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A Phenomenological Study on How Exemplary Community College Chief Human
Resource Officers Lead From the Heart to Accomplish Extraordinary Results

A Dissertation by

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School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

February 2022

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Phenomenological Study on How Exemplary Community College Chief Human
Resource Officers Lead From the Heart to Accomplish Extraordinary Results

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This study and accomplishment would not be possible without God. I am so grateful for His presence and covering over my life. With God, all things are possible!

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ABSTRACT

A Phenomenological Study on How Exemplary Community College Chief Human Resource Officers Lead From the Heart to Accomplish Extraordinary Results

by Angela Love

Purpose: The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe how exemplary community college chief human resource officers lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Methodology: This qualitative study used a phenomenological method to describe how eight exemplary community college chief human resource officers (CHROs) lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations. Data from interview transcripts and artifacts were triangulated, synthesized, and coded for themes using NVivo software.

Findings: Examination of qualitative data from the participating eight exemplary community college CHROs in this study indicated various findings. The data from the study resulted in 21 themes and 571 frequencies related to Crowley's (2011) four principles of leading from the heart. From these, eight major findings emerged.

Conclusions: The study described how eight exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart by building highly engaged teams, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. The study

resulted in five conclusions related to establishing a culture of trust; creating a safe and caring work environment; supporting employees' mental, physical, and professional well-being; showing value and honor of employees' work; and connecting on a personal level built on respect and trust.

Recommendations: It is recommended that the study be replicated in a larger geographic area and expanded to a sample of participants that considers age, years of experience, gender, and training. A postpandemic study is also recommended. A mixed methods study to gather quantitative and qualitative data from both leaders and employees and a meta-analysis study to analyze the findings of the 14 studies conducted by the thematic group of peer researchers are recommended.

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PREFACE

Upon consideration and discussions regarding the opportunity to study Mark Crowley's (2011) leadership from the heart strategies of exemplary leaders, 14 researchers, with the collaboration of five faculty advisors from education to corporate America, organized to form this thematic study. The thematic study was driven by a shared passion to explore the ways exemplary leaders lead from the heart to achieve extraordinary results.

The framework for this phenomenological research study was designed using Mark Crowley's four principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. Each peer researcher studied a different population of leaders to interview and identified a sample of exemplary leaders through criterion-based purposeful sampling from various public, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations. To ensure consistency and reliability throughout the thematic study, the team of 14 peer researchers worked in collaboration to construct the purpose statement, research questions, definitions of terms, interview questions, and research study protocols.

Throughout the study, the term *peer researchers* was used in reference to the 14 researchers in the thematic study. The following is the complete list of the doctoral candidates, hereafter referred to as peer researchers, along with their chosen population in this research study: Giovanna Arzaga, charter executive directors; Aimee Barnard, special education administrators; Kelly Castillo, elementary principals; Joshua Chohan, elementary Title 1 principals in Sacramento County; Jeyan Danesh, secondary admin principals; Christina Foster, middle school principals; Martha (Stephanie) Herrera,

nonprofit women leaders with focus on domestic violence/sexual abuse; Teresa Hubbard, primary principals in Southern California; Randa Jad-Moussa, learning and development leaders in corporate organizations; Angela Love, community college chief human resource officers; Elizabeth Medina, Hispanic entrepreneur women; Aries Sanders, leaders of remote sales/marketing employees; Jeanine Wulfenstein, female superintendents; and Sepideh Yeoh, K-12 superintendents in Southern California.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The role of chief human resource officer (CHRO) has increasingly become vital to the success of an organization. Historically, the role of personnel management has been centered on the tasks of hiring and evaluating staff as well as training and compensating employees (Chukwunonso, 2013). There is evidence of human resources, also referred to as personnel management, dating back to the early 19th century England during the apprenticeship and craftsman era. It was during the late 1800s that Fredrick Taylor proposed that workers should be managed through a combination of the job, its efficiencies, psychology, and the well-being of workers (Haslinda, 2009; Kaufman, 2014). It is reasonable that even before the 1800s, personnel management existed to select and train individuals for a job, such as a prehistoric tribal leader for example (Rotich, 2015).

The role and understanding of human resources continued to evolve throughout the 19th century and early 20th century. By the 1940s, the role of human resource professionals became more refined, incorporating more behavioral science theories and practices into the role of recruiting skilled employees (Rotich, 2015). Through the 1970s to the mid-1990s, the role continued to evolve to become human resource management (HRM) with the position becoming more fully integrated with the organizations' management staff. Today, HRM is considered a strategic partner to the organization, an asset deeply involved in several aspects of management including career management, human resource planning and policy, performance and quality management, and the management of the employee relationship (Nankervis, Baird, Coffey, & Shields, 2019; Rotich, 2015). Human resource leaders are now part of the executive leadership team,

jointly responsible for developing and implanting organizational strategies and objectives (P. M. Wright et al., 2011).

Because the office of human resources reaches every member of the organization, CHROs can affect the climate and culture of an organization as well as influence employees' interpretation and perceptions of organizational initiatives (Pereira & Gomes, 2012). Accordingly, at the macro level, CHROs are in charge of culture as well as organizational leadership (Obedgiu, 2017). Considering how CHROs affect the organization's culture, it can be said that CHROs who fail to lead from the heart may adversely affect the organization by failing to create an environment where team members are valued and inspired to reach organizational objectives.

Based on the significant impact CHROs can have on employees and the organization, it is important to understand how they use transformational leadership skills and lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations. Transformational leadership is known to directly affect employee attitudes, performance, and behaviors (Becker, 2014; Greenleaf, 1970; Pereira & Gomes, 2012; Valeri, 2007). An exemplary CHRO is a transformational leader who affects employee attitudes and behaviors through consistent heart-based leadership. This concept of leading from the heart is connecting with employees in a way that not only affects their attitudes, behavior, and performance but also motivates employees to go beyond what is expected of them (Pereira & Gomes, 2012). With kindness, care, and courage, CHROs can drive the culture of the organization as well as levels of employee engagement and satisfaction.

Background

Personnel management, presently referred to as HRM, dates to early 19th century England during the apprenticeship and craftsman era. In the early 1900s, conflicts between employee and employers marked the development of several written human resources theories, such as the Marxist, cooperative, and humanitarian theories, which became important elements of modern HRM (Rotich, 2015). Taylorism, a scientific theory of management, dates from 1890 to 1910 when Fredrick Taylor proposed that workers should be managed through a combination of the job, its efficiencies, psychology, and the well-being of workers (Haslinda, 2009; Kaufman, 2014). In addition, Taylor argued for incentive-based compensation systems to motivate employees, his theory heavily based on productivity (Chukwunonso, 2013).

The field of human resources continued to evolve into the early 20th century. As leadership became more researched and understood, the role of human resource professionals became more refined, incorporating more behavioral science theories and practices into the role of recruiting skilled employees (Rotich, 2015). Starting in the 1930s, there was a greater emphasis on how the informal culture and various social aspects of the workplace affected worker productivity. During this time, the field of human resources began to evolve further as leaders began to understand that productivity could be increased by increasing employees' level of job satisfaction (Chukwunonso, 2013).

Through the 1970s to the mid-1990s, HRM positions became more fully integrated with the organizations' management staff as HRM definitively became a strategic function. As a result, HRM became what it is today, a strategic partner to the

organization, fully integrated into all aspects of management including career management, human resource planning and policy, performance and quality management, and the management of the employee relationship (Nankervis et al., 2019; Rotich, 2015). CHROs today are understood and accepted as part of the executive leadership team, jointly responsible for developing and implanting organizational strategies and objectives (P. M. Wright et al., 2011).

Within the California Community College System, there is typically one senior cabinet level human resource officer responsible for overseeing human resource functions at the district level. The title of the individual in the role of CHRO varies across the 116 community colleges and includes CHRO, vice chancellor of human resources, director/CHRO, executive director of human resources, and vice president of human resources

Theoretical Foundation

An understanding of the need for leadership and an appreciation for leadership has always existed. Leadership and theories of leadership date back to the existence of civilization, as inherently as children instinctively follow the leadership of their parents. Early principles of leadership can be traced back to 2300 BCE when Lao-Tzu and Confucius discussed the responsibility of leaders as well as appropriate conduct for leaders (Bass, 2008). Written concepts of leadership also date back to the 6th century BCE in Egyptian hieroglyphs followed by evidence of Chinese principles, Greek, and Machiavelli's Renaissance work *The Prince* written in 1532. In the 20th century, modern studies of leadership began to emerge, including notable works such as Max Weber's introduction of charismatic leadership in 1922 (Bass, 2008; Epley, 2015). The

importance of leadership continued to gain attention as more scholars began to research and publish articles on the importance of leadership, characteristics and traits of leaders, and achievements and responsibilities of leaders throughout the later decades of the 20th century. The interest in charismatic, visionary, and transformational leadership theories grew in the 1970s and continues today as a deeper understanding of the need for leadership related to personal and organizational success grows.

Servant Leadership

Recognizing the theoretical foundations of transformation leadership provides an understanding and relevancy to the phenomenological study on heart-based leadership. The principles of servant leadership have been studied by various scholars for different reasons throughout history. Although the term servant leadership was first coined in 1970 by Robert Greenleaf, historical examples of servant leadership exist in the Bible, and perhaps even before the Bible.

When contemplating the origins of servant leadership, many refer to Jesus Christ as the original servant leader, noting that the very purpose of God sending Jesus to earth to live among man was to teach man how to be servants unto others. Following Jesus's time with the disciples, there are numerous references to this type of leadership in the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, known as the Gospels. The following example is an excerpt from the book of Mark:

⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:43-45, NIV)

In this translation of the Bible, Jesus used the term *servant* outright and again said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45, NIV). In addition to this instance, there are numerous accounts of Jesus modeling servant leadership, such as when he washed his disciples’ feet, which would be considered a demeaning task, far beneath Jesus. Today, this teaching helps people understand that as a leader, no task should be off limits, and to be revered as a leader is to be a servant to one another. Also in the Old Testament, as Isaiah speaks prophetically about Jesus, he refers to him as a servant: “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight” (Isaiah 41:1, NIV).

Valeri (2007) set out to research the origins of servant leadership, suspecting that the origins dated further back than Dr. Greenleaf, known as the founder of servant leadership, and Jesus, known as the original servant leader. As he hypothesized, Valeri found there are also numerous accounts of servant leadership from ancient philosophers and writers such as Plato, Cicero, and Sophocles that date back at least 2,500 years. In addition to these, Xenophon wrote, “It was the work of leaders and superiors to plan for their followers and ‘toil for them whenever there be need’” (Dillery, 1998, p. 231).

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leaders can be defined as those who are aware that their actions, values, beliefs, knowledge, and strengths are being observed by others (Cooper, Scandura, & Schriesheim, 2005). Further, in their 2004 study, Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and May worked collaboratively to begin developing a theoretical framework designed to guide research on authentic leadership. Their research suggested that authentic leaders

have the inherent ability to increase overall levels of employee engagement, involvement, satisfaction, and commitment, resulting in higher outcomes (Avolio et al., 2004).

Heart-based living is not exclusive to an individual's religious state of mind. On the contrary, the heart-based principles in leadership refer to the day-to-day actions that represent qualities of the heart (Childre, 2007). These principles regarding heart-based leadership have been studied and successfully implemented across multiple industries from banking to nursing. A 2008 study cited 10 heart-based characteristics that inform leadership practices in nursing including energy, love, open emergence, and authentic presence (Turkel, 2014). Similarly, researchers found in each of three independent studies that followers not only took on their leader's emotions, but they also were sensitive to their leader's emotional valence and reacted more positively to leader positivity (Eberly & Fong, 2013).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership was introduced by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) and has since become one of the most studied and cited leadership theories. Transformational leadership is defined as leadership that establishes positive and valuable changes in its followers (Huey-Wen, Yu-Hsun, Hsiu-Hua, & Wen-Wei, 2013). Transformational leadership also describes a leader's ability to elevate the interests of the employees, encouraging them to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group (Bass, 1999). In their book *Improving Organizational Effectiveness Through Transformational Leadership*, Bass and Avolio (1994) expanded on this definition concluding that transformational leaders can create an environment in which people are encouraged to approach various situations with creativity and commitment to success. These leaders are

described as those who have a strong base of values and ideals as well as a heightened sense of self-determination and self-worth (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Research has shown that by creating trust and respect, transformational leaders have the potential to be powerful influencers over their followers who in turn conform their values to the leaders (Gregory Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). This is beneficial to the leader and the employee, as well as the organization, because transformational leadership is never self-serving but is employee and organizationally focused.

Resonant Leadership

Resonant leadership is an additional relationally focused leadership style, marked by its foundation on emotional intelligence (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Laschinger, Wong, Cummings, & Grau, 2014). Emotional intelligence, as it relates to resonant leadership, includes the leaders' level of emotional self-awareness, sociopolitical awareness, ability to self-manage, and ability to effectively manage their relationships with others. According to the founder of this leadership theory Daniel Goleman, resonant leaders increase the level of engagement and effectiveness from their followers through emotional intelligence coupled with the ability to stay emotionally attuned to themselves as well as those around them (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2004). These leaders are empathetic, are committed, and can empower and effectively transfer their knowledge and expertise to those around them.

Theoretical Framework

In his book *Lead From the Heart: Transformational Leadership for the 21st Century*, the basis for this thematic study on exemplary leadership, Crowley (2011) provided compelling evidence that the human heart drives employee performance, not the

mind. The key aspect in Crowley's study is the heart, as is the case in the book *The Heart of the Matter* (Becker, 2014), which concludes that the heart is the inner ground of morality, authenticity, and integrity (Brown, 2012; Greenleaf & Spears, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Valeri, 2007).

Research related to heart-based leadership has strongly suggested that these characteristics, often used to describe exemplary leaders, originate in the heart; therefore, the condition and nature of a person's heart lend to exemplary leadership skills. Further, these studies strongly indicate that managers are more effective and can increase feelings of value and respect, as well as increase productivity, by leading with heart-based principals.

Crowley's (2011) framework on transformational leadership for the 21st century is based on the theory that traditional leadership models have not evolved and are no longer effective. Additional theories related to Crowley's work include studies on employee dissatisfaction because of issues related to trustworthiness, lack of recognition, and lack of healthy relationships between managers and staff.

The framework regarding Crowley's (2011) work presents four transformational leadership practices of leading from the heart: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements.

Building a Highly Engaged Team

Employee engagement first gained interest in the 1990s as researchers began to study and publish articles related to employee engagement and disengagement. In 2001, research increased, providing a deeper understanding of employee engagement, which

can be understood as employees' level of involvement, energy, and efficacy (Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 2008) or the individual's involvement and satisfaction as well as enthusiasm for work (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). A highly engaged team has a collective interest in going beyond what is expected of the team to function at a high level and produce high-level results for the organization (Crowley, 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Leaders can build highly engaged teams by modeling these same behaviors as staff oftentimes adapt the characteristics of their leaders (Kerfoot, 2007).

Connecting on a Personal Level

In his book *Everyone Communicates, Few Connect*, Maxwell (2010) suggested that the ability to connect with others is directly related to stronger relationships, a stronger sense of community, the ability to create teamwork, and a greater level of influence, and finally, connection allows productivity to skyrocket. Maxwell further explained that leaders who can connect on a personal level are able to inspire and motivate others by communicating what they know, what they see, and what they feel in a way that demonstrates care and concern for their followers. This ability to connect with others is based on the intentional work leaders do to connect with themselves, being vulnerable enough to connect and establish trust with others (Brown, 2012; Gelb, 2017; Maxwell, 2010).

Maximizing Employee Potential

Transformational leaders are focused on their followers' concerns and developmental needs (Ismail, Mohamed, Sulaiman, Mohamad, & Yusuf, 2011). Further, scholars such as Bass and Avolio (1993, 1994) maintained that transformational leaders are characterized by those who want to develop their followers' full potential. The

benefit to maximizing employee potential is that it causes followers to focus on organizational goals and interests, setting self-interests aside. According to Bass and Avolio (1993), leaders maximize employee potential by establishing trust, by providing timely and ongoing feedback, and by effectively linking followers' needs to organizational needs. According to Crowley (2011), leaders must value themselves and have a deep sense of personal worth, security, and self-confidence to understand the personal benefits achieved through maximizing the potential in others.

Valuing and Honoring Achievements

An important part of engagement, and leadership, is recognition (Kerfoot, 2007). To be effective, transformational leaders should focus on meaningful recognition, which is valuing and honoring the uniqueness and true essence of followers and their respective contributions (Kerfoot, 2007). As Crowley (2011) stated, employees want to know that they are helping the organization and the leader to succeed. Further, receiving recognition and praise is an expression of care, reinforcing the contributions and value of people. Related to performance, valuing and honoring achievements increase productivity and engagement levels as people instinctively repeat behaviors that are rewarded. On the contrary, a lack of recognition will cause followers to minimize their efforts (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

These four transformational leadership practices of leading from the heart help people feel valued, understood, and connected and result in higher employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall productivity. As scholars continue to research transformational leadership, they recognize that additional variables can be added to Crowley's (2011)

framework, such as trust, communication, and motivation tactics to further strengthen and support the framework.

Community College Chief Human Resource Officers

Presently, the role of CHRO is one of the most important positions of executive leadership (P. M. Wright et al., 2011). Discussions concerning the importance of the role often include leadership development and recruitment and creating a high performing culture (Abt & zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2017). Some researchers already view CHROs as crucial for the future (P. M. Wright et al., 2011) and further contemplate that it may be only a matter of time until the position carries equal or even more weight than the role of chief financial officer (Charan, Barton, & Carey, 2015; Groysberg, Kelly, & MacDonald, 2011; Welch & Welch, 2014). Researchers have also found that CHROs are likely to become favored and logical successors for chief executive officer succession (Abt & zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2017).

The role of community college human resource personnel includes standard transactional tasks such as compensation, benefits enrollment, talent management and acquisition, training and development, and policy. However, community college CHROs have additional responsibilities such as collective bargaining for multiple units, school accreditation, convocation, personnel research and record keeping, communications, and Title IX administration and compliance to name a few. At the community college level, CHROs act as a resource and strategic partner to multiple groups within the organization, such as student services, faculty, adjunct faculty, central services, executive leadership, and the board of trustees. In addition, the CHRO may provide service to multiple campuses and satellite locations spread across several different counties.

According to Bergquist (1992), community college CHROs need to have a profound understanding of the four cultures of the organization described as managerial, developmental, collegial, and the culture of negotiating. The first three cultures, managerial, developmental, and collegial, are related to faculty engagement, loyalty, teaching-learning, and outcomes. The culture of negotiating emerged from the community college setting because of the first three cultures failing to meet the personal and financial needs of the staff (Kemper, 2001). Although the technical aspects of the CHROs role such as payroll, talent and personnel management, compliance, training, and development are important, community college CHROs must have a keen understanding of the four cultures present on campus as well as the ability to work within these cultures to prevent disruption and dysfunction.

Gaps in Research

Transformational, servant, and heart-based leadership have been studied in various industries. However, a review of the literature reflected limited and conflicting research related to the transformational leadership in the public sector, specifically in organizations such as community colleges. There is research to suggest that transformational leaders are not common within the public sector, and where they do exist, they are less effective (B. E. Wright & Pandey, 2010). On the contrary, research has suggested that transformational leadership within public and private sector organizations is equally common and equally effective (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2013; B. E. Wright & Pandey, 2010). Finally, there is limited research connecting transformational leadership to the role of CHROs.

Summary

It has been stated that CHROs can affect the climate and culture of organizations as well as influence employee's interpretation and perceptions of organizational initiatives (Pereira & Gomes, 2012). This study examined the role of exemplary CHROs and how they utilize transformational leadership to influence the culture and climate of the campuses they serve and lead employees within multiple bargaining units to extraordinary results.

Statement of the Research Problem

The challenges facing community colleges today require highly engaged and motivated employees within multiple levels of the organization including executive leadership, faculty, adjunct faculty, and classified staff. The office of human resources, specifically the CHRO, has the benefit of reaching each of these departments while shaping and reinforcing a positive culture within the organization. In addition to establishing an environment for success, the CHRO can establish job descriptions and interview guidelines conducive to attracting and retaining those leaders who embrace the organization's culture and transformational leadership and will lead their respective departments from the heart. When CHROs and executive leaders fail to establish and maintain a positive culture for the organization, the organization will become dysfunctional, resulting in dysfunctional behaviors that ultimately become damaging to the organization (Pierre, Robert, & Richard, 2006).

Although traditional authoritarian leadership styles have given way to transformational leadership styles, there still exists an opportunity for human resource leaders to establish a more positive culture on community college campuses because a

dysfunctional culture can prove damaging in multiple ways. Scholars have found that a negative community college culture can act as a barrier to student success (Cervantes, 2015; McGrath & Spear, 1991; Ornelas & Solorzano, 2004). Issues with culture can include faculty disengagement, contract and collective bargaining disputes, or an overall lack of clarity regarding the mission or vision of the organization. With the immense goals of community colleges, there is no room for internal or external barriers to success.

Historically, community colleges have provided low-cost pipelines to bachelor's degrees as well as vocational and apprentice training programs. Additionally, community colleges also assist students who are not prepared for college-level work by providing remedial educations. This, in conjunction with the task of establishing a kindergarten to baccalaureate pipeline, can pose a challenge for community colleges to balance multiple functions and institutional initiatives (Eddy & Boggs, 2010).

To overcome these challenges, to increase and maintain employee engagement, and to establish a positive organizational culture, CHROs need to possess a variety of competencies including skill-based, personality-based, and experience-based. A more important consideration is that community college CHROs should proactively lead from the heart to create a culture that strengthens employee satisfaction and cooperation while positively affecting levels of retention and productivity throughout the organization.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee

potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions

1. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?
2. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?
3. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?
4. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Significance of the Problem

CHROs have many complex responsibilities. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), these responsibilities include developing and implementing human resource strategies, supporting the organization's mission and strategic plan, managing talent and performance, training and development, and administering compensation. CHROs working at community colleges share these responsibilities with the added responsibilities of serving as chief negotiator for the organization, participating in collective bargaining activities for multiple units; as Title IX compliance officer, participating in school accreditation activities; and serving on the chancellor's cabinet (Kemper, 2001). More important, the community college CHRO's role is to create and maintain a positive culture conducive to positive student learning outcomes achieved by increased levels of employee engagement, satisfaction, and

retention. CHROs at community colleges who do not intentionally focus on culture risk employee disengagement, fail to act as a strategic partner, and put the institution's overall objectives at risk. The results of this study will equip community college CHROs with the tools to lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results.

