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Servant Leadership and Teacher Retention

by  
Ryan Timothy Siegle

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of Bethel University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education.

St. Paul, MN  
2019

Approved by:

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## Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover for public middle school teachers in Minnesota. This study specifically examined the primary relationship between perceptions of servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. A secondary focus examined the differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover analyzing teachers' demographic factors. Participants included 803 public middle school teachers throughout the state of Minnesota. Results suggest a significant negative correlation between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. Furthermore, a statistically significant difference in intent to turnover was found among teachers based on ethnicity. There were no significant differences in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender or years of teaching experience. Finally, there were no significant differences in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender, years of teaching experience, or teaching position. Findings from this study indicate the servant leadership of a principal may play a factor in turnover intentions of public middle school teachers in Minnesota. Based on these findings, further examination of the role servant leadership plays in teacher retention efforts is warranted.

## Acknowledgments

As we journey through life, we encounter monumental moments that help shape and define who we are. This dissertation journey has been one of those moments and has humbled me to the core. I can say with both humility and gratitude that the completion of this journey would not have been possible without the countless support of those around me.

I would first like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Michael Lindstrom for sharing his incredible gift of advising. Dr. Lindstrom's ability to provide words of affirmation while also giving valuable feedback and timely direction were pivotal in the completion of this project. Dr. Lindstrom, you have been the epitome of servant leader. Your ability to serve while leading is both a model I strive to follow and a leadership style I admire.

I would also like to thank both Dr. Erica Hering and Dr. Annette Ziegler for being a part of an incredible dissertation committee. You both brought humility, caring, and a genuine desire to support me in my journey. This dissertation would not be what it is without both of you.

To my wife Kirsten, son Owen, and daughter Elin, there are no words that can describe my thankfulness. Kirsten, you have provided words of encouragement when needed, a listening ear, and amazing wisdom during challenging times. This journey could not have happened without your unconditional love and support! Owen and Elin, I am so proud of you and cannot wait to see what God has in store for you!

Finally, to my family, thank you for supporting me in countless ways during this journey. Your excitement about my learning offered me hope and determination to keep going. Your willingness to step in and help when the workload was heavy will not be forgotten. Each of you have played a tremendous role in getting me to this point and for that I thank you!

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## **Chapter I: Introduction**

### **Introduction to the Problem**

The quality of education contributes to a notable impact on student learning outcomes in schools and few would argue that the most influential school-related factor of student achievement is the teacher (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Nye, Konstantopoulos, & Hedges, 2004; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005; Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002). Federal legislation recognizes the sentiment of offering our nation's students highly qualified teachers through a plethora of educational reform policy (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003). The No Child Left Behind Act (2002) was enacted to elevate the quality of education across the United States by requiring specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions of practicing teachers (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). More recently, the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015) requires states to ensure an equitable distribution of effective teachers while reducing the number of inexperienced or ineffective teachers in high-poverty and high-minority schools. The problem, and one of the foremost educational concerns to date, lies with the nation's inability to supply all schools with highly qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 2001; Podolsky, Kini, Bishop, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016).

Teacher shortage concerns have risen to an all-time high across the country and are considered a potential crisis by media, policymakers, and empirical researchers alike (Educator Policy Innovation Center, 2016; Rich, 2015; Sutchter et al., 2016). While teacher shortages vary based on teaching fields (Billingsley, 2004; Ingersoll & May, 2010), geographic locations (U.S. Department of Education, 2017), and school type (Adamson & Darling-Hammond, 2012), a nationwide discrepancy exists between the supply of incoming teachers and the demand for those teachers (Sutchter et al., 2016). The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) indicated a

projected student enrollment growth of three million students between 2016 and 2025. In addition, pupil-teacher ratios are thought to reduce over the coming years, increasing an annual demand for approximately 20,000 additional teachers. In all, there will be a need for an estimated 300,000 new teachers each year by 2020 and 316,000 new teachers by 2025 (Sutcher et al., 2016).

While the demand for new teachers is seemingly increasing, the supply of teachers is struggling to keep pace (Cook & Boe, 2007; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010). The number of students enrolled in teaching certification courses decreased by 35% or approximately 240,000 potential teachers between 2009 and 2014 (Sutcher et al., 2016). Furthermore, fewer recent high school graduates are considering entering the education field. Statistics from the ACT National Curriculum Survey indicate only 5% of all high school graduates are interested in pursuing a career in teaching (ACT, 2015). According to the United States Department of Education (2017), teacher shortages result when the demand for teachers cannot meet the current supply of teachers in a specific area. Currently, every state is federally designated as having some form of teaching shortage (United States Department of Education, 2017). In Minnesota, eight of the 12 economic development regions and 66 license fields are considered teacher shortage areas (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017a). In addition, Minnesota school officials specify a major barrier to hiring quality teaching candidates is the limited number of applicants for posted positions (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017b).

Historically, educational policy initiatives have sought to address teacher staffing concerns through a wide array of recruitment strategies (Ingersoll, 2001). Alternative teacher licensing programs are designed to attract individuals with the opportunity to teach using a streamlined licensure track (Cochran-Smith et al., 2011; Labaree, 2010; Zhang & Zeller,

2016). Financial incentives have also played a role in recruiting new teachers through grow-your-own programs, student loan forgiveness, and bonus compensation packages (Fulbeck, 2014; Swanson, 2011). While many financial incentive programs are proving to successfully attract teachers (Liou & Lawrenz, 2011; Steele, Murnane, & Willett, 2010) school staffing issues remain. Much of these concerns can be attributed to the number of teachers choosing to leave their school for another position or leave the profession entirely (Ingersoll, 2001; Sutchter et al., 2016).

### **Background of the Study**

Teacher turnover is a substantial contributor to teacher shortage problems (Boe, 1997; Dove, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001). When analyzing multiple U.S. Department of Education databases, Sutchter et al. (2016) found teacher turnover constitutes 75-100% of teacher demand. In fact, approximately 16% of all teachers either leave their current position each year or leave the profession entirely. Two-thirds of those teachers voluntarily turnover pre-retirement with 37% of pre-retirement turnover caused by teachers moving and 30% from those leaving the profession. Only 18% of total teacher turnover results from retirement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). In addition, The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) estimates an 8% annual attrition rate. This number is noteworthy when taking into account the attrition rates of high-performing countries such as Singapore and Finland with less than 3% and 1% attrition rates respectively (Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2011). Considering the increased demand for teachers, decreased supply of potential teachers, and a troublesome turnover and attrition rate, further examination of possible factors contributing to teacher retention is warranted.

A review of literature underscores the justification for teachers leaving their positions. Working in the teaching profession can take both a physical and psychological toll on an individual (Shernoff, Mehta, Atkins, Torf, & Spencer, 2011). Teachers are found to carry more stress and have higher chances of burnout when compared to other professions (de Heus & Diekstra, 1999). A MetLife survey (2012) found teacher job satisfaction is at the lowest point it has been in the past 20 years. The American Federation of Teachers (2017) echoed this finding by citing teachers' stress levels have grown by working longer hours with fewer resources and feelings of less support.

School leaders are in a unique position to address teacher turnover concerns as they are ultimately responsible for establishing work environments conducive to supporting the collegial, instructional, and developmental needs of their staff (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2015). The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (2015) developed the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders to set a level of expectations addressing leadership behaviors necessary for organizational success. Guided by empirical research and the work of leadership professionals, the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders calls for school principals to build school capacity by recruiting, hiring, and retaining quality, caring teachers. In addition, principals must build shared commitment through a common mission, vision, and values, provide instructional leadership, maintain healthy work environments, build relationships with a variety of stakeholders, and manage school resources efficiently and effectively. Because the role of the school principal is holistic, it has become a largely influential component to school success (The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Scholarly research points to the principal's role in providing positive work experiences for teachers (Cerit, 2009; Jacob, Goddard, Kim, Miller, & Goddard, 2015; Shaw & Newton,

2014). Principals have been found to influence factors that relate to stress, burnout, teacher job satisfaction, and teacher retention (Mehta, Atkins, & Frazier, 2013; Shaw & Newton, 2014, Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). How principals support their teachers is a critical factor in whether teachers choose to stay or leave their school (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Hughes, Matt, & O'Reilly, 2015; Ladd, 2011). Hughes et al. (2015) found the support of teachers was significantly and positively related to four elements of administrative support: emotional, environmental, instructional, and technical. Therefore, embodying leadership characteristics that exhibit the aspects of administrative support is critical (Shaw & Newton, 2014).

Empirical research points to several specific leadership styles conducive to the support of teachers (Brezicha, Bergmark, & Mitra, 2015; Shaw & Newton, 2014). In the case of teacher retention, servant leadership is one particular leadership style that stands out (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Servant leadership places priority on the success and well-being of individuals rather than the needs of the organization (Parolini, Patterson, & Winston, 2009). By definition, servant leaders focus on the immediate hierarchical needs of their followers through authenticity, humility, standing back, courage, empowerment, accountability, forgiveness, and stewardship (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). In his book, *The Servant as Leader*, author Robert Greenleaf (1970) claimed “The servant-leader *is* servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (p. 7). The distinct difference marked by a servant leader’s approach may be a determining factor in whether a teacher chooses to stay or leave their school (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Greenleaf (1970) went on to explain how a servant leader is unique from all other types of leaders by stating:

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will he benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 10)

Further examining the impact principals' leadership behaviors have on teacher retention may be an essential step in addressing school staffing concerns. This study sought to shed light on the specific style of servant leadership and its role in teacher retention.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Public schools across the country face the challenge of retaining high-quality teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2016). On average, 16% of all teachers across the United States leave their position each year (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). In Minnesota, the number of educators leaving their school or the teaching profession altogether has increased by 46% from 4,471 teachers in 2008 to 6,546 teachers just six years later (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017, p. 23). These statistics are cause for concern when considering two-thirds of teachers are leaving their position pre-retirement (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). After their first year of teaching, 15.1% of Minnesota educators leave the profession. Within three years, 25.9% of new teachers leave, and 31.9% leave by their fifth year (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017, p. 24).

Retaining teachers at the middle school level is of particular importance. Adolescence is a critical time in an individual's life for biological and psychosocial development (Goddings, Burnett-Heyes, Bird, Viner, & Blakemore, 2012; Viner et al., 2015). Empirical research



indicates the importance of nonparental adult influences on the growth and maturation process of adolescence (Beam, Chen, & Greenberger, 2002). In spite of the critical role a teacher may play in the life of a middle school student, the rate of middle school teachers leaving their positions is alarmingly high (Marinell & Coca, 2013; Neild, Useem, & Farley, 2005). The state of Minnesota has designated nine of the 13 middle school teaching licenses as teacher shortage areas (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017). When a school is unable to fill a middle school position, they may be forced to hire teachers with alternative licensure or no license at all. Hiring uncertified teachers can be a problem considering they are more apt to leave their position than certified teachers further exasperating the teacher retention concern (Miller, Brownell, & Smith, 1999).

The amount of teacher turnover each year is a noteworthy problem when considering the financial (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007), academic (Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013), and instructional cost (Goldhaber, Lavery, & Theobald, 2015) to school districts. Nationally, the cost of teacher attrition ranges from \$1 billion to \$2.2 billion per year (Haynes, 2014). In Minnesota, teacher attrition is estimated to cost the state between \$18 million and \$40 million each year (Ingersoll & Perda, 2014). Financial costs in the form of recruiting, hiring, and retaining teachers, depletes school funding and ultimately impacts the quality of teaching and learning inside the school (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

Given the growing prevalence of teacher turnover, empirical studies have examined several contributing factors (Burkhauser, 2017; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2011; Ingersoll & May, 2010; Johnson, Kraft, & Papay, 2012; Kraft, Marinell, Yee, 2016). A large body of research indicates a teacher's background characteristics including years of teaching experience (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Ingersoll, 2001), gender (Ingersoll & May, 2011), ethnicity

(Borman & Dowling, 2008; Ingersoll & May, 2011), and teaching position (Billingsley, 2004) play a role in whether they choose to stay or leave their school. For instance, those teaching with a license in hard-to-fill areas are more likely to leave a school with high teacher turnover rates (Ingersoll & May, 2011). Furthermore, teachers with fewer years of teaching experience turnover at higher rates than those more experienced, leaving teaching positions open that are often filled by other inexperienced teachers (Marinell & Coca, 2013).

More recent studies highlight the working conditions of a school as the salient factor related to teacher turnover (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2012; Ladd, 2011). Primary components to healthy working conditions include positive school climates (Burkhauser, 2017) and supportive principal leadership (Hughes et al., 2015; Shaw & Newton, 2014). When coupled, the effects of an adverse school climate and unsupportive principal leadership amplify the severity of the teacher retention problem (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

School climate resulting from poor work conditions is a factor that significantly impacts teacher turnover (Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Guin, 2004; Johnson et al., 2012; Kraft, Marinell, & Yee, 2016). School climate is defined as “the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009, p. 182). In positive school climates, principals are supportive, colleagues are connected, and stakeholders work toward a shared vision (Cohen et al., 2009; Hoy, Tarter, Kottkamp, 1991). Studies have shown teachers are more apt to leave their school when working in an unsupportive school climate (Johnson et al., 2012; Kraft et al., 2016). Allensworth et al. (2009) found school climate factors explained over 75% of teacher stability. Principal leadership is critical to the

development and sustainability of a favorable school climate (Ross & Cozzins, 2016). Research indicates that ineffective leadership practices hinder the development of a healthy school (Johnson & Uline, 2005).

Research has suggested that principal leadership is foundational to whether teachers choose to stay or leave their school (Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Kraft et al., 2016). Teachers want to feel valued as individuals and instructors (Hughes et al., 2015). Teacher turnover is more likely when principals fail to provide a caring, distributive leadership style and instead take a more top-down hierarchical approach (Hughes et al., 2015; Shaw & Newton, 2014). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) found teachers are twice as likely to leave their current position when they strongly believe the principal fails to be encouraging, provide autonomy, and offer opportunities to be a part of school decision making. On the other hand, teacher retention is found to be higher in schools where the leader establishes a clear vision, strong communication, and an engaged, respectful learning environment for teachers and students alike (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Cohen et al., 2009).

Servant leadership is an approach capable of retaining teachers (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Servant leaders place the needs of others before themselves and strive to develop their followers to reach their highest level of self-actualization (Greenleaf, 1970). Despite empirical evidence pointing to the factors of principal servant leadership (Shaw & Newton, 2014) and teacher background characteristics (Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll & May, 2011; Marinell & Coca, 2013) as critical components to teacher retention, there is a gap in the literature investigating these variables. This study sought to extend the work of Shaw and Newton (2014) by examining servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover at the middle school level.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover for public middle school teachers in Minnesota. This study specifically examined the primary relationship between perceptions of servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. A secondary focus examined the differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover analyzing teachers' demographic factors.

## **Research Questions**

Three research questions guided this study:

1. What relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover?
2. What difference exists in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on specific demographic factors?
3. What difference exists in teacher intent to turnover based on specific demographic factors?

## **Significance of the Study**

School leaders may benefit from additional research on the topic of teacher retention as they seek ways to enhance school improvement efforts, promote student achievement, and develop students for future career and college success. Stability in the school setting is essential for the development of highly effective teachers (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). When teacher turnover occurs, the social capital among colleagues shifts and teachers are pressed to develop relationships with new hires. Building social capital often requires an extensive amount of time to establish norms for communication, sharing, and ultimately a sense of trust (Hallam, Smith,

Hite, Hite, & Wilcox, 2015). The sustained relationships of teachers, students, and administration play a role in student achievement results (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Teacher retention also has ramifications for life-long student success (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2014). Chetty et al. (2014) found students receiving high-quality teaching were more likely to attend college and earn a higher salary than those who did not. Knowing a specific leadership style, such as servant leadership, and its relationship to turnover may help school leaders prioritize how they lead their school to optimize student success.

