practices within solid waste management (SWM) firms to positively impact employee retention. A key feature of Section 3 included the presentation of the findings where the researcher addressed the themes, patterns, and relationships that materialized from data analysis. The researcher also discussed why and how the findings were relevant to enhanced business and leadership practices. In addition to the findings outlined in the study, the researcher provided recommendations and potential steps firms and leaders can take for actions that may assist in enhancing employment practices. Finally, the researcher offered recommendations for further examination and future studies followed by a concluding statement, as well as the researcher's experience and reflection concerning the study.

Overview of the Study

This study was conducted in an effort to determine what impact servant leadership had on a SWM firm and their employee retention efforts. SWM firms are service-oriented and labor-intensive, necessitating the continuous efforts of recruitment and retention. It is considerably more efficient to keep quality employees than to hire, train, and acclimate a new hire of the same quality (Mertel & Brill, 2015). Servant leadership may provide a method that helps in both hiring and maintaining quality personnel in a service-driven industry. The actions a servant leader takes coupled with the self-concept of who a servant leader is lead to not only performing a unique service but, more importantly, to being a dedicated servant (Sendjaya et al., 2008).

The researcher, through investigation, identified a SWM firm that employs a servant leadership philosophy. Using a qualitative method of research and a single case study design,

the researcher conducted structured interviews of current employees at the SWM firm to better understand the interviewee's lived experiences. The researcher selected eligible employees of the studied SWM firm after a brief recruitment period through networking and purposeful sampling. A copy of the recruitment letter can be found in Appendix C. The interviewed employees all were employed for the SWM firm in a full-time capacity for at least six months, and had also previously worked for at least one prior employer. Those who decided to take part in the study read and signed a consent form and scheduled a time to participate in a phone interview. A copy of the consent form can be found in Appendix A.

Each participant answered approximately seven open-ended questions pertaining to the leadership practiced within their firm: what differentiates servant leadership from other leadership models they have witnessed, what aspects of servant leadership appeal to them, how servant leadership works in retaining employees, would servant leadership influence them to stay or leave their current employer, and any further information they would like to provide. A copy of the structured interview questions can be found in Appendix B. The objective of the interviews was to answer specific interview questions and to address the research questions discussed in Section 1.

The responses from the interview participants were consistent in several ways: putting others first, describing a positive work culture, a team-first mentality, and an overwhelming desire to stay with their current employer. The participants who were hired by the SWM firm described the immediate training undertaken by the firm to train servant leaders, while those who joined the firm through acquisition spoke of the lengthy, costly, and necessary managerial overhaul it took to become servant leaders. The primary research question for the study involved

how servant leadership principles impact employee turnover rates at SWM firms, and the findings of the interviews provided relevant information to address the research question.

Anticipated Themes/Perceptions

Based on previous findings, the researcher anticipated a positive reaction from the interview participants concerning the SWM firm's incorporation of servant leadership. Given the selfless underpinnings intertwined within servant leadership principles, the researcher predicted a positive correlation between improved employee relations and employee retention within firms that practice servant leadership. The researcher also estimated an optimistic response from participants when asked if the principles of servant leadership would influence them to either stay or leave for another company that did not employ servant leadership within that firm.

The researcher expected confirmation by the interview participants of many common servant leadership themes outlined by Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) five servant leadership dimensions within the servant leadership questionnaire (SLQ) of altruistic calling, wisdom, organizational stewardship, emotional healing, and persuasive mapping. Further, the author did not assume that the interview participants would necessarily call the themes by a specific name; rather, examples or stories within the workplace would be provided by the participants that align with the aforementioned themes. Finally, the researcher estimated the overarching theme of servant leadership, serving others first, would be a key theme repeated often in the interview process by the participants.

Presentation of the Findings

The researcher gave findings for the study through themes that originated from multiple interviews with various personnel of the selected SWM firm. The participants who were

interviewed at the SWM firm were employed in different locations and in various positions across North America. The themes that emerged from the interviews aligned with various aspects of the literature reviewed in preparation for the study and were further analyzed with data analysis software. The conceptual framework helped to foster ideas for the study, and the resulting themes supported answers for the primary research question.

The conceptual framework for this study was developed through extensive research on the principles of leadership, servant leadership in particular, and the SWM industry. The concepts within leadership include economic, political, and organizational structure accomplishments that rely on the efficient and successful guidance by their leaders (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Servant leadership has proven to be an effective leadership model, where successful firms not only generate services that allow for the business and its employees to flourish, but also create a positive societal impact in their respective communities (Greenleaf, 1977). Servant leadership may be a successful leadership model to follow in the SWM industry. There are numerous stakeholders outside of private firms involved in operating SWM, including public managers of municipalities, business owners, and regulatory agencies (de Souza et al., 2017).

The findings of the study dovetail with the conceptual framework outlined earlier in the paper. The participants in the study frequently mentioned terms positively associated with the effective servant leadership demonstrated in their firm; expressions such as caring, freer, and autonomy were used in describing how the participants viewed leadership. A prerequisite of participation in the study was having at least one former employer to gauge the servant leadership model against. Several of the interviewees had previously worked for other SWM firms that did not incorporate a servant leadership philosophy; those participants used

expressions such as “making a difference” and “could be myself” to describe the difference between their current SWM employer and former SWM firms where they were employed previously. The findings indicated a preference for servant leadership among the employees in the SWM firm in the study. These findings may have implications for other SWM firms.