A review of the previous research reflects numerous studies on HRM and the role of human resource leaders at 4-year institutions, but very few studies have been conducted at the community college level. This study will fill the gap in research related to community college CHROs. The study will also provide research related to how community college CHROs' leadership styles contribute to the institution's overall level of effectiveness, specifically related to employee engagement and satisfaction. The results of the study will help future community college CHROs to understand the oftentimes unspoken responsibility of establishing, maintaining, and overseeing the culture of the institution. Additionally, the results of the study will provide community college chancellors, presidents, deans, and other members of management with a deeper understanding of the CHRO's role as a strategic partner. Finally, each of the forementioned parties possessing this information will benefit students, faculty, staff, and other internal and external partners to the institution.

Professional organizations, such as SHRM, a hybrid of free resources and fee-based memberships, can use this information from this study to update and elaborate on training, tools, and other resources available to human resource professionals. The Association of Chief Human Resource Officers (ACHRO) is a nonprofit organization specifically serving the CHROs in the California Community College system. ACHRO

can use the results of this study to enhance its annual training conferences and Human Resource Leadership Academy.

Definitions

The operational terms relevant to this study are defined in this section to provide context and understanding for the reader. The definitions were discussed and synthesized by a team of peer researchers working collaboratively on similar studies based on Crowley's (2011) four transformational leadership practices of leading from the heart: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. The operational definitions establish clarity of terms that could be interpreted in different ways (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018).

Building a highly engaged team. Building a highly engaged team uses strategies that help people become enthusiastically invested in and dedicated to work they believe is significant, meaningful, and challenging in which relationships are built on emotional connection and shared vision and values and commitment are based on personal strengths and interests aligned with organizational goals (Crowley, 2011; P. S. George & Stevenson, 1988; Rees, Alfes, & Gatenby, 2013; Senge, Lichtenstein, Kaeufer, Bradbury, & Carroll, 2007).

Caring leadership. Caring leadership is showing kindness, empathy, and understanding that builds relationships that bring people together regarding a common goal. Caring leaders demonstrate warmth, show genuine interest in people, and treat others with mutual acceptance and respect (Kautz, 2013; Madison, Tabor, Marler, & Kellermanns, 2020; Maxwell, 2013; Tomkins & Simpson, 2015).

Chief human resource officer (CHRO). Chief human resource officers implement organizational structure and act as compliance and governance regulators. For this study, community college CHRO is used to describe the organization and position responsible for the direction and oversight of the human resources department at a community college. This is a senior management level position at a single community college or at the community college district level (Abt & zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2017; P. M. Wright et al., 2011).

Connecting on a personal level. Connecting on a personal level is seeing and acting on behalf of others and authentically communicating with the intention of adding value driven by humility, concern, and love (Brown, 2012; Crowley, 2011; Hayward, 2015; Maxwell, 2010).

Extraordinary results. Extraordinary results are accomplishments that are remarkable, surprising, exceptional, and go beyond what is usually expected (O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000).

Maximizing employee potential. Maximizing employee potential ignites emotional drivers by promoting human well-being while proactively strengthening, teaching, and building up people toward high achievement (Burnett & Lisk, 2019; Crowley, 2011).

Valuing and honoring achievements. Valuing and honoring achievements praises, acknowledges, recognizes, and appreciates positive accomplishments as an expression of care through monetary and/or nonmonetary rewards, which may lead to increased job satisfaction (Crowley, 2011; Brun & Dugas, 2008; Posamentier, 2008; Tessema, Ready, & Embaye, 2013).

Delimitations

The study was delimited to eight community college CHROs in Northern California. Exemplary community college CHROs in this study are leaders who represented at least four of the following six criteria:

1. Evidence of caring about people in the organization.
2. Minimum of 3 years' experience in their position
3. Evidence of extraordinary results.
4. Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences of association meetings
5. Recognition by their peers.
6. Membership in professional associations in their field

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters, followed by references and appendices. Chapter I introduced the study and provided an overview of the role of community college CHROs and various leadership theories, including Crowley's (2011) four transformational leadership principles. Chapter I included the problem statement, research questions, significance of the study, and operational definitions pertinent to this study. Chapter II presents an overview of the literature related to leadership theories pertinent to this study and the role of CHROs at community colleges. Chapter III outlines the methodology and research design of the study including the study population and the sampling, data collection, and data analysis procedures. Chapter IV includes the research findings and an analysis of the findings. Chapter V presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Leaders breathe life into the hopes and dreams of others and enable them to see the exciting possibilities that the future holds (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Today, the importance of leadership and how leaders affect the climate and culture of their organization is understood and yet continues to be an area of study. This study centers on human resource leaders. The term human resource management, or HRM, evolved from the human relations movement of the early 20th century (Obedgiu, 2017). Armstrong (2006) defined HRM as a coherent and strategic approach to the management of the people working for an organization who collectively and individually contribute to the organization's objectives. Early HRM centered on transactional work such as payroll and benefits administration. However, the role of HRM transitioned because of globalization, technological advances, and evolving research in the field. As a result, HRM has become heavily centered on more complex tasks such as succession planning, talent management and mergers and acquisitions, diversity, inclusion, and labor relations (Obedgiu, 2017).

Today, many recognize the role and importance of human resource professionals in maintaining and establishing the culture of an organization. Specifically, the role of the CHRO has evolved such that this position holds the primary responsibility of communicating the organizations core values while ensuring that personnel, programs, and policies are developed to reinforce those values (P. M. Wright et al., 2011). The values and norms of an organization become the organization's culture. In short, by developing, influencing, and supporting the values and norms of an organization, human resource leaders develop, influence, and support an organization's culture (Armstrong, 2006; Browne, 2017; P. M. Wright et al., 2011).

An organization's culture is determined largely by its leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Transformational leaders can change their organization's culture by first understanding it then realigning the culture to a new system of shared values, assumptions, and norms (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Although the culture of an organization is the responsibility of all its leaders, human resource leaders have the unique opportunity to influence the organization of the culture through their daily interactions with senior management and other staff members. An organization has an overall culture, but often microcultures exist within departments, locations, and geographies (Browne, 2017). Human resource leaders have access and the ability to influence these microcultures as well as the overall company culture.

An organization's culture, whether positive or negative, affects employee satisfaction and retention rates, among other things. A 2017 study found that 85% of employees are not actively engaged or are actively disengaged at work, resulting in \$7 trillion in lost productivity across the globe (Harter, n.d.). Employee disengagement negatively effects an organization's bottom line as it relates to sales and productivity, making it difficult to reach organizational goals and objectives. Harter (n.d.) maintained that today's workforce is looking for purpose, development, conversation, and coaching. These job aspects require leaders who are interested and invested in their employees. When leaders fail to lead from the heart, the culture of the organization is negatively impacted. Such leaders fail to create an environment where team members are valued and inspired. This occurs when leaders cannot be vulnerable and fail to connect with others (Brown, 2012; Gelb, 2017).

Chapter II presents an overview of the literature related to the study of leadership and various transformational leadership models. In addition, literature on the importance of culture within an organization, the role and involvement of the human resource professionals, and the theoretical context for Crowley's (2011) four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) are presented. The researcher utilized a synthesis matrix (Appendix A) to organize the literature and develop the review of the literature. The chapter is organized into five sections. The first section provides an historical overview on the study of leadership and an overview on the importance of leadership. The second section, theoretical foundations, includes a review of pertinent leadership models including servant leadership, transformational leadership, authentic leadership, and resonant leadership. The third section, theoretical framework, describes Crowley's leadership model and the four principles of transformational leadership. The fourth section describes the role of CHROs at California community colleges. The literature review concludes with the fifth section, which outlines the gaps that currently exist in the research related to exemplary CHROs who lead from the heart.

Overview and Importance of Leadership

The evidence that leadership makes a difference is visible to all people (Bass, 2008). Leadership principles have been studied for several years as professionals, scholars, and researchers have gained a greater understanding that group performance depends heavily on the team leader (Huey-Wen et al., 2013). Leadership is a crucial factor to organizational success. According to Mastrangelo, Eddy, and Lorenzet (2014), leadership is the ability to influence others to perform tasks willingly, efficiently, and

competently. Organizational leaders and researchers alike also find interest in how leadership affects organizational outcomes, employee engagement, and employee satisfaction. According to Harter et al. (2002), employee satisfaction is related to meaningful business outcomes. Those outcomes include higher productivity and profitability, fewer safety incidents, fewer quality incidents, lower turnover, and lower absenteeism (Popli & Rizvi, 2016). Kerfoot (2007) and Macey and Schneider (2008) agreed that leadership, specifically transformational leadership, has a direct effect on trust and levels of employee engagement and satisfaction. Today more than ever, employees are unengaged and dissatisfied at work (Crowley, 2011).

Concepts and theories of leadership have evolved over the past century. In the 1920s, leaders impressed their will onto followers, inducing obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation. By the 1940s, leadership was the ability to lead and direct beyond the effects of position, power, or circumstances. Leadership transitioned again throughout the 1980s as leadership became more about inspiring others to take purposeful action. By the 1st decade of the 21st century, leaders were seen as those most accountable and responsible for the organization's actions (Bass, 2008). Instead of simply looking at who is in charge, today, leadership is studied and measured in a more holistic way considering the whole leader, including personal characteristics, effectiveness, and their outcomes (personal, team, and organizational).

According to Epley (2015), leaders can be defined by who they are (the personal) and the obligations, tasks, and responsibilities they are charged with (the position). Greenberg and Barron (1997) defined leadership as an individual's work to influence other members in a group to work toward attainment of a common goal. This aligns with

Kouzes and Posner (2012) who stated that leaders are those who are able to lead by demonstrating the following characteristics:

- “Enable others to act”
- “Model the way”
- “Encourage the heart”
- “Inspire a shared vision”
- “Challenge the process” (p. 9).

Kouzes and Posner (2007) further maintained that leadership is a reciprocal process between those who choose to lead and those who chose to follow and that by demonstrating the five characteristics, leaders create meaningful connections and encourage, inspire, and facilitate change (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Brown, 2018; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Maxwell, 2018).

In his book *Lead From the Heart: Transformational Leadership for the 21st Century*, Crowley (2011) referenced a 2005 study by human resources consultants Towers Perrin that found 21% of U.S. workers were engaged in their jobs and willing to go the extra mile for their organizations. Crowley defined employee engagement as a force that drives human performance and asserted that authentic and supportive leadership inspires worker engagement. This is supported by Kouzes and Posner’s (2012) belief that being in love with leading and with the people who do the work is key and that leadership is an affair of the heart, not the head.

Theoretical Foundation

Written examples of leadership go as far back as 2300 BC in the Egyptian *Instruction of Ptahhotep*. Early leadership theories point to autocratic leadership styles

characterized by a leader with absolute control over decision-making with little to no input from followers. However, over time, leadership models have evolved into theories more centered on inclusion, vulnerability, trust, love, and servitude. In 1927, Max Weber introduced charismatic leadership in which authority arises from the charisma of the leader (Bass, 2008; Epley, 2015). By the 1970s, there was a rise in interest related to visionary and transformational leadership (Bass, 2008). Today, researchers continue to study transformational leadership theories and their effects on employee engagement, culture, and organizational success. An exploration of four main theories provided a foundation for this study: transformational leadership, resonant leadership, servant leadership, and authentic leadership.

Leadership Theories

Good theories explain how and why they must be grounded in assumptions that fit facts (Sutton & Straw, 1995, as cited in Bass, 2008). Leadership theories that contain extensive empirical support of the effects on follower's satisfaction and effectiveness can be classified as informal, instrumental, and inspirational. Informal leadership theories include those leaders who lack formal positions or authority but are effective leaders. Instrumental leadership theories relate to the leader's focus on the person or task, to the leader's direction and the follower's obedience, and to the leader's rewards and promises or threats and disciplinary actions. Finally, inspirational leadership theories focus on displays of exemplary behavior, emotional and ideological appeals, and intrinsic motivation. Inspirational leadership theories include transformational, resonant, servant, and authentic leadership (Bass, 2008).

Servant Leadership

Robert Greenleaf, known as the father of servant leadership, coined the term servant leadership in the 1970s. According to Greenleaf (1970), servant leaders are service-oriented and are strongly influenced by what their organization and their followers need. Servant leaders are further characterized by those who are servant first, followed by a conscious choice to lead. This acute awareness and desire to serve first causes servant leaders to depend on empathy, awareness, and foresight as opposed to manipulation and coercion when leading (Bass, 2008; Greenleaf, 1970; Keith, 2015; Valeri, 2007). To summarize, servant leadership is not about doing acts of service but about being a servant (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002).

Greenleaf's (1970) theory on servant leadership originated from his reading of *The Journey to the East* by Hermann Hesse. The story involves a group of men on a journey. The group falls into disarray when the group's servant Leo disappears. The narrator of the story comes to the realization that Leo was more than a servant. He was the group's sustainer, its guiding spirit, and a great and noble leader (Greenleaf & Spears, 1998; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Valeri, 2007). Although this story and Greenleaf are notable in the origins of servant leaders, many scholars state that it was Jesus Christ who first taught the concept of servant leadership (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Throughout the accounts of Jesus's life in the Bible, Jesus was seen as a servant leader, and servant leadership was practiced more than 2,000 years ago. Not only did Jesus teach servant leadership to his disciples, or followers, but he also applied the concept of servant leadership in concrete ways. Throughout his ministry, Jesus demonstrated servant leadership, such as the act of

washing his disciples' feet as referenced in the Gospel of John, Chapter 13. Like Jesus, servant leaders encourage moral development in their followers. Their care for others underlies considerate leadership behaviors, and for these leaders who care, service is an obligation, not a burden (Bass, 2008).

Greenleaf's continued research and refinement in the area of servant leadership led to the creation of the four central tenets of effective servant leaders, which emphasize the importance of people greater than production (Frick & Spears, 1996). The four tenets recognize the following in servant leaders: sharing the power in decision-making, having a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and being of service to others (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. The central tenets of servant leadership.

Sharing the power of decision-making. Greenleaf explained that a climate of encouragement and trust is built through shared decision-making (Frick & Spears, 1996).

Further, shared decision-making occurs when servant leaders take the time to create connection and build relationships with their followers, thus developing a culture of success and like-mindedness that permeates the organization.

Having a holistic approach to work. Servant leaders create a holistic work space by allowing their followers' individual opinions. At the same time, servant leaders integrate valuation of each individual's ideals, which benefits the performance and long-term interest of the workplace (Frick & Spears, 1996).

Promoting a sense of community. When servant leaders establish a sense of community among followers, they also establish a culture that supports the goals of the organization. This culture is created based on the actions of the servant leader (Frick & Spears, 1996).

Being of service to others. Being of service to others requires leaders to assume the position of servant when interacting with their followers. Authentic, legitimate leadership is built on this desire to help others (Frick & Spears, 1996). As explained by Keith (2015), servant leaders have a natural desire to serve, followed by a conscious decision to lead. To be of service to others requires one to take care in ensuring that other people's highest priority needs are served (Keith, 2015).

Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership has emerged over the past decade from the intersectionality of leadership, ethics, and positive organizational behavior (Avolio et al., 2004).

Authentic leadership is defined as a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness, internal moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and

relational transparency on the part of leaders (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). An authentic leader has also been defined as one who brings people together under a shared vision and purpose while empowering them to step up and lead authentically to create value for stakeholders (B. George, 2007).

Authentic leaders inspire and empower others to step up and lead. This is accomplished through the leader's ability to connect with others. To connect with others, authentic leaders must be self-aware and possess the ability to self-regulate (Avolio et al., 2004; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Self-awareness refers to the ability to demonstrate and understand one's own weaknesses and strengths as well as an awareness of how one sees the world (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Authentic leaders can take this information, how they see themselves and how they see the world, and apply it to how they show up for their followers and how they impact others around them (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Self-regulation refers to a leader's ability to be regulated by internal values and moral standards as opposed to organizational, group, or societal pressures. Authentic leaders show others that they genuinely care and desire to understand their own leadership abilities to serve others more effectively (Avolio et al., 2004; B. George, 2007; Walumbwa et al., 2008). B. George (2007) supported this theory that the ability to be self-aware and to self-regulate in leadership produces leaders who are genuine and can therefore create trust and meaningful connections with others as reflected in the five dimensions of an authentic leader: (a) practicing solid values, (b) leading with heart, (c) pursuing purpose with passion, (d) establishing enduring relationships, and

(e) demonstrating self-discipline. Figure 2 summarizes the five dimensions of an authentic leader.

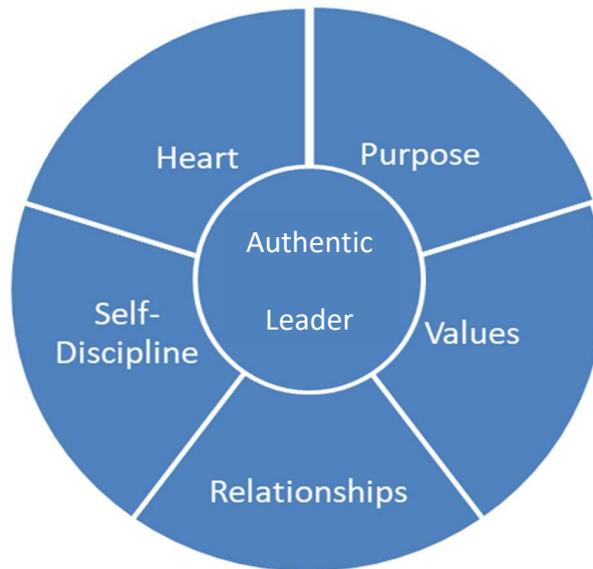


Figure 2. Dimensions of Authentic Leadership.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is a process of leaders and followers helping each other advance to higher levels of motivation and morale (Burns, 1978). Burns (1978) asserted that the process of transforming produces significant changes in goals, expectations, and values for both leaders and employees in an organization. According to Avolio and Bass (2002), transformational leaders move and rouse others by “providing meaning and challenge to their followers’ work” (p. 2). Through an atmosphere of trust, transformational leaders cultivate an environment where connections are shaped and visions can be shared (Bass, 1985). As Bass (1999) stated, transformational leaders can be participative or directive, authoritarian, or democratic.

Transformational leaders are affected by personal and moral development in addition to education and training (Bass, 1999). The moral standard of a leader's parents in conjunction with one's own leadership experiences in school and extracurricular activities can forecast tendencies to be a transformational leader as an adult (Avolio, 1994; Bass, 1999). Although researchers agree that a natural inclination for transformational leadership is helpful, it can be learned if a willingness exists (Bass, 1999).

Transformational leadership, described in Figure 3, requires the leader to move the follower beyond immediate self-interests. This is accomplished through four essential practices of transformational leadership: idealized influence (or charismatic influence), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass & Riggio, 2006)

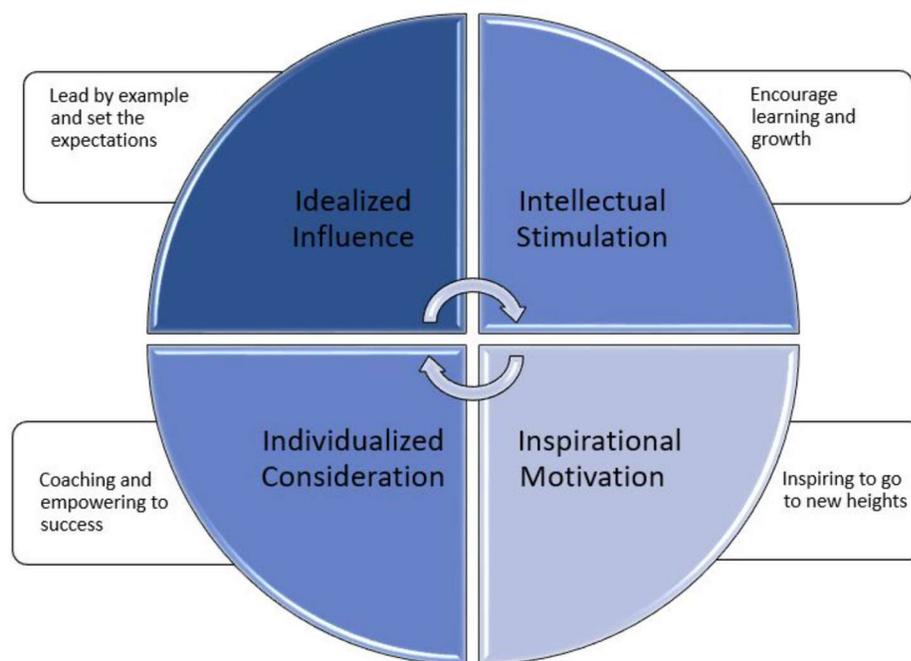


Figure 3. Transformational leadership model. From “Transformational Leadership: Leading Change Through Growth and Empowerment,” by Educational Business Articles, 2016 (<https://www.educational-business-articles.com/transformational-leadership/>)

Idealized influence. According to Bass and Riggio (2006) and Avolio and Bass (2002), the magnetic component of transformational leadership is idealized influence. Transformational leaders are primarily role models of high ethical behaviors. Exhibiting a strong moral compass, followers observe the leader's values and integrity, which never waiver. Transformational leaders consider the needs of others over their own. Followers identify with the leaders and often emulate their behaviors. Idealized influence results in leaders who are well respected, admired, and trusted.