The study of factors impacting teacher retention is not only significant for schools and their stakeholders, but also for policymakers and society in general. Turnover results in costly consequences of the unmet needs of teachers (Barnes et al., 2007). Examining several contributing factors related to teacher retention could have implications for how retention policy is approached. Principal preparation programs may consider adjustments to content, coursework, and program design as they learn leadership characteristics that best support teachers. In addition, state administrative licensure requirements could adopt competencies related to best practice leadership efforts that curb teacher turnover.

The findings from this study have implications for advancing research literature on servant leadership and teacher retention. Servant leadership characterizes an approach capable of navigating the complexities of 21st-century education (Parris & Peachey, 2013). However, the servant leadership phenomenon is still in its infancy, and there are continuous calls for further empirical examination (Brown & Bryant, 2015; Liden, Wayne, Liao, & Meuser, 2014; Parris & Peachey, 2013; van Dierendonck, 2011). Specifically, there is a need to research the relationship between servant leadership behavior and organizational outcomes such as employee retention (Black, 2010; Shaw & Newton, 2014). Only one study has been discovered in the

literature addressing these two variables together (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Shaw and Newton (2014) found a significant positive correlation between perceived levels of servant leadership and teacher retention. While Shaw and Newton (2014) advanced the knowledge of how servant leadership impacts educational outcomes it was conducted in the high school setting limiting the overall scope of the results. The level in which one teaches may play a factor in one's experiences. The teaching experience for middle school teachers can be much different than the experience of their elementary and high school counterparts (Ladd & Sorenson, 2017). Considering the high rates of teacher turnover in middle schools (Marinell & Coca, 2013), further examination at this level was required. A gap in the literature existed examining servant leadership and teacher retention for middle school teachers. This particular research study sought to build upon the work of Shaw and Newton (2014) by exploring the relationship between servant leadership and teacher retention at the middle school level.

## **Definition of Terms**

### *Servant Leadership*

A leader's willingness and desire to place the needs of others before oneself. A servant leader leads by serving followers and helping followers grow as individuals and into becoming servants themselves (Greenleaf, 1970). According to van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), servant leaders embody eight characteristics: empowerment, standing back, accountability, forgiveness, courage, authenticity, humility, and stewardship.

### *Servant Leadership Survey*

The servant leadership survey developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) is a multi-dimensional construct of servant leadership measuring eight characteristics: empowerment, standing back, accountability, forgiveness, courage, authenticity, humility, and stewardship. The

30-item survey using a Likert scale measures an individual's perception of their leader's servant leadership characteristics (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

#### *Teacher Attrition*

The turnover of a teacher that chooses to leave their position and exit the teaching profession including those that have retired and those that have left for reasons other than retirement (Ingersoll, 2001).

#### *Teacher Migration*

The turnover of a teacher that chooses to leave their position for another teaching position (Ingersoll, 2001).

#### *Teacher Retention*

Teachers staying in the same teaching assignment and same school from one year to the next (Billingsley, 1993).

#### *Turnover Intention*

An individual's conscious and intentional voluntary decision to leave an organization. Turnover intention is considered the final stage prior to actual turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993).

#### *Teacher Turnover*

Ingersoll (2001) defined teacher turnover as teachers who choose to leave their current school while remaining in the profession or leave the teaching profession entirely.

### **Assumptions and Limitations**

Examining the leadership behaviors of a principal in relation to teacher retention efforts can be a challenging endeavor. An abundance of factors are associated with the turnover intentions of teachers and retention is often related to more than one variable. This study sought to investigate the influence of one highly related teacher retention factor, principal leadership. It

was beyond the scope of this study to examine other contributing factors that have been known to be highly associated with teacher turnover including school working conditions, salary, teaching geographic location, school demographics, personal reasons, and the qualifications of the teacher. For this reason, consideration of the potential influences of several variables on participant responses is warranted.

### **Nature of the Study**

Chapter One introduced the topic, problem statement, purpose, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, and assumptions and limitations of the study. The chapter specifically highlighted teacher staffing problems throughout the country and efforts to curb teacher turnover. Teacher retention continues to be a problem at the national level and more locally in Minnesota. The leadership style of the school leader can play a large role in whether a teacher chooses to stay or leave their position. Empirical research points to servant leadership as a style that may contribute to the retention of teachers. However, there was a need for further research, and a gap existed in the study of servant leadership and teacher retention at the middle school level.

This quantitative study examined the relationship between servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. A cross-sectional survey design was employed by collecting data from public middle school teachers across the state of Minnesota. Data was analyzed to discover if there was a relationship between the variables of teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover.

### **Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

Chapter Two reviews empirical literature related to this study, specifically regarding teacher retention and servant leadership. Chapter Three shares methodology by discussing the



research design strategy, theoretical framework, data collection and analysis, limitations of methodology, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four examines the results of the research study. Finally, Chapter Five includes a discussion on the conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations for practitioners and academics.

## **Chapter II: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the review of literature is to provide depth and understanding to the independent variable teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and the dependent variable teacher intent to turnover. There are increasing calls to examine the influence of servant leadership on employees, particularly in the field of education (Black, 2010; Shaw & Newton, 2014). There is also growing concern regarding the extent of teacher turnover across the United States (Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2011; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Considering the influential position of the school principal and the empirical connection to teacher turnover (Hughes et al., 2015; Ladd, 2011), a closer look at the relationship between servant leadership and teacher retention is warranted. The following literature review is divided into three sections: (1) a synthesis of peer-reviewed literature on teacher retention, specifically focusing on the costs of teacher turnover and selected influential factors contributing to teacher turnover; (2) a discussion of servant leadership including its origin, development, characteristics, and influence on education; (3) a theoretical framework positioning human motivation theory as a lens in which to view servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover.

### **Teacher Retention**

Since the 1980s, teacher turnover has been a substantial issue in education (Ingersoll, 2001). Scholars have documented the retention of teachers, and a multitude of influencers have emerged as factors compromising the fidelity of the current educational system (Guin, 2004; Hanushek et al., 2004). Teacher turnover is classified in three ways: (a) those who choose to stay in their current schools, or stayers, (b) those who choose to leave their current school to work in another school, or movers, (c) and those who choose to leave the teaching profession

entirely, or leavers (Ingersoll, 2001). Regardless of whether a teacher is a mover or a leaver, their turnover continues to be a concern (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

**The cost of teacher turnover.** Teacher retention scholars agree that the turnover of teaching staff is inevitable and at times an essential part of eliminating ineffective practitioners (Henry, Bastian, & Fortner, 2011). Turnover may generate growth opportunities as new teachers stimulate the work environment (Stronge & Hindman, 2003). However, while teacher turnover can impact schools and the individuals within them in positive ways, the loss of teachers due to migration or attrition can be detrimental to the financial, academic, and instructional components of schooling (Barnes et al., 2007; Haynes, 2014; Sutchter, et al., 2016).

**Financial cost of turnover.** The high price of teachers leaving their position can place a substantial financial burden on schools (Carroll, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Watlington, Shockley, Guglielmino, & Flesher, 2010). The Alliance for Excellent Education estimated the cost of teacher attrition in the United States may range from \$1 billion to \$2.2 billion per year (Haynes, 2014). This number is even more significant when considering the cost of replacing teachers who remain in the profession but choose to go to a different school (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future estimated the cumulative cost of teacher migration and attrition exceeds \$7 billion per year (Barnes et al., 2007). The annual price of replacing teachers per district equates to approximately \$70,000 in urban school districts and \$33,000 in non-urban school districts. Much of these costs derive from recruiting, hiring, processing, and developing new teachers. Consequently, as schools spend fiscal resources to counteract migration and attrition, the investment in developing human resources takes a toll and in turn harms student achievement (Barnes et al., 2007; Ronfeldt et al., 2013).

***Academic cost of turnover.*** Teacher turnover is costly for student learning outcomes (Guin, 2004; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Research indicates a relationship between student achievement and teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001; Guin, 2004; Ronfeldt, et al., 2013). Guin (2004) utilized a mixed-methods study in a large urban district to examine the relationship between teacher turnover and student achievement in math and reading. Results suggest a significant correlation; when fewer teachers leave a school building, students are more likely to score higher on a standardized assessment. While this study sheds light on the impact of turnover on student achievement, it may be criticized. The correlational nature of the results may not have taken into account other factors that could have played a role in the findings (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Guin’s (2004) work was extended by Ronfeldt et al. (2013), who examined the causal effects of turnover on student achievement. Their study found “some of the first empirical evidence for a direct effect of teacher turnover on student achievement” (Ronfeldt et al., 2013, p. 30) in the areas of math and English/language arts. In addition, Ronfeldt et al. (2013) found these effects to be greater in high-turnover schools comprised of low performing and Black students.

***Instructional cost of turnover.*** Schools with chronic teacher turnover amplify adverse outcomes due to a disproportionate distribution of effective teachers (Goldhaber et al., 2015; Guin, 2004; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Studies show teachers are more apt to leave schools with lower socioeconomic student populations and a higher number of minority students (Hanushek et al., 2004). As teachers in disadvantaged schools gain experience, they are more likely to pursue other teaching opportunities, creating hard-to-staff openings in their former schools (Allensworth et al., 2009). When teachers turnover, disadvantaged schools are often forced to hire teachers with less experience (Kalogrides & Loeb, 2013). Novice teachers often instruct students with

less effective teaching methods than their more seasoned counterparts (Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Wheeler, 2007). Goldhaber et al. (2015) examined “the inequitable distribution of teacher quality across student subgroups for each combination of school level, teacher quality variable, and student disadvantage category explored in the existing literature” (p. 294). Data revealed an inequitable distribution of teacher quality across all disadvantage factors including free and reduced lunch, American Indian, Black, and Hispanic populations, and schools with previous low-performing student achievement levels.

**Factors influencing teacher turnover.** Scholars have found relationships between teacher turnover and a number of teacher background characteristics including years of teaching experience, teaching position, gender, and ethnicity. In addition, factors influencing the turnover of teachers has also been correlated with environmental influences, with principal leadership being among the most prominent.

***Years of teaching experience.*** Teaching experience is a well-known factor influencing the retention of teachers (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll, 2001). Boe, Bobbitt, Cook, Whitener, and Weber (1997) claimed the experience of a teacher is the most significant demographic factor in whether a teacher will choose to stay or leave their school. Grissmer and Kirby (1987) likened the relationship of teaching experience and teacher retention to a U-shaped pattern. Teachers are more likely to leave their position at the beginning or end of their careers rather than the middle (Allensworth et al., 2009; Boe et al., 1997; Grissmer & Kirby, 1987; Ingersoll, 2001). Scholars have asserted that the instability of veteran teachers should be no surprise given the likelihood of retirement impacting the turnover rate for that demographic (Allensworth et al., 2009). The younger, more inexperienced teacher demographic is also considered unstable as these teachers are still determining career aspirations

and job fits (Allensworth et al., 2009; Mayer, 2006). Mid-career teachers are more likely to stay in the profession after having developed a sense of professional identity (Coulter & Lester, 2011).

The retention of novice teachers has received an abundance of empirical attention (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Burke, Aubusson, Schuck, Buchanan, & Prescott, 2015; Glennie, Mason, & Edmunds, 2016). Among a plethora of personal (Mayer, 2006) and school-related (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017) variables, appropriate support systems can act as a determining factor in whether an early-career teacher stays or leaves their position (Ingersoll, 2012). School leaders play a large role in developing positive contextual factors related to the retention of novice teachers (Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2011). Glennie et al. (2016) found novice teachers are more likely to stay in their position when their administrator develops a culture of shared leadership, mutual trust, and collegial support. Pogodzinski, Youngs, Frank, and Belman (2012) found similar results, citing novice teachers' perception of the relationship they have with their administrator is more critical than adequate resources and workload expectations when considering their intent to remain in their school. Ultimately, the type of leadership in a school is influential for novice teacher retention (Pogodzinski et al., 2012).

***Teaching position.*** The rate of teacher turnover is also dependent upon the subject area in which one teaches (Ingersoll & May, 2010). Primarily math, science, and special education teachers are found to leave their positions at a higher turnover rate than peers teaching other subject areas (Billingsley, 2004; Ingersoll & May, 2010; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010). Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) hypothesized a 14.7% turnover rate for math and science teachers and a 15.6% turnover rate for special education teachers. Scholars predicted higher

paying career opportunities outside of teaching attribute to the attrition of math and science teachers (Rumberger, 1987). Others, such as Ingersoll and May (2010), distinguished job satisfaction as a major determinant in whether a math or science teacher will stay in their position.

Special education teachers are in high demand around the country (Berry, 2012; Billingsley, 2004). Prominent factors influencing retention decisions of special education teachers include personal characteristics, work qualifications, and working conditions (Billingsley, 2004). Principal leadership also plays a large role in the turnover intentions of special education teachers (Berry, 2012; Billingsley, 2004). Billingsley and Cross (1991) identified the lack of principal support through pedagogical and non-instructional policy as a determinant in special educators' turnover intentions. The findings of Conley and You (2017) revealed similar results. They found the collective efficacy of a teaching team and direct and indirect administrative support were indicators of whether a special education teacher chose to leave their position. In Conley and You's (2017) study, principal support was shown through staff recognition, vision-casting, and motivating behavior. When a principal demonstrates support for their teachers, special educators are more likely to have higher job satisfaction, commitment, and retention levels (Berry, 2012).

**Gender.** Teacher retention and gender has also been examined (Addi-Raccah, 2005; Billingsley, 2004). Historically, the teaching profession has been considered a largely female-dominated occupation (Strober, 1984). This trend continues with reports indicating females comprise over 76% of the teaching population (Ingersoll, Merrill, & Stuckey, 2014). In some cases, studies have shown statistically significant differences between men and women exiting the teaching profession (Borman & Dowling, 2008), with males less likely to leave than females

(Gritz & Theobald, 1996; Ingersoll, 2001). However, other studies did not find much difference between the retention rates of men and women (Allensworth et al., 2009), or found females were less likely to leave than males (Johnson, Berg, & Donaldson, 2005). The National Center for Education Statistics (2014) indicated 8.1% of females moved from their current teaching position during the 2012-2013 school year compared to 7.9% of males. In addition, 8.1% of women left teaching altogether compared to 6.4% of men.

***Ethnicity.*** Studies show the race or ethnicity of a teacher may also be a determining factor in whether the teacher chooses to stay or leave their school (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010; Hanushek et al., 2004; Marinell & Coca, 2013). Teachers of color are notably underrepresented in the teaching profession (Achinstein et al., 2010; Ingersoll & May, 2011), and a gap remains between the diversity of students and the representation of this diversity in the teaching field (Villegas, Strom, & Lucas, 2012). The turnover of minority teachers is notable as the United States has historically suffered from the lack of minority teacher role models (Dee, 2005; Miller & Endo, 2005). In addition, teachers of color are more likely to teach in disadvantaged urban schools than their nonminority counterparts, an often difficult context in which to draw teachers (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2017). Successful efforts have been made to increase the number of minority teachers resulting in a substantial increase since the 1980's (Ingersoll, May, & Collins, 2017). However, as the minority teaching population has grown, so too have the turnover rates for these teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek, & Morton, 2007).

Ingersoll et al. (2017) found statistically significant differences in the amount of minority turnover compared to nonminority turnover. They claimed the turnover difference has grown in the past years by stating, “this gap appears to have widened in the past decade. In the 2004–05,



2008–09, and 2012–13 school years, minority turnover was, respectively, 18%, 24%, and 25% higher than nonminority teacher turnover” (Ingersoll et al., 2017, p. 11). Additional data has suggested that Black or African American, Asian, Native American, and Hispanic/Latino teachers have higher turnover rates than nonminority teachers. The findings of Ingersoll et al. (2017) have been supported by previous literature, all revealing a disproportionate rate of turnover for teachers of color (Ingersoll & May, 2011; Marvel et al., 2007).

Teachers of color leave their teaching position for reasons similar to the dynamics found in general teacher retention literature (Burkhauser, 2017; Clotfelter et al., 2011; Kraft et al., 2016). Job dissatisfaction ranks among the highest reasons a teacher of color will leave their job over personal reasons, forced migration, and retirement (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Ingersoll & May, 2011). Data has indicated teachers of color are more likely to stay in their school when given a chance for personal autonomy, self-growth, decision-making capabilities, and principal support (Ingersoll et al., 2017).