The foundation for this study is significant due to the evolving need for leadership domestically and internationally for efficient SWM practices. Recruitment of talent in the SWM is difficult in general, as waste professionals must deal with the collection of leftovers, refuse, and other unwanted elements from customers (Sekerka & Stimel, 2014). As economies strengthen and environmental regulations tighten, the need for effective SWM programs to handle the additional waste generated by citizens becomes more important (Wilson & Velis, 2014). The literature on leadership demonstrated many successful theories and strategies implemented by businesses. Servant leadership, in particular, offered unique principles that stood out amongst other prevailing leadership theories; specifically, the core notion that a leader not only serves, but serves others first (Greenleaf, 1977). The study then focused in the influence servant leadership may have on not only serving customers at an SWM firm, but in recruiting and retaining valuable employees to carry out the principles involved in incorporating servant leadership.

Previous studies from authors such as Antunes and Franco (2016), Lacey and Kennett-Hensel (2015), Otero-Neira et al. (2016), Mahembe and Engelbrecht (2014), and Chan and Mak (2013) addressed general leadership attributes such as authenticity, trust, work team environments, and emotion that foster positive employee-employer relations. The findings of this study reinforce the previous leadership studies outlined in this paper, with qualities like caring and value being repeated often throughout the interview. Further, several of the

participants specifically used the term “team” to describe their work environment, with all employees, regardless of their individual position within the SWM firm, working together as one to complete tasks.

One leadership topic researched for this study that was not made evident by the participants was storytelling. According to Auvinen et al. (2013), storytelling is a function within leadership where leaders communicate stories, anecdotes, refrains, and memories that become part of the narrative within firms. The researcher surmised this might be, in part, due to the acquisition trend of their firm, which was brought up by several participants. Acquisitions typically involve a purchase of all or most assets from another firm, ceasing operations at the old business, and an often-chaotic transition of personnel. The researcher theorized the case study SWM firm might incorporate a forward-looking theme for employees, refraining from looking back at past memories from firms that no longer exist or did not share the same principles of the acquiring firm. This particular concept would coincide with the servant leadership studies from Yigit and Bozkurt (2017), which suggested servant leaders look towards the future aim to embolden their followers to provide a constructive and helpful contribution to their organizations.

Studies on servant leadership from authors like Sendjaya et al. (2008), Jit et al. (2016), Williams et al. (2017), and Akbari et al. (2014) focused on general attitudes and processes used within firms that practice servant leadership, such as a willingness to follow first, a horizontal hierarchical chain of command, and the creation of a desire to lead through servant leadership behaviors. The findings of the study correlate with the literature reviewed, with participants expressing terms like “happiness” and “more fun at work” when describing their opinions on working for a firm that abides by servant leadership principles. One participant provided a story

about their view of the hierarchical chain of command within the SWM firm with an employee at their location:

Today, we just heard a story that one of our drivers wrote a letter to the CEO saying how much he loved the changes that he had seen in the company and the positive effect that it had had on his life. Then, our CEO turns around and responds to him within 24 hours. If that's not a statement on servant leadership, I don't know what is; that somebody who, in most companies, is so unattainable, and somebody who is so connected to ... basically, our drivers are the foundation of our organization, and that he still is so engaged. I mean, that to me is so inspiring.

The research question for this study addressed how servant leadership principles impact employee turnover rates at an SWM firm. The results of the interviews and the analysis of the data generated through the interviews supported the concept that servant leadership has a positive influence on employee retention at an SWM firm. Several participants supportively endorsed servant leadership over other leadership models they had witnessed in other companies. Perhaps the most revealing aspect of the interviews concerning employee retention was that every participant confirmed, without hesitation, that the principles of servant leadership strongly influence their desire to remain with their current employer.

Each question in the interview questionnaire was intended to address the main research question for the study. Question 1 dealt with the participant's perception of the leadership practiced in their firm; many of the participants recognized that their firm specifically employed a servant leadership model. Question 2 tackled the impact servant leadership had on the participant personally and professionally; several participants indicated they integrated servant

leadership seamlessly both at home and in the workplace. Question 3 asked what differentiated servant leadership from other leadership models they had seen in prior employers; comments such as “self-serving” and “bureaucratic” were used to describe other leadership models, while “see it, say it” and “ego check” were applied to the current servant leadership philosophy used by their employer. Question 4 concentrated on the attributes of servant leadership that appealed to the participant; examples such as “the right thing to do,” “removing barriers,” “direct conversations,” and “mentoring” were revealed by participants as positive servant leadership characteristics. Question 5 inquired as to how servant leadership worked in recruiting and retaining employees; “feeling appreciated,” “awareness,” and “reputation in the community” were a few of the ways the participants felt servant leadership worked in recruiting and retaining personnel. Question 6 examined whether or not servant leadership had an impact on a potential departure for the participant to a similar job in another firm that did not employ servant leadership; each participant unanimously concluded servant leadership is a key factor in their continued employment at their current employer. Finally, the last question allowed participants to add any additional remarks to the survey; comments like “great working for a company who believes in servant leadership,” “We don’t work for; we work with,” and “they’re having fun at work” were used to describe the participant’s overall sentiments about the servant leadership used at their organization.

The findings through the interview process were not unexpected, as they supported the conclusions drawn from the literature, as well as the experiences of the researcher. Many participants focused on the unique relationship between management and non-managers, where the traditional hierarchal structure was not present. Servant leadership is distinctive in this respect amongst all other leadership styles, where a horizontal focus on followers, rather than a

typical vertical leader-focused perspective, is existent (Williams et al., 2017). Also, servant leaders walk and move amongst their followers in a direction that can bond all in a common visualization (Boone & Makhani, 2012).

Another point of emphasis from participants involved a team-first focus, along with team-based metrics, when evaluating results within the firm. Leaders have great influence over the members of a team and their remuneration, acknowledgment, and potential opportunities for development (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Boone and Makhani (2012) pointed to the ability of servant leaders to be cognizant that their successes originate from an attitude that spearheading organizational and group efforts leads to developing productive communities.

