Dissertations

Meaning Makers: A Mixed-Method Case Study of Exemplary University Presidents and the Behaviors They Use to Create Personal and Organizational Meaning

Barbara E. Bartels
Brandman University, bartels@mail.brandman.edu

Meaning Makers: A Mixed-Methods Case Study of Exemplary University Presidents

and the Behaviors They Use to Create Personal and Organizational Meaning

A Dissertation by

Barbara E. Bartels

Brandman University

Irvine, California

School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

March 2017

Committee in charge:

Keith Larick, Ed.D., Dissertation Chair

Dr. Cindy Petersen,   Ed.D., Committee Member

Dr. James B. Cox,   Ph.D., Committee Member

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY

Chapman University System

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

The dissertation of Barbara E. Bartels is approved.

_____, Dissertation Chair

Dr. Keith Larick, Ed.D.

_____, Committee Member

Dr. Cindy Petersen, Ed.D.

_____, Committee Member

Dr. James D. Cox, Ph.D.

_____, Associate Dean

Dr. Patricia Clark White, Ed.D.

Date: March 3, 2017

Meaning Makers:

A mixed-methods case study of exemplary university presidents and

the behaviors they use to create personal and organizational meaning

Copyright © 2017

by Barbara E. Bartels

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to my children, Victoria Marie Bartels and Ryan William Bartels. They have been through this journey with me from the very beginning! I could not have accomplished this dream without their love, support, and encouragement. Victoria and Ryan, you complete me! I am so blessed to have you both in my life. You two are my world, my inspiration, my reason! I look forward to being with you as you progress through your lives.

Thank you to Victoria, who patiently reminded me, nearly daily at the very start of this journey, that Google truly is a verb! With Tori away at college, I would text her on late nights while studying, asking her random questions, mostly about APA, and she simply would text back "Google it, Mom!" She did this again and again until Google became my friend and I finally stopped asking her.

A very special thank you to "my Ryan"… my special buddy, who was side-by-side with me on this journey, through days of me running home from work and not making dinner so I could attend an evening webinar, to Saturday mornings where I had to attend a cohort meeting instead of hanging out with him. Ryan, you are my rock! Thank you for packing up my computer and books when I fell asleep with the light on and for supporting me on endless study sessions. I especially want to thank you for the "I Love You" written on a corner of a page deep within a paper I was reading. You made me smile! Also, thank you for the amazing burger with all the fixings, including avocados and sweet potato fries. I was so proud of that burger that I even texted a photo of it to my team while we were on a webinar. You lovingly created this yummy meal and brought it up to me as I listened to the call. Little did I know that two hours later I'd come

downstairs to find a burned stove and numerous scorched towels from the grease fire that ensued during the making of the now-famous burger! I am proud that you knew how to put out a grease fire without making it worse and, more importantly, that you handled the situation on your own! You are an amazing man and will someday be an exemplary leader, just like the people I interviewed for this study.

To my wonderful chair, Dr. Keith Larick, and to my committee members, Dr. Cindy Petersen, Dr. Jim Cox, and the Associate Dean, Dr. Patricia White. I could not have done this without you! What an amazing group of individuals you are! Dr. Larick, the meaning you have brought to my life, and to the lives of the hundreds of others you have mentored over the years, is the legacy you will leave behind. Meaningful indeed! Your valuable input helped to bring this thematic study to life. And I would be remiss if I did not mention Dr. Alan Enomoto and the other faculty in this phenomenal program. Dr. Enomoto, you are a true friend! Thank you for your guidance. I would also like to thank my *Blue Team,* Sandy and Rose Nicole, and of course, the WC Gammas! Dr. Tim McCarty, Ed, Fran, Jamel, Javier, Majeedah, and Jawan– you were such a great group of people to be with on this journey! WC Gammas always brought our 'A game' to everything we did! It will be fun to see where our journey leads us.

I'd also like to acknowledge my friends and family for their support! Julie Burgett, you will forever be my best friend (and sister)! The universe is a better place because of you. Thank you for your undying support, love, and encouragement on so many levels. I am so proud of the woman and exemplary leader you have become! And Nick, Morgan, Ebie, Rachel and Nathan—love y'all! A heartfelt thanks to Janet, you are one of the most amazing people I know. Your faith, leadership, and love are

irreplaceable. I would not be where I am today had it not been for you and all of your support these past 25 years of our lives! And to Anna, Jannette, Jill, Julie, Karen, Kim, Kristen, Maureen, and Nora (my favorite editor)—thanks for reminding me that it's important to have work-study-life balance! Thank you for the many nights out along this journey we call life!

I especially dedicate this dissertation to my mom and dad, Isabell and Tom Weltzer, who created the foundation of my soul. I would not be where I am today without your support and guidance. And, of course, my crazy, wonderful crew of siblings: Tom, Joe, Tim, Ellen, Patty, and Julie! And most importantly, I thank God for bringing all of these wonderful people into my life! Love you all! I am blessed indeed!

"The meaning of my life is to help others find the meaning of theirs."

~ Viktor Frankl

ABSTRACT

Meaning Makers: A Mixed-Methods Case Study of Exemplary University Presidents

and the Behaviors They Use to Create Personal and Organizational Meaning

by Barbara E. Bartels

The purpose of this thematic, mixed-methods case study was to identify and describe the

behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational

meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships,

wisdom, and inspiration. Further, this study surveyed followers to assess the degree of

importance to which followers believe a leader uses character, vision, relationships,

wisdom, and inspiration to create personal and organizational meaning. This study was

accomplished by interviewing exemplary university presidents regarding their

perceptions of utilizing the strategies and behaviors associated with character, vision,

relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. While there has been much research on character,

vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration as independent leadership variables, there

has yet to be a study conducted that looks at all five variables used collectively as

strategies used by exemplary leaders to create meaning within the organization. By

identifying and describing the extent to which university presidents use the behaviors of

character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration to create meaning, it is possible

to develop best practices to train other leaders in these strategies. The findings and

literature supported the use of these behaviors to develop meaning. The findings of this

research showed that exemplary leaders use all five variables on a regular basis. Further,

exemplary university presidents concurred that all five variables are required, and none

would sacrifice any variable for another. Followers also agreed that all five variables are

important for exemplary leadership to create meaning in an organization. Further

research is advised for the study of meaning by repeating this study in other universities,

including public and for-profit institutions, as well as with both male- and female-run

institutions. By identifying and describing the behaviors that exemplary university

presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their

followers, and the degree to which followers perceive that the behaviors create meaning

through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration, researchers can provide

tools for improving these leadership variables to ensure success.

PREFACE

Following discussions and considerations regarding the opportunity to study

meaning-making in multiple types of organizations, four faculty members and 12

doctoral students discovered a common interest in exploring the ways exemplary leaders

create personal and organizational meaning. This resulted in a thematic study conducted

by a research team of 12 doctoral students. This mixed-methods investigation was

designed with a focus on the ways in which university presidents create personal and

organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision,

relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. Exemplary leaders were selected by the team

from various public, for-profit and nonprofit organizations to examine the leadership

behaviors these professionals used. Each researcher interviewed three highly successful

professionals to determine what behaviors helped them to make meaning; the researcher

then administered a survey to 12 followers of each leader to gain their perceptions about

the leadership behaviors most important to creating meaning in their organization. To

ensure thematic consistency, the team co-created the purpose statement, research

questions, definitions, interview questions, survey, and study procedures.

Throughout the study, the term "peer researchers" is used to refer to the other

researchers who conducted this thematic study. My fellow doctoral students and peer

researchers studied exemplary leaders in the following fields: Barbara E. Bartels,

presidents of private, nonprofit universities in Southern California; Kimberly Chastain,

chief executive officers of charter school organizations; Candice Flint, presidents or chief

executive officers of nonprofits in Northern California; Frances E. Hansell,

superintendents of K-12 schools in Northern California; Stephanie A. Herrara, female

chief executive officers of private-sector companies in Southern California; Sandra

Hodge, chief executive officers of engineering technology firms; Ed Jackson, exemplary

technology leaders in Northern California; Robert J. Mancuso, chief marketing officers of

automotive industries; Zachary Mercier, professional athletic coaches in NCAA Division

I institutions; Sherri L. Prosser, chief executive officers of healthcare organizations in

California; Jamel Thompson, K-12 superintendents in Southern California; and Rose

Nicole Villanueva, police chiefs in California and Utah.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

"Man is a being in search of meaning."

~ Plato

The search for meaning in life is a quest which dates back nearly 2,500 years to ancient Greece, as cited in works by Plato and Aristotle. Socrates' teachings display the belief that happiness is what all people desire. Socrates, known as the father of Western philosophy, discusses how happiness comes from within, not from external effects as prescribed by leaders of his time. After his death, which was a result of his outspoken theories, the teachings of Socrates continued through his protégés, Plato and Aristotle. Philosophers of ancient Greece continued to discuss the search for meaning in one's life (Kraut, 2014; Mark, 2009).

As the search for meaning has progressed through the ages, it has transcended to include meaning both personally and professionally. Per Aristotle, "Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work." Centuries later, Viktor Frankl (1984) observed in his memoir *Man's Search for Meaning* that "logotherapy is meaning-centered psychotherapy" (p.104). "According to logotherapy, this striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man" (Frankl, 1984, p. 104). The search for meaning and the desire for fulfilling, satisfying work experiences are more prevalent today, not only for individuals but for organizations. In fact, studies have tied job satisfaction with increased productivity and effectiveness (Crowley, 2011; Dallimore & Mickel, 2006; Henderson, 2011; Yang & Kassekert, 2010). On average, "a full-time employee spends approximately one-third of their working lives preparing for work, commuting, and performing the tasks for which they are paid. With that much time

1

invested in the work environment, the satisfaction and fulfillment an individual derives

from their work become important to an individual's well-being" (Henderson, 2011, p. 1).

T. Moore (2008) stated that people's work is "not just as a means for making a living, but

as the medium through which you become a person" (p. xv). Further, as Mitroff and

Denton (1999) stated, "The only thing that will really motivate people is that which gives

them deep meaning and purpose in their jobs and their lives in general" (p. 52). Pink

(2006) says, "The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different

kind of mind-creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers" (Pink,

2006, introduction). Since people spend more waking hours at work, or preparing for

work, than they do at home with family and friends, and since technology is enabling

people to remain connected, even during off hours, it will become more critical that

employees find satisfaction and meaning in the workplace (Pink, 2006).

Though the research indicates the need for creating meaning in one's work and

life, the evidence from employee-satisfaction research contradicts that desire. In an era

of abundance, when basic needs are easily met within just a few days, employees are

seeking enlightenment and satisfaction in their work (W. Moore, 2014). According to a

report by the Conference Board, a nonprofit research group, 52.3% of Americans are

unhappy at work (Adams, 2014). In fact, "workers were happier in 1987 than they are

now" (Adams, 2014; Weber, 2014). With the rapid changes in technology and

innovation, there has been a decline in job satisfaction among employees over the past

decade (Crowley, 2011). More people are losing jobs that can be replaced by machines

and technology, or sent overseas to be done more cheaply and quickly (W. Moore, 2014;

Robinson, 2009). Not only are employees losing jobs, but research has shown that more

than 2 million Americans voluntarily leave their jobs every month (Hall, 2013). In fact, a study by Accenture reports that 31% of employees quit because they did not like their boss, another 31% felt they were not empowered, and an alarming 43% quit due to lack of recognition (Hall, 2013). With dissatisfaction in the workplace at high levels, it is important for leadership to prepare for opportunities to increase meaning and satisfaction.

The theoretical background of leadership stems from work initially about leadership traits and what it means to be a natural born leader, through transactional and transformational leadership, and is now moving into dynamic leadership roles where there is an integrated approach to leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008; Chemers, 1984; Crowley, 2011; Northouse, 2009). To ensure that leaders bring personal and professional meaning into the workplace, it is important to understand what exemplary leaders do to create work environments that motivate and inspire employees. Leadership must be transformational to build an environment where followers can experience both personal and professional satisfaction.

Background

"We are not just looking for a job, but rather an activity

that will make our lives make sense."

~ Viktor Frankl

Meaning

Meaning is a sense of purpose as a fundamental need which leads to significance and value for self and others (Ambury, 2017; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Frankl, 1984; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; Mautz, 2015; T. Moore, 2008; W. Moore, 2014; Pearson, 2015; Rodney et al., 2013; Tredennick, 2004; Varney, 2009; Yeoman, 2014). The search

for meaning in one's life has been studied for nearly 2,500 years, tracing back to ancient Greece. Socrates' teachings display the belief that happiness is what all people desire (Kraut, 2014; Mark, 2009). Socrates, known as the father of Western philosophy, discusses how happiness comes from within, not from external influences as prescribed by leaders of his time. In the 20th century, meaning continued to be a topic of discussion. As stated by Frankl (1984), "It is one of the basic tenets of logotherapy that man's main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life" (p. 117).

Personal meaning. "The only thing that will really motivate people is that which gives them deep meaning and purpose in their jobs and their lives in general. Whatever you call it, it is spiritual at its base" (Mitroff & Denton, 1999, p. 52). The search for meaning and purpose dates back centuries, but more recently, "According to [Frankl's] logotherapy, this striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man" (Frankl, 1984, p. 104). As the world changes through developments in technology and information, "Abundance has satisfied, and even over-satisfied, the material needs of millions-boosting the significance of beauty and emotion and accelerating individuals' search for meaning" (Pink, 2006, p. 46). In fact, "Gregg Easterbrook, an American journalist who has written insightfully on this topic, puts it more boldly: "A transition from *material want* to *meaning want* is in progress on a historically unprecedented scale-involving hundreds of millions of people-and may eventually be recognized as the principal cultural development of our age" (Pink, 2006, p. 219).

4

Meaning in the workplace. In an age of abundance, people are seeking to find meaning in both their professional and their personal lives. Workers today strive to integrate their lives by finding fulfillment both at work and at home. Employees are constantly seeking purpose in what they do for a living and, at the same time, wanting to know that they are valued and have options for growth. Numerous authors cited statements similar to *Do what you love and everything else falls into place* (Mitroff & Denton, 1999; T. Moore, 2008; Robinson, 2009; Sheep, 2006). In the book *A Life at Work,* T. Moore (2008) discusses job satisfaction and meaning in one's life: "The two are inseparable: The work that we do and the opus of the soul" (p. 20). The importance of meaning in the workplace is commonplace. "Feelings of belonging, connection, history, and involvement may seem secondary to the person designing and managing the job, but these soul qualities have everything to do with good and fulfilling work" (T. Moore, 2008, p. 42). "Baby boomers are entering the *Conceptual Age* with an eye on their own chronological age. After decades of pursuing riches, wealth seems less alluring. For them, and for many others in this new era, meaning is the new money" (Pink, 2006, p. 61). In fact, "Rich Karlgaard, the publisher of *Forbes*, says this is the next cycle of business… Meaning. Purpose. Deep life experience. Use whatever word or phrase you like, but know that consumer desire for these qualities is on the rise. Remember your Abraham Maslow and your Viktor Frankl. Bet your business on it" (Pink, 2006, p. 225).

The search for meaning and the desire for fulfilling, satisfying work experiences are prevalent today, not only for individuals but for organizations. Research has shown that, on average, "a full-time employee spends approximately one-third of their working

lives preparing for work, commuting, and performing the tasks for which they are paid.

With that much time invested in the work environment, the satisfaction and fulfillment an

individual derives from their work become important to an individual's well-being"

(Henderson, 2011, p. 1). As a result, leaders need to develop ways in which followers

can find meaning within organizations. In fact, "The link between fulfillment at work

and happiness at home is more important than ever" (T. Moore, 2008, p. 3). It is also

important for the meaning of one's life to converge with the meaning of one's work in

order for a worker to develop and flourish (Sheep, 2006). In addition, "You want your

career to match your sense of self-your values, your hopes, your style, and your deep

needs" (T. Moore, 2008, pp. 103-104). In the quest for a life work, "it means being a real

person on the job and being connected to the work you do" (T. Moore, 2008; Sheep,

2006). Further, as stated by Cisek (2009), members of organizations who find shared

meaning in work can instill a better way of being with and for others. Finally, T. Moore

(2008) stated, "The work you ultimately decide to do may be influenced by your interest

in matters of the soul, and you may learn that a life work rises up out of a heart and

imagination that you have tended and educated over the years. Your vision about the

whole of life gives you a bias for choosing what to get involved with" (T. Moore, 2008,

p. 29).

Though the importance of meaning in the workplace has been identified and

supported through research, lack of fulfillment in the workplace is common. Lack of

fulfillment and job dissatisfaction have implications for productivity and effectiveness,

which has prompted numerous authors to write on this important topic (Baird, 2010;

Collins, 2001; Crowley, 2011; Henderson, 2011; T. Moore, 2008). "Tardiness,

6

absenteeism, and sloppy work are often due to the absence of soul in the workplace" (T. Moore, 2008, p. 42). Further, "studies have shown that feelings of accomplishment and respect within an organization are often more powerful motivators for coming to work than the paycheck itself" (Henderson, 2011, p. 1). Research supports the concept that employees "may step outside of issues of salary, hours, duties, and opportunities for advancement to consider ethics, meaning and social contribution of the work" (T. Moore, 2008, p. 158). A person's work should be seen "not just as a means for making a living, but as the medium through which you become a person" (T. Moore, 2008, p. xv). With the continued research on workplace success related to meaning, it is important that leaders continue to develop skills that instill meaning in the workplace.

To ensure that leaders bring personal and professional meaning into the workplace, it is vital to understand what exemplary leaders do to create work environments that motivate and inspire employees. Leadership must be transformational to build an environment where followers can experience both personal and professional satisfaction. We are entering a new age of leadership with a new form of thinking where relationships with leaders are highly engaging. "High touch involves the ability to empathize with others, to understand the subtleties of human interactions, to find joy in one's self and to elicit it in others, and to stretch beyond the quotidian in pursuit of purpose and meaning" (Pink, 2006, p. intro).

Leadership

"The most powerful leadership tool you have

is your own personal example."

~ John Wooden

Leadership practice has evolved over time, yet the need for leaders and leadership has not (Bass & Bass, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Galton's Great Man theory from the 1840s shows the historical evolution of the study of leaders and leadership, with its origins dating back as far as Aristotle (Islam, 2010). The Great Man theory postulates that leaders possess characteristics with which they are born. The theory also suggests that if one is not born with these traits, they will not be able to develop their leadership skills (Islam, 2010). From these early beginnings, leadership theory has gone through numerous transitions, which include the behavioral approach, situational leadership, contingency theory, charismatic leadership, transactional leadership, and transformational leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008). Recent leadership theories embrace a more integrated approach (Bass & Bass, 2008; Chemers, 1984; Crowley, 2011; Northouse, 2009). One theory that stands out was Collins (2001) five levels of leadership in his book *Good to Great*. Collins (2001) stated there are five levels of leadership: Level 1 leaders are "Highly Capable", Level 2 leaders are "Contributing Members", Level 3 leaders are "Competent Managers", Level 4 are "Effective Leaders" and Level 5 are "Executive Leaders". According to Collins (2006), Level 5 leaders are considered the highest, most effective leaders in an organization. "Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious-but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves" (Collins, 2001, p. 21).

The theory of integrated leadership, described by Wilber (2000) in his book *A Theory of Everything,* attempted to place a wide diversity of theories and thinkers into one single framework. It is portrayed as a "theory of everything", trying "to draw

together an already existing number of separate paradigms into an interrelated network of approaches that are mutually enriching" (Visser, 2003, p. Foward). *A Theory of Everything* is based on an extensive data search among various types of developmental and evolutionary sequences, which yielded a four-quadrant model of consciousness and its development. The four quadrants are intentional, behavioral, cultural, and social. Each of these dimensions was found to unfold in a sequence of at least a dozen major stages or levels. Combining the four quadrants with the dozen or so major levels in each quadrant yields an integral theory of consciousness that is quite comprehensive in its nature and scope. This model is used to indicate how a general synthesis and integration of 12 of the most influential schools of consciousness studies can be affected, and to highlight some of the most significant areas of future research. The conclusion is that an all-quadrant, all-level approach is the minimum degree of sophistication that we need in order to secure anything resembling a genuinely integral theory of consciousness (Wilber, 2000). This integral approach that embraces the spiritual aspects of leadership suggests that employees find their passion. Leadership must be transformational to build an environment where followers can experience both personal and professional satisfaction. To ensure that effective leaders bring personal and professional meaning into the workplace, it is important to understand what exemplary leaders do to create work environments that motivate and inspire employees.

Five Variables for Exemplary Leadership Skills

> "In the last analysis, what we *are* communicates far more
>
> eloquently than anything we say or do."
>
> ~ Stephen Covey

The theoretical framework for the five domains of "meaning" explored in this research was first introduced by Dr. Keith Larick and Dr. Cindy Petersen in series of conference presentations and lectures to school administrators in ACSA (Association of California School Administrators) and to doctoral students at Brandman University. This initial research and work by Dr. Larick and Dr. Petersen, coupled with their leadership experience as school-district superintendents, inspired the need to explore what exemplary leaders do to develop personal and organizational meaning, leading to high achievement. The five domains of leadership explored in this research include character, vision, relationships, wisdom and inspiration. The framework proposed by Larick and Petersen suggests that while each domain has merit, it is the interaction of the domains that supports the making of meaning in organizations. In a 2015 Association of California School Administrators State Conference presentation, Larick and Petersen proposed that leaders with character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration have the integral skills to create personal and organizational meaning. In recent presentations at Brandman University, Larick and Petersen further assert that creation of personal and organizational meaning is fundamental to leading innovation and transformational change. The theoretical framework suggests that exemplary leaders who have developed behavioral skills in each domain have the capacity to create personal and organizational meaning for followers.

The 12-thematic studies are designed to explore the Larick and Petersen theory to determine whether exemplary leaders across a variety of professional fields have developed the leadership behaviors that fuse the five domains and actualized meaning in their organizations.

Character. Character is a person's value system put into action, which may include trust, honesty, respect, and being a good person. Patterson (2008) stated that character sets the rules based on moral standards. Character is the core of each individual being. In fact, "Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) identified six defining leadership traits: drive, the desire to lead, honesty/integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business" (Baird, 2010, p. 14). Further, character is based on being "trustworthy or dependable or reliable" and showing "good judgment" (Loughead, 2009, p. 2). Likewise, "Ethical leadership, for Sama and Shoaf (2007), is derived from a model of transformational leadership wherein the vision is one of achieving moral good, and the core values are those of integrity, trust, and moral rectitude" (as cited in Cisek, 2009, p. 13). Integrity, honesty, and consistency are the bedrock of good leadership because people will follow leaders they trust. Conversely, even the most compelling vision, communicated with clarity and conviction, will fall on deaf ears if a leader lacks credibility and integrity. Covey (1991) encouraged principle-centered leaders to build greater, more trusting and communicative relationships with others in the workplace and in the home.

Vision. Vision can lead an organization or a team to a desired outcome. "A leader's greatest power is his or her personal vision, communicated by the example of his or her daily life" (Cisek, 2009, p. 15). In fact, "Visionary Leadership is considered to be within a genre of leadership which first emerged in the mid-1970s and is described by Bryman (1993) as a class of theories known as the New Leadership Theories" (Loughead, 2009, p. 3). Similarly, "Organizational DNA is created through shared vision, clear lines of communication, and authority and alignment between espoused and perceived values"

(Henderson, 2011, p. 33). In the book *Built to Last*, Collins and Porras (2002) state that

highly successful organizations contain visionary leaders who articulate a vision that

supports a core ideology and stimulates progress toward a new future. For the same

reason, "Commitment to clear, focused goals, and a vision on how to accomplish those

goals is necessary for high-performing teams and groups and is a sought-after objective

of organizations" (Henderson, 2011, p. 66). Further, Kouzes and Posner (2006) postulate

that a visionary leader passionately believes that they can make a difference, envisioning

the future to create an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become.

"Through their magnetism and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams.

They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the

future" (Loughead, 2009, p. 3).

     Relationships. Important to building positive and productive relationships is the

ability to connect with others. "Being able and willing to pay attention to and

acknowledge the existence of others is one of the easiest and most basic ways to support,

empower, and appreciate them. Yet it is often one of the most overlooked" (Robbins,

2008, p. 122). In the book The Element, Robinson (2009) calls the leader and followers a

"tribe". Robinson (2009) said a tribe forms when people are able to connect with other

people who share the same passions and desires to make the most of themselves and their

situation. Further, a tribe influences others to be even better. As Sir Isaac Newton stated,

"If I succeed it is because I stand on the shoulders of giants." "Connecting with people

who have the same passions confirms that you are not alone-it validates a common

passion and brings the ability to share ideas, techniques and enthusiasms" (Robinson,

2009, p. Chapter 5). The tribe mentality can provide team members with support and

inspiration (Robinson, 2009). The evidence supporting the importance of relationships is overwhelming. One study conducted by researchers at the Center for Creative Leadership (2015) interviewed over 400,000 people from 7,500 companies and found that an overwhelming majority, nearly 70%, of leaders felt that relationships are critical for success. In addition, the report cited another research study with 115 executives and found that relationships were critical to building and maintaining successful careers (Center for Creative Leadership, 2015).

Inspiration. Inspiration can be described as the spiritual sense of knowledge and the ability to have others follow with enthusiasm, hope, and optimism. "According to Forbes, leaders like the late Nelson Mandela had so much influence because people knew they could trust him. If you want to inspire your teams, keep your promises, big and small" (Power, 2014). "When you are inspired your work can be inspirational to others. You tap into your most natural self and you can contribute at a much higher level. It becomes effortless" (Robinson, 2009, p. Chapter 4). In fact, as Sir Richard Branson stated, successful companies in the area of employee motivation hire the type of leaders who are capable of motivating and inspiring their team members (Gallo, 2011). Furthermore, in her dissertation, Cisek (2009) stated that if people believe they can change themselves and help others set up the conditions whereby they too can change, leaders will act differently than if they were interested solely in producing success without considering the implications of their actions. Leaders in the 21st century must continue to find ways to inspire to their followers.

Wisdom. Wisdom can provide insight and understanding at a very deep level. Wisdom oftentimes offers valuable insight into organizational behaviors, leading to

improved business performance and success among leaders, as well as a positive impact on society as a whole (Bennis & Nanus, 2007; R. J. Sternberg, 2004; Yang & Kassekert, 2010). The ability for leaders to make key decisions for the common good often comes through wisdom (Spano, 2013; R. J. Sternberg, 2004). As such, according to Bennis and Nanus (2007) and Yang and Kassekert (2010), wisdom is important to the understanding of leadership. In addition, it has been noted that "Wisdom enhances a leader's overall ability to make moral and ethical choices" (Spano, 2013). Further, as stated by Ardelt (2004), "Wisdom is critically dependent on ethics, judgment, insight, creativity, and other transcendent forms of human intellection. Wisdom is concerned less with how much we know and more with what we do and how we act. Wisdom is a way of being and is fundamentally practical in a complex and uncertain world" (p. 187). Ardelt (2004) goes on to say that "It is only when an individual *realizes* (i.e. experiences) the truth of this preserved knowledge that the knowledge is re-transformed into wisdom and makes this person wise(r)" (p. 260). Overall, wisdom is a state of being measured by experience (Ardelt, 2004). More importantly, wisdom is for the common good and essential to leadership (Yang & Kassekert, 2010).

In summary, literature supports character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration as important variables displayed by exemplary leaders. Independently these variables, and their associated behaviors, are often referenced by exemplary leaders as traits that support instilling meaning within the workplace. This research will assess the importance of these variables as they are used collectively to instill meaning.

The Role of University Presidents

"Leadership and learning are indespensable to each other."

~ John F. Kennedy

One of the most important leadership roles is that of university president. The president of a university is the lead administrator at an institution, and the expectations for the position are high. As Ramsden (1998) stated, "it is the task of academic leaders to revitalize and energize their colleagues to meet the challenge of tough times with eagerness and with passion" (p. 3). Universities, like businesses, must generate revenues, but unlike businesses, universities are also assessed on student success and on the production of scholarly research. Similar to the chief executive officer of an organization, a university president is responsible for the growth and development of the institution. The president must do so through communicating effectively with board members, faculty, administration, community members, lawmakers, donors, students, and parents. Being a university president requires the type of intelligence where one is capable of synthesizing information and applying knowledge in a visionary way to create strategies for sustainability and success (Johnson Bowles, 2013). Understanding these strategies must begin with understanding the multifaceted roles of presidents.

One role of the university president is to lead the academic side of the institution. For the development of students and the research the institution produces, a president must communicate with the deans and faculty from academia. As Ramsden (1998) researched universities from the years 1997 - 2005, one of the most notable challenges facing academic leaders is the ability to help staff "cope with increased workloads, maintaining motivation and morale at a time of declining public respect for the

profession, and rewarding performance" (p. 7). Leadership strategies used by presidents to lead through challenging times with deans and faculty is critical.

In addition to leading the academics, the president has the role of fiscal responsibility for the institution. With fiscal responsibility comes the requirement to communicate with donors, board members, state and federal lawmakers, and administration. The president must ensure that tuition and financial aid are adequate to support students efficiently to establish continued enrollment. The president must also oversee the budgetary responsibilities by department, which can become complicated as models vary on how funds should be distributed to ensure that student outcomes are achieved, and that research is appropriately funded (Murray, 2000). Ultimately, the president must report such fiscal responsibilities to the board of directors and the community as a whole.

With such a multifaceted role, the president must have the ability to lead a diverse set of stakeholders. As such, it is important to know more about what exemplary presidents do to lead their followers through meaning and the strategies and characteristics that must be present to ensure success.

Statement of the Research Problem

Studies have tied job satisfaction with increased productivity and effectiveness (Crowley, 2011; Dallimore & Mickel, 2006; Henderson, 2011; Yang & Kassekert, 2010). In fact, job satisfaction is the most widely investigated job attitude, as well as one of the most extensively researched subjects (Judge & Church, 2000). Many work-motivation theories have represented the implied role of job satisfaction. In addition, many work-satisfaction theories have tried to explain job satisfaction and its influence, such as:

Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, Herzberg's (1968) Two-Factor (Motivator-Hygiene) Theory, Adam's (1965) Equity Theory, Porter and Lawler's (1968) modified version of Vroom's (1964) VIE Model, Locke's (1969) Discrepancy Theory, Hackman and Oldham's (1976) Job Characteristics Model, Locke's (1976) Range of Affect Theory, Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, and Landy's (1978) Opponent Process Theory. Leaders of 21st-century organizations must create a work environment which provides fulfillment and meaning to increase organizational effectiveness and job satisfaction (Collins, 2001; Crowley, 2011; Frankl, 1984; T. Moore, 2008; W. Moore, 2014; Ulrich & Ulrich, 2010). In an age of abundance, where basic needs are easily satisfied for most, "appealing only to rational, logical, and functional needs is woefully insufficient," and it is imperative that leaders continue to develop strategies for sustaining satisfaction in their organizations (Pink, 2006, p. 34). Further, as Mitroff and Denton (1999) stated, "The only thing that will really motivate people is that which gives them deep meaning and purpose in their jobs and their lives in general" (p. 52). As the leader of a university, the president plays an integral role in developing themselves and their employees to ensure that fulfillment and meaning are part of the culture.

The university president's role is vital, especially today, when universities are in crisis. Rising costs and high student loan debt, along with discussions questioning the value of an education, bring the crisis to the forefront of the news on a regular basis. Extensive changes are taking place in higher education, including disruptive innovations in teaching and the increase in the use of technology with platforms such as massive open online courses (MOOCs) and competency-based education (CBE) platforms. With nearly 20 million undergraduate and graduate students being served at institutes of higher

17

education, the role of the university president is vital (Blumenstyk, 2015). The university president's role must provide leadership that meets the deluge of changes. The university president must establish an environment where innovation thrives and change is the norm. To create this environment, it is imperative that a culture be created that embraces the people of the organization to support personal and professional meaning.

To ensure university presidents bring meaning into the workplace for themselves and their followers, it is important to understand the role of university leaders and how specific leadership strategies and behaviors can support the university through long-term success. As such, innovative leadership strategies must create and sustain dynamic leadership roles where there is an integrated approach to leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008; Chemers, 1984; Crowley, 2011; Northouse, 2009). "The future belongs to a very different kind of person with a very different kind of mind-creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers" (Pink, 2006, introduction), so it is imperative that university presidents implement strategies to increase the leadership mindset of their followers.

A university president's leadership strategies can transform the organization as they transform the lives of the leaders of the future. Leadership has been studied for decades (Bass & Bass, 2008). Traits, characteristics, and competencies have been measured to see whether exemplary leaders possess all of these on some level, and yet minimal research specific to exemplary university presidents is available. As higher education continues to change, it is vital that university presidents develop the leaders of tomorrow. There is a gap in the literature on how character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration are tied together to create exemplary leaders who create meaning

for themselves and their followers in an organization. The search for meaning and the desire for fulfilling, satisfying work experiences are more prevalent today, not only for individuals, but for organizations, and research must continue to understand the strategies that university presidents are using to ensure they meet the needs of their followers. There is a need to research and define the strategies university presidents use to create meaning through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration to ensure they and their followers develop and sustain meaning in the organization.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods case study was to identify and describe the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration.

In addition, it was the purpose of this study to determine the degree of importance to which followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning.

Research Questions

1. What are the behaviors exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration?

2. To what degree do followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning?

Significance of the Problem

"Man is a being in search of meaning."

~ Plato

Man's search for meaning dates back centuries to the seminal works of Aristotle and Socrates, and through the 20th-century works of Abraham Maslow and Viktor Frankl. Studies have postulated that people find motivation in activities that bring meaning and purpose in their lives and in their work (Cisek, 2009; Frankl, 1984; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Pink, 2006). Furthermore, studies have shown a direct correlation between workplace happiness and increased productivity (Driscoll & McKee, 2007; W. Moore, 2014; Robbins, 2008; Sheep, 2006). In fact, the lack of meaning has been considered the root cause for many problems that businesses face today (Robinson, 2009; Ulrich & Ulrich, 2010).

Although the need for organizations to provide meaning in the workplace has been substantiated in the literature, little research has been done to guide leaders in their efforts to create meaning. The needs of employees have changed significantly in the last few decades, yet the way leaders lead organizations has not. This research will provide leaders with information for creating personal and professional meaning within their organizations. More notably, this study will contribute to how university presidents can create meaning for themselves and their followers within their organizations through the use of specific leadership variables.

Studies support character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration as positive leadership variables (Bennis, 1984; Covey, 1991; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; T. Moore, 2008). However, little research describes how exemplary university presidents

use these traits to instill meaning within their organizations. The survival of institutes of higher education is dependent upon the president's ability to effectively lead the institution's teams (Corrigan, 2002). Further, "the university's place is a paramount player in a global system increasingly driven by knowledge, information, and ideas. We live in a time when knowledge is ever more vital to our societies and economies" (Faust, 2010). It is noteworthy that research on university presidents is comprised of their roles and responsibilities independent of research on the traits which support these roles. Studies have examined the various leadership styles and practices of university presidents (Aldighrir, 2013; Brown, 2010; Corrigan, 2002; Johnson Bowles, 2013), yet few studies have examined how specific variables can support and define how exemplary presidents lead their teams to ensure they find meaning in their workplace and in their lives. This research will provide strategies for university presidents to lead their organizations with meaning using character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration.

In summary, it is imperative that leaders of the 21st century create meaning within their organizations, for themselves and their followers. University presidents must be capable of leading innovation and change within their universities in a rapidly changing environment. By examining how exemplary university presidents use character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration to lead their organizations, university presidents will be better equipped to create meaning for themselves and their followers.

Definitions

Following are definitions of terms relevant to the study. Theoretical definitions give meaning in terms of the theories of a specific discipline and stem from previous research studies. Operational definitions provide clarity for the purpose of this study and

serve two essential purposes: (a) They establish the rules and procedures used to measure the key variables of the study; and (b) they provide unambiguous meaning to terms that otherwise might be interpreted in different ways.

Theoretical Definitions

Exemplary. Someone set apart from peers in a supreme manner, suitable behavior, principles, or intentions that can be copied (Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014).

Followers. Followership is the role held by certain individuals in an organization, team, or group. Specifically, it is the capacity of an individual to actively follow a leader. Followership is the reciprocal social process of leadership. Specifically, followers play an active role in organization, group, and team successes and failures (Baker, 2007; Riggio, Chaleff, & Lipman-Blumen, 2008).

Meaning. Meaning is a sense of purpose as a fundamental need, which leads to significance and value for self and others (Ambury, 2017; Bennis, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Frankl, 1984; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; Pearson, 2015; Tredennick, 2004; Varney, 2009; Yeoman, 2014).

Character. Character is the moral compass by which a person lives their life (Bass & Bass, 2008; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; T. Moore, 2008; J. C. Quick & Wright, 2011; Sankar, 2003).

Vision. A bridge from the present to the future created by a collaborative mindset, adding meaning to the organization, sustaining higher levels of motivation and withstanding challenges (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; Landsberg, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 1993; Nanus, 1992).

Relationships. Relationships are the bonds that are established between people through encouragement, compassion, and open communication, which lead to feelings of respect, trust and acceptance (Bermack, 2014; Frankl, 1984; George, 2003; George & Sims, 2007; Henderson, 2011; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007, 2009; Liborius, 2014; Mautz, 2015; McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnston, 2008; Reina & Reina, 2006; Seligman, 2002; D. M. Smith, 2011; Ulrich & Ulrich, 2010).

Wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to utilize cognitive, affective, and reflective intelligences to discern unpredictable and unprecedented situations with beneficial action (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Kekes, 1983; Pfeffer, 2010; Spano, 2013; R.J. Sternberg, 1998).

Inspiration. Inspiration is a source of contagious motivation that resonates from the heart, transcending the ordinary and driving leaders and their followers forward with confidence (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; I. H. Smith, 2015; Thrash & Elliot, 2003).