***Principal leadership.*** The leadership of a school principal plays a vital role in whether educators choose to stay in their current teaching position or leave (Burkhauser, 2017; Ladd, 2011; Shaw & Newton, 2014). When teachers develop trusting, positive relationships with their principal, they are more likely to feel valued and remain in their current position (Allensworth et al., 2009; Burkhauser, 2017; Ladd, 2011). This is true for both novice (Boyd et al., 2011) and seasoned educators (Guin, 2004; Ingersoll & May, 2010). Positive teacher-administrator relationships center on the supportive nature of the principal as they promote an ethic of caring for individual staff members (Boyd et al., 2011; Buchannen et al., 2013; Ingersoll & May, 2010).

Teacher retention is found to be higher in schools where the leader establishes a clear vision, strong communication, and an engaged, respectful learning environment for teachers and

students alike (Brown & Wynn, 2009; Cohen et al., 2009). Teachers are more likely to stay in their school when principals provide support through pedagogical expertise and allow for individual teacher autonomy (Allensworth et al., 2009; Ingersoll & May, 2010; Marinell & Coca, 2013). Teachers also desire leadership opportunities from their administrators (Ingersoll & May, 2010; Ladd, 2011). Turnover is more likely when principals act as hierarchical leaders and fail to provide a collaborative leadership approach (Hughes et al., 2015; Shaw & Newton, 2014). On the other hand, teachers are less likely to leave a school when they feel they are a part of the decision-making process (Allensworth et al., 2009; Ladd, 2011). Data has suggested that the retention of all teachers, regardless of background characteristics, may be influenced by the behavioral approach of the school leader. Principal support in the form of servant leadership may prove to be an essential factor in teacher migration and attrition (Shaw & Newton, 2014).

### **Servant Leadership**

The conceptual underpinnings of servant leadership began in the late 1960s when Robert Greenleaf introduced a new form of leadership centered on moral principles, ethical values, and a genuine concern for the betterment of others (Greenleaf, 1970). Through a series of essays including *The Servant as Leader* (1970), *The Institution as Servant* (1972a), and *Trustees as Servants* (1972b), Greenleaf built a foundation for the early theoretical development of what it means to serve first and lead second.

Greenleaf's (1970) original conception of servant leadership derived from a reading of Hermann Hesse's (1956) short story *The Journey to the East*. In this novel, a group of individuals, accompanied by their servant Leo, embark on a voyage in search of "the Truth." Along the way, Leo empowers the group through story and song, yet all the while performing the duties of a servant. The journey takes an unexpected turn when Leo, the beloved

servant, disappears. Through turmoil and struggle, the group eventually gives up on the journey. As the story develops, the narrator rediscovers Leo by realizing that he was, in fact, the leader of the group that initially sponsored the journey. Hesse's character Leo epitomized Greenleaf's (1970) notion of true leadership bringing Greenleaf to the realization of the complementary relationship between servanthood and leadership.

Greenleaf (1970) identified the servant leader as one who makes a deliberate, conscious choice to serve each follower as they grow into the best version of themselves. Greenleaf's goal was to encourage new leadership in those with an innate desire to serve. Servanthood, the central component of servant leadership, contrasts the notion of hierarchical leadership (Crippen, 2005). Greenleaf offered an alternative picture to traditional leadership styles that is people-centered and focused on the well-being of others by providing the conditions to improve the health, wisdom, freedom, and autonomy of followers. The leader-follower relationship influences the behavioral approach of the servant leader (Greenleaf, 1970; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Servant leaders act as stewards of their organization, recognizing their role as leaders as not one of power and coercion, rather of care and guidance towards the development of a greater self and community (Greenleaf, 1970; Reinke, 2004).

Servant leaders manifest a moral conviction to both "act as" and "be" a servant to others (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). The servant leader style is characterized as an ethical form of leadership (Clegg, Kornberger, & Rhodes, 2007), placing the needs of the individual over that of the organization (Parolini et al., 2009; Russell & Stone, 2002; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). In his early writings, Greenleaf (1970) offered a series of leadership characteristics incumbent to the role of servant leader. These characteristics can be placed along a continuum as individuals willingly and purposefully develop their own self-concept of servant leadership

(Greenleaf, 1970; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Greenleaf (1970) described leadership as a transformative process, evolving through time and experience. He stated, “Leaders are not trained; they evolve. A step-by-step conscious striving will produce something...but a contrived synthetic person is not as likely to reach the level of servant-leader as will one who has evolved with his own natural rhythm” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 10).

**Theory development of servant leadership.** Although the practice of servant leadership has existed for centuries (Ebener & O’Connell, 2010; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002), empirical research in the area is rather new (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Greenleaf’s (1970) early conceptualization of servant leadership spurred several accounts of practicing servant leaders in the workplace (Brody, 1995; Buchen, 1998; De Pree, 1987; Gaston, 1987; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Spears, 1996). However, these studies were largely anecdotal, providing little chance for empirical advancement (Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). In 1999, Farling et al. recognized a need for scholarly support and called for additional research to advance the stream of servant leadership literature. Since then, a growing body of measurement development and theoretical models have emerged, as shown in Table 1 (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005; Ehrhart, 2004; Laub, 1999; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Spears, 1998; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Table 1

*Comparison of Selected Servant Leadership Theoretical and Measurement Models*

Van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011)	Van Dierendonck (2011)	Spears (1995)	Laub (1999)	Russell & Stone (2002)
Empowerment	Empowering and developing people	Commitment to the growth of people	Develops people	Empowerment
Humility	Humility		Shares leadership	
Standing Back		Listening		
Authenticity	Authenticity		Displays authenticity	Honesty Integrity Trust
Forgiveness	Interpersonal acceptance	Empathy Healing	Values people	Appreciation of others
Accountability	Providing direction	Conceptualization	Providing leadership	
Courage		Awareness Persuasion Foresight		Vision Pioneering Modeling
Stewardship	Stewardship	Stewardship Building community	Builds community	Service

Spears's (1995) model of servant leadership underscores 10 characteristics reflected in the writings of Greenleaf (1970) that are essential to the maturation of a servant leader. These characteristics include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. Spears's

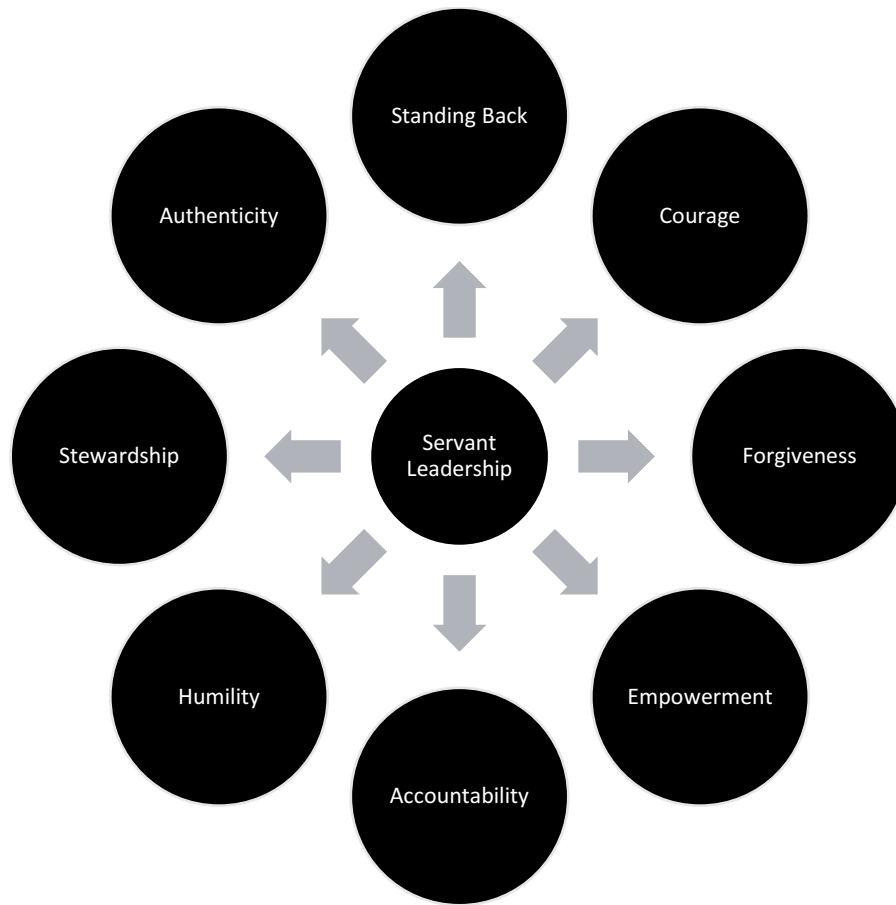
(1995) initial intent of developing this model was to establish a complementary form of Greenleaf's (1970) original conceptualization. Spears (2010) asserted that the list was neither comprehensive nor complete. Rather, the model offers a description of the possibilities servant leadership provides. Spears's (1995) servant leader model has served as a cornerstone for defining servant leadership in scholarly research (Parris & Peachey, 2013). However, Spears has received criticism for failing to operationalize the model, which reduced the chance to study the characteristics through empirical research (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Laub (1999) sought to extend the ideas of Spears (1995) by bringing further clarity to the definition of servant leadership and developing a model that allowed for quantifiable data collection. Following an exhaustive review of the literature, an initial list of servant leadership characteristics was determined. Laub (1999) then conducted a Delphi survey by using experts from the field to narrow the model to six characteristics. The characteristics included: values people, develops people, builds community, displays authenticity, provides leadership, and shares leadership. The development of Laub's model is thought to be a considerable contribution to the academic advancement of servant leadership (Smith, Montago, & Kuzmenko, 2004; van Dierendonck, 2011). However, the multi-dimensional nature of Laub's (1999) model is limiting as a factor analysis of the instrument measuring the model showed servant leadership to be a one-dimensional construct (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Russell and Stone (2002) also offered a theoretical model of servant leadership. Through a thorough review of research, Russell and Stone (2002) identified 20 attributes of servant leaders. Russell and Stone (2002) classified nine of these attributes as functional due to their recurrence in the literature. The functional attributes included vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others, and empowerment. Russell and Stone's

(2002) attributes defined the leader through observed behaviors. While operating independently, functional attributes also form relationships with other attributes. The remaining accompanying attributes complement the functional attributes. These include communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching, and delegation. While this early conceptual model for servant leadership has been important to the development in theory building, the model's limitation revolves around the use of anecdotal and subjective literature (Parris & Peachey, 2013; van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

While previous scholars have sought to shed light on the characterization of servant leaders, the lack of conceptual clarity and a common definition of servant leader has been criticized (Anderson, 2009; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Liden et al., 2008). A more recent servant leadership model presented by van Dierendonck (2011) counteracted critics by synthesizing the theoretical characteristics of previous scholars with empirical research findings. Van Dierendonck identified six overlapping characteristics of servant leader behavior. The six characteristics include empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) offered a similar model including eight characteristics developed from an exhaustive review of the literature and operationalized into an eight-dimensional survey. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) characteristics include: standing back, forgiveness, courage, empowerment, accountability, authenticity, humility, and stewardship (see Figure 1). Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) argued that their latest model of servant leadership offered a distinct difference to those previously presented as it emphasized both the servant and leader aspects of servant leadership.



*Figure 1.* Van Dierendonck and Nuijten’s (2011) eight characteristics of servant leadership.

**Characteristics of servant leaders.** The model presented by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) incorporated the ideas of Greenleaf (1970), Spears (1995), Russell and Stone (2002), and Laub (1999), among others. For this study, van Dierendonck and Nuijten’s (2011) servant leadership model provided a framework for the characteristics of servant leaders and was measured using the Servant Leadership Survey as discussed later in the methodology chapter.

**Empowerment.** Servant leaders empower individuals towards self-growth and development (van Dierendonck, 2011). They use words of affirmation and encouragement as individuals try new skills and refine personal talents (Laub, 1999; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Empowering leadership relinquishes power to the follower, giving the follower greater autonomy while at the same time offering facilitative mentorship (Liden et al., 2008; van



Dierendonck, 2011). The central component for empowering and developing people is the servant leader's innate belief in another person's capacity (Greenleaf, 1970). As servant leaders empower and develop, they guide followers to leadership roles throughout the organization (Russell & Stone, 2002). Servant leaders stay involved through active listening, establishing grounds for shared decision making, and modeling love and equality to followers (Laub, 1999; Russell & Stone, 2002; Spears, 1995).

***Humility.*** Servant leaders practice humility by willingly placing the needs of another over their own (Liden et al., 2008). Servant leaders put their success into perspective and consider themselves an equal to their followers (Dennis & Bocarnea, 2005). Servant leaders are willing to accept the viewpoints of others and to learn from criticism (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Their selfless intent epitomizes humble leadership (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). As the servant leader recognizes the success of a follower, they stand back and give the follower credit for their accomplishments (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

***Standing back.*** Similar to acting with humility, servant leaders stand back by placing priority on their followers over themselves. Servant leaders provide the necessary supports for their followers and give credit following success (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). A core tenet of Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership includes the development of future servant leaders by providing opportunities to lead. Servant leaders methodically determine when to refrain from speaking, knowing the communication strengths of others may be a necessary medium for organizational unity (Dewan & Myatt, 2012). By standing back, servant leaders listen to the ideas of others and show respect and benevolence towards all stakeholders (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) explain the concept of standing back forms an interdependent relationship with many other servant leader characteristics. While standing back serves as one-dimension to the multi-dimensional nature of servant leadership, characteristics such as authenticity, empowerment, humility, and stewardship may emerge simultaneously.

***Authenticity.*** Authentic leaders are able to stay open to one's true self (van Dierendonck, 2011). They remain honest while upholding integrity by speaking the truth, keeping promises, and remaining fair to followers (Russell & Stone, 2002). Servant leaders show authenticity through transparency and self-awareness (Laub, 1999). Servant leaders holds-fast to their values and ethics as they grow, mature, and experience leadership (Greenleaf, 1970). Servant leaders remain authentic when they identify their thoughts and feelings and stay true to their heart (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). By allowing the art of leadership to coalesce within their self-concept, the servant leader remains relatable regardless of their organizational position (Greenleaf, 1970).

***Forgiveness or interpersonal acceptance.*** Servant leaders exhibit interpersonal acceptance when they look for the best in people (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Servant leaders seek to understand their followers and where they are coming from rather than passing judgment (George, 2000). The differences in each are valued and viewed as an integral component of the strength of the organization (Laub, 1999). Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) argue, "interpersonal acceptance is about empathy: being able to cognitively adopt the psychological perspective of other people and experience feelings of warmth and compassion" (p. 252). Research scholars explain forgiveness occurs when an individual is willing to abandon ill-regard towards another regardless of the offense placed upon them (Baskin & Enright, 2004). When followers make a mistake, servant leaders provide empathy and forgiveness, realizing

success and achievement is a human rather than organizational endeavor (Greenleaf, 1970; Russell & Stone, 2002).

***Courage.*** Courageous leadership requires wisdom and vision to navigate the complexities of risk-taking (Batagiannis, 2007). For servant leaders to provide individuals direction, they must be clear about the goals of the organization and the steps it will take to achieve success (Laub, 1999). Clarity derives from a depth of knowledge and understanding regarding the issues at hand and capitalizing upon the appropriate levers to do so (Batagiannis, 2007). Courageous leadership necessitates passion and an overwhelming sense to stay true to what is best for the organization and the individuals within (Batagiannis, 2007; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Servant leaders must be willing to take risks for the betterment of the people within the organization regardless of the difficulty (Russell & Stone, 2002). Being courageous requires creative thinking, problem-solving, and a willingness to try new approaches (Greenleaf, 1970; Russell & Stone, 2002).