Inspirational motivation. The degree to which leaders can articulate vision that is inspiring to their followers is known as inspirational motivation. Transformational leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to goals and shared vision. By using stories and symbols, leaders clearly communicate expectations that followers want to meet. In addition to verbal communication, transformational leaders behave in ways that inspire and motivate followers by offering challenge and meaning to their followers' work. A desire to change and improve is created when followers are inspired by their leader (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Intellectual stimulation. Transformational leaders encourage creativity and stimulate followers' innovation by reframing problems, by questioning assumptions, and by approaching old situations in new ways. Leaders provide a flow of challenging innovative ideas to stimulate rethinking of old ways and solutions. Mistakes are not publicly criticized and new ideas are solicited from followers who are encouraged to try novel approaches and to provide input and ideas that differ from the leader's ideas. This concept of shared decision-making is a key component of the transformation leadership framework (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Individualized consideration. Practicing individualized consideration requires leaders to listen attentively and pay close attention to their followers' needs. Acting as a coach and mentor, leaders provide continual feedback and link followers' needs to the organization's mission. Transformational leaders encourage two-way communication, are visible, are approachable, and are attentive listeners. Their interactions with followers are personalized. Finally, leaders recognize the individual differences, needs, and desires of their followers (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Resonant Leadership

Resonant leaders are those who exhibit high social and emotional intelligences and are highly attuned to themselves and those around them (McKee, Boyatzis, & Johnston, 2008). The result of resonant leadership is team members who are in tune with one another's thoughts and emotions (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

Resonance is created by leaders who intuitively understand emotional intelligence or have worked hard to understand the competencies of self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Laschinger et al., 2014; McKee et al., 2008). Emotional intelligence differs from cognitive intelligence, which refers to a leader's understanding of the environment, numbers, product, or technology. Emotional intelligence is what allows leaders to deal with their own internal moods and states of mind. When combined with social intelligence, how people understand and interact with others, emotional intelligence helps leaders to be effective because they perform in ways that leave their followers feeling stronger and more capable (McKee et al., 2008).

Social awareness is the ability of people to discern their own feelings and moods and their impact on others. This includes emotional self-awareness, which refers to the ability to process emotional information quickly and accurately. As stated by McKee et al. (2008), good leaders know their principles and values as well as their strengths and limitations. Resonant leaders remain in a state of self-awareness and can manage themselves as well as manage the emotions of others around them. As a result, resonant leaders often build trusting relationships (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). Because resonant leaders are committed, passionate, and empathetic and have the ability to accurately read others, they are often successful as change leaders as they provide courage and hope toward a new future while empowering and enabling those around them (Laschinger et al., 2014). Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between emotional and social intelligence competencies as they relate to resonant leadership.

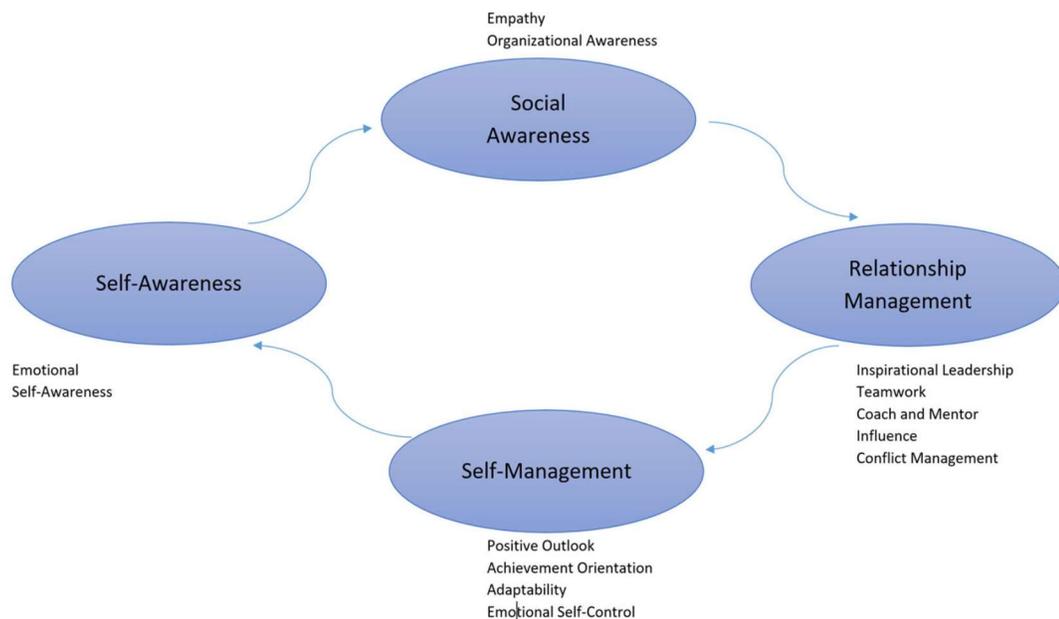


Figure 4. Emotional and social intelligence competencies. Adapted from *Becoming a Resonant Leader: Develop Your Emotional Intelligence, Renew Your Relationships, Sustain Your Effectiveness*, by A. McKee, R. Boyatzis, & F. Johnston, 2008, p. 25, Boston, MA: Harvard Business School.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is the lens through which a specific research problem is viewed (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018). Further, the theoretical framework explains the main factors, variables, or constructs and the relationships among them (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018). The framework used in this study to describe how exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations is from Crowley's (2011) four principles of leading from the heart. The four principles are (a) building a highly engaged team, (b) connecting on a personal level, (c) maximizing employee potential, and (d) valuing and honoring achievements. According to Crowley, when these four heart-led principles are present in a leader, the leader can build trust, build strong connections, create shared vision, and meet the individual needs of team members. As a result, followers are loyal, and the culture of the organization is positively affected.

Building a Highly Engaged Team

Engaged employees are loyal to the leader and the organization and are productive, creative, and excited about their work (Kerfoot, 2007; Miller, 2019). When employees are engaged, they are willing to invest time, energy, and personal resources and believe these investments will be rewarded in some meaningful way, intrinsically or extrinsically (Macey & Schneider, 2008). When staff are not engaged, they are likely to miss work, be careless, make mistakes, and are overall uninterested in their work (Kerfoot, 2007). Building a highly engaged team starts with intention, and leaders need to be conscious of the impact that each individual hired will have on the team (Crowley, 2011). This level of mindfulness allows leaders to add team members who are engaged

and add value to the collective team. When employees find personal meaning in their leader's purpose and the team's vision, they are more likely to be engaged and committed to the group's objectives (Miller, 2019).

Leaders generate engagement by creating trust in followers. Trust is critical to the development of an engaged workforce (Macey & Schneider, 2008). When a leader behaves fairly and establishes trust, followers connect with the leader, connect with the vision, and connect with the organization's goals (Kerfoot, 2007; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Followers tend to embrace the characteristics of their leaders; therefore, it is difficult for staff to be engaged unless the leader is engaged (Harter et al., 2002; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Trust within an organization is built when employees believe that safety exists. This occurs through leaders who understand the needs of their employees and provide work that is meaningful and fulfilling. To accomplish this, leaders need to understand their teams' strengths and weaknesses and assign tasks that employees are passionate about and will put their heart into (Crowley, 2011). As Crowley (2011) maintained, individuals are born with natural inclinations. It is the leader's job to match those inclinations to the appropriate job duties, resulting in genuine enthusiasm and quality work.

Employee engagement can be built through staff development, coaching, and feedback (Crowley, 2011; Kerfoot, 2007; Miller, 2019). Leaders have the ability and opportunity to help employees establish professional goals, be their best and improve, discover strengths, and overcome challenges (Miller, 2019). Likewise, engagement is increased when employees are provided with opportunities to gain additional experiences needed to reach their personal goals (Miller, 2019). Miller (2019) acknowledged that

modeling is an essential element of building a highly engaged team. Leaders should model receiving feedback and understand that receiving critical feedback can be challenging for some. Allowing employees to provide the leader with feedback builds trust within the team.

Finally, team engagement is reliant on open-minded communication and discussions. Many employees report that high levels of open and honest communication affect their personal levels of engagement (Miller, 2019; Ricklefs, 2016). Popli and Rizvi (2016) cited expansive communication, in addition to trust and integrity, as predictors of employee engagement. Ricklefs (2016) found that among the 1st year employees interviewed, the two top engagement drivers reported were a positive relationship with the leader and open, honest, two-way communication with the leader. Open-minded discussions require leaders to create a culture in which team members are free to contribute by identifying problems, collaborating to solve them, and sharing thoughts and opinions freely ((Miller, 2019).

Connecting on a Personal Level

Connecting on a personal level is seeing and acting on behalf of others and authentically communicating with the intention of adding value driven by humility, concern, and love (Brown, 2018; Crowley, 2011; Hayward, 2015; Maxwell, 2010). Leaders see employees by identifying, recognizing, and noticing who they are as individuals. Embracing diversity in the workforce requires leaders to fully appreciate others' concerns, perceptions, values, and interests (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Kouzes and Posner (2003) further stated that connected leaders “build relationships by learning how to understand and see things from another’s perspective” (p. 97). Connecting

requires leaders to acknowledge and affirm the individual characteristics and talents of their employees, resulting in sustained performance by employees (Dutton, 2003; Gebauer, Lowman, & Gordon, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

According to Gelb (2017), connection is creating and maintaining genuine rapport with others. Connection is the key to building relationships and making creative dreams come true. Similarly, Maxwell (2010) maintained that connection is all about relationship, and it begins with the other person feeling valued. Personal connections are established when leaders demonstrate good listening skills and find out what employees value by asking questions. Connections are deepened when leaders connect by sharing their own similar values (Maxwell, 2010).

Acting on behalf of others is creating trust by connecting with people and modeling genuine behaviors (Maxwell, 2010). By modeling genuine feelings, leaders build trust and positive emotions (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Gelb, 2017; Maxwell, 2010). According to Maxwell (2010), “With credibility, leaders continue to connect with people” (p. 230). Leaders help people trust them by how honestly and openly they discuss their own behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Leaders build confidence in their trustworthiness by demonstrating initiative, by reassuring others, and by showing care for others through action (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Leaders add value by being vulnerable, compassionate, and caring. According to Maxwell (2018), the leaders’ success can be measured by how they add value to others how they add value to others. Additionally, by putting others first, the teams’ success becomes the leader’s success. When leaders recognize their employees’ strengths and learn to value what motivates them, value is in turn created for the employee, the team,

and the organization (Brown, 2018; Crowley, 2011; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Maxwell, 2018). As explained by Maxwell (2010), people can identify with leaders who are authentic and vulnerable, which leads to connection. Gelb (2017) described vulnerability as “an acknowledgement that we are sensitive, alive, and affected emotionally by our interactions and experiences” (p. 51). In the same manner, Brown (2012) described vulnerability as the core of all emotions and feelings and the source of empathy, hope, accountability, and authenticity. Further, the result of vulnerability is trust, connection, and engagement.

Leaders show concern and love through vulnerability (Brown, 2018; Gelb, 2017; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Maxwell, 2010) and by treating others fairly and respectfully while engaging and developing them (Brown, 2018; Crowley, 2011; Gebauer et al., 2008; Gelb, 2017; Maxwell, 2018). Concern is placing the needs of others above one’s own and serving others first (Maxwell, 2018). Concern is also the act of being fully present as a leader, specifically while engaging with team members and ensuring that a strong genuine rapport is built with them (Gelb, 2017). Leaders show concerns by meeting with team members regularly to learn and understand their individual concerns, goals, and intrinsic motivations. This can be accomplished by consistently scheduling uninterrupted time exclusively focused on them to spend with team members (Crowley, 2011).

Crowley (2011) provided compelling evidence that the human heart drives employee performance, not the mind. Similarly, Becker (2014) concluded that the heart is the inner ground of morality, authenticity, and integrity. Consequently, love can be described as caring for others authentically, consistently, and with integrity (Brown, 2012; Gelb, 2017; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Maxwell, 2018). Research related to heart-

based leadership strongly suggested that these characteristics, often used to describe exemplary leaders, originate in the heart; therefore, the condition and nature of the person's heart lend to exemplary leadership skills (Becker, 2014; Childre, 2007; Crowley, 2011; Turkel, 2014).

Heart-based principles in leadership refer to the day-to-day actions that represent qualities of the heart. These qualities can include expressions of kindness, appreciation, or care for others (Childre, 2007). Additional principles of love include energy, open emergence, and authentic presence (Turkel, 2014). Turkel (2014) further suggested that leaders who are self-caring and holistic exude harmony and peace, actively listen, and maintain an authentic presence in caring moments with colleagues and staff.

Maximizing Employee Potential

Maximizing employee potential is igniting emotional drivers by promoting human well-being while proactively strengthening, teaching, and building people toward high achievement (Burnett & Lisk, 2019; Crowley, 2011). The ignition of positive emotional drivers leads to connected employees and higher levels of employee engagement (Gebauer et al., 2008). One definition of employee engagement is a deep and broad connection that results in a willingness to go beyond to help the company succeed (Gebauer et al., 2008). In addition to organizational commitment, engagement is also connected to job satisfaction, employee motivation, and employee morale (Burnett & Lisk, 2019). There are numerous emotional drivers that can affect employee engagement and increased employee potential. Burnett and Lisk (2019) referenced a 2006 study that included 26 separate drivers of engagement. Of those, eight drivers were found to significantly impact engagement: trust and integrity, influence of team members, pride

about the company, employee development, relationship with one's manager, nature of the job, career growth opportunities, and alignment between individual and company performance. Weber (2020) listed 17 employee engagement drivers, which include shared values, professional development, feedback, fairness, leader integrity, professional development, and psychological safety. According to Gebauer et al. (2008), the number one driver globally is senior management's sincere interest in employee well-being. This shows the direct influence leaders have on employee engagement.

Engaged employees produce at a higher pace, have a higher level of focus, and feel good about what they do (Kerfoot, 2007; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Popli & Rizvi, 2016). They have a clear understanding of their value to the organization, their role, and the way it fits into the overall strategy of the organization (Weber, 2020). Leaders need to understand which drivers have the biggest influence on their employees to create a highly engaged culture and maximize potential in employees. A culture of open, authentic communication; timely and ongoing feedback; coaching and mentoring; and promoting mutual goals and trust produces highly engaged employees and drives organizational goals forward (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, 2012). As cited by Kouzes and Posner (2003), when individuals have a challenging goal and receive feedback on their progress, they become motivated to improve.

Leaders can coach their followers to high achievement. Coaching allows employees to develop new skills and increase confidence. Likewise, coaching creates team members who feel valued and connected with the team (Miller, 2019). According to Kouzes and Posner (2003), "Leaders should expand or realize the potentialities of the people they lead and bring them to a fuller state" (p. 155). In addition, leaders should

provide resources, organizational support, and educational opportunities for individuals to build their knowledge and skills (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Valuing and Honoring Achievements

Valuing and honoring achievements is a constructive response that is an acknowledgment, appreciation, or approval of positive accomplishments to motivate peers and subordinates through both monetary and nonmonetary rewards, which may lead to increased job satisfaction (Brun & Dugas, 2008; Crowley, 2011; Posamentier, 2008; Tessema et al., 2013). According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), “One way leaders give heart to others and keep them from giving up is by recognizing individual contributions” (p. 270). Weber (2020) agreed that milestones should be celebrated with employees so they feel energized by the work and their successes. Kerfoot (2007) added that meaningful recognition means that the true essence and uniqueness of employees is recognized and honored.

Numerous studies have highlighted employee recognition as an essential component of motivation (Brun & Dugas, 2008). According to Crowley (2011), organizational leaders should provide appropriate recognition that is both genuine and sincere, recognizing the accomplishments of employees when they are earned. He further stated that recognition “is an act of giving and of reinforcing the value and contributions of people” (Crowley, 2011, p. 125). According to Brun and Dugas (2008), recognition should focus on employees’ work process, including innovation, creativity, and continual improvement. Further, recognition should point toward the manner in which employees work, not the employees themselves (Brun & Dugas, 2008). Recognition that is not heart-felt is noticeable and diminishes the value of the contributions an employee makes.

Crowley (2011) recommended honoring employees as a regular occurrence or ritual, which helps to encourage employees to be their best while at work.

Leaders use many types of rewards to recognize the contributions and efforts of their employees (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Relying on formal reward systems typically requires considerable effort and time. Instead, leaders make use of intrinsic rewards, which refer to rewards that are built into the work itself (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). Examples of intrinsic rewards include challenging work, completion of meaningful tasks, the thrill of creation, or the leader listening without interruption or lending a helping hand (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

Some employers use monetary incentives to increase job performance in addition to nonmonetary incentives. Monetary rewards include raises, bonuses, or other opportunities to gain additional money. Nonmonetary rewards include employee development and promotional opportunities. According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), an individual's needs for and appreciation of rewards extend much further than bonuses and salary increases, and they maintained that verbal recognition of performance in front of peers, visible awards such as plaques and certificates, and spontaneous rewards are often more meaningful to employees.

Verbal praise is also associated with increased employee engagement, job satisfaction, and outcomes (Brun & Dugas, 2008; Kouzes & Posner, 2012). As referenced by Kouzes and Posner (2012), "Personal congratulations rank at the top of the most powerful nonfinancial motivators identified by employees" (p. 279). Praise can yield tremendous results when applied meaningfully and thoughtfully. Praise should be based on current performance, timely, specific, and personalized to the receiver

(Blanchard, Stanford, & Witt, 2014). Further, Blanchard et al. (2014) explained that managers who remember to say “thank you” find that employees on the receiving end of gratitude are motivated to work harder. Additionally, a leader known for giving encouragement and praise can expect to see better results than a leader who walks away after assigning a task (Blanchard et al., 2014). As stated by Lee (2020), “The use of positive vocal tone and enthusiasm” (p. 359) is directly correlated not only to performance but also to employees’ increased understanding of expectations without a feeling of judgement or fear.

In summary, Blanchard et al. (2014) advised, “If managers want to create an environment in which people thrive, they need to look at the benefits of praise. It costs nothing and pays big dividends to both giver and receiver” (p. 1). Recognition, pay rewards, and development opportunities are drivers and predictors of employee engagement (Popli & Rizvi, 2016). When these drivers are present in the workplace, employees are engaged, energized, and resilient, leading to higher levels of job involvement or job satisfaction (Kerfoot, 2007; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Popli & Rizvi, 2016). Conversely, studies have shown that insufficient reward increases employees’ vulnerability to burn out and job dissatisfaction (Maslach & Leiter, 2008).

The Role of Chief Human Resource Officers in Organizational Leadership

The chief human resource officer (CHRO) role has become one of the most important positions on the executive leadership team (Abt & zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2017; Browne, 2017; Obedgiu, 2017; P. M. Wright et al., 2011). Human resource functions, and especially the head of the function, has been elevated. As a result, the role of CHRO has evolved and become more important to many organizations. Human

resource directors have been promoted and given titles of personnel director or CHRO in important strategic and structural change (Abt & zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2017). In many cases, the position is tied more closely to the CEO, and as a result, CEOs have begun demanding more from their CHRO (Abt & zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2017; P. M. Wright et al., 2011).

Throughout the 1980s, human resource leaders began discussing the need to be a meaningful part of the executive leadership team with responsibility for developing strategy (P. M. Wright et al., 2011). For 2 decades, the role of CHRO continued to increase in importance, visibility, and the amount of time spent with board members (P. M. Wright et al., 2011). Today the CHRO is a vital member of senior management team in most organizations. As explained by P. M. Wright et al. (2011), “The human resource field has shifted from only doing transaction work to the more strategic work of helping organizations build capabilities to respond to customers and increase confidence from investors” (p. 273). As a strategic partner, CHROs should function as a business ally who knows the product or service offered well, a strategic architect who helps create and communicate strategy, a human resource expert able to manage people and performance, and a culture agent capable of creating, changing, managing, and maneuvering organizational culture (P. M. Wright et al., 2011). The CHRO is in a key position to create strong or weak systems that influence employees’ perception of policies, practices, procedures, and rewards (Pereira & Gomes, 2012).

Organizational Culture

Every organization has core values. Core values are the principles and beliefs of an organization, and they serve as guiding principles of how an organization will

accomplish its overall mission (Weber, 2020). Examples of core values include being family friendly. This core value could be demonstrated through workplace flexibility options, onsite day care options, or flexible options for paid and unpaid time away from work (P. M. Wright et al., 2011). CHROs typically are responsible for keeping the core values alive. They make sure that programs and policies are crafted to reinforce the values, that stories that reinforce the values are updated, and that leaders are building core values into their messages to employees and external partners. Core values bring a company mission statement to life, often define physical elements of the workplace, and play a significant role in shaping company culture (Weber, 2020; P. M. Wright et al., 2011).

Culture can be defined as the social norms at an organization, specifically as demonstrated by the behavioral norms of the organizations' leaders. Bass and Avolio (1994) described culture as the setting within which the organization's vision takes hold. Every company has a culture, and that culture can have positive and negative aspects. Browne (2017) asserted that every aspect of how an organization works is tied to culture. According to Bass and Avolio (1993), in an innovative and positive culture, transformational leaders are found to believe employees are purposeful and trustworthy, and each employee has a unique contribution to make. Further, these leaders who build strong cultures can communicate vision, align others concerning the vision, empower others, and take responsibility for the development of their followers.

When core values are not integrated into every aspect of the day-to-day culture, the organization's overall culture is negatively affected. As an example, if an employee leaves the organization because of an awful supervisor, the company's culture has

allowed the supervisor to be awful (Weber, 2020). Bass and Avolio (1993) described this as a garbage can culture in which no leadership exists, and there is neither clear purpose or vision nor values or rules to control activities. In such an environment, there is little cooperation but many grievances. Laschinger et al. (2014) described this culture as a breeding ground for workplace incivility.

Workplace incivility is described as “low intensity deviant behavior with intent to harm the target, in violation of work norms for mutual respect” (Laschinger et al., 2014, p. 5). Examples of workplace incivility include excluding people from department-based social activities, making derogatory or demeaning remarks about coworkers, and dismissing opinions or ideas (Laschinger et al., 2014). A culture that fosters incivility is created or allowed by leadership. Such a culture adversely affects employee health, productivity, and job satisfaction, which can lead to high absenteeism rates, turnover, and legal action (Laschinger et al., 2014).