Operational Definitions

Exemplary. Exemplary leaders are defined as those leaders who are set apart from peers by exhibiting at least five of the following characteristics: (1) Evidence of successful relationships with followers, (2) Evidence of leading a successful organizational, (3) A minimum of five years of experience in the profession, (4) Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings, (5) Recognition by their peers, and (6) Membership in professional associations in their field.

Followership. For purpose the of this study, a follower is defined as a member of the leadership team who has responsibilities for managing different aspects of the

organization. This group of followers could include: Chief Information Officer, Assistant Superintendents, Director, Coordinator, Chief Financial Officer, Director of Personnel Services, Coordinators, Administrators, Sales Manager, Account Manager, Principal, etc.

Leadership behavior. Leadership behavior as used in this research study is defined as the actions performed by the leader that are observed or experienced by followers.

Meaning. Meaning is the result of leaders and followers coming together for the purpose of gathering information from experience and integrating it into a process that creates significance, value, and identity within themselves and the organization.

Character. Character is alignment of a value system that promotes ethical thoughts and actions based on principles of concern for others through optimism and integrity while being reliable, transparent, and authentic.

Vision. Vision is foresight demonstrated by a compelling outlook on the future shared by leaders and followers who are engaged to create the future state.

Relationships. Relationships are authentic connections between leaders and followers involved in a common purpose through listening, respect, trust, and acknowledgment of one another.

Wisdom. Wisdom is the reflective integration of values, experience, knowledge, and concern for others to accurately interpret and respond to complex, ambiguous, and often unclear situations.

Inspiration. Inspiration is the heartfelt passion and energy that leaders exude through possibility-thinking, enthusiasm, encouragement, and hope to create relevant, meaningful connections that empower.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to three exemplary university presidents and 12 followers in private nonprofit universities in California. This study considers an exemplary leader to be one who demonstrates at least five of the following criteria:

- Evidence of successful relationships with followers

- Evidence of leading a successful organization

- A minimum of five years of experience in the profession

- Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings

- Recognition by peers

- Membership in professional association in their field

Organization of the Study

This study was organized into five chapters, a bibliography, and appendices. Chapter I provided the introduction of meaning and leadership, the background, the five variables of behaviors of exemplary leaders, and posed the research questions used in the study. Chapter I also provided both theoretical and operational definitions used in the study. Chapter II provides an extensive review of the literature and research that has been conducted on meaning and the characteristics and traits exemplified by exemplary university presidents. Chapter III describes the methodology used to collect and analyze the data used in the study. Chapter IV presents the data collected, as well as the research

findings and an in-depth analysis of the results of the study. Chapter V concludes the

research study with the significant findings, conclusions, research gaps, and

recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter II provides an extensive review of the literature and research conducted on meaning in the workplace, as well as the associated strategies and behaviors exemplary leaders use through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration to achieve a meaningful environment. The literature review begins with the history of meaning and how meaning is associated to the workplace and in society as a whole. Research on leadership and followership is then reviewed. The literature review then investigates five variables—character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration—and how these variables are used independently by exemplary leaders. The review of literature concludes with the history of university presidents and the impact of their contribution to society. The literature review provides the researcher a theoretical framework from which to understand the strategies and behaviors exemplary leaders, specifically university presidents, use to create meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration.

Meaning

"There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread."

~ Mother Teresa

History of Meaning

Man's quest to seek meaning has been documented in literature from the seminal works of Aristotle and Socrates—through the 20th-century works of Viktor Frankl and Abraham Maslow. As quoted by Aristotle centuries ago, "Pleasure in the job puts perfection in the work" and, as Viktor Frankl (1984) stated in his memoir *Man's Search*

for Meaning, "logotherapy is meaning-centered psychotherapy" (p.104). "According to logotherapy, this striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man" (Frankl, 1984, p. 104). The search for meaning continues into the 21st century through the works of numerous authors including James Kouzes, Scott Mautz, Thomas Moore, Barry Posner, and Martin Seligman. In fact, T. Moore (2008) stated that people's work is "not just as a means for making a living, but as the medium through which you become a person" (p. xv). Over time, numerous authors have studied meaning, each with varying theories on how to find meaning, but all these authors agree on the importance and necessity of creating meaning in one's personal and professional life, finding that it is critical for sustained happiness (Bennis & Nanus, 2007; Mautz, 2015; Nanus, 1992; Pink, 2006; Seligman, 2002; Senge, 2006; Tredennick, 2004). In order to understand personal and organizational meaning and the strategies that can be used to create meaning, it is important to begin with the historical background on meaning.

Aristotle noted, "Happiness is the meaning and purpose of life, the whole aim and end of human existence" (Tredennick, 2004, p. 13). Centuries later, Abraham Maslow described a hierarchy of needs whereby individuals fulfill one need at a time, from the basics like food and shelter to the supreme level of self-actualization and meaning (McLeod, 2016). Further, Viktor Frankl, a psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor, described meaning as the ability "to become aware of what can be done about a given situation" (Frankl, 1984, p. 145). Frankl went on to explain his thoughts on man's search for meaning in that "one of the basic tenets of logotherapy is that man's main concern is not to gain pleasure or to avoid pain but rather to see a meaning in his life" (Frankl, 1984, p. 117). Historical works discuss how meaning is found through meeting the basic needs,

through to finding meaning for survival, even if the meaning is found in small wins.

Further, meaning is described as something more spiritual and for a higher purpose.

More recently, Seligman (2011) stated, "If we want to flourish and if we want to have

well-being, we must indeed minimize our misery; but in addition, we must have positive

emotion, meaning, accomplishment, and positive relationships" (p. 53). Flood (1999)

elaborated, "The idea that power, wealth and self-interest are sole motivators is

challenged. Senge's learning organization assumes over and above self-interest that a

person wants to be a part of something larger" (p. 26). As such, the literature supports

the theoretical definition of meaning as a sense of purpose and a fundamental need that

leads to significance and value for self and others (Ambury, 2017; Bennis, 1999;

Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Frankl, 1984; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Mautz, 2015; T. Moore,

2008; Pearson, 2015; Tredennick, 2004; Varney, 2009; Yeoman, 2014). The desire to

find a sense of purpose and meaning, both personally and professionally, is vital to the

success of organizations. For the purpose of this study, the operational definition of

meaning has been defined by the peer researchers as the result of leaders and followers

coming together for the purpose of gathering information from experience and integrating

it into a process that creates significance, value, and identity within themselves and the

organization.

Creating Meaning in Society

Numerous authors postulate that meaning is finding a greater purpose than just

serving oneself, and includes serving others within society (Crowley, 2011; Mautz, 2015;

T. Moore, 2008; W. Moore, 2014; Seligman, 2011). Amortegui (2014) stated,

"Meaningfulness, in contrast, comes from being a 'giver,' suspending what one wants

and desires for a fair amount of self-sacrifice" (paragraph 7). Exemplary leaders have the tendency to be concerned more about others than themselves, including taking blame for things that go wrong, and praising others when things go right. Discussions on finding meaning in one's life date back centuries, yet are no less relevant today. For example, Viktor Frankl (1984), the Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor who wrote the book *Man's Search for Meaning* after suffering through brutality in a German concentration camp, stated that "Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life and not the 'secondary rationalization' of instinctual drive" (p. 121). Further, in the book *Are You Fully Charged? The 3 Keys to Energizing Your Work and Life*, Rath (2015) stated that creating meaning is vital to existence and is central to organizations in society today. Similarly, Mautz (2015) said, "You must also balance between the craving for independence and the higher-order needs of a greater purpose within which to serve and a broader community within which to belong" (p. 25). And finally, Kouzes and Posner (2006) indicated, "We have to consider more deeply the true value of *what was*, *what is*, and *what will be*. We search our souls for the deeper meaning in our lives. A heartfelt quest to leave a lasting legacy is a journey from success to significance" (p. intro). Creating meaning in one's life that then transcends from self to others will ensure healthy connections to society, but it must begin with taking care of oneself and finding meaning from within.

Creating meaning in society begins with creating meaning in one's life. Studies theorize that meaning in life, and the journey from success to significance, is truly attainable (Covey, 2004; Frankl, 1984; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Sood, 2015). In fact, finding meaning is vital to one's health and well-being. As stated by Sood (2015),

"Being able to find meaning helps you be healthier, happier and more focused—with better ability to cope; lower anxiety, depression and stress; improved quality of life; less anger; greater success; and better relationships" (p. 142). Further, when one develops a mission, one can have meaning and better overall health (Covey, 2004). Great leaders ensure that the mission of the organization, or project, is expressed clearly to followers. Great leaders go so far as to ensure alignment of the professional mission with that of a personal mission. Aligned missions, both personally and professionally, can instill meaning for employees, thereby benefiting the health of the organization. Conversely, meaninglessness and emptiness can cause mental illness (Covey, 2004). People who have lost meaning in their lives are in what Frankl (1984) terms an "existential vacuum" (p. 121). In effect, as society becomes more automated, people are finding they have more free time. People may be at a loss as to what to do with their lives in their free time, and as a result, must search for other ways to find meaning so as not to end up in a vacuum of questioning existence, as theorized by Frankl.

Frankl's writings suggest there are three ways in which to find meaning: (1) Create work or do a deed, (2) Experience someone or something through the love of person or work, and (3) Rise above facing a fate you cannot change to become a better self (Frankl, 1984). Similarly, as stated in *FastCompany Magazine*, to create meaning, one must give more of one's talent, heed the "why", and remember that others matter (Amortegui, 2014). Superior leaders always remember, "Small acts of meaning can change how people value things" (Roz & Ierelli, 2015). In summary, experiences that create meaning can lead to better overall health and happiness, personally and organizationally. In addition, meaningfulness will build connections with others and with

society. Meaningful experiences can be either positive or negative, and either filled with

adversity and challenges, as in Frankl's case, or filled with love, optimism, and hope.

Love, optimism, and hope. Literature posits that experiences that are positive,

hopeful, and loving provide meaning (Chopra, 2009; Collins, 2001; Covey, 1991; T.

Moore, 2008; W. Moore, 2014; Robbins, 2008; Robinson, 2009). In his book *The Work:*

My Search for a Life that Matters, Wes T. Moore (2008) stated that people talk about

looking for the right job and meaningful work, but what people want is a job that they

love doing. Doing what one loves and loving what one does can create happiness with

oneself, as well as create meaningful relationships with others, which in turn can lead to a

rich and fulfilling life. According to Seligman (2002), a leading practitioner in positive

psychology, things that contribute to happiness and well-being are being married,

engaging in satisfying work, avoiding negative emotions and events, and having a robust

social network. Also important to happiness are gratitude, forgiveness, and optimism.

"For no matter what we achieve, if we don't spend the vast majority of our time with

people we love and respect, we cannot possibly have a great life. But if we spend the

vast majority of our time with people we love and respect—people we really enjoy being

on the bus with and who will never disappoint us—then we will almost certainly have a

great life, no matter where the bus goes" (Collins, 2001, p. 62).

Love, optimism, and hope must be present in personal relationships, but are also

important for building and sustaining meaningful relationships in the workplace. In *The*

Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Things, Robinson (2009) asserted that

those who love what they do continue to excel because they are in their element and they

fundamentally love their position. Robinson (2009) recognized that doing what we love

takes time and preparation, but when it comes together and one lives in the moment, one can get lost in the experience and move forward effortlessly into doing that which they love. Numerous authors share stories of love in the workplace and how organizations thrive when love is present. One example was when the president of Philip Morris said that working with his team was like a "love affair". His relationships became lifelong and provided love and meaning to him and his colleagues, which in turn led to positivity throughout the organization. He described how he truly enjoyed going to work, as did his colleagues, and how the relationships extended into their personal lives, leading to lifelong relationships. Further, as Herb Kelleher, cofounder of Southwest Airlines, stated, "A company is stronger if bound by love than by fear" (Stallard, 2015). Through love and optimism with team members, these exemplary leaders were able to build meaning, both personally and professionally, for themselves and their followers. Research goes on to reflect that people work harder and more effectively for people they like and for those who make them feel good (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Robinson, 2009). By doing what you love, the hours slip away and meaning develops not only in one's personal life, but also in the workplace (Aierly, 2015; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Robinson, 2009; Stallard, 2015).

Creating Meaning in the Workplace

Fulfilling, satisfying work experiences are important not only for individuals but for organizations as well. Numerous studies and articles have demonstrated a decline in satisfaction in the workplace, showing employees less engaged than their colleagues decades prior (Gallup, 2013; Seligman, 2011). It is critical that organizations help employees to be engaged and to seek meaning in the work they do to ensure the vitality

of the organization for the long term. One of the top examples of how exemplary leaders

instill meaning in the workplace for their employees develops from meaningful

communication. Exemplary leaders use conversations and relationships to understand *the*

why for each individual employee. A good leader will ask questions to ensure employees

are happy with their positions. A great leader will ask what is needed to improve the

work environment. The exemplary leader takes the conversation further and implements

change based on conversations with team members. One example in *Hardwiring for*

Excellence described a hospital chief executive officer who asked the nurses how their

environment could be improved. The nurses asked for a copy machine at each nurses'

station. The change was implemented, the nurses were happy, and job satisfaction rose

significantly. The direct cost to the hospital was inconsequential, but the rewards were

priceless (Studer, 2003). In effect, studies have tied job satisfaction with increased

productivity and effectiveness, which thereby increases profitability. As a result, keeping

employees happy and satisfied positively impacts the overall success of the organization

(Covey, 2004; Dallimore & Mickel, 2006; Frankl, 1984; Gallup, 2013; Henderson, 2011;

Schwartz & Porath, 2014; Yang & Kassekert, 2010).

"Rich Karlgaard, the publisher of *Forbes*, says this is the next cycle of business…

Meaning. Purpose. Deep life experience. Use whatever word or phrase you like, but

know that consumer desires for these qualities is on the rise. Remember your Abraham

Maslow and your Viktor Frankl. Bet your business on it" (Pink, 2006, p. 225). Meaning,

purpose, and fulfillment increase employee engagement and satisfaction, which studies

contend will translate to increases in the bottom line. Further, "Spirituality affects our

work in three key areas: It leads us to engage in work that gives life meaning; it calls on

us to do work that is ethical and carried out in ethical context; and it inspires us to do work that makes a contribution to society" (T. Moore, 2008, p. 159). On average, a full-time employee spends typically one-third of their adult working life preparing for work or conducting tasks for which they are paid. "With that much time invested in the work environment, the satisfaction and fulfillment an individual derives from their work become important to an individual's well-being" (Henderson, 2011, p. 1). According to the 2013 Gallup poll *State of the American Workplace,* only 30% of employees in America stated they feel engaged at work, and worse, across 142 countries, only 13% of employees stated they feel engaged at work (Gallup, 2013; Schwartz & Porath, 2014). The article goes on to say, "For most of us, in short, work is a depleting, dispiriting experience, and in some obvious ways, it's getting worse" (Schwartz & Porath, 2014). Research shows that the need for meaning in the workplace is on the rise, particularly because basic needs are being met for most employees. As basic needs are met, the demands for seeking meaningful work increases, which, in turn, will increase the overall success of the organization.

For the health of an organization to be sustained in the 21st century, it is important to ensure that employees are finding meaning in their work. "Increasing a sense of meaningfulness at work is one of the most potent—and underutilized—ways to increase productivity, engagement, and performance" (Amortegui, 2014). In fact, Amortegui (2014) goes on to say, "employees who derive meaning from their work are more than three times as likely to stay with their organizations—the highest single impact of any other survey variable they tested" (para. 6). Model leaders can help employees feel a sense of meaningfulness through sharing stories of how their work is creating meaning

for others. One example is the hospital administrator who brought previous patients into

an annual corporate meeting to share personal thanks with the staff members who had

saved their lives or the lives of their family members. The stories were powerful

reminders to team members of the impact that each individual employee has on a patient,

from the orderly to the surgeon. Another example of developing meaning is through

sharing and publicizing small wins, such as positive comments and reviews from

customers, for all to see. Successful leaders allow employees to see the rewards of their

efforts and to feel the emotional connection to what they do, which in turn instills

meaning in the workplace. As explained in Cisek (2009), "the only thing that will really

motivate people is that which gives them deep meaning and purpose in their jobs and

their lives in general. Whatever you call it, it is spiritual at its base" (p. 8). Meaning in

the workplace encourages employees to do what is best for themselves, their customers,

and their organizations.

Finding meaning allows employees to feel good about what they are doing, which

in turn motivates them to increased productivity. Through a leader's ability to create

connections with employees, and then to recognize and appreciate the effort and attention

an employee puts into their work, a follower will feel their work means more and the

organization will benefit. Ulrich and Ulrich (2010) contend, "When our organizations

enact our highest values and embody our best aspirations, they inspire our best efforts"

(p. 10). As early as 1989, a study by Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre (1989) reported

people experienced more flow at work than in their leisure time, flow being described as

a state in which people "report feeling more active, alert, concentrated, happy, satisfied

and creative" (p. 816). As summarized by Ulrich and Ulrich (2010), when one finds

meaning in one's work, one will find meaning in one's life. The ability to derive meaning from one's work can lead to higher satisfaction overall, with work and with life.

In the book *Make It Matter: How Managers Can Motivate by Creating Meaning,* Scott Mautz (2015) described seven "Markers of Meaning" including: (1) Doing significant work that matters; (2) Personal opportunities to learn, grow, and influence; (3) Working with a heightened sense of competency and self-esteem; (4) Being in control and influencing decisions; (5) Cultivating an authentic, caring culture; (6) Mastering meaning-making leadership behaviors; and (7) Being free from corrosive workplace behaviors (p. 18). In fact, studies show that time, energy, and effort to help people find meaning in work makes them appreciate it more while providing an increased sense of ownership (Aierly, 2015). Ownership can be encouraged by management through allowing an employee to create and pave the way to success in their own position. Aierly (2015) calls this the *Ikea Effect*, which proves that when one puts time and effort into work to build something great, it has more meaning. A good leader can support and encourage creativity by allowing flexibility and the freedom to decide how to get to the end result. This freedom will make the task more meaningful when it is achieved. Skunk Works, a division of Lockheed Martin founded in 1943, is a prime example of an organization that allows creativity and disruptive innovation to take place, searching for new and innovative developments. Leadership of Skunk Works is known to provide an extreme level of autonomy to its employees. In addition, creativity is encouraged through the ability to make mistakes and the freedom to innovate, all leading to technologies no one knew existed. By building opportunities for increased meaning and fulfillment, leaders can develop employees who see value and importance in their work,

and that work can lead to new technologies and developments. Mautz (2015) said that humans are deeply filled and energized when their work has deep significance and value and when people feel they are doing what they were *meant* to be doing. More importantly, studies postulate that feelings of accomplishment, respect, and meaning in the workplace are more powerful motivators for coming to work than the paycheck received (Aierly, 2015; Covey, 2004; Henderson, 2011; Mautz, 2015).

Mautz (2015) proposed that "accordingly, the potential for a trickle-down negative impact on meaning, fulfillment, and performance is too great to not get all this right" (p. 212). Recognition of accomplishments and successes will help to motivate and inspire employees, thereby increasing meaning and value. Exemplary leaders are skilled at recognizing small wins, which in turn leads to replicated behaviors and bigger wins. Ways in which to share wins include acts such as producing something like "Wow" cards, which can be handed to employees for a job well done, or "Employee of the Month" awards at meetings. By publically recognizing others, leaders instill a sense of pride with employees. T. Moore (2008) postulates that our work is important, "not just as a means for making a living, but as the medium through which you become a person" (p. xv). Additionally, strong leaders can make a follower feel meaning by engaging in conversation, actively listening to others, and making employees feel good about what they are doing. Robinson (2009) contends that finding one's element is essential to a balanced and fulfilled life and that doing what you love and what you do well can make everything else more substantial.

In summary, studies support the importance of increased meaning and fulfillment in the workplace. Creating a culture in which employees find meaning in their work is

critical for the health and well-being of the individuals, as well as the organization. The future success of organizations depends on it. Leaders within organizations have a responsibility to ensure the work environment supports opportunities to create meaning. As such, it is critical to understand the history and importance of leadership within organizations.

Leadership

"Leadership is about empathy. It is about having the ability to relate to and connect

with people for the purpose of inspiring and empowering their lives."

~ Oprah Winfrey

History of Leadership

Leadership practices and theories have changed over time, yet the need for great leaders remains strong (Bass & Bass, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Leadership theories have evolved from the seminal theories of ancient Greece and Rome to today. The personality theories of ancient times brought forth the idea that people with strong personalities, like Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great, were the ones who became leaders. Personality theories evolved to the Great Man theory, then to trait theories, followed by the advent of behavioral theories. Later, contingency theories, transactional, and more recently transformational leadership theories developed (Bass & Bass, 2008). Leadership theories have evolved, but it is undeniable that the need for good leadership remains vital to the future success of organizations.

Galton's Great Man theory of leadership dates back to the 1840s and contends that leaders possess innate leadership characteristics from birth, postulating that great leaders are born, not made. "In the nineteenth century, personal traits such as height,

weight, health, and education had been found to correlate with leadership" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 81). The Great Man theory implied that if one is not born with said leadership traits, they will not be able to develop leadership skills (Islam, 2010). Nearly two decades after the Great Man theory developed, philosophers began to dispute the theory, postulating that the leadership heroes were simply products of their times and that leaders evolved due to their circumstances, not due to intrinsic characteristics. As the Great Man theory was disputed, other leadership theories were researched and developed.

In the early 1900s, the trait-leadership theory became commonplace. The trait theory postulated that leadership traits were either innate from birth, or were developed over time, making leaders excel. Trait theory looked at a variety of characteristic traits in hopes of evaluating those most common among leaders, which then led to the advent of behavioral theories. In the 1940s and 1950s, behavioral theories in leadership developed, looking more at behavioral traits as opposed to the mental, physical, or social traits attributed to the earlier trait theories. With the advent of behavioral theories came the cliché "Leaders are made, not born." Numerous titles of behavioral theories developed, including the Managerial Grid Model and the Role Theory, dividing leader traits into two categories, those dealing with tasks versus those dealing with people (Bass & Bass, 2008).

As time went on, the 1960s and 1970s brought about contingency, situational, and transactional leadership theories. "In direct opposition to trait theorists, situational theorists have argued that leadership is a matter of situational demand; that is, situational factors determine who will emerge as a leader" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 52). Contingency and situation leadership theories postulated that there was no single way to lead a team or

organization, but instead, leadership styles must adjust to the particular situation. Leaders were concerned with how the followers would react or behave in certain situations. Leadership/followership concerns became even more important as transactional leadership developed in the 1970s. Transactional leadership focused on behaviors that would align the leader with the follower to ensure organizational objectives were met. "By 1970, there was plenty of evidence that particular patterns of traits were of consequence to leadership; these included determination, persistence, self-confidence, and ego strength" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 102). Later studies supported the importance of these traits and transformational leadership theory support was on the rise.

Transformational leadership is one of the more recent leadership theories and has been referenced in the literature as growing in popularity from late 1970s and the 1980s to today. "In the new paradigm, the transformational leader moves followers to transcend their own interests for the good of the group, organization, or society " (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 1190). Transformational leadership theory looks at how leaders use inspiration, charisma, relationships, and teamwork to develop followers and transform organizations through change. Many researchers have associated theories related to transformational leadership, including Burns, Bass, Kouzes, and Posner. In summary, "charismatic/transformational leaders arouse in followers unconscious motives of achievement, power, and affiliation" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 1191).

Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004) examined two of the more recent models of leadership when they compared servant leadership and transformational leadership. The authors offer the following characteristics of leadership found in both models: influence, vision, trust, respect, risk-taking, integrity, and modeling (Cisek, 2009; Stone et al.,

2004). Sood (2015) stressed the importance of service when she said, "Two things

transcend age, race, gender, country, religion, and even our planet and solar system:

service and love" (p. 135). As a result, more recent leadership theories in the 21st century

hold a more integrated approach (Bass & Bass, 2008; Collins, 2001; Crowley, 2011;

Northouse, 2009). In the book *Good to Great,* Collins (2001) describes five levels of

leadership theory. Collins (2001) stated that Level 1 leaders are "Highly Capable"; Level

2 leaders are "Contributing Members"; Level 3 leaders are "Competent Managers"; Level

4 are "Effective Leaders"; and Level 5 are "Executive Leaders". Level 5 leaders are

considered the highest, most effective leaders in an organization, according to Collins

(2001). "Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the

larger goal of building a great company. It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-

interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious—but their ambition is first and foremost

for the institution, not themselves" (Collins, 2001, p. 21). The integrated approach to

leadership continues to evolve.

Another more recent integrated leadership theory was described by Wilber (2000)

in his book *A Theory of Everything. A Theory of Everything* yields a four-quadrant model

of consciousness that will "draw together an already existing number of separate

paradigms into an interrelated network of approaches that are mutually enriching"

(Visser, 2003, p. forward). The four quadrants are intentional, behavioral, cultural, and

social. The conclusion is that an all-level approach is needed to secure an integral theory

of consciousness (Wilber, 2000). In this integrated approach, employees can find their

passion, which has been a recurring theme in leadership theory research. Regardless of

the theory of leadership, good leadership is vital to the success of an organization, which leads to research on the importance of leadership.

Importance of Leadership

According to Bass and Bass (2008), leadership is cross-cultural and takes place with all groups of people, from rulers to elected officials to organizational leaders. In fact, "No societies are known that do not have leadership in some aspects of their social life, although many, many lack a single overall leader to make and enforce decisions" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 3). Researchers further contend that high-quality leader/follower relationships have resulted in lower turnover rates, higher performance evaluations, higher commitment to the organization as a whole, better attitudes, more promotions, overall job satisfaction, and higher organizational success (Collins, 2001; Covey, 2004; Gallup, 2013; Northouse, 2009; Ulrich & Ulrich, 2010). In fact, it has been noted that "The single biggest decision you make in your job—bigger than all of the rest—is who you name manager. When you name the wrong person manager, nothing fixes that bad decision. Not compensation, not benefits-nothing" (Gallup, 2013). The importance of strong leadership and its influence on the success of an organization is evident in the literature.

In the book *Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge,* Bennis and Nanus (2007) describe leaders as having the following leadership characteristics: (1) a clear vision of the organization's future state, (2) the role of the leader as social architect for the organization, (3) a high level of trust created by clearly articulating and holding firm to stated positions, and (4) the use of creative deployment of self through positive self-regard. Kouzes and Posner (2006) state that the quest for leadership and making meaning

43

is "first an inner quest to discover who you are and it's through this process of self-examination that you find the awareness needed to lead" (p. 93). Furthermore, leadership must be transformational to build followers who can experience both personal and professional satisfaction in the workplace, which then transcends into one's personal life for meaning and fulfillment (Seligman, 2002). With that said, the need for positive influence from a leader is vital to the overall satisfaction among employees, which in turn supports the overall success of an organization. Positive influence from a leader is demonstrated through being present; communicating effectively and often with all employees; rewarding, recognizing, and celebrating small wins; and leading by example. In fact, "Nothing erodes respect and corporate culture more than a leader who does not lead by example all the time. An organization is only as good as the employees and leaders within it" (Etzel, 2016, p. 30). Research contends that transformational leaders are "highly expressive, articulate, and emotionally appealing. They are self-confident, determined, active, and energetic. Their followers want to identify with them, have complete faith and confidence in them, and hold them in awe" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 50). To ensure effective leaders bring personal and professional meaning into the workplace, it is important to understand what exemplary leaders do to create work environments that will motivate and inspire employees. In fact, "When we move on, people do not remember us for what we do for ourselves, they remember us for what we do for them" (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, p. chap 1 audio). As such, it is also important to understand followership and the power and characteristics followers have as they support the organization's success.

Followership

Power of Followership

An important factor of becoming a good leader is to first be a follower. Hegel's *Philosophy of the Mind* (1830/1971) reasoned that by first serving as a follower, a leader can better understand the role of followership. Hegel said that being a follower first and a leader second is vital in order for a leader to be effective (as cited in Bass & Bass, 2008). In being a good leader and understanding what it is like to be a follower, leaders can better direct their followers in success. Exemplary leaders share the importance of having a skilled mentor. By shadowing other great leaders, one can develop best practices that can be implemented within one's own organization. Leaders also continue to learn through training programs and coaching. In addition, great leaders hire coaches and seek accountability partners to ensure their effectiveness. In fact, Bass and Bass (2008) further contend that leader/follower relationships are needed for teams to bond, learn, and even avoid pain. Further, Northouse (2009) posits that a leader is morally responsible to followers, and decisions that may affect followers should include input and evaluation from the team. With team input and transparency, leaders will be more effective, and such inclusion and consideration will create trust and deeper organizational productivity. Northouse (2009) goes on to say that leaders must assess their followers' motives and aspirations and assist them in meeting their goals. In *Hardwiring Excellence,* Studer (2003) provides examples of seeking input from new employees at the 30-, 60- and 90-day marks, not to simply evaluate the employee, but to ask questions such as, *How does our company compare to your previous organization?* and *What changes do you see could be made to improve processes?* Through this input and

evaluation, the organization can be proactive in making positive changes and employees

have the sense that their opinions and comments matter. Great leaders also allow

employees to brainstorm and to include input on changes to processes. One example is

suggestion boxes or meetings in which ideas are shared. By including the team on

change projects and providing the team with the tools needed for success, the leader can

step back from the process, empowering the team members to make positive changes. To

understand a follower's aspirations, it is important for a leader to understand the traits

and characteristics that embody a follower.

Characteristics of Followers

A good leader must be adept at seeking followers who embody specific traits and

characteristics for the stated position. Strong leaders will use communication and

observation to ensure a person's skills match what is required for the position. When

seeking the correct followers for a position, Etzel (2016) emphasizes, "Seek the right

people, with the right talents for the position, equip them as needed for the job, and then

get out of their way" (p. 7). Collins (2001) echoes these sentiments when he states that

leaders must get the right people on the right bus, in the right seats, and the wrong people

off the bus. A great example of leading with the right talent came from Sam Walton and

how he set his employees up with the tools for success. Walton hired the right employees

and gave them the freedom to run each department as if it were their own business.

Walton trusted department leaders and stood back to watch his organization grow through

the values, skills, and talents of his leaders. As a reminder, followers tend to act similar

to their leader, a mirroring technique of follower to leader, which can benefit the

organization provided the leader is leading with ethics and morals. When studying

46

leaders and followers, it is important to know the variables that contribute to the success of a leader.

Variables in Leadership

Leadership and theories of leadership have been studied for centuries, yet, as Bass and Bass (2008) note, "Critics complain that despite all the research, nothing is known about leadership! Still others declare that leadership is a figment of the imagination or that leadership as a research subject is moribund and has reached a dead end" (p. 1205). Despite concerns regarding leadership theories, the study of leadership and the importance of certain variables within leadership continue to be topics of discussion. Developing quality leaders for the health and sustainability of organizations is vital. Through the study of positive leadership traits and characteristics, certain traits can be capitalized on to further develop and replicate strengths. "Herda (1999:32) states that 'If we believe we can change ourselves and help others set up the conditions whereby others can change with us, we act differently than if we are interested solely in producing facts or knowledge without considering the applications or implications of our actions'" (as cited in Cisek, 2009, p. 2). Further, Bass and Bass (2008) argue that the study of leadership will continue to be needed as new challenges continue to surface, including leadership with virtual teams, self-management, and leader-member exchange development. Throughout the historical study of leadership over many centuries, studies have independently looked at character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration as variables to successful leadership practices, yet no one study has combined these five common variables and traits to evaluate exemplary leadership. This study contends that leaders will be more successful in creating meaning in the workplace throughout the 21st

century by evaluating exemplary leaders who embody all five traits: character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration.

Character

Character is one variable defined as a necessary leadership trait. In fact, "A study of world leaders over the past 150 years asserts that managers who possess strong character will create a better world for everyone, while leadership generally is vital to the social, moral, economic, and political fabrics of society" (Cooper, Sarros, & Santora, 2007). As such, the theoretical definition of character is the moral compass by which a person lives their life (Bass & Bass, 2008; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; T. Moore, 2008; J. C. Quick & Wright, 2011; Sankar, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the operational meaning of character has been defined by the peer researchers as the alignment of a value system that promotes ethical thoughts and actions based on principles of concern for others through optimism and integrity while being reliable, transparent, and authentic.

Moral compass. Research shows character in leadership is present when a leader has a strong moral compass, whereby leaders are ethical in their thoughts and in their actions (Cisek, 2009; Covey, 1991; T. Moore, 2008; Ricoeur, 1992). In fact, Bass and Bass (2008) stated that moral examples have been set from Greek and Roman leaders, like Julius Caesar, to Confucius and Lao-tzu. Character is displayed through decision making processes which depend upon morals and ethics. An exemplary leader will ask "*Is this the right thing to do?*" before taking action. Leaders must ensure that they, and their followers, are able to make moral and rational decisions, in addition to acting with a sense of responsibility and meaning (Cisek, 2009; Loughead, 2009). Ethical and moral leadership can increase effectiveness in followers, making these character traits vital to

the health of an organization (Cisek, 2009; T. Moore, 2008; Robinson, 2009; Spano, 2013). Though morality in leadership dates back centuries, it is even more relevant today. Leaders lacking character in their moral and ethical decisions are rampant in the news, from fraudulent use of travel funds and nepotism by a university president to inappropriate use of tax dollars by presidential candidates. Trust is contagious, as is distrust. Leaders who live a life with a moral compass can avoid negative press, and instead lead through positive action, which in turn supports the growth of the organization. It is the moral and ethical leaders who make good decisions for themselves and their followers who will lead organizations to long-term sustainability. In the book *Influencer,* Patterson (2008) stated that it is important for leaders to set the rules based on moral standards. In effect, as discussed in the book *A Life at Work* by T. Moore (2008), one's ethics at work must align with one's ethics in daily life or one will be torn and unable to work effectively. Further, Covey (1991) stated that deep integrity and fundamental character strengths must be present to have long-term success. By modeling desired behaviors based on the foundation of trust and integrity, extraordinary leaders can expect similar results from employees. Transformational leadership theory characteristics include the emphasis on moral good, with core values of integrity, trust, and ethics (Cisek, 2009; Northouse, 2009). Specific traits, such as honesty, integrity, and trust, have consistently been present in the defining character strengths.

Honesty, integrity, and trust. Good moral character is often displayed through the traits of honesty, integrity, and trust (Stone et al., 2004). As such, these character strengths must be present for an organization to have long-term success (Baird, 2010; Covey, 1991; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Shugart, 1999). Honesty, integrity, and trust

support organizational growth as well as personal growth. In fact, Covey (1991) contends that integrity and honesty "create the foundation of trust which is essential to cooperation and long term personal and interpersonal growth" (5:31 audio). Extraordinary leaders display honesty, integrity, and trust through model behaviors, both inside and outside of their organizations. A leader who is trustworthy is one who follows through on their commitments and who communicates openly about their feelings. A trustworthy leader provides clarity to a situation and is willing to listen to the group for suggestions and collaboration. Covey (1991) speculated that one cannot sustain trust without trustworthiness. Trust and trustworthiness are vital to the success of both leaders and followers and have been studied extensively as a trait that supports personal and organizational success.

Kouzes and Posner (2006) described trust as listening, valuing others, stepping out of one's comfort zone, being honest, and keeping commitments. Where there is a climate of trust, then people can let go and take ownership of their actions (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). A trustworthy leader must first and foremost trust others. By trusting the team, a leader is vulnerable and can let go of control so that the team may innovate and collaborate. In fact, "Trust has been described as the bedrock of effective leadership and a healthy organizational climate" (Baird, 2010, p. 1). Kouzes and Posner (2006) go on to state that "Trust is the social glue that binds human relationships. Without it we would be unable to get anything meaningful accomplished" (chapter 10 audio). And finally, "Baier (1986) used the metaphor that trust is like air: invisible but essential" (as cited in Baird, 2010, p. 2).

Equally important to sustaining trust, "Betrayal of trust," which McCall &

Lombardo (1983) define as having a lack of integrity, was one of the top ten traits that

were found to stem a budding leader's success. In fact, 'betrayal of trust was noted to be

the single 'unforgivable sin' from which leaders could rarely rebound" (as cited in Baird,

2010, p. 14). Further, one needs to protect trustworthiness because trust takes years to

build, but can suffer serious damage in just a moment if it is challenged or broken (Baird,

2010). Honesty, integrity, and trust are examples of traits that support an organization's

growth through a positive value system.

Value system. A positive, value-driven culture has consistent guiding values, a

shared purpose, teamwork, innovation, learning, appreciation, encouragement, and

recognition (Covey, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007). Quality leaders engage

employees in identifying and developing their own personal value and mission

statements, which can then lead to development and alignment with organizational

values. Through this activity, the leader and the employees can establish a personal

connection to the organization and its mission. Further, the leaders can then collaborate

with the groups to develop organizational values. Organizational values are

communicated through the development of a collaborative mission, vision, and values

statement. Extraordinary leaders are mindful of the words they use to instill the corporate

value system throughout all communication. A strong leader is not afraid to post their

stated values for all to see, including in entrances of the organization or on the signature

lines of their emails. The values become the guiding force for an exemplary organization

and the leaders ensure all employees are working to support the values. In addition, a

transformational leader creates a culture whereby personal development is encouraged,

effort is valued and rewarded, and people are respected as members of a team (Covey, 2004; Cutler, 2014). These values support positive influence and growth for an organization and are contagious among team members with flow. By recognizing and rewarding others through a value-driven culture, positive results will be replicated. In fact, "Credit is infinitely divisible. The more you give the more you get. There's always some left for you" (Patterson, 2008). An example of an exemplary leader rewarding values may be the use of an annual award system whereby one employee is recognized for their alignment with the values of the organization. Bennis and Nanus (2007) observed "leaders induced (stemming from their own self-regard) positive *other-regard* in their employees. And this turns out to be a pivotal factor in their capacity to lead" (p. 58). Leaders with character have integrity and make decisions for the right reasons. Exemplary leaders that possess character lead with courage and stand for what they believe in. Additionally, a leader's actions and values are influenced by their character (Northouse, 2009). Positive traits, such as trust and character, in effective leadership are seen through the positive outlook a leader displays.