***Accountability.*** Servant leaders empower individuals in the organization by holding them accountable for a set of standards (van Dierendonck, 2011). Accountability is enacted when leaders hold both individuals and teams responsible for results (Konczak, Stelly, & Trusty, 2000). Through accountability, followers know what is expected and, in turn, know how to perform accordingly (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). “Giving followers responsibility is an essential element of effective and positive leadership” (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011, p. 264). Konczak et al. (2000) found followers to be more satisfied and committed to their work when a leader held them accountable.

***Stewardship.*** Stewardship requires a sense of responsibility for individuals to look beyond one’s self-interest to seek good for society as a whole (van Dierendonck & Nuijten,

2011). Stewardship emphasizes teamwork, collaboration, and the development of relationships (Laub, 1999). Servant leaders model for others how to act as stewards of the organization and community (Greenleaf, 1970). In doing so, followers imitate steward behavior and further build community (Laub, 1999).

**Servant leadership in education.** The servant leadership behavior of a principal compliments the evolving role of educational institutions and may be a critical factor in addressing the needs of teachers. Scholars in educational leadership point to the rising demands of schools today as a wake-up call for principals to consider their leadership style (Letizia, 2014). Murphy (2017) suggested the organizational structure of the modern school lends itself to leadership positioned in a servant-like posture:

In these new postindustrial organizations, there are important shifts in roles, relationships, and responsibilities, traditional patterns of relationships are altered, authority flows are less hierarchical, role definitions are both more general and more flexible, leadership is connected to competence for needed tasks rather than to formal position, and independence and isolation are replaced by cooperative work. (p. 258)

Empirical research supports the assumption that when teachers perceive their principals as servant leaders the result is positive for both the school organization and the individuals working within (Black, 2010; Cerit, 2009; Crippen & Wallin, 2008; Shaw & Newton, 2014).

***Servant leadership and teacher demographics.*** A small body of research indicates the demographics of a teacher may influence how teachers perceive their principal's servant leadership behaviors (Ekinici, 2015; Salameh, 2011; Turkmen & Gul, 2017). So far, data has revealed mixed results in whether gender influences the way a teacher views their principal as a servant leader. Turkmen and Gul (2017) found a significant difference between male and female

teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership behavior, citing females to perceive their principals as servant leaders more often than males. Al-Mahdy, Al-Harhi, and Salah El-Din (2016) found similar results highlighting a significant difference in gender perceptions of principal servant leaders citing female teachers ranked principals higher in the area of emotional healing. Salameh (2011) also indicated a significant difference between male and female perceptions of overall principals' servant leadership, however when analyzing the individual dimensions of servant leadership these differences were reduced. Authors have also found gender to influence the self-perceptions of servant leadership as females are more likely to build consensus, offer emotional support, empower others, develop and honor individual contributions, and humbly reflect on conversations with staff (Fridell, Belcher, & Messner, 2009). Counter to these findings, authors have either reported male teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership higher than female teachers' perceptions (Ekinci, 2015) or no significant difference in gender perceptions (Laub, 1999). The contradictory nature of these results suggests that further research is required (Ekinci, 2015).

Research has also examined the influence of teaching experience on teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership. Ekinci (2015) found that the longer teachers worked with a principal, the more likely they were to perceive the principal as a servant leader. Salameh (2011) found that the servant leader behaviors of staff development and community building emerged as the largest differences in perceptions. Teachers with a shorter tenure perceived their principals higher in the area of developing others than teachers in the middle or latter part of their careers. However, teachers in the middle of their careers were more likely to perceive their principal as a community builder than teachers at the start or end of their career. Both demographic factors

discussed above are pertinent to the study at hand as gender and years of teaching experience are also factors related to teacher retention (Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll & May, 2011).

***Servant leadership and teacher commitment.*** There are several antecedents to teacher retention that relate to servant leadership (Black, 2010; Bozeman, Scogin, & Stuessy, 2013; Fong, 2018; Larkin, Lokey-Vega, & Brantley-Dias, 2018). Organizational commitment, or the extent to which an individual identifies themselves within their organization (Steers, 1977), is an indicator as to whether a teacher chooses to stay or leave their current position (Larkin et al., 2018). Servant leaders have been found to be strongly correlated with teacher commitment to their schools (Cerit, 2010; Turkmen & Gul, 2017). Teachers are more likely to have a strong commitment to their school when they perceive their leaders to be empowering and to act with forgiveness. In addition, when the principal holds members of the school accountable for their work, teachers are more likely to respond with increased commitment (Turkmen & Gul, 2017). Committed teachers want to feel valued, have opportunities for professional growth, and follow an authentic leader (Cerit, 2010).

Turkmen and Gul (2017) examined the relationship between the servant leadership characteristics of high school principals and the organizational commitment of teachers. Employing van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) Servant Leadership Survey and a survey measuring organizational commitment, Turkmen and Gul (2017) found servant leadership to be a predictor of organizational commitment.

***Servant leadership and job satisfaction.*** Job satisfaction is another indicator of whether a teacher will choose to stay in their position or leave (Bozeman et al., 2013; Fong, 2018). Several scholars indicated correlations between teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership and job satisfaction (Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Anderson, 2005; Cerit, 2009;

Thompson, 2002). Engelhart (2012) claimed a teacher's attitude toward their job results, in part, from the caring ethic of the school leader. Cerit (2009) furthered this statement by claiming when teachers work in environments where they feel valued, respected, and part of a community, their level of job satisfaction increases along with their chances of staying within the school.

Von Fischer and De Jong (2017) examined teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership characteristics and teacher job satisfaction in high schools in South Dakota. The researchers employed van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) Servant Leadership Survey with 322 possible respondents. Data from 76 total respondents revealed a significant correlation between levels of servant leadership and job satisfaction. In addition, the servant leadership characteristics of empowerment and humility ranked among the highest determinants of job satisfaction. Von Fischer and De Jong (2017) also found both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of job satisfaction were related to the behaviors of a servant leader. Ultimately, empirical research points to the notion that when humble leaders empower teachers, they are more likely to be satisfied with their current occupational state (Cerit, 2009; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017).

*Servant leadership and school climate.* The environment within a school is a strong predictor of teacher turnover (Burkhauser, 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Guin, 2004; Johnson et al., 2012; Kraft et al., 2016). When teachers work in unsupportive environments, they are more likely to leave (Johnson et al., 2012; Kraft et al., 2016). In addition, when teachers perceive their principal as a servant leader, a positive school climate results. Servant leaders establish climates centered on community cohesion, collegial respect, and an understanding of the value each brings to the school (Black, 2010).

Black (2010) conducted a mixed-methods research study examining the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and school climate. The study

utilized the Organizational Leadership Assessment (Laub, 1999) and the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-Revised (Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991) with 231 teachers and 15 principals in elementary schools. The study also qualitatively gathered data using three focus groups and a total of 24 participants to better understand the experiences of teachers and principals and their perceptions on servant leadership and school climate. Data indicated a significant positive relationship between servant leadership and school climate.

*Servant leadership and teacher retention.* Only one scholarly report was found that examined the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership and teacher retention. Shaw and Newton (2014) examined the influence of servant leadership on job satisfaction and teacher retention. Through a quasi-experimental correlational study, Shaw and Newton (2014) surveyed teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership using Dennis and Bocarnea's (2005) Servant Leadership Assessment Instrument. Teacher job satisfaction was measured with Laub's (1999) six job satisfaction questions from his Organizational Leadership Assessment. The researchers added two questions at the end of the survey to collect data on teachers' intentions to remain in the teaching profession and stay in their current school. Shaw and Newton (2014) utilized cluster sampling of 50 of the largest high schools in an unspecified state as categorized by the state athletic association. Fifteen schools chose to participate, and 234 of 1,092 teachers responded. The study found a significant positive correlation between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher job satisfaction. There was also a significant positive correlation between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher retention.

Shaw and Newton (2014) offered the first peer-reviewed evidence of the relationship between servant leadership and teacher retention. They suggested that the concept of servant



leadership should be taken seriously when seeking teacher retention possibilities. Shaw and Newton (2014) summarized their research by stating, “One can pour all the money in the world into training new crops of teachers and pass mandates to assure high quality, but if schools do not have leaders who can cultivate and retain great teachers, the effort is amiss” (p. 106). Shaw and Newton (2014) emphasized the need for additional empirical studies to confirm and extend their results. This dissertation sought to advance the work of Shaw and Newton (2014) by examining the relationship between teachers’ perceptions of principals’ servant leadership and intent to turnover for public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this research study follows a humanistic approach. The study aligns with Maslow’s (1943) theory of human motivation and Herzberg’s (1966) motivation-hygiene theory. An overview of each theory explains how the factors of servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover relate.

**Maslow’s theory of human motivation.** Maslow’s (1943) theory of human motivation represents a lens in which to view the factors that influence servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. Maslow’s hierarchical model builds upon five elements of need: physiological, safety, belonging and love, esteem, and self-actualization. Each element influences human motivation. Maslow asserted that foundational needs must be met before higher order needs are fulfilled. While each hierarchical level builds upon the previous need, human motivation is complex and will often take into account several need levels at once.

According to Maslow, physiological needs are the foundational elements to human survival, including air, water, food, and shelter (as cited in Mathes, 1981). Maslow postulated when humans lack in physiological needs; their primary motivator is to remedy those needs as a

means of satisfaction. Physiological needs will supersede all other needs until satisfied. Maslow (1943) further theorized when physiological needs are met, higher-order needs begin to arise. In Maslow's (1943) hierarchy, safety needs are the next level of motivation. Humans intrinsically desire to protect oneself when facing harmful situations. Maslow contended the need for safety will emerge when unpredictable or unorganized patterns arise. As one begins to feel unsafe, protecting one-self becomes a prepotent factor, ultimately becoming the primary motivator and superseding all other higher-order needs. Once the need for safety is realized, the need for love and belonging will emerge. Humans desire connectedness, affection, and acceptance. When individuals accomplish this level, their motivation turns towards the level of esteem. Esteem involves respect and appreciation from others. Maslow explained, "satisfaction of the self-esteem need leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world" (p. 382). When all other levels of need are realized, humans reach the need for self-actualization. At this level, individuals become the best possible version of themselves.

Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs provides a framework for understanding the motivations behind an individual choosing to stay or leave their teaching position. Maslow (1943) would contend the basic and psychological needs of a teacher must be fulfilled before the teacher reaches the pinnacle level of self-actualization. If a teacher's physiological or safety needs are not met in their current school setting, they may be motivated to leave that school in search of a more satisfying environment (Buckley, Schneider, & Shang, 2004; Espelage et al., 2013). Servant leadership embodies both courage and accountability. Standing up for what is right while holding others accountable may provide both the physical and psychological safety needed for an individual to choose to stay in their school (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

Furthermore, teachers working in environments that fulfill their need for love and belonging are also more likely to stay than leave (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Servant leaders place great value in caring for their followers and acknowledging who they are through interpersonal acceptance (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Similarly, servant leaders empower individuals as they place value in the uniqueness of one's offerings by highlighting their esteem for that individual (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Teachers are more likely to stay in their position when they feel such support (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Finally, when teachers reach levels of self-actualization, they begin to realize their full potential through increased self-efficacy and a greater commitment towards teaching (Ware & Kitsantas, 2007). Servant leaders uniquely align with Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs as their primary concern is to serve the needs of others for followers to reach the level of self-actualization (Greenleaf, 1970).

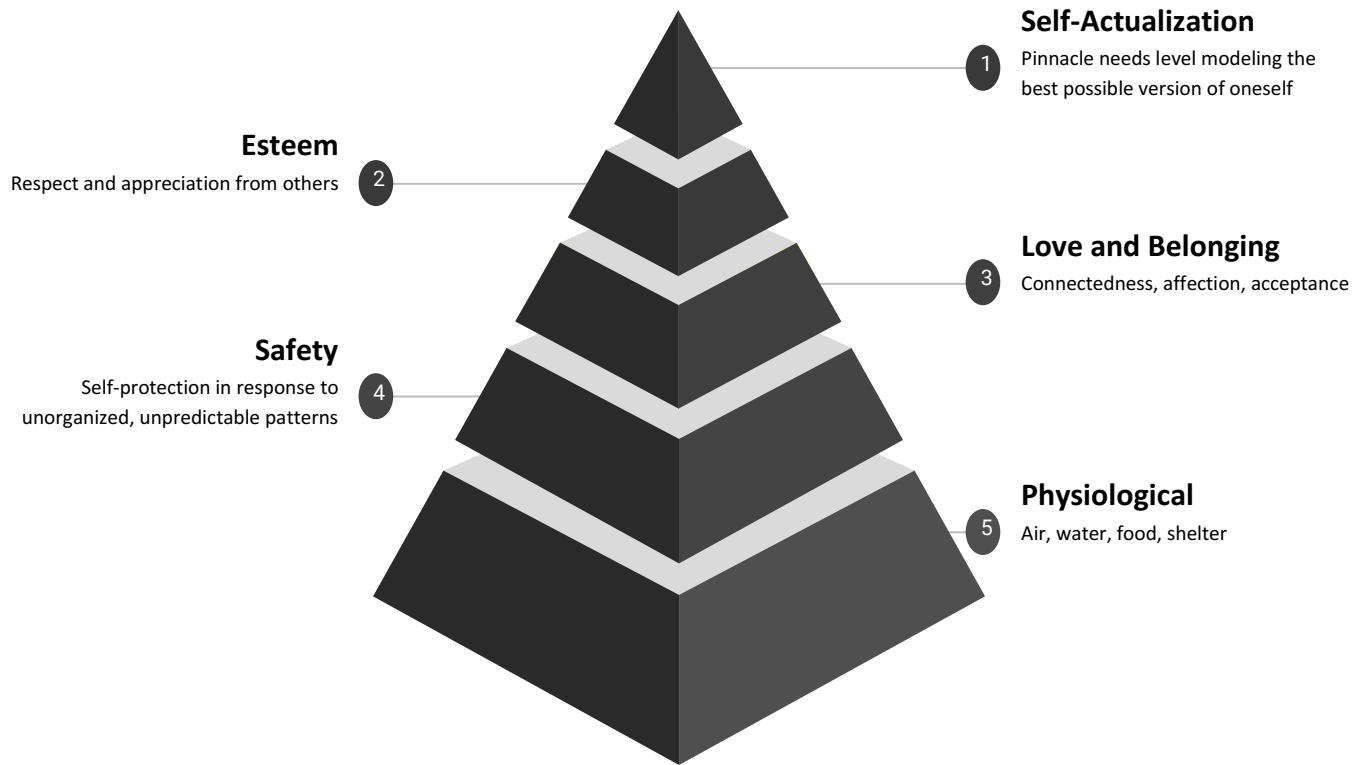


Figure 2. Maslow’s (1943) theory of human motivation.

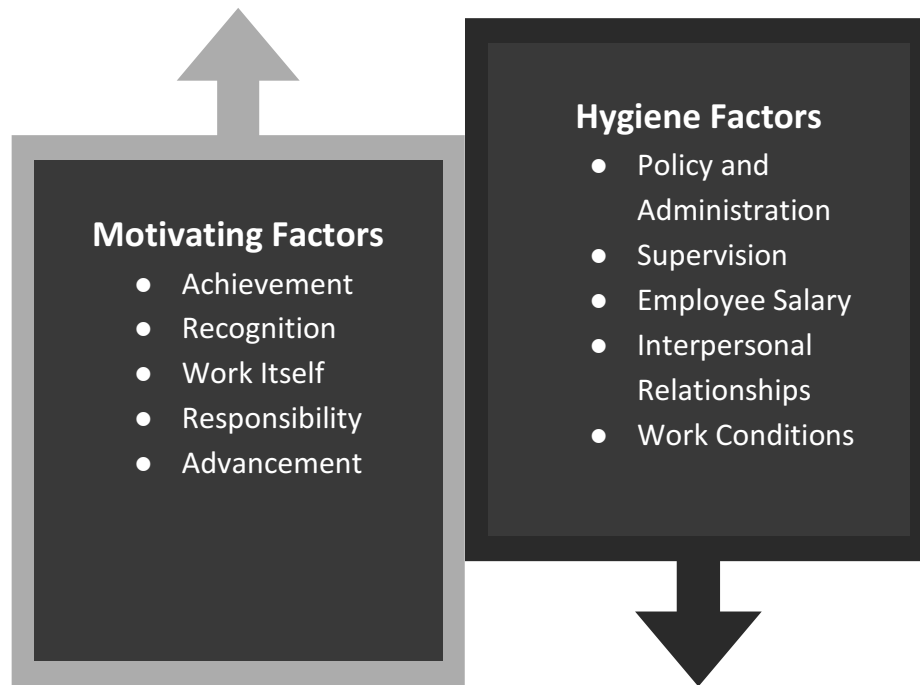
**Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory.** Herzberg (1966) provided a hygienic-motivation model framing the psychological factors related to servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. While similar to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Herzberg (1966) extended human motivation theory to the organizational context. Herzberg’s motivation-hygiene theory, often called two-factor theory, is a model that identifies both hygienic factors and motivators as the sources for employee satisfaction needs in the workplace (Marion & Gonzales, 2014; Pardee, 1990). The two-factor theory represents human satisfaction as a motivational driver that differs from human dissatisfaction. Herzberg (1987) explained, “the opposite of job satisfaction is *not* job dissatisfaction but, rather, no job satisfaction; and similarly, the opposite of job dissatisfaction is *not* job satisfaction, but no job dissatisfaction” (p. 9). Therefore, two distinct

sets of factors ultimately determine an individual's desire to continue working in a particular organization (Herzberg, 1987).