An unexpected finding, though not a trend or theme, involved the acknowledged commitment of time, funds, and human capital necessary in beginning or developing a servant leadership environment. One participant indicated that some of the best managers within the firm had to be terminated because of their refusal to integrate servant leadership, regardless of their financial success. Another participant was employed by the studied firm through an acquisition, indicating the prior company did not use a servant leadership model and that the change to servant leadership involved discomfort and considerable funds, but was well worth the efforts after witnessing the positive results.

Several themes emerged from the data analysis in conjunction with those developed during the literature review:

1. Culture
2. Accountability
3. Support
4. Commitment

Theme 1: Culture. The first theme to emerge was the impact culture had on the studied firm. The culture within a firm helps establish an organizational identity, recognizable by stakeholders both inside and outside of the firm. When employees sense an organization directly supports them and shares their concern about their well-being, a stronger sense of connection and identification occurs between the employee and the employer (Otero-Neira et al., 2016). Organizational identity can often be tied to organizational resiliency, where significant time and efforts dedicated to planning for crisis management can help to enhance the infrastructure and identity of the firm (Davison, 2015). The culture of a firm persists during both positive times, when a company is profitable, and negative times, where personnel turnover may be rampant. Servant leadership offers a cultural panacea to the ups and downs of business cycles, where leaders are more likely to support their followers during vexing situations while fostering an atmosphere of mutual trust, thereby persuading and gaining the confidence of their followers (Jaiswal & Dhar, 2015). SWM firms possess a culture where diverse personnel must be able to effectively service MSW and recycle customers; the objective of operational waste collection accounts for approximately 40% of the total cost of MSW management (Jaunich et al., 2016). Culture was the theme most mentioned by participants, supporting and affirming the documented literature in leadership, servant leadership, and SWM practices.

Question 1 of the interview guide, located in Appendix B, dealt directly with how the participant viewed leadership in their organization. Several participants answered that servant leadership was utilized, while others offered stories about their own experiences with leadership and the culture at the firm without specifically mentioning servant leadership. One participant stated this about the others-first culture within the leadership at their firm:

Recently when there was a hurricane that came through one of our regions, the leaders immediately flew into the area. Instead of focusing on taking care of the garbage on the ground and the business at hand, they loaded up truckloads of generators and food and they reserved a hotel room for our employees.

The open-ended question at the end of the survey asked if the participant wished to add anything else. Several participants elected not to add anything else, while others spoke of the servant leadership culture that permeates their firm. Two participants concluded their interviews with statements about retention with the researched SWM firm due to the servant leadership model and the culture. The first described their personal feelings about staying with the SWM firm when asked:

One of the things that would be a challenge is to go to another organization that has not adopted servant leadership. Even if they wanted to adopt it, I would understand and know that it would take time and energy and effort to get them to where this organization is, so it would be a difficult thing to find another organization who has done that journey and made the investment to make servant leadership a part of their culture.

The second participant expressed the uniqueness a servant leadership culture has in recruiting new employees:

But what I found is those who have joined our firm and have experienced this culture, have experienced servant leadership, have a commitment to the organization that is unparalleled to any other organization I've seen. In fact, we had a significant merger two years ago, and I have heard employees from the company that joined us say that they would work for this organization for free

because the culture and the leadership and the way of life is so unique and so different, that they wouldn't find that anywhere else.

Another participant concluded their interview by emphasizing the importance of culture within a firm and why they plan on staying:

It's really the culture of a company that keeps people in place, and servant leadership is kind of the core behind what makes this company successful, and I don't think there's any amount of money, at this point, to get someone like me to pack up and leave for the same reason - more money. I enjoy the company too much.

Theme 1 reached a saturation point almost immediately due to the preponderance of responses that referenced the importance of culture within a firm. A saturation point within qualitative studies is determined by the researcher, who must use his or her own discernment and experience in drawing this conclusion (van Rijnsouwer, 2017). Triangulation of the theme of culture was achieved through the literature review, interview transcripts, and field notes. A researcher substantiates his or her evidence through triangulation of multiple data resources (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

To summarize Theme 1, the conceptual framework of this study affirmed culture is embedded in aspects of leadership and organizational identity according to various authors, including Otero-Neira et al. (2016), Barbuto and Gottfredson (2016), and Akbari et al. (2014). Additional authors provided tangential aspects of the impact culture have in a firm such as persuasive mapping, community building, and awareness. After analyzing the data collected from the studied SWM firm, the experiences of these employees support the literature that

culture is emphasized as one of the most critical aspects of servant leadership and employee retention.

Theme 2: Accountability. While culture was the most annotated theme of the interviews, accountability quickly became another prevalent theme that was positively identified as a core function of employee retention at an SWM firm. A leader must be accountable not only to their followers, but also to a variety of other stakeholders. Impartiality is a necessity: If a leader is identified as partial towards one particular follower, he will lose authenticity and credibility as both a leader and a mediator (Jit et al., 2016). Stewardship through servant leadership is the act of taking and accepting personal and professional accountability, leaving a constructive and lasting legacy while maintaining a caretaker's role, as opposed to an owner's role (Coetzer et al., 2017). Accountability requires the ability of leaders to properly identify their particular role and the role of their followers in a firm. The total strength of a service organization, such as an SWM firm, is contingent on the effectiveness and competency of its staff (Sersland & Nataraajan, 2015). Accountability was a popular theme mentioned by several of the participants during their interviews, supporting and affirming the documented literature in leadership, servant leadership, and SWM practices.