Optimism. As described by Peterson and Seligman (2004), optimism occurs when one is hopeful and expresses positivity, trust, and confidence regarding future outcomes. Lowney (2003) concurred when he stated that "we perform our best work in supportive, encouraging, and positively-charged environments" (p. 5). Seligman (2002) further stated that optimism has been proven to cause less cardiovascular disease and greater well-being, as well as better connections with one's environment and the ability to provide meaning in one's life. Optimists have the ability to look at setbacks as surmountable. Optimists look at setbacks as one single problem that is likely temporary

and will be resolved with changes to the circumstances. A pessimist sees setbacks as devastating and, as a result, the pessimist has difficulty recovering from setbacks. Optimism is critical to helping leaders rise above challenges to seek opportunities. Positive emotions and optimism can strengthen a leader's ability to solve problems and can encourage finding solutions in new and innovative ways. Seligman (2011) stated, "Companies with better than a 2.9:1 ratio for positive to negative statements are flourishing" (p. 66). Extraordinary leaders will go out of their way to recognize employees in a positive fashion, whether it is on a personal or a professional level. Optimistic leaders will be sure to state more positive comments than negative. Bennis and Nanus (2007) shared the example of Irwin Federman, former president and chief executive officer of Monolithic Memories, who illustrated the importance of optimism wisely when he said:

> If you think about it, people love others not for who they are, but for how they make us feel. We willingly follow others for much the same reason. It makes us feel good to do so. In order to willingly accept the direction of another individual, it must feel good to do so. This business of making another person feel good in the unspectacular course of his daily comings and goings is, in my view, the very essence of leadership. (p. 58)

In the book *Flourish*, Seligman (2011) summarized the importance of optimism when he said, "To flourish, an individual must have all the 'core features': Positive emotions, engagement, interest, meaning, and purpose and three of the additional features: Self-esteem, optimism, resilience, vitality, self-determination, positive relationships" (p. 27). Strong leaders will make the most of situations and will look at

obstacles or weaknesses as opportunities. The optimistic leader will convey messages of

positivity through difficult times, encouraging team members to watch for the bright side

when a change is fully implemented, for example. The positive leader will always find

the silver lining and will share their enthusiasm with others. Having a positive attitude

and a positive outlook are critical traits for a strong leader, as are reliability and

resiliency.

   Reliability and resiliency. Like optimism, reliability and resiliency are

additional traits that a leader with character displays. A leader is said to have reliability

when they demonstrate consistency in behaviors, attitudes, and actions. A reliable leader

follows through on what they state they will do. Consider examples like Martin Luther

King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela, who proved that through consistency and reliability,

despite self-sacrifice and risks, others would follow in their cause. By demonstrating

reliability, these extraordinary leaders established trust with their followers. A leader

with resiliency is also a leader who is able to spring back from setbacks and recover from

difficulties and challenges. Reliable and resilient leaders have the capacity to learn from

their mistakes and seek opportunities for improvements (Northouse, 2009; Patterson,

Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2012; Ulrich & Ulrich, 2010). Further, reliable leaders

also have the skills to support team members in the development of their own resiliency

(Moua, 2010; Ulrich & Ulrich, 2010). As stated by Northouse (2009), "Skilled leaders

are competent people who know the means and methods for carrying out their

responsibilities" (p. 2). Reliability and resiliency are important and positive character

traits, as are transparency and authenticity.

Transparency and authenticity. Recent research postulates that leaders who lead from the heart with transparency and authenticity in their actions and words are more successful (Crowley, 2011; Etzel, 2016; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; T. Moore, 2008; W. Moore, 2014). Transparent leaders share their visions and goals through constant communication with their organization. A transparent leader is said to wear their vision, and their heart, on their sleeve, acting as a role model by persistently living out their dreams and sharing their goals with others. The organization and the employees are more functional when they have a clear sense of the goals and expectations of their leaders. Transparency and authenticity occur when a leader is clear and honest about actions, behaviors, and attitudes. An authentic leader is genuine and does not keep secrets from followers. Transparent and authentic leaders are honest and ethical in their thoughts and in their actions. "Authentic leadership does not come from the outside in, it comes from the inside out" (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, p. 92). Good leaders possess the ability to be transparent and authentic in their actions, while caring about their followers and the feelings of others (Northouse, 2009). Further, Robbins (2008) stated that it is vital to listen to others and that "by listening to people, you let them know that you care, that they're important, and that what they say and who they are matters to you" (p. 115). Transparency and authenticity, along with optimism, trust, and reliability, encompass character traits important to exemplary leadership. In addition to character, relationships are also vital to the health and well-being of an organization. Exemplary leaders must instill positive relationships within their organizations.

Relationships

"Leaders become great, not because of their power,

but because of their ability to empower others."

~ John Maxwell

In expressing the meaning of his life in one sentence, Frankl (1984) said "the

meaning of my life is to help others find the meaning of theirs" (p. 165). Positive

relationships between leaders and followers are vital to the success of an organization.

Encouraging others to find meaning develops through relationships, which can lead to

long-term success for an organization by creating supportive and rich environments

(Amortegui, 2014; Covey, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Mautz, 2015; Pink, 2006;

Seligman, 2011; Ulrich & Ulrich, 2010). The theoretical definition of a relationship is

the bond established between people through encouragement, compassion, and open

communication, which lead to feelings of respect, trust and acceptance (Bermack, 2014;

Frankl, 1984; George, 2003; George & Sims, 2007; Henderson, 2011; Kouzes & Posner,

2006, 2007; Liborius, 2014; Mautz, 2015; McKee et al., 2008; Reina & Reina, 2007;

Seligman, 2011; D. M. Smith, 2011; Ulrich & Ulrich, 2010). For the purpose of this

study, the operational meaning of relationships has been defined by the peer researchers

as authentic connections between leaders and followers involved in a common purpose

through listening, respect, trust, and acknowledgment of one another.

Build the team, build the organization. "As iron sharpens iron, so one person

sharpens another," according to Proverbs 27:17. This proverb personifies the definition

and importance of relationships. Literature affirms that feelings of belonging to a team

because of strong, meaningful relationships are critical to the overall success of an

organization (Mautz, 2015; Seligman, 2011). *Management by walking around*, also

56

called *rounding,* is an effective tool for establishing powerful relationships. A good

leader will be cognizant of walking around on a regular basis, checking in with staff. A

great leader will use this technique to strengthen relationships, focusing not only on the

work environment, but more importantly by asking employees about their personal lives.

Exemplary leaders will take notes and build the relationship even further by remembering

to check in about a topic previously mentioned, such as asking how a sick child is doing

or asking about their weekend. By engaging in a personal conversation, leaders cite that

employees feel more connected to their work, thereby creating more meaning.

Employees will understand that leadership cares when they see leadership taking an

interest in employees. In fact, numerous authors found that human relationships between

workers and managers have a greater impact on productivity than focus on physical work

conditions and processes (Baird, 2010; Covey, 1991; Gallup, 2013; Patterson, 2008;

Seligman, 2011). Similarly, Collins (2001) stated that great organizations "illustrate the

idea that 'who' questions come before 'what' questions-before vision, before strategy,

before tactics, before organizational structure, before technology" (p. 45).

　　　Relationships between leaders and followers create environments in which

success flourishes. Patterson (2008) detailed that teams build better capacity for success

because they are working together for the common good. By creating positive

relationships, the leader builds trust and confidence in their employees, and vice versa.

Kouzes and Posner (2006) stated that if an organization has a leader who states they do

not care if others like them, then leadership should fire that particular leader. By firing

the leader, the leadership will make the employees happier. Even if the leader is

productive, failure to care about others will create the negative relationships that will

eventually cause productivity to decline. In fact, leaders should be liked-relationships should be personal. "Leaders must be able to recognize their relationships with self and the other which are vital for members of organizations to thrive" (Cisek, 2009, p. 19). The concept of building teams for organizational success can be summed up in this quote: "Humans need each other for survival" (DeSteno & Valdesolo, 2011, p. 228).

Since humans need one another to thrive, the necessity of building strong teams is important. Numerous authors contend that organizational relationships begin with the leader (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Mautz, 2015; W. Moore, 2014; Robinson, 2009; D. M. Smith, 2011). A leader's ability to create positive and productive teams will help lead the organization to overall success. Team members can, and must, have different, but complementary, characteristics. Complementary traits will ensure the team is even stronger together. Team members' differences make creative work better than the sum of its parts. Team members complement their strengths and challenge each other to raise their game (Robinson, 2009). In fact, Covey (2004) stated, "true greatness comes from those who master the art of 'we' and through the mind that works selflessly with mutual respect and for the group's benefit" (chap. 2 audio). Exemplary leaders use words like *we* and *us* instead of *me* and *my.* Further, a strong leader will take blame when something goes wrong, yet be quick to state it was a team effort when there is success. "Leaders need to engage well with others (social skills) to accomplish common goals" (Lucas, 2015, p. 63). A good leader must use character strengths of honesty, authenticity, and reliability to build the team. Additionally, Kouzes and Posner (2006) declared, "If others know you genuinely care about them, they're likely to care about you" (p. 288). If employees feel a caring connection with their leader, they will work harder (Kouzes &

Posner, 2006). Building the team and the organization through relationships can instill

meaning among individuals and in the workplace.

  Meaning in connections. The building of relationships can introduce meaning

for employees in the workplace. "Meaning is made in moments, and what matters most

is the people we create those moments with" (Amortegui, 2014). In support of this

comment, Kouzes and Posner (2006) stated that people will do their best to follow you as

a leader if they know you at a deeper level than just as a boss. Connections between

employees and also between followers and leaders will support authentic relationships,

which result in meaningful connections. Additionally, literature states that leadership is

nurtured through interpersonal relationships created with trust and connectedness, and

people are more likely to trust those they know on a more personal level (Collins, 2001;

Covey, 2004; Crowley, 2011). Personal relationships and communication can grow

connectedness. According to Woody Allen, "80% of success is just showing up," and

this holds true for extraordinary leaders. A leader who shows up and is present is more

likely to create meaningful connections in the workplace. Leaders can take showing up

one step further through following up on a conversation by writing personal notes,

touching on achievements, giving thanks, words of advice, and inspiration. Furthermore,

"Meaning arises from people's cognitive processes and the way that, for each person,

their cognizance defines their relationships with other people and the world" (Flood,

1999, p. 110). These meaningful relationships create a sense of trust and safety among

leaders and followers within the organization. Sinek (2014) also reinforced the

importance of relationships by stating, "When we feel the *Circle of Safety* around us, we

offer our blood, sweat and tears and do everything we can to see our leader's vision come

to life" (p. 67). In fact, literature supports the need for high-touch, positive, personal relationships for the continued success of an organization (Covey, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Mautz, 2015; T. Moore, 2008; Pink, 2006; Seligman, 2011). Positive, interpersonal relationships and the ability to acknowledge others will empower employees to succeed and do their best for the organization.

It is said that "being able and willing to pay attention to and acknowledge the existence of others is one of the easiest and most basic ways to support, empower, and appreciate them. Yet it is often one of the most overlooked" (Robbins, 2008, p. 122). In the book *Make it Matter: How Managers can Motivate by Creating Meaning,* Mautz (2015) postulates that relationships are vital to creating conditions that allow for superior performance and personal connection for meaningful work. In addition, Harvey and Drolet (2006) state "relationships must be balanced with purpose; those organizations that propel commitment through joy are more productive than organizations dedicated solely to task" (p. 24). In fact, "High concept and high touch are on the rise throughout the world economy and society" (Pink, 2006, p. 52). Leaders and followers must nurture relationships for the overall success for the team and the organizations with which they serve. Pink (2006) goes on to say, "What will distinguish those who thrive will be their ability to understand what makes their fellow woman or man tick, to forge relationships, and to care for others" (p. 66). In fact, "when we feel that work is a place where we can express our true, best selves every day, and feel a tremendous sense of connectedness and harmony with our coworkers, leaders, and organization–it matters" (Mautz, 2015, p. 12).

In support of connectedness through meaningful relationships, Collins (2001) stated, "Members of good to great teams tended to become and remain friends for life. Their experiences went beyond just mutual respect, to lasting comradeship" (p. 62). In fact, "Connectedness is another hallmark of the soul. It's important in our work not only to be excited about being successful and making money, but also deeply concerned about the value of what we're doing and having a stake in the outcome or product" (T. Moore, 2008, p. 31). Relationships and connectedness will sustain an organization and the people in it. T. Moore (2008) contended that "Though it seems ordinary and simple, friendship is one of the most powerful forces on earth. It is a kind of love, a special brand, that can support you as you search for a life" (p. 147). Meaningful connections and relationships in the workplace are critical to the success of organizations in the 21st century.

Relevancy of workplace friendships and relationships. "Leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to follow" (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, ch. 6 audio). Relationships are vital to being part of a team within the workplace, whether it is between employees or between a leader and follower. A primary component is connecting with others who share the desire and passion to make the most of the team, with and for the organization. Extraordinary leaders will seek ways to make connections with team members through open communication and authentic dialogue. The best leaders will ask questions about where an employee is and where they would like to be in the future. When the leader discovers an employee's passion, they will provide tools and opportunities to help feed these passions. A leader knows that when one finds their element and true passion, one feels part of the team and is closest to their true self (Robinson, 2009). Connecting with people who have the similar passion

confirms you are not alone. Workplace relationships validate common passion. Through these relationships, team members have the freedom to share ideas, techniques, and enthusiasms, which in turn can drive the passion further, and raise the bar on personal and professional achievements. In fact, Robinson (2009) contends that workplace relationships support and inspire members to keep up with one another, which strengthens the commitment to excellence. As Isaac Newton said, "If I succeed it is because I stand on the shoulders of giants."

"When you ask people about what it is like being part of a great team, what is most striking is the meaningfulness of the experience. People talk about being part of something larger than themselves, of being connected, of being generative" (Senge, 2006, p. 13). For Bennis (1984) leadership is a transaction between people. Leaders can create meaning for others; however, leaders do not exist in a vacuum. They cannot simply explore the meaning they find in work alone as individuals. For them, meaningful work comes in their ability to act in concert with others (Cisek, 2009). In fact, Cisek (2009) contends, "Members of just institutions who find shared meaning in work can appropriate a better way of being with and for others" (p. 1). Great leaders know and understand that being part of a team, with personal relationships, will benefit themselves and the workplace.

Kouzes and Posner (2006) shared the sentiment that leadership is a personal relationship based on trust. Personal relationships create trust and people are more likely to trust those whom they know (Collins, 2001; Covey, 1991; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Loughead, 2009; T. Moore, 2008). Numerous authors discuss relationships and their importance in the workplace. Further, authors support the notion that "Doing what you

62

love and having relationships at work that help you as a person can give you feelings of peace and satisfaction at home and in the family" (T. Moore, 2008, p. 3). Seligman (2011) contends, "Even without knowing the particulars of these high points of [one's] life, I know their form: all of them took place around other people" (p. 20). Similarly, Kouzes and Posner (2006) indicated the significance of relationships and meaning when they said, "One of the great joys and grave responsibilities of great leaders is making sure that those in their care live lives not only of success, but of significance" (ch. 1 audio). In summary, the importance of relationships between leaders and followers, and also between employees, are clearly crucial for leading an organization to success. Like relationships, it is also critical for a leader to have a vision for the future within an organization.

Vision

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."

~ Proverbs 29:18

To create vision, one must objectively review the current state of the organization to develop a relevant and attainable future. In fact, Etzel (2016) theorized that "Outlining a vision of where you want to go is critical to the success of an organization" (p. 45). As such, the theoretical definition of vision is a bridge from the present to the future created by a collaborative mindset, adding meaning to the organization, sustaining higher levels of motivation and withstanding challenges (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; Landsberg, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 1993; Nanus, 1992). For the purpose of this study, the operational definition of vision has been defined by the peer researchers as the foresight

demonstrated by a compelling outlook on the future shared by leaders and followers who are engaged to create the future state.

　　Shared vision. Positive relationships among employees will ensure that a clear vision can be developed, leading to the success and sustainability of the organization. In fact, "Shared purpose is the thread that stitches together the fabric of relationships" (Sood, 2015, p. 182). Senge (2006) defined vision as a picture of the future that a leader would like to create with employees. In *Built to Last*, Collins and Porras (2002) describe how visionary leaders seek to build a company that will sustain over many different leaders. Their research demonstrated that a vision for the organization, not just the product, leads to sustainability. Visionary leaders encourage creativity among team members by providing them opportunities to share their creative ideas. Open dialogue and positive reinforcement of ideas flows freely from employees to management to senior management. Vision is a collaborative effort that originates from others. A strong leader concentrates everyone's attention on the vision. By allowing for and being open to a shared vision, the organization is always moving forward. Further, G. Quick (2006) stated, "the inspiration does not have to be 'heroic' to be motivational—rather all that is necessary is a clearly articulated purpose with well-defined objectives that employees can understand and buy into" (np). Shared vision provides a focus for learning, and the energy to follow through. A shared vision can help organizations expand opportunities which help to create the future, rather than be created by current events (Flood, 1999). Furthermore, "Great vision without great people is irrelevant" (Collins, 2001, p. 42). A great leader knows they cannot succeed alone, so a great leader ensures they communicate the shared vision to the team often. Unfortunately, creating a vision can be

difficult to understand and demonstrate and is oftentimes one of the most difficult tasks

for leaders to master (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Practitioners know a shared vision is

valuable, but oftentimes the pace of change and complex problems make it difficult to

create and articulate a futuristic vision. An exemplary leader must ensure the vision,

purpose, and mission of an organization are aligned. Through positive character traits

and strong relationships, trust will develop between the leader and followers to ensure the

vision is shared and aligns with the goals of the organization. If the vision does not align

with the mission and the purpose, it can lead to cynicism within the organization. Senge

(2006) clarified that a gap between the vision and the current behavior is opportunity for

creativity and growth. Techniques that visionary leaders use to encourage creativity

include allowing areas for casual conversations, such as break rooms or common areas.

Lower cubicles also encourage communication among team members. Further, the best

visionary leader positions himself or herself in an office location that is exposed to the

action taking place daily within the organization, not in the "ivory tower". Most

importantly, an effective leader must use positive traits, such as optimism and

authenticity, to effectively communicate the vision among the team members.

Developing and communicating a shared vision is important for growth in an

organization. "People who are clearest about their vision and values are significantly

more committed to their organizations than those who are not clear about their vision and

values" (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, intro). Furthermore, loyalty comes from a shared

vision and is inspired not by an idea, but by a true force in people's hearts (Senge, 2006).

Therefore, "communicating an attractive and inspiring vision to employees and

displaying self-sacrificing behavior that benefits the work group and with it acting as a

role model can be seen as important mechanisms in the process" (Effelsberg, Solga, & Gurt, 2014, p. 133). Leaders must adequately develop the communication flow of a clear vision to ensure that employees understand, support, and can follow through on actions that lead to positive outcomes on the vision. As such, "The learning organization in this sense is about cooperative relationships between people" (Flood, 1999, p. 26). In fact, in Collins and Porras (2002) book *Built to Last*, the research discovered that very successful organizations all had visionary leaders who had the ability to clearly articulate the vision of the organization, thereby creating a clear pathway to the future goals. It is through the clear articulation of the vision that employees are led to embrace and work toward the common goal for success.

With the pathway to the future in mind, Senge (2006) emphasized that an organization cannot have a full vision until the individuals within the organization buy into and support the stated vision. The starting point of vision for organizations only occurs after the climate allows for personal visions to grow. Sustained relationships and clear communication about the vision from the leader will ensure buy-in from employees. Lowney (2003) contends that anyone can be a leader, as one's life is filled with many opportunities in which to lead, and in doing so one's greatest power is his or her personal vision, which is shown through living a life of leading by example. Leaders must lead by example, embrace the vision themselves, and help employees also understand and embrace the vision. The vision then becomes shared, making it more viable and sustainable. In fact, Kouzes and Posner (2006) say that it's the people's vision that is most important, not necessarily the leader's vision. In summary, Henderson (2011) stated that "organizational DNA is created through shared vision, clear lines of

communication, and authority and alignment between espoused and perceived values" (p.

33), and understanding the reason for the vision will make it more likely to be successful

and sustainable for the overall organization's success.

The "why" of vision. "Commitment to clear, focused goals, and a vision of how

to accomplish those goals is necessary for high performing teams and groups and is a

sought after objective of organizations" (Henderson, 2011, p. 66). Without commitment

to the overall vision of an organization, the opportunity for success declines. Senge

(2006) wrote that committing to a vision can be overwhelming at times, yet one develops

personal mastery through seeing personal vision. Further, Simon Sinek (2009) stated it is

vital that an organization understand why it is in business. The organization must clearly

articulate its vision to internal and external stakeholders alike. Sharing a vision, *the why*,

can bring the organization together collectively. The shift in mindset occurs when the

team members switch from seeing parts to seeing wholes. The team members are active

participants in shaping reality in order for a vision to come to fruition (Senge, 2006).

Exemplary leaders are able to connect the dots of each individual's contribution. When

employees see the vision, it empowers them to see themselves as a part of a greater

whole, not only for the organization, but for society. One example is when leaders allow

employees the time to job-share and to cross disciplinary lines. This technique allows

employees to experience another colleague's position. By allowing this job-sharing,

employees see how all the pieces of the organization fit together. In addition, a model

leader also ensures that employees have time to work with customers. Working with

customers directly helps employees to understand the value and the why of a vision and

the organizational goals in order to fully embrace and support it. As Flood (1999)

theorizes, "Shared vision refers to shared operating values, a common sense of purpose, indeed, a basic level of mutuality. It extends insights and principles from personal mastery into a world of collective aspiration and shared commitment" (p. 23). By sharing the reasons for the vision, the opportunity for success is greater and the leaders can then inspire the team into action toward the common goals.

Inspiration

"Someone is sitting in the shade today because

someone planted a tree a long time ago."

~ Warren Buffett

In the book *Fire Them Up,* Gallo (2007) states there are seven simple secrets of influence: (1) Ignite your influence, (2) Navigate the way to success with vision, (3) Sell the benefit—put listeners first, (4) Paint a picture with stories and actions, (5) Invite input, (6) Reinforce outlook and be a beacon of hope, and (7) Encourage with praise. Taking the first letter of each influencer creates the acronym *INSPIRE.* Oftentimes the best innovations come from employees on the front line, working directly with customers. As a result, superior leaders will seek innovation from employees at all levels, encouraging innovation throughout the organization. Federal Express, recognized as one of the top ten most admired companies by *Fortune Magazine*, prides itself on innovation. FedEx inspires and challenges all employees to develop improvements in processes, customer satisfaction, and a variety of yet unknown inventions through both monetary awards and corporate recognition programs. As a result, numerous technological advances, from the use of biofuels to electronic package tracking, have developed and changed the way packages are delivered today. The theoretical definition

of inspiration is described as a source of contagious motivation that resonates from the heart, transcending the ordinary and driving leaders and their followers forward with confidence (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; I. H. Smith, 2015; Thrash & Elliot, 2003). Inspiration is an important leadership trait to support the employees in the work environment. For the purpose of this study, the operational meaning of inspiration has been defined by the peer researchers as the heartfelt passion and energy that leaders exude through possibility-thinking, enthusiasm, encouragement, and hope to create relevant, meaningful connections that empower followers.

Leader's ability to motivate followers. Kouzes and Posner (2009) stated that leaders truly believe they can make a difference in the lives of others by creating value through a shared vision. Leaders can visualize the future to create the ideal organization and they can bring the team members on the journey through their ability to inspire through vision. Great leaders are able to enlist others to join in on their dreams through their use of magnetism and quiet persuasion. Exemplary leaders are proud to roll their sleeves up and work as hard, at all levels, as their employees to share their passion for the organization. A great leader even states, "If I expect them to do it, then I should be able to do it." A clear example is Nordstrom's, as they require all employees to start at the bottom, on the sales floor with customers. The organization is proud to say that even the three brothers who are now chairmen started on the sales floor. As a result, the leaders of the organization know what it takes to motivate followers. Furthermore, "Leaders have to enlist others in a common vision…. Leaders breathe life into the hopes and dreams of others and enable them to see the exciting possibilities that the future holds" (Kouzes & Posner, 2007, p. 18). The ability to motivate and inspire others is a powerful tool for

leading an organization to success. In fact, as Collins (2001) shares in the book *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't*, the chief executive officer from Abbott Laboratories, George Cain, created success in his organization not through "an inspiring personality to galvanize the company, but [through] something much more powerful: inspired standards" (p. 31). As cited in the literature, "Inspirational theories of leadership include charismatic, transformational, and visionary theories. [These traits] focus on emotional and ideological appeals, displaying exemplary behavior and confidence" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 47).

Leader's ability to recognize and reward strengths. A leader's ability to inspire and reward a follower's strengths is critical for the success of the organization. Studies contend that recognizing and appreciating good work cannot be overemphasized. In fact, in the book *Hardwiring Excellence: Purpose, Worthwhile Work, Making a Difference*, Studer (2003) contends that reward and recognition can align behavior with the desired results, and ensure that such behaviors are then replicated among other team members. As far back as 1887, Proctor and Gamble understood the benefits of rewards when they established one of the first four-tiered profit-sharing programs. Profit-sharing was based upon commitment and buy-in to the organization. Financial gains were the result of an employee's hard work. As the saying goes, "Success breeds success!" Studer (2003) goes even further by postulating that feeling appreciated and recognized is a universal human need. In addition, numerous authors suggest that rewards and recognition can come in many forms, both monetary and non-monetary. Rewards used by exemplary leaders include verbal recognition, pats on the back, hand written thank-you notes, Employee of the Month awards, and a President's Award (Collins & Porras,

2002; Gallup, 2013; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Studer, 2003). In fact, "Sharing positive thoughts and reminders that your staff is meaningful and worthy of believing in themselves and your company exemplifies leadership that makes a difference" (Etzel, 2016, p. 132). A leader's ability to recognize and reward success can provide the motivation and inspiration for team members to do their very best. The ability to inspire others is vital, as is the need to use past successes through the wisdom gained over time on effective leadership strategies.

Wisdom

"Knowledge comes from learning. Wisdom comes from living."

~ Anthony Douglas Williams

Theorists contend that wisdom is important to our understanding of leadership and is relevant for leaders when making decisions for the common good of an organization (Bennis, 2007; Spano, 2013; Yang & Kassekert, 2010). The theoretical definition of wisdom is the ability to utilize cognitive, affective, and reflective intelligences to discern unpredictable and unprecedented situations with beneficial action (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Kekes, 1983; Pfeffer, 2010; Spano, 2013; R.J. Sternberg, 1998). For the purpose of this study, the operational definition of wisdom has been defined by the peer researchers as the reflective integration of values, experience, knowledge, and concern for others to accurately interpret and respond to complex, ambiguous, and often unclear situations.

Use of knowledge and experience. As quoted by John Meacham, "Wisdom lies not in what is known but rather in the manner in which knowledge is held and in how that knowledge is put to use" (as cited in Azure, 2004, p. 9). In fact, "It is only when an

individual realizes (i.e. experiences) the truth of this preserved knowledge that the knowledge is re-transformed into wisdom and makes this person wise" (Ardelt, 2004, p. 260). Exemplary leaders can put the wisdom gained throughout their leadership journey to use in the organization to create meaning for themselves and their followers. Martin Seligman (2002) describes a variety of individual character traits that demonstrate wisdom and self-knowledge, including curiosity, love of learning, open-mindedness, creativity, and perspective. Similarly, Azure (2004) measures wisdom in leaders through the framework of seven pillars: time perspective, reflective life experience, making sense of ambiguity, trade-off judgment, dealing with life pragmatics, psychological empathy, and emotional maturity. A combination of the exemplary leaders' character traits and experiential learning impacts the wisdom and knowledge a leader brings into the workplace. Gluck and Bluck (2011) point out that wisdom is acquired from what one has learned in different life phases, yet why some people develop wisdom more than others has yet to be determined. Additionally, wisdom is often termed as a sixth sense, which allows a wise leader to effectively plan, manage, and evaluate situations while supporting and giving feedback to followers (McKenna, Rooney, & Boal, 2009).

Some researchers theorize that the way to develop wisdom is to live a life filled with rich experiences (Oh, 2013; Warm, 2012). Similarly, Barone (2013) theorizes that "the older adult has advantages to obtaining wisdom that come from a lifetime of experiences in relationships, family matters, and a perspective about the important things in life " (p. iii). As such, wisdom is a variable developed over time and through rich experiences. Exemplary leaders often use storytelling to share successes and challenges from their past experiences. The use of stories can help employees to understand the

72

wisdom and knowledge that a leader brings to the organization. It is also through this storytelling that leaders can better understand the perspectives learned throughout their leadership journey. Additionally, Cook-Greuter (2005) postulates that wisdom develops with a deeper understanding of self, as well as awareness about more complex perspectives. The Berlin Wisdom Model describes how the acquisition of wisdom comes from the efforts of establishing a "good life," achieving excellence in mind and virtue, creating meaning through life experiences, and achieving balance between the personal and common good (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000). As a result, one could hypothesize that "wisdom enhances a leader's overall ability to make moral and ethical choices" (Spano, 2013, p. 2). Further, it is likely that leaders have the ability to foster wisdom in their followers (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). In summary, wisdom empowers an exemplary leader to lead deeply. And, as stated by Warm (2012), "Leading deeply makes a difference through tapping into meaning and purpose" (p iii).

     Leader's ability to share wisdom. "Wisdom is critically dependent on ethics, judgment, insight, creativity, and other transcendent forms of human intellection. Wisdom is concerned less with how much we know and more with what we do and how we act. Wisdom is a way of being and is fundamentally practical in a complex and uncertain world" (Ardelt, 2004, p. 187). A leader's ability to share the wisdom gained through experiences via story-telling and open communication can enhance the work environment. Leaders can impact followers in the organization through the wisdom they bring to a variety of situations. Mark Twain stated, "Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you would rather have talked", so it is also critical that exemplary leaders are good listeners, to add to their body of knowledge and wisdom.

"Yang (2011) further contends that when leadership is executed with wisdom, the leader has the potential to not only influence his followers and impact the organization, but to also impact global society…. If philosophical wisdom was concerned with the ultimate nature of things, practical wisdom was concerned with the ultimate good of many" (as cited in Spano, 2013, p. 5). Leaders can use wisdom and past experiences as a guide to create a meaningful workplace for themselves and their followers.

History of University Presidents

Historical Timeline of Higher Education

The history of universities and colleges in the United States dates back nearly 400 years with the opening of Harvard University in 1636 in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Sass, 2016). According to the Harvard University website, Harvard began with nine students and one master teacher and today has nearly 360,000 living alumni. In 1693, nearly 30 years after Harvard University began, a second college, The College of William and Mary, opened up in Williamsburg, Virginia. Decades later, in 1751, Benjamin Franklin opened the first "English Academy", which later became the University of Pennsylvania. The number of students and the number of universities continued to increase at a slow pace for the next 100 years. The student population was typically white, privileged males studying religion, but as the number of universities increased, the desire to add more degrees and areas of study grew. By the mid-1800s, the population was developing an appreciation for higher education. In 1862, the Morrill Land Grant Act passed (Goldin & Katz, 1999; Kaufman, 2016; Sass, 2016). The Morrill Land Grant Act donated land to states for the support of at least one state college. The Morrill Act

drove the development of state colleges and universities throughout the country, and as a result, there were more than 800 colleges and universities by 1900.

According to Sass (2016), nearly 40 years after the Morrill Land Act, in 1901, the first public community college, Joliet Junior College, was established in Joliet, Illinois, serving six students in its inauguration year. The community college system was designed to prepare students who intended to transfer to a four-year baccalaureate program in the future. From 1901 to 1960, community colleges were on the rise. By the 1960s, community-college enrollment nearly tripled. During this period, the student demographics at colleges and universities drastically changed. With the advent of the post-war GI Bill, there was a significant increase in the number of veterans entering college, which thereby increased student diversity. In addition, the student population increased from 1.5 million in the 1940s to over 2.7 million in the 1950s. Higher education was expanding to a more ethnically and economically diverse population (Kaufman, 2016).

Today, nearly 400 years after the first university opened in the United States, there are nearly 5,000 "typical" colleges and universities throughout the United States ("National Center for Education Statistics," 2016). Table 1 shows the number of degree-granting institutions and the growth since 1980.

Table 1

Types and Number of Degree-granting Colleges and Universities: 1980 – 2012

	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010	2011	2012
Total Degree-granting	3,231	3,559	4,183	4,276	4,599	4,709	4,726
2-year colleges	1,274	1,418	1,732	1,694	1,729	1,738	1,700
4-year colleges	1,957	2,141	2,450	2,582	2,870	2,968	3,026

Note: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Digest of Education Statistics, 2014* (NCES 2016-006), http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=84

With the advent of the internet in the 1990s and the fast-paced growth of technology, changes to higher education also rapidly evolved. The University of Phoenix and Jones International began to offer full online programs. Today, the number of students taking programs and courses online continues to rise. In addition, new models of education are forming such as competency-based education and massive open online courses (MOOCs).

As the value of higher education is in question, the need for strong graduation rates, low loan-default rates, and specific assessment tools will continue to rise. Improvements in higher education and the need for both federal and state-level involvement are driving changes in higher education. There are also increased demands for student performance and outcomes as changes take place in educational modalities. With the changing environment in higher education, the need for strong transformational change is also on the rise. It is essential to have strong leadership from university presidents. It is also important to recognize, identify, and describe what makes a university president successful to best meet the needs of the institution and the students it serves.

University Presidents

Higher education in America was originally reserved for the elite. The student populations consisted of wealthy, privileged, young White males, most often studying religion or to become a clergyman (Kaufman, 2016). In fact, Kaufman (2016) stated, "Harvard University, the oldest university in the U.S., graduated about 70% clergymen in the 17th century, 45% in the 18th, and by the latter half of the 19th century, only 10%" (np). The demographics of university presidents mirrored those of the student population.

Today, the diversity of university presidents is similar to what it was in decades past, yet the student population, knowledge gained, and modality of delivery in higher education is rapidly changing.

Who they are. According to a 25-year study on university and college presidents, Cook (2012) stated that in 1986, "the typical college leader was a white male in his 50s. He was married with children. Protestant, held a doctorate in education, and had served in his current position for six years" (para. 4). In 2012, the demographic had not changed much, with the exception that the average age in nearly 60% of the colleges and universities increased by 10 years to 61 years old. Cook (2012) postulated that the reason for the increase in age was the complexity of leading higher-education institutions, leading governing boards and higher-education committees to choose more experienced leaders.

What they do. In the American Council on Education study entitled *The American College President: Key Findings and Takeaways,* "Presidents cited fundraising, budgets, community relations, and strategic planning as the areas that occupy most of their time" (Cook, 2012, para. 8). The president of a university is the lead administrator of a multi-million- or even multi-billion-dollar organization. A university can employ hundreds of faculty and staff members and may serve thousands, or even tens of thousands, of students annually. The university president is responsible for making a contribution to the community and is held accountable to the board of directors (Cook, 2012; Corrigan, 2002; Faust, 2010). Universities are an important part of society in a global system increasingly driven by knowledge, information, technological changes, and a tumultuous political arena (Cook, 2012; Faust, 2010). Furthermore, as baby boomers

age, it is anticipated that mass retirements will present a great challenge, or even a shortage, of university leadership (Cook, 2012).

Budgets and fundraising. One of the main roles of university president is the role of fiscal responsibility for the institution. As stated by Cook (2012), the duties of budgets are reported as one of the least desired tasks of a university president, but the university must maintain strict budgets to sustain itself. In addition, fundraising is a large portion of a university president's role to ensure an adequate amount of revenues through fundraising, endowments, and financial-aid support. With fiscal responsibility comes the requirement to communicate with board members, donors, alumni, administration, and state and federal lawmakers. The president must ensure that tuition and financial aid are adequate to support students and to establish continued enrollment. The president must also oversee the budgetary responsibilities by department, which can become complicated as models vary on how funds should be distributed to ensure that student outcomes are achieved and that research is appropriately funded (Murray, 2000). Ultimately, the president must report such fiscal responsibilities to the board of directors and the community as a whole.

Community relations. The university president plays an important role in community relations, for professional and political reasons. A university president must be skilled at communicating with all stakeholders: board members, donors, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the community at large. Maintaining relationships with external organizations must reach beyond the university. Both internal and external relationships will ensure positive working relationships with faculty and staff at the university. Studies confirm that human capital, the people that work at the organization, are truly the most

valuable asset, and they must be treated as such for the benefit of the organization (Covey, 1991; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; W. Moore, 2014). The ability to collaborate effectively with multiple stakeholders is a critical component of the role of university president.

Strategic planning. Dr. Drew Gilpin Faust, Harvard University president, said, "Knowledge is replacing other resources as the main driver of economic growth, and education has increasingly become the foundation for individual prosperity and social mobility." Faust (2010) goes on to quote a recent survey in the United States that found that 55% of respondents believe higher education is "absolutely necessary" for success and that the impact is global, with over 20% of Harvard students being international. As such, the university president must lead the institution and members through communicating effectively with board members, faculty, administration, community members, lawmakers, donors, students, and parents. Being a university president requires the "type of intelligence that synthesizes and applies knowledge in a visionary way to create strategies for success and distinction" (Johnson Bowles, 2013). The survival of an institute of higher education is dependent upon the president's ability to effectively lead the institution's teams (Corrigan, 2002). Understanding the strategies needed to lead stakeholders in a university setting is vital to the success of these institutions.

Academics. One role of the university president is instructional leadership. Areas of measurement for the success of a university include student achievement, faculty performance, and research. For the development of students and the research the institution produces, a president must communicate with the deans and faculty from

academia. As Ramsden (1998) researched universities from the years 1997 to 2005, one of the most notable challenges facing academic leaders is the ability to help staff "cope with increased workloads, maintaining motivation and morale at a time of declining public respect for the profession, and rewarding performance" (p. 7). Effective leadership strategies are critical for university presidents to ensure they lead through challenging times with deans and faculty.