Herzberg's (1966) model originated from a job satisfaction study of engineer and accountant employees. Herzberg conducted interviews with 200 workers seeking input on workplace experiences that impacted fulfillment and happiness. As a result, Herzberg theorized hygienic factors as determinants for job dissatisfaction including policy and administration, supervision, employee salary, interpersonal relationships, and organizational work conditions. Similar to Maslow's (1943) hierarchical levels of physiological needs, safety, and belonging, Herzberg's (1966) hygienic factors are extrinsically driven and may become a primary focus when unrealized. Motivating factors, or satisfiers, represent motivation elements including achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement. Much like Maslow's (1943) levels of esteem and self-actualization, motivating factors are derived intrinsically. When realized, motivating factors provide a sense of meaning to one's work and increased self-fulfillment (Marion & Gonzales, 2014).

Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory contributes a lens for additional insight into the motivational factors of teacher turnover. Herzberg (1966) would argue an educator's decision to continue teaching in a position would hinge on motivational experiences in their school. Teachers are more likely to leave their position when working in environments deficient of hygiene factors (Burkhauser, 2017; Springer, Swain, & Rodriguez, 2016). Uniquely, a servant leader's ultimate goal is to serve and lead individuals towards self-improvement, yet a by-product of their leadership is the amelioration of poor hygiene factors (Black, 2010; Chiniara & Bentein, 2018). Herzberg (1966) would also contend the factors contributing to positive work attitudes lead to greater potential in teacher retention than hygiene factors. The empowering

style of servant leadership focuses on intrinsic satisfaction through recognition, appreciation, and acknowledgment of the unique gifts each teacher brings to the school (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).



*Figure 3.* Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory.

## **Chapter III: Methodology**

### **Philosophy and Justification**

Selecting the most appropriate research approach is critical to the success and quality of an empirical study. Researchers determine research methodology based on philosophical beliefs, research problems to be addressed, and their hope for generalizing findings to a population (Creswell, 2014; Muijs, 2011; Pyrczak, 2014). Methodology decisions generally fall between the use of quantitative and qualitative research during the study's conception (Patten, 2014). Quantitative researchers address educational problems that can be analyzed using numbers or statistical methods (Muijs, 2011; Orcher, 2014; Patten, 2014), while qualitative researchers study problems by using words to interpret themes or trends (Muijs, 2011; Orcher, 2014; Pyrczak, 2014). In addition, quantitative researchers often study a sample of a given population and make generalizations to that population (Muijs, 2011; Pyrczak, 2014). Instead, qualitative researchers focus on gaining a deep understanding of a small population and form conclusions only about the participants of the study (Patten, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover for public middle school teachers in Minnesota. This study specifically examined the primary relationship between perceptions of servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. A secondary focus examined the differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover analyzing teachers' demographic factors. Considering the purpose of the study is to find relationships and examine differences to generalize findings, a quantitative research approach was appropriate.

## **Research Design Strategy**

This research study employed a cross-sectional quantitative research design. This study drew from teacher participants working in middle schools, as classified by the Minnesota Department of Education (2018a), throughout the state of Minnesota. To best represent the population of middle school teachers throughout the state of Minnesota, a large number of participate responses was required. Therefore, the use of a quantitative survey was appropriate (Muijs, 2011; Patten, 2014; Pyrczak, 2014). Two survey instruments were combined in this study forming one online survey. Teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership characteristics was measured using the Servant Leadership Survey (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) measured teacher intent to turnover (Bothma & Roodt, 2013). Finally, teachers were asked background information regarding their years of experience, gender, ethnicity, and teaching position.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Motivational theory provided a framework for understanding the relationship between servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. For this study, Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation and Herzberg's (1966) motivation-hygiene theory positioned servant leadership as a possible explanation of teacher turnover intentions.

## **Research Questions**

The following research questions were examined in this study:

1. What relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover?
2. What difference exists in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on specific demographic factors?



3. What difference exists in teacher intent to turnover based on specific demographic factors?

### **Hypotheses**

H1<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover.

H1<sub>a</sub>: There is a relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover.

H2<sub>0a</sub>: There is no difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender.

H2<sub>aa</sub>: There is a difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender.

H2<sub>0b</sub>: There is no difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience.

H2<sub>ab</sub>: There is a difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience.

H3<sub>0a</sub>: There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender.

H3<sub>aa</sub>: There is a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender.

H3<sub>0b</sub>: There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience.

H3<sub>ab</sub>: There is a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience.

H3<sub>0c</sub>: There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity.

H3<sub>ac</sub>: There is a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity.

H3<sub>od</sub>: There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on teaching position.

H3<sub>ad</sub>: There is a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on teaching position.

## **Variables**

The independent variables for this study were teachers' perceived level of principals' servant leadership characteristics and the teacher demographic factors of gender, years of teaching experience, ethnicity, and teaching position. The dependent variable for this study was public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota intent to turnover.

## **Instrumentation**

**The Servant Leadership Survey.** The Servant Leadership Survey developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) was the instrument used in the study to measure teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership characteristics. The model by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) represents a timely understanding of the servant leader phenomenon and is one of the most current servant leadership measurements developed. The survey was established around the core tenets of servant leadership founding father Robert Greenleaf (1970) and has been employed in countries throughout the world (van Dierendonck et al., 2017).

The Servant Leadership Survey was developed and validated using a three-phase process. After an exhaustive review of the literature and interview process of servant leadership experts, van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) developed an initial model of servant leadership characteristics. These characteristics included empowerment, accountability, standing back, humility, authenticity, courage, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship. A total of 99 survey items were selected to represent the servant leader characteristics. After exploratory factor

analysis, 39 items remained, the characteristic of empathy was removed, and the interpersonal acceptance subscale was renamed forgiveness to reflect the corresponding items accurately. The remaining 39 items were then tested using confirmatory factor analysis. Additional question items were removed, eventually ending with a scale of 30 items. A final study was conducted to confirm van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) model of servant leadership consisting of eight characteristics. Goodness of fit was verified confirming the eight-factor model in this study. Cronbach alpha scores were developed based on the combined total of all three phases to determine the reliability of the Servant Leadership Survey. The Cronbach alpha was determined for each subscale including .89 for empowerment, .76 for standing back, .81 for accountability, .72 for forgiveness, .69 for courage, .82 for authenticity, .91 for humility, and .74 for stewardship.

The final version of the Servant Leadership Survey consisted of 30 questions using a six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (=1) to strongly agree (=6). The survey represents a multi-dimensional measure of servant leadership including the subscales: empowerment, standing back, accountability, forgiveness, courage, authenticity, humility, and stewardship. The Servant Leadership Survey has been determined to be a valid research instrument measuring servant leadership. Content validity was determined by comparing the Servant Leadership Survey with additional leadership instruments including Ehrhart's (2004) Servant Leadership Scale; Liden et al.'s (2008) Servant Leadership Scale; Rafferty and Griffin's (2004) Measure of Transformational Leadership; Brown, Trevino, and Harrison's (2005) Ethical Leadership Scale; Scandura and Graen's (1984) Leader-Member Exchange Measure; Damen, van Knippenberg, and van Knippenberg's (2008) Measure of Perceived Charisma; and Podsakov, Todor, Grover, and Huber's (1984) Measure of Punishment Behavior. Following a

correlational and second-order factor analysis, van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) confirmed content validity with the Servant Leadership Survey. The Servant Leadership Survey was also found to have criterion-related validity. Positive correlations were found when the eight dimensions of servant leadership were related to work well-being factors such as vitality, engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance.

The Servant Leadership Survey includes statements such as: “My manager encourages me to use my talents,” and “My manager helps me to further develop myself,” and “My manager emphasizes the importance of focusing on the good of the whole.” Dr. van Dierendonck gave approval to use the Servant Leadership Survey in this study and provided permission to adapt the language of the survey to read “my principal” instead of “my manager” (see Appendix A).

**The Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6).** Roodt’s (2004) Turnover Intention Scale was utilized to measure public middle school teachers’ intent to turnover. The Turnover Intention Scale was originally used as a 15-item instrument for an unpublished document (Roodt, 2004). Jacobs and Roodt (2007) later introduced the instrument in a published study on nurses’ intent to turnover. In their study, the Cronbach alpha was determined to be 0.91, designating scale reliability. In an additional study conducted by Martin and Roodt (2008), a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.90 was determined.

In 2013, Bothma and Roodt validated a shortened version of the Turnover Intention Scale titled TIS-6. An exploratory factor analysis confirmed the TIS-6 as a one-dimensional representation of turnover intentions. The survey was found to have reliability with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.80 and demonstrated validity in predicting whether an employee would stay or leave their organization.

The TIS-6 contains six items using a five-point Likert scale. Examples of items on the instrument include: “How often have you considered leaving your job?” and “How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level should it be offered to you?” and “How often do you look forward to another day at work?” Dr. Roodt approved the use of the TIS-6 in this study (see Appendix B).

**Teacher demographic factors.** Background characteristics were asked for teacher gender, years of teaching experience, ethnicity, and teaching position. For the teacher gender demographic, teachers had the option to choose between male, female, or prefer not to comment. Teachers were asked to select the ethnicity that best described themselves among American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, White/Caucasian, Multi-Ethnic, or prefer not to comment. Years of teaching experience was represented by every five years of experience including 0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, 21-25 years, and 26 or more years. Finally, teachers were asked to select the teaching position that best represented their current position with options including art, band, choir/general music, computer/technology, English/language arts, foreign language, general elementary education, general family and consumer science, industrial/technology education, math, physical education, science, social studies, special education, or other.

### **Field Test**

The Qualtrics survey was field tested in September 2018 using experts from the field of education familiar with middle schools in Minnesota. The purpose of the field test was to ensure face validity, determine approximate survey completion rates, and identify any errors before the actual distribution of the survey. Field test participants were asked to provide feedback on each of the previous components through either written or verbal communication. The survey

instrument was then revised and edited based on field test participant feedback. One field test participant was asked to complete the survey multiple times for the researcher to become better acquainted with the Qualtrics data collection platform. The survey took between five and 10 minutes to complete for each field test participant. Approximate survey completion times were shared with potential participants prior to their participation in the study.

### **Sampling Design**

The research population examined in this study was public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota. Patten (2014) explains the population is the group in which the scholar is interested in examining. The Minnesota Department of Education (2018a) categorizes schools according to classification codes. Classification codes relate to the level of education each organization provides. The state of Minnesota identifies schools as either an elementary school (Grades PreK-6), middle school (Grades 5-8), junior high school (Grades 7-8 or 7-9), senior high school (Grades 9-12), or secondary school (Grades 7-12). The Minnesota Department of Education also classifies schools as combined when they are comprised of Grades K-12 or public area learning center when identified by the state as an alternative educational opportunity for students facing challenges with their current school system (Minnesota Department of Education, n. d.). For this study, the population of public middle schools in the state of Minnesota constituted all public middle schools, as defined and classified by the Minnesota Department of Education.

A sampling frame provided by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board was used to examine the population of public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota. Each teacher in the state is required to provide an email address to the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board on their license application

(personal communication, K. Anthony-Wigle, August 16, 2018). This study's sampling frame included all teachers that had submitted a license application to the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board as of August 16, 2018. According to the Minnesota Department of Education (2018b), there are 228 middle schools throughout the state. Currently, the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (personal communication, K. Anthony-Wigle, August 16, 2018) identifies a total of 9,548 teachers employed in Minnesota's public middle schools. To accurately represent the middle school teacher population, a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5% was employed. The appropriate sample size for this study was 369 participants. Finally, to minimize sampling bias, an additional data request was made to the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board to obtain the most recent list of public middle school teachers before data collection. However, an updated list was not received prior to the beginning of the survey. Therefore, the study's sampling frame utilized the teacher email list provided by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board as of August 16, 2018.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data was collected from public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota, as defined by the Minnesota Department of Education (2018a). Email addresses of each middle school teacher in the state were obtained through a data request with the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board. Online surveys were distributed to each potential participant's email address, and quantitative data was collected using Qualtrics software. The survey was composed of two separate instruments, one instrument for measuring teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership characteristics and another instrument for measuring intent to turnover. Additional demographic questions collected data on teacher

gender, ethnicity, years of teaching experience, and teaching position. The survey displayed as one page divided by the survey instruments and demographic questions (see Appendix C).

Data collection occurred for two weeks. Middle school teachers received an email explaining the study's purpose, why they were selected for the invitation, and a brief discussion on their rights as a participant (see Appendix D). The email also contained a link to the survey. A reminder email with another link to the survey was sent one week following the initial email to potential participants that had not completed the survey (see Appendix E). Data collection was carefully monitored to ensure an acceptable response rate.

### **Data Analysis**

The unit of analysis for this study was public middle school teachers in Minnesota. SPSS software was used to analyze data from the Servant Leadership Survey, the Turnover Intention Scale, and teacher demographics. Demographic data is summarized in Chapter Four through descriptive statistics using tables and discussion. The summarization includes the demographic variables years of teaching experience, ethnicity, teaching position, and gender. Data from the independent variable teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and the dependent variable intent to turnover were analyzed using parametric statistics. Means, ranges, and standard deviations were determined for servant leadership and each of the eight servant leadership subscales: empowerment, authenticity, standing back, accountability, forgiveness, courage, humility, and stewardship. Means, ranges, and standard deviations were also determined for the Turnover Intention Scale.

Research hypothesis one used inferential statistical analysis using Pearson Correlation Coefficient to examine the relationship between the independent variable of teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and the dependent variable of teacher intent to



turnover for public middle school teachers. Research hypothesis two used inferential statistical analysis using a t-test to examine differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership based on gender and an ANOVA to examine the differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership based on years of teaching experience. Research hypothesis three used inferential statistical analysis using a t-test to examine the differences in teacher intent to turnover based on gender and ethnicity and an ANOVA to examine the differences in teacher intent to turnover based on years of teaching experience and teaching position. All collected data was retrieved from Qualtrics and transferred to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for data analysis.

### **Limitations of Methodology**

While the development and execution of this research study was done through care and consideration, several limitations still apply. First, the study of one's perceptions of their principal's leadership and one's intent to turnover may be subject to a specific place, time, mood, or feeling of the participant. The cross-sectional nature of the study collected the perceptions of participants at one point in time, therefore relying on a single moment to accurately reflect the overall perceptions of each participant. Further exploring this topic using longitudinal research may prove beneficial. Secondly, this study relied on participants' honest reflection of the topic. Responding to questions related to turnover intentions and principal leadership may have left participants feeling vulnerable when sharing such information. Confidentiality was communicated to participants and considered of the utmost importance. Third, conditions for participants taking the survey were not controlled. While an ideal setting was preferred, the reality of the teaching profession may not have allowed for this. Fourth, the survey was distributed via email accounts provided by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and

Standards Board. Due to the nature of online surveys, potential participants may have encountered technical difficulties accessing the survey. Finally, the scope of the study was limited to public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota and results should be cautiously interpreted only to reflect this population.