Participants in the study mentioned accountability when answering different questions in the interview guide, specifically question 5 on how servant leadership works in recruiting and retaining employees and the final open-ended question. The theme of accountability resonated with participants when describing their desire to hold and to be held responsible for decisions that are made within the firm. One participant specifically mentioned accountability within servant leadership as a method in recruiting and retaining employees, directly addressing the research question within the study:

When employees know that they can come to a place, they can own their job, make their own decisions, but also be held accountable for them, it makes it a lot easier to retain people, as well as recruit.

Another research participant concluded their interview by explaining how everyone within the firm has to invest into the servant leadership model for it to work, starting at the very top of the organization:

It's all the way to the very top, and employees that are not management are taught what it is, and they hold their managers accountable to it. Servant leadership is the only way to manage/lead your employees.

In extolling the virtues of establishing a servant leadership model within a firm, a participant elucidated how servant leadership is a great tool for accountability, but is not necessarily for everyone:

People who don't thrive in an environment of clear expectations and accountability self-select out. Which is good, right? Because this is not leadership that everybody can embrace or live in. Some people really like the military kind of hierarchy sort of leadership model. And that's okay. That's not what we do here. So I think that it enables people to make those choices and feel good about the choice to stay and be part of the team and embrace servant leadership, or be successful elsewhere.

Theme 2 reached a saturation point by the time the final participant was interviewed for the study. Triangulation of the theme of accountability was achieved through the literature review, interview transcripts, and field notes. The theme of accountability emerged after the interview data were compiled into the 'NVivo' qualitative research software.

In concluding Theme 2, the conceptual framework of this study reinforced accountability as a critical component of leadership according to various authors, including Jit et al. (2016), Flynn et al. (2016), Du Plessis et al. (2015), and Lin and Liu (2017). The findings of this study support the aforementioned aspects of literature. The interview data also revealed the term empowerment was another analogous term often used in conjunction with accountability by the participants. Within servant leadership, empowerment fosters growth in followers when servant leaders freely give away their power, believing matters should be decided on a more local level with the least centralized authority structure (Boone & Makhani, 2012). The experiences shared by the participants supported the significance of accountability in SWM firms that practice servant leadership.

Theme 3: Support. Support was mentioned by many of the research participants as an important factor in their view of servant leadership. The literature established support often manifests itself within internal teams or groups. A leader's main job within a team is to provide support to all facets that contribute towards the successful completion of the team's task are handled properly (Graça & Passos, 2015). Support by leaders within a firm often encourages reciprocity throughout the company. Otero-Neira et al. (2016) discovered leaders who employ servant leadership principles increase their followers' levels of organizational support and identification within the firm. Franscoise (2016) stated servant leadership is centered on the values of followers, exhibiting belief and support in them without undue judgment, and allowing them the flexibility to learn and grow. The theme of support was offered by participants in describing mutually exclusive elements of servant leadership in their view: support by management personnel to followers, support by personnel to one another, and support in the form of resources.

The responses offered by participants on support were very positive. One participant described their job as one of support when asked question 2 of the interview guide on what aspects of servant leadership was appealing. Another participant answered question 1 by describing the leadership practiced within their organization as both warm and supportive. When answering question 5, a participant gave a concise answer to the study research question regarding the impact servant leadership has on recruiting and retaining employees in SWM firms:

It definitely works for retaining. I'm going to hit that one first. The employees feel appreciated for what they've done. They feel supported, they feel if they've got some kind of an issue, they can talk to their leaders about whatever the issue is, and we'll work with them to get through it. Whether it's a job related, or a personal issue. We will see what we can do to help them get through it. The employees are much happier, because they can see that we're working with them, not against them. For recruiting, we tell people up front that this is the type of management style we have, and we explain what servant leadership is.

A participant answered question 3 regarding the employee's previous experiences with leadership at other firms in describing servant leadership:

Oh, man. The fact that if you're a servant leader, you're there for the people that you lead. You're there to support them, you're there to make sure they can do their jobs. You need to give them the tools, the training, the support that they need.

One participant answered question 1, describing the leadership practiced within their firm, by illustrating the ability to obtain support within their firm as decentralized in nature:

How would I describe the leadership practice? Well, I would say (redacted), the leadership team at (redacted) has very deliberately designed our organization to be decentralized in that we have district managers that run our locations that are responsible for their own P&L. They get support, and resources, and standards to meet from the corporate headquarters and from our regional offices, but our management teams in our districts, our district managers have a significant amount of autonomy and responsibility to run their garbage location.

Theme 3 reached a saturation point by the end of the interview process. Triangulation of the theme of support was achieved through the literature review, interview transcripts, and field notes. The 'NVivo' qualitative data analysis software identified support as a main theme after coding all of the inputted interview transcripts.

Theme 3 reaffirmed the conceptual framework of this study by classifying support as a significant factor involved in leadership, servant leadership, and the SWM industry. The experiences shared by the participants coincide with the literature reviewed for the study. The diversity of responses by the participants in identifying aspects of support as a core concept of servant leadership was surprising. The responses alluding to support further bolstered the notion behind the research question that servant leadership plays a positive role in employee retention at SWM firms.

Theme 4: Commitment. The theme of commitment was mentioned by several of the participants when responding to the question in the interview guide. Commitments by leaders within a firm can take on many meanings. Leaders can create a foundation of trust by working diligently to recognize their subordinate's unique talents and committing to the accomplishments achieved by each follower (Boone & Makhani, 2012). In servant leadership, leaders who

perform an altruistic calling make a commitment to prioritize the desires and needs of their followers over those of the organization and over their own (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). Servant leadership also encourages organizational stewardship, where a servant leader commits to an awareness of community within a firm while exemplifying his or her desire for positive societal impact (Krog & Govender, 2015). Firms must commit tangible and intangible resources to employees for recruitment and retention purposes. Tangible benefits include salaries and salary adjustments, which signal a perceived value of an employee and their ongoing contribution to the firm (Gevrek et al., 2017), whereas intangible benefits often involve training and development, which may result in higher levels of employee engagement, thereby reducing turnover (Shuck et al., 2014).