Personal ethics and values. Successful leadership has been linked to a moral compass, which includes honesty, trustworthiness, ethics, reliability, and transparency (Collins, 2001; Cook, 2012; Covey, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Robbins, 2008). Internal and external factors can affect and challenge a leader's ethics, and the strength of a leader's moral compass may affect how the leader reacts to a particular situation. According to Cesarone (1999), "Resilience is the human capacity and the ability to face, overcome, be strengthened by, and even be transformed by experiences of adversity" (p. 12). Resilient leaders are able to deal effectively with stress and are able to overcome setbacks, oftentimes with optimism. Castro and Johnson (2008) noted that resilient leaders are leaders who demonstrate self-awareness and who establish healthy and supportive relationships with others. Further, resilient leaders have strong interpersonal skills and coping skills to help them deal with the pressures of life. University presidents must have strong ethical values and must be ready to defend their ethics if need be.

With the multifaceted role of university president, the president must have the ability to lead a diverse set of stakeholders. According to Bass and Steidlmeier (1999), transformational leaders are able to adjust their behavior continually to ensure development of followers. As such, it is important to know more about what

extraordinary presidents do to lead their followers through meaning and the strategies and characteristics that must be present to ensure success.

Need for Meaning in Universities

The success of a university is critical as the university provides the educational foundation of our workforce, our future leaders, and the business executives of the future. As stated by Faust (2010), "the university's place is a paramount player in a global system, increasingly driven by knowledge, information, and ideas. We live in a time when knowledge is ever more vital to our societies and economies" (para. 2). For a university to remain successful in this ever-changing, global, technologically advanced society, a university president must lead effectively through the transformational changes required to remain successful and competitive. The president is responsible for leading a diverse set of stakeholders through change. As Ramsden (1998) stated, "it is the task of academic leaders to revitalize and energize their colleagues to meet the challenge of tough times with eagerness and with passion" (p. 3). It is noteworthy that research on university presidents is comprised of their roles and responsibilities independent of research on the traits that support these roles. Studies have examined the various leadership styles and practices of university presidents (Aldighrir, 2013; Brown, 2010; Corrigan, 2002; Johnson Bowles, 2013), yet few studies have examined how specific variables can support and define how extraordinary presidents lead their teams to ensure they find meaning in their workplace and in their lives. This study will add to the body of knowledge on leadership traits of university presidents by specifically focusing on five particular variables–character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration–and how extraordinary university presidents use these variables to create personal and

organizational meaning for themselves and their followers. Further, this study will

identify and describe the strategies these extraordinary presidents use to ensure that

presidents meet the needs of both internal and external stakeholders effectively. To

ensure that leaders bring personal and professional meaning into the workplace, it is

important to understand what exemplary university presidents do to create work

environments that motivate and inspire employees to make a positive impact on society

and to develop the leaders of tomorrow. The search for meaningful, desirable, satisfying

work experiences is widespread among individuals, as well as for the health and

sustainability of organizations.

Summary

"The meaning of life is to find your gift.

The purpose of life is to give it away."

~ Pablo Picasso

Studies have postulated that people find motivation in things that bring meaning

and purpose in their lives and in their work (Cisek, 2009; Frankl, 1984; Mitroff &

Denton, 1999; Pink, 2006). Furthermore, studies have shown a direct correlation

between workplace happiness and increased productivity (Driscoll & McKee, 2007;

Gallup, 2013; W. Moore, 2014; Robbins, 2008; Sheep, 2006). Organizations, including

institutes of higher education, can benefit by providing an environment where meaning is

brought into the workplace, which transcends into their personal lives. Exemplary

university presidents can use a variety of tools with specific characteristics to ensure that

meaning is at the forefront of the mission of the organization. As stated by Sheep (2006),

"Consider nothing less than what the world is like when the decisions and actions of

work organizations become the chief determinants of the well-being of society" (p. 362).

Research has recognized the need for bringing meaning to one's life dating as far back as

the seminal works of Aristotle through the 20th-century Viktor Frankl. With meaning, to

quote the words of singer Sam Cooke, "What a wonderful world this would be!"

Researchers continue to add to the body of knowledge on how bringing meaning in the

workplace benefits self, organization, and society.

Senge (2006) claimed that today's organizations do not adequately provide

employees the opportunity to fill the higher-order needs, like self-respect and self-

actualization; therefore, organizations must continue to address these needs. As the

literature supports, employees seek purpose in their lives, a greater calling than simply

sitting at a desk for eight hours a day (Aierly, 2015; Amortegui, 2014; Bennis & Nanus,

2007; Covey, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Seligman, 2002, 2011). Similarly, "people

are more interested than ever in having the time they spend working matter" (Steger, Dik,

& Duffy, 2012, p. 322). In fact, it is the responsibility of top leadership, not human

resources, to ensure the creation of a meaningful workplace. Warren Bennis (1989)

postulated that at precisely a time when the trust and credibility of leaders are at an all-

time low, and a time when leaders feel most inhibited to exercise their talents, America

most needs leaders who can lead the team in a meaningful work environment. He further

contends that society cannot function without leaders, just as humans cannot function

without a brain. "Today, the defining feature of social, economic, and cultural life in

much of the world is abundance" (Pink, 2006, p. 31). Abundance is reshaping the way

we think as it appeals to the rational, logical, and functional needs, which are dolefully

insufficient (Pink, 2006). It is a moral imperative to ensure that meaning is brought into the workplace.

Steger et al. (2012) summarized their research by stating that people who feel meaning in the workplace report a higher state of well-being, feel their work is more valuable and important, and are better satisfied with their work. Overall, meaningful work leads people to believe they are serving a higher purpose and they are therefore more satisfied and work more cohesively with others. With people spending more than half of their waking life at work, work matters. Work that brings meaning to one's life is important to one's psychological health. Steger et al. (2012) also noted that research on the influence of perceptions that work is meaningful to one's well-being is an exciting area of growing relevance for researchers, managers, and organizations alike. "We can find significance and fulfillment in the work itself depending on the impact it has on who and what is important to us and its congruence with who we are" (Mautz, 2015, p. 11). The worth of this study is to provide information on behaviors exemplary leaders, specifically university presidents, use to instill personal and professional meaning within their organizations.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Chapter III is a review of the methodology used in the study, which identified and described the behaviors used by exemplary university presidents to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers. This study also evaluated the degree to which the university presidents' followers believe the behaviors help to create organizational meaning. As Roberts (2010) outlines in the book *The Dissertation Journey,* the methodology chapter "describes in detail how the study was conducted" (p. 25). The chapter begins with the purpose statement and research questions studied. The chapter also describes the quantitative and qualitative research design, the population to be studied, and the methodology used to determine the sample population. The chapter then describes in detail the research instruments used, the methods of data collection, and the methods of data analysis. The assumptions and limitations of the study and the ethical procedures used to safeguard the human subjects who voluntarily participated in the research study are also outlined in this chapter. The chapter concludes with a final summary of the overall methodology used in the research study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods case study was to identify and describe the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration.

In addition, it was the purpose of this study to determine the degree of importance to which followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning.

Research Questions

1. What are the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration?

2. To what degree do followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning?

Research Design

The methodology used to identify and describe the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers was a mixed-methods case study. A case study, as defined by Creswell (2003), is an in-depth exploration of data that supports specific cases for study in a specific time and place. "The case study stands on its own as a detailed and rich story about a person, organization, event, campaign, or program" (Patton, 2015, p. 259). Case-study research excels at bringing us to an understanding of complex issues. In addition, case-study research can extend experiences and add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies emphasize the detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. Researchers have used the case-study research methodology for many years across a variety of disciplines. Social scientists, in particular, have made wide use of this qualitative

research method to examine contemporary real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods. Researcher Robert K. Yin (2009) defines the case-study research method as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13).

As Roberts (2010) stated, "Qualitative and quantitative approaches in a single study complement each other by providing results with greater breadth and depth. Combining *what* with a possible *why* adds power and richness to your explanation of the data" (p. 145). Furthermore, using a mixed-method approach is "an intuitive way of doing research that is constantly being displayed through our everyday lives" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 1). The mixed method of research focused on collecting and analyzing data using both quantitative and qualitative research methods, including questionnaires and interviews that offer a fixed choice of closed-ended questions, and surveys and interviews with open-ended questions. The general premise of mixed-method research was that it used both quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, which thereby provided a more detailed understanding of the research topic than a qualitative or quantitative review could provide alone (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Roberts, 2010).

The qualitative portion of this mixed-method study was conducted via face-to-face interviews with university presidents. The quantitative portion of the study was conducted via an electronic survey containing closed-ended questions. The survey was deployed to followers of the university presidents who were interviewed for the qualitative analysis. The quantitative survey assessed the degree of importance to which

followers perceive the behaviors university presidents use to lead with character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. Upon completion of both the qualitative and quantitative measures, the data was then interpreted to ensure the strength and consistency of the data (Patton, 2015).

Figure 1

Graphical Representation of a Mixed-method Study
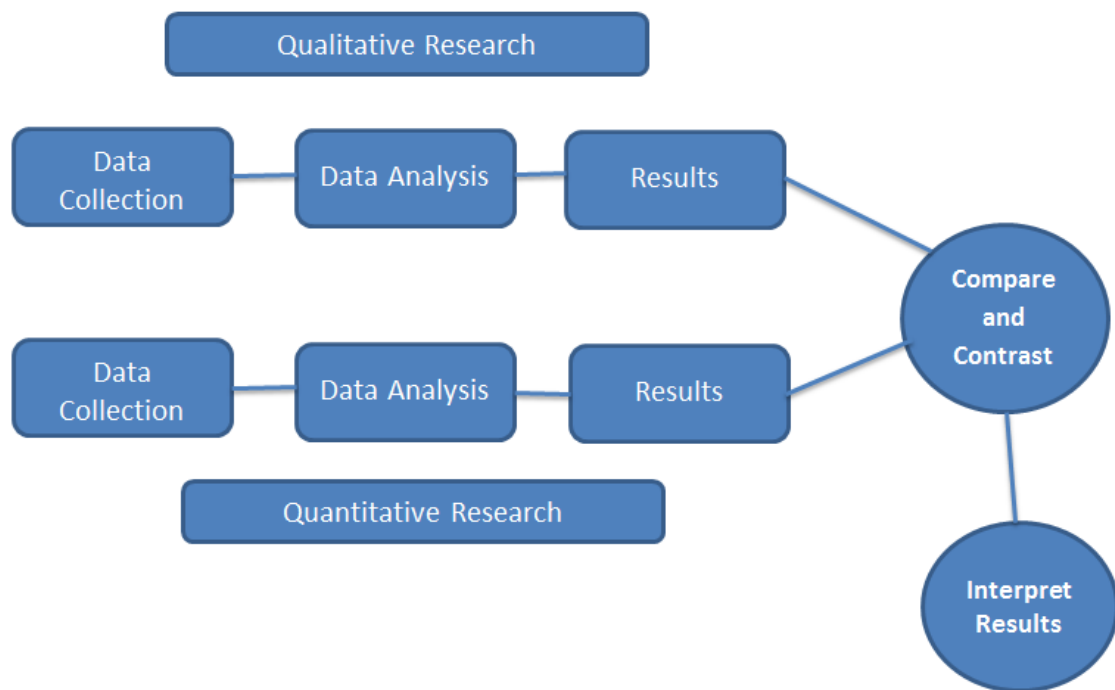
Qualitative Research Design

The qualitative approach "is based on the philosophical orientation, called *phenomenology*, which focuses on people's experience from their perspective" (Roberts, 2010, p. 143). There are three main forms of data collection in qualitative research, which come typically through interviews, observations, and by viewing a variety of documents and artifacts (Patton, 2015; Roberts, 2010). Qualitative research was conducted with three exemplary university presidents through face-to-face interviews.

The sample size was small because "in-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information-rich" (Patton, 2015, p. 311). In addition, as stated by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), "qualitative understanding arises out of studying a few individuals and exploring their perspectives in great depth" (p. 8). The data was then evaluated to establish patterns, which helped to formulate a hypothesis and then added to the development of the theory (Patton, 2015). This study focused on individual interviews with the university presidents to get a better understanding of a particular topic from the subjects, specifically how they used the variables of character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration to create meaning for themselves and their followers. The data was collected in the form of open-ended interview questions, which focused on each specific variable. The results were coded and themes were analyzed. "In qualitative research, the results are presented as discussions of trends and/or themes based on words, not statistics" (Patten, 2012, p. 19).

Quantitative Research Design

As defined by Roberts (2010):

The quantitative approach is called *logical positivism*. Inquiry begins with a specific plan—a set of detailed questions or hypotheses. Researchers seek facts and causes of human behavior and want to know a lot about a few variables so differences can be identified. (p. 142)

Patten (2012) stated that quantitative researchers can select larger participant populations because questionnaires are easy to provide to a large number of individuals at the same time and the researcher can provide statistics on the results. Quantitative data can be collected in a short amount of time and can easily be reduced to a statistical

89

analysis. The quantitative research was conducted by providing a survey to the followers of the exemplary university presidents who were chosen for the qualitative interviews. The followers were assessed on their perceptions of leader's use of character, vision, wisdom, relationships, and inspiration to create meaning within the institution. The quantitative approach allowed the researcher to determine the degree to which followers believed character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration were used to create meaning.

Method Rationale

The mixed-method design was collaboratively chosen by the 12 peer researchers to study meaning-making and the behaviors leaders used based on five stated variables: character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. The 12 researchers conducted the study across an interdisciplinary set of organizations including nonprofit universities, charter schools, nonprofit organizations, K-12 schools, private-sector companies, technology firms, automotive organizations, athletic coaches in NCAA Division I institutions, healthcare organizations, and police departments. The researchers used the same methodology, a mixed-methods case study, which allowed the researchers to certify the breadth and depth of the topics studied through the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Each of the 12 researchers interviewed three leaders within their chosen organizational sector. This researcher's goal was to identify and describe the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create meaning for themselves and their followers. The literature supported how leaders use at least one of the five variables independently, but little data supports the five variables used collectively to create meaning for themselves and their followers. There is a gap in the research that

specifically addresses how the five variables, used collectively, can instill personal and professional meaning within an organization. In addition, there is a gap in the literature about how followers perceive the importance of these variables to create meaning within the organization.

Population

In the publication *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches,* Creswell (2003) stated a population is "a group of individuals who comprise the same characteristics" (p. 644). Similarly, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) defined a population as a collection of individuals or objects within a certain group known to have common characteristics or traits. A population in research is a group that conforms to a specific set of criteria and to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The larger population for this study was university presidents. University presidents are ultimately responsible for the culture, climate, security, and safety of their institutions. The presidential oversight includes the quality of the academic and support programs and all of their component entities. The president is responsible for the fiscal viability of the institution, including budgets and fundraising, as well as the relationships among students, administration, and faculty. In addition, the president is in charge of strategic planning, operations, and maintenance of real and personal property. It is vital the president remain in consultation and cooperation with the Board of Regents and other university groups while making a contribution to the community (Simpson, 2000).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), there are nearly 5,000 institutes of higher education in the United States. It was not feasible to use such a

large population due to time, geographic, and monetary constraints; therefore, in order to create a manageable population, a target population was identified. First, the population was narrowed geographically, focusing on institutes of higher education in California, which narrowed the population to approximately 451 institutions ("National Center for Education Statistics," 2016). This population was still too large to sample every possible respondent. When it is not feasible to include all members from a large target population, it is necessary to identify an accessible population that is practical for the researcher to interview. The narrowing of the target population provided a reasonable and accessible population for the purpose of this study.

Target Population

A target population for a study is the entire set of individuals chosen from the overall population for which the study data are to be used to make inferences. The target population defines the population to which the findings are meant to be generalized. It is important that target populations are clearly identified for the purposes of research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). It is typically not feasible, due to time or cost constraints, to study large groups; therefore, the peer researchers chose population *samples* from within a larger group. The target population was identified as private nonprofit universities within a 25-radius of the Brandman University campus to allow for face-to-face interviews, leaving a target population of 37. According to Creswell (2003), "The target population or 'sampling frame' is the actual list of sampling units from which the sample is selected" (p. 393). The target population for this study considered exemplary university presidents. This study considers an exemplary leader to be one who demonstrates at least five of the following criteria:

- Evidence of successful relationships with followers

- Evidence of leading a successful organization

- Minimum of five years of experience in the profession

- Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings

- Recognition by peers

- Membership in professional association in their field

Sample

The sample is a group of participants in a study selected from the population from which the researcher intends to generalize. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), sampling is selecting a "group of individuals from whom data are collected" (p. 129). Similarly, Patton (2015) and Creswell (2003) defined a sample as a subset of the target population representing the whole population. When a researcher chooses a quantitative approach, the sample is often random; however, the sample population for this study was criteria-based. The study used purposeful sampling for the both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), *purposeful sampling* is when the researcher "selects a sample that is representative of the population or that includes subjects with needed characteristics" (p. 138). Purposeful sampling was chosen as the method of sample selection based on the criteria used for the exemplary leaders.

In addition to purposeful sampling, convenience sampling was also utilized. Due to limitations on time, cost, and accessibility, convenience sampling was also utilized for proximity and accessibility. The site of private, nonprofit universities was selected to align the research focus on the research problem and the ability to interview a select

group of presidents and followers. "Site selection, in which a site is selected to locate people involved in a particular event, is preferred when the research focus is on complex micro processes" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 326). The 37 private nonprofit universities were placed into an Excel spreadsheet and the researcher was able to evaluate information on the university presidents in regards to their length of time in their position, organization and association affiliations, and speaking engagements, as noted on websites, LinkedIn, published articles, and association websites. In identifying presidents who displayed exemplary relationships, evidence was obtained and verified through discussions with board members, faculty, students, and other staff, as well as published university articles and websites. After the university presidents were identified as meeting the desired parameters, the final presidents were placed on a prospective participant list and assigned a unique identifying number (President A, President B, President C, etc.) to be contacted for the research study. The requirement for the university president to be in their field for at least five years was based on information from a research study which looked at colleges and universities over a 25-year period. The average time as president was six years in their position (Cook, 2012); therefore, the researcher was comfortable using the criteria agreed upon by the peer researchers, which set the five-year figure as a benchmark for the minimum term of exemplary leaders in this study.

Figure 2

Graphical Representation of the Population and Sample Funnel
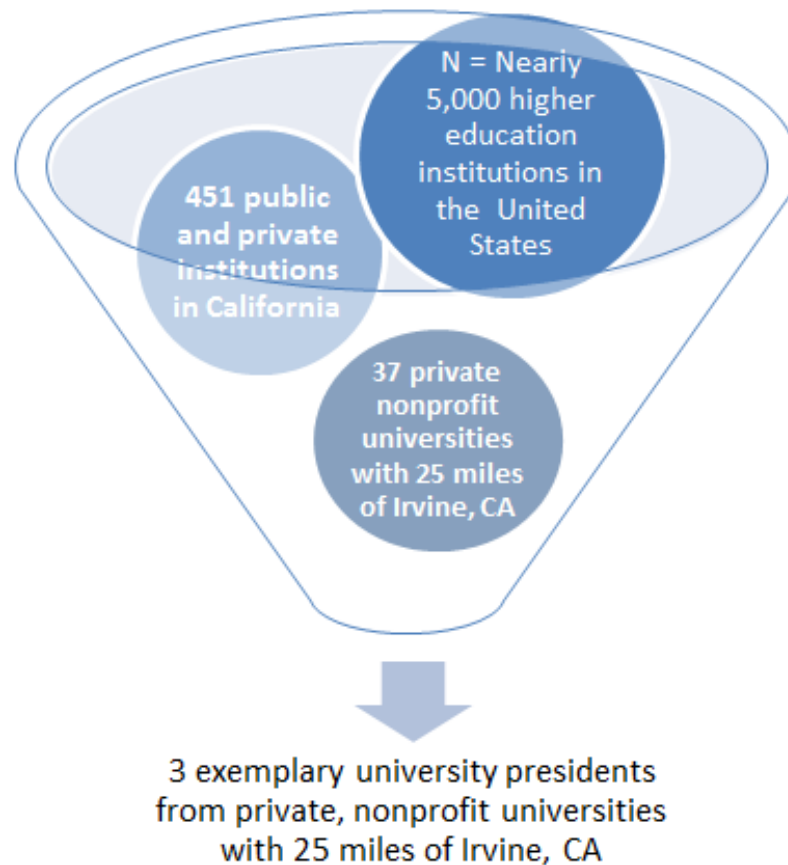
N = Nearly 5,000 higher education institutions in the United States

451 public and private institutions in California

37 private nonprofit universities with 25 miles of Irvine, CA

3 exemplary university presidents from private, nonprofit universities with 25 miles of Irvine, CA

National Center for Education Statistics, 2016

Quantitative Sampling

Upon selecting the university presidents based on the criterion-specific sampling, the quantitative sample population was selected. The sample population for the survey was also criterion-based since the population must have been followers of the given university president. The researcher worked in collaboration with the university president and a selected designee at the university to obtain the list of followers who worked with the university president. The sample size chosen for the quantitative

analysis was limited to 12 followers of the university president. The sample size was

limited due to the number of followers each president has under their purview.

Sample Subject Selection Process

After the Institution Review Board (IRB) completed review and approval of the

study proposal, university presidents were contacted from the list of 37 potential

participants who demonstrated exemplary leadership skills and met the purposeful and

convenience selection criteria. From the identified exemplary presidents, the final three

presidents were selected randomly, as well as based on the availability and accessibility

for face-to-face interviews. The process for contacting sample subjects is outlined as

follows:

1. The researcher contacted the university presidents by phone at their offices to

   explain the purpose, benefits, and risks of participating in the study. The

   researcher also explained associated terms of anonymity for participants in the

   study. The researcher answered any remaining questions posed by the

   president regarding the study. An Informational Letter was sent to the

   university president (Appendix A).

2. Upon agreement to participate, the researcher scheduled a 60-minute meeting

   with each of the three exemplary university presidents. Time was limited to

   60 minutes in order to be manageable for their busy schedules. The researcher

   then explained that the following documents would be emailed prior to the

   interview to ensure adequate preparation so as to remain in the allotted

   timeframe: (1) Invitation to Participate letter (Appendix B), (2) Research

   Participant's Bill of Rights (Appendix C) , (3) Informed Consent form to be

signed and collected at the time of the interview (Appendix D), (4) *Interview*

Schedule for review prior to the interview (Appendix E), (5) Audio Release

form to be signed and collected at the time of the interview (Appendix F).

3. Upon completion of scheduling interviews, the researcher emailed the

following documents to the participants: (1) Invitation to Participate, (2)

Research Participant's Bill of Rights, (3) Informed Consent form, (4) Script

and Script Questions, and (5) Audio Release form.

Instrumentation

This study utilized the mixed-methods case study instrumentation. The researcher

used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. According to McMillan and

Schumacher (2010), "mixed-method studies combine qualitative and quantitative

paradigms in meaningful ways. It is a convergence of philosophy, viewpoints, traditions,

methods, and conclusions" (p. 396). The peer researchers, in partnership with faculty and

instrumentation experts, Cox and Cox (2008), authors of *Your Opinion Please!: How to*

Build the Best Questionnaires in the Field of Education, developed a Survey Monkey tool

for the quantitative data collection and an interview guide for the qualitative interviews

with the university presidents.

Researcher as an Instrument of the Study

When piloting qualitative research, the researcher is known as the instrument

(Patten, 2012; Patton, 2015). Due to the researcher being the instrument in a qualitative

study, Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day (2012) contended that the unique personality,

characteristics, and interview techniques of the researcher may influence how the data is

collected. As a result, the study may contain some biases based on how the researcher influenced the interviewee during the qualitative interview sessions.

For this study, the researcher was employed in an office of the president at a private, nonprofit institution. As a result, the researcher brought a potential bias to the study based on personal experiences in a setting similar to those that were studied. The researcher conducted qualitative interviews with the research participants. The interview questions and responses were conducted face-to-face and were recorded digitally via a hand held recording device.

Qualitative Instrumentation

Qualitative research has five common methods for collecting data: "interviews, observations, questionnaires, document reviews, and audiovisual materials" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 343). For this study, interviews were conducted in a face-to-face modality by the researcher asking open-ended questions to the participant. The qualitative interview began with a brief overview of the study. The researcher discussed the Research Participants Bill of Rights and obtained the participant's signature on the Informed Consent Form and the Audio Recording Release form. The signed forms were collected and the researcher proceeded with the interview.

The type of interview used was the interview guide, which, as described by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), allowed the open-ended questions to be developed in advance. The development of the open-ended qualitative interview questions began with the 12 peer researchers compiling data gathered from the literature review. The 12 peer researchers were then divided into four groups of three researchers each. Each research team was assigned two variables with which to evaluate and assess for behaviors of

leaders. The respective groups conducted many sessions in which they found common behaviors and recurring words within the literature that identified leadership behaviors supporting each of the five variables studied. The teams then collaborated to develop interview questions based on the agreed-upon behaviors and themes. Faculty was assigned to each team to evaluate the interview questions developed. Once all teams had developed their particular variables' questions, all 12 researchers were then brought together, in partnership with faculty, for an open discussion and evaluation of the questions designed by each team. The thematic team, with guidance from the faculty researchers and an instrumentation expert, chose the final questions to be used for the pilot interviews.

For the pilot interviews, peer researchers field-tested the interview guide with participants who were similar in characteristics to the populations to be studied. Test participants would not be part of the final study. The test participants had the opportunity to provide feedback regarding the interview process and the questions asked. In addition, the peer researchers had an observer attend the pilot interview in order to provide feedback and assess the neutrality of the researcher as the pilot interview was conducted. The observer provided feedback regarding body language and other behaviors that may have caused researcher bias. Upon completion of the pilot interviews, the observer completed an evaluation for the personal use of the researcher. In addition, each interview participant completed a survey evaluation form to assess their thoughts and observations about the interview. The evaluations were all sent to the instrumentation expert, as well as the faculty members, for review and evaluation. Questions were modified based on participant and researcher feedback. All questions were redistributed

to the 12 peer researchers and faculty members for review and approval. The final

qualitative *Interview Schedule* was used to conduct the interviews with the exemplary

leaders.

The researcher used the interview questions as a guide when interviewing the

participating exemplary leader. The guide was followed, but allowed some variability as

it pertained to the sequencing and wording of the questions. During each interview, the

researcher took some notes, but also recorded the session, with permission from the

participant. The interview questions and responses were then transcribed by a

confidential transcriptionist. The data was evaluated and themes developed. The final

data set was coded and analyzed to develop the qualitative data.

Quantitative Instrumentation

"Quantitative measurement uses some type of instrument or device to obtain

numerical indices that correspond to characteristics of the subjects" (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2010, p. 173). Instruments are often in the form of surveys, pencil-and-

paper tests, and questionnaires. Instruments used to collect data must be reliable, and

provide a range of responses in a numerical analysis that can then be analyzed for a

summary of results.

A closed-ended quantitative survey, titled *Leader Behaviors* (Appendix H), was

developed collaboratively by the team of 12 peer researchers, four faculty members, and

one instrument expert. To develop the survey questions, the peer researchers compiled

data gathered from the literature review. The 12 peer researchers were divided into four

groups of three researchers each. Each research team was assigned two variables with

which to evaluate and assess for common behaviors and themes. The respective groups

conducted many sessions in which they found descriptions of leadership behaviors from within the literature review. The teams then collaborated to develop survey questions based upon the recurring behaviors found in the research. The team members created a data-bank of questions. Team members chose five of their top questions, plus two backup questions, to provide to the instrumentation expert for development into a survey. The expert and the faculty members took the chosen questions from all four teams and developed an initial survey. Upon completion of the first draft, all 12 peer researchers, the expert, and the faculty members evaluated and adjusted the survey to create the final survey. Upon completion, the survey expert provided the peer researchers a copy of the survey to be deployed to a pilot group.

Field Testing

Peer researchers field-tested the survey by asking five participants to take the pilot survey. The researchers tested for reliability by conducting a test-retest measure. Test-retest reliability is a measure of reliability obtained by administering the same test twice over a period of time to a group of individuals (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The scores from the first and second tests were then correlated to evaluate the test for stability over time.

The participants chosen were followers of exemplary leaders with characteristics similar to those of the populations to be studied. Test participants would not be part of the final study. The pilot survey was deployed to five participants each for a few peer researchers. Five to seven days later, the same survey was sent to the same pilot group members again to test for reliability (two-test pilot). All survey responses were confidentially sent to a third-party evaluator for collection via the software application

Survey Monkey. Following completion of the second pilot survey, the peer researchers

provided a questionnaire to participants to assess the quality of the survey. The

assessment asked if the questions were clear and if the response scales were appropriate,

as well as providing an area for the participants to make comments or suggestions. The

two-test pilot and the assessment checked for clarity, validity, and reliability. Participant

evaluation forms were sent to faculty and the instrumentation expert for review. The

survey questions were evaluated, revised, and resubmitted for faculty review based on

feedback from the pilot participants. The final quantitative survey, titled *Leader*

Behaviors (Appendix E), was used to conduct the survey with followers of the exemplary

leaders in the researchers' studies. The survey instrument meets the requirement of

reliability and validity as the peer researcher used a test-and-retest pilot study.

Validity

Validity in research refers to how accurately a study answers the study question or

the strength of the study conclusions. Validity, as defined by Roberts (2010), "is the

degree to which your instrument truly measures what it purports to measure" (p. 151).

For outcome measures, such as surveys or tests, validity refers to the *accuracy* of

measurement. In essence, validity refers to how well the assessment tool actually

measures the underlying outcome of interest so that you can ensure the findings of the

study are true.

Content Validity

Content validity is when a researcher must depend upon the appropriate

construction of the instruments to ensure the elements of the construct are measuring the

research questions adequately (Patton, 2015). A study must have content validity to

ensure that misinterpretations are not made and so that conclusions can be drawn based on data collected. In the context of this study, with the researcher as the primary instrument, the validity of the method depended largely on the competence and skill of the researcher. The researcher addressed this limitation in part by the following steps:

1. The researcher performed mock interviews with volunteer subjects with similar exemplary leadership traits prior to the actual data collection. An audio recording of the mock interview was conducted. In addition, the researcher had a volunteer observer who was knowledgeable about interviewing skills. The audio tape and the observer notes were reviewed for feedback in relation to delivery, pacing, body language, and other interview techniques. This process helped validate that the interview skills of the researcher were appropriate.

2. Prior to deployment of the final survey, the researcher developed and refined the interview questions through an interactive process with the survey development expert, the faculty panel, and with the peer researchers. This process helped ensure the instruments were actually asking what was needed to be asked for the purpose of responding to the research questions. This process helped validate the *Interview Schedule* and survey questions developed.

Reliability

According to Patton (2015), reliability in qualitative research refers to "the degree to which your instrument consistently measures something from one time to another" (p. 151). Cox and Cox (2008) described reliability as developing a survey that is consistent over time, whereby if the study were repeated, similar results would be obtained. Further, in the case-study context, reliability refers to the consistency and repeatability of

the research procedures (Yin, 2014). Literature suggests when a study achieves consistency in its data collection, data analysis, and results, it is then deemed reliable (Creswell, 2003; Patton, 2015; Roberts, 2010). For this study, in an effort to increase reliability, the researcher utilized an interview script and interview questions. The interview guide was used to ensure each participant was asked the same questions in a similar fashion.

Internal Reliability of Data

Consistency of data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation was critical to internal reliability. Internal reliability indicates that another researcher would come to the same conclusions if they were to review the same data.

Intercoder Reliability of Data

Intercoder reliability is a term used when a third-party evaluator reads and compares the data and reaches the same conclusions and consistencies in coding the characteristics as the researcher (Patton, 2015). For the purpose of this thematic study, a peer researcher was selected to check the coding to ensure accuracy of the themes.

External Reliability of Data

External reliability is evident when another researcher replicates the study and achieves the same results and conclusions. The issue of generalization was not significant for this qualitative research study because the qualitative data is difficult to replicate when humans are in interviews as behaviors and interactions of both the participants and the researchers may be different. As a result, external reliability of the data is not a concern for this study.

Data Collection

Data collection for this study was through two avenues: face-to-face interviews for qualitative data collection and an electronic survey for quantitative data collection. Data, including transcripts, were kept in a locked file cabinet and a password-protected computer. Data collection commenced only after the researcher obtained approval from Brandman University's Institutional Review Board and after completing the National Institutes of Health (NIH) certification in protecting human research participants (Appendix I). The rights and privacy of all participants were protected throughout the duration of the study. The researcher provided the Informed Consent documents to each participant and collected the signed documents prior to any data collection.

Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data was collected through a peer-designed interview guide of questions. Through the use of interviews, "responses can be probed, followed up, clarified, and elaborated to achieve specific accurate responses" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 205). The interviews were conducted in a face-to-face setting and the researcher asked a series of open-ended questions from the *Interview Schedule*. The participants were provided the Audio Recording Release Form, which each participant read and signed and the researcher collected. The interview questions were collaboratively developed by the thematic research team to ensure consistency in the questions asked to participants. The researcher had the opportunity to take notes during the interview, which allowed the researcher to observe non-verbal cues and make note of body language, which added depth to the interview results. Responses were digitally recorded and transcribed by a confidential transcriptionist.

105

Specific steps for data collection were:

1. Conduct face-to-face interviews, using the interview questions as a guide.

2. The identities of participants remained confidential and each was identified by a unique identifying code.

3. Interviews were transcribed by a confidential transcriptionist.

4. Patterns and themes were identified when reviewing the transcriptions.

5. Common categories were identified and coded for interpretation.

Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data was collected through the dissemination of a peer-designed and professionally reviewed instrument. The instrument was administered to 12 followers from each of the three chosen university presidents. The surveys were distributed electronically through the computer-generated software program Survey Monkey. All survey questions were protected using a secure, password-protected Survey Monkey account. The purpose of the study was clearly spelled out at the beginning of the survey and the confidentiality clauses were made available in an email that accompanied the Survey Monkey link. Before the survey began, all participants were asked to read the Informed Consent form (Appendix D). Participants had to acknowledge that they had read the informed consent and purpose of the study prior to the beginning of the survey, which must be approved for the survey to open.

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

</div>

This mixed-methods case study used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The qualitative data was collected through face-to-face interviews and the quantitative data was collected through the use of a survey. The qualitative data was

collected and transcribed first, followed by the survey to followers to collect the quantitative data. Upon completion of both methods of research, the data was then examined to investigate the findings of the study.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data that emerged and was collected from interviews and observations during a face-to-face interview at the university campus. Creswell (2003) outlined a process of organizing and preparing the data, reading and reviewing all the data, and then coding the data. The researcher organized and prepared the data by having the audio recordings transcribed by a third-party confidential transcription service. These transcriptions were shared with the interviewee to review for accuracy, allowing the opportunity for feedback to ensure the interview was accurately transcribed. The researcher typed up all observation logs and field notes. Following a comprehensive arrangement of the data, the researcher read, reviewed, and reflected on the data elements to cultivate general impressions and to develop an overall sense of meaning from the data. A preliminary list of themes and patterns emerged. The data was then formally coded to identify patterns and repetition that speak to categories, subcategories, themes, concepts, and then assertions (Patton, 2015).

The data-coding process for this study involved three primary steps:

1. The codes were scanned for themes. More specifically, in support of the theoretical framework used in this study, the researcher reviewed the five variables of character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration and the frequencies of their associated descriptive words.

2. The codes were scanned for frequencies. The researcher identified the frequency of

   codes. The frequency of codes was one indication of the strength of a possible theme

   developing from a particular code.

3. The codes were consolidated into meaningful themes.

The researcher proceeded to use the codes, themes, and frequencies of codes to

analyze the data and to understand how university presidents use character, vision,

relationships, wisdom, and inspiration to bring meaning to the institution.

The qualitative interview questions were asked in such a way that authentic

narratives could be interpreted by the researcher. An authentic narrative is described by

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) as "one that may be read and lived vicariously by

others. A narrative is authentic when readers connect to the story by recognizing

particulars, by envisioning the scenes, and by reconstructing them from remembered

associations" (p. 337). Once the themes and patterns were identified, the research was

then linked back to research question number one:

> What are the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal
>
> and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character,
>
> vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration?

The analysis of the qualitative data was complete, the survey results from

the quantitative research were compared to those of the qualitative interview questions.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data was obtained through the use of deploying a survey via

Survey Monkey to 12 followers of each exemplary university president, for an aggregate

of 36 quantitative surveys collected per peer researcher. Descriptive statistics were then used to answer research question number two:

To what degree do followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning?

Descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to analyze the quantitative results obtained from the survey to the university president's followers. "Descriptive statistics are used to transform a set of numbers or observations into indices that describe or characterize the data" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 149). Description statistics therefore provide simple summaries about the measures. Together with simple graphics analysis, descriptive statistics is the fundamental way to present data and to interpret the results in a quantitative research study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Central tendency. The central tendency provides a numerical index of a data set and its associated distribution. Central tendency includes three indices: mean, median, and mode. The mean is the most common of the central tendencies and is used to determine the average of all scores. The median describes the center score of the data set whereby half falls above and half falls below the middle score. The mode is the score that occurs most frequently (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The mean and the percentages of occurrence in the variables researched answered question number two, which analyzed the perception each subordinate has about the behaviors university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration.

Limitations in a particular study may affect the results of the researcher's ability

to make generalizations, yet are often out of the control of the researcher (Patton, 2015;

Roberts, 2010). This thematic study was replicated by 12 different researchers who

utilized the same methodology and instrumentation, but with different organizations;

therefore, the validity of the findings was supported. This study had a variety of

limitations that may have affected the mixed-methods case study including time,

geography, sample size, and the researcher as the instrument.

Time

Time was a limitation to this study as the study had to be approved by the

Institutional Review Board prior to data collection. As a result, data collection was

nearing the holidays, including Thanksgiving and Christmas, which are breaks for

universities. University presidents are extremely busy during the holidays, so the

interviews needed to be scheduled well in advance and be organized in such a manner as

to take one hour or less. It was important to limit the time of the interviews to 60 minutes

or less to respect the time of the university presidents. In addition, it was critical to avoid

a delay in the retrieval of the quantitative data from followers of the university president.

It was important to deploy the quantitative survey immediately after the qualitative

interview to ensure that no major changes took place within the institution after the

interview was conducted, which could have skewed the perceptions from the followers.