### **Delimitations of Methodology**

Several delimitations also apply to this study. The study was limited to current public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota. Therefore, the voices of teachers that have already left the profession were not heard. Future studies may seek to shed light on the topic using the perceptions of teachers that have already left education. In addition, to limit the scope of the study, several factors known to influence teacher retention such as school climate, salary, teacher qualifications, and personal reasons were not included.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are of the utmost importance when conducting an empirical study (Creswell, 2014; Patten, 2014; Roberts, 2010). Prior to conducting research, it is essential to have an understanding of the ethical issues that may arise and an idea of how to address ethical concerns if or when they occur (Creswell, 2014; Roberts, 2010). Further, a vital role of the researcher is to place the protection of human participants at the forefront (Patten, 2014). The Belmont Report (1979) established core principles for researchers to follow when conducting an ethically sound study. Researchers must respect the individuals participating in the study, show beneficence towards them, and ensure justice. Therefore, no research was conducted prior to approval from the Institutional Review Board.

The nature of this research study required the protection of willing participants (Creswell, 2014; Patten, 2014). Sharing one's perception of their principal's leadership and their turnover

intentions may have left teachers concerned about the accessibility of their responses. Therefore, care was taken to distribute surveys directly to teachers with assurances that all collected data would remain confidential and any identifiable information would be deleted immediately following data collection. In addition, before participating in the study, participants were given the study's purpose, potential risks and benefits, an explanation of how the data would be used, and a notification of their ability to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also reminded that by participating in the survey, they were giving informed consent to the study and any subsequent study that may result.

Proper care of research data was taken following the collection and analysis period. All data was obtained through the Qualtrics survey platform and remained on Qualtrics through the duration of the study. Data was transferred to a flash-memory drive for storage purposes. The flash-memory drive will be kept in a securely locked safe for seven years. At that time, all data from the study will be removed from the flash memory drive using a removal software application and the drive will be destroyed.

## **Chapter IV: Results**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover for public middle school teachers in Minnesota. This study specifically examined the primary relationship between perceptions of servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. A secondary focus examined the differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover, analyzing teachers' demographic factors. Data was collected using the Qualtrics survey platform and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for statistical analysis with support from the St. Cloud State University's Statistical Consulting and Research Center.

This chapter is organized around demographic data and inferential statistical analysis of the hypotheses related to the three research questions: (1) What relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover? (2) What difference exists in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on specific demographic factors? (3) What difference exists in teacher intent to turnover based on specific demographic factors?

### **Sample**

Data was collected from public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota working in middle schools as classified by the Minnesota Department of Education (2018a). The Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board provided the email addresses for each middle school teacher in Minnesota as of August 16, 2018. On January 15, 2019, an initial email was sent to a total of 14,503 teacher email addresses seeking participation in the study. After 4,955 emails were eliminated from Qualtrics due to duplication, 520 emails

bounced, and one email failed to deliver, a total of 9,371 potential participants were reached. A second email was sent to all unfinished respondents (n=8,939) one week following the initial email. After two weeks, 966 participants responded to the survey. One hundred sixty-three participants were then eliminated from the study as they had only opened the survey but did not complete the survey, resulting in 803 participants included in the study. With an overall public middle school population of 9,548, confidence level of 95%, and confidence interval of 5%, the appropriate sample size for this study was 369 participants. The 803 participants included in this study exceeded the required sample size.

The participants represented a wide range of demographics. Participants either identified themselves as male, female, or preferred not to comment. Over two-thirds of the participants were female. For years of experience, participants indicated having 0-5 years of experience, 6-10 years of experience, 11-15 years of experience, 16-20 years of experience, 21-25 years of experience, and 26 or more years of experience. Each years of experience group fell between 12.6% and 18% of the total sample population. Demographics for ethnicity included American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, White/Caucasian, Multi-Ethnic, or preferred not to comment. White/Caucasian teachers represented 94.3% of the total sample population while the remaining population was represented by all other ethnicity demographics or preferred not to comment. Finally, 15 teaching positions were represented by the sample population and include art, band, choir/general music, computer technology, English/language arts, foreign language, general elementary education, general family and consumer science, industrial/technology education, math, physical education, science, social studies, special education, or identified as having a position other than what was listed. A summary of participant demographics can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

*Participant Demographics*

	n	%
Gender		
Male	238	29.6
Female	551	68.6
No Comment	14	1.7
Years of Experience		
0-5	101	12.6
6-10	131	16.4
11-15	144	18.0
16-20	144	18.0
21-25	139	17.4
26 or more	142	17.7
Ethnicity		
American Indian	2	0.2
Asian	3	0.4
Black/African American	4	0.5
Hispanic/Latino	7	0.9
White/Caucasian	757	94.3
Multi-Ethnic	7	0.9
No Comment	23	2.9
Teaching Position		
Art	22	2.7
Band	44	5.5
Choir/General Music	24	3.0
Computer Technology	11	1.4
English/Language Arts	126	15.7
Foreign Language	22	2.7
General Elementary Education	25	3.1
General Family and Consumer Science	12	1.5
Industrial/Technology Education	9	1.1
Math	87	10.9
Physical Education	45	5.6
Science	116	12.0
Social Studies	77	8.0
Special Education	122	12.6
Other	59	6.1
Total Sample	803	100

Descriptive statistics including the mean, range, and standard deviation were found for the Turnover Intention Scale, the Servant Leadership Survey, and each of the eight subscales found within the Servant Leadership Survey. The Servant Leadership Survey subscale accountability received the highest mean score illustrating public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota perceive their principals' accountability to be the highest servant leadership characteristic. Following accountability, the Servant Leadership Survey subscales in order of highest mean score to lowest mean score were stewardship, empowerment, standing back, authenticity, humility, courage, and forgiveness. The overall average was found for the Servant Leadership Survey and was used to represent the servant leadership variable throughout statistical analysis. In addition, the overall average was found for the Turnover Intention Scale and was used to represent the turnover intention variable throughout statistical analysis. See Table 3 for the means, ranges, and standard deviations.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for the Servant Leadership Survey and the Turnover Intention Scale*

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>SD</i>
Empowerment	4.43	5.00	1.10
Authenticity	4.08	5.00	1.05
Standing Back	4.39	5.00	1.29
Accountability	4.72	5.00	.96
Forgiveness	2.63	5.00	1.30
Courage	3.74	5.00	1.29
Humility	3.94	5.00	1.21
Stewardship	4.53	5.00	1.12
Servant Leadership	4.06	5.00	.97
Turnover Intention	2.47	4.00	.96

**Research Question One**

Research question one stated: What relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover? The null hypothesis ( $H_{10}$ ) for research question one was that there was no relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. The alternative hypothesis ( $H_{1a}$ ) was that there was a relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. A Pearson correlation coefficient was completed between teachers' responses of their perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teachers' responses of their intent to turnover. The sample size was 803 and the alpha level used to test correlation



significance was  $p < 0.05$ , meaning there would be less than a 5% chance of falsely rejecting the null hypothesis. The  $r$  coefficient for this test was  $-.622$ . A negative relationship was found between teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover ( $r = -.622$ ). In other words, the greater a teacher perceives their principal as a servant leader, the more likely they are to stay in their position. On the other hand, the less a teacher perceives their principal as a servant leader, the more likely they are to leave their position. The correlation was significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level, meaning there would be less than a 1% chance of falsely rejecting the null hypothesis. The relationship between the two variables is statistically significant since  $p < .001$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4

*Correlation of Servant Leadership and Teacher Intent to Turnover*

		Servant Leadership	Turnover Intentions
Servant Leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	$-.622^{**}$
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	803	803
Turnover Intentions	Pearson Correlation	$-.622^{**}$	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	803	803

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Research Question Two**

Research question two stated: What difference exists in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on specific demographic factors?

**Hypothesis One.** The first null hypothesis ( $H_{20a}$ ) for research question two was there was no difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender. The alternative hypothesis ( $H_{2aa}$ ) was that there was a difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender. The independent variable

represented the genders male and female. The dependent variable was the average score for perceptions of principals' servant leadership. Prior to statistical analysis, it was determined to eliminate any participant that did not respond to the gender demographic question or chose not to comment. In all, 789 participants were included in the analysis. Data indicate the male group mean score for perceptions of principals' servant leadership is slightly lower than the female group mean score for perceptions of principals' servant leadership. As teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership increases, the mean score of servant leadership increases. As teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership decreases, the servant leadership mean score decreases. Therefore, males were slightly less likely to perceive their principals as servant leaders than females. See Table 5 for the sample sizes, means, and standard deviations for each of the two groups.

Table 5

*Means and Standard Deviations for Principals' Servant Leadership Based on Gender*

<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male	238	4.23	.98
Female	551	4.32	.96

An independent t-test was performed on the data with a 95% confidence interval to determine the mean difference between perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender. The alpha level  $p < .05$  was used to determine statistical significance. The independent t-test revealed there was not a statistically significant difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender;  $t(787) = -1.158, p = 0.247$ . These findings reveal it does not make a difference whether a teacher is male or female in the

way they perceive their principal as a servant leader. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Independent T-Test for Perceptions of Principals' Servant Leadership Based on Gender*

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower CI	Upper CI
Servant Leadership	-1.158	787	.247	-.08707	.07516	-.23461	.06048

**Hypothesis Two.** The second null hypothesis ( $H_{2_{0b}}$ ) for research question two was there was no difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience. The alternative hypothesis ( $H_{2_{ab}}$ ) was there was a difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience. The independent variable represented years of teaching experience using six groups: 1) 0-5 years of experience; 2) 6-10 years of experience; 3) 11-15 years of experience; 4) 16-20 years of experience; 5) 21-25 years of experience; 6) and 26 or more years of experience. The dependent variable was the average score for perceptions of principals' servant leadership. Prior to statistical analysis, it was determined to eliminate any participant that did not respond to the years of experience demographic question. In all, 801 participants were included in the analysis. Data indicate the 0-5 year group mean score for perceptions of principals' servant leadership was the highest followed by the 11-15 year group, the 21-25 year group, the 6-10 year group, the 26 or more year group, and the 16-20 year group. Therefore, the 0-5 year group was slightly more likely to perceive their principal as a servant leader than all other groups. In addition, the 16-20 year group was slightly less likely to perceive their principal

as a servant leader than all other groups. See Table 7 for the sample sizes, means, and standard deviations for each of the six groups.

Table 7

*Means and Standard Deviations for Principals' Servant Leadership Based on Years of Teaching Experience*

<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
0-5 years	101	4.38	.96
6-10 years	131	4.32	.80
11-15 years	144	4.35	.94
16-20 years	144	4.14	.98
21-25 years	139	4.33	1.06
26+ years	142	4.23	1.01

An ANOVA was performed to determine the mean differences between perceptions of principals' servant leadership based on years of teaching experience. The alpha level  $p < .05$  was used to determine statistical significance. The ANOVA revealed there was not a statistically significant difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on years of teaching experience;  $F(5, 795) = 1.192, p = 0.311$ . Stated differently, the number of years a teacher has been teaching does not make a difference in how one perceives their principal as a servant leader. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected (see Table 8).

Table 8

*Analysis of Variance for Perceptions of Principals' Servant Leadership Based on Years of Teaching Experience*

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between	5.561	5	1.112	1.192	.311
Within	741.552	795	.933		
Total	747.113	800			

**Research Question Three**

Research question three stated: What difference exists in teacher intent to turnover based on specific demographic factors?

**Hypothesis One.** The first null hypothesis ( $H_{3_{0a}}$ ) for research question three was there was no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender. The alternative hypothesis ( $H_{3_{aa}}$ ) was that there was a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender. The independent variable represented the genders male and female. The dependent variable was the average score for turnover intentions. Prior to statistical analysis, it was determined to eliminate any participant that did not respond to the gender demographic question or chose not to comment. In all, 789 participants were included in the analysis. Data indicate the male group mean score for intent to turnover was the same as the female group mean score for intent to turnover. See Table 9 for the sample sizes, means, and standard deviations for each of the two groups.

Table 9

*Means and Standard Deviations for Teacher Intent to Turnover Based on Gender*

<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Male	238	2.46	.97
Female	551	2.46	.96

An independent t-test was performed on the data with a 95% confidence interval to determine the mean difference between teacher intent to turnover based on gender. The alpha level  $p < .05$  was used to determine statistical significance. The independent t-test revealed there was not a statistically significant difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender;  $t(787) = .031$ ,  $p = .975$ . That is to say, whether a teacher is male or female does not make a difference in turnover intentions. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected (see Table 10).

Table 10

*Independent T-Test for Teacher Intent to Turnover Based on Gender*

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Std. Error Difference</i>	<i>Lower CI</i>	<i>Upper CI</i>
Intent to Turnover	.031	787	.975	.00234	.07467	-.14423	.14892

**Hypothesis Two.** The second null hypothesis ( $H_{3_{0b}}$ ) for research question three was there was no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience. The alternative hypothesis ( $H_{3_{ab}}$ ) was there was a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience. The independent variable represented years of teaching experience using six groups: 1) 0-5 years of experience; 2) 6-10

years of experience; 3) 11-15 years of experience; 4) 16-20 years of experience; 5) 21-25 years of experience; 6) and 26 or more years of experience. The dependent variable was the average score for teacher intent to turnover. Prior to statistical analysis, it was determined to eliminate any participant that did not respond to the years of experience demographic question. In all, 801 participants were included in the analysis. Data indicate the 16-20 year group mean score for intent to turnover was the highest followed by the 6-10 year group, the 11-15 year group, the 21-25 year group, the 0-5 year group, and the 26 or more year group. Turnover intentions are more likely as the mean score increases. On the other hand, turnover intentions are less likely as the mean score decreases. Therefore, the 16-20 year group had the highest turnover intentions followed by the 6-10 year group, the 11-15 year group, the 21-25 year group, the 0-5 year group, and the 26 or more year group respectively. See Table 11 for the sample sizes, means, and standard deviations for each of the six groups.

Table 11

*Means and Standard Deviations for Teacher Intent to Turnover Based on Experience*

<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
0-5 years	101	2.42	1.05
6-10 years	131	2.50	.86
11-15 years	144	2.46	.92
16-20 years	144	2.65	1.04
21-25 years	139	2.43	.94
26+ years	142	2.36	.94

An ANOVA was performed to determine the mean differences between teacher intent to turnover based on years of teaching experience. The alpha level  $p < .05$  was used to determine statistical significance. The ANOVA revealed there was not a statistically significant difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on years of teaching experience;  $F(5,795) = 1.531$ ,  $p=.178$ . In other words, the number of years of teaching experience does not make a difference in turnover intentions. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Analysis of Variance for Teacher Intent to Turnover Based on Experience*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between	7.018	5	1.404	1.531	.178
Within	728.748	795	.917		
Total	735.766	800			

**Hypothesis Three.** The third null hypothesis ( $H3_{0c}$ ) for research question three was there was no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity. The alternative hypothesis ( $H3_{ac}$ ) was that there was a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity. Due to the small number of teachers other than Caucasian to participate in the study a determination was made to combine American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Multi-Ethnic participants into one combined ethnicities group. The independent variable represented the Caucasian ethnicity group and the combined ethnicity group. The dependent variable was the average score for turnover intentions. Prior to statistical analysis, it was determined to eliminate any participant that did not respond to the ethnicity demographic question or chose not to comment. In all, 776 participants were included in the



analysis. Data indicate the Caucasian ethnicity group mean score for intent to turnover was lower than the combined ethnicities group mean score for intent to turnover. See Table 13 for the sample sizes, means, and standard deviations for each of the two groups.