The participants mentioned the theme of commitment in different portions of the interview. One participant linked an organizational commitment to servant leadership as a boon for recruitment efforts and additionally helped to answer the primary research question of the study:

I would like to think that those who have heard of it recognize how rare and unique it is and when they hear about it in the recruiting process that it strikes them. But what I found is those who have joined our firm and have experienced this culture, have experienced servant leadership, have a commitment to the organization that is unparalleled to any other organization I've seen.

Another participant referenced commitment when answering the interview question on what impact servant leadership has had on the firm itself:

It's a huge investment. The company's gotten great returns, but they made a real commitment and they made a huge investment into developing servant leadership characteristics in the management team.

Several other participants mentioned commitment or responsibility in referencing their roles in their firm.

Theme 4 confirmed the conceptual framework of this study by categorizing commitment as a noteworthy factor involved in leadership, servant leadership, and the SWM industry. The experiences shared by the participants regarding commitment coincided with the literature reviewed for the study. The responses that pointed to personal and organizational commitment augmented the notion behind the research question that servant leadership plays a positive role in reducing employee turnover at SWM firms.

Relationship of themes to the research question. The themes of culture, accountability, support, and commitment all play a significant role in how servant leadership principles impact employee turnover rates at an SWM firm. Every interview participant expressed a desire to remain with their current employer due to servant leadership principles, and most participants listed one or more of the aforementioned themes in describing their views on the firm and their leadership philosophies. Further, all of the themes identified were covered in the literature review for the study.

Summary of the findings. The field study reaffirmed many of the aspects of leadership and, specifically, servant leadership initially discovered in the literature review for the report. The participants when referencing how leadership in their firm was executed mentioned the themes of culture, accountability, and support often. All of these themes helped to answer the

research question on how servant leadership principles impact employee turnover rates at an SWM firm.

Many other topics were discussed by the participants during the interviews, but not to the level of an overall theme. The participants brought up subjects like care, creativity, trust, and value when relaying their sentiments towards the leadership demonstrated in their organization. Others mentioned relationships, training, and trust as factors that have contributed to their continued employment. A few ideas were mentioned by more than one participant that did not rise to the level of a theme, but were worthy of further discussion.

Two of the participants revealed their knowledge of servant leadership originated long before their current employer: As adolescents, they were familiar with the teachings of Jesus and ascribed Him as the original servant leader. One of the participants said:

I think that I learned servant leadership from my father, at least some of the principles. My father was also a manager, in quite a different field. He managed a Bible camp, a Lutheran Bible camp, that's where I grew up. I was able to observe how he interacted with the staff and with the people that he came in contact with. I didn't know it was called servant leadership...

The other participant who gave a biblical reference when describing servant leadership mentioned:

Personally, I learned about servant leadership many years ago. I'm a student of the life of Jesus, and he was in my opinion one of the most well-known and most influential servant leaders, so I understood the concept, and I believe that servant leadership was the best way to lead any organization. I spent much of my life looking for an organization that practiced that leadership style.

Development was another tangential concept in the interviews. A participant spoke at length on the concept of development of servant leadership within their firm. “I like the development. Servant leadership is very focused on developing new leaders and helping people be all that they can be. I try to mentor my staff on a daily basis...” The same participant also mentioned:

I think that's the thing with servant leadership. I think there's a lot of folks in the company that feel (sic) way, is we want to leave our mark on the organization by developing people. I like to say that if I'm going to hire somebody on the management team, I'm not going to hire them unless they can teach me something. It's not just about me teaching them, it's a two-way thing. If I'm going to bring you on the team, you got to bring something to the party that the team needs. That's the thing for me, and I think for all true servant leaders, is just taking that sense of accomplishment as you watch someone that you've mentored and nurtured be successful.

The findings from data analysis included major themes and topics that were positively associated with subjects addressed in the literature review, including general leadership, servant leadership, and operations within SWM firms. The themes and topics covered in the findings buttressed the idea that servant leadership can positively impact employee attitudes and behaviors and, thus, turnover at SWM firms. All of the employees interviewed for the study provided strong examples of servant leadership demonstrated within their firm. Perhaps the most significant finding of the study was the unanimous desire of participants to remain at their current employer due in large part to servant leadership.

Applications to Professional Practice

As discussed in Section 1, this study focused on the impact servant leadership has on employee turnover in SWM firms. The results of the study were overwhelmingly positive towards a servant leadership philosophy practiced within an SWM firm. The literature strongly suggested firms that practice servant leadership adds significant value to their relations with employees (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Franscoise, 2016; Jit et al., 2017; Guitierrez-Wirsching et al., 2015; Mertel & Brill, 2015), and the interview participants confirmed the earlier findings of the literature review. All of the participants viewed servant leadership as having a positive impact on their continued employment, identifying many of the aspects outlined in the literature review such as community building, listening, and growth. Other than the initial discomfort and growing pains associated with changing leadership models, none of the participants associated negative attributes towards the servant leadership demonstrated by their employer.