Geography

There are nearly 5,000 universities in the United States, with 451 institutes of

higher education in California alone. Due to geographical constraints, which would put a

monetary strain on the researcher, the sample was narrowed to private, nonprofit universities within a 25-mile radius of the Brandman University main campus in Irvine, California. This geographical radius allowed the researcher to conduct face-to-face interviews within a reasonable time frame.

Sample Size

Utilizing a purposeful sample—limiting the number of participants to three university presidents from private, nonprofit universities within a 25-mile radius of Irvine, California—limits how the results can be generalized to the overall population. The sample size was limited to three participants for each of the 12 peer researchers on the thematic team. The quantitative data was limited to 36 participants for each of the 12 members on the thematic team. The sample size was determined as a collective whole in collaboration with all peer researchers. In addition, the fact that the quantitative data was collected from followers could lead to some favorable bias toward the study in the perceptions that followers believe a leader's behaviors lead to creating meaning within the organization.

Researcher as an Instrument of the Study

When piloting qualitative research, the researcher is known as the instrument (Patten, 2012; Patton, 2015), which may bring questions of credibility into play. The researcher of this study has been in a leadership position for over 25 years, including conducting interviews for a variety of functions within a university setting. In addition, the researcher has conducted numerous training sessions as a leader in the organization. The researcher conducted the interviews with the university presidents in a face-to-face

setting, and the transcriptions were provided to the participants for review of accuracy to ensure the presidents were represented and quoted with neutrality and accuracy.

Summary

A mixed-methods approach was used for this study. The design was that of a case study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed in this mixed-method approach to assess the strategies that exemplary university presidents use to create meaning. This chapter began by restating the purpose statement, research questions, and research design. The chapter then examined the population, sample, data-collection instruments, methods of data collection, and methods of data analysis. The study was conducted through the use of both qualitative data (via interviews) and a quantitative data (via surveys). The purpose and research questions were addressed and examined using data collection and analysis. The chapter concluded with potential limitations to the study, as well as the precautions taken to protect the human subjects who volunteered to participate in the study. This study was conducted with university presidents, while another 11 researchers conducted a similar study, utilizing the same methodology and instruments with different populations. Through the thematic peer researchers' studies, the goal was to identify and describe behaviors exemplary leaders use to create meaning for themselves and their followers. In addition, the analysis of data also studied the degree of importance to which the followers perceive how leaders create meaning within the organization. With the combined efforts of the peer researchers, this thematic study may yield insights as to how character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration are used by leaders to create meaning within an organization. Chapter IV follows with the results of the research findings and detailed descriptions of both the

qualitative and quantitative analysis. Chapter V then follows with a descriptive analysis

of the data, the significant findings of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for

further research.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This mixed-methods case study identified and described the behaviors exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers. In addition, this study identified the degree of importance to which followers believe these behaviors create meaning. This chapter describes the qualitative results obtained through face-to-face interviews with university presidents, and quantitative results collected through an electronic survey deployed to followers of those presidents. This chapter begins with a review of the purpose statement and research questions. The chapter also summarizes the population and sample used for the study. The chapter then explores the research methods used and discusses the data-collection procedures. The data collected from the qualitative interviews address research question one and are presented in a narrative format, including direct quotes from exemplary university presidents. The data collected from the quantitative surveys address research question two and are presented in narrative form, followed by a table format. Chapter IV then concludes with a presentation of the data and a summary of the findings.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods case study was to identify and describe the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration.

In addition, it was the purpose of this study to determine the degree of importance to which followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning.

Research Questions

1. What are the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration?

2. To what degree do followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning?

Research Methodology and Data-Collection Procedures

A case study, as defined by Creswell (2003), is an in-depth exploration of data that supports specific cases for study in a specific time and place. This study was conducted using a mixed-methods case study. For this study, the qualitative portion was conducted via face-to-face interviews with exemplary university presidents to identify and describe the behaviors they use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers. The interview was guided through the use of an *Interview Schedule* (Appendix E) developed by the peer researchers. A field test of the interview, observed by a colleague, was first conducted by the researcher to ensure quality interview procedures and techniques. A total of three exemplary university presidents were chosen for face-to-face interviews. Next, for the quantitative portion of the study, the researcher used a survey, developed by the peer-researchers, titled *Leader Behaviors* (Appendix H). The survey was deployed electronically to 12 followers of each

115

of the three university presidents. The survey asked fixed-choice questions to determine the degree to that followers perceive the behaviors related to specific variables help create personal and organizational meaning.

Interview and Survey Data Collection

The researcher conducted three face-to-face interviews with exemplary university presidents. The identities of the exemplary university presidents remained confidential as each participant had a unique identification code. Each participant in the research study was asked the same general questions as the researcher used scripted interview prompts from the *Interview Schedule* developed by the peer researchers. The *Interview Schedule* included questions related to each variable studied: character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. All interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. The researcher also took notes manually throughout the interview. Audio recordings were then transcribed by the researcher and coded for emergent themes.

Upon completion of the face-to-face interviews with exemplary university presidents, the researcher worked with the president, or designated appointee, to obtain names and email addresses of 12 followers to whom to deploy the electronic survey. The quantitative survey assessed the degree of importance to which followers perceive that the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning. Survey Monkey was the electronic tool used to deploy the Leaders Survey. Data collection was anonymous and data were stored electronically on a password-protected computer. Upon completion of both the qualitative and quantitative measures, the data was then interpreted to ensure the strength and consistency of the data (Patton, 2015).

Interview Process and Procedures

The qualitative interview with each of the three presidents began by identifying

and narrowing the population of university presidents to those within the desired sample

population, which targeted university presidents in the Southern California region. The

population of nearly 5,000 university presidents nationwide narrowed to a list of 451

colleges and universities in Southern California. The population was still too large, so it

was ultimately reduced to a list of 37 presidents from private, nonprofit universities in

Southern California. The researcher narrowed the scope even further by determining the

six criteria for selection as outlined in the sample population. The researcher then

randomly contacted presidents and selected the first three who committed to a face-to-

face interview. The researcher emailed a brief overview and description of the study,

along with the invitation to participate. Upon their agreement to be interviewed, the

researcher emailed the Research Participants Bill of Rights, the Informed Consent, the

Audio Release Form, and a sample of the *Interview Schedule*. Prior to commencing the

face-to-face interviews, the researcher reviewed the emailed documents with the

interviewer and obtained the signatures on the Informed Consent Form and the Audio

Recording Release form. The signed forms were collected and the researcher proceeded

with the interview.

The type of interview used was the interview guide which, as described by

McMillan and Schumacher (2010), allowed the open-ended questions to be developed in

advance. Interview questions were asked using the *Interview Schedule*, developed by the

12 peer researchers, as a guideline to ensure consistency in the interviews. The overall

interview guide was followed, but allowed some variability as it pertained to the

sequencing and wording of the questions. With permission from the exemplary leader

participants, interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder and subsequently

transcribed by the researcher. The researcher then evaluated and coded the data to

develop themes from the interview as they related to each variable studied, including

character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration.

Intercoder Reliability

Intercoder reliability is a term used when a third-party evaluator reads and

compares the data and reaches the same conclusions and consistencies in coding the

characteristics as the researcher (Patton, 2015). For the purpose of this thematic study, a

peer researcher was selected to check the coding to ensure the accuracy of the themes.

The peer researcher established the same conclusions and consistencies with the data as

did the researcher. The variables and their related codes were developed and the

consistencies were identified as being closely related between the two peer researchers.

<div align="center">

Population

</div>

A population is defined as "a group of individuals who comprise the same

characteristics" (Creswell, 2003, p. 644). The overall population for this study was

university presidents and their followers. There are more than 5,000 colleges and

universities in the United States and 451 in California alone ("National Center for

Education Statistics," 2016). A researcher would like to interview as many individuals as

possible for a thorough study; however, it was not feasible to study the entire population

due to limitations on time, cost, and accessibility. The researcher chose university

presidents as the ultimate responsibility of university presidents is to oversee the culture,

security, and climate of an institution. The presidential oversight includes the quality of

<div align="center">

118

</div>

the academic programs, the fiscal viability of the institution, and the relationships among students, administration, and faculty. The president is also in charge of strategic planning, operations, and maintenance of the institution and has a tremendous amount of responsibility.

Sample

The sample is a group of participants in a study selected from the population from which the researcher intends to generalize. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a sampling is selecting a "group of individuals from whom data are collected" (p. 129). Convenience sampling was utilized for proximity and accessibility reasons for the researcher. The peer researchers chose population *samples* from within a larger group. The sample population for this study was criteria-based. The sample population was identified as private nonprofit universities within a 25-mile radius of Brandman University's Irvine campus to allow for face-to-face interviews, leaving a target population of 37. The target population for this study considered exemplary university presidents who demonstrated at least five of the following criteria:

- Evidence of successful relationships with followers
- Evidence of leading a successful organization
- Minimum of five years of experience in the profession
- Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings
- Recognition by peers
- Membership in professional association in their field

Table 2

Criteria Selection for Exemplary University Presidents

	President A	President B	President C
Evidence of successful relationships with followers	✓	✓	✓
Evidence of leading a successful organization	✓	✓	✓
Minimum of five years of experience in the profession	✓	✓	✓
Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings	✓	✓	✓
Recognition by peers	✓	✓	✓
Membership in professional association in their field	✓	✓	✓

The 37 private nonprofit universities were placed into an Excel spreadsheet and the researcher was able to evaluate information on the university presidents as regarded to the length of time in their positions, organization and association affiliations, and speaking engagements, as noted on websites, LinkedIn, published articles, and association sites. In identifying presidents who displayed exemplary relationships, evidence was obtained and verified through discussions with referral sources including past and present faculty, consultants, and students, as well as published university articles and websites. After the university presidents were identified as meeting the desired parameters, the final presidents were placed on a prospective-participant list and assigned a unique identifying letter (President A, President B, President C, etc.) to be contacted for the research study. The requirement for the university president to be in their field for at least five years was based on information from a research study that looked at colleges and universities over a 25-year period. The average term for university presidents was six years (Cook, 2012); therefore, the researcher was comfortable using the criterion agreed upon by the peer researchers, which set the five-year figure as a benchmark for the minimum term of exemplary leaders in this study.

After completion of the face-to-face interviews, the researcher worked with the exemplary university president, or designee, to provide the names and email addresses of at least 12 followers. A follower was defined as a member of the leadership team who has responsibilities for managing different aspects of the organization. This group of followers could include Officers, Vice Chancellors, Vice Presidents, Directors, Administrators and the like. An email was sent to the followers that included a brief overview of the study and a link to an electronic survey developed by the peer researchers. The follower survey results were confidential and stored via an electronic, password-protected software application.

Demographic Data

The participants for the qualitative interviews were all identified as exemplary university presidents. A total of three exemplary university presidents were selected and met the criteria for the study. The participants had served as university presidents for five years or more. All of the participants have published and had presented at conferences or association meetings. All of the presidents had been recognized as exemplary leaders by their peers. The average time the presidents were in their current position was five years. The average time the three presidents were in higher education was 38 years. All of the participants hold a terminal degree, a doctorate, from an accredited institution. One of the participants was female and the others were male. Each university president, or a designee, provided names and email addresses of followers. Table 3 shows the demographics for each exemplary university president.

Table 3

Demographic Information for Exemplary University Presidents

	President A	President B	President C
Gender	F	M	M
Years in Current Position	5.5	6.5	3.5
Approximate Years in Higher Education	35	30	49
Education Degree	Ph.D.	Ph.D.	Ed.D.

The followers were sent the *Leader Behaviors* survey via a Survey Monkey link

in an email. A total of 36 surveys were deployed. There were 29 surveys completed

(81%). The results and demographics for the 29 respondents are shown in Table 4 below.

The *Leader Behaviors* survey asked followers to report on the degree of importance to

which they believe that the traits of character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and

inspiration create personal and organizational meaning.

Table 4

Demographic Information for Followers

Gender	# of Respondents	% of Respondents
Female	10	34%
Male	19	66%
Age		
20-30 years	1	3%
31-40 years	6	21%
41-50 years	9	31%
51-60 years	10	34%
61+ years	3	10%
Years in Organization		
0-5 years	10	34%
6-10 years	11	38%
11-20 years	3	10%
21+ years	5	17%
Years with Current Leader		
0-2 years	4	14%
3-5 years	13	45%
6-10 years	11	38%
11+ years	1	3%

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The presentation and analysis of data in this chapter were obtained qualitatively through face-to-face personal interviews with three identified exemplary university presidents, and quantitatively through the use of an electronic survey launched to 12 followers of each of the exemplary university presidents. The findings from the interviews and surveys are reported below in relation to how they answered each of the research questions.

Data Results for Research Question 1

The first research question asked, "What are the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration?" The theoretical definition of meaning is a sense of purpose as a fundamental need that leads to significance and value for self and others (Ambury, 2017; Bennis, 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Frankl, 1984; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; Pearson, 2015; Tredennick, 2004; Varney, 2009; Yeoman, 2014). For the purpose of this study, the operational definition of meaning is the result of leaders and followers coming together for the purpose of gathering information from experience and integrating it into a process that creates significance, value, and identity within themselves and the organization.

Upon conducting the interviews, the major overarching findings concluded that each variable, when observed independently, had strengths that helped a leader to create meaning, yet using the variables together was critically important for exemplary university presidents to create personal and professional meaning within their organization. The presidents unanimously concluded that all five variables are *must*

123

haves when creating meaning within their organizations. When the researcher asked, "Here are five leadership behaviors that research suggests are necessary in an exemplary leader (character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration). Would you agree that these are all important?", each president reviewed the list of variables, and responded unequivocally in agreement by saying, "Yes, these are all important." "Yes, I certainly would." and "Yes, they are!" President B went on to say that one variable could not outweigh another if it meant eliminating any of the other variables, which defined how important he felt it was to have behaviors related to all variables present. President A concurred, stating, "I think all of these are important for long-term leadership, but you have to come in with vision, enthusiasm, to light the fire for others on campus to believe in your vision or the vision you have crafted together—but you have to have *all* of these other things for people to continue to follow you." In fact, when referencing the desire to have a great impact long-term on the organization, President C stated, "I would take my passion and my experience and my skills and hopefully these five qualities (character, relationships, vision, wisdom, and inspiration) to an institution where that could better serve the population of students."

When the researcher specifically asked which variables each president felt were most essential to create meaning within an organization when asked, "Realizing they are all important, do any jump out as being absolutely essential?" the three respondents had three different answers. President A stated Character. President B stated Wisdom. President C stated Vision. Though the initial most essential variable, as stated by each university president, differed among the three leaders, the interview data from each president supported that all three presidents actually held relationships as the most

important variable for instilling meaning for themselves and their followers with over 40% of the codes relating to relationships. In fact, when asked about the other variables of character, vision, wisdom, and inspiration, the conversation came back around to behaviors demonstrated within relationships. Relationship behaviors were woven throughout each and every other variable discussion. This observation was interesting to note because the various studies conducted by Kouzes and Posner (2006) have found character, including honesty and trust, to be the most critical variable, though character also ranked very high among the presidents. In addition, the interpretation of the definitions of character and relationships as it relates to the words *trust* and *honesty* are sometimes used interchangeably in the literature and in this study.

Character was the second most important variable for the university presidents based on a response rate of 22% of all codes. The literature from various authors supported a high level of character and integrity as a *must have* for exemplary leaders (Collins, 2001; Covey, 2004; Crowley, 2011; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Further, vision and wisdom were very similar in frequency of responses from the exemplary university presidents at 14% and 13% respectively. Behaviors related to the variable of inspiration had the least number of frequencies at 11%. The graphic below shows the percentages of frequencies of each of the five variables as described and coded by interviews with the exemplary university presidents.

Figure 3

Meaning Maker Variables as a Total Percentage of Codes from 384 Total Codes

Meaning Maker Variables
384 total codes
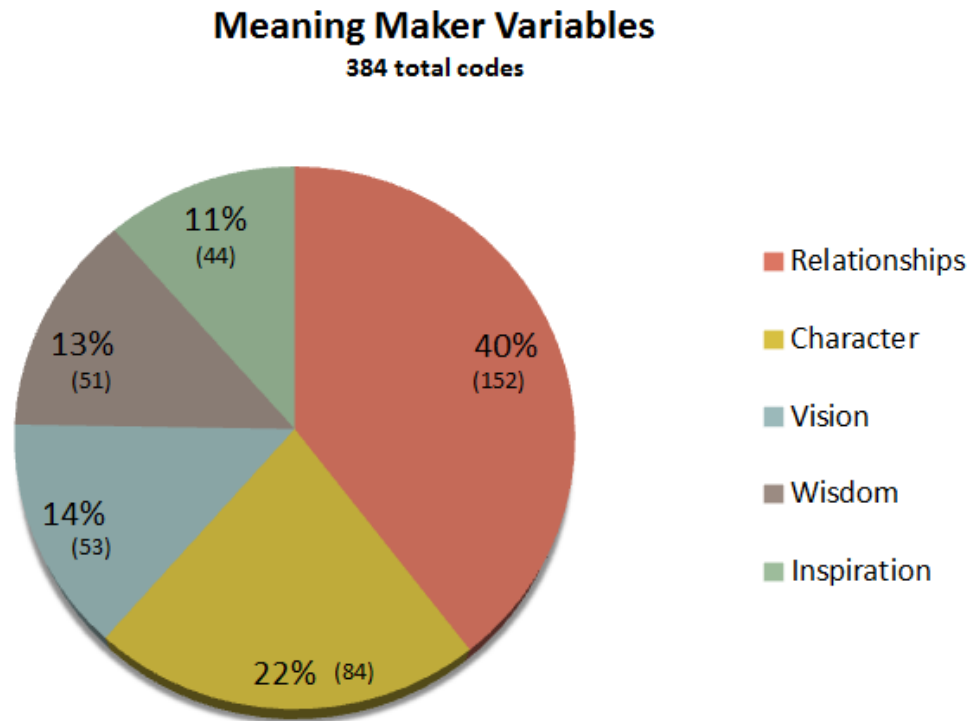
Upon completion of transcription and coding of the face-to-face interviews,

several overarching themes were found within each variable studied. The following

pages clarify the major findings within each variable, as well as the consistent themes

within each variable of character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration.

Major Findings for Relationships

The theoretical definition of relationships is the bonds that are established

between people through encouragement, compassion, and open communication, which

lead to feelings of respect, trust and acceptance (Bermack, 2014; Frankl, 1984; George,

2003; George & Sims, 2007; Henderson, 2011; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007, 2009;

Liborius, 2014; Mautz, 2015; McKee et al., 2008; Reina & Reina, 2006; Seligman, 2002;

D. M. Smith, 2011; Ulrich & Ulrich, 2010). For the purpose of this study, the operational

definition of relationships is authentic connections between leaders and followers involved in a common purpose through listening, respect, trust, and acknowledgment of one another.

Behaviors related to relationships occurred in 40% of the thematic codes with 153 of a total of 384 codes obtained from interviews with the university presidents as shown in Figure 3. Exemplary presidents were asked about establishing relationships with this initial question: "(Relationships) involve being a good listener and establishing trust among your team members. Are there specific things you have done to develop relationships among the members of your organization?" All three exemplary presidents felt relationships were critically important to instill meaning for themselves and their followers. One president described a situation where a colleague from another institution was unsuccessful, and it specifically related to the lack of relationship-building: "The one characteristic that (the said president) could not do was relationship build, so all of these other things fell by the wayside because this relationship piece was missing." Further, President B summed up the importance of relationships when he said, "We were made to be in relationships with one another. If that's out of whack, all kinds of things fall apart in your personal and professional life."

All three presidents gave very specific answers in response to asking about specific behaviors they use to develop relationships to instill meaning within their organizations. The top recurring themes for relationship behaviors included communicating and socializing with others; developing personal relationships with team members; managing by walking around (MBWA); showing compassion, love and care for others; having trust and respect; listening to team members; and collaboration among

team members. Further, Harvey and Drolet (2006) stated "relationships must be balanced with purpose; those organizations that propel commitment through joy are more productive than organizations dedicated solely to task" (p. 24). The chart below represents the number of occurrences of each respective code under the relationship variable.

Figure 4

Graphical Representation of Relationship Themes as Total Number of Occurrences (152)
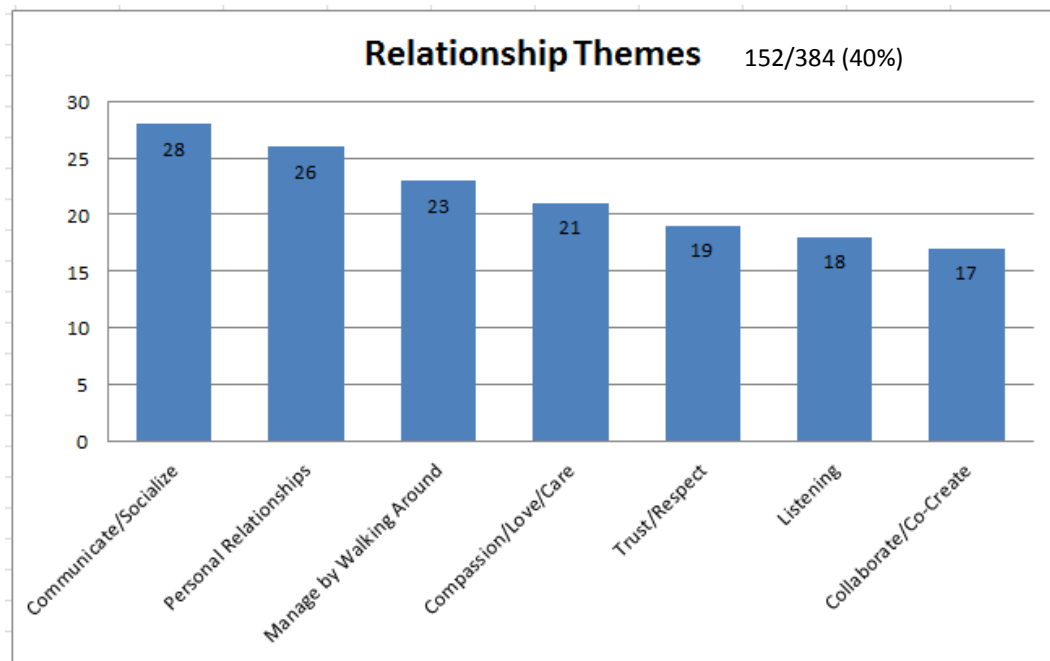
Consistent Themes within Relationships

      Communicate and socialize. The code occurring most often within relationships was a leader's ability to communicate and socialize with 28 of the 152 codes (18%) falling into this theme. Communication and clear articulation resonated throughout leadership books. Numerous authors in the literature supported the need for open, honest, conversational communication for successful leadership (Collins & Porras, 2002; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Patterson et al., 2012). In Collins and Porras (2002) book, *Built to Last*,

the research discovered that very successful organizations all had visionary leaders who had the ability to clearly articulate organizational goals and opportunities to team members. The data supported the need for open communication on numerous occasions, including the following examples of communication with staff, faculty, and students: "We need to communicate clearly to our students"; "So I think in all cases a high level of honesty, having communication and giving people as much information as possible about why I think we should go this direction"; and "We sit on the floor and I just talk about anything they want to talk about." Exemplary leaders consistently communicate with all stakeholders with clear and consistent messages. The exemplary leaders discussed how they get to know their colleagues on both a personal and a professional level.

Personal relationships. Numerous authors found that human relationships between workers and managers have a greater impact on productivity than focus on physical work conditions and processes (Baird, 2010; Covey, 1991; Gallup, 2013; Patterson, 2008; Seligman, 2011). The three university presidents agreed that establishing personal relationships is critical for the success of the organization. The data showed 17% (26 of 152) of the behavior codes overall were related to personal relationships. The literature also demonstrated the importance of personal relationships for building and sustaining meaningful relationships in the workplace, including Kouzes and Posner (2006), who stated that relationships should be personal and employees should know that a leader cares. Additionally, Studer (2003) stated that personal relationships help leaders to get to know the team better and that when a team feels the leader cares, productivity increases. Comments from each university president demonstrated how important personal relationships are to their success. President C

described the importance of personal relationships when he described how he walks

around and chats with the staff: "I like to say 'How are your children?' 'How is your

family?' 'How is your day?' And just chat with them." President A specifically said,

"That's my relationship—it's personal and it's professional."

Management by walking around. Management by walking around (MBWA)

occurred as a theme within relationships 15% of the time with 23 of 152 codes. In the

book *Hardwiring Excellence,* Studer (2003) discusses how MBWA can help leaders

focus on the positives in the organization, harvest wins, and breed more wins as a result.

Further, Patterson (2008) emphasized how propinquity can lead to collaboration and that

the most effective leader has their office in a location where they are always walking

among the team to increase communication with team members. The interview data

included examples from each university president in relationship to MBWA. One said he

intentionally walks all signed checks to accounts payable himself instead of having his

secretary do it so that he can visit with team members along the way. Another said she

went on a "magical mystery tour" whereby she talked with faculty, staff, and students

before even joining the university and continued this practice well into the presidency. In

fact, President A said, "I spent every day out of this office and I just walked from office

to office to office. Once a month I walk around campus the whole day." The president

went on to describe how "With the students every semester I go into each of the residence

halls. I have *pizza with the president.* I want to be seen and I want to see every minute

what's going on." President B said, "I give student body lectures," and, "I attend

concerts put on by the students." Other examples of managing by being present included

how the presidents conducted faculty luncheons, had lunch with students in the dining

130

hall, conducted town meetings, spoke at the State of the University address, held candlelight vigils, and more. The presidents ensure they know the staff by name, ask about family and personal life, drop-in to staff offices, and numerous other examples. According to Woody Allen, "80% of success is just showing up," and this holds true for extraordinary leaders. President C summarized it well when he said, "I like to see what people do. I like to schmooze."

Caring, love, and compassion. Literature suggested that experiences that are positive, hopeful, and loving provide meaning (Chopra, 2009; Collins, 2001; Covey, 1991; T. Moore, 2008; W. Moore, 2014; Robbins, 2008; Robinson, 2009). In *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Things*, Robinson (2009) asserted that those who love what they do continue to excel because they are in their element and they fundamentally love their positions. Research goes on to reflect that people work harder and more effectively for people they like and for those who make them feel good (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Robinson, 2009). Compassion, love, and caring occurred as a theme within relationships 14% of the time with 21 of 152 codes. The interviews with university presidents demonstrated that showing faculty, staff, and students that you care can strengthen a relationship, even if times are difficult. President A said, "You can make mistakes in some of your decision-making and people will forgive you if they believe you care about them." The president went on to say, "It comes back to I care about every one of them." President A gave a specific example of showing caring and love—she sends a hand-written, personal birthday card to each employee, over 1,200 people per year, stating that it is an important gesture that will continue because "…everyone wants to feel special." Further, President B said, "It's thanking them and

recognizing their talents." When discussing the importance of relationships with colleagues, President C stated "I like to show that I care about them and they're important to the institution." In fact, the literature also supported the idea that rewards used by exemplary leaders included verbal recognition, pats on the back, hand-written thank-you notes, Employee of the Month awards, and a President's Award. (Collins & Porras, 2002; Gallup, 2013; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Studer, 2003). President B summarized compassion and caring well when he emphasized, "We all do care about what has brought us to this place."

University presidents not only want to show care and compassion to employees, but they also stated their love for the students. "Talk about students with heart! I love to shake their hands when they walk across the stage after spending four years here." The literature review supported the need to have compassion and caring with the example, "For no matter what we achieve, if we don't spend the vast majority of our time with people we love and respect, we cannot possibly have a great life. But if we spend the vast majority of our time with people we love and respect—people we really enjoy being on the bus with and who will never disappoint us—then we will almost certainly have a great life, no matter where the bus goes" (Collins, 2001, p. 62). Love and caring was summarized well by President B when he stated, "We love all people. We realize that we all fall short, but at the end of the day, we are all in the same boat all together here."

Trust and respect. President C stated, "One of the most important components of relationships in our kind of organization is trust. Just blunt honesty." Trust and respect occurred as a theme within relationships 13% of the time with 19 of 152 codes. Trust and respect were recurring themes throughout leadership literature and are essential

to creating meaningful relationships (Collins, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; T. Moore, 2008). Trust has been studied extensively as a trait that supports personal and organizational success. "According to *Forbes*, leaders like the late Nelson Mandela had so much influence because people knew they could trust him. If you want to inspire your teams, keep your promises, big and small" (Power, 2014). In fact, Covey (1991) speculated that one cannot sustain trust without trustworthiness. President C clarified the importance of trust and respect when he described how the institution looks to a leader for decision-making: "People have enough trust in you to say well, okay, I don't know all the reasons, but I trust him or I trust this group to make the right decision."

Listening. Robbins (2008) stated that it is vital to listen to others and that "by listening to people, you let them know that you care, that they're important, and that what they say and who they are matters to you" (p. 115). Just as the literature supported listening, it was also a common theme of relationships with 18 of the 152 codes (12%) related to listening. The importance of listening was evident in interviews with the presidents. One president said they "gain the trust of faculty and staff through listening." Another stated, "You have to listen to folks. You have to have respect. So if someone comes in with an oddball suggestion or observation, you just sit and nod and let him or her play that out.... That person knows I've heard him or her out. I think that's how you build a relationship."

Collaborate and co-create. A positive, value-driven culture has consistent guiding values, a shared purpose, teamwork, innovation, learning, appreciation, encouragement, and recognition (Covey, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007). Further, Patterson (2008) detailed that teams build better capacity for success because they are

133

working together for the common good. The literature clearly supported the need for

collaboration, teamwork, and co-creation for successful organizations to thrive.

Similarly, the data supported the need for collaboration and teamwork for their success,

as this theme occurred 11% of the time with 17 of 152 codes. The presidents stated how

relationships included building teams and the teams working together for success.

References ranged from overarching institutional strategies—"It's not someone sitting in

an office like this and thinking all this through and coming up with a wise answer. It's

collaboration"—all the way down to collaborating on new team members to ensure

success—"I interview every single final candidate—faculty and staff. I go through our

mission. This is our vision. These are the things we value here."

Major Findings for Character

The theoretical definition of character is the moral compass by which a person

lives their life (Bass & Bass, 2008; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; T. Moore, 2008; J. C.

Quick & Wright, 2011; Sankar, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the operational

definition of character is the alignment of a value system that promotes ethical thoughts

and actions based on principles of concern for others through optimism and integrity

while being reliable, transparent, and authentic.

Character is paramount to exemplary leadership and is seen in the literature. In

fact, "A study of world leaders over the past 150 years asserts that managers who possess

strong character will create a better world for everyone, while leadership generally is vital

to the social, moral, economic, and political fabrics of society" (Cooper et al., 2007).

Patterson (2008) stated that character sets the rules based on moral standards and

contended that character is the core of each individual being. Character was discussed

22% of the time in conversations with the university presidents, with 84 of the 384 codes

referencing character, as shown in Figure 3. One president described the importance of

character by saying that there would be no relationships if character were not present:

"You always have to show good character. For me, the best indication of good character

is that you do what you say you're going to do so people can trust you." President A

went deep into the importance of character by stating, "…unless you've got other things,

like if you come in with vision and enthusiasm, but you aren't listening, you're not

displaying good character, you're not making good decisions, then you just got a hope

and a prayer…" President C summed it up by quoting the old-adage, "Honesty is the best

policy."

All three presidents provided specific responses when asked about specific

behaviors they use to display character to develop meaning within their organizations.

The top recurring themes for character included ensuring that they lead with morals,

integrity, honest, transparency, and authenticity. Further, the presidents consistently

shared how it was crucial to provide clarity and to do what they said they would do.

Further, the presidents demonstrated behaviors related to servant leadership and leading

with faithfulness while staying true to their values. The common recurring themes for

character are shown below in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Graphical Representation Character Themes as Total Number of Occurrences (84)
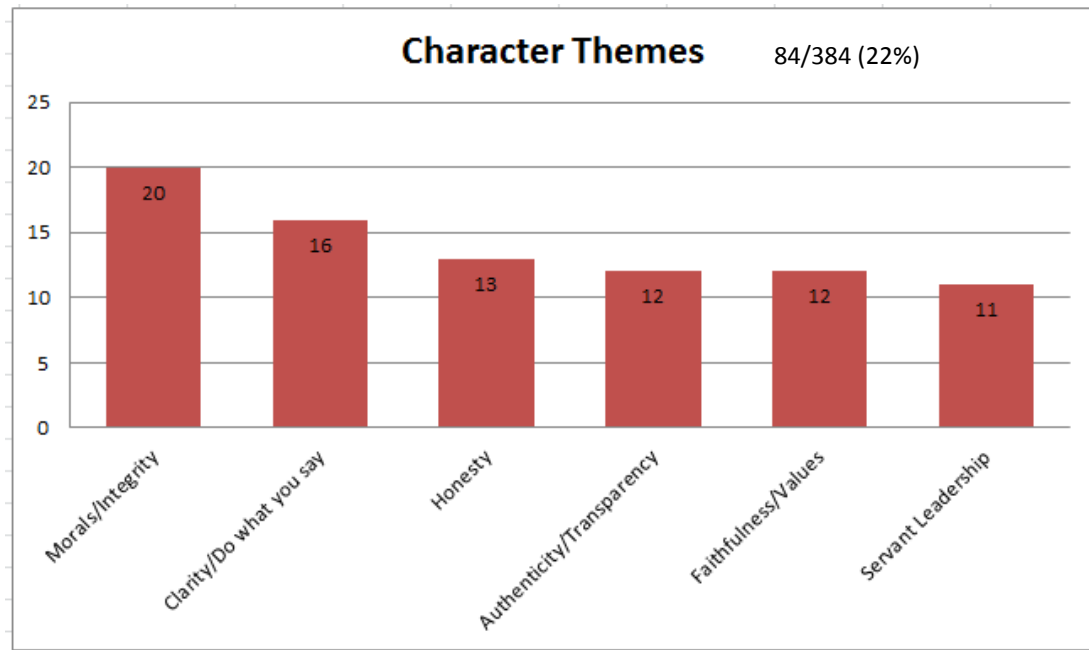
Consistent Themes within Character

   Morals and Integrity. Bass and Bass (2008) stated that moral examples have

been set from Greek and Roman leaders, like Caesar, to Confucius, and Lao-tzu. Morals

and integrity help to set clear expectations and to model behaviors with followers and

occurred as codes in the data 22% of the time, in 20 of the 84 codes related to character.

The interviews conducted with exemplary presidents concur that it is critical to uphold

standards of morals and integrity. President A stated, "Even though they may disagree

with my vision or my decision, they don't disagree with me as a human being." The

president went on to say, "What's the one thing that you have to have above all, you'd

have to have character." President C concurred when he stated, "I use that in my

commencement speeches—that everybody needs to develop a moral compass… that you

draw lines that you wouldn't cross over." President C also stated, "When we talk about

character, we mean it in a positive way—integrity and honesty. I want to make sure we live it out."

Clarity and doing what you say you will do. Walking the walk was a common theme among the university presidents, appearing in the codes 16 of 84 times for 19% of the total character codes. It resonated in the literature also that an exemplary leader must align their actions with their words. Kouzes and Posner (2006) stated that leaders must clarify values and express confidence to build leadership qualities with their followers. If a university president can do what they say they are going to do, then align and recognize behaviors of followers, the positive actions will be replicated. President A specifically supported this assessment by stating, "For me, the best indicator of good character is that you do what you say you're going to do." President C also shaped the importance of character by affirming, "We have to live it! We have to walk the walk."

Honesty. Good moral character is often displayed through the traits of honesty, integrity, and trust (Stone et al., 2004). Further, Kouzes and Posner (2006) described trust as listening, valuing others, stepping out of one's comfort zone, being honest, and keeping commitments. Honesty occurred in 13 of the 84 character codes (15%). When asked, "What do you think is most important in that relationship?" President C gave a one-word answer: "Honesty." When asking the presidents what they look for when hiring a new employee, they stated, "I want honesty. I want integrity." The overarching theme of honesty from the exemplary presidents included the notions that one must not lie or cheat and that one must trust and be trusted in order for the institution to thrive.

Authenticity and transparency. Good leaders possess the ability to be transparent and authentic in their actions, while caring about their followers and the

feelings of others (Northouse, 2009). The literature review consistently supported the

need for authenticity and transparency for exemplary leadership (Steger et al., 2012;

Xiong, Lin, Li, & Wang, 2016). Similarly, authenticity and transparency occurred in 12

of the 84 character codes (14%). The respondents in the interviews referenced the need

for authenticity and transparency as a component of their success. One president stated,

"I always feel like I'm so transparent and so authentic." President C hoped that his

authenticity would go so deep that if I were to ask his followers what they think of his

leadership, he would hope that the first comments were "He's believable. He's authentic.

We trust him."

      Faithfulness and values. Faithfulness and values occurred in 12 of the 84

character codes (14%). The literature supported the need for alignment between personal

and organizational values. In the book *Good to Great*, Collins (2001) stated that great

organizations stay great if they are faithful to their core values. Similarly,

"Organizational DNA is created through shared vision, clear lines of communication, and

authority and alignment between espoused and perceived values" (Henderson, 2011, p.

33). The interviews aligned with faithfulness and values in that all presidents mentioned

situations where the university ties situations to the core values of the institution.

President A said, "We need to work together. This is a moment for all of us to come

together for the campus grounded in these values." President C took the conversation

even further when he described how values are instilled throughout the institution: "A lot

of clarity about these are the values that guide our institution and trying to work them into

the curriculum and the co-curriculum so they are repeated over and over."

Servant leadership. Servant leadership as a key component of character development as numerous authors postulated that meaning is finding a greater purpose than just serving one-self, and included serving others within society (Crowley, 2011; Mautz, 2015; T. Moore, 2008; W. Moore, 2014; Seligman, 2011). In expressing the meaning of his life in one sentence, Frankl (1984) said, "The meaning of my life is to help others find the meaning of theirs" (p. 165). Similarly, servant leadership was a consistent theme in the data collection and occurred in 11 of the 84 character codes (13%). President B clarified the need for servant leadership with the statement, "I really lead with heart and passion and I want people to find meaning in their work, like you and I were just discussing. To serve individuals and get them to the next level." Similarly, President C said, "We need to be more open or we need to be more honest, or we need to be more caring and show concern for others."