Table 13

*Means and Standard Deviations for Teacher Intent to Turnover Based on Ethnicity*

<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Caucasian	753	2.43	.94
Combined Ethnicities	23	3.02	1.25

Prior to completing statistical analysis, the assumption of homogeneity of variances was tested and Levene's test for equality of variances was not met ( $p = .019$ ). SPSS adjusts for this violation and offers an alternative, non-pooled estimate. The Welch-Satterthwaite method adjusts the degrees of freedom when equal variances are not assumed and was used to determine statistical significance. It is important to note the degrees of freedom was adjusted from 774 to 22. As the degrees of freedom decrease, the t-distribution has less of a normal distribution due to a smaller sample size. On the other hand, as the degrees of freedom increase, the t-distribution approaches a normal distribution. An independent t-test was performed on the data with a 95% confidence interval to determine the mean difference between teacher intent to turnover based on ethnicity. The alpha level  $p < .05$  was used to determine statistical significance. The independent t-test revealed there was a statistically significant difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity;  $t(22) = -2.221$ ,  $p = .037$ . In other words, teachers of color are more likely to leave their teaching position than Caucasian teachers. The results are given in

Table 14 and indicate the combined ethnicities group is statistically more likely to turnover than the Caucasian ethnicity group. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 14

*Independent T-Test for Teacher Intent to Turnover Based on Ethnicity*

	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower CI	Upper CI
Intent to Turnover	-2.221	22.763	.037	-.58548	.26363	-1.13116	-.03981

**Hypothesis Four.** The fourth null hypothesis ( $H_{3od}$ ) for research question three was there was no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on teaching position. The alternative hypothesis ( $H_{3ad}$ ) was there was a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on teaching position. The independent variable represented teaching positions using 15 groups: 1) art; 2) band; 3) choir/ general music; 4) computer technology; 5) English/ language arts; 6) foreign language; 7) general elementary education; 8) general family and consumer science; 9) industrial/ technology education; 10) math; 11) physical education; 12) science; 13) social studies; 14) special education; 15) and other. The dependent variable was the average score for teacher intent to turnover. Prior to statistical analysis, it was determined to eliminate any participant that did not respond to the teaching position demographic question. In all, 801 participants were included. Data indicate the highest intent to turnover mean score for teaching position was industrial/ technology education, followed by choir/ general music, special education, computer technology, math, English/ language arts, social studies, other, science, art, physical education, foreign language, general family and consumer science, band, and general elementary education. See Table 15 for the sample sizes, means, and standard deviations for each of the 15 groups.

Table 15

*Means and Standard Deviations for Teacher Intent to Turnover Based on Experience*

<i>Group</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Art	22	2.43	.83
Band	44	2.34	.96
Choir/ General Music	24	2.63	1.06
Computer Technology	11	2.53	.93
English/ Language Arts	126	2.47	1.06
Foreign Language	22	2.39	1.02
General Elementary Education	25	2.05	.77
General Family and Consumer Science	12	2.38	1.04
Industrial/Technology Education	9	2.93	1.10
Math	87	2.49	.92
Physical Education	45	2.42	.90
Science	116	2.51	.96
Social Studies	77	2.47	.83
Special Education	122	2.53	.97
Other	59	2.45	.96

An ANOVA was performed to determine the mean differences between teacher intent to turnover based on teaching position. The alpha level  $p < .05$  was used to determine statistical

significance. The ANOVA revealed there was not a statistically significant difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on teaching position;  $F(14, 786) = 0.683, p = 0.793$ .

Therefore, the teaching position of a teacher does not play a difference in turnover intentions.

Results are given in Table 16 and indicate the mean score differences for intent to turnover were not statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

Table 16

*Analysis of Variance for Teacher Intent to Turnover Based on Teaching Position*

Source	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between	8.805	14	.629	.683	.793
Within	724.145	786	.921		
Total	732.950	800			

**Summary**

Chapter Four included analysis on data including the demographic variables gender, years of teaching experience, ethnicity, and teaching position, as well as inferential statistical analysis on the research instruments and three research questions and corresponding hypotheses. Data was analyzed using SPSS from a total of 803 public middle school teacher participants from the state of Minnesota. Table 17 represents a research summary including hypotheses, results, and statistical tests.

Table 17

*Research Summary*

Hypothesis	Result	Test	Summary
H1 <sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover.	Reject	Pearson Correlation	There is a statistically significant relationship between these two variables. Since $p < 0.001$ the null hypothesis was rejected.
H1 <sub>a</sub> : There is a relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover.			
H2 <sub>0a</sub> : There is no difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender.	Failed to Reject	T-test	There is no statistically significant difference based on gender. Since $p = 0.247$ the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.
H2 <sub>aa</sub> : There is a difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender.			
H2 <sub>0b</sub> : There is no difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience.	Failed to Reject	One-way ANOVA	There is no statistically significant difference based on years of teaching experience. Since $p = 0.311$ the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

<hr/>			
H2 <sub>ab</sub> : There is a difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience.			
<hr/>			
H3 <sub>0a</sub> : There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender.	Failed to Reject	T-test	There is no statistically significant difference based on gender. Since $p = 0.975$ the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.
<hr/>			
H3 <sub>aa</sub> : There is a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender.			
<hr/>			
H3 <sub>0b</sub> : There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience.	Failed to Reject	One-way ANOVA	There is no statistically significant difference based on years of teaching experience. Since $p = 0.178$ the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.
<hr/>			
H3 <sub>ab</sub> : There is a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience.			
<hr/>			
H3 <sub>0c</sub> : There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity.	Reject	T-test	There is a statistically significant difference based on ethnicity. Since $p = 0.037$ the null hypothesis was rejected.
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H3<sub>ac</sub>: There is a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity.

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H3<sub>od</sub>: There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on teaching position.

Failed to Reject

One-way ANOVA

There is no statistically significant difference based on teaching position. Since  $p = 0.793$  the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

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H3<sub>ad</sub>: There is a difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on teaching position.

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## **Chapter V: Discussion, Implications, and Recommendations**

### **Overview of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover for public middle school teachers in Minnesota. This study specifically examined the primary relationship between perceptions of servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. A secondary focus examined the differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover, analyzing teachers' demographic factors. Teacher turnover has become a notable problem across the United States (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Financial, academic, and instructional costs ensue as educators choose to leave their position for another or leave the profession entirely (Barnes et al., 2007; Goldhaber et al., 2015; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Empirical research on the factors influencing teacher turnover point to principal leadership as a prominent determinant in whether or not a teacher chooses to stay or leave their position (Burkhauser, 2017). Servant leadership has been characterized as a leadership posture related to positive employee outcomes such as teacher retention (Shaw & Newton, 2014). In this study, Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation and Herzberg's (1966) motivation-hygiene theory served as a theoretical framework for the possible relationship between servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover.

A survey consisting of the Servant Leadership Survey (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), the Turnover Intention Scale (Roodt, 2004), and teacher demographic factors was utilized to collect quantitative data. The study sample consisted of 803 public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota. A Pearson correlation was used to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. T-



tests were used to examine the mean differences in perceptions of principals' servant leadership based on gender and intent to turnover based on gender and ethnicity. One-way ANOVA's were used to examine the mean differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership based on years of teaching experience and intent to turnover based on years of teaching experience and teaching position. Each statistical test was analyzed and hypotheses were either rejected or failed to be rejected based on the results.

The remainder of Chapter Five presents a discussion of the research findings in relation to scholarly literature in the areas of servant leadership and teacher retention. Chapter Five includes an overview of the research questions, conclusions from the data, implications, recommendations for practitioners and academics, the study limitations, and concluding comments.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were examined in this study:

1. What relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover?
2. What difference exists in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on specific demographic factors?
3. What difference exists in teacher intent to turnover based on specific demographic factors?

### **Conclusions**

**Research question one.** A Pearson correlation test to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover revealed a moderately negative, statistically significant correlation. According to Dancey and Reidy

(2007), the strength of Pearson's  $r$  correlation may be interpreted where (+/-) 0.1- 0.3 is weak, 0.4- 0.6 is moderate, 0.7-0.9 is strong, and 1.0 is perfect. In addition, a negative correlation occurs when the value of one variable increases and the value of the other variable decreases (Taylor, 1990). Results indicate a moderately negative relationship exists between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover ( $r = -.622$ ). A negative relationship between the two variables suggests that while teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership increases, teacher intent to turnover decreases. On the other hand, as teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership decreases, teacher intent to turnover increases.

The results of this study align with previous literature supporting the relationship between principal leadership and teacher retention (Burkhauser, 2017; Hughes et al., 2014). In addition, this study's findings are similar to previous studies citing that positive personal outcomes are related to teachers' perceptions of their principals as servant leaders (Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Turkmen & Gul, 2017). Most notably, this study's findings support the one scholarly report that also examined the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership and teacher retention (Shaw & Newton, 2014). Similar to Shaw and Newton (2014), this study found a significant negative correlation between servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover. Table 18 provides a summary of the outcome for the hypothesis of research question one.

Table 18

*Research Question One Hypothesis Outcome*

Null Hypothesis	Outcome
H1 <sub>0</sub> : There is no relationship between teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover.	Rejected the null hypothesis

**Research question two.** Research question two examined the difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on specific demographic factors. Each of the two demographic factors examined in this question were separated into individual hypotheses and analyzed independently. The first hypothesis explored potential differences in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender. An independent t-test was employed revealing there was not a statistically significant difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership between male and female teachers. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected.

A small body of research indicated mixed results in whether gender influences a teacher's perception of their principal's servant leadership (Al-Mahdy et al., 2016; Salameh, 2011; Turkmen & Gul, 2017). Similar to Laub (1999), this study found gender did not play a role in how teachers perceived their principal. However, this study contradicted the findings of other studies citing that gender did make a difference (Salameh, 2011; Turkmen & Gul, 2017). Turkmen and Gul (2017) found a significant difference between male and female teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership suggesting female teachers perceived their principals as servant leaders more often than males. Ekinici (2015) reported males more often perceived their principals as servant leaders than females. Previous research suggests mixed

findings and the amount of literature examining gender influence on perceptions of servant leadership is limited. Further research may be required to better understand this area. Overall, this study helps add to the small body of literature suggesting gender may not influence perceptions of principals' servant leadership.

The second hypothesis explored potential differences in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on years of teaching experience. A one-way ANOVA indicated there was not a statistically significant difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership based on years of teaching experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. This study supports earlier findings from Salameh (2011) that overall perceptions of principals' servant leadership are not influenced by years of teaching experience. However, previous literature suggests the number of years a teacher works with a principal may influence their perceptions of their principal's servant leadership (Ekinici, 2015). This study only examined perceptions of principals' servant leadership from the perspective of years of teaching experience. It did not examine the potentially influencing factor of perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on years of working with a principal. Further examination may prove beneficial in this area.

In summary, there was no statistically significant difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender or years of teaching experience. Table 19 provides outcomes for each of the two hypotheses for research question two.

Table 19

*Research Question Two Hypotheses Outcomes*

Null Hypothesis	Outcome
H2 <sub>0a</sub> : There is no difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender.	Failed to reject the null hypothesis
H2 <sub>0b</sub> : There is no difference in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience.	Failed to reject the null hypothesis

**Research question three.** Research question three examined the difference in teacher intent to turnover based on specific demographic factors. Each of the four demographic factors examined in this question were separated into individual hypotheses and analyzed independently. The first hypothesis explored potential differences in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender. An independent t-test revealed there was not a statistically significant difference between males and females in intent to turnover. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. Current research indicates mixed findings when analyzing the difference between male and female teacher turnover (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Gritz & Theobald, 1996). In some studies, research suggests males are more likely to turnover than females, while in other studies the opposite is found (Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2005). The results from this study align with previous empirical findings that gender does not play a significant factor in whether a teacher intends to leave their position (Allensworth et al., 2009). Findings from this study also show similarities between a recent national turnover report and intent to turnover for public middle school teachers in Minnesota. The National Center for Education Statistics (2014)

indicated a comparable turnover rate for both males and females. In all, the findings from this study add to the research suggesting there is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender.

The second hypothesis explored potential differences in intent to turnover among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience. Results from a one-way ANOVA indicated there was not a statistically significant difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience. Therefore, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. Much of the literature surrounding teacher turnover and years of experience indicates early career teachers and late career teachers are more likely to leave their position than mid-career teachers (Allensworth et al., 2009; Coulter & Lester, 2011). This study found quite the opposite with little difference in intent to turnover among all groups. In fact, the mean score for intent to turnover fell between 2.42- 2.65 showing little variation between years of experience groups. Teachers with the least years of teaching experience (0-5 years) and the most years of teaching experience (26 or more years) indicated the lowest intent to turnover among all groups. In addition, a mid-career group (16-20 years) indicated the highest intent to turnover mean score. Therefore, this study cannot confirm what has been found in previous literature, that there is a statistically significant difference between the number of years teaching and one's intent to leave their position.

The third hypothesis explored potential differences in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity. Due to the small number of teachers other than Caucasian to participate in the study, it was determined to form one combined group of ethnicities including American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Multi-Ethnic. An independent t-test was used to analyze the difference between Caucasian teachers and teachers from the

combined group of ethnicities. A statistically significant difference was found in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. Current teacher turnover literature has shown the number of minority teachers leaving their positions and the profession is greater than nonminority teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Marvel et al., 2007). Ingersoll et al. (2017) found statistically significant differences in turnover between minority teachers and nonminority teachers. The results from this study indicate teachers of color are more likely to leave their teaching position than Caucasian teachers. Therefore, the findings from this study are supported by recent research suggesting teachers of color are more likely to leave their position than Caucasian teachers (Ingersoll et al., 2017; Ingersoll & May, 2011).

The fourth hypothesis explored potential differences in intent to turnover among teachers based on teaching position. A one-way ANOVA was used to reveal there was not a statistically significant difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on teaching position. Because of this, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. These findings slightly differ from current literature suggesting particular teaching positions are more apt to turning over than others (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Ingersoll & May, 2010). Research in the area of teacher turnover by teaching position points to math, science, and special education as among the highest turnover positions. This study found industrial/technology education as the position with the highest intent to turnover; math ranked fifth, science ranked ninth, and special education ranked third, out of a total of 15 teaching positions that were analyzed. Similar to empirical research, both math and special education were among the highest turnover intention positions. However, science was not, indicating a discrepancy between current literature and this study. To better understand the meaning of these results, further research may be warranted.

In conclusion, there was no statistically significant difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender, years of teaching experience, and teaching position. However, a statistically significant difference was found in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity. Table 20 provides outcomes for each of the four hypotheses for research question three.

Table 20

*Research Question Three Hypotheses Outcomes*

Null Hypothesis	Outcome
H3 <sub>0a</sub> : There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender.	Failed to reject the null hypothesis
H3 <sub>0b</sub> : There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on varying years of teaching experience.	Failed to reject the null hypothesis
H3 <sub>0c</sub> : There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on ethnicity.	Rejected the null hypothesis
H3 <sub>0d</sub> : There is no difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on teaching position.	Failed to reject the null hypothesis

**Implications**

The findings from this study have implications for both practitioners and scholars. Results indicate a significant negative correlation between servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover suggesting teachers may be more likely to stay in their position when perceiving their principal as a servant leader. Principals would benefit from developing the characteristics of a



servant leader, knowing such a leadership posture may support the hierarchical needs of their teachers, which in turn may influence teacher retention. What is not known from this study is how each servant leadership characteristic relates to teacher intent to turnover. Salameh (2011) found teachers perceived their principals' specific servant leader characteristics differently. Further examining the individual characteristics of servant leadership may shed light on the most influential characteristic related to teacher retention.