Human Resources Role in Culture

Human resource departments act as agents of change, help departments and individual employees deal with change, and help shape culture in ways that improve organizations’ capacity for change (Abt & zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2017). The CHRO, the CEO, and the entire company senior management team are responsible for the organization’s culture; however, it likely falls to the CHRO and the human resource team to pay the most attention to culture. Implementing new ways of working, building high-performing teams within a high-performing culture, developing leaders, and recruiting talent are often tasks at the top of each CHRO’s strategic agenda (Abt & zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, 2017). According to Browne (2017), human resource leaders are in the best

position to guide culture because they are in charge of the people and practices of the organization. P. M. Wright et al. (2011) agreed that it is the CHRO who likely spends the most time thinking about culture while recruiting talent, drafting policy, or communicating changes necessary to keep culture fresh and on point. Bowen and Ostroff (2004) agreed that it is human resources that creates policy and systems that can positively affect employees' behaviors and attitudes and organizational outcomes.

Human resource leaders create and sustain a culture that promotes organizational success by actively monitoring and increasing employee engagement. Human resource leaders affect employee engagement in numerous ways, such as establishing trust, communicating practices, hiring practices, and demonstrating core values. According to Weber (2020), an organization's core values should be incorporated into the day-to-day culture of the organization. This can be accomplished by integrating core values into hiring decisions, feedback, and peer-to-peer recognition (Weber, 2020). Maxwell (2010) stressed the importance of leaders living what they communicate. CHROs demonstrate the core values of the organization by living them and by ensuring the core values are woven throughout the organizational policies, procedures, and systems. Pierre et al. (2006) asserted that when roles, norms, or expectations are weak or inconsistent, culture suffers. The CHRO can manage and effectively communicate in these areas, reinforcing a positive culture throughout the organization.

Hiring and retaining motivated employees who embody the desired culture is a function of the CHRO. Ensuring that new hires fit with the culture, the organization, and the position positively affects culture, job performance, and job satisfaction (Runhaar, 2017). A bad or inappropriate hire can adversely affect morale, engagement, and the

desired culture of the organization. P. M. Wright et al. (2011) suggested that CHROs positively affect culture through intentional hiring practices focused on acquiring the best talent, engaging, and motivating talent, maximizing employee performance, and retaining the best talent.

Human resource leaders work collaboratively with senior management, build high-performing teams, create high-performing cultures, and develop other leaders by first establishing trust throughout the organization. By establishing trust, human resource leaders can effectively change and maintain organizational culture. According to P. M. Wright et al. (2011), human resource leaders establish trust accomplished by building affective relationships, by listening and asking questions, by having candid conversations, and by creating quick wins.

Building affective relationships. To be affective, human resource leaders need to establish relationships with peers and stakeholders outside of human resources. Human resource leaders who spend time with peers and stakeholders obtain a greater understanding of their individual needs, issues, and challenges as well as individual levels of commitment (Browne, 2017; P. M. Wright et al., 2011). Miller (2019) added that building relationship takes time but that once human resource leaders understand employees' skills and aspirations, they connect with them better and increase engagement.

Listening and asking questions. The role of human resource leaders is to listen to both individuals and the organizational culture. By doing so, human resource leaders not only gain trust and credibility but also are able to define problems and create solutions from what they hear (P. M. Wright et al., 2011). Leaders who take the time to

listen and ask meaningful questions also increases engagement. When employees establish trust with human resources personnel, engagement behaviors are increased, and behaviors outside of cultural norms and organizational expectations decrease (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Having candid conversations. According to P. M. Wright et al. (2011), it is important for leaders to create a safe environment for open communication by engaging in frank, candid conversations. By doing so, human resources creates a culture conducive to faster understanding and resolution of issues. In addition, this demonstrates a common motivation of putting company issues first and ahead of individual needs.

Creating quick wins. Human resource leaders who are mindful of the culture, who are responsive, and who are results-oriented identify problems that can be solved right away and act on them (P. M. Wright et al., 2011). This attention to detail and responsibility supports high levels of employee engagement. In agreement, Kouzes and Posner (2012) maintained that acting with a sense of urgency is a characteristic of leaders who get extraordinary things done.

Human resource leaders create and sustain organizational culture by (a) taking the time to understand the culture; (b) acting as a strategic partner to senior leadership to focus on the mission and vision of the organization; and (c) developing policies and procedures that reinforce the mission, the vision, and the culture of the organization. By focusing on establishing trust, building relationships, hiring practices, and communication, employee engagement is increased, resulting in positive outcomes for the employees and the organization (Kerfoot, 2007; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Popli & Rizvi, 2016; P. M. Wright et al., 2011).

Leadership in Community Colleges

Community colleges offer many services, such as transfer education, remedial education, contract training for local businesses, vocational training, and community service. A primary challenge for community college leadership is balancing the multiple missions and functions of the institution in a way that meets the needs of local communities, states, and the nation (Eddy & Boggs, 2010). Community college leaders are tasked with navigating internal and external demands while prioritizing some institutional goals over others (Eddy & Boggs, 2010). As stated by Eddy and Boggs (2010), “By connecting college priorities to community needs and enacting specific strategies to fulfill institutional objectives, leaders can help campus constituents make meaning of their roles at the institution while focusing on improving college outcomes” (p. 4). Historically, community college leadership rested upon the shoulders of the college president; however, community college leaders now embrace concepts of leadership that focus on collaborative relationships, team building, and shared governance (Derrigo, 2005; Eddy & Boggs, 2010). In the same manner, Boies (2017) agreed that successful community college presidents rely on their leadership team and recognize the importance of a high-quality workforce and prioritize efforts related to recruiting, retaining, and engaging quality employees. Boies further asserted that to overcome the many challenges facing community colleges, leaders must take a proactive approach to strengthen employee satisfaction at all levels of the institution.

Human Resources Role in Community College Leadership

The traditional top-down leadership model shifted a learning college model that called for shared leadership in the 1990s (Boies, 2017). An important function of the

human resources department is creating organizational effectiveness. Organizational effectiveness is accomplished through the process of assessing the organization's staffing needs as they relate to organizational goals while making plans to employ a competent stable workforce (Kemper, 2001). To be effective, CHROs must fully understand the college's mission, culture, and climate. This requires forecasting, or predicting the future need for faculty and staffing levels and programming passed on to performance management and career management (Kemper, 2001). In his study, Boies (2017) found that each college president interviewed referred to the importance of hiring the right people for the organization and the importance of showing value and appreciation to employees. The study found that effectively managing the human resources within the organization was vital to building and maintaining a positive employee culture, and the collaboration with the human resources department was helpful in creating programs that promoted employee satisfaction. Such programs included formal and informal recognition programs, professional development programs, and work-life balance initiatives.

Summary of Literature

Chapter II provided a review of the literature as it related to the evolution of leadership and the function of human resources within an organization. The literature supported theories of transformational leadership as identified in the theoretical foundation of this study. Leadership theories such as servant leadership, authentic leadership, and resonant leadership are closely aligned to the theoretical framework of Crowley's (2011) principles of leading from the heart, which include building a highly

engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements.

The culture of an organization is strongly affected by the office of human resources (Browne, 2017; Weber, 2020; P. M. Wright et al., 2011). Quantitative and qualitative research suggest there is a discrepancy between the need for recognition and many human resource practices developed in the workplace (Brun & Dugas, 2008). In fact, without attention to Crowley's (2011) heart-led principles, the culture of the organization will suffer resulting in a loss of employee satisfaction and engagement and the ability to achieve organizational goals (Kerfoot, 2007; Macey & Schneider, 2008; Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 2008; Popli & Rizvi, 2016).

Human resources, specifically the CHRO, is becoming more critical to the vision and mission of colleges and universities (Boies, 2017; Hampton, 2016; Kemper, 2001). It is increasingly important for CHROs to understand the importance of shared governance, the unique culture of the institutions where they work, and the importance of effectively designed policies and procedures that support the culture (Kemper, 2001). However, as concluded by Kemper (2001), there is limited literature on the roles of CHROs at the strategic level in higher education. There is also limited literature on the role of CHROs at community colleges, specifically CHROs' perceptions of their own effectiveness as a strategic partner to the college president.

Community college leadership is a balance of multiple missions and functions, including vocational training, transfer education, and community service (Eddy & Boggs, 2010). To provide a culture conducive to student learning and high engagement for staff at all levels, the CHRO must distribute Crowley's (2011) four principles of leading from

the heart throughout the organization. As the touch point to each department and staff member within a community college, CHROs can build highly engaged teams, connect on a personal level while attracting other leaders who will do so, create policies and build culture that maximizes employee potential, and finally, incorporate systems and programs that are designed to value and honor achievements. When these structures are in place, CHROs function as a strategic partner and can accomplish extraordinary results.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

According to Roberts and Hyatt (2018), methodology describes in detail how the study was conducted. Therefore, this chapter provides insight into the methodology of this phenomenological study including a review of the purpose statement and research questions. In addition, the research design, population, sample, and instrumentation are presented in separate sections. An explanation of the data collection process and the procedures taken to analyze the data are provided. Within these two sections, the interviews conducted are described and the steps taken to produce validity and reliability are included. Chapter III concludes with a presentation of study limitations.

This phenomenological study identified and described how community college chief human resource officers (CHROs) lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results. The lived experiences of CHROs were studied to explain the way these exemplary leaders use Crowley's (2011) four principles of leading from the heart.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions

1. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

2. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?
3. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?
4. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Research Design

The research design explains the specific plan the researcher used to answer the research question by gathering reliable data and information to generate credible conclusions (McMillian & Schumacher, 2010). Research methodology falls into three categories: quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. Although quantitative and qualitative research designed to find answers to a researcher's inquiry, qualitative research includes personal interviews and goes beyond numbers by describing emotions, attitudes, and beliefs (Patton, 2015). In contrast, quantitative research proves the question by analyzing data and comparing data with evidence from surveys or data sets. The goal of quantitative research is to explain relationships and reasons for change among outcomes in an inquiry. Qualitative study is concerned with understanding and describing the phenomenon from people's lived experiences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative research collects data that are described or analyzed as words. Qualitative data is most often collected through interviews and observation, consist of quotations, observations, excerpts from documents, and entries from social media communique (Patton, 2015).

Qualitative research is a body of research that is focused on telling the story of the sample. The objective of qualitative research is to investigate a research problem resulting in a comprehensive understanding of the problem (Creswell, 2008). To be able to tell the story of an individual, it is necessary for the researcher to thoroughly understand the problem being researched. This understanding is obtained through the analysis of interviews, observations, and artifacts (Creswell, 2008). As analysis of interviews, observations, and artifacts progress, the purpose and research questions may change because of the emergent nature of storytelling. These changes are necessary to accurately describe the experiences of the members of the research sample. It is not possible to tell a story without some subjective influence from the researcher. Because the story is specific to the individual at the time the story occurred, qualitative research is less generalizable than quantitative research (Creswell, 2008). However, it is possible to increase the validity of the study, which allows researchers to make some generalizations and enables readers to apply findings to similar scenarios. To enhance validity of data collection and analysis, “Qualitative research in recent years has moved toward preferring terms such as trustworthiness and authenticity. Evaluators aim for balance, fairness, and neutrality” (Patton, 2015, p. 58). To achieve the desired trustworthiness and authenticity, it is necessary to collect data systematically, triangulate data, and ensure that the researcher is properly trained in qualitative data collection methodology. A qualitative research design was most appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to describe the lived experiences of community college CHROs who lead from the heart. The research methods of interview and artifact collection provided rich stories of the

participants' experiences supported by artifacts that documented strategies used to lead from the heart.

Method Rationale

This qualitative study used a phenomenological method to describe how exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations. The study is part of a larger thematic study on how exemplary leaders lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results. Each researcher in the 14-member group selected a leader from a separate and distinct population to study.

The approach to examining perceptions about the world and how people construct reality is known as phenomenology (Patton, 2015). This was the best approach to this researcher because the phenomenological method of collecting data allowed the researcher to capture a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of exemplary human resource leaders while also obtaining the leaders' associated perceptions of experiences, attitudes, and opinions of the environment. The phenomenological study yielded qualitative data, collected through observations, semistructured open-ended interviews, and review of written documentation.

Population

Creswell and Guetterman (2019) described a population as a group of individuals having one characteristic that differentiates them from other groups. Similarly, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) described a research population as the complete collection of

individuals who are the focus of a study. The population in this phenomenological study was community college CHROs in California. Human resource administrators play a significant role in creating and establishing the culture of the institution as strategic partners to college presidents, chancellors, deans, and executive staff. Human resource officers at community colleges create policies and procedures and make daily decisions that impact the culture of the institution, including the well-being of students, employees, and stakeholders. CHROs are responsible for establishing health care and retirement plans for the organization employees in addition to their responsibility for attracting and retaining highly skilled employees. These duties are all vital to the success of the institution.

According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (n.d.), there are 74 California community college districts and 116 community colleges in California servicing 2.1 million students. The title of the individual in the role of CHRO varies across the 116 community colleges and includes CHRO, vice chancellor of human resources, director/CHRO, executive director of human resources, and vice president of human resources. It is assumed that each of the 116 community colleges has a CHRO although the specific title may vary.

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 because of time or cost

constraints, to study large groups; therefore, the researcher chose population samples from within a larger group. The target population was identified as 46 community colleges within 150 miles of Sacramento, California. There is one individual responsible for oversight of human resource functions, either at the college or associated district level.

There is no published information related to the number of CHROs at the college level versus the district level; however, there is typically one senior cabinet level human resource officer responsible for overseeing human resource functions at the district level. For this study, it was estimated that there were 74 positions equivalent to CHRO within the California Community College System.

Sample

A sample population is defined as the group of subjects or participants from whom the data are collected, representative of a larger population the researcher intends to generalize (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The purpose of this study was to understand how CHROs at community colleges lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results. CHROs at community colleges are responsible for a myriad of tasks from hiring and evaluating staff, training and compensation, and labor relations. However, the sample for this study intentionally focused on those exemplary CHROs who have effectively and positively affected their staff as well as the culture of the organizations in which they work. For this reason, purposeful sampling was used to identify eight individuals who possessed a specific set of characteristics.

In purposeful sampling, the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest with an

emphasis on selecting cases that are information rich (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In qualitative studies, the researchers must use their best judgement to select a sample that meets the intended criteria. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), one general guideline for qualitative research is to study a few individuals but to collect extensive details related to each individual.

Criterion sampling was also used in conjunction with purposeful sampling to ensure participants met the criteria of exemplary community college CHRO. Criterion sampling is a form of purposeful sampling based on meeting the studied measure (McMillan et al., 2010). According to Patten and Newhart (2018), “It is a standard or principle used to judge” (p. 129). This sampling approach provides a quality assurance standard to an information or monitoring system (McMillan et al., 2010). Criterion sampling provides predetermined criterion attributes identified for qualitative assessment (McMillan et al., 2010). The criteria used for this study included eight exemplary community college CHROs who demonstrated at least four of the following criteria; the first three were required:

1. Evidence of caring for people in the organization
2. A minimum of 3 years’ experience as a community college CHRO
3. Evidence of extraordinary results
4. Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences of association meetings
5. Recognition by peers
6. Membership in professional association in their field

Qualitative analyses require a smaller sample size than quantitative analyses. Obtaining most or all the perceptions of the population leads to the attainment of saturation. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommended the concept of saturation for achieving an appropriate sample size in qualitative studies. For phenomenological studies, the number of recommended participants varies. Creswell (1998) recommended five to 25 participants, and Morse (1994) suggested at least six. There are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research (Patton, 2002). Based on the collaborative work of the thematic group, sample size for this study was eight CHROs working in one of the 37 community colleges within the target population who met the criteria for selection. This phenomenological study required a minimum of eight individuals selected from the target population of 37 colleges. In addition, part of the selection process was to identify the title and location of each individual responsible for human resources. The eight community college CHROs working in Northern California selected for participation had to meet at least four of the six criteria to participate in the study. These eight were determined to be representative of the target population supporting generalization of the findings. Figure 5 illustrates the population, sampling frame, and the sample population for this qualitative phenomenological study.

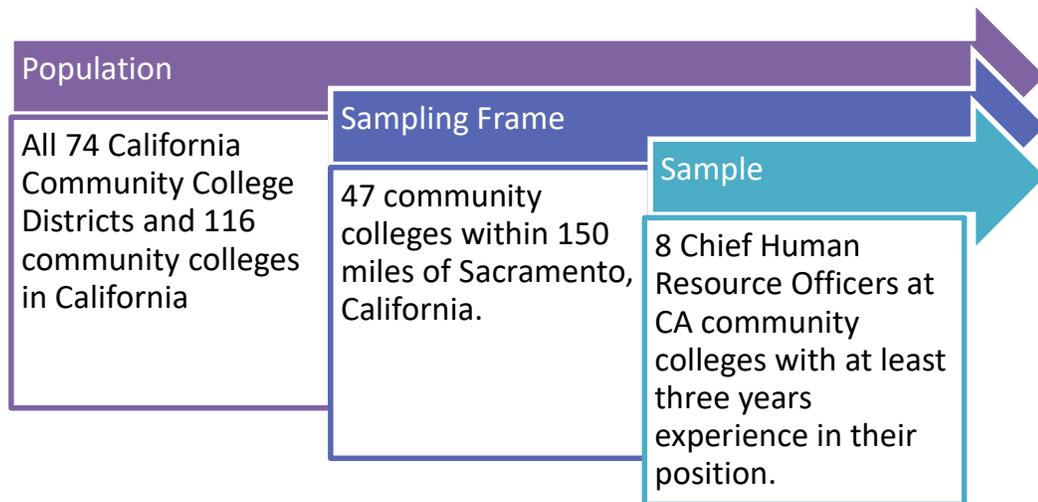


Figure 5. Population, sample frame, and sample.

Sample Selection Process

The researcher enlisted the help of an expert panel of advisors to assist with the sample selection of participants. The members of the expert panel worked closely with the population group as members and advisors within the Association of Chief Human Resource Officers (ACHRO), a nonprofit organization that serves CHROs in the California Community College System. The panel included the following individuals: Laura Benson, consultant-education support services group, and Juliana Mosier, ACHRO president 2020–2022. Both individuals have developed, managed, and strategically planned the structure of their charter organizations and networked with various community college CHROs. Both individuals have served at least one term as president of ACHRO. At the time of this study, Benson had over 17 years of experience as a community college CHRO, served as a consultant, and was involved with various human resource organizations. Mosier had over 14 years of experience in community college human resource roles and was serving as president of ACHRO.

The panel members were provided with the list of participant criteria and asked to nominate CHROs whom they knew or reasonably assumed met the following criteria:

1. Evidence of caring for people in the organization
2. A minimum of 3 years' experience as a community college CHRO
3. Evidence of extraordinary results
4. Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences of association meetings
5. Recognition by peers
6. Membership in professional association in their field

The following steps were followed to select participants for the study:

1. The expert panel collectively provided a list of potential study participants.
2. The researcher checked professional sources, social media sites, and various other websites to determine and verify that the participants met the study criteria.
3. The researcher presented the faculty team with a list of potential participants to confirm the validity of the list.
4. An email was sent to qualified participants inviting them to participate in the study.
5. In addition to the email, each participant was contacted via phone requesting involvement in the research study.
6. The researcher provided disclosure information during the telephone conversation, including privacy and risk information. The researcher provided clarification and answered questions during the telephone conversations.
7. The first eight participants who volunteered and met the qualifications of the study were selected.

8. Each participant who agreed to take part in the research study was provided with the informed consent form (Appendix B).
9. Interviews were scheduled via Zoom based on the participant's availability. Each interview was allotted for 45–60 min.
10. Upon scheduling, the participant was then provided with the following: informed consent form (Appendix B), invitation letter (Appendix C), research Participants Bill of Rights (Appendix D), and an advance copy of the interview questions for review and preparation (Appendix E).
11. Interviews were recorded on Zoom and later transcribed. The participant was asked to provide verbal consent, which was included in the Zoom recording and transcription.

Instrumentation

The researcher was used as a primary instrument for this study. The researcher collected various types of data to determine the lived experiences of participants by conducting interviews, observations, and artifact review (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Interviews are a common methodology used for providing relevant information about people's experiences and perceptions in qualitative research studies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Semistructured open-ended interview questions allowed the researcher to use additional probe questions depending upon each participant's initial response to the interview questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Researchers are advised to be highly aware of personal biases that could influence outcomes such as past personal and professional experiences, relationships, perspectives, age, gender, position, and more. To reduce the bias present in this study, the thematic

team members collectively developed the semistructured open-ended questions used for the study (Appendix E). The thematic team created an alignment table (Appendix G) to ensure that each interview question was directly aligned to the research questions and purpose of the study.

The researcher conducted a qualitative, semistructured open-ended interview with the research participants. The interview questions and responses were conducted either face-to-face or video conferencing and recorded digitally using a handheld device. The peer researchers in the thematic collaborated with faculty members and developed interview questions for the study using the following steps:

1. Crowley's (2011) four principles were identified.
2. The four principles were divided among four research teams, each with three to four team members.
3. Each research team member defined the principle using research from seminal authors. The team met numerous times until there was agreement on the definitions.
4. The next step was for each research team member to identify the subvariables within each definition using research from seminal authors.
5. Research team members convened, reviewed, revised, and finally agreed upon final subvariables within the definitions.
6. Team members then used the concept papers to produce an operational definition for each term or phrase discussed in the theoretical definition.
7. Each team member wrote a concept paper for each subdefinition and produced three questions and a probe to each question based on these definitions in the concept papers.

8. Each research team member then drafted interview questions from each definition of principles using the subvariables as a content guide.
9. The team convened, reviewed, revised, and agreed upon final interview questions and probes aligned with research questions and definitions.
10. Following review by the faculty chairs, team members drafted a script for the interview process.

The team finalized 12 open-ended questions with three questions for each of Crowley's (2011) four principles (building an engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements). The questions were based on the review of the literature and Crowley's four heart-led principles. The thematic research team met to do a final review and reached agreement on the final version of the interview instrument and script. When the thematic team completed the development of the interview protocol, each member of the thematic team completed a field test of the instrument. The purpose of the field test was to evaluate the effectiveness of the instrument. Following the field test, the researcher completed an evaluation of the interview questions. An observer, assigned to oversee the field test, also completed an evaluation form. The field-test participant, an individual who met the criteria to participate in the study, also submitted feedback following the field test.