Major Findings for Vision

The theoretical definition of vision is the bridge from the present to the future created by a collaborative mindset, adding meaning to the organization, sustaining higher levels of motivation and withstanding challenges (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; Landsberg, 2003; Mendez-Morse, 1993; Nanus, 1992). For this study, the operational definition of vision is foresight demonstrated by a compelling outlook on the future, shared by leaders and followers who are engaged to create the future state.

Codes related to vision and its associated behaviors occurred 14% of the time in conversations with the university presidents, with 53 of the 384 codes referencing vision as shown in Figure 3. Exemplary university presidents were asked about behaviors they use related to vision with the question, "Are there things that you recall having done to

139

develop vision for yourself and your organization?" The top recurring themes for

behaviors related to vision, as shown in Figure 6, included creating a shared vision, belief

in the vision, sharing the purpose and mission, and ensuring there are no surprises when

communicating with team members, students, and stakeholders. In fact, the university

presidents concurred that a vision must be co-created and collaborative to instill meaning

both personally and professionally with their team members. The overarching theme was

eloquently summed up by President C when he said, "Without a vision, there is nothing

to follow. As one of my mentors used to say, *If you don't know where you're going, you*

may end up someplace you don't want to be."

Figure 6

Graphical Representation Vision Themes as Number of Occurrences of Total (53)
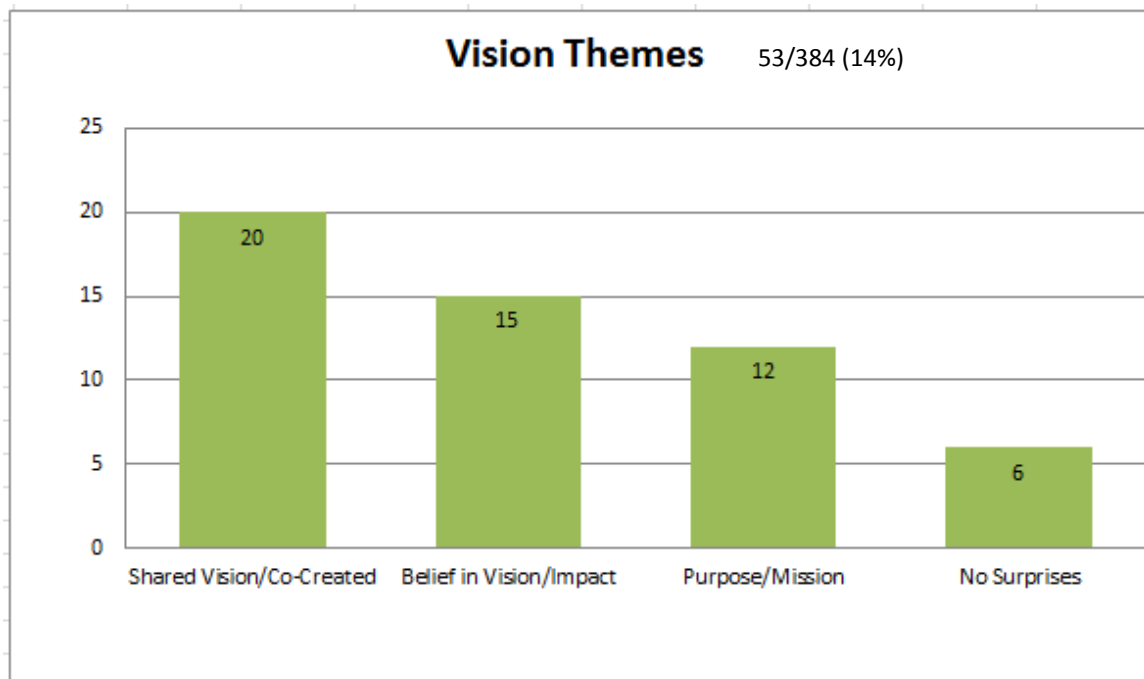
Consistent Themes within Vision

  Shared vision that is co-created. Literature supported that a shared vision

sustains exemplary leadership and that a clear vision, developed collaboratively, can lead

to success and sustainability of the organization (Collins, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2009).

In fact the literature proposed, "Shared purpose is the thread that stitches together the

fabric of relationships" (Sood, 2015, p. 182). By communicating and carrying out the

vision strategically together, organizations can expand opportunities that help to create

the future, rather than be created by current events (Flood, 1999). Having a shared

vision, one that is co-created among members of the institution, appeared as a theme of

vision 38% of the time with 20 of 84 occurrences among the codes. President C said he

can help the organization "create a destiny by having a vision" and that "We develop a

strategic plan with the entire institution." All presidents concurred with statements like

President B when he said, "We are all one when it comes to the school's mission."

Further, President B said, "The challenge is to take that mix and kind of meld it into, in

this case, one policy or one position we can all nod and consent to." All presidents

agreed their primary vision was to make sure the students were going to be successful

after they graduate. President A summed it up with the comment, "Who am I here for?

I'm here for the students."

  Belief in vision and impact. Belief in the vision and the impact it can make on

the institutional success was another common theme, appearing in 28% of the codes

related to vision with 15 of 53 occurrences. Kouzes and Posner (2006) postulated that a

visionary leader passionately believes that they can make a difference, envisioning the

future to create an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become.

141

President A demonstrated just that when she stated, "They are hiring you to take the mission and the vision to the next step." Further, President C said, "If you're going to lead, and you're wanting people to follow, you need to have a vision." President B agreed when he stated, "Enthusiasm is important, but the kind of leader I would be is one who is determined and dependable and working toward a solution."

Purpose and mission. Understanding the purpose and the mission as the destiny for the organization was another component of the overarching variable of vision, appearing in 23% of the vision codes (12 of 53 codes). A shared purpose and mission was supported in the literature when Mitroff and Denton (1999) stated, "The only thing that will really motivate people is that which gives them deep meaning and purpose in their jobs and their lives in general" (p. 52). Further, Senge (2006) stated that the purpose, mission, and values must align to create consistency in the vision. Interviews with the presidents resulted in similar findings. President A said, "I read about the University (name) and I read about student population and the mission, it was the first time I ever really said I can bring my own purpose to a place that will have a larger impact I've ever had before." President B made a similar comment when he said, "We are all one when it comes to our school's mission."

No surprises. A fourth theme under vision is that of "no surprises", with 11% of the occurrences, 6 of 53 codes, related to vision. The literature postulated that "Commitment to clear, focused goals, and a vision on how to accomplish those goals is necessary for high-performing teams and groups and is a sought-after objective of organizations" (Henderson, 2011, p. 66). Similarly, President B discussed the importance of having a clear vision within the organization. President B stated his style is "No

142

surprises. Kind of a calming influence on folks." President A concurred and explained a

technique for clear communication with board members, "I send the board a document

that I write once a month called *What keeps me up all night?* … No surprises!"

Major Findings for Wisdom

The theoretical definition of wisdom is the ability to utilize cognitive, affective,

and reflective intelligences to discern unpredictable and unprecedented situations with

beneficial action (Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Kekes, 1983; Pfeffer, 2010; Spano, 2013;

R.J. Sternberg, 1998). For the purpose of this study, the operational definition of

wisdom is the reflective integration of values, experience, knowledge, and concern for

others to accurately interpret and respond to complex, ambiguous, and often unclear

situations.

Literature supported that wisdom and knowledge from past experiences can

positively influence highly effective leadership (Covey, 2004; Spano, 2013). Ardelt

(2004) stated:

> Wisdom is critically dependent on ethics, judgment, insight, creativity, and other
>
> transcendent forms of human intellection. Wisdom is concerned less with how
>
> much we know and more with what we do and how we act. Wisdom is a way of
>
> being and is fundamentally practical in a complex and uncertain world. (p. 187)

Similarly, data collected from interviews with exemplary university presidents

supported behaviors related to wisdom for creating meaningful work environments.

Wisdom as a variable of study was referenced 13% of the time with 51 of the 384 total

variable codes, as shown in Figure 3. The discussion on wisdom was asked with the

question, "The fifth item on the card is Wisdom. As the card stated, responding

143

effectively to unclear, complex issues is called for here. Can you describe a time when your organization faced a very complex or unclear situation?" All three presidents felt behaviors related to wisdom are important to exemplary leadership. The presidents interviewed collectively had over 100 years of experience in higher education, with the average being 38 years. The presidents expressed their history and experience as vital to their exemplary leadership in leading their institutions.

The behaviors related to wisdom, as shown in Figure 7 below, included the themes of experience and applying their knowledge and determination to complex, ambiguous issues. The presidents also expressed how they are calm and assured and that they have failed over the years, but were able to successfully learn from their mistakes and get back up. "Wisdom…", as Mark Twain so eloquently suggested, "…is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you would rather have talked."

Figure 7

Graphical Representation of Wisdom Themes as Total Number of Occurrences (51)
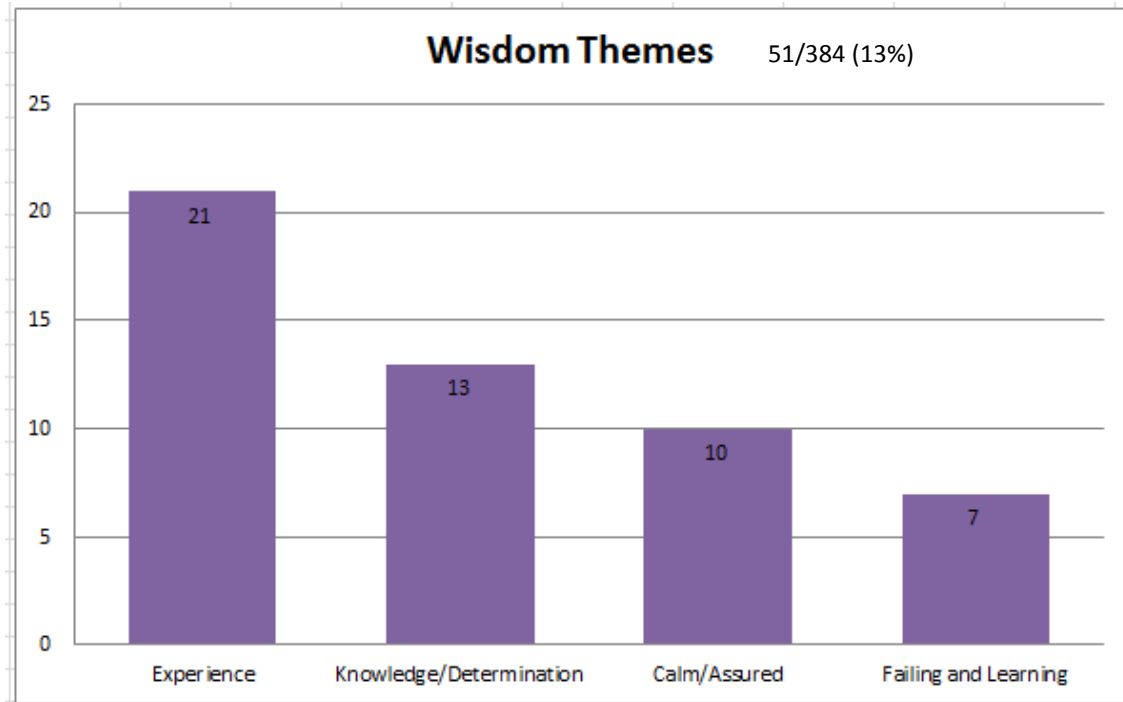
Consistent Themes within Wisdom

Experience. As recognized throughout the literature review, wisdom is a state of being measured by experience (Ardelt, 2004). Furthermore, the literature posited that wisdom is for the common good and essential to leadership (Yang & Kassekert, 2010). The university presidents referenced their past experiences with wisdom in over 40% of the codes (21 of 51 occurrences). Demographically, the three presidents interviewed averaged more than 38 years in higher education, so their past experiences with wisdom gained were referenced often. President C utilized storytelling in his organization and stated that it is like "a proven theory in a sense. So I use past experiences often to influence." Further, he contended, "I do have a lot of experience. I find that if I say *I have seen this happen on multiple occasions...* it has a lot of sway with people." President B also referenced experience and a collaborative wisdom: "It really takes a lot

of wisdom, not just my wisdom, but the collective wisdom of the leadership team… to try to stay faithful to who we are."

Knowledge and determination. Using knowledge and determination as a theme within wisdom occurred in 25% of the codes (13 of the 51 references). Accordingly, to ensure teams remain positive and productive, literature theorized that wisdom is often termed a sixth-sense, allowing a wise leader to effectively plan, manage, and evaluate situations while supporting and giving feedback to followers (McKenna et al., 2009). President C stated, "I've learned that having the answers is not really the key to successful leadership. Knowing the right questions (to ask) is the key to being a successful leader." He went on to say it is critical to "guide the situation by seeding it in the beginning. *These are my thoughts… what are your thoughts?*"

Calm, self-assured confidence. Wisdom is displayed through being calm and self-assured, which appeared in the interview coding 20% of the time with 10 out of the 51 codes. The literature characterized being calm and self-assured as a defining leadership trait (Bass & Bass, 2008; Senge, 2006). A calm demeanor was an observed trait that all leaders displayed throughout the interview. In addition, each president referenced the ability to remain calm and confident, even in difficult situations. President B discussed numerous situations that were challenging, like when making presentations to the board, or having crucial conversations with faculty or staff. The president stated, "I try to present in a calm, assured presence so that people know that we are doing fine." Another example was when President C described a situation where someone made a mistake on a presentation: "I like to not overreact. I like to stay calm and cool and say *let's peel off the layers of this onion.*"

146

Failing and Learning. "It is knowledge and experience that creates wisdom!

Time and having failed and gotten up," as stated by President B. Learning and gaining

wisdom from past situations occurred in the conversations in 14% of the references as

associated with wisdom with 7 of the 51 occurrences. President C specifically stated, "I

have some 40 years of experience… so I bring all that." And President B also declared, "I

have to use my wisdom. In most meetings, I don't say a lot, other than to ask probing

questions, except when it comes to a crazy idea… I clearly spoke up and said we can't

afford to do that!" As it relates to hiring upper level faculty and administration, the

presidents have to listen to the opinions and recommendations of others, but the final

decision ultimately resides with the president, as noted by President A, "I respect your

opinion, but this is the person we are going with and you have to respect mine." And

more importantly, an exemplary leader must know when his or her past knowledge has

created such validity that there is no need for further discussion, "There are times when I

will not listen. I will just say based on my experience or based on what we are trying to

do, I can say this is not a good idea." As the literature stated, Cook-Greuter (2005)

understand that wisdom develops with a deeper understanding of self, as well as

awareness about more complex perspectives.

Major Findings for Inspiration

The theoretical definition of inspiration is a source of contagious motivation that

resonates from the heart, transcending the ordinary and driving leaders and their

followers forward with confidence (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; I. H. Smith, 2015; Thrash &

Elliot, 2003). The operational definition of inspiration is the heartfelt passion and energy

that leaders exude through possibility-thinking, enthusiasm, encouragement, and hope to create relevant, meaningful connections that empower.

University presidents were asked about inspiration with the question, "As stated on the card, an inspirational leader empowers staff by exuding enthusiasm, encouragement, and hope. Tell me about some of the things you do to inspire your staff to be all they can be." Inspiration was referenced by all three exemplary leaders as important for them to instill meaning within their organizations with 44 of the 384 total codes (11%) as seen in Figure 3. Though the exemplary presidents felt inspiration was important to instilling meaning in the organization, it was mentioned as the least important of the five variables, based on the coding in the data. The presidents stated unanimously that inspiration is necessary to bring to teams for long term sustainability, yet without the other variables, inspiration alone cannot achieve meaning in the workplace. President A compared inspiration to that of instant oatmeal versus regular oatmeal, inspiration can be quick and short lived, or it can be developed over time and help to sustain meaning for the long haul. The president stated that one can continue to inspire, but without the other variables coming into play, the inspiration is for naught, "Sometimes someone comes into an organization and they are full of enthusiasm, encouragement, and hope. But… unless you've got other things, like if you come in with vision and enthusiasm, but you aren't listening, you're not displaying good character, you're not making good decisions, then you just got a hope and a prayer in a vision."

The top recurring themes for inspiration behaviors included encouragement and persuasion, enthusiasm and passion, and empowerment and positivity. The chart in

Figure 8 below represents the number of occurrences of each respective code under the

inspiration variable which had 44 total references in the interview data.

Figure 8

Graphical Representation of Inspiration Themes as Total Number of Occurrences (44)
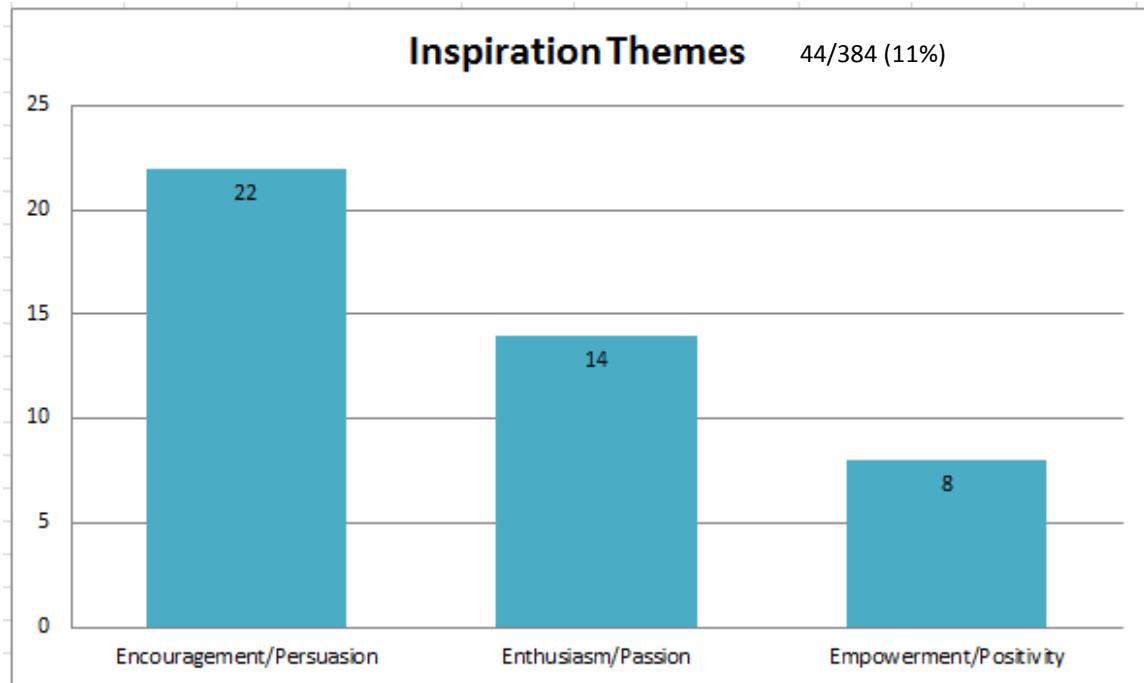
Consistent Themes within Inspiration

      Encouragement and persuasion. Encouragement and persuasion resonated

among the codes for inspiration, leading the way over all behaviors related to inspiration

with 50%, 22 of 44 occurrences. In fact, in the book *Hardwiring Excellence: Purpose,*

Worthwhile Work, Making a Difference, Studer (2003) contended that reward and

encouragement can align behavior with the desired results, and ensures that such

behaviors are then replicated among other team members. Similarly the literature

supported that a positive, value-driven culture has consistent guiding values, a shared

purpose, teamwork, innovation, learning, appreciation, encouragement, and recognition

(Covey, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007). Furthermore, Seligman (2011) stated,

"Companies with better than a 2.9:1 ratio for positive to negative statements are flourishing" (p. 66). Likewise, the conversations with exemplary presidents yielded examples where the institutions thrive on encouragement when they shared comments like "We need you to inspire us." and "We are depending on you to inspire us so that we can do more and be better."

Enthusiasm and passion. Enthusiasm and passion appeared as a theme within inspiration 32% of the time with 14 of the 44 codes referenced. President C summed up the importance of passion when he stated, "You've got to be able to get people excited." Further, in describing a difficult situation, he decided he needed to encourage his team with enthusiasm. He said, "I need to give a pep talk… these are our challenges and this is what we need to do … and we can do it!" President C stated that he wanted to keep his team encouraged and energized. To do so, he knew he had to empower them through enthusiasm, not micromanage them. Similarly, the literature also contended that a leader can inspire passion. "Connecting with people who have the same passions confirms that you are not alone-it validates a common passion and brings the ability to share ideas, techniques and enthusiasms" (Robinson, 2009, p. Chapter 5). Further, "Through their magnetism and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. They breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future" (Loughead, 2009, p. 3).

Empowerment and positivity. Inspiration also included behaviors related to empowerment and positivity, which appeared in the codes 8 of the 44 total times (18%). As the literature posited, "being able and willing to pay attention to and acknowledge the existence of others is one of the easiest and most basic ways to support, empower, and

appreciate them. Yet it is often one of the most overlooked" (Robbins, 2008, p. 122).

Furthermore, literature speculated that experiences which are positive, hopeful, and

loving provide meaning (Chopra, 2009; Collins, 2001; Covey, 1991; T. Moore, 2008; W.

Moore, 2014; Robbins, 2008; Robinson, 2009). Allowing employees to take risks and

empowers them to take the lead. President B suggested, "It empowers these people… go

ahead and pursue it (your idea). I'm not sure it's the best idea, but go ahead, prove me

wrong." President C agreed when he stated, "One of the words I use is that a leader needs

to be a cheerleader."

The qualitative interviews supported the belief that behaviors related to character,

vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration are important for the success of exemplary

leaders to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers.

The findings for the quantitative interviews are summarized next.

Data Results for Research Question 2

Research question two asked, "To what degree do followers perceive the

behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to

create personal and organizational meaning?" Data for research question two was

obtained through the deployment of an electronic survey to 36 followers of the three

exemplary university presidents. The electronic survey was deployed via email. The

email briefly described the study and included a Survey Monkey link to the *Leader*

Behaviors survey. Embedded within the survey was the Informed Consent information

and the Participants Bill of Rights. The followers were not permitted to move forward

unless they acknowledged they had read and agreed to both items.

The survey data results for research question two were broken down into the main variables of character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. A total of 36 surveys were deployed to followers of the exemplary university presidents. Of the 36 deployed surveys, 29 people responded and completed the survey. The results were compiled and analyzed. The summary chart in Figure 9 summarizes the overall data results by variable. The total number of answers is in parenthesis. Relationships, character, inspiration, and vision asked the respondents about 5 behaviors questions, resulting in 145 answers. The wisdom variable asked 29 respondents about 10 behaviors resulting in 290 answers.

Figure 9

Summation of Number of Respondents and the Perceived Degree to Which Each Variable Helps to Create Meaning–Includes % and Mean of Totals

Variables (total # of answers)	Degree of Importance by the Number and % of Responses, Plus Total Mean												Total Mean
	Not Important		Marginally Important		Somewhat Important		Important		Very Important		Critically Important		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Relationships (145)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	6.2%	29	20.0%	57	39.3%	50	34.5%	5.02
Character (145)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	2.1%	22	15.2%	66	45.5%	54	37.2%	5.18
Inspiration (145)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	7.6%	38	26.2%	65	44.8%	31	21.4%	4.80
Wisdom (290)	1	0.3%	3	1.0%	14	4.8%	72	24.8%	120	41.4%	80	27.6%	4.89
Vision (145)	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	7	4.9%	37	25.9%	61	42.7%	37	25.9%	4.86

Overall, the results show that the greatest number of respondents perceived character to be *Critically Important* with 54 respondents (37.2%), and relationships a very close second, with 50 respondents (34.5%). These results aligned with the qualitative results of the exemplary university president findings, which also had the

largest number of codes supporting relationship and character behaviors (40% and 22% respectively) as the top two priorities to instill meaning within organizations. The main difference between the leader and follower results was that relationships scored highest in the qualitative data with 40% of the codes, yet character surpassed relationships in the quantitative data, by a narrow margin of four respondents. In essence, the data of relationships and character were very close, as *Critically Important* to both leaders and followers alike.

When analyzing the quantitative survey results in more detail, character moves slightly ahead of relationships with 97.9% of the answers related to character behaviors being *Important* (22 responses, 15.2%), *Very Important* (66 responses, 45.5%), and *Critically Important* (54 responses, 37.2%). Relationships fall to just below character at 93.7% of the answers related to relationships behaviors being *Important* (29 responses, 20.0%), *Very Important* (57 responses, 39.3%), and *Critically Important* (50 responses, 34.5%). In addition to percentages and number of respondents, the mean was also used to assess the quantitative data results. The mean is the average of all the numbers in a data set (Patten, 2012). As a result of the increased number of respondents who felt character is *Very Important* (66 respondents) versus relationships as *Very Important* (57 respondents), the final column on Figure 9 shows the mean of the variables with relationships having a slightly lower total mean at 5.02 than that of character at 5.18. When assessing the three levels of importance, from *Important* to *Critically Important*, the data results align with the works of Kouzes and Posner (2006), which identify character as the most important behavior for exemplary leadership. It is also important to note that there were no respondents who identified relationships and character as *Not*

153

Important or *Marginally Important*. In summary, all respondents perceived a high level of importance for both relationships and character, which aligned with data from the university president interviews, as well as the literature review.

The next highest number of responses (80 responses, 27.6%) cited wisdom as *Critically Important* for instilling meaning within an organization. It is important to note that the number of responses for wisdom is twice that of the other variables as the wisdom variable asked all 29 respondents 10 behavior questions (10*29 = 290), whereas all other variables asked the respondents about 5 behaviors questions (5*29 = 145). Data results from respondents who identified inspiration behaviors as *Critically Important* was 31 respondents at 21.4%. Data results for vision behaviors had 37 respondents (25.9%), which supported vision behaviors as *Critically Important* to instill meaning within the organization. The data results for the follower surveys closely mirrored that of the responses from exemplary leaders in that vision, inspiration, and wisdom were lower in importance than relationships and character, yet they were perceived as *Critically Important* to instill meaning in an organization. The quantitative data from the followers is similar to the findings for the qualitative data in that both leaders and followers perceive inspiration as lower in importance than all other variables.

On the *Leader Behaviors* survey, each variable—character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration—had a series of related behaviors, which the respondents were asked to rank as *Not Important, Marginally Important, Somewhat Important, Important, Very Important,* or *Critically Important.* Character, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration variables each assessed 5 related behaviors and wisdom had 10 related

154

behaviors. Below are the data results for each variable, described with their related major

findings.

Major Findings for Relationships

Figure 10 below shows the variable of relationships and the survey results as to

the perception of the importance of each related behavior. The respondents were asked to

rank each question from *Not Important* to *Critically Important*.

Figure 10

*Summation of the Relationships Variable and its Related Behaviors–Includes the Number
and % of Respondents, as well as the Mean*

Relationship Themes	Degree of Importance by Number and % of Responses and Mean												Total Mean
	Not Important		Marginally Important		Somewhat Important		Important		Very Important		Critically Important		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Continuously promotes our team's moving together as one unit to serve a common purpose.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	4	13.8%	15	51.7%	9	31.0%	5.10
Creates an environment of trust among leaders and team members in the organization.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	6	20.7%	22	75.9%	5.72
Behaves in a way that shows she/he cares about the team members.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	37.9%	11	37.9%	7	24.1%	4.86
Communicates in a clear, meaningful way.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	10.3%	15	51.7%	11	37.9%	5.28
Encourages team members to share leadership when performing tasks.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	27.6%	10	34.5%	10	34.5%	1	3.4%	4.14
Overall Degree of Importance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	6.2%	29	20.0%	57	39.3%	50	34.5%	5.02

The behavior relating to trust was noted with the following statement: "Creates

an environment of trust among leaders and team members in the organization." This

behavior far surpassed any other relationship behavior with an astounding 22 of the 29

155

(75.9%) respondents who perceived trust to be *Critically Important*. This finding directly aligned with the literature in that numerous authors identify trust as the foundation to all relationships and important for successful leadership within an organization (Collins, 2001; Collins & Porras, 2002; Covey, 2004; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; T. Moore, 2008; Seligman, 2011). Trust appeared in both the variable of relationships and the variable of character in the literature review and in the interviews with university presidents. In fact, in the survey to followers, trust is mentioned in the relationship variable, "Creates an environment of trust among leaders and team members in the organization." as well as in the character variable, "Actions with others show that he/she can be trusted." In fact, Covey (2004) stated that trust binds people together and is a critical behavior for leaders to thrive in their position.

Other relationship behaviors, including those regarding communication, caring, and moving the team forward with a common purpose, had fewer than 10 respondents who perceived the behaviors as *Critically Important*. The lowest-ranking behavior perceived by the respondents to be *Important* to *Critically Important* was "Encourages team members to share leadership when performing tasks." In fact, 27.6% of the respondents ranked this behavior as only *Somewhat Important*. It is also important to note that of all five relationship behaviors, none had responses where the perceptions of the behaviors were neither *Not Important* nor *Marginally Important*. Further, only two behaviors related to relationships had *Somewhat Important* as a response: "Continuously promotes our team's moving together as one unit to serve a common purpose", which had only one response, and "Encourages team members to share leadership when performing tasks", which had six responses. Overall, the data indicated that 93.9% of the

respondents perceived behaviors related to relationships as *Important, Very Important,* or *Critically Important.*

Major Findings for Character

Figure 11 below shows the variable of character and the survey results as to the perception of the importance of each related behavior. The respondents were asked to rank each question from *Not Important* to *Critically Important*.

Figure 11

Summation of the Character Variable and its Related Behaviors–Includes the Number and % of Respondents, as well as the Mean

Character Themes	Degree of Importance by Number and % of Responses and Mean												Total Mean
	Not Important		Marginally Important		Somewhat Important		Important		Very Important		Critically Important		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Behaves in an ethical manner when dealing with others.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	41.4%	17	58.6%	5.59
Actively listens when communicating with others.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	6.9%	19	65.5%	8	27.6%	5.21
Responds to challenging situations with optimism.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	6.9%	8	27.6%	10	34.5%	9	31.0%	4.90
Actions with others show that he/she can be trusted.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	10.3%	13	44.8%	13	44.8%	5.34
Actions show concern for the well-being of others.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	9	31.0%	12	41.4%	7	24.1%	4.86
Overall Degree of Importance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	2.1%	22	15.2%	66	45.5%	54	37.2%	**5.18**

Overall, the data revealed that 97.9% of all respondents perceived character as *Important* (15.2%), V*ery Important* (45.5%) or *Critically Important* (37.2%) to create personal and organizational meaning. Only three respondents overall perceived character

as *Somewhat Important* and none felt that character was *Not Important* or *Marginally Important*.

The respondents were asked specifically about five behaviors representative of character. The one behavior that stood out above all others with 58.6% of the respondents feeling it was *Critically Important* was "Behaves in an ethical manner when dealing with others." Ethical behavior also had the highest mean score of 5.59. In fact, 100% of the respondents perceived ethical behavior as *Very Important* (41.4%) or *Critically Important* (58.6%) to instill meaning within the organization. Ethical behavior was the only behavior within any of the variables with a 100% response rate of *Very Important* or *Critically Important*. "Behaves in an ethical manner when dealing with others" overall ranks the highest of the five categories of character behaviors including ethics, trust, listening, optimism, and showing concern.

The second highest behavior related to character was "Actions with others show that he/she can be trusted." 44.8% of the respondents stated that trust was *Critically Important*. An additional 44.8% (13 respondents) stated that trust behaviors are *Very Important,* taking the total trust behaviors to near 90%. The mean score for trust was 5.34, which was the second highest mean after "Behaves in an ethical manner", which had the highest mean score of 5.59.

The results of the three final character behaviors: "Actively listens when communicating with others," "Responding to challenging situations with optimism," and "Showing concern for the well-being of others" all scored fairly close together, ranging from 24% to 31% as *Critically Important* for instilling meaning. "Actively listens when communicating with others" had a significant number of respondents (19 respondents,

65.5%) who stated this trait was *Very Important* as compared to the behaviors related to

trust (13) and concern for others (12); as a result, the mean score for actively listening

was the third highest at 5.21.

Major Findings for Vision

Figure 12 below shows the variable of vision and the survey results as to the

perception of the importance of each related behavior. The respondents were asked to

rank each question from *Not Important* to *Critically Important*.

Figure 12

*Summation of the Vision Variable and its Related Behaviors–Includes the Number and %
of Respondents, as well as the Mean*

Vision Themes	Degree of Importance by Number and % of Responses and Mean												Total Mean
	Not Important		Marginally Important		Somewhat Important		Important		Very Important		Critically Important		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Communicates organization's vision in a way in which team members support it.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	7	24.1%	11	37.9	10	34.5%	5.03
Engages team members in creating a vision for the future	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	1	3.4%	11	37.9%	10	34.5%	6	20.7%	4.66
Behavior reflects organizational vision when making decisions.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	13.8%	8	27.6%	12	41.4%	5	17.2%	4.62
Promotes innovation that aligns with the organization's vision.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	18.5%	14	51.9%	8	29.6%	4.97
Demonstrates thinking toward the future through conversations and actions.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	6	20.7%	14	48.3%	8	27.6%	5.00
Overall Degree of Importance	0	0.0%	1	0.7%	7	4.9%	37	25.9%	61	42.7%	37	25.9%	4.86

The degree to which followers felt vision was *Critically Important* was 25.9%.

Followers stated vision helps to instill meaning, though it was less important than the

159

behaviors related to relationships (34.5%) and character (37.2%). The mean score for vision was also lower at 4.86 than those of relationships (5.02) and character (5.18). Similarly, exemplary university presidents felt that vision must be co-created and collaborative in order for exemplary leaders to instill meaning both personally and professionally with their team members, yet the presidents also felt that vision was less important than relationships and character, but necessary as one variable to create meaning for themselves and their followers.

The most *Critically Important* behavior related to vision was "Communicates the organization's vision in a way in which team members support it" with 34.5%, for a total of 10 respondents. The importance of communicating the vision mirrored the qualitative data in that leaders felt it was critical to communicate the shared vision of the organization. Overall, 68.6% of all respondents felt the five behaviors related to vision are *Very Important* (42.7%) or *Critically Important* (25.9%), yet almost double the proportion (42.7%) of the respondents chose *Very Important* over *Critically Important*. In fact, nearly 5.6% of all respondents felt that vision is only *Marginally Important* or *Somewhat Important* overall, whereas only 2.1% of respondents said character was *Somewhat Important*.

Major Findings for Inspiration

Figure 13 below shows the variable of inspiration and the survey results as to the perception of the importance of each related behavior within inspiration. The respondents were asked to rank each behavior from *Not Important* to *Critically Important*. The behaviors within inspiration included generating enthusiasm, recognizing

160

achievements, encouraging team members to innovate, building confidence among team

members, and empowering team members.

Figure 13

Summation of the Inspiration Variable and its Related Behaviors—Includes the Number and % of Respondents, as well as the Mean

	Degree of Importance by Number and % of Responses and Mean											
Inspiration Themes	Not Important		Marginally Important		Somewhat Important		Important		Very Important		Critically Important		Total Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Works with team members in a way that generates enthusiasm within teams.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	24.1%	16	55.2%	6	20.7%	4.97
Recognizes achievements of teams and team members.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	17.2%	9	31.0%	12	41.4%	3	10.3%	4.45
Encourages team members to innovate in order to advance the organization's leading edge.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	6.9%	10	34.5%	11	37.9%	6	20.7%	4.72
Engages in activities that build confidence among team members.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	10.3%	17	58.6%	9	31.0%	5.21
Empowers team members to take reasonable risks when problem solving.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	13.8%	9	31.0%	9	31.0%	7	24.1%	4.66
Overall Degree of Importance	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	7.6%	38	26.2%	65	44.8%	31	21.4%	4.80

The data from the qualitative exemplary leader interviews concluded that

inspiration is necessary to bring to teams for long-term sustainability, yet without the

other variables, inspiration alone cannot achieve meaning in the workplace. When asked

how followers perceive behaviors related to inspiration as a way to help instill meaning in

the organization, 21.4% overall felt inspiration is *Critically Important*, which is

significantly lower than the 37.2% *Critically Important* for character and the 34.5%

Critically Important for relationships. Further, 44.8% find inspiration to be *Very*

161

Important and the overall mean score for inspiration was 4.80, as compared to the 5.02

mean for relationships and 5.18 mean for character, indicating that for all respondents, it

is less than *Very Important* as a way to build personal and organizational meaning. The

specific behavior ranking highest as it related to using inspiration to instill meaning was

"Engages in activities that build confidence among team members." The mean score on

this behavior was the only behavior under inspiration at a mean score of greater than 5

(5.21), showing that nearly 90% of all the respondents felt that building confidence in

members can help to create meaning.

Major Findings for Wisdom

Figure 14 below shows the variable of wisdom and the survey results as to the

perception of the importance of each related behavior. The respondents were asked to

rank each question from *Not Important* to *Critically Important*. The behaviors within

wisdom included:

- Keeps goals of the organization as part of the conversations.
- Evaluates decision-making on past similarities.
- Demonstrates compassion toward team members.
- Reflects an understanding of life's complexities.
- Integrates personal values with organizational values when interacting with team members.
- Brings personal knowledge to the table when responding to complex situations within the organization.
- Takes action by doing the "right thing" in a variety of organizational settings.
- Displays expertise when working in a variety of situations within the organization.
- Shows concern for others.