Findings also suggest two demographic factors, gender and years of teaching experience, do not influence how a teacher perceives their principal as a servant leader. Therefore, the practice of servant leadership may not be a demographic specific endeavor. The modern-day founder of servant leadership, Robert Greenleaf (1970), would suggest servant leaders are to place their priority on all followers in order to improve the health, wisdom, freedom, and autonomy of those they are called to serve. The findings in this study support Greenleaf's (1970) conceptual development of servant leadership, suggesting servant leadership transcends all followers regardless of demographic. What is not known from this study is if other demographic or school related factors may influence teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership. This study examined all schools classified by the Minnesota Department of Education as public middle schools in the state of Minnesota. However, scholarly literature suggests the size of a school may influence a teacher's perception of their principal (Kruger, Witziers, & Slegers, 2007). In addition, research has found the number of years a teacher works with their principal may influence their perception of their principal as a servant leader (Ekinci, 2015). Analyzing servant leadership and teacher retention through multiple demographic and school-related factors may prove beneficial for principals to best understand how these variables fit in their particular context.

School leaders may also benefit from the intent to turnover findings. This study did not find a statistically significant difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender, years of teaching experience, or teaching position. However, findings do suggest there is a statistical significance for teachers of color to be more likely to turnover than Caucasian teachers. Empirical research indicates teachers of color are more likely to stay in their position when feeling supported by their principal (Ingersoll et al., 2017). Findings from this study suggest public middle school principals in the state of Minnesota should seek alternative methods known to curb the turnover intentions of teachers of color. While this study found a correlation between servant leadership and intent to turnover, it did not examine the relationship for specific demographic groups such as ethnicity. Further inquiry into the possible influence servant leadership has on the retention of teachers of color may be warranted. Additionally, insight into other factors influencing turnover intentions would be beneficial to better understand why teachers of color are more likely to leave than their Caucasian counterparts.

Results from this study also have implications for advancing previous empirical research. Scholarly research in the area of servant leadership is limited, particularly in the field of education. This study adds to the body of knowledge examining the role servant leadership plays in positive teacher outcomes. Only one other study was found related to servant leadership and teacher retention. Shaw and Newton (2014) examined the relationship between servant leadership and teacher retention at the high school level. The results from this study are the first known findings correlating servant leadership and teacher retention at the middle school level. The limited nature of empirical research in this area suggests further examination is needed. A similar study at the elementary or early childhood level may prove beneficial. In addition, teacher turnover has also been problematic in private schools across the country (McGrath &

Princiotta, 2005). Examining the relationship between private school teacher turnover and servant leadership may provide further understanding of how to reduce private school teacher retention concerns. Finally, gleaning insight from those working in the public or private setting such as school counselors, school social workers, paraprofessionals, or custodians may present alternative perspectives on the relationship between servant leadership and turnover intentions for non-licensed school staff.

### **Limitations**

Limitations surrounding the results of this study must be considered. To begin, findings may only be generalized to public middle school teachers in the state of Minnesota. The sample population is limited considering non-licensed school employees, private school teachers, and any teacher that has left the profession of teaching were not included. In addition, the sample was limited to the sampling frame provided by the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board. Any current teacher hired to teach in a public middle school in Minnesota after August 16, 2018, was not included as a potential participant in the study. Furthermore, several emails failed to deliver to potential participants. The Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board relies on teachers to provide up-to-date email addresses for communication purposes (personal communication, K. Anthony-Wigle, August 16, 2018). However, invalid or out-of-date email addresses may have caused a number of potential participants to not receive a study invitation.

Another consideration is the inherent limitation of conducting a research study utilizing quantitative methods. Results are limited to participant responses at a fixed point in time in survey form. Considering the complex nature of turnover intentions, other factors influencing the results must be considered. This study did not examine why a teacher answered the way they

did. A qualitative study analyzing the lived experiences of teachers may be an important step in further understanding the factors associated with servant leadership and one's intentions to leave their position. This may be an important direction for research, particularly for teachers of color as they were found to have statistically significant differences in intent to turnover than Caucasian teachers.

Finally, the voluntary nature of participation potentially increased the chance for response bias. The overall average for turnover intentions was 2.47 which is generally low when considering the Turnover Intention Scale utilized a Likert-scale from 1-5 with 5 being the highest turnover intention selection. These findings may suggest those choosing to take the survey were more generally satisfied with their current position than those that did not. Also, the overall average for servant leadership was 4.06 which is generally high considering the Servant Leadership Survey uses a Likert-scale from 1-6 with 6 being the highest servant leader score. Because of this, participants who chose to be a part of the study may have been more likely to respond favorably to questions regarding their principal than those that chose not to participate.

### **Recommendations for Practitioners**

The results of this study have implications for servant leadership and teacher retention efforts. The following is a list of recommendations for practitioners based on the findings from this study:

- Principals would benefit from embodying the characteristics of a servant leader as positive teacher outcomes, including teacher retention, are linked to servant leader behaviors.

- Future teachers would benefit from understanding the characteristics of servant leadership and servant leadership's relationship with teacher retention as they seek employment.
- Principal preparation programs should consider the inclusion of learning about and developing servant leadership characteristics while employing content, coursework, and program design.
- Principals may seek to develop and further understand the characteristics of servant leadership when considering school improvement and student achievement, bearing in mind teacher retention is empirically linked to both.
- State policy makers and local school districts would benefit from seeking alternative retention methods, such as servant leadership development in current principals, to better curb teacher attrition, particularly for teachers of color.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

Results from this study indicate a need for further research in the areas of servant leadership and teacher retention. The following is a list of recommendations for further research based on the findings from this study:

- Research the relationship between servant leadership and teacher retention through qualitative, longitudinal, and mixed methodologies.
- Research the correlation between servant leadership and teacher retention for specific demographic groups such as teachers of color or teachers with varying years of teaching experience with their principal.

- Research the correlation between servant leadership and teacher retention for varying school levels and types such as elementary schools, private schools, or early-childhood settings.
- Research the correlation between servant leadership and teacher retention for varying school sizes.
- Research the correlation between specific servant leadership characteristics and teacher retention.
- Research intent to turnover for teachers of color through quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies.
- Research differences in perceptions of principals' servant leadership among teachers based on years of work experience with their principal.

### **Concluding Comments**

Retaining teachers is one of the foremost educational concerns across the United States and in Minnesota today (Minnesota Department of Education, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2016; Sutchter, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016). Considering the personal, organizational, and systemic costs related to teacher turnover, this study examined possible correlates to curbing the mass exodus of teachers. This study employed a cross-sectional quantitative design to research both the relationship between teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover as well as the differences in teachers' perceptions of principals' servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover among various teacher demographic factors. This study found a significant negative correlation between servant leadership and teacher intent to turnover for public middle school teachers in Minnesota. Furthermore, a statistically significant difference was found in intent to turnover among teachers

based on ethnicity. This study also revealed there was not a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of their principals' servant leadership among teachers based on gender or years of teaching experience. Finally, there was not a significant difference in intent to turnover among teachers based on gender, years of teaching experience, or teaching position.

The turnover antecedents of stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction are alive and present in educators across the country suggesting a greater need to support the whole teacher (American Federation of Teachers, 2017; de Heus & Diekstra, 1999; Mehta et al., 2013). Foundational turnover research clearly indicates principals are an essential component to meeting the highest priority needs of those they are called to serve. Studies such as this illuminate the imperative role a school principal can play in teacher retention. More specifically, when principals epitomize the notion of leading through servanthood and embody the characteristics of a servant leader, they become difference-makers in the turnover intentions of their teachers.

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## Appendix A

### Permission to Use the Servant Leadership Survey

Ryan Siegle <[rys46464@bethel.edu](mailto:rys46464@bethel.edu)>  
12:42 PM

Fri, Jul 20, 2018 at

To: [DvanDierendonck@rsm.nl](mailto:DvanDierendonck@rsm.nl)

Dear Dr. van Dierendonck,

I am a doctoral student from Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota writing my dissertation tentatively titled "Examining the Relationship Between Principal Servant Leadership, School Climate, and Intent to Turnover for Public Middle School Teachers in Minnesota" under the direction of advisor Dr. Michael Lindstrom.

I would like your permission to use your instrument the Servant Leadership Survey in my research study. I would also like your permission to adapt the existing survey items to read from "My manager" to "My principal."

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
Ryan Siegle  
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix A (Continued)

Dirk van Dierendonck <[dvandierendonck@rsm.nl](mailto:dvandierendonck@rsm.nl)>

Sat, Jul 21, 2018 at 1:23 AM

To: Ryan Siegle <[rys46464@bethel.edu](mailto:rys46464@bethel.edu)>

Dear Ryan,

Yes you have my permission to use the survey and to adjust the survey items.

Good luck with your study.

Best regards,

Dirk

Appendix B

Permission to Use the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6)

Ryan Siegle <[rys46464@bethel.edu](mailto:rys46464@bethel.edu)>  
3:37 PM

Fri, Jul 27, 2018 at

To: [grootdt@uj.ac.za](mailto:grootdt@uj.ac.za)

Dr. Roodt,

I am a doctoral student from Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota writing my dissertation tentatively titled "Examining the Relationship Between Principal Servant Leadership and Intent to Turnover for Public Middle School Teachers in Minnesota" under the direction of advisor Dr. Michael Lindstrom.

I would like your permission to use your instrument the Turnover Intention Scale (TIS-6) in my research study. Any additional information regarding the scoring or administration of the scale would also be appreciated. Thank you!

I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
Ryan Siegle  
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix B (Continued)

Roodt, Gerhard <[grootd@uj.ac.za](mailto:grootd@uj.ac.za)>

Mon, Jul 30, 2018 at 6:48 AM

To: Ryan Siegle <[rys46464@bethel.edu](mailto:rys46464@bethel.edu)>

Dear Ryan

You are welcome to use the TIS!

For this purpose please find attached the longer 15-item version of the scale. The six items used for the TIS-6 are high-lighted. You may use any one of these two versions.

You are welcome to translate the scale if the need arises. I would like to propose the translate – back-translate method by using two different translators. First you translate from English into home language and then back from home language to English to see if you get to the original English wording.

This is the fourth version of the scale and it is no longer required to reverse score any items (on TIS-6). The total score can be calculated by merely adding the individual item scores. I would strongly recommend that you also conduct a CFA on the item scores to determine if any item scores should be reflected.

The only conditions for using the TIS is that you acknowledge authorship (Roodt, 2004) by conventional academic referencing. The TIS may not be used for commercial purposes.

I wish you the very best with your research project!

Best regards

Gert

Prof Gert Roodt  
Dept Industrial Psychology & People Management

## Appendix C

### Survey

The following survey will ask questions regarding principal servant leadership and teacher retention. Servant leadership can be defined as a leader’s desire to place the needs of others before oneself through characteristics such as authenticity, humility, standing back, courage, empowerment, accountability, forgiveness, and stewardship. As you complete the survey please read each statement below and respond by considering your current building lead principal. If you work in a building with more than one acting principal, please consider only the head/lead principal rather than an assistant principal or leadership team. In addition, while completing the survey consider your overall interactions with the principal rather than a single time or experience.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
My principal gives me the information I need to do my work well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My principal encourages me to use my talents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My principal helps me to further develop myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My principal encourages his/her staff to come up with new ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My principal keeps himself/herself in the background and gives credit to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My principal holds me responsible for the work I carry out.

My principal keeps criticizing people for the mistakes they have made in their work.

My principal takes risks even when he/she is not certain of the support from his/her own manager.

My principal is open about his/her limitations and weaknesses.

My principal learns from criticism.

My principal emphasizes the importance of focusing on the good of the whole.

My principal gives me the authority to take decisions which make work easier for me.

My principal is not chasing recognition or rewards for the things he/she does for others.

I am held accountable for my performance by my principal.

My principal maintains a hard attitude towards people who have offended him/her at work.

My principal takes risks and does what needs to be done in his/her view.

My principal is often touched by the things he/she sees happening around him/her.

My principal tries to learn from the criticism he/she gets from his/her superior.



My principal has a long-term vision.

My principal enables me to solve problems myself instead of just telling me what to do.

My principal appears to enjoy his/her colleagues' success more than his/her own.

My principal holds me and my colleagues responsible for the way we handle a job.

My principal finds it difficult to forget things that went wrong in the past.

My principal is prepared to express his/her feelings even if this might have undesirable consequences.

My principal admits his/her mistakes to his/her

superior.

My principal emphasizes the societal responsibility of our work.

My principal offers me abundant opportunities to learn new skills.

My principal shows his/her true feelings to his/her staff.

My principal learns from the different views and opinions of others.

If people express criticism, my principal tries to learn from it.

How often have you considered leaving your job?

- Never
  - Sometimes
  - Often
  - Frequently
  - Continually
- 

How satisfying is your job in fulfilling your personal needs?

- Very satisfying
  - Somewhat satisfying
  - Neither satisfying nor dissatisfying
  - Somewhat dissatisfying
  - Very dissatisfying
- 

How often are you frustrated when not given the opportunity at work to achieve your personal work-related goals?

- Never
  - Sometimes
  - About half the time
  - Most of the time
  - Always
-

How often do you dream about getting another job that will better suit your personal needs?

- Never
  - Sometimes
  - About half the time
  - Most of the time
  - Always
- 

How likely are you to accept another job at the same compensation level should it be offered to you?

- Highly unlikely
  - Somewhat unlikely
  - Neither likely nor unlikely
  - Somewhat likely
  - Highly likely
- 

How often do you look forward to another day at work?

- Always
  - Most of the time
  - About half the time
  - Sometimes
  - Never
-

What is your gender?

- Male
  - Female
  - I would prefer to not comment
- 

Which best describes you?

- American Indian
  - Asian
  - Black or African American
  - Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander
  - Hispanic/ Latino
  - White/Caucasian
  - Multi-Ethnic
  - I would prefer to not comment
-

How many prior years of teaching experience do you have?

- 0-5
  - 6-10
  - 11-15
  - 16-20
  - 21-25
  - 26 or more
-

Which best represents your current teaching position?

- Art
- Band
- Choir/ General Music
- Computer Technology
- English/ Language Arts
- Foreign Language
- General Elementary Education
- General Family and Consumer Science
- Industrial/Technology Education
- Math
- Physical Education
- Science
- Social Studies
- Special Education
- Other

## Appendix D

### Email of Introduction

Dear Educator,

I am a doctoral student from Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota and I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study. Survey participation should take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between school principal's servant leadership characteristics and teacher retention. Your involvement will provide key insight into potential factors influencing the retention of middle school teachers in Minnesota.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you will be giving your consent for the researcher to include your responses in his data analysis. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may decline to take the survey or discontinue the survey at any time without affecting your relationship with Bethel University. Your responses in this survey will remain completely confidential and any individually identifiable information of you as a participant will be deleted immediately following data collection. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study.

Thank you for considering participating in this study. Your insight will prove an important contribution to keeping teachers in this great profession.

If you have further questions concerning the study, please contact me by email at [rys46464@bethel.edu](mailto:rys46464@bethel.edu) or my dissertation adviser Dr. Michael Lindstrom by email at [m-lindstrom@bethel.edu](mailto:m-lindstrom@bethel.edu).

Click [HERE](#) to take the survey.

Sincerely,

Ryan Siegle  
Bethel University Doctoral Candidate  
[rys46464@bethel.edu](mailto:rys46464@bethel.edu)



## Appendix E

### Follow Up Email

Dear Educator,

This email is being sent as a reminder of your opportunity to still participate in my research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between school principal's servant leadership characteristics and teacher retention.

By agreeing to participate in this study, you will be giving your consent for the researcher to include your responses in his data analysis. Participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may decline to take the survey or discontinue the survey at any time without affecting your relationship with Bethel University. Your responses in this survey will remain completely confidential and any individually identifiable information of you as a participant will be deleted immediately following data collection. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study.

Thank you for considering participating in this study. I sincerely appreciate your time and value your input. Your insight will prove an important contribution to keeping teachers in this great profession.

If you have further questions concerning the study, please contact me by email at [rys46464@bethel.edu](mailto:rys46464@bethel.edu) or my dissertation adviser Dr. Michael Lindstrom by email at [m-lindstrom@bethel.edu](mailto:m-lindstrom@bethel.edu).

Click [HERE](#) to take the survey.

Sincerely,

Ryan Siegle  
Bethel University Doctoral Candidate  
[rys46464@bethel.edu](mailto:rys46464@bethel.edu)