Researcher as Instrument

According to McMillian and Schumacher (2010), in a phenomenological study, the researcher becomes the primary instrument. The researcher's background, experience, skills, training, interpersonal confidence, and engagement in the fieldwork and analysis undergird the credibility of the findings (Patton, 2015). During this study,

the researcher was employed as the executive director of a nonprofit organization. In this role, the researcher performed all the executive-level functions for the organization, including human resources. The researcher has a master's degree in Human Resource Management and previously worked in the human resource department at a Northern California community college district. The researcher led each of the participant interviews. Based on the previous and existing professional roles, the researcher was confident in leading the participant interviews and interpreting the lived experiences of the participants based on the interview responses.

Field Testing

An interview pilot test, or field test, is an essential step in preparing for research because it provides the researcher with feedback and checks for bias in the questions, interviewer, and procedures (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The researcher conducted a field test prior to the start of the research interviews. The researcher and each member of the thematic team conducted at least one field test of the interview questions and the associated script that was drafted by members of the thematic team. The researcher conducted a sample interview with an educational leader to gain feedback from an experienced interviewer. An experienced interviewer was invited to observe the pilot test. Feedback regarding body language, tone, and overall interview style was provided for the purpose of refining the researcher's interview style and limiting potential researcher bias. Adjustments were made to the interview process based on the feedback from the pilot test participants and observer. The researcher used the feedback to guide future interview practices and procedures during data collection. The field-test feedback related to the interview questions and the interview process can be found in Appendix E.

Validity

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), in qualitative research, validity refers to the degree of congruence between the explanation of the phenomenon and the realities of the world. Validity can further be described as the degree to which interpretations have mutual meanings between the participants and the researcher. There are various methods qualitative researchers can use to establish validity of a study, such as member checking, triangulation, participant review, peer debriefing, and mechanically recording data (Creswell, 2008; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). In this study, the researcher used multiple researchers, participant review, and multimethod strategies to increase the validity of the qualitative study.

Multiple Researchers

One strategy for using multiple researchers is an arrangement in which each researcher is independently responsible for a research site, or population, and regularly meets with the team to share emerging strategies and ideas (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The thematic team of researchers worked collectively to develop, test, revise, and implement the interview protocol. This occurred after each member of the thematic team did a thorough, individual review of the literature related to the study. In addition to the interview protocol, this strategy allowed the 14 members of the thematic team to work collectively to define other aspects of the study such as definitions, delimitations, and survey population.

Participant Review

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), participant review provides the interviewee with an opportunity to review the interview transcript and to modify any

information from the interview data for accuracy. For this study, after each interview, the researcher sent each participant an electronic copy of the respective transcript to review for accuracy. The participants were asked to review the transcript and provide applicable corrections within 1 week. Once this process was completed, the transcripts were analyzed and coded for themes.

Multimethod Strategies

Although a study typically includes one central data collection, it is common for qualitative researchers to use several data collection procedures within a study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The primary data collection method in this study was semistructured open-ended interviews. The researcher also collected artifacts to support participants' experiences. The use of these multiple methods allowed for triangulation of data across various investigation techniques. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple data sources to corroborate data to broaden one's understanding of the phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Reliability

As stated by Roberts and Hyatt (2018), reliability refers to the degree to which the data collection instruments for the study are consistent or will produce similar results even when different researchers use the instrument. The researcher conducted a field test of the interview instrument to identify any deficiencies and to strengthen the data collection instrument.

Internal Reliability

An instrument is considered reliable if it provides consistent results according to Patten and Newhart (2018). The researcher was the main instrument for data collection

in this qualitative study. To increase reliability, the secondary instrument—the interview—was developed collaboratively among the thematic team and approved by assigned faculty members. Further, each member of the thematic team conducted a field test to establish and strengthen reliability of the data collection instrument. The field test allowed the peer researchers to check for bias and to assess the length of the interview process. Equally important, the field test allowed the peer researchers to determine whether sufficient and relevant data could be collected and analyzed using the instrument. At the conclusion of the field tests, the peer researchers made the appropriate adjustments to the instrument, which was ultimately approved by assigned expert qualitative researchers. It was agreed that the interview instrument would be implemented similarly across the thematic group.

Throughout the study, each interview was conducted the same as each participant was allotted the same amount of time, and questions were asked in a similar manner with probing allowed. As stated by Patten and Newhart (2018), the reliability of a study can be increased by completing the following steps:

1. Data collection
2. Transcription of the data
3. Participant review for accuracy of the transcription
4. Data synthesized for themes

External Reliability

The thematic group of peer researchers collectively created the interview instrument with the guidance of assigned expert qualitative researchers. Part of the development of the interview instrument included a field test conducted by each member

of the thematic team. The field test checked for bias, time allowances, and the ability to collect relevant data. This established internal reliability of the instrument and subsequently eliminated factors associated with external reliability.

Data Collection

According to Patten and Newhart (2018),

Qualitative data is collected in a number of ways: through interviews, observation, focus groups, or other modes of rich data collection in which the data from each subject is more extensive than quantitative data. Qualitative methods allow researchers to collect local knowledge and give voice to participants.

(p. 114)

The researcher conducted eight interviews virtually via Zoom. The interviews were conducted according to the protocols developed by the thematic team once the researcher obtained approval to move forward from the UMass Global University Institutional Review Board (UMIRB). In addition to the interviews, the researcher collected artifacts from each of the eight participants.

The researcher used the following steps for data collection:

1. The researcher worked with the thematic team to establish the interview protocols.
2. The researcher conducted a field test to check for bias, content validity, and reliability in the interview questions.
3. Following the field test, the researcher reviewed the feedback received and made appropriate revisions to the interview instrument.
4. Approval to conduct the virtual interviews was received from the UMIRB.

5. An email was sent to the ACHRO describing the study and outlining the required participant characteristics. The email requested the names of community college CHROs who met the study criteria and were within the target population of 46 community colleges within 150 miles of Sacramento, California.
6. Once the names of potential participants were received, an email was sent to each (Appendix G) outlining the study and the required characteristics. The potential participants were asked to self-select, confirming that they meet the requirements of exemplary leaders and at least four of the six criteria
7. Once an exemplary community college CHRO was selected and agreed to participate in the study, a 60-min interview session was scheduled via Zoom. An email was sent to the participants with four attachments: invitation to participate in the study (Appendix C), leading from the heart interview questions (Appendix E), informed consent form (Appendix B), and, Research Participant's Bill of Rights (Appendix D).
8. Interviews were conducted with each participant once participants confirmed receipt of the documents. The interview included a verbal confirmation of consent and was included in the Zoom recording and transcript for verification.
9. The interviews were recorded, and following each interview, the recording was transcribed using a third-party transcription service. Each participant was provided with a copy of the transcription to ensure accuracy.
10. Interview participants were asked to provide the researcher with artifacts that supported their leadership based on their interview responses.
11. At the conclusion of the interview process, the researcher coded the data using third-party software. The researcher then moved on to analyze the data.

Data Analysis

In qualitative studies, the goal of data analysis is to transform raw data into knowledge that will be of value (Patton, 2015). Roberts and Hyatt (2018) suggested that in qualitative studies, raw data should be coded and sorted into themes or categories for analysis. The data for this study were obtained from interview transcripts and artifacts received from eight exemplary community college CHROs. Following the interviews, each participant was provided with a copy of the transcript. This was done to ensure accuracy in the answers provided and to allow the participants to clarify any responses recorded, as appropriate.

The interviews and subsequent transcriptions resulted in a massive amount of data. To manage the data, the researcher followed a systematic process of sorting, coding, and analyzing the data. First, the researcher conducted a preliminary review of the transcripts to determine the themes, or codes, that appeared numerous times and throughout multiple transcripts. This preliminary sorting process allowed the researcher to determine the saturation point (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Next, the extensive coding process was completed using a coding software, NVivo. The software assists researchers in organizing and analyzing qualitative data. Using NVivo, the researcher was able to identify the common themes and patterns that existed throughout the group of participants based on their transcripts. The researcher categorized the data into themes then created frequency tables to track the codes and the frequency for each code. The tables also helped the researcher to show alignment between participants' responses and Crowley's (2011) four principles of leading from the heart. Upon completion of the coding process, the researcher was able to describe how exemplary community college

CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results for their organization. This was accomplished by triangulating and synthesizing coded data from NVivo, the frequency charts and data, and the artifacts collected from the participants. The artifacts allowed the researcher to further substantiate the analysis of the data. The narrative that emerged from the data analysis is further described in Chapter IV and Chapter V.

Limitations

Limitations are particular features of a study that the researcher knows may affect the results of the study or the ability to generalize the findings (Roberts & Hyatt, 2018). In this study, the sample size was limited to eight by the thematic group. There were 74 community college districts in California, so a sample size of eight was a limitation of the study.

Generally, qualitative research includes interviews, collection of artifacts, and observations. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher was not permitted to conduct observations of the participants. As a result, data analysis was limited to the synthesis of the interviews and artifacts.

Finally, the researcher as the primary instrument was a potential limitation. With a background in human resources and work history at a California community college, the researcher was mindful of potential bias. Safeguards were put in place to mitigate potential bias such as the interview field test as well as input and oversight from a faculty advisory.

Summary

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to study the lived experiences of exemplary community college CHROs. The chapter detailed the process by which the

study was conducted and confirmed alignment between the purpose of the study and the methodology used to complete the study, including the population, target population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis methods. The chapter concluded with the validity and reliability of the study. A detailed analysis of how exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principals is provided in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This qualitative phenomenological study describes the lived experiences of chief human resource officers (CHROs) at California community colleges who accomplished extraordinary results for their organizations using Crowley's (2011) four principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. A thematic team consisting of 14 peer researchers agreed that a qualitative phenomenological design method would be the most effective way to gather rich data related to the lived experiences of exemplary leaders. Collectively, the peer researchers created research-based definitions for each of the four principles, caring leadership, and extraordinary results. The thematic team also established the interview protocol, the criteria for qualified exemplary leaders, and the sample size.

This chapter begins with a review of the purpose statement and research questions. Next is a description of the research methodology, the procedures for data collection, and a description of the population and sample for the study. The chapter concludes with the presentation and analysis of the key findings from the study, leading into Chapter V, which presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee

potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions

1. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?
2. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?
3. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?
4. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

This qualitative study used a phenomenological method to describe how exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations. The phenomenological method of collecting data through observations, semistructured open-ended interviews, and review of written documentation allowed the researcher to capture a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of exemplary human resource leaders while also obtaining the leaders' associated perceptions of experiences, attitudes, and opinions of the environment.

The researcher conducted eight interviews virtually via Zoom. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. The data for this study were obtained from the interview

transcripts and artifacts received from the eight exemplary community college CHROs. Artifacts included departmental mission and vision statements, surveys, email communications, employee recognition announcements, and professional development program materials.

The interview transcriptions and artifacts resulted in a vast amount of data. To manage the data, the researcher followed a systematic process of sorting, coding, and analyzing the data. First, the researcher conducted a preliminary review of the transcripts to determine the themes that appeared numerous times and throughout multiple transcripts and artifacts. The coding process was completed using a coding software, NVivo. The software assists researchers in organizing and analyzing qualitative data. Using NVivo, the researcher was able to identify the common themes and patterns that existed among the group of participants based on the transcripts and artifacts. The researcher categorized the data into themes then created frequency tables to track the codes and the frequency for each code. The tables helped the researcher to show alignment between participants' responses and Crowley's (2011) four principles of leading from the heart. Upon completion of the coding process, the researcher was able to describe how exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results for their organization. This was accomplished by triangulating and synthesizing coded data from NVivo, the frequency charts, and the artifacts collected from the participants.

Population

The population in this phenomenological study was community college CHROs in California. Human resource administrators play a significant role in creating and

establishing the culture of the institution as strategic partners to college presidents, chancellors, deans, and executive staff. CHROs at community colleges create policies and procedures and make daily decisions that impact the culture of the institution, including the well-being of students, employees, and stakeholders. CHROs are responsible for establishing health care and retirement plans for the organization employees in addition to their responsibility for attracting and retaining highly skilled employees. These duties are all vital to the success of the institution.

According to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (n.d.), there are 74 California community college districts and 116 community colleges in California servicing 2.1 million students. The title of the individual in the role of CHRO varies across the 116 community colleges and includes CHRO, vice chancellor of human resources, director/CHRO, executive director of human resources, and vice president of human resources. It is assumed that each of the 116 community colleges has a CHRO although the specific title may vary.

Sample

A sample population is defined as the group of subjects or participants from whom the data are collected, representative of a larger population the researcher intends to generalize (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The purpose of this study was to understand how CHROs at community colleges lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results. CHROs at community colleges are responsible for a myriad of tasks, including hiring and evaluating staff, training and compensation, and labor relations. However, the sample for this study intentionally focused on those exemplary CHROs who have effectively and positively affected their staff as well as the culture of

the organizations in which they work. For this reason, purposeful sampling was used to identify eight individuals who possessed a specific set of characteristics. Criterion sampling was also used in conjunction with purposeful sampling to ensure participants met the criteria of exemplary community college CHRO. Criterion sampling is a form of purposeful sampling based on meeting the studied measure (McMillan et al., 2010). The criteria used for this study included eight exemplary community college CHROs who demonstrated at least four of the following criteria; the first three were required.

1. Evidence of caring for people in the organization
2. A minimum of 3 years' experience as a community college CHRO
3. Evidence of extraordinary results
4. Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences of association meetings
5. Recognition by peers
6. Membership in professional association in their field

For phenomenological studies, the number of recommended participants varies. Creswell (1998) recommended five to 25 participants, and Morse (1994) suggested at least six. There are no specific rules when determining an appropriate sample size in qualitative research (Patton, 2002). Based on the collaborative work of the thematic group, sample size for this study was eight CHROs working in one of the 37 community colleges within the target population who met the criteria for selection. The eight community college CHROs working in Northern California selected for participation had to meet at least four of the six criteria to participate in the study.

Demographic Data

Eight CHROs who worked at community colleges within 150 miles of Sacramento, California, were selected to participate in the study. Participants were assigned a letter so their identity was not disclosed. Table 1 represents the demographics of the human resource leaders who participated in the study. Criteria to participate in the study were established by the thematic team of researchers. Each participant met at least four of the six qualifying criteria. Table 2 shows the analysis for the study participant criteria.

As reflected in Table 1, the exact title of the leader responsible for the human resources department at community colleges varies. However, for this study, the position is referred to as chief human resource officer. The study participants consisted of six females and two males. At the time of this study, the participants had worked in the human resources field for an average of 15 years and in their current role as CHRO an average of 5.25 years.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Study Participants

Participant	Title	Gender	Years in human resources	Years in current position
A	Vice Chancellor	Female	25+	5
B	Associate Vice President	Female	10+	6
C	Vice President	Female	20+	5
D	Chief Human Resource Officer	Female	15+	10
E	Associate Vice Chancellor	Female	20+	11
F	Associate Vice Chancellor	Male	5+	3
G	Vice Chancellor	Male	15+	9
H	Vice Chancellor	Female	10+	3

Table 2 reflects the study participant criteria. The criteria used for this study included eight exemplary community college CHROs who demonstrated at least four of the six criteria listed in the table; the first three were required. As illustrated in Table 2, each of the participants met all the criteria apart from four participants who had not had articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences of association meetings.

Table 2

Study Participant Criteria

Criteria	Participant							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Evidence of caring for people in the organization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
A minimum of 3 years' experience as a community college CHRO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evidence of extraordinary results	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences of association meetings	✓	✓			✓		✓	
Recognition by peers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Membership in professional association in their field	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Qualitative research includes interviews, collection of artifacts, and observations. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher was not permitted to conduct observations of the participants. As a result, data analysis was limited to the synthesization of the interviews and artifacts. Eight semistructured open-ended interviews were conducted virtually using Zoom. The interviews were simultaneously

transcribed, resulting in a large amount of data. The researcher followed a systematic process of sorting, coding, and analyzing the data. The coding process was completed using a coding software, NVivo, allowing the researcher to identify the common themes and patterns that existed from the group of participants based on their transcripts. Upon completion of the coding process, the researcher was able to describe how exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results for their organization. The researcher accomplished this by triangulating and synthesizing coded data from NVivo, the resulting frequency charts, and the artifacts collected from the participants.

The coding process resulted in 21 themes and 571 frequencies. The themes and frequencies were distributed across Crowley's (2011) four principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. The frequency of themes reflected a high importance of connecting on a personal level. On the contrary, the data resulted in only four themes related to valuing and honoring achievements. There was an equal emergence of themes across the remaining two principles: building a highly engaged team and maximizing employee potential. Figure 6 reflects the distribution of themes among the four principles included in the study.

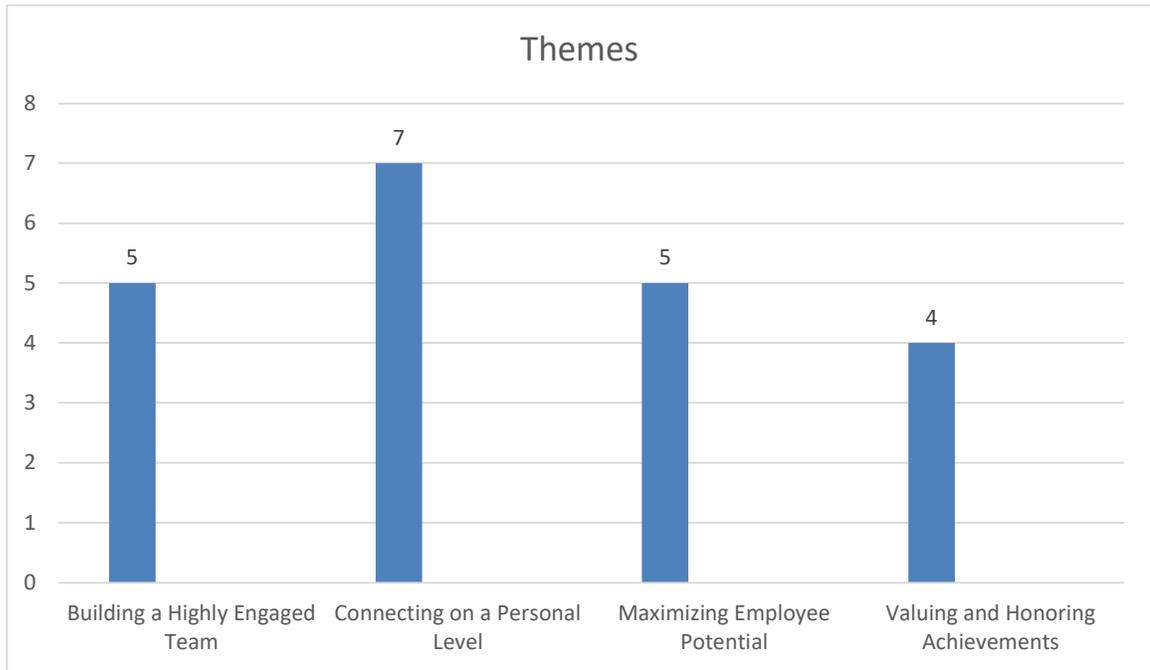


Figure 6. Number of themes in each of the four principles.

The eight interviews conducted for this study were an average of 55 min each, resulting in a large amount of dialogue and subsequent data from each of the participants. The data resulted in 21 themes overall, and 571 frequencies were coded. Of the 571 frequencies, 248 were coded to the theme connecting on a personal level, representing 43% of the data. Twenty-eight of the frequencies were coded to the theme maximizing employee potential, representing 22% of the total frequencies, followed by the theme building a highly engaged team with 102 frequencies coded, representing 18% of the total frequencies. Valuing and honoring achievements was the lowest frequency construct, representing 93 frequencies or 16% of the total frequencies.

The data relating to the theme connecting on a personal level were significant and support the literature, which reveals that connecting and building affective relationships is an important piece of the CHRO's role. Human resource leaders who spend time with

peers and stakeholders obtain a greater understanding of their individual needs, issues, and challenges as well as individual levels of commitment (Browne, 2017; P. M. Wright et al., 2011). Miller (2019) added that building relationships takes time, but once human resource leaders understand employees' skills and aspirations, they connect with them better and increase engagement. There were 248 references to the theme connecting on a personal level throughout the study, reinforcing the importance of CHROs building connections with employees to increase engagement and accomplish extraordinary results.

Figure 7 illustrates the percentage of frequency for each of the principles included in the study. Figure 8 illustrates the hierarchy of total frequencies in each of the four principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements.

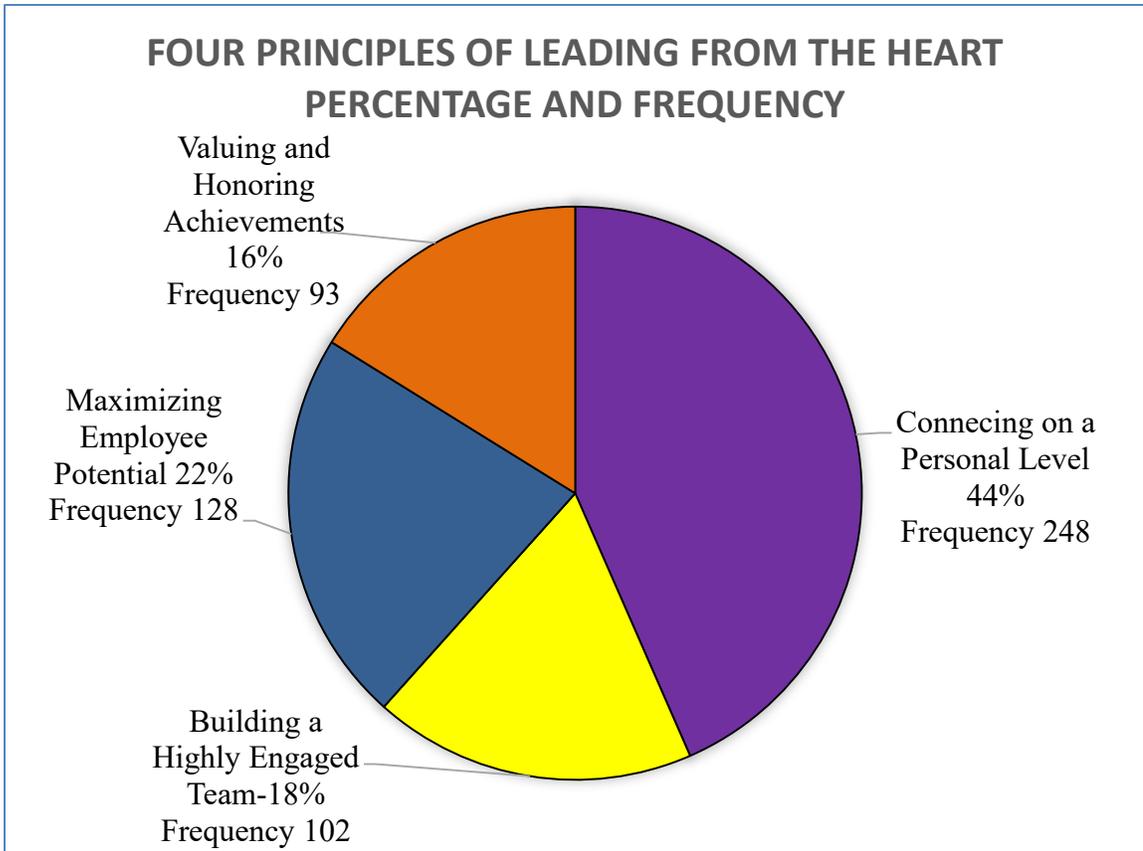


Figure 7. Four principles percentage and frequency.