162

Figure 14

Summation of the Wisdom Variable and its Related Behaviors—Includes the Number and % of Respondents, as well as the Mean

Wisdom Themes	Degree of Importance by Number and % of Responses and Mean												Total Mean
	Not Important		Marginally Important		Somewhat Important		Important		Very Important		Critically Important		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
When working with teams and team members, continuously keeps the overall goals of the organization as part of the conversations.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	17.2%	14	48.3%	10	34.5%	5.17
Evaluates the quality of decision making by discussing similarities of past situations with team members.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	10	34.5%	11	37.9%	7	24.1%	4.83
Demonstrates compassion toward team members.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	4	13.8%	15	51.7%	9	31.0%	5.10
Behavior reflects an understanding of life's complexities.	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	6	20.7%	5	17.2%	7	24.1%	10	34.5%	4.66
Integrates personal values with organizational values when interacting with team members.	1	3.4%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	12	41.4%	11	37.9%	4	13.8%	4.52
Brings personal knowledge to the table when responding to complex situations within the organization.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	18	62.1%	10	34.5%	5.31
Takes action by doing the "right thing" in a variety of organizational settings.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	11	37.9%	12	41.4%	5	17.2%	4.72
Displays expertise when working in a variety of situations within the organization.	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	0	0.0%	10	34.5%	10	34.5%	8	27.6%	4.83
Considers past experiences when responding to complex situations within the organization.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	8	27.6%	11	37.9%	9	31.0%	4.97
Shows concern for others.	0	0.0%	1	3.4%	3	10.3%	6	20.7%	11	37.9%	8	27.6%	4.76
Total	**1**	**0.3%**	**3**	**1.0%**	**14**	**4.8%**	**72**	**24.8%**	**120**	**41.4%**	**80**	**27.6%**	**4.89**

Data collected from the qualitative interviews with exemplary university presidents concluded that wisdom and knowledge from past experiences can influence meaning in the workplace. When followers were asked the degree of importance to which wisdom and its associated behaviors help to instill meaning in the workplace, the mean score overall, based on the 10 related behaviors, was 4.89, making wisdom third overall, after relationships with a mean of 5.02 and character with a mean of 5.18. 41.4% of all respondents stated that behaviors related to wisdom are *Very Important*, as opposed to *Critically Important*, which was 27.6%. The behavior which stood out the most in the survey was "Brings personal knowledge to the table when responding to complex situations within the organization." The mean score on this particular behavior was the highest under wisdom with a mean score of 5.31. The second highest behavior related to wisdom was "Continuously keeps the overall goals of the organization as a part of the conversations" with a mean score of 5.17 and with 82.8% of the respondents stating that this was *Very Important* or *Critically Important* to instilling meaning within the organization. The lowest ranking score, both in mean (4.52) and percentage of *Very Important* or *Critically Important* (51.7%) was "Integrates personal values with organizational values when interacting with team members."

Summary

The qualitative and quantitative data results supported the five variables of character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration as traits which exemplary university presidents use to instill meaning both personally and professionally. Further, the research supported the degree of importance to which leaders use these traits as all five variables being used concurrently and consistently for meaning in the workplace.

Figure 15

Summation of the Five Variables with Related % of Codes from Exemplary Presidents and % of Data Results who Noted Behaviors as Critically Important

Variable	% Codes for Exemplary Presidents	% Codes for Followers as Critically Important
Relationships	40%	34.5%
Character	22%	37.2%
Wisdom	13%	27.6%
Vision	14%	25.9%
Inspiration	11%	21.4%

Exemplary university presidents and their followers were similar in support of behaviors relating to relationships and character as being important to instill meaning within an organization. Data from the exemplary presidents described behaviors related to relationships in 40% of the codes and the followers concurred with 34.5% of the followers stating relationships were *Critically Important.* Data from the exemplary presidents described behaviors related to character in 22% of the codes, second to relationships. Followers concurred with 37.2%, slightly above that of relationships, stating character as *Critically Important.* Similarly, inspiration ranked the lowest for both exemplary university presidents, at 11% of the codes, and for followers as feeling inspiration was *Critically Important* at 21.4%. Wisdom and vision were reversed, with vision being cited 14% of the time and wisdom falling only slightly behind at 13% of the codes cited by exemplary presidents; in contrast, 27.6% of the followers identified wisdom as *Critically Important* and a slightly lower 25.9% felt that vision was *Critically Important*. Overall, the data results for university presidents and followers are very similar.

It is also important to note that trust, ethics, morals, and integrity were common themes among exemplary university presidents and followers, as well as the literature

review. 75.9% of followers identified trust, under relationships, as *Critically Important*.

Trust within relationships was the highest behavior in the *Leader Behaviors* survey, with

the next highest behavior of ethics, under character, with 58.6% of followers who cited

ethics at *Critically Important*. Trust and respect were also recurring themes throughout

leadership literature and are essential to the creation of meaningful relationships (*Center

for Creative Leadership*, 2015; Collins, 2001; Covey, 1991; Kouzes & Posner, 2006; T.

Moore, 2008; Patterson, 2008; Robinson, 2009).

Overall, 40% of the codes for exemplary leaders identified behaviors related to

relationships as *Important*, and 73.8% of followers concurred that relationship behaviors

were either *Very Important* or *Critically Important*. 22% of codes for exemplary leaders

found character behaviors important, and 82.7% of followers concurred that character

was either *Very Important* or *Critically Important*. Further, exemplary leaders cited

codes of vision (14%), wisdom (13%), and inspiration (11%) as important, and nearly

70% of all followers in each variable concurred, stating that such behaviors were either

Very Important or *Critically Important* to instill personal and professional meaning

within the organization.

Chapter IV reported the detailed qualitative and quantitative data results on the

research findings of this study. Chapter V discusses the findings of the study in more

detail. Chapter V will also explore the unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for

action, recommendations for future studies, and closing remarks.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Chapter V begins with an overview of the research study, starting with the purpose statement, research questions, methodology, population, and sample. Chapter V then describes the major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions from the findings, implications for action, and recommendations for further research. Chapter V closes with concluding remarks and reflections.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods case study was to identify and describe the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration.

In addition, it was the purpose of this study to determine the degree of importance to which followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning.

Research Questions

1. What are the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration?

2. To what degree do followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning?

Methodology

The methodology used for this study was mixed methods. The qualitative portion of the study was conducted via face-to-face interviews with exemplary university presidents. The interviews were conducted using a series of questions from an *Interview Schedule* (Appendix E) developed by the peer researchers. The interviews were used to identify and describe the behaviors exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers. A total of three exemplary university presidents were chosen for face-to-face interviews. The quantitative portion of the study was conducted through a survey, developed by the peer-researchers, entitled *Leader Behaviors* (Appendix H). The survey was deployed electronically to 12 followers of each of the three university presidents. The survey asked fixed-choice questions to determine the degree to which followers perceive that the behaviors related to specific traits help create personal and organizational meaning. Of the 36 followers who were invited to participate, 29 individuals completed the survey.

Population

In the publication *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches,* Creswell (2003) stated a population is "a group of individuals who comprise the same characteristics" (p. 644). Similarly, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) defined a population as a collection of individuals or objects within a certain group known to have common characteristics or traits. The larger population for this study was university presidents. University presidents are ultimately responsible for the culture, climate, security, and safety of the institution, as well as the quality of the academic and support programs and all of its component entities. In addition, the president is responsible for

the fiscal viability of the institution, including budgets and fundraising, as well as the relationships among students, administration, and faculty. The president is in charge of strategic planning, operations, and maintenance of real and personal property.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), there are nearly 5,000 institutes of higher education in the United States. It was not feasible to use such a large population due to time, geography, and monetary restraints; therefore, in order to identify a manageable population, a target population was identified. The population was first narrowed geographically, focusing on institutes of higher education in California, which narrowed the population to 451 institutions ("National Center for Education Statistics," 2016). This population was still too large to sample every possible respondent. The demographic region was then narrowed to private, nonprofit institutions in the Southern California area. The narrowing of the population provided a reasonable and accessible target for the purpose of this study.

Target Population

A target population for a study is the entire set of individuals chosen from the overall population for which the study data are to be used to make inferences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The target population defined the population to which the findings are meant to be generalized. The sample population was identified as private nonprofit universities within a 25-mile radius of the Brandman University campus to allow for face-to-face interviews. The target population for this study considered exemplary university presidents. This study considered an exemplary leader to be one who demonstrated at least five of the following criteria:

169

- Evidence of successful relationships with followers

- Evidence of leading a successful organization

- Minimum of five years of experience in the profession

- Articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings

- Recognition by peers

- Membership in professional association in their field
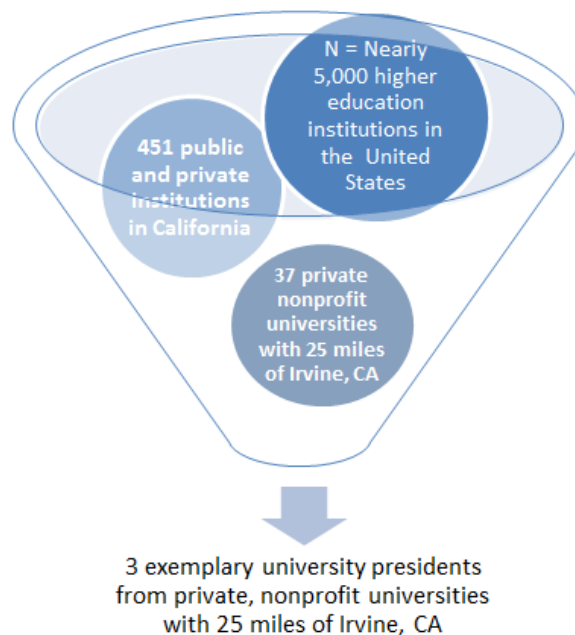
Sample

The sample is a group of participants in a study selected from the population from which the researcher intends to generalize. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), a sampling is selecting a "group of individuals from whom data are collected" (p. 129). The study used purposeful sampling for the both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), purposeful sampling is when the researcher "selects a sample that is representative of the population or that includes subjects with needed characteristics" (p. 138). Purposeful sampling was chosen as the method of sample selection based on the criteria used for the exemplary leaders.

Due to limitations on time, cost, and accessibility, convenience sampling was also utilized for proximity and accessibility reasons. The site of private, nonprofit universities was selected to align the research focus on the research problem and the ability to interview a select group of presidents and followers. The 37 private nonprofit universities were placed into an Excel spreadsheet, and the researcher was able to evaluate information on the university presidents as to the length of time in their positions, organization and association affiliations, and speaking engagements, as noted on websites, LinkedIn, published articles, and association sites. In identifying presidents

who displayed exemplary relationships, evidence was obtained and verified through discussions with employees, consultants, faculty, and students, as well as published university articles and websites. After the university presidents were identified as meeting the desired parameters, the final presidents were placed on a prospective-participant list and assigned a unique identifying number (President A, President B, President C) to be contacted for the research study. The requirement for the university president to be in their field for at least five years was based on information from a research study that looked at colleges and universities over a 25-year period. The average term for university presidents was six years in their position (Cook, 2012); therefore, the researcher was comfortable using the criteria agreed upon by the peer researchers, which set the five-year figure as a benchmark for the minimum term of exemplary leaders in this study.

Figure 16

Graphical Representation of the Population and Sample Funnel.

National Center for Education Statistics, 2016

Quantitative Sampling

Upon selecting the university presidents based on the criterion-specific sampling, the quantitative sample population was selected. The sample population for the survey was also criterion-based since the population must have been followers of the stated university presidents. The researcher worked in collaboration with the university president, or a selected designee, at the university to obtain the list of followers who work with the university president. The sample size chosen for the quantitative analysis was limited to 12 followers of the university president. The sample size was limited due to the number of followers each president has under their purview.

Major Findings

Several major findings resulted from this research study. The findings are outlined below, organized by research question.

Research Question 1

Research question number one asked: "What are the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration?" Face-to-face interviews were conducted with three exemplary university presidents to answer research question number one. The researcher asked participants in the study open-ended, guided interview questions about the behaviors they use to create meaning through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. The interviews were recorded and transcribed, then coded and analyzed for major themes and patterns.

The first major finding of the study is that all exemplary university presidents in this study resoundingly agreed that all five traits—character, vision, relationships,

172

wisdom, and inspiration—are vital to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers. The leaders differ slightly on which trait they stated to be the most critical, but all agree that all variables must be present on some level to create meaning.

The second major finding from the study was that the exemplary university presidents agree that behaviors related to relationships and character outweigh behaviors of vision, wisdom, and inspiration, yet behaviors relating to all variables are all necessary to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers. University presidents referenced behaviors related to relationships in 40% of the codes and behaviors related to character in 22% of the codes, whereas behavior codes were lower, yet still important, for vision (14%), wisdom (13%) and inspiration (11%). The exemplary university presidents all concurred that not one variable could be eliminated.

Third, the key findings resoundingly supported relationships as the most important behaviors needed to instill personal and organizational meaning. Behaviors related to the trait of relationships occurred in 40% of the codes for the exemplary university presidents. Relationship behaviors included communication and socialization; establishing personal relationships; management by walking around; compassion, love, and caring; trust and respect; listening; and collaboration. The data supported the premise that without relationships, an exemplary university president would not be able to instill meaning in the organization.

The fourth major finding is that behaviors related to the variable of inspiration scored the lowest overall, with 11% of the codes related to inspiration. The exemplary

university presidents felt that, although at a lower rate, inspiration is a *must have*, especially when times are difficult and the teams need to be inspired to push forward.

Research Question 2

Research question number two asked, "To what degree do followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning?" A survey developed by the peer researchers, titled *Leader Behaviors*, was deployed via an electronic link to followers of the exemplary university presidents to answer research question number two. The researcher asked participants in the study the extent to which they perceived leader behaviors as important to creating meaning within an organization through character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. Respondents selected *Not Important*, *Marginally Important, Somewhat Important, Important, Very Important,* or *Critically Important*. The number of respondents, the percentage of responses, and the mean were then calculated to establish the overall results of the survey by each variable of character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. The researcher also evaluated the number of respondents, percentage of responses, and the mean for specific behaviors within each variable. Data was then compiled to evaluate the findings as shown in Figure 17.

Figure 17

Summation of the Five Variables with Related % of Codes from Followers and % of Data Results who Noted Behaviors as Critically Important

Variable	% Codes for Followers as Critically Important
Relationships	34.5%
Character	37.2%
Wisdom	27.6%
Vision	25.9%
Inspiration	21.4%

The first major finding from the quantitative data was that the vast majority of followers, over 92% in every variable, perceived the behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration to be *Important, Very Important,* or *Critically Important* for creating personal and organizational meaning. Character scored the highest overall at 97.9%, vision scored second highest at 94.5%, relationships and wisdom came in at 93.8% each, and inspiration had 92.4% of the respondents who stated the behaviors to be *Important, Very Important,* or *Critically Important* for creating personal and organizational meaning.

The second major finding was that trust, under the relationship variable, was the highest specific behavior overall, with 75.9% of the followers who perceived this behavior as *Critically Important*. The specific behavior was "Creates an environment of trust among leaders and team members in the organization." The mean of this particular behavior was also the highest at 5.72. The literature supported this finding also; as stated, "Trust has been described as the bedrock of effective leadership and a healthy organizational climate" (Baird, 2010, p. 1).

The third major finding was that encouragement of shared leadership, also under the relationship variable, was the lowest specific behavior overall, with only 3.4% of the followers who perceived this behavior as *Critically Important*. The specific behavior was "Encourages team members to share leadership when performing tasks." The mean score of this particular behavior was the lowest for the entire survey at 4.14.

The fourth major finding was that followers rated the overarching variable of character higher than that of all other variables with the mean score of 5.18 and with

97.9% of the followers who perceived character as *Important, Very Important,* or

Critically Important.

The fifth major finding was that the relationships variable and the character

variable scored very close together with relationships at 5.02 and character at 5.18,

indicating that these two variables, similar to the qualitative results, are critically

important for creating personal and organizational meaning.

Unexpected Findings

There were three unexpected findings from this research. The first unexpected

finding was that inspiration ranked the lowest of all the variables. The second was that

there are very few female university presidents. The third related to shared leadership.

The first unexpected finding was the level at which both the exemplary university

presidents and their followers ranked inspiration as a trait that instills personal and

organizational meaning. Inspiration was referred to as a required trait, but it ranked

lower, both in the qualitative analysis and in the quantitative analysis, than the four other

traits of character, vision, relationships, and wisdom. It was unanimous that inspiration is

good to have in combination with the other traits, but inspiration alone cannot instill a

sense of meaning. The researcher found this unexpected because inspiration and

motivation are broad concepts that are highly discussed in the literature and in a variety

of leadership-development workshops. In addition, the majority of respondents felt that

with a high level of inspiration, and a lower level of the other critical traits, especially

relationships and character, inhibits the organization's ability to create meaning.

A second unexpected finding was the gender demographics of the exemplary

university presidents. The researcher had not considered the possibility of having a

difficult time finding a female president to interview, yet upon seeking exemplary

presidents, females were difficult to find. In fact, Cook (2012) stated that only 26% of

university presidents throughout the country are female.

A third unexpected finding was the low percentage of followers who felt shared

leadership was *Critically Important.* The statement appeared in the relationship variable

of the *Leader Behaviors* survey, "Encourages team members to share leadership when

performing tasks." Only one respondent (3.4%) stated shared leadership as *Critically*

Important. This is contrary to the literature which supports shared leadership (Flood,

1999; Senge, 2006; Sood, 2015).

Conclusions

This study identified the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to

create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through

character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. In addition, the study looked at

the degree to which followers perceive the behaviors related to character, vision,

relationships, wisdom, and inspiration help to create personal and organizational

meaning. Results from the study show that exemplary presidents must have behaviors

related to all five traits—character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration—to

create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers. Further,

the results show the behaviors exemplary university presidents use to create meaning for

themselves and their followers was in alignment with the degree to which followers

believe these behaviors create personal and organizational meaning. The findings show

that relationships and character score significantly higher than the other traits and are

critically important for exemplary presidents to instill meaning. Vision and wisdom

behaviors were critical, yet to a lesser degree than relationships and character. Finally, though leaders and followers cited inspirational behaviors as critical and impossible to do without, inspiration fared lower both for exemplary presidents and for followers. The conclusions found are supported by the literature as follows:

Conclusion 1: Relationships

Based on the findings of this research, it was concluded that presidents who do not have a high level of relationship skills will have more disengaged employees and will not be as effective in creating meaning for themselves and their followers. As supported in the literature by Kouzes and Posner (2006), leadership is based upon a relationship between those who would like to lead, and those who choose to follow. Further, in the book *Building Teams, Building People*, Harvey and Drolet (2006) discussed the importance of communication and setting norms for conversations that must take place for effective leadership. Relationship skills must include the ability to create an environment of trust in the organization, a high level of communication, the ability to collaborate to move the teams forward cohesively, and the ability to show team members that the leader truly cares about them.

Trust was the highest-ranking important behavior within the relationship variable, with 75.9% of the follower respondents stating trust was C*ritically Important* for leaders to instill meaning in the organization. The literature supported the need for exemplary relationship skills to include trust, as demonstrated by Xiong et al. (2016) when they stated, "As an employee's trust in their supervisor increases, so does the commitment toward the organization. The positive relationship was higher for employees who felt their boss had a high level of authentic leadership" (p. 829). Exemplary university

178

presidents must trust and be trusted. Further, it was concluded that collaboration and communication are crucial for strong relationships in organizations.

Conclusion 2: Character

Based on the findings of this research, it was concluded that exemplary university presidents who do not display a high level of character may cause the organizational structure to fall apart. High character includes behaving in an ethical manner, actively listening to others, showing that one can be trusted, communicating with optimism, and showing concern for the well-being of others. An example of poor character has been seen in the press with fraudulent expense reporting, which damaged the institution's reputation and caused the community members to question other leaders in the institution. To instill meaning in their organization, university presidents must display character through actions and words that are ethical and morally just.

The data from the follower survey ranked the overall findings of behaviors related to character as critical to instilling meaning in the organization with nearly 98% of the respondents stating that character was of the utmost importance. As such, leaders must ensure they have high levels of ethics to ensure the followers can trust them to lead and do the right thing. In the book *A Leader's Legacy,* Kouzes and Posner (2006) emphasized the importance of character as the most critical behavior for successful leadership. They go on to say that trust binds all human relationships and that to ensure meaningful accomplishments in the organization, a leader must be honest, keep their commitments, value others, and be an active listener. Patterson (2008) agreed when he stated that leaders must set the rules within their organizations based on moral standards.

Conclusion 3: Vision

Based on the findings in this study, it was concluded that exemplary university presidents who craft the organizational vision with other team members, and who share the vision throughout the organization, will be more successful in creating buy-in to the vision from the followers. In addition, presidents who collaborate on a shared vision effectively incorporate behaviors that communicate the organization's vision for the future. It is imperative that vision behaviors include co-creating the vision to ensure buy-in from followers. Finally, the vision must continue to be upheld through actions, words, and decision-making.

The data from the follower survey showed that 94.5% of all respondents believed vision to be *Important* to *Critically Important*. As such, it is imperative that exemplary leaders share the vision of the institution with faculty, staff, and students alike. As so eloquently stated in Proverbs 29:18, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Further, in the book *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge (2006) said that the starting point of creating a vision for organizations occurs only after the climate allows for personal visions to grow, so exemplary leaders must allow an environment where creating a vision and following through on the vision is rewarded. Further, in *Make it Matter,* Scott Mautz (2015) discussed how a personal vision statement that aligns with an organizational vision statement can create personal meaning, that transcends into organizational meaning.

Conclusion 4: Wisdom

It is concluded that followers want an exemplary leader to instill their personal wisdom on the organization. Followers acknowledge that wisdom of the leader builds

confidence and trust so that the organization can achieve their goals. The followers want to hear the experiences and stories from the president to validate the successes from past situations. By sharing the knowledge and wisdom learned from previous experiences, the leader can pave the way to creating meaning in the organization for themselves and their followers. Behaviors related to wisdom included bringing past experiences to a situation, using storytelling to compare future and past scenarios, displaying expertise and understanding, showing concern for others, and demonstrating compassion.

The data results from this study concluded that wisdom was a necessary variable with 13% of leaders' codes reflecting wisdom and past expertise and 93.8% of the followers stating that wisdom is *Important* to *Critically Important.* Bennis and Nanus (2007) discussed the importance of wisdom and that wisdom can impact not only organizations, but society as a whole. Socrates said it well as he is quoted saying, "True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize how little we understand about life, ourselves, and the world."

Conclusion 5: Inspiration

It is concluded, based on the findings in this study, that followers have a higher concern for inspiration than leaders. Followers want to be inspired—and when they are, engagement increases and there is higher productivity. Followers are striving for words of inspiration and motivation. Though inspiration scored the lowest in the qualitative data and the quantitative data, leaders and followers both concurred that inspiration is still a necessary variable for meaningful leadership. Behaviors related to inspiration include the abilities to generate enthusiasm among employees, recognize achievements, build confidence in others, and encourage team members to innovate and take risks.

Numerous authors emphasized the importance of recognizing small and big wins and the achievements of team members to keep them inspired (Kouzes & Posner, 2006; Seligman, 2002; Studer, 2003). It is important that university presidents broaden their ability to inspire and motivate not only team members, but students as well, to ensure that team members are excited and hopeful about the institution and its future.

Conclusion 6: Five Variables

Based on the this research and the literature review, it is clear that behaviors related to all five variables—character, relationships, vision, wisdom, and inspiration—are critical to create meaning in an organization. When all five variables are in play, demonstrated by exemplary university presidents, the employees are more engaged. The research supported that more engaged employees are happier employees. Happier employees find more meaning in their work, and organizations benefit through increased productivity and profitability. The five variables—character, relationships, vision, wisdom, and inspiration—integrated together, are critical and must be displayed concurrently and consistently to create meaning in an organization for leaders and their followers. The data supported this conclusion through the qualitative interviews when the presidents unanimously stated that all five variables are essential for creating meaning within the organization. Further, data from the followers concur that all variables are important to critically important for instilling meaning in the workplace.

<div align="center">

Implications for Action

</div>

This research supported the premise that exemplary university presidents can create meaning within their institutions through demonstrating behaviors that exemplify character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. Further, the research supported

that without one of these variables, the ability to create true meaning in an organization may be difficult. The following section outlines a variety of implications that should be put into action to ensure that exemplary university presidents instill meaning within their organizations.

Implication 1: Self-Assessments

It is important that a university president take time for self-reflection and feedback from others. One way a university president can seek information about their leadership style is to participate in a 360-degree assessment, or similar tool, which focuses on behaviors related to character, relationships, vision, inspiration, and wisdom. A president should continue to self-reflect and analyze feedback from others on a regular basis to ensure that their perception of their personal leadership behaviors aligns with the perceptions of their followers. A great leader will assess the results of such a survey with the perspective that there are opportunities for growth in every individual, not as personal attacks or judgments. The university president should hire a coach or seek a mentor to assist with the assessments to determine opportunities for improvement and personal development. The mentor/coach should work with the president to develop areas of strength and shore up areas of weakness. It is recommended that the university president consider all stakeholders, including faculty, staff, and students, to participate in the assessment to see a variety of opportunities for growth and development. Feedback from the student perspective, as well as the organizational perspective, will be important to ensure exemplary leadership results in impact on the institution as a whole.

Implication 2: Professional Development

It is critical that professional development continue to be a priority, not only for the university president, but for the entire leadership team. It is recommended that the institution provide sufficient time and the financial resources for university presidents and leadership team members to engage in professional development. To ensure that behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration transcend throughout the leadership team, the president should confirm that all leadership team members understand the importance of the variables and their related behaviors from this study. Understanding both personal and professional relationships of team members will ensure buy-in from the teams.

The top two variables found in the results, as well as in the literature, embrace relationships and character at high levels. The university presidents can also improve their relationship skills through working with coaching and mentorship programs. The mentor should observe the university president in action for a true assessment of their relationship skills. It was concluded that exemplary university presidents should continue to expand their knowledge of effective leadership strategies through continually reading and gaining knowledge of effective communication and relationship strategies

Professional development should focus on relationship skills, which include communication, relationships, managing by walking around, compassion, love, trust, listening, and collaboration. Further, university presidents should also be required to take courses or training in ethics and ethical behaviors. Character behaviors should be at the forefront of training, including how to maintain a high level of integrity, honesty,

authenticity, transparency and faithfulness, while practicing the skills of servant leadership and doing what one says they will do.

Implication 3: Personal Development

Exemplary university presidents should ensure they continue their personal development so they can effectively lead their organizations through meaning. As stated by Scott Mautz (2015) in his discussions on creating meaning in the workplace, leaders must "master meaning-making leadership behaviors." As seen in this study, these behaviors include character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration, which all proved to be perceived as important to critically important by followers within the organization. There are numerous online tools and support opportunities to personally develop and fine-tune leadership skills. It would be fitting for exemplary university presidents to consider reading such books as *Hardwiring Excellence* by Quint Studer (2003), *Lead with Heart* by Mark Crowley (2011), and *Make it Matter* by Scott Mautz (2015). In addition, these authors have developed numerous coaching tools, emails, and blogs on their websites that will help leaders stay abreast of new and innovative leadership techniques for instilling excellence within their organizations.

Implication 4: Professional Associations

To facilitate professionalism and character development, university presidents should participate in professional networks and associations to ensure they are sharing and learning best practices within their field. Presidents can connect with other exemplary leaders, not only from other universities and colleges, but from other industries as well. As seen in the literature, exemplary leadership skills and behaviors are not industry specific, so it may behoove presidents to learn from others who display

exemplary leadership skills within a variety of industries. Presidents should also use social media, such as LinkedIn, to expand their professional networks of contacts outside of their typical geographical reach. Such relationships can expand the opportunities for growth from other areas through other leaders to create innovative and successful approaches to leading a university.

Implication 5: Vision, Wisdom, Inspiration

This study revealed that behaviors related to vision, wisdom, and inspiration are *must haves* to help a university president create meaning within their organization. As such, a university president should ensure they have honed their skills in co-creating a vision within their organization. Opportunities such as Stephen Covey workshops can help to build skills in creating a vision, mission, and values, as well as ensuring the teams do the same to create buy-in for the vision of the organization. Further, it would befit an exemplary leader to learn the art of storytelling and master the skill of effectively seeding conversations to bring their wisdom to the success of the organization. And finally, inspiration is a must for supporting team members through good times and bad. As seen in this study, inspiration is effective, but does not create meaning as a stand-alone variable. However, it can be used effectively to acknowledge, reward, and inspire team members to be the best that they can be.

Implication 6: Train the Trainers

University presidents should ensure there is both budget and time allotted to professional development for all leadership team members. Other key leaders within the organization should partake in 360-degree assessments and DISC assessments to understand their levels of interaction, strengths, and opportunities for growth. The

186

leaders can focus on the variables of character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration to ensure the variables permeate throughout the organization.

Implication 7: Searching for New Presidents

As transitions occur in leadership, it may benefit a search team in charge of seeking a new president to use the *Leader Behaviors* survey developed by the peer researchers in this study with potential candidates to measure the degree of importance to which they feel an exemplary leader holds these traits as important. By deploying this survey to a potential leader, the search team could assess the perceptions of leaders. This study has shown an alignment between the perceptions of the followers and that of the exemplary leader. The *Leader Behaviors* instrument used in this study could also be modified and developed to create a 360-degree type assessment asking questions about the follower's current leader. The research confirmed that the perceptions of followers can accurately report on leader behaviors toward create meaning. In addition, it is critical that a search team do a thorough investigation of character assessments through social media and internet searches to ensure the university president exemplifies character in decision making.

<div align="center">

Recommendations for Further Research

</div>

Universities are an important part of society in a global system increasingly driven by knowledge, information, technological changes, and a tumultuous political arena (Cook, 2012; Faust, 2010). A university president is held accountable to the board, faculty, staff, students, and the community as a whole. Based on the findings in this study, it is important the body of knowledge as it relates to instilling meaning in the workplace at the university level continues to be a topic of research. According to the

Gallup poll, 70% of all workers are disengaged in their work (Gallup, 2013). Numerous studies supported there is a direct correlation between engagement at work and productivity, which then leads to profitability and organizational success. As the workplace dynamics change, and as employees seek positions that instill meaning in their lives, it will be vital for exemplary leaders to find ways in which to drive meaning in the workplace, both professionally and personally. This study has led to thoughts on future research that could bring the topic to a broader level. The following are some areas of interest and findings that could strengthen this body of study:

Recommendation 1: Women in University Leadership Positions

The first recommendation for further research would be to do a comparative analysis between male and female presidents and the behaviors they use to create meaning within the institution using character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration. Only 26% of the university presidents in the United States are female (Cook, 2012). Women oftentimes are said to be nurturing and relationship-driven. It is suggested that this study be replicated with more interviews and surveys deployed to female presidents. It is suggested that further research compare the results of numerous female and male presidents to assess whether there is a significant difference in the specific behaviors males and females use to instill meaning in the workplace.

Recommendation 2: Private versus Public Institutions

This study was conducted specifically with private nonprofit university presidents. It is suggested that the study be replicated with public institutions and the behaviors the presidents use to create meaning in those institutions. Public institutions typically have larger student and employee populations, so it would be interesting to note

whether personal relationships and character score as high for large institutions as they do for smaller institutions.

Recommendation 3: For-Profit versus Nonprofit

It is recommended that future research include a comparative analysis of meaning instilled in for-profit versus nonprofit institutions. Replicating this study with a combination of for-profit and nonprofit institutions might reveal whether there is a difference in the leader's ability to instill meaning in the institution and assess how meaning may be related to profitability and shareholder accountability.

Recommendation 4: Presidency Terms

It is suggested that the study be replicated with presidents who have been in their positions for longer than six years, which is the average time a president serves in one institution. It would be interesting to assess how time in their position affects particular variables such as character, wisdom, and vision. The study could correlate the time in the role of president of a given institution to changes in the leadership variables. In addition, by studying term, if the results show that long-term presidency leads to greater perceptions of instilling meaning, additional coaching and pairing of individuals in mentorship-type programs could prove quite successful. By pairing longer serving presidents with shorter serving presidents, it becomes possible to teach skills to improve the creation of meaning in organizations. Further, long-term leadership could be rewarded and recognized by board members to ensure university presidency at one institution continues.

189

Recommendation 5: Professional Development Opportunities

It is suggested this study go deeper with specifics as to "examples" of each

variable behavior and how the president demonstrates such behaviors. This study

compiled specific traits such as personal relationships, communication, collaboration, and

honesty, but how these variables are displayed could be assessed. The study could be a

fully qualitative study incorporating observations, artifacts, and interviews to dig deeper

into specific behaviors. Behaviors such as writing personal notes to employees or having

pizza in the dining hall with students could then be collected. University-specific

coaching and professional-development modules could be created to teach leaders in

universities more specific techniques for creating meaning within their institution.

Recommendation 6: Qualitative Case Study

It is suggested this study go deeper with a qualitative case study of exemplary

university presidents. The study could be replicated with a long term case study whereby

the researcher shadows exemplary university presidents over numerous months. The

shadowing would allow the researcher to witness behaviors related to character,

relationships, vision, wisdom, and inspiration. The researcher could assess if exemplary

leaders are applying all variables on a consistent and concurrent basis. The researcher

could also collect artifacts and document observations.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

"Do you work in a community, or a corporation? It's your choice."

~ Scott Mautz

Working adults spend more than half their waking lives at work, yet as seen

within the literature review, workplace satisfaction has declined over the past few

decades (Gallup, 2013). It is more important now than ever to ensure that leaders create a

work environment that fulfills the needs of individuals today in order to ensure that

employees are engaged and finding satisfaction in their work; therefore, employees are

more productive, which in turn improves profitability. As so eloquently stated by Scott

Mautz (2015), "Simply put, meaning is *the* performance enhancer of our times. And by

the way, it's free" (p. 11). Meaning and its impact on organizational success must

continue to be studied. The variables studied, and their related behaviors, are essential

for leaders to develop to ensure that they bring meaning to the workplace, not only for

their followers, but for themselves.

     The president of a university is the lead administrator and holds a very important

role within the community. The expectations for the position are high. The university

president is held accountable to the board of directors, faculty, staff, students, donors, and

the community as a whole. An exemplary university president must use character, vision,

relationships, wisdom, and inspiration to instill meaning in the workplace for themselves

and their followers.

     In today's work environment, where the basic needs of most individuals are

already met, creating a meaningful work environment is vital to the ultimate success of

an organization. As I reflect on the literature reviewed through this process and

conducting the face-to-face interviews with exemplary university presidents, I have found

it rewarding and validating to learn that relationships and character are the top variables

for an exemplary leader to instill meaning, followed by vision, wisdom, and inspiration. I

have been in a leadership role for over 25 years of my career, not only in education, but

also in the business arena. I have always based my leadership style on authentic and

transparent relationships. In addition, I hold myself to a high level of ethical standards, so it was validating to know that relationships and character behaviors appeared as the most critical for leaders and followers for instilling both personal and organizational meaning. I am also thankful to see that truth, morals, and ethical behaviors ranked high for both leaders and followers. In the unstable environment of the 21st century, it is validating to know that character will prevail. The results of this study, as well as the literature reviewed for this study, have given me a greater sense of hope for the leaders of tomorrow.

As this study validated, both leaders and followers believe that all five variables of character, vision, relationships, wisdom, and inspiration are important to create meaning within their organizations. As such, tools and training materials can be developed to ensure that leaders have the tools they need to become powerful, meaningful leaders of the 21st century. Coaching modules can be developed for training on the behaviors within the five variables studied to ensure that university presidents bring meaning to their institutions.

As the old adage says, "If you love what you do, you'll never work a day in your life." How sweet it will be if we can help leaders love their work and bring that same meaningful environment to their employees!

REFERENCES

Adams, S. (2014). Most Americans are unhappy at work. *Forbes Leadership,* (June 20, 2014). Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2014/06/20/most-americans-are-unhappy-at-work

D. Aierly (Producer). (2015). *What pushes us to work hard - even when we don't have to* Retrieved from http://www.npr.org/player.embed/443434903/445043373

Aldighrir, W. M. (2013). *An examination of the leadership practices of university presidents of land-grant universities in the united states* (Doctor of Education), West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV. Retrieved from Proquest database. (3576283)

Ambury, J. M. (2017). Socrates, 469 BC *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. King's College.

Amortegui, J. (2014). Why finding meaning at work is more important than feeling happy *FastCompany*. Retrieved from http://www.fastcompany.com/3032126/how-to-find-meaning-during-your-pursuit-of-happyiness-at-work

Ardelt, M. (2004). Wisdom as expert knowledge system: A critical review of a contemporary operationalization of an ancient concept. *Human Development, 47*(5), 257-285. doi:10.1159/000079

Azure, A. (2004). *The seven pillars of leadership wisdom*. Retrieved from http://coachingpartners.co.nz/the-sevevn-pillars-of-leadership-wisdom.pdf

Baird, C. A. (2010). *Leadership behaviors that build or destroy trust: A narrative case study.* (3418810 Ph.D.), The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database.

Baker, S. D. (2007). Followership: The theoretical foundation of a contemporary

   construct. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 14*(1), 50-60.

   doi:101177/0002831207304343

Baltes, P. B., & Staudinger, U. M. (2000). Wisdom: A metaheuristic (pragmatic) to

   orchestrate mind and virtue toward excellence. *American Psychologist, 55*(36),

   122-136.

Barbuto, J. E., & Wheeler, D. W. (2006). Scale development and construct clarification

   of servant leadership. *Group & Organization Management, 31*, 300-326.

Barone, C. E. (2013). *Late life identity: An examination of the relation between wisdom

   and ethics of care enactments in late life.* The George Washington University.

   Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database.

Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership: Theory, research &

   managerial applications 4th Edition*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Bass, B. M., & Steidlmeier, P. (1999). Ethics, character, and authentic transformational

   leadership behavior. *The Leadership Quarterly, 10*(2), 181-217.

   doi:10.1016/S1048-9843(99)00016-8

Bennis, W. G. (1984). The four competencies of leadership. *Training and Development

   Journal*, 15-19.

Bennis, W. G. (1999). The leadership advantage. *Leader to Leader, 1999*(12), 18-23.

   doi:10.1002/ltl.40619991205

Bennis, W. G. (2007). The challenges of leadership in the modern world: Introduction to

   the special issue. *American Psychologist, 62*(1), 2-5.