The consensus of the participants that servant leadership plays a critical factor in their continued employment convinced the researcher that a servant leadership model may work better than other leadership models in reducing turnover at SWM companies. Many authors reviewed for the study indicated the employee-driven needs of SWM firms (Cortinhal et al., 2016; Sekerka & Stimel, 2014; Baylor, 2016), while other authors pointed to the costs of employee turnover in general for firms (Wang et al., 2014; Zeng & Honig, 2016; Spencer et al., 2016; Stormbroek & Blomme, 2017). A leadership model like servant leadership that encourages significant investment in personnel and, in turn, discourages employee attrition, can be a valuable tool for SWM firms and other service industry companies to implement. The researcher concluded that an investment must ultimately be made in personnel by all firms: a servant leadership style encourages considerable investment in personnel immediately and continuing, while other

leadership strategies often place an emphasis on investing in recruiting replacement personnel only after employee separation has occurred. Servant leadership represents an effective long-term investment in both an organization and its personnel, while other models emphasize short-term investment in the bottom-line, often eschewing a direct investment in the largest asset companies possess: their workforce.

The results of this study and the themes that emerged are unmistakably relevant to the use of servant leadership in SWM firms to help curtail employee turnover. SWM firms, according to Ghiani et al. (2014), must make various tactical, strategic, and operational choices, incorporating solid waste treatment options, treatment facility sites, capacity and expansion capabilities, the flow of waste and recyclables to treatment sites, operational service areas, waste and recyclable collection days, commercial fleet procurement and allocation, and the routing of all collection vehicles, all of which require substantial investments in personnel. Servant leadership should assist SWM firms in recruiting and retaining valued employees. The themes of culture, accountability, support, and commitment that materialized in the interviews from participants in a SWM firm that uses servant leadership reinforce the concepts that originated in the literature review and are replicable in not only other SWM firms, but other industries, as well.

The study identified some biblical concepts with the interview participants. As noted in the Summary of the Findings portion of Section 3, several participants based their knowledge of servant leadership from scriptural teachings that were conveyed during their youth. The researcher immediately referenced Proverbs 22:6 after reviewing the data from these interviews: “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (KJV). The participants may not have directly conceptualized servant leadership in their youth, but

immediately recognized the foundational underpinnings of the term when employed by their current firm.

Two of the participants referenced their religious upbringing in identifying servant leadership at an early age. All of the participants either referred to themselves as servant leaders or were able to clearly identify those in the organization who were servant leaders. The concepts of servant and leader permeate the scriptures. Bucci and Lewis (2016) noted the term leader is referenced only six times in the KJV bible, whereas the term servant is used 885 times. Many of the participants of the study spoke of deferring personal desires in order to benefit others in the firm or the SWM firm itself, placing the emphasis away from them, which is a distinct trait of servant leadership. Thomas et al. (2015) used the book of Nehemiah to characterize servant leadership when he absconded the benefits of his position as a palace official to serve the needs of the Jews in Jerusalem. The Book of Nehemiah and the Gospels of Mark and Luke all contain passages of scripture where servant leadership is on full display. Nehemiah demonstrated servant leadership when organizing the labor necessary in rebuilding the wall, all while negating the benefits of his position as a palace official to serve the needs of the Jews in Jerusalem. Jesus in the Gospels epitomized servant leadership with His selflessness in proclaiming those who are in charge shall be servant of all.

The findings show a strong proclivity by many towards a servant leadership model over other leadership models. Servant leadership shares many qualities with other modern leadership models, such as transformational leadership and situational leadership. The conspicuous difference between servant leadership and other leadership types is the well-defined focus on others first and foremost. Servant leadership posits the leader serves and serves first, making those who follow become healthier, freer, and more autonomous (Greenleaf, 1977). The trend of

servant leadership is growing in stature and is manifesting in many industries outside of SWM. The researcher is confident the findings of this study will not only help to contribute towards leadership in general, but specifically in the SWM industry, where firms are frequently looking for an edge in recruiting and retaining high quality employees.

Recommendations for Action

The study focused on the impact servant leadership may have on SWM firms and their efforts to recruit and retain quality employees. The researcher discovered that, through a review of the literature and a field study, servant leadership plays a significant and positive role in recruitment and retention efforts for SWM firms. The literature alone pointed to many positive effects servant leadership has on firms and their employees; though, a scarcity of literature exists on the direct impact servant leadership has in the SWM industry. The findings of the study allowed for a direct connection to be made between incorporating servant leadership and retaining personnel within SWM firms. The results of this study can be valuable and assist other SWM firms in efforts to reduce the significant costs associated with employee turnover. Further, other labor-intensive service firms or industries outside of SWM may draw on the findings of this study, as well. The following initiatives are relevant in the potential incorporation of a servant leadership model within SWM firms:

Individual investment. The level of individual investment required in hiring and training personnel for any SWM firm, regardless of their leadership practices, is extraordinary. Instituting a servant leadership foundation adds even more costs with the additional investments in personnel that are necessary. Training new hires is an example of investments companies must make in personnel, accounting for an average of 15 days of new employee training in particular firms, while taking between eight and 16 weeks to become capable in their new

positions (McNally, 2013). SWM firms have the unique challenge of investing in commercial drivers and equipment operators, where the expense to replace a single driver of a commercial vehicle might exceed \$10,000 in total costs, including recruitment, new driver training, and potential lost business in the interim (Sersland & Nataraajan, 2015). SWM firms who incorporate servant leadership must account for an increased financial and time investment in their personnel, including training, remuneration, and interpersonal communication. The literature illustrates, as demonstrated by Beck (2014), Winston and Fields (2013), Barbuto and Gottfredson (2016), and Guitierrez-Wirsching et al. (2015), that servant leadership attributes increases organizational stewardship, which assists in increasing employee longevity and decreasing turnover. Each of the participants in the study acknowledged a desire to remain with their firm, attributable in large part to servant leadership. The additional investments by SWM firms in their personnel today through servant leadership pays ongoing dividends by augmenting employee satisfaction and decreasing attrition rates and the sizeable financial costs to replace them.

Action step for individual investment. SWM firms must dedicate themselves to a long-term plan of incorporating and maintaining servant leadership. The leaders at the top of the firm have the additional responsibilities of modeling servant leadership and ensuring compliance from their followers. Mertel and Brill (2015), Jaiswal and Dhar (2015), and Boone and Makhani (2012) all give confirmation of the growth needed to become servant leaders. An SWM must create a servant leadership foundation for their employees to grow not only within the firm, but also in their personal lives. Clear channels of communication, both vertically and horizontally within the firm, must be outlined to all employees. A concerted effort of interpersonal interaction by the SWM firm and by the leaders themselves must be conveyed to each employee,

emphasizing the importance and value of each individual. Finally, ongoing market research by human resources personnel within the firm should be instituted to ensure pay rates, benefits, and bonuses are at the top or near the top for each employee.

Cultural education. The foundations of servant leadership must penetrate all levels of employment within an SWM firm that uses servant leadership. Unfortunately, despite the many different descriptions and attributes of servant leadership, there is no consensus, clear definition, or theoretical framework behind servant leadership (Davenport, 2015). Therefore, SWM firms must mold their ‘brand’ of servant leadership to fit their particular business model. From hiring to ongoing training, SWM firms should possess a continual training and educational structure centered on servant leadership and how it impacts the company and their stakeholders. A distinct interest in the advancement of servant leadership principles in employees by firms demonstrates a large investment in the development of leadership principles (Winston & Fields, 2013). The findings of the field study support and reinforce the concepts of continual servant leadership education as well, as several participants noted the ongoing presence of servant leadership training.

Action step for cultural education. Despite the lack of a clear definition of servant leadership, SWM firms can use a vast number of methods or studies as a foundation of servant leadership education. Information from seminal authors on servant leadership such as Greenleaf (1977) and Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), along with contemporary authors like Ken Blanchard, can help establish a foundation for how servant leadership is implemented and training is ongoing in any SWM organization. Once the decision has been made by an SWM firm to use servant leadership, those in leadership roles must exhibit the attitudes and behaviors universally throughout the firm, impacting and reaching all employees. Further, prospective applicants

should be queried as to their knowledge of servant leadership; if an applicant is unaware of what encompasses servant leadership, then the individual can be apprised at that time to see if they will be a good culture fit within the SWM firm's leadership model. For servant leadership to work effectively within SWM organizations, a significant financial and human capital investment must be made and followed up with ongoing training and education at all levels to ensure success.

These recommendations have potential value in reducing employee turnover at SWM firms through the incorporation of servant leadership. Though a significant undertaking, the researcher concluded through the study of the literature and through interviews that instituting servant leadership in SWM companies would likely face extraordinary expenses and heartache in the beginning, but cost less in the long-term through improved production, enhanced relations between leaders and non-leaders, increased customer service, and decreased attrition costs. This study can contribute to increased employee satisfaction and decreased turnover at SWM firms. SWM firms and all of their internal and external stakeholders may be impacted by the results of the study. The results of this study should be shared with all SWM firms, regardless of whether or not they currently use a servant leadership model.

Recommendations for Further Study

Given the short time frame for data collection, a limitation of the study was the sample size itself. Also, given the proprietary nature of private businesses, the questions asked to participants could not go into greater detail as to the particular aspects of servant leadership and how they are used in the case study SWM firm. The study, nor the literature, directly addressed the consequences of employees within SWM firms who did not adhere to servant leadership principles. The following recommendations are suggested for future researchers:

Broaden the sample size. Though saturation was reached in this study, a more nuanced view of servant leadership may be accessible if a study were segmented by location, division, or occupation, as opposed to job status, tenure, and whether or not the participants had former employers.

Expand the market. The number of SWM firms that use a servant leadership philosophy was limited, according to the literature. A more expansive view of servant leadership may be available if other service-intensive industries that used a servant leadership model were included in a study.

Employee separation. Researchers should investigate the processes in place for terminating employees who did not meet the servant leadership standards in SWM firms. Further, what procedures must be established, given the lack of consensus, clear definition, or theoretical framework behind servant leadership (Davenport, 2015), to warrant terminating an employee?

This study focused on the impact servant leadership has on employee retention efforts at SWM firms. The researcher hopes future studies can utilize the information outlined in this study for future considerations on related topics.

Reflections

This study was personally rewarding for many reasons, while proving to be frustrating in other facets. To begin, the author has been in the SWM industry for over two decades, employed in a variety of capacities. Secondly, the author currently owns and operates his own SWM company for over 13 years. The author has never worked for, nor has utilized, an SWM firm that used a servant leadership strategy, and marveled at the responses from the participants about how much they were appreciative of the servant leadership employed in their firm. Given the

extraordinary costs associated with instituting servant leadership, and taking into consideration the size of the company he operates, the author was dismayed at his inability to exercise servant leadership principles in his own company prior to the execution of this study.

As indicated earlier, the author has worked for companies that did not use a servant leadership strategy, but were financially successful, making the potential for research bias possible. In order to avoid bias, the researcher ensured the conceptual framework pulled from numerous studies from a vast range of sources. Additionally, the researcher interviewed participants from different locations, departments, and vocations within the firm. Finally, the researcher used an interview questionnaire that was established from the concepts located within the literature, asking only the questions from the approved interview guide. The potential impact of the researcher on the participants was minimized due to the limited number of questions asked, along with the anonymity provided in the study.

The researcher learned a great deal from the study. The amount of literature reviewed helped guide the researcher to more specificity in the research, allowing for a more nuanced investigation of how servant leadership impacts turnover at SWM firms. The researcher was able to confirm the literature reviewed through the interview participants and their affirmation of servant leadership principles. Finally, the researcher was pleased to be able to tie all of the aspects of the study together to help address the research question and provide information for future research ideas.

Biblically, the researcher further reinforced his scriptural understandings as it relates to servant leadership through the study. There are countless instances of servant leadership in the Bible from Nehemiah to Paul, with the model of all servant leadership resting in the examples and teachings of Christ in the Gospels. The literature reviewed for the study reaffirmed, directly

or indirectly, Christ's archetypal model of servant leadership. The field study further strengthened the links between servant leadership and biblical principles, as multiple participants indicated their knowledge of servant leadership emanated from biblical teachings during their youth. The results of this study allowed the researcher to benefit academically, spiritually, and professionally from the experience.

Summary and Study Conclusions

This study focused on the impact servant leadership had on employee turnover at an SWM firm. The researcher concentrated on servant leadership due to the trend of companies using this evolving leadership model, the SWM market based on the researcher's industry experience, and employee turnover as a critical issue for every firm that employs individuals. The researcher conducted a series of interviews for the study, with the data analysis creating multiple themes to support the findings. The findings suggested servant leadership played a critical role in retaining employees through the themes of culture, accountability, support, and commitment as expressed by the research participants.

Many different leadership styles were researched for the study, and the literature suggested a strong preference by employees for servant leadership models to be used in their vocations. The literature researched for this study on employees and costs of employee turnover suggested a balance from employers between tangible and intangible rewards helped in retention efforts. The SWM industry was also researched, with little information available on leadership models practiced by SWM firms and their effectiveness in reducing employee turnover.

The study was conducted using participants from various locations of an SWM firm that uses servant leadership, all of which had at least 6 months of continuous full-time employment with the researched firm, as well as at least one previous employer to gauge the servant

leadership management model against. Interviews were structured based on the concepts derived from the literature on leadership, servant leadership, SWM, and employee turnover. The phone interviews were semi-structured, recorded, and transcribed for the intentions of coding and data analysis.

The research conducted for this study may assist in closing the gap in literature concerning servant leadership and its direct impact on employee retention in the SWM industry. SWM firms require significant investment into personnel through training, licensure for operating commercial vehicles, and competitive remuneration. A leadership theory that potentially diminishes employee turnover while strengthening personnel matters is worth further investigation by any SWM firm.

The findings of the study suggested a strong relationship between servant leadership, employee satisfaction, and employee retention efforts. SWM firms, as well as other service-intensive organizations, may be drawn to the impact servant leadership philosophies have on the employees within the SWM firm based on the results of the study. An investment into SWM personnel now in the form of servant leadership and its attributes may pay greater dividends in the forms of reduced turnover, increased satisfaction, and higher profits.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Letter

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CONSENT FORM

How Might Servant Leadership Principles Impact Employee Turnover at a Solid Waste
Management Firm?

Clifton Thacker
Liberty University
School of Business

You have been invited to participate in a research study addressing the impact servant leadership has on employee turnover at a solid waste management (SWM) firm. You were selected as a potential participant in the research because you have been employed full-time for at least six months with a SWM firm that utilizes servant leadership principles. Also, you have been employed by at least one other firm prior to your current position with your current employer. Please carefully review this form and ask any questions you may have prior to agreeing to participate in the study.

Clifton Thacker, a doctoral candidate in the School of Business at Liberty University, is conducting the study.

Background Information: The intent of the research is to determine the impact servant leadership has on employee turnover at a SWM firm.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Pre-survey screening: You will be asked if you meet the research criteria. This process should take no longer than 5 minutes.
2. Interview: You will be asked to answer questions in a recorded interview, which should take approximately 20 minutes
3. Follow-up questions: You will be asked if you have any questions before concluding the interview. This process should take no longer than 5 minutes.

Risks and Benefits of Participation: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Compensation: Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

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- Participants will be assigned a pseudonym. I will conduct the interviews in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

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

How to Withdraw from the Study: If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Contacts and Questions: The researcher conducting this study is Clifton Thacker. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED], or his email address, [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty chair at Liberty University, Dr. Gene R. Sullivan, at grsulliv@liberty.edu

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

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Servant Leadership Survey at SWM Firm

Interview Questions for Servant Leadership Survey at SWM Firm

1. How would you describe the leadership practiced within your organization?
2. What impact, if any, has servant leadership had on you, personally and professionally?
3. Based on your experience, what differentiates servant leadership from other leadership models practiced at other firms you have worked for previously?
4. Please describe what aspects of servant leadership appeal to you.
5. How does servant leadership work in recruiting and retaining employees within your firm?
6. Would the principles of servant leadership influence you to either stay or leave for a similar position with comparable pay and benefits at another SWM firm?

Is there anything more you would like to add?

Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

June 30, 2018

Dear [REDACTED] Employee,

As a graduate student in the School of Business at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to determine the impact of servant leadership on employee retention in the solid waste management industry, and I am writing to invite you to participate in my study.

If you are a full-time [REDACTED] employee with at least 6 months of experience, have had at least one prior employer, and are willing to participate, you will be asked several questions pertaining to leadership in a recorded interview. At the conclusion of the interview, you will also have the opportunity to confirm or challenge any of the interpretations I may have established in my preliminary findings. It should take approximately 25 minutes for you to complete the procedures listed. Your name and other identifying information will be collected as part of your participation, but this information will remain confidential.

If you are interested in participating, or have further questions, please email me at [REDACTED] by July 13, 2018. Once the study begins, I will contact you directly to set up a convenient time for an interview.

A consent document is attached to this letter. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Please sign the consent document and return it to me by email prior to the interview.

Sincerely,

Clifton Thacker
Doctoral Candidate