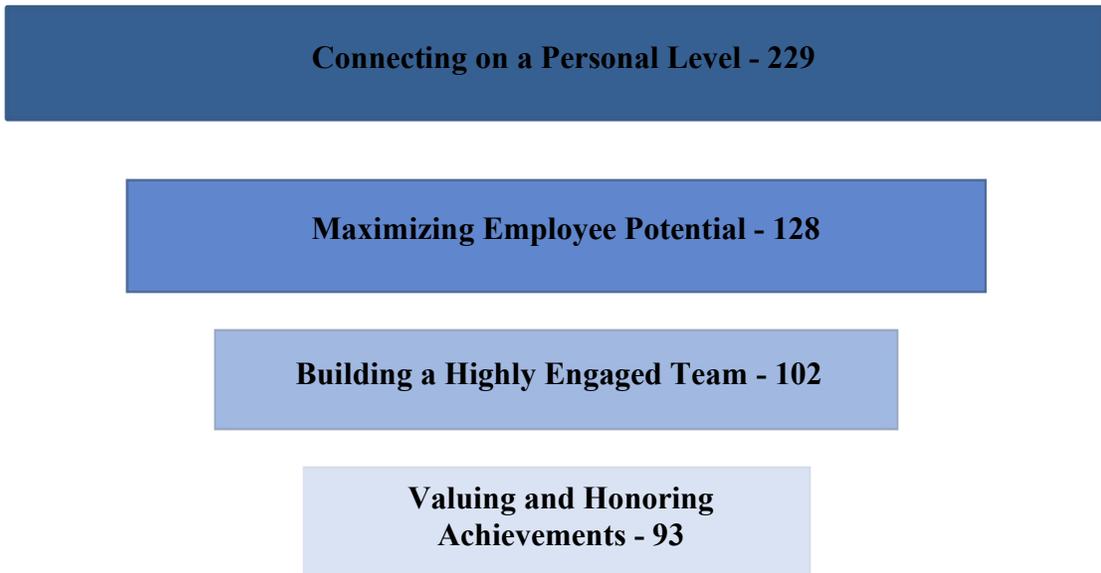


Figure 8. Hierarchy of themes identified for each of the four principles.

Research Question 1

How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

Building a highly engaged team uses strategies that help people become enthusiastically invested in and dedicated to work that they believe is significant, meaningful, and challenging; in which relationships are built on emotional connection and shared vision; and in which values and commitment are based on personal strengths and interests aligned with organizational goals (Crowley, 2011; George & Stevenson, 1988; Rees et al., 2013; Senge et al., 2007).

Based on the data from the interviews and artifacts, exemplary CHROs build highly engaged teams by establishing a focus on the organization's overall mission, building trust among their teams, remaining open to feedback, establishing clear expectations and strategies for success, and connecting with employees outside of the office. Table 3 outlines each of these themes with the number of participants who contributed to each theme, the number of artifacts, and the frequency count of responses for each theme.

Table 3

Themes for Building a Highly Engaged Team

Theme	Interview participants	Artifact sources	Total sources	Frequency	% Total frequency
Establish focus on organization's overall mission	8	3	11	35	34
Build trust among team	6	1	7	22	22
Remain receptive to feedback	4	2	6	17	17
Establish clear expectations and strategies for success	6	3	9	16	16
Connect with employees outside of the office	6	0	6	12	12

Note. Frequency total = 102.

Establish focus on the organization's overall mission. This theme was referenced by each of the eight study participants. In addition, three of the collected artifacts referenced this theme including mission and values statements for the human resources department and a newsletter from the human resources department. In total, this theme had a frequency of 35, representing 34% of the total references for building a highly engaged team. During the interviews, each of the participants expressed the importance of expressing how the work of the human resources department directly supports the organization's overall mission. Further, the participants explained that this was an important and ongoing conversation because the human resources department does not directly touch students. In community colleges, it is important to clearly identify how the human resources department helps to achieve student outcomes indirectly. Participant D described the work of human resources as an important piece of the puzzle. Participant G expressed the importance of communicating the impact that the human resources department has on the mission. Participant G explained how he accomplishes this with his staff:

One thing I do is to have them customize, to some degree, their work duties to the mission. The other thing is really understanding the impact of what they do to the bigger picture. For us, even though we're so far removed from the classroom and the students, you know I remind our folks that all of us have an impact on people's lives. So, for us, if we do HR right and we provide the level support to our faculty, staff, and administrators, that then frees up their time to help students. I really passionately believe that the people in my department right now understand the nexus to their work and how they actually impact, and effect student lives by making the lives of others simpler, I guess.

Similarly, Participant A described the importance of connecting the human resource department's mission to the overall organization's mission to build a highly engaged team:

And so, you have to look at your human resources mission, vision, and values. The organizations have them, but you have to look at your own human resources function, and ask how does that function, support the organization's strategic goals and planning? And in that support, you develop your [human resources] mission, your vision, and your values. That was one of the first things we did when I got the district, and that has done collectively.

This work of creating a mission and vision for the human resources department that supports the organization's mission and vision was evidenced by an artifact submitted by Participant A. The department's mission states in part that the "District's human resources department is committed to supporting the strategic goals of the district."

Build trust among team. This theme was referenced 22 times among seven participants, representing 22% of the total references for building a highly engaged team. As referenced in Chapter II, when a leader establishes trust, followers connect with the vision and with the organization's goals (Macey & Schneider, 2008). In agreement, Participant B stated, "Trust is the number one way to build a highly engaged team." Many of the participants agreed that trust was a common thread among leadership and a highly engaged team. In describing trust, Participant H stated,

I'm a real honest person or at least I try to be. I try to be really transparent—I don't like to hide things. I really do try to just be transparent and to not sugarcoat. Sugarcoating to me can sometimes make things worse because when people do find out the truth, it can be a little bit more damaging than it is when you are just honest and up-front from the get-go.

Trust is not always automatically present within a team, or between a team and the leader. As Participant E maintained, employees do not automatically feel safe, and it is the leader's job to create safety by building trust. During the interview, Participant E stated,

So, you keep saying to your staff at every meeting, "Hey, this is a safe place let's talk." And they don't feel safe, they haven't bought into it, yet, so there needs to be this bridge building that takes place. A layering of foundation and cultivation, that has to happen first and that starts at the individual level. I know many leaders say hey, this is a safe space, but they haven't built the infrastructure for it to be safe, yet.

Throughout the interviews, it was apparent that building highly engaged teams requires leaders to establish trust, which results in a safe environment. Participant E added,

Building trust at the same time, I think it can be learned; I think, I think you can actually learn a strategy, even if it's not your personality, to gain not only leverage, but to build trust with your team. Something that I do regularly is, and this is very uncomfortable for me, I have to share something about my own emotion. I think there's something about a leader that asks for you to share your emotion but then when it comes reciprocating that same level of sharing or disclosure or vulnerability that, then you don't do it, you need to, you need to walk the walk.

One artifact was submitted for this theme, a copy of the human resource mission and value statements, which included statements related to honesty and respect.

Remain receptive to feedback. This theme was referenced by four of the eight participants and referenced in two separate artifacts with 17 frequencies, representing 17% of the total references for building a highly engaged team. This theme demonstrated how important two-way communication is among a team, with leaders being open to the thoughts and ideas of their employees as opposed to communication flowing top-down only. The four participants who spoke to the importance of receiving feedback also shared artifacts. Based on the artifacts received, such as surveys, it was apparent that the participants solicited feedback from their teams as well as external partners. While sharing lived experiences from several years in human resources, Participant F communicated the importance of allowing the team to provide input, referring to the team as thought-partners.

It is important to keep the team informed of all our initiatives and the work that's been done. So, the key is communication and then also being open to their feedback. I give them opportunities to provide input related to what will work or not work, and I allow them to have a voice on the bigger picture.

The participants agreed that openness to feedback is expressed by what is done with the feedback. Participant E and Participant H described lived experiences, recalling that while they were allowed to provide feedback, there was no action taken. Both participants now make it a priority to implement feedback as often as possible and appropriate. Participant H stated,

It's important that when we say we want your feedback that we really do want it and that we will use the feedback. That we're not just collecting it and tossing it to the side. They should understand that from the feedback we're creating programs to help us improve and to help you improve.

The total of 17 references demonstrated the participants' emphasis on the openness to feedback. As referenced in Chapter II, when openness to feedback exists, employees are more likely to find their work meaningful and in turn are more engaged, as described by Macey and Schneider (2008).

Artifacts for this theme included a human resources program review document and a human resources department service survey.

Establish clear expectations and strategies for success. This theme was referenced by six of the eight participants and was found in three artifacts including human resources mission and vision statements and materials detailing the objective of a leadership development program. With a frequency of 16, the theme represented 16% of

the total references for building a highly engaged team. During the interviews, participants commented on the importance of setting clear expectations for their employees as well as outlining strategies for successfully meeting the expectations.

Participant E emphasized,

First, you have to make sure that your expectation is clear; I think that making sure that your expectations, regardless of what that is, how specific, or how general, they have to be clear. And, and when I say clear—a strategy or practice around that. Putting it in writing and presenting it to the team or presenting it to a small group of people is important.

Similarly, Participant A stated,

I set very high expectations for myself and my staff and like I said before, you do that by setting high standards. Now you have to then give them the tools to get there right, because if you are going to expect somebody to perform at a certain level, you need to make sure that they're able and trained to perform at that level.

Participant F also expressed the importance of establishing clear expectations: “When you clearly express your expectations, you reduce unnecessary stress within the department.” The participants explained during the interviews that clear strategies for achieving expectations are as important as establishing (and communicating) clear expectations. This was supported by the artifacts collected for the study related to this theme. Artifacts such as departmental mission and vision statements reflected clear expectations and to achieve those expectations, such as teamwork, collaboration, respect, and training.

Connect with employees outside of the office. This theme was referenced by six participants with a frequency of 12, representing 12% of the total references for building a highly engaged team. During the interviews, all the participants expressed the importance of connecting with their employees and establishing a familial environment. However, six participants specifically described the importance of connecting with employees outside of the office in a more neutral environment. Participant B explained that she has done this since joining the team, immediately scheduling an off-site retreat to build connections with the team. This is an ongoing practice for Participant B, regularly hosting off-site meetings or one-on-one lunches with employees outside of the office. Participant D described a similar practice, noting the importance of meeting with employees outside of the office to check in, specifically avoiding work-related matters and focusing on the employee.

Throughout the study, many of the participants acknowledged COVID-19, and the effects the global pandemic had on their work environment. When it came to connecting with employees outside of the office, each of the six participants spoke on the inability to connect with their teams. However, Participant H shared creative solutions to this challenge, such as virtual happy hour, and Participant A arranged virtual fitness classes and competitions to stay connected with employees. Overwhelmingly, the participants described the importance of connecting outside of the office to show care for their employees. The participants agreed that there were more opportunities to open up and to check in with employees without the pressure or interruption of the office environment and associated workload. Participant E expressed the need to be intentional in this area.

Research Question 2

How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

Connecting on a personal level is seeing and acting on behalf of others and authentically communicating with the intention of adding value driven by humility, concern, and love (Brown, 2012; Crowley, 2011; Hayward, 2015; Maxwell, 2010).

Based on the data from the interviews and artifacts, exemplary CHROs connected on a personal level by giving attention and care to employees, creating and cultivating a safe environment, communicating authentically, exercising humility and vulnerability, investing time in people, and leading by example. Table 4 outlines each of these themes with the number of participants who contributed to each theme, the number of artifacts, and the frequency count of responses for each theme.

Table 4

Themes for Connecting on a Personal Level

Theme	Interview participants	Artifact sources	Total sources	Frequency	% Total frequency
Give attention and care to employees	8	1	9	62	25
Create and cultivate a safe environment	7	2	9	46	19
Communicate authentically	8	3	11	33	13
Exercise humility and vulnerability	8	0	8	32	13
Invest time in people	7	1	8	29	12
Be flexible	8	0	8	27	11
Lead by example/create desired culture	8	3	11	27	11

Note. Frequency total = 248.

Give attention and care to employees. This theme was the most frequently referenced as it related to connecting on a personal level with a frequency of 62, representing 25% of the 248 frequencies. All eight of the participants referenced the importance of intentionally giving their employees full attention, thus demonstrating care. One artifact was submitted, a flyer communicating the importance of being a caring campus.

Each of the participants agreed that connection is built only when employees can see that the leader cares and is invested in them as people, not solely employees. Participant F described showing care as knowing employees beyond what they do or their assigned tasks and further explained that giving attention requires actively listening to employees. Participant F recalled listening to an employee describing her workload at home. More than allowing the employee to vent, Participant F was determined to show care and concern for the employee, later developing a work-life policy to ensure employees left work on a timely basis. Participant G also described a similar policy; however, while speaking with employees, he learned that they often responded to emails even while tending to family matters at home. As a result, he resolved to not send emails to employees after 6:00 p.m. to further alleviate the mental load they described.

Participant B was passionate about giving her employees care and attention:

It's picking up the phone if you know someone just had a grandbaby to say congratulations and asking them, tell me about your experience, tell me about what's going on, do you need anything, can I help you, did you get enough time off? Remembering birthdays is always nice, but paying attention on a daily basis is important.

This sentiment was echoed by Participant E who felt that caring for employees or people in general must be a core belief and not something done simply hoping to receive something in return. Participant E shared,

If you help your employees, your employees will help you, right? You know, if you take care of your employees, your employees will take you, take care of you. It's that law of reciprocity, right? You put in enough care and attention to all the individuals and as a team. And whether or not they do the same for you, it really doesn't matter like it, you know, you did what you needed to do, and you held true to your principles.

Participant E expressed the need to not expect anything in return when caring for employees but stated, as reflected in the quote, it is likely that when leaders care for employees, the employees will care for the leader. Participant D described checking in with employees often and helping them to resolve personal and professional issues. In turn, when Participant D had personal issues arise, employees acted in a similar caring and hopeful manner. Each of these participants, including Participant A, agreed that leaders cannot express this level of care without giving their employees attention.

Participant A explained, "Not everything employees go through is verbally expressed, and sometimes you miss it if you're not paying attention." Finally, Participant H had this to say about giving care and attention to employees:

I understand. I mean home life is happening while we're working, and so it really is trying to get people to pause and to know that if you step away, your work will still be there. We're doing the best that we can. I just really try to, you know, reassure people that we'll get through, whatever it is that we're going through

right now, which is actually a lot. Like I said, just check in with yourself and check in with one another. It's about the people, not the work.

Create and cultivate a safe environment. This theme was referenced by seven of the eight participants with a frequency of 46 and included in two artifacts. This theme represented 19% of the total frequencies for the second principle, connecting on a personal level. As articulated by the participants, work is required to create a safe environment and to cultivate or maintain such an environment. Participant E stated,

I know many leaders try to talk to everyone and say hey, this is a safe space, but they haven't built the infrastructure for it to be safe, yet. And that's the key. So, finding out what are the reasons why a particular individual feels unsafe or insecure at their job. Maybe they were burned by a previous manager, maybe they're currently in conflict with a certain team member that they don't trust, or maybe because you're new to the organization, maybe they don't trust you, yet. Creating a safe environment, I think it can happen; it can happen organically, and simultaneously, but I would say, though, you have to take the time and energy to do that.

Participant E described the work and awareness that need to take place to create and cultivate a safe environment. Participant E gave further examples of reasons employees may feel unsafe, such as leaders who verbally tell employees that they have an open-door policy, yet their door is always physically closed. Although well intentioned, the door may signify the leader is unavailable and in turn unsafe. Participant D shared a similar story but added another example of safety related to employee mistakes and shared the importance of employees understanding that perfection was not expected and

allowing space for mistakes. Several of the participants explained that they want employees to not be afraid to make mistakes, and they create this culture by being open enough to share their own mistakes. Participant H stated, “It adds value—people seeing that you’re okay with making mistakes and owning up to those mistakes.” Participant G added,

That are if there are issues, whether personal or professional there’s a safe space for them to be a part, right? So I think it’s just kind of leading from that effort of being accessible, creating a space that people feel comfortable in. Building relationship also means that people feel comfortable to say what they want to say, or to be able to make mistakes. You know, I tell my folks all the time that we’re all human. We make mistakes, right? And so my issue is not really about pointing fingers or correcting someone but letting people learn and own up to their own errors, fix them, and move on. They appreciate that because, number one, we all are human and make mistakes. The point is to establish relationships, where it’s okay to make mistakes and to not know everything.

Participant G submitted an artifact related to a training and development program that specifically included language regarding “a safe place to develop and grow.” A program review document that referenced the safe culture of the department was also submitted.

Artifacts for this theme included materials related to a leadership development program and a caring campus flyer.

Communicate authentically. This theme was referenced by all eight participants with 33 frequencies and represented 13% of the total frequencies for connecting on a

personal level. There were three artifacts submitted for this theme, including departmental mission and vision statements and program review documents that referenced authentic communication and dialogue within the human resource department. Each of the participants shared the importance of communication with their team, expressing how authentic communication is a valuable tool to connecting with employees. As referenced in the literature review in Chapter II, a culture of open, authentic communication produces highly engaged employees and drives organizational goals forward (Kouzes & Posner, 2003, 2012). Overwhelmingly, the participants explained that authentic communication includes being oneself. The participants shared they like to tell jokes, may quote music lines, or may be loud or soft spoken. Participant F explained, “It is important to stay true to yourself, but others need to know that whatever is coming out of your mouth is authentic.” According to this participant, authentic communication includes honesty, transparency, acknowledgement of mistakes, and even apologies. Participant A described authentic communication as opening up before asking others to do so. Participant A stated,

People think that you are just up in your ivory tower doing your work, separate from everybody else, but when you can communicate on a personal level what you are going through, some of the strengths of some of the challenges that everybody else has, I think that people can connect with you better.

When describing authentic communication, Participant A added, “I communicate like this because I wanted people to know that I understand that if I’m facing this, you’re probably facing this too.”

In multiple ways, the participants shared that they cannot connect with their teams without authentic communication because it builds trust and promotes two-way communication. Participant C said this when describing this theme:

I just put myself out there; I am very direct in telling people that I'm a human being, and I just say I just want to have a real conversation, I just want to be real with you. I try to be real, and I try to be authentic in terms of how I communicate, how I acknowledge others, and how I share about myself.

Exercise humility and vulnerability. This theme was referenced by all eight of the participants with 32 frequencies and represented 13% of the total frequencies for this theme. As referenced in the Chapter II literature review, people can identify with leaders who are authentic and vulnerable (Maxwell, 2010). Additionally, Brown (2012) described vulnerability as the core of all emotions and feelings and found that the result of vulnerability is trust, connection, and engagement. Both points were supported by the responses received from the eight participants related to how humility and vulnerability helped them to connect on a personal level. Participant F shared, "I've learned a lot by being humble, because when you're humble, you're also actively listening." Participant B explained, "Connecting means you're taking the time to get to know them and see them. Then you're humbling yourself, where they can see you." Participant E said this about vulnerability among the team:

I am very much a private person. I'm an introvert—my family is so sacred to me that nobody is breaking through that shell. So, it took a lot of practice, but I learned from many exemplary leaders that you don't have to go in and divulge

everything that you find sacred. Just be vulnerable enough to choose something that can connect; with that intention in mind, how can I connect with my team?

During the interviews, the participants described the need to be humble and vulnerable in a variety of ways, for a variety of reasons. Participant A explained that being humble enough to admit to shortcomings can open communication and build connections with employees. Participant A explained,

Not only am I not perfect, but I make mistakes, and I own up to them. I tell people, hey I made a mistake, for two reasons. One, people need to know I'm going to approach everything with that level of integrity—I made a mistake but I'm going to own up to it. But the other reason is, I want all of my staff to know that they can come to me at any time and share that they made a mistake. I don't, I don't want them to feel like they have to hide something. I think that when you are open like that and honest and transparent, and I guess that's a little of the humility—being able to share that you are not perfect, that you make mistakes. I think it opens it up for others to be feel comfortable to be the same.

For Participant G, humility is ensuring that the title does not define the person.

Participant G recalled a display of humility while working through COVID-19 protocols:

My typical line is you know you are never too big to do anything too small, and you are never too small to do anything too big. It doesn't matter if you are the least paid person or the highest paid person like me, we're all sitting here stuffing envelopes together. Again, reinforcing the fact that we're team, and none of us are too small or too big.

Invest time in people. This theme was referenced by seven of the eight participants with 29 frequencies, representing 12% of the total frequencies related to connecting on a personal level. An artifact related to this theme was a document detailing components of a leadership development program. These frequencies were separated from the theme giving attention and care to employees because this theme specifically captured how participants described the importance of investing time in their people. Participant B stated, “You just have to invest time in the people you are working with, period.” Participant B later added,

If you don’t make that investment, if you don’t take time to really see the people you’re going to be working with and establish that trust, it’s going to be hard as heck to try to build the trust later on.

Similarly, Participant D expressed the importance of intentionally investing time in employees:

I think it’s just making time for conversations with them, the one-on-one conversations with them as well as the group: how are you, how is your family, how are you doing? I try to meet with them every few months and say like, what are your goals, where do you want to go, what do you want to do, are you happy with where you are, do you want to promote, are you looking for something else?

Sometimes, we are busy, but I make time for them and for these conversations.

Artifacts submitted by Participant D included descriptions of mentorship and leadership programs and work and time that was invested in addition to the participant’s required job functions.

Participant H spoke about investing in employees in the same manner that employees invest their time for the organization, and Participant C spoke about giving time, attention, wisdom, finances, and training to employees. Participant G added,

You know people talk to me; they're honest with me about their issues. I have people that have health conditions, financial conditions, they aspire to possibly do more or they have challenges with what they're doing now. And I think it's just spending that time listening to my folks and just really trying to figure out how to support them.

Participant G submitted an artifact related to a mentor development program that was created as an important and affective way to invest in employees throughout the organization.

Be flexible. All eight participants referenced this theme with a frequency of 27, representing 11% of the total frequencies for this theme. The participants expressed ways they are flexible with their employees and how flexibility leads to connection with employees and deeper levels of engagement. According to Participant F,

You show concern and love by being flexible; that is something we are able to do. I'm not going to micromanage you because I don't believe it helps. I have confidence in your ability to do the work. But I'm also going to be flexible in helping you have work-life balance and flexible in how I can support you in your workflow.

Participant F also explained that a schedule that fits family needs or accommodates a second job is an additional way to express flexibility and show concern and love for

employees. As referenced in Chapter II, these examples of workplace flexibility options demonstrate the leader's and the organization's core values (P.M. Wright et al., 2011).

Participant D and Participant E both recalled giving an employee an unplanned day off when they sensed the employee was overwhelmed. Participant B shared a similar example of flexibility stating, "I say, 'Tomorrow, I'm directing you to take time off.' They laugh, but I say, 'No I'm serious, you're not coming in; tomorrow I need you to take care of yourself.'" Participant G emphatically felt that flexibility is a way to show care and relatability with employees:

I think that we all have things that kind of intersect with our work-life, things that happen, personally, and you know I'm not a black-and-white person, you know. I'm flexible, to the extent that I can be. And I think it's very important to let people know that not everything is black and white that you'll be flexible, to the extent that you can be, to help people out. And I can say I've done that for everybody in this department, in some fashion.

Lead by example to create desired culture. This is the final theme identified related to connecting on a personal level. All eight participants referenced this theme with 27 frequencies, representing 11% of the total frequencies. Three artifacts were collected related to this theme, including human resources department goals, mission, and values statements and a human resources newsletter. Throughout the interviews, the participants shared that they are the ones responsible for establishing the culture for their departments, and to do so, they must lead by example and model desired behaviors. Participant E shared, "Yes, like roll up your sleeves and do the work. If you do that, maybe some people will follow, maybe some people won't." Participant E expressed the

importance of leading by example not only in how the workload is managed but also in communicating and expressing care and stated, “As a chief HR officer, [it] is incumbent on us to show the love, just basically leading the practice and then encouraging others to do the same.” Participant E and other participants submitted artifacts, such as newsletters and other publications, demonstrating positive leadership principles and work ethic to support an affirmative work environment.

The participants shared examples of leading and creating culture by checking in with employees, being flexible, and facilitating dialogue. Participant A explained, “Openness, honesty, and transparency are expected, because that is what I am.” Acknowledging that everyone has bad days, Participant G explained, “I tell my staff all the time, you know when I’m in a bad zone, you know I’ll be locked in my office, because I don’t want to carry that over to other people.” Participant G explained that by doing this, negativity and frustration will not infiltrate the department. Participant C, Participant F, and Participant H expressed the importance of “practicing what you preach” referring again to the theme of leading by example. Throughout the interviews, it was apparent that each of the participants not only verbalized expectations regarding culture, engagement, and connections with employees, but they also demonstrated these behaviors with internal and external stakeholders. Participant D added that modeling behaviors not only has set the example for employees but also has set the tone for negotiations and interactions with peers outside of the human resources department. Participant A described the culture of the human resources department as “a unique culture in our department where everybody not only genuinely likes each other, but they enjoy spending time with each other.”

Research Question 3

How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?

Maximizing employee potential is igniting emotional drivers by promoting human well-being while proactively strengthening, teaching, and building up people toward high achievement (Burnett & Lisk, 2019; Crowley, 2011).

Based on the data from the interviews and artifacts, exemplary CHROs maximize employee potential by supporting employees' goals, offering training and conference opportunities, establishing wellness programs that focus on the whole person, pushing and stretching employees beyond their comfort zone, and having fun while promoting team interaction. Table 5 outlines each of these themes, the number of participants who contributed to each theme, the number of artifacts, and the frequency count of responses for each theme.

Table 5

Themes for Maximizing Employee Potential

Theme	Interview participants	Artifact sources	Total sources	Frequency	% Total frequency
Support employees' goals/back up employees	8	3	11	36	28
Offer training and conference opportunities	7	3	10	32	25
Establish wellness programs/focus on whole person	6	3	9	31	24
Push/stretch employees beyond their comfort zone	8	0	8	17	13
Have fun and promote team interaction	6	1	7	13	10

Note. Frequency total = 129.

Support employees' goals and back up employees. This theme was the most frequently referenced in the principle of maximizing employee potential. All eight participants referenced the theme with 36 frequencies, representing 28% of the total frequencies related to this principal. Artifacts related to this theme included mission and vision statements, department review documents, and newsletters, all of which contained references of support for employees, such as employee assistance programs and training programs.

Each of the eight participants expressed the importance of supporting employees in multiple ways: in their current job duties, in career aspirations, and areas of work-life balance. While discussing support, the participants explained that support is also advocating for employees and supporting and reinforcing their decisions while interfacing with others outside the human resources department. Participant B expressed the importance of checking in with employees: "I always ask, 'Tell me more. How can I support you?' and 'Let's process map this out; let's figure out what resources we already have and what I need to fight for you to do.'" In like manner, Participant D regularly checks in with employees:

I try to meet with them every few months and say what are your goals, where do you want to go, what do you want to do, are you happy with where you are, do you want to promote, are you looking for something else?

Like Participant D, each of the participants emphasized the importance of checking in and asking questions, explaining that they cannot support or advocate for employees if they do not understand what their employees need. Participant A shared,

We asked our employees, what is it that they want to do, where do they have an interest—even if there's not an immediate opportunity to try a different job—where do they have an interest outside of their job, and we give them opportunities to work on projects in those areas.

Participant A added the importance of asking comparable questions even during the interview process so there is an understanding of the employee's goals from the beginning and work to support goals that can begin immediately:

I continually talk to my employees about what they want to be when they grow up, and I don't mean that in a condescending way because I say it about myself. You know, you can't motivate somebody to grow if you don't know where they want to grow to, or if they don't know where they want to grow. You know, I talk with my staff: "So do you want to be a vice chancellor of HR one day? If you want to be a vice chancellor of HR one day, we need to set some milestones. You know you have to go back and get your master's degree, so let's talk about when that makes sense to do it. You're going to need some negotiations experience; let me get you on a negotiation stage. You may only be a notetaker right; I might not be able to get you to be a full member. You might be a notetaker, but let me get you on there." And so, we do a lot of cross training in our department. We're creating our next, our future generation of HR leaders.

In addition to career aspirations, the participants expressed the importance of supporting employees in other ways. Participant C stated,

Always, always having the backs of my people and knowing that and having them know with certainty that I will always have their back. And the way I do that is

through my, through telling them that but, more importantly, I do that through my actions, and they know if they get into a difficult situation, or someone is unfairly challenging them or blaming them or misinterpreting them or whatever, they know that I will always speak up on their behalf.

Offer training and conference opportunities. This theme was referenced by seven of the eight participants with 32 frequencies, representing 25% of the total frequencies for maximizing employee potential. Throughout this theme, the participants made it clear that their goal was to help people reach or move closer to their career goals, recognizing this as an important piece of employee engagement. Participant C and Participant H made similar comments related to their focus on professional development and their desire to send employees to conferences as often as they can. Participant D also made similar comments:

Especially those that want to move up and promote. I feel like if you leave them kind of stagnant, in the same work, they're going to be unhappy, and they're going to want to leave. You kind of have to focus on them and continue to try to develop them, give them motivation, give them things that make them want to come to work and still be there. Whether that be professional improvement opportunities or hey go take your certification or hey there's a conference coming up. It's keeping them engaged, I think.

Participant A commented on the importance of training and development as they related to standards set for the team:

I don't expect everybody to be perfect, but I do want them to strive to be better tomorrow than they were today and so you do that by setting high standards.

Now you have to then give them the tools to get there right, because if you are going to expect somebody to perform at a certain level, you need to make sure that they're able and trained to perform at that level. So, we invest a lot of time on training and development of our staff. We do a lot of it on a shoestring budget, but I am as frugal as I can be so that when we have opportunities to send people to outside training as well, we do that.

Artifacts related to this theme included department newsletters, mission statements, and advertisements for internal training and development programs.

Establish wellness programs and focus on the whole person. This theme was referenced by six of the eight participants with 31 frequencies, representing 24% of the total frequencies. Three artifacts were submitted by the participants, including newsletters and screenshots from employee intranet sites advertising wellness programs.

The six participants who spoke about wellness during the interviews emphasized the importance of focusing on employees as people, not just employees by making sure they have what they need in their current roles, access to time off as needed, flexible work schedules, and access to employee assistance programs and other health and wellness programs. When speaking about the development and importance of wellness programs, Participant B expressed,

In the past 3 years, we developed a training development program. So, you match that up with the efforts of our wellness program and you began to set the priority and set the goals for the organization; this is the focus. You've got to be healthy physically, mentally, and emotionally. We serve students and so we're telling our students that they need to be healthy in those areas in order to be successful, then

how much more important it is for our employees and out faculty and staff to have those things as a priority.

In a comparable manner, Participant D stated, “Keeping my employees healthy mentally is a big deal.” Participant A spoke of the affect the COVID-19 pandemic had on the department, noting events such as virtual paint night, walking challenges, and cooking contests were organized to keep employees engaged with one another and mentally strong. Finally, Participant G explained that each department newsletter contains information related to employee assistance program and other wellness programs, and employees are sent home early as often as reasonably possible to help mitigate mental overload.

Push or stretch employees beyond their comfort zone. This theme was referenced by all eight participants with a frequency of 17, representing 13% of the total frequencies for maximizing employee potential. Participant E shared that without a push, some employees do not realize they have goals or aspirations. Participant E recalled that upon joining the department, there were many discussions regarding goals, and many employees disclosed that they had never been asked what their goals were. Participant E further explained that when it comes to high achievers, it is the leader’s job to recognize when employees have mastered their current position and to look for things for them to do outside of their functional area.

Many of the participants talked about stretching employees beyond their comfort zone by asking them to join meetings with cabinet members or board members or by

asking them to prepare presentations and present their own work throughout the organization. Participant H stated,

I have employees do all the research and present. Having them lead the workshops helps them build themselves and build on their skills. I really try to encourage our staff to take on the things that they have high knowledge of and provide those workshops because it's not just management who has to deliver this stuff.

Participant C also expressed how important it is to push employees:

I'm giving them opportunities to learn and giving them opportunities to deal with more complicated work and assignments over time. I'll kind of push them in an uncomfortable direction, but I'm always there with them. So, for example, my director doesn't have as much interaction with the board, as I do. But sometimes I push her: "Why don't you come with me, you know, let's do this presentation for the board, and you can do part of it, so come with me."

Participant G added, "When they step out, they will always be applauded for taking the risk."

Have fun and promote team interaction. This is the final theme for the principle of maximizing employee potential. This theme was referenced by six of the eight participants with 13 frequencies, representing 10% of the total frequencies. An artifact for this theme was a copy of a human resources department meeting agenda showing icebreakers and bonding activities. This theme demonstrated the participants' perception that being connected and having fun contributes to the process of maximizing employee potential. Participant F expressed the importance of promoting informal

interactions within her team. Likewise, Participant B often sent out fun facts and trivia to promote fun. Participant A excitedly reported about fun activities within the department:

Most of us, not everybody in our office, but most of the people in our office are huge football fans or sports fans, and so we get little friendly ribbing on our Microsoft teams chat about who's going to win this weekend, or the 49ers are going to lose again, whatever it may be. Harmless fun.

Participant A liked to keep the mood light: "I just started belting out a song in the middle of my office, and I can see everybody like peeking out from their workstations like, is that our boss singing?"

The participants acknowledged the stress and workload related to human resources but expressed that the stress can be offset or balanced by having fun.

Participant C also shared the importance of having fun and having regular get-togethers outside of the office. Overwhelmingly, there was a sense that having fun and promoting team interactions created a family environment. Participant A shared, "We've established a familylike culture that's closer than most families. I actually love them; they are the most amazing people I've ever worked with; I'm so fortunate."

Research Question 4

How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Valuing and honoring achievements is praising, acknowledging, recognizing, and appreciating positive accomplishments as an expression of care through monetary and/or nonmonetary rewards, which may lead to increased job satisfaction (Brun & Dugas, 2008; Crowley, 2011; Posamentier, 2008; Tessema et al., 2013).

Based on the data from the interviews and artifacts, exemplary CHROs value and honor employee achievements by appreciating employees through multiple platforms, giving timely and specific credit to employees using their names, staying aware of the temperature in the department, and encouraging employees to talk about their accomplishments. Table 6 outlines each of these themes, the number of participants who contributed to each theme, the number of artifacts, and the frequency count of responses for each theme.

Table 6

Themes for Valuing and Honoring Achievements

Theme	Interview participants	Artifact sources	Total sources	Frequency	% Total frequency
Appreciating employees through multiple platforms	8	3	11	36	39
Give timely and specific credit to individuals, by name	8	0	8	35	38
Stay aware of department temperature	6	0	6	12	13
Encourage team to talk about accomplishments	6	0	6	10	11

Note. Frequency total = 93.

Appreciating employees through multiple platforms. This was the most frequently referenced theme related to valuing and honoring achievements. The theme was referenced by all eight participants and included three artifact sources. There were 36 frequencies, representing 39% of the total frequencies for this principle. Artifacts included samples of emails sent to employees expressing gratitude.

As stated in Chapter II literature review, according to Kouzes and Posner (2012), “One way leaders give heart to others and keep them from giving up is by recognizing

individual contributions” (p. 270). This was confirmed by all eight of the participants who agreed on the importance of appreciating employees through multiple platforms, be it verbal appreciation, emails, cards, notes, or formal recognition awards. Participant F explained, “Anytime I can give kudos I do it because it goes a long way; I’ve been a recipient of positive feedback, and I know how that feels.” Similarly, Participant D stated,

For me it’s constantly reminding them, constantly thanking them for the work that they do, for the dedication. I definitely put it in writing to them even if it’s as simple as hey, thank you for doing this, I appreciate you. I think it’s important to constantly say thank you to them; it may be their jobs, but you know you if you’re doing your job well, thank you for what you’re doing.

Participant A used multiple platforms to express appreciation:

I try to do it one-on-one, and I try to make sure to do it verbally and via email thanking people, one-on-one for the work that they have done: “You know, thank you so much for putting that survey together, it was phenomenal, you did a great job. I know it was a lot of work, I really appreciate.” In addition to one-on-one, I also take opportunities to do shout-outs on our team’s message board.

Participant G spoke about the limited budget available in the department and on creative ways to express thanks to employees:

There are things that don’t cost money, like just telling people “thank you, I appreciate what you did today.” For me, I cook a lot for my staff. I barbecue, I’ll bring in food, I’ll bring in plants or flowers, or random small \$5 gift cards for

Starbucks. Little things that I can control where I'm not relying on the institution that doesn't give you things like that.

Give timely and specific credit to individuals, by name. This theme was referenced by all eight participants with 35 frequencies, representing 38% of the total frequencies for valuing and honoring achievements. Although similar to appreciating employees through multiple platforms, this theme was specifically related to the urgency of expressing gratitude. The participants each expressed ways employees can be acknowledged immediately instead of waiting for formal events. Participant E stated,

Recognition is not just an act, you know, that is saved or held for a certain ceremonial event, it, it is a practice that can happen daily if given the same credence depending on what transpired, so I think the possibilities are endless when it comes to recognition. If you notice something is done, don't wait for the meeting. You go up to the person and you say, I saw that you did this or how you handled that difficult situation.

Participant F agreed, "In most cases, immediate feedback is more appropriate than waiting for a formal event." In addition to timely feedback, Participant F shared the importance of not taking credit for his employees' work and using names outside of the department. As an example, he stated, "We make note of a project, and we acknowledge the individuals that worked on it." Participant B explained, "I brag on what everyone is doing, even at management meetings." In a separate statement, Participant B added that the use of names is important when praising employees outside of the department: "I say things like, that was not my work it was Isabell's or whoever it was." Participant A shared the same philosophy:

When I bring a policy, a presentation, whatever it may be before the cabinet to look at, review, comment on, approve, whatever it may be, I share who did it.

Who was involved in revising it, whoever provided feedback. That goes right on the memo to cabinet—these people were involved.

Participant C's comments were similar:

I'm so happy always to toot everybody else's horn, and so I love giving credit to my team when something goes well. I'll give you an example; we just finished a 2 year or 2 plus year class/comp study. Every opportunity I got I was always just mentioning their names and tooting their horns and making sure that when people misdirected giving credit to me that I would correct them. I'd say, "No, no Amy's the one who's been doing this."

Participant H also referenced the importance of attaching names when giving credit to employees: "During our staff meetings or when we have other meetings outside of our department, it's identifying a name of the individual who contributed to working on something."

Stay aware of department temperature. This theme was referenced by six of the eight participants with 12 frequencies and represented 13% of the total frequencies for valuing and honoring achievements. This theme captured the participants' thoughts related to understanding when employees may be overwhelmed and fatigued or when other factors are present that may warrant additional praise or acknowledgement.

Participant A recalled an experience related to an employee who mentioned their son was struggling in school. It became important to express appreciation for the employee reporting to work and pushing through with such significant matters occurring at home.

Participant C shared a similar experience related to an employee caring for an elderly relative. Participant F commented on how many initiatives employees may be working on at a given time and expressed how important it is to celebrate milestones along the way. Participant H shared the importance of picking up on small cues, especially while the team worked virtually throughout the COVID-19 pandemic:

I really try to pay attention. Now in this Zoom environment when people are on camera, or like I said when they're off camera and they're normally on camera, that tells me something is off. And I need to ask, well why are you off today? And I need to encourage them to keep going and remind them of what they've accomplished.

Encourage employees to talk about accomplishments. This was the final theme for valuing and honoring achievements. The theme was referenced by six of the eight participants with 10 frequencies and represented 11% of the total frequencies.

All eight of the participants expressed that valuing and honoring achievements is an important part of leading their teams and facilitating growth among their employees. The six participants who contributed to this theme agreed that acknowledging their staff is important, but it is just as important for staff to acknowledge and discuss their own accomplishments. Participant D stated, "They've become the experts so they should own their work and own what they do and own that they're the experts in it." Participant A and Participant C shared that they honor achievements by providing opportunities for employees to present and gain exposure outside of the department. Participant E shared, "I've kind of communicated to the team that I want anyone to bring up anything that anyone did positive, even if it's you."

Major Findings

The eight interviews conducted for this study were transcribed, and the interview transcripts and collected artifacts were then coded, resulting in 21 themes presented in this chapter. Of the 21 themes, those themes with a frequency greater than 20% were further identified as major findings. The marker of 20% was established by the thematic team of peer researchers. Table 7 represents a summary of the major findings, which are discussed in detail in Chapter V.

Table 7

Summary of Major Findings

Theme	Interview participants	Artifact sources	Total sources	Frequency	% Total frequency
Building a highly engaged team					
Establish focus on organization's overall mission	8	3	11	35	34
Build trust among team	6	1	7	22	22
Connecting on a personal level					
Give attention and care to employees	8	1	9	62	25
Maximizing Employee Potential					
Support employees' goals/back up employees	8	3	11	36	28
Offer training and conference opportunities	7	3	10	32	25
Establish wellness programs/focus on whole person	6	3	9	31	24
Valuing and honoring achievements					
Appreciating employees through multiple platforms	8	3	11	36	39
Give timely and specific credit to individuals, by name	8	0	8	35	38

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of community college CHROs who lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. This chapter discussed 21 themes related to the four research questions and derived from Crowley's four heart-led principles. The themes arose from the triangulation of data derived from the eight interviews and artifacts collected from the study participants.

Chapter V presents a final summary of this qualitative research study including key findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for action, recommendations for further research, and concluding remarks and reflections from the researcher.

CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V includes a summary of the study, the findings, and conclusions based on the data collected and analyzed in Chapter IV. The data analysis was derived from eight semistructured interviews and collected artifacts, which resulted in 21 themes. This qualitative phenomenological study explored and described exemplary community college CHROs who lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements to accomplish extraordinary results. Chapter V presents the purpose statement, four research questions, and overview of the methodology, major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for action, recommendations for future research, and closing remarks and reflections from the researcher.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary community college chief human resource officers (CHROs) lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions

1. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?
2. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

3. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?
4. How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Methodology

This qualitative study used a phenomenological method to describe how exemplary community college CHROs lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations. The phenomenological method of collecting data through observations, semistructured open-ended interviews, and review of written documentation allowed the researcher to capture a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of exemplary human resource leaders while also obtaining the leaders' associated perceptions of experiences, attitudes, and opinions of the environment.

The researcher conducted eight interviews virtually via Zoom. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. The researcher followed a systematic process of sorting, coding, and analyzing the data. The coding process was completed using a coding software, NVivo. Using NVivo, the researcher was able to identify the common themes and patterns that existed among the group of participants based on their transcripts and artifacts. The coding process resulted in 21 themes and 571 frequencies.

Major Findings

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of exemplary community college CHROs who lead from the heart using

Crowley's (2011) four principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements. The study was comprised of four research questions directly tied to these four principles. Data were obtained through eight semistructured interviews and collected artifacts. The data were then analyzed, resulting in 21 themes and seven major findings. An explanation of major findings is discussed in the following sections.

Research Question 1

How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?

Major Finding 1: In order to build highly engaged teams, leaders must connect employees' work to the overall mission. During the interviews, all eight of the participants explained the importance of establishing a focus on the organization's overall mission and tying human resource employees' work to the mission. Each of the community college CHROs stated that although the human resources department does not directly engage with students, it is critical to explain to employees how their work indirectly affects students and how the work helps others outside of human resources to accomplish the overall mission. Participant A shared such an explanation:

Myself and the managers within our department make sure that employees understand how what they're doing is serving our students because HR is many steps removed, often from direct service to our students. But what about when we're hiring a custodian? How do we make that connection? So, I think we have a lot of discussions in our department about making that connection between what we're doing and how it's supporting students.

Major Finding 2: Leaders who create trust with their employees create highly engaged teams. Throughout the interviews, exemplary community college CHROs explained that when they established trust with their employees, they were more dedicated to their collective work and more highly engaged. A highly engaged team has a collective interest in going beyond what's expected of the team to function at a high level and produce high-level results for the organization (Crowley, 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2008). Leaders can build highly engaged teams by modeling these same behaviors as staff oftentimes adapt to the characteristics of their leaders (Kerfoot, 2007). The study participants agreed that they hold the responsibility of creating trust by being trustworthy. Participant A stated, "I have to be honest and transparent, and I need to share with them things that they need to know when they need to know it."

Research Question 2

How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

Major Finding 3: Giving employees attention and showing care is necessary to build strong personal connections. The second of Crowley's (2011) four heart-led principles is connecting on a personal level. The study participants unanimously agreed that giving employees their full attention and demonstrating care are required to build strong connections. According to the literature, leaders build confidence in their trustworthiness by demonstrating initiative, reassuring others, and showing care for others through action (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The participants agreed that giving employees attention requires action in ways such as making time to be available for conversations, making phone calls to check in with employees, actively listening, and

staying aware of work and personal issues that may affect employees while creating solutions to problems spoken and unspoken.

The exemplary CHROs who participated in this study further explained that showing care is an expression that must accompany attention. Care is demonstrated by engaging in conversations and recalling details such as employees' children's birthdays or sporting events, asking about ailing family members, asking about pets, or recognizing exhaustion or frustration in employees and extending unplanned time off to recharge.

Research Question 3

How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?

Major Finding 4: Leaders maximize potential by supporting their employees' personal and professional goals. According to the literature, leaders have the ability and opportunity to help employees establish professional goals, be their best and improve, discover strengths, and overcome challenges (Miller, 2019). This was supported by the eight participants who agreed that employees must be supported professionally and personally to reach their full potential. The participants agreed on the importance of checking in with employees to understand their goals and to provide support and solutions to overcoming obstacles. Additionally, the participant responses established a connection between personal and professional goals, finding that when employees reach personal goals, they are more likely to work toward and accomplish professional goals.

Major Finding 5: Professional development opportunities for employees create a culture of engagement. Professional development opportunities were

mentioned by the participants 28 times. Additionally, three artifacts were submitted to demonstrate a focus on professional development opportunities within the human resource department. As stated by participant A, “You have to offer professional development opportunities if you really want to grow your team.” Participant D spoke on the importance of offering professional development opportunities to ensure that staff do not become stagnant or bored. These, and the remainder of the data collected during the interviews confirm the participants’ ideas that professional development opportunities create an ongoing culture of engagement.

Major Finding 6: Wellness programs that focus on whole-person care create higher levels of productivity. Throughout the study, many participants referred to employee matters that may become barriers to productivity, such as caring for family members, financial matters, mental health challenges, or physical health issues. Although these issues fall outside of work-related matters, many of the participants addressed this in conjunction with the development of wellness programs such as employee assistance programs. The participants explained that such programs were designed out of necessity, but the programs are maintained and often improved out of genuine care for employees. In addition, the participants found that when programs were in place to assist employees manage personal matters, stress, fatigue, and absenteeism lessened and engagement and productivity were positively affected.

Research Question 4

How do exemplary CHROs lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievements?

Major Finding 7: Exemplary leadership shows appreciation through multiple platforms. According to the literature, an important part of engagement and leadership, is recognition (Kerfoot, 2007). According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), “One way leaders give heart to others and keep them from giving up is by recognizing individual contributions” (p. 270). Weber (2020) agreed that milestones should be celebrated with employees so they feel energized by the work and their successes. This was supported by the findings of this study because each of the participants explained that they keep employees engaged and encouraged by showing appreciation whenever it is warranted and using whatever medium makes sense. The participants agreed that instead of waiting for formal events, such as annual performance reviews or appreciation dinners, appreciation should always be expressed and in a timely manner. The participants described that appreciation was shown through emails, text messages, cards, notes, gifts, and verbal appreciation as a means to keep employees engaged and encouraged. Additionally, Participant A and Participant E shared that this practice positively affected the culture of the human resource department with employees also regularly showing appreciation for one other.

Major Finding 8: Leaders must give timely and specific credit to employees, using names. Throughout the study, the participants shared experiences of giving their employees credit for the work they were doing and shared the importance of ensuring that employees see value in their work. They achieve this by letting others know who contributed to the work or who the subject matter expert was for each area. The CHROs shared that although they are often tasked with presenting information to stakeholders, they are careful to give their employees credit for the work and are careful to not accept

credit that belongs to others. In one example, Participant A explained that employees who contribute to a project are listed on the memo to the board. Participants also shared that this form of acknowledgement must be timely, adding that they politely interrupt conversations to clarify who deserves credit for work done.

Unexpected Findings

The study resulted in three unexpected findings related to Research Question 2, connecting on a personal level, and Research Question 4, valuing and honoring achievements. Based on the literature review, it was expected that these two principles would yield equivalent results; however, the frequency rates varied significantly between these two principles.

Unexpected Findings 1: Connecting on a Personal Level

The first unexpected finding was related to the frequency rate of the themes associated with connecting on a personal level. For this study, 571 frequencies were coded. Of those, 248 of the frequencies were coded to connecting on a personal level, representing 43% of the data. Data to support the importance of this theme were expected; however, there was an uneven distribution of data related to the connecting on a personal level. In addition, the themes for connecting on a personal level were strategically narrowed to seven whereas the themes for the other three principles only yielded four to five themes.

In his book *Everyone Communicates, Few Connect*, Maxwell (2010) explained that leaders who can connect on a personal level are able to inspire and motivate others by communicating what they know, what they see, and what they feel in a way that demonstrates care and concern for their followers. This ability to connect with others is

based on the intentional work leaders do to connect with themselves being vulnerable enough to connect and establish trust with others (Brown, 2012; Gelb, 2017; Maxwell, 2010). Maxwell (2010) further suggested that the ability to connect with others is related to stronger relationships, a stronger sense of community, and the ability to create teamwork.

Unexpected Findings 2: Valuing and Honoring Achievements

Although the data related to Research Question 4 resulted in two major findings, only four themes emerged, and the overall frequency was only 93 compared to connecting on a personal level, which had an overall frequency of 248. According to the literature, leaders should focus on meaningful recognition, which is valuing and honoring the uniqueness and true essence of followers and their respective contributions (Kerfoot, 2007). Related to performance, valuing and honoring achievements increases productivity and engagement levels as people instinctively repeat behaviors that are rewarded. On the contrary, a lack of recognition will cause followers to minimize their efforts (Kouzes & Posner, 2012).

All eight participants agreed on two themes: appreciating employees through multiple platforms had a frequency rate of 39% and giving employees timely and specific credit had a frequency rate of 38%. Other than these two themes, there were no other themes that all eight respondents contributed to or that had a frequency greater than 13%.

Conclusions

Based on the review of literature, the data collection, and the associated findings in this study, the following conclusions are made to explain how exemplary community college CHROs accomplish extraordinary results using Crowley's (2011) four principles:

building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements.

Conclusion 1

Community college CHROs who establish a culture of trust create employees who are dedicated and passionate about their work resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction, commitment, and organizational productivity.

This is supported by Major Findings 1 and 2, as well as the data from this study, which show that once community college CHROs establish trust, employees become more engaged and receptive to the vision. Kouzes and Posner (2012) stated that when leaders effectively communicate the mission or vision, higher levels of job satisfaction, motivation, commitment, loyalty, and organizational productivity are reported.

The exemplary community college CHROs who participated in this study successfully created a culture of trust with their employees. According to Bass (1985), through an atmosphere of trust, transformational leaders cultivate an environment where connections are shaped and visions are shared. The literature also states that leaders generate engagement by creating trust in followers. Trust is critical to the development of an engaged workforce (Macey & Schneider, 2008). When a leader is present who behaves fairly and establishes trust, followers connect with the leader, the vision, and the organization's goals (Kerfoot, 2007; Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Conclusion 2

Community college CHROs who create a safe and caring work environment will boost morale and engagement and increase innovation and performance.

Major Finding 3 summarized the participant data related to the importance of giving employees attention and showing care to build strong personal connections. It is concluded that when the participant CHROs showed care and created a safe environment for employees, employees achieved exemplary results in return. As stated by Sinek (2014), when employees feel safe and protected by their leaders, their natural reaction is to trust and cooperate. Additionally, when leaders make sacrifices for their employees, employees will sacrifice in return and work hard to see that their leader's visions are realized. The study data revealed that a safe environment is established by communicating authentically and when the CHRO leads by example, exercising humility and vulnerability. According to Kouzes and Posner (2003), leaders build confidence in their trustworthiness by demonstrating initiative, reassuring others, and showing care for others through action. Leaders help people trust them by how honestly and openly they discuss their own behavior (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Leaders show concern and love through vulnerability (Brown, 2018; Gelb, 2017; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Maxwell, 2010). Gelb (2017) described vulnerability as "an acknowledgement that we are sensitive, alive, and affected emotionally by our interactions and experiences" (p. 51).

Conclusion 3

It is concluded that employees are more engaged when CHROs support their mental, physical, and professional well-being, resulting in high organizational achievement.

Throughout the study, participants gave examples of addressing employees' needs in each of these areas. The participants described lived experiences, such as lower productivity and engagement, related to the effects on employee engagement when these

areas were left unaddressed. Describing the need to pay attention in these areas, Participant A stated, “I saw the affect the COVID pandemic had on my own mental health and knew that if I was affected so was my staff.” Participant H shared a similar experience related to the loss of a loved one. As a result, these participants and others worked to ensure that mental health professionals were made available to human resource employees and the rest of the organization. Similarly, participants established wellness programs, such as walking challenges and water-drinking challenges, to address physical health issues affecting employees.

Finally, the participants reported that they were able to keep employees engaged by supporting their professional well-being. Offering training and cross-training opportunities and conferences and ongoing coaching and mentoring created higher levels of engagement. Engagement can be described as employees’ level of involvement, energy, and efficacy (Maslach, 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 2008) or their involvement and satisfaction, as well as enthusiasm, for work (Harter et al., 2002). A highly engaged team has a collective interest in going beyond what is expected of the team to function at a high level and produce high-level results for the organization (Crowley, 2011; Macey & Schneider, 2008).

Conclusion 4

Community college CHROs who regularly show value and honor of employees’ work will have a team of employees who remain engaged and inspired to grow.

Based on the findings of this study and the supporting research, it is concluded that exemplary community college CHROs who regularly celebrate employees produce employees who are engaged and inspired to grow professionally and personally.

According to Kouzes and Posner (2012), “One way leaders give heart to others and keep them from giving up is by recognizing individual contributions” (p. 270). Weber (2020) agreed that milestones should be celebrated with employees so they feel energized by the work and their successes. This was supported by the participants who shared sending notes, emails, cards, and verbal appreciation to employees. Each of the exemplary CHROs who participated in this study described the effects of regular, ongoing appreciation of employees as higher engaged, higher performing, and more confident employees. Further, the participants explained that when employees became more engaged, higher performing, and more confident, they were more likely to accept assignments that were more challenging or offered greater visibility.

Conclusion 5

Community college CHROs who establish the foundation of connecting with employees on a personal level that emphasizes respect and trust will have a workforce in which employees are engaged, collaborative, and have a high degree of satisfaction.

Based on the results of this study, the researcher concludes that of the four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements), connecting on a personal level is the foundation for leading from the heart. Connecting on a personal level represented 43% of the data and produced seven themes, or 33% of the total themes. Figure 9 reflects a pyramid of the four themes. By placing the theme with the most substantial data at the bottom of the pyramid, this theme, connecting on a personal level, becomes the base, or foundation of the four principles. Based on the results of this study, it is apparent that once exemplary community college CHROs connect with employees

on a personal level, they then maximize employee potential and build highly engaged teams. Valuing and honoring employee achievements sustains these highly engaged teams.

This is supported by Chukwunonso (2013), who stated that job satisfaction increases employee productivity, and Avolio et al. (2004), who agreed that leaders have the inherent ability to increase overall levels of employee engagement, involvement, satisfaction, and commitment, resulting in higher outcomes.

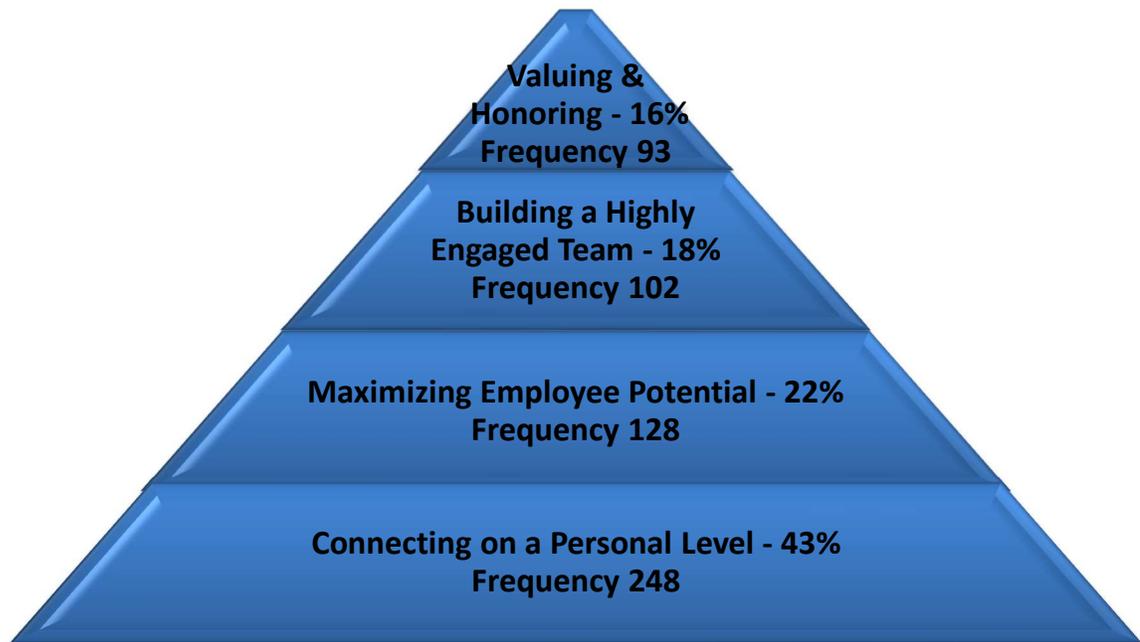


Figure 9. Pyramid of the four principles' percentage and frequency.

Implications for Action

The results of this study and the literature show that to accomplish extraordinary results for their organization, community college CHROs must lead from the heart using Crowley's (2011) four principles: building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements.

The major findings and conclusions resulted in the following implications for action to equip future and existing CHROs and human resource professionals to adopt these practices.

Implication 1

The study findings support a strong emphasis on the importance of heart-based leadership principles to achieve extraordinary results. The data specifically demonstrate that leaders should be knowledgeable in and practice the four principles of leading from the heart. Therefore, it is recommended that all human resource leaders be required to participate in training that focuses on transformational leadership and the principles of leading from the heart. Additionally, human resource directors should develop and implement required training programs for all leaders and managers so that heart principles become part of the culture and foundation of the organization. Annually, human resource directors must collect feedback from all employees about the culture and adherence to heart principles. Finally, it is recommended that the researcher contact the Association of Chief Human Resource Officers (ACHRO) to begin collaboration on the development of training and support materials focused on heart-based leadership, which will be provided to future and existing human resource leaders.

Implication 2

To expand knowledge and expertise related to principles of leading from the heart, it is recommended that CHROs extend or expand professional development programs for all employees focused on a pathway to develop new and advanced skills based on transformational, heart-led principles. The findings of this study show the value of leaders who connect, build trust, give attention and care, and are humble and

vulnerable to employees. Therefore, an emphasis on the importance of transformational leadership throughout the organization must be established. Employees seeking career advancement into leadership roles need to be aware of required heart-based leadership characteristics and provided a mentor who has demonstrated success in leading from the heart. These mentors should provide mentees with specific strategies and goals related to the four heart-led principles, educating mentees on the importance of leading from the heart by sharing lived experiences like those collected in this study. A mentor program such as this will help additional community college organizations to retain highly engaged employees and to achieve exemplary organizational goals.

Implication 3

Based on the study findings, exemplary CHROs recognize the importance of and regularly establish focus on the organization's overall mission. Because CHROs understand how their work helps to achieve organizational outcomes and establish the culture of the organization, they must form partnerships with other departments and staff (faculty, adjunct, classified, and administrators) to collaborate on the development of an organizational culture that values, respects, and honors every employee.

Exemplary community college CHROs who have demonstrated experience in leading from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results must present literature, theories, and lived experiences to other organizational leaders. By working with other community college stakeholder groups, CHROs can help these departments achieve greater employee engagement and higher outcomes for the organization. In addition, instead of a human resource culture, this will create an organizational culture based on

honor and respect focused on inherently developing people beyond merely training employees for a specific job function.

Implication 4

One purpose of this study was to fill the gap in research related to how community college CHROs' leadership styles contribute to the institution's overall level of effectiveness, specifically related to employee engagement and satisfaction. The results of this study and additional scholarly articles are needed to strengthen the body of research as it relates to heart-based leadership. Such publications, emphasizing the results of heart-based leadership, should be added to human resource magazines and publications including *SHRM HR News*, *HR Daily*, *HR Magazine*, and *HR Digest Magazine*. There is extensive literature related to leadership, specifically transformational leadership styles such as resonant leadership, authentic leadership, and servant leadership. There is not, however, extensive literature related to heart-based leadership. Adding this literature to the body of knowledge could help ensure that these principles can be included in textbooks and will encourage educators to incorporate the information into their curriculum plans. Exposing students to heart-based principles at an early age will normalize these leadership behaviors.

Implication 5

At the time of the study, the participants had worked in the human resource field for an average of 15 years. These leaders developed into heart-based leaders throughout their careers. It would be more effective for employees to know and understand the principles of leading from the heart before moving into leadership roles so that the work of building highly engaged teams, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee

potential, and valuing and honoring achievements can start immediately upon accepting a leadership role. To introduce and familiarize employees with these concepts, organizational leaders need to include principles of leading from the heart in their annual goals and evaluation process. To encourage behaviors consistent with leading from the heart, community college CHROs should add these principles to their employees' standard performance evaluations for measurement. In doing so, CHROs can expose employees to these principles as they are being trained and developed to move up in their careers. Performance evaluations include important markers for employees, identifying individual strengths and weaknesses. On a performance evaluation, heart-led principles, such as connecting on a personal level and valuing and honoring achievements, will help employees connect with these practices and create strategies for implementation; 360-degree evaluations should also be implemented so peers and stakeholders other than direct supervisors can evaluate employees' effectiveness in these areas and provide meaningful feedback.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the findings of this qualitative study, additional research related to the presence of Crowley's (2011) four principles in community college human resource departments is recommended.

Recommendation 1

This study was limited to community colleges within 150 miles of Sacramento, California. It is recommended that a phenomenological study be conducted in community colleges in a different geographic area expanding to all three sectors of

California, northern, southern, and central, to determine the similarity of outcomes to this study.

Recommendation 2

Most of the community college CHROs who participated in this study spoke about the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it was referenced that strategies used to connect with employees had to change because of the pandemic, remote work, and social distancing requirements. For these reasons, it is recommended that a postpandemic study be conducted on new or alternative methods of connection.

Recommendation 3

This study was conducted from the viewpoint of community college CHROs and how they lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results. Because the goal of community college CHROs is to help college stakeholders accomplish the organization's overall mission, a replication study on the effectiveness of CHROs from the perspective of college presidents is recommended.

Recommendation 4

It is recommended that the study be replicated with an expanded sample of participants that considers age, years of experience, gender, and training. With the exception of one, each of the study participants had been in the position as CHRO for less than 10 years. Expanding the study to participants with more than 10 years of experience will allow participants to share their lived experiences over a greater time period.

Recommendation 5

This study was conducted from the viewpoint of community college CHROs and how they lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results. It is recommended that

a mixed methods study be conducted to gather quantitative and qualitative data from both leaders and employees about the importance of leading from the heart.

Recommendation 6

This study was part of a larger group of thematic studies. It is recommended that a meta-analysis study be conducted to analyze the findings of the 14 studies to identify common themes across various groups of leaders from diverse types of organizations to identify a common set of transformational leadership skills.

Recommendation 7

It is recommended that a study related to diversity be conducted to analyze how heart-based leadership principles are demonstrated by leaders of color and how such principles are received by employees of diverse leaders. Further, the relationship between a leader's ethnic or racial background and the leader's ability to connect with employees on a personal level should be studied.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

I have previously worked in a community college human resource department and appreciate the work and passion of community college CHROs. Even before this study, I recognized that the human resources department is the heart of the organization. The human resources department touches every aspect of the organization, or community college, including classified staff, faculty, custodians, students, administrators, and even board members. As the heart of the organization, human resource employees develop policies and procedures not only to keep the organization in compliance but also to establish health and wellness programs to benefit the