Bennis, W. G., & Nanus, B. (2007). *Leaders: Strategies for taking charge*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Bermack, B. (2014). *Interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction among information technology professionals.* (PhD), Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology, MA.

Blumenstyk, G. (2015). *American higher education in crisis? What everyone needs to know*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Brown, E. D. (2010). *Four-year historically black college and university presidents: An examination of leadership styles, values, and attributes.* (Doctor of Education), Montgomery, AL. ProQuest database. (3480201)

Castro, V., & Johnson, M. B. (2008). Self-reported resilient behaviors of seventh and eighth grade students enrolled in an emotional intelligence based program. *Journal of School Counseling, 6*. Retrieved from http://jsc.montana.edu

(2015, March 2015). *Center for Creative Leadership.* Retrieved from http://www.ccl.org/leadership/annualreport.aspx

Cesarone, B. (1999). Resilience guide: A collection of resources on resilience in children and families. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education and the National Parent Information Network.*

Chemers, M. M. (1984). Contemporary leadership theory. In J. T. Wren (Ed), The leader's companion.

Chopra, D. (2009). *The ultimate happiness prescription*. New York, NY: Harmony Books.

Cisek, R. L. (2009). *Leadership and the other: Ethical action through meaning in work.* (3362519 Ed.D.), University of San Francisco. Retrieved from http://godot.lib.sfu.ca/GODOT/hold_tab.cgi?jtitle=&issn=&volume=&issue=&spage=&date=2009 ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database.

Collins, J. C. (2001). *Good to great: Why some companies make the leap and others don't*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Collins, J. C., & Porras, J. I. (2002). *Built to last: Successful habits of visionary companies*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Cook-Greuter, S. R. (2005). Ego development: Nine levels of increasing embrace. http://www/integralchurch.se/media/9levelsofincreasingembrace.pdf

Cook, B. J. (2012). The American college president study: Key findings and takeaways. *American Council on Education: Leadership and Advocacy.* Retrieved from http://www.acenet.edu/the-presidency/columns-and-features/Pages/The-American-College-President-Study.aspx

Cooper, B. K., Sarros, J. C., & Santora, J. C. (2007). Improving the practice of management. *Ivey Business Journal*. Retrieved from http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publicantion/the-character-of-leadership

Corrigan, R. A. (2002). Presidential leadership: Moral leadership in the new millennium. *Liberal Education, 88*(4), 8. Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/publications-research/periodicals/presidential-leadership-moral-leadership-new-millennium

Covey, S. R. (1991). *Principle-centered leadership*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Covey, S. R. (2004). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Cox, J. B., & Cox, K. B. (2008). *Your opinion please: How to build the best questionnaires in the field of education* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. .

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed method research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Crowley, M. C. (2011). *Lead from the heart: Transformational leadership for the 21st century*. Bloomington, IN: Balboa Press.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal exerience*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers.

Csikszentmihalyi, M., & LeFevre, J. (1989). Optimal experience in work and leisure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56*(5), 815-822.

Cutler, A. (2014). *Leadership psychology: How the best leaders inspire their people*. Philadelphia, PA: Kogan Page Limited.

Dallimore, E., & Mickel, A. (2006). Quality of life: Obstacles, advice, and employer assistance. *Human Relations, 59*(1), 61-103. doi:10.1177/0018726706062759

DeSteno, D., & Valdesolo, P. (2011). *Out of character: Surprising truths about the liar, cheater, sinner (and saint) lurking in all of us*. New York, NY Crown Archetype.

Driscoll, C., & McKee, M. (2007). Restorying a culture of ethical and spiritual values: A role for leader storytelling. *Journal of Business Ethics, 73*, 205-217.

Effelsberg, D., Solga, M., & Gurt, J. (2014). Getting followers to transcend their self-interest for the benefit of their company: Testing a core assumption of

transformational leadership theory. *Journal Of Business & Psychology, 29*(1), 131-143. doi:10.1007/s10869-013-9305-x

Etzel, T. (2016). *Invest in your heartbeats wisely: Practical, philosophical, and principled leadership concepts for business and life*. Austin, TX: Greenleaf Book Group Press.

Faust, D. (2010). The role of the university in a changing world.   Retrieved from http://www.harvard.edu/president/speech/2010/role-university-changing-world

Flood, R. L. (1999). *Rethinking the fifth discipline: Learning within the unknowable*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Frankl, V. E. (1984). *Man's search for meaning* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Pocket Book.

Gallo, C. (2007). *Fire them up: 7 simple secrets to: Inspire colleagues, customers, and clients; Sell yourself, your vision, and your values; Communicate with charisma and confidence*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Gallo, C. (2011). Richard Branson: The one skill leaders need to learn. *Forbes*. Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/richard-branson-the-one-skill-leaders-need-to-learn

Gallup, I. (2013). *State of the American workplace: Employee engagement insights for U.S. business leaders*. Retrieved from Washington, DC: www.gallup.com

George, B. (2003). *Authetic Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Publishing.

George, B., & Sims, P. (2007). *True north*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Publishing.

Gluck, J., & Bluck, S. (2011). Laypeople's conceptions of wisdom and its development: Cognitive and integrative views. *Psychological Sciences*. doi:10.1093

Goldin, C., & Katz, L. F. (1999). The shaping of higher education: The formative years in

    the United States, 1890 to 1940. *The Journal of Economic Perspectives, 13*(1),

    37-62. Retrieved from

    http://www.jstor.org/libproxy.chapman.edu/stable/2647136

Goodwin, G. P., Piazza, J., & Rozin, P. (2014). Moral character predominates in person

    perception and evaluation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 106*(1),

    148-168.

Hall, A. (2013). "I'm Outta Here!" Why 2 million Americans quit every month (and 5

    steps to turn the epidemic around). *Forbes Entrepreneurs*. Retrieved from

    http://www.forbes.com

Harvey, T. R., & Drolet, B. (2006). *Building teams, building people: Expanding the fifth*

    discipline. Lancaster, PA: Scarecrow Education.

Henderson, M. E. (2011). *Creating great places to work through attention to systems of*

    structure, meaning, knowledge-power, and process. (3490712 Ph.D.), Saybrook

    Graduate School and Research Center. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations &

    Theses Global database.

Islam, K. (2010). The transformational leader. Retrieved from

    https://www.trainingindustry.com/blog/the-transformational-leader.aspx

Johnson Bowles, K. (2013). The president's many roles. *Inside Higher Education*.

    Retrieved from https://www.insiderhighered.com

Judge, T. A., & Church, A. H. (2000). Job satisfaction: Research and practice. *Industrial*

    and organizational psychology: Linking theory with practice, 166-198.

Kaufman, C. (2016). The history of higher education in the United States.   Retrieved

from http://www.worldwidelearn.com

Kekes, J. (1983). Wisdom. *American Philosophical Quarterly, 20*, 277–286.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2006). *A leader's legacy*. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2007). *The leadership challenge: How to make*

extraordinary things happen in organizations (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA:

Jossey-Bass.

Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2009). To lead, create a shared vision. *Harvard Business*

Review, 87(1), 20-21. Retrieved from https://hbr.org/2009/01/to-lead-create-a-

shared-vision

Kraut, R. (2014). Aristotle's Ethics. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Retrieved

from http://plato.stanford.edu

Landsberg, M. (2003). *The tools of leadership: Vision, inspiration, momentum*. London,

England: Profile Books Ltd.

Liborius, P. (2014). Who is worthy of being followed? The impact of leaders' character

and the moderating role of followers' personality. *The Journal of Psychology,*

148(3), 347-385. doi:10.1080/00223980.2013.801335

Loughead, M. R. (2009). *A transformational model of visionary leadership.* (3384877

Ed.D.), University of Pittsburgh. Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses

Global database.

Lowney, C. (2003). *Heroic Leadership*. Chicago, IL: Loyola Press.

Lucas, N. (2015). When leading with integrity goes well: Integrating the mind, body, and

heart. *New Directions For Student Leadership, 146*, 61-69. doi:10.1002/yd.20135

Mark, J. J. (2009). Ancient History Encyclopedia: Socrates.   Retrieved from

    http://www.ancient.eu/socrates

Mautz, S. (2015). *Make it matter: How managers can motivate by creating meaning*.

    New York, NY: American Management Association.

McKee, A., Boyatzis, R., & Johnston, F. (2008). *Becoming a resonant leader: Develop*

    your emotional intelligence, renew your relationships, and sustain your

    effectiveness. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

McKenna, B., Rooney, D., & Boal, K. (2009). Wisdom principles as a meta-theoretical

    basis for evaluating leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 20*, 177-190.

McLeod, S. (2016). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.   Retrieved from

    http://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in education: Evidence-based*

    inquiry. Harlow, Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited.

Mendez-Morse, S. (1993). Vision, leadership and change.   Retrieved from

    http://sedl.org/change/issues23.html

Mitroff, I., & Denton, E. A. (1999). *A spiritual audit of corporate America: A hard look*

    at spirituality, religion, and values in the workplace. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-

    Bass.

Moore, T. (2008). *A life at work: The joy of discovering what you were born to do*. New

    York, NY: Broadway Books.

Moore, W. (2014). *The work: My search for a life that matters* New York, NY: Spiegel

    & Grau.

Moua, M. (2010). *Culturally intelligent leadership: Leading through intercultural interactions*. New York, NY: Business Expert Press, LLC.

Murray, B. (2000). Can academic values mesh with fiscal responsibility? *American Psychological Association, 31*(2), 46. Retrieved from http://www.apa.org/monitor/feb00/budget.aspx

Nanus, B. (1992). *Visionary leadership: Creating a compelling sense of direction for your organization*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

National Center for Education Statistics. (2016).   Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp

Northouse, P. G. (2009). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5 ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication Inc.

Oh, H. (2013). *Wisdom and the life course: An analysis of life course factors related to laypeople's conceptions of wisdom.* University of Florida. Retrieved from http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UFE0045751%5C00001

Patten, M. L. (2012). *Understanding research methods: An overview of the essentials*. Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Patterson, K. (2008). *Influencer: The power to change anything*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Patterson, K., Grenny, J., McMillan, R., & Switzler, A. (2012). *Crucial conversations: Tools for talking when stakes are high*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Pearson, T. (2015). *The end of jobs: Money, meaning and freedom without the 9-to-5*:
Lioncrest Publishing.

Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character, strengths, and virtues: A
handbook and classification*. Washington, DC: Oxford University Press.

Pezalla, A. E., Pettigrew, o., & Miller-Day, i. (2012). Researching the researcher-as-
instrument: an exercise in interviewer self-reflexivity *Qualitative Research, 12*(2),
165-185. doi:10.1177/1468794111422107

Pfeffer, J. (2010). *Power: Why some people have it-and others don't* New York, NY
Harper Collins.

Pink, D. H. (2006). *A whole new mind: Why right-brainers will rule the future*. New
York, NY: Penguin Group Inc.

Power, R. (2014). 3 powerful traits of inspirational leaders. *Inc. Magazine*. Retrieved
from http://www.inc.com

Quick, G. (2006). The role of inspiration in cultivating high performance. *FastCompany*.
Retrieved from http://www.fastcompany.com

Quick, J. C., & Wright, T. A. (2011). Character based leadership, context and
consequences. *The Leadership Quarterly, 22*, 984–988.

Ramsden, P. (1998). *Learning to lead in higher education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Rath, T. (2015). *Are you fully charged? The 3 keys to energizing your work and life*.
USA: Silicon Guild.

Reina, D. S., & Reina, M. L. (2006). *Trust and betrayal in the workplace: Building
effective relationships in your organization*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler
Publishers, Inc.

Reina, D. S., & Reina, M. L. (2007). Building sustainable trust. *OD Practitioner, 39*(1), 36-41. Retrieved from http://www.marbletreegroup.com/blog/building-sustainable-trust.pdf

Ricoeur, P. (1992). *Oneself as Another*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Riggio, R. E., Chaleff, I., & Lipman-Blumen, J. (2008). *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Robbins, M. (2008). *Focus on the good stuff: The power of appreciation*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Roberts, C. M. (2010). *The dissertation journey: A practical and comprehensive guide to planning, writing, and defending your dissertation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin: A SAGE Company.

Robinson, K. (2009). *The element: How finding your passion changes everything*. New York, NY: Penguin Works.

Rodney, B., Green, W. S., Hubbard, R. G., Jain, D., Katehi, L., McLendon, G., . . . Roomkin, M. (2013). *The foundation of entrepreneurship: A report from the Kauffman panel on entrepreneurship curriculum in higher education*. Kauffman Foundation. Retrieved from http://www.kauffman.org

G. Roz & D. Ierelli (Producer). (2015). *What pushes us to work hard - even when we don't have to?* [Retrieved from http://www.npr.org

Sankar, Y. (2003). Character not charisma is the critical measure of leadership excellence. *The Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies, 9*(4), 5-55. Retrieved from www.jlo.sagepub.com

Sass, E. (2016). American educational history: A hypertext timeline.   Retrieved from

    http://www.eds-resources.com/educationhistorytimeline.html

Schwartz, T., & Porath, C. (2014). Why you hate work. *The New York Times* Retrieved

    from http://www.nytimes.com

Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic happiness: Using the new positive psychology to*

    realize your potential for lasting fulfillment. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and*

    well-being. New York: NY Free Press.

Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning*

    organization. New York, NY: Doubleday.

Sheep, M. L. (2006). Nurturing the whole person: The ethics of workplace spirituality in

    a society of organizations. *Journal of Business Ethics, 66*(4), 357-375.

    doi:10.007/s10551.006.0014-5

Shugart, S. C. (1999). *A brief philosopy of community college leadership.*   (ED445729)

Simpson, R. D. (2000). The study of higher education. *Innovative Higher Education,*

    25(2), 81-84.

Sinek, S. (2009). *Start with why: How great leaders inspire everyone to take action*. New

    York, NY: Penguin Books.

S. Sinek (Producer). (2014). *Why good leaders make you feel safe*. Retrieved from

    http://www.ted.com/talks/simon_sinek

Smith, D. M. (2011). *Elephant in the room: How relationships make or break the success*

    of leaders and organizations. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Smith, I. H. (2015). *The disruption model of inspiration: Toward a general model of "being inspired to act".* The University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT.

Sood, A. (2015). *The Mayo Clinic: Handbook for happiness: A 4-step plan for resilient living*. Boston, MA: Da Capo Press.

Spano, S. L. (2013). *Wisdom and leadership: A constructive-developmental perspective.* (3603776 Ph.D.), Fielding Graduate University, Washington, DC. Retrieved from http://godot.lib.sfu.ca/GODOT/hold_tab.cgi?jtitle=&issn=&volume=&issue=&sp age=&date=2013 ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global database.

Stallard, M. L. (2015). Love: The ultimate competitive advantage.   Retrieved from http://www.foxbusiness.com Fox Business.

Steger, M. F., Dik, B. J., & Duffy, R. D. (2012). Measuring meaningful work: The work and meaning inventory (WAMI). *Journal of Career Assessment, 20*(3), 322-327.

Sternberg, R. J. (1998). A balance theory of wisdom. *Review of General Psychology, 2*, 347–365.

Sternberg, R. J. (2004). Words to the wise about wisdom. *Human Development, 47*(5), 286-289.

Stone, A. G., Russell, R. F., & Patterson, K. (2004). Transformational versus servant leadership: A difference in leader focus. *Leadership & Organization Development, 25*(4), 349-361.

Studer, Q. (2003). *Hardwiring excellence: Purpose, worthwhile work, making a difference*. Gulf Breeze, FL: Fire Starter Publishing.

Thrash, T. M., & Elliot, A. J. (2003). Inspiration as a psychological construct. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 871-889.

Tredennick, H. (2004). *Aristotle: The nicomachean ethics* (J. A. K. Thomson, Trans.).

    London, England: Penguin Books.

Ulrich, D., & Ulrich, W. (2010). *The why of work: How great leaders build abundant*

    organizations that win. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.

Varney, J. (2009). Leadership as meaning making. *Human Resource Management*

    International, 17(5), 3-5.

Visser, F. (2003). *Ken Wilber: Thought as passion*. Albany, NY: State University of

    New York Press.

Warm, R. (2012). *Leading deeply: A heroic journey toward wisdom and transformation.*

    (PhD), Antioch University. Retrieved from

    http://aura.antioch.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1116&context=etds

Weber, L. (2014). U.S. workers can't get no (job) satisfaction. *Wall Street Journal*.

    Retrieved from http://blogs.wsj.com/atwork

Wilber, K. (2000). *A theory of everything: An integral vision for business, politics,*

    science, and spirituality. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, Inc.

Xiong, K., Lin, W., Li, J. C., & Wang, L. (2016). Employee trust in supervisors and

    affective commitment: The moderating role of authentic leadership.

    Psychological Report, 118(3), 829-848. doi:0.1177/0033294116644370

Yang, K., & Kassekert, A. (2010). Linking management reform with employee job

    satisfaction. Evidence from federal agencies. *Journal of Public Adminnistration*

    Research and Theory 20(2), 413-436. doi:10.1093/jopart/mup010

Yeoman, R. (2014). Conceptualizing meaningful work as a fundamental human need.

    Journal of Business Ethics., 125(2), 235-251. doi:10.1007/s10551-013-1894-9

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA:

Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A

Informational Letter

BRANDMAN University

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

INFORMATIONAL LETTER

Date

Dear University President,

We are a group of doctoral candidates in Brandman University's Doctorate of Education in Organizational Leadership program in the School of Education. We are conducting a thematic, mixed method case study which will identify and describe the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, relationships, vision, inspiration, and wisdom.

We are asking for your assistance in the study by participating in an interview which will take approximately 60 minutes and will be setup at a time and location convenient for you. If you agree to participate in the interview, you can be assured that it will be completely confidential. No names will be attached to any notes or records from the interview. All information will remain in locked files, accessible only to the researchers. No employer will have access to the interview information. You will be free to stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any time. You are also encouraged to ask any questions that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. Further, you may be assured that the researchers are not in any way affiliated with XYZ University.

The research investigator, Barbara Bartels, is available at bartels@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at 925-930-2012, to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Barbara E. Bartels, MBA
Doctoral Candidate, Ed.D.
275 Mountaire Circle
Clayton, CA 94517

APPENDIX B

Invitation to Participate

BRANDMAN University

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

DATE:

Dear ...

My name is Barbara Bartels and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Education at Brandman University. I am participating in a thematic dissertation with 11 other researchers. This letter serves an as an invitation for you to participate in a research study.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this thematic, mixed method case study is to identify and describe the behaviors that exemplary university presidents use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, relationships, vision, inspiration, and wisdom. Further, this study will survey followers to assess their perceptions of the leader's behaviors in relation to character, relationships, vision, inspiration, and wisdom and how these traits create personal and organizational meaning. Results from this study will be summarized in a doctoral dissertation.

PROCEDURES: If you choose to participate in this study, you will be invited to a 60 minute, one-on-one interview. I will ask a series of questions designed to allow you to share your experience as an exemplary university president. The questions will assess the specific variables of character, relationships, vision, inspiration, and wisdom. The interviews will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes.

RISKS, INCOVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are no major risks to your participation in this research study. The interview will be at a time and place which is convenient for you.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participating; nonetheless, a potential benefit may be that you will have an opportunity to identify future best practices for using the five variables of exemplary leadership. The information for this study is intended to inform researchers and leaders of behaviors used to by exemplary leaders to create organizational meaning.

ANONYMITY: If you agree to participate in the interview, you can be assured that it will be completely confidential. No names will be attached to any notes or records from the interview. All information will remain in locked files, accessible only to the researchers. No employer will have access to the interview information. You will be free to stop the interview and withdraw from the study at any time. You are also encouraged to ask any questions that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. Further, you may be assured that the researchers are not in any way affiliated with XYZ University. Feel free to contact the principle investigator, Barbara Bartels, at bartels@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at 925-930-2012, to answer any questions or concerns you may have. If I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or your rights as a participant, you may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, 949-341-7641.

Sincerely,

Barbara Bartels, MBA
Doctoral Candidate, Ed.D.
275 Mountaire Circle
Clayton, CA 94597

APPENDIX C

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB   Adopted   November 2013

APPENDIX D

Informed Consent Form

BRANDMAN
University

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMATION ABOUT: The behaviors of exemplary leaders related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom and inspiration to help create personal and organizational meaning.

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Barbara Bartels, MBA

PURPOSE OF STUDY:
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Barbara Bartels, MBA, a doctoral student from the School of Education at Brandman University. The purpose of study is to identify and describe the behaviors that leaders use to create personal and organizational meaning for themselves and their followers through character, vision, relationships, wisdom and inspiration.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and will include an interview with the identified student investigator. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete and will be scheduled at a time and location of your convenience. The interview questions will pertain to your perceptions and your responses will be confidential. Each participant will have an identifying code and names will not be used in data analysis. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only.

I understand that:
   a) The researcher will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes safe-guarded in a locked file drawer or password protected digital file to which the researcher will have sole access.
   b) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time.
   c) If I have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Barbara Bartels, bartels@mail.brandman.edu or by phone at 925-930-2012; or Dr. Keith Larick (Chair) at larick@brandman.edu.
   d) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and consent re-obtained. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research.
   e) If I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, 949-341-7641.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the "Research Participant's Bill of Rights." I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

_____   Date: _____
Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

_____   Date: _____
Signature of Principal Investigator

APPENDIX E

Thematic Interview Schedule

 "My name is Barbara Bartels and I am the assistant vice chancellor at Brandman University. I work directly the enrollment team at Brandman, leading a team of community relations managers. In addition, I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership*.* I am a part of a team conducting research to determine what behaviors are used by exemplary leaders to create effective organizations. What is it that you do to create a positive work environment, a healthy culture, and to bring meaning to your organization?

Our team is conducting approximately 36 interviews with leaders like yourself. The information you provide, along with the information provided by others, hopefully will provide a clear picture of the thoughts and strategies that exemplary leaders use to create effective organizations and will add to the body of research currently available. We are also inquiring from a sample of your management level team using a survey instrument to obtain their impressions as well.

Incidentally, even though it appears a bit awkward, I will be reading most of what I say. The reason for this is to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating exemplary leaders will be conducted in the most similar manner possible.

Informed Consent (required for Dissertation Research)

I would like to remind you any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported without reference to any individual(s) or any institution(s). After I record and transcribe the data, I will send it to you via electronic mail so that you can check to make sure that I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas.

You received the Informed Consent and Brandman Bill of Rights in an email and responded with your approval to participate in the interview. Before we start, do you have any questions or need clarification about either document?

We have scheduled an hour for the interview. At any point during the interview you may ask that I skip a particular question or stop the interview altogether. For ease of our discussion and accuracy I will record our conversation as indicated in the Informed Consent.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let's get started, and thanks so much for your time.

1. "Here are five leadership behaviors that research suggests are necessary in an exemplary leader. Looking at these, would you agree that these are all important?"

> **VISION:** The leader exhibits foresight with a compelling outlook of the future.
>
> **RELATIONSHIPS:**   The leader communicates a common purpose through listening, respect, trust, and acknowledgment of one another.
>
> **CHARACTER:** The leader displays a moral compass of ethics and integrity while being reliable, transparent, and authentic.
>
> **INSPIRATION:** The leader empowers followers by exuding enthusiasm, encouragement, and hope.
>
> **WISDOM:** The leader accurately interprets and responds to complex, ambiguous, and often unclear situations

If "Yes"	If "No"… "not really"… or they hedge, ask:
"Realizing that they are all important, do any jump out as being absolutely essential?" V R C I W *If any selected*: "What is about those you selected that would place them a bit above the others?"	"Which of them do you believe do not fit into the group of important behaviors?" V R C I W "Why do you think it/they do not belong in this group of important behaviors?"

2. *"The first behavior on the list is Vision (pointing to Vision on the card). Based upon the success of your leadership, it is clear that you have established a vision for your organization. Are there things that you recall having done to develop vision for yourself and your organization?"*

- "Are there some that seemed to work better than others?"
- "Why do you think they (it) worked as well as they (it) did?"
- "Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative, from the use of that particular strategy?"
- "How do you ensure that your team buys into your vision?"

3. *"The second item on the card is establishing Relationships. This involves being a good listener and establishing trust among your team members. Are there*

specific things you have done to develop relationships among the members of your organization?"

- "Are there some that seemed to work better than others?"

- "Why do you think they (it) worked as well as they (it) did?"

- "Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative, from the use of that particular strategy?"

4. *"If you take a look at the card, one of the five important leadership behaviors is character and leading with a moral compass. This includes integrity...reliability...authenticity.* "What kinds of things do you do to demonstrate your character as the leader of your organization?"

   - *"What behaviors do you look for in your peers or employees that demonstrate their character?*

   - "How do you communicate the importance of these behaviors to your staff members?"

   - "Are there challenges that you face as you deal with these issues on a daily basis?"

   - "Are there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative, from the use of a particular strategy?"

5. *"As stated on the card, an Inspirational leader empowers staff by exuding enthusiasm, encouragement, and hope. Tell me about some of the things you do to inspire your staff to be all they can be."*

   - "Are there some things that seemed to work better than others?"

   - "Why do you think they (it) worked as well as they (it) did?"

   - "Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative, from the use of any particular strategy?"

6. *"The fifth item on the card is Wisdom. As the card states, responding effectively to unclear, complex issues is called for here. Can you describe a time when your organization faced a very complex or unclear situation?"*

If yes:

"What did you do or what strategies did you put in place to clarify the

situation so that progress was possible?"

If no:

"If a situation like this did arise in the future, how do you think you would

you go about clarifying the situation to put your staff's mind at ease and

feel ready to go?"

- "Are there some strategies that seemed to (or you think would) work better than others?"
- "Why do you think they (it) worked (would work) well?"
- "Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative, from the use of that particular strategy?"

7. *"Of all the things we have spoken about today – vision, relationships, character, inspiration and wisdom - are there absolute 'musts!' that you believe are **essential** behaviors for an exemplary leader to have?"*

If yes: "What are those behaviors and why do you believe they are so

critical?"

"Thank you very much for your time. If you like, when the results of our

research are known, we will send you a copy of our findings."

GENERIC PROBES THAT CAN BE ADDED TO ANY QUESTION TO PRODUCE MORE

CONVERSATION:

1. "Would you expand upon that a bit?"

2. "Do you have more to add?"

3. "What did you mean by …."

4. "Why do think that was the case?"

5. "Could you please tell me more about…. "

6. "Can you give me an example of …."

7. "How did you feel about that?"

Generic probes can be used to encourage an interviewee to say more about a question

you have asked.

APPENDIX F

Audio Release Form

BRANDMAN University

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

AUDIO RELEASE FORM

RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: Meaning Makers: A Mixed Method Case Study of Exemplary University Presidents and the Strategies They Use to Create Personal and Organizational Meaning

> **BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY**
> **16355 LAGUNA CANYON ROAD**
> **IRVINE, CA 92618**
> **RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR:** Barbara E. Bartels, MBA

I authorize Barbara E. Bartels, MBA, Brandman University Doctoral Candidate, to record my voice. I give Brandman University, and all persons or entities associated with this study, permission or authority to use this recording for activities associated with this research study.

I understand that the recording will be used for transcription purposes and the identifier-redacted information obtained during the interview may be published in a journal or presented at meetings and/or presentations. I will be consulted about the use of the audio recordings for any purpose other than those listed above. Additionally, I waive any rights and royalties or other compensation arising from or related to the use of information obtained from the recording.

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have completely read and fully understand the above release and agree to the outlined terms. I hereby release any and all claims against any person or organization utilizing this material.

_____   Date: _____
Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

_____   Date: _____
Signature of Principal Investigator – Barbara E. Bartels, MBA

APPENDIX G

Transcriptionist Confidentiality Form

BRANDMAN University

CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

TRANSCRIPTIONIST CONFIDENTIALITY FORM

RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: Meaning Makers: A Mixed Method Case Study of Exemplary University Presidents and the Strategies They Use to Create Personal and Organizational Meaning

I, _____, agree to serve as a transcriptionist for the above titled research study. I understand that my role during the study is only to transcribe the audio for each one-on-one interview. I understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality of the study participants; therefore, I will not share any information about the individuals participating in the above study that will connect them to any data gathered and transcribed during the one-on-one interviews or reported in the final dissertation.

_____   Date: _____

Transcriptionist Signature

_____   Date: _____

Signature of Principle Investigator – Barbara E. Bartels, MBA

Quantitative Survey

Leader Behaviors 2.0

Introduction

The success of any organization depends in large part on the quality of interactions among the leader and the team members and associates. What determines the quality of these interactions is tied closely to the perception that these people have of the leader's behaviors in five areas: **vision** for the organization; **relationships** between the leader and team members; **character** of the leader; **inspiration** the leader provides; **wisdom** of the leader.

Completing this survey will take approximately 10 minutes. Please choose to become a part of this important undertaking.

Leader Behaviors 2.0

Informed Consent

It is important to read the following consent information carefully and click the agree box to continue. The survey will not open until you agree.

In the Informed Consent language below, '*Student*' refers to the researcher who requested you complete the survey.

INFORMATION ABOUT: The degree of importance regarding a leaders' behaviors related to character, vision, relationships, wisdom and inspiration help to create personal and organizational meaning.

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: Student

THE FOLLOWING WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE ELECTRONIC SURVEY:

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by the student., a doctoral student from the School of Education at Brandman University. The purpose of study is to **identify and describe** the **behaviors** that leaders use to create **personal and organizational meaning** for **themselves** and their **followers** through character, vision, relationships, wisdom and inspiration.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may choose not to participate. If you decide to participate in this electronic survey, you can withdraw at any time.

The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Your responses will be confidential. The survey questions will pertain to your perceptions.

Each participant will use a three digit code for identification purposes. The researcher will keep the identifying codes safe-guarded in a locked file drawer to which the researcher will have sole access. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes only.

No information that identifies you will be released without your separate consent and all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, you will be so informed and consent re-obtained. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research.

I understand that the investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researcher. I understand that I may refuse to participate in or I may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

If you have any questions about completing this survey or any aspects of this research, please contact the student at email or phone number provided or the faculty advisor Dr. Keith Larick (916-212-5410).

2

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button indicates that you have read the informed consent form and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree to participate.

If you do not wish to participate in this electronic survey, you may decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button.

The survey will not open for responses unless you agree to participate.

◯ **AGREE:** I acknowledge receipt of the complete Informed Consent packet and "Bill of Rights." I have read the materials and give my consent to participate in the study.

◯ **DISAGREE:** I do not wish to participate in this electronic survey

Leader Behaviors 2.0
Part 1

Please enter the code provided to you by the researcher.

[   ]

Part 1 Directions: For purposes of this study and survey, meaning is defined as the result of leaders and followers coming together for the purpose of gathering information from experience and integrating it into a process which creates significance, value and identity within themselves and the organization.

Listed below are behaviors that research suggest that leaders use to create personal and organizational meaning. Using the following descriptions, which one comes the closest to your feelings about the importance of the leadership behavior in developing meaning in your organization.

3

1 = Not important in our organization; it's absence would have no effect upon the leader's overall effectiveness nor our organization's culture.

2 = Marginally important to have but not necessary in our organization; its absence would have little effect upon the leader's effectiveness or the cultural health of our organization.

3 = Somewhat important for a leader in our organization; this is a leadership behavior that would have a positive effect upon how we function and would contribute in some positive ways to our organizational culture.

4 = Important for a leader in our organization; this is a leadership behavior that is good for the organization and its absence in the leader would be a definite deterrent in the organization's overall effectiveness as well as culture.

5 = Very important for a leader in our organization; would contribute significantly to our overall effectiveness and enhance our organizational culture in some very positive ways.

6 = Critically important in our organization; an absolute must; its absence would severely inhibit the leader's effectiveness and the overall health of our organizational culture.

4

Using the descriptions above, which one comes the closest to your feelings about the importance of the leadership behavior in developing meaning in your organization?

	Not Important (1)	Marginally important (2)	Somewhat important (3)	Important (4)	Very important (5)	Critically important (6)
Continuously promotes our team's moving together as one unit to serve a common purpose.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Behaves in an ethical manner when dealing with others.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Works with team members in a way that generates enthusiasm within teams.	○	○	○	○	○	○
When working with teams and team members, continuously keeps the overall goals of the organization as part of conversations.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Elevates the quality of decision making by discussing similarities of past situations with team members.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Creates an environment of trust among leaders and team members in the organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Actively listens when communicating with others.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Recognizes achievements of teams and team members.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Communicates the organization's vision in a way in which team members support it.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Demonstrates compassion toward team members.	○	○	○	○	○	○

5

Using the descriptions above, which one comes the closest to your feelings about the importance of the leadership behavior in developing meaning in your organization?

	Not important (1)	Marginally important (2)	Somewhat important (3)	Important 4	Very important (5)	Critically important (6)
Behaves in a way that shows she/he cares about the team members.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Responds to challenging situations with optimism.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Encourages team members to innovate in order to advance the organization's leading edge.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Engages team members in creating a vision for the future.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Behavior reflects an understanding of life's complexities.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Communicates in a clear, meaningful way.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Engages in activities that build confidence among team members.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Behavior reflects organizational vision when making decisions.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Integrates personal values with organizational values when interacting with team members.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Encourages team members to share leadership when performing tasks.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

6

225

Using the descriptions above, which one comes the closest to your feelings about the importance of the leadership behavior in developing meaning in your organization?

	Not important (1)	Marginally important (2)	Somewhat important (3)	Important (4)	Very important (5)	Critically important (6)
Actions with others shows that he/she can be trusted.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Empowers team members to take reasonable risks when problem solving.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Actions show concern for the well-being of others.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Promotes innovation that aligns with the organization's vision.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Brings personal knowledge to the table when responding to complex situations within the organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Takes action by doing the "right thing" in a variety of organizational settings.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Displays expertise when working in a variety of situations within the organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Considers past experiences when responding to complex situations within the organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Shows concern for others.	○	○	○	○	○	○
Demonstrates thinking toward the future through conversations and actions.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Leader Behaviors 2.0

Part 2

Part 2 Directions: Please supply the following information. The information will be used only to

7

226

assist in understanding the results of this inquiry.

Enter the code provided to you by the person who asked you to completed this survey.

[   ]

Your gender

○ Female ○ Male

Your age category

○ 20-30 ○ 31-40 ○ 41-50 ○ 51-60 ○ 61+

Your time with this organization

○ 0- 5 yrs. ○ 6-10 yrs. ○ 11-20 yrs. ○ 21 yrs. or over

Your time with the current leader

○ 0- 2 yrs. ○ 3-5 yrs. ○ 6-10 yrs. ○ 11 yrs. or over

8

Institutional Review Board Approvals

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Barbara Bartels** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 07/20/2015.

Certification Number: 1801527.

Screen capture of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) certification in protecting human research participants, which was provided to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Brandman University. This certifies that doctoral candidate Barbara Bartels has successfully completed the "Protecting Human Research Participants" training.

BRANDMAN University Chapman University System

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

IRB Application Action – Approval

Date: November 7, 2016

Name of Investigator/Researcher: Barbara Bartels

Faculty or Student ID Number: B00243035

Title of Research Project:

Meaning Makers: A Mixed Method Case Study of Exemplary University Presidents and the Behaviors They Use to Create Personal and Organizational Meaning

Project Type: [✔] New   [ ] Continuation   [ ] Resubmission

Category that applies to your research:

[✔] Doctoral Dissertation EdD
[ ] DNP Clinical Project
[ ] Masters' Thesis
[ ] Course Project
[ ] Faculty Professional/Academic Research
[ ] Other: _____

Funded: [✔] No   [ ] Yes _____
(Funding Agency; Type of Funding; Grant Number)

Project Duration (cannot exceed 1 year): 6 months

Principal Investigator's Address: 275 Mountaire Circle

Email Address: bartels@mail.brandman.edu   Telephone Number: 925-457-3212

Faculty Advisor/Sponsor/Chair Name: Dr. Keith Larick

Email Address: larick@brandman.edu   Telephone Number: 916-212-5410

Category of Review:

[ ] Exempt Review   [✔] Expedited Review   [ ] Standard Review

Brandman University IRB Rev, 11.14.14   Adopted   November 2014

229

✓	I have completed the NIH Certification and included a copy with this proposal
	NIH Certificate currently on file in the office of the IRB Chair or Department Office

Signature of Principal Investigator: **Barbara Bartels** Digitally signed by Barbara Bartels
DN: cn=Barbara Bartels, o, ou,
email=bartels@brandman.edu, c=US
Date: 2016.10.08 08:33:05 -07'00' Date:_____

Signature of Faculty Advisor/
Sponsor/Dissertation Chair: **Keith Larick** Digitally signed by Keith Larick
Date: 2016.11.09 10:53:25
-08'00' Date: 11/8/16

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
IRB APPLICATION ACTION – APPROVAL
COMPLETED BY BUIRB

<u>**IRB ACTION/APPROVAL**</u>

Name of Investigator/Researcher:_____

☐ Returned without review. Insufficient detail to adequately assess risks, protections and benefits.

☐ Approved/Certified as Exempt form IRB Review.

☑ Approved as submitted.

☐ Approved, contingent on minor revisions (see attached)

☐ Requires significant modifications of the protocol before approval. Research must resubmit with modifications (see attached)

☐ Researcher must contact IRB member and discuss revisions to research proposal and protocol.

Level of Risk: ☐ No Risk   ☑ Minimal Risk   ☐ More than Minimal Risk

IRB Comments:

```
Digitally signed by Michael Moodian
DN: cn=Michael Moodian, o=Brandman University, ou,
email=moodian@brandman.edu, c=US
```
IRB Reviewer: Date: 2016.11.17 14:41:13 -07'00'_____

Telephone:_____ Email:_____

```
Digitally signed by Doug DeVore
DN: cn=Doug DeVore, o=Brandman University, ou=EDOL,
email=ddevore@brandman.edu, c=US
```
BUIRB Chair: Date: 2016.11.17 14:42:02 -07'00'_____ Date: **November 17, 2016**

<u>**REVISED IRB Application**</u>   ☐ Approved   ☐ Returned

Name: _____

Telephone:_____ Email:_____ Date: _____

BUIRB Chair: _____

Brandman University IRB Rev, 11.14.14   Adopted   November 2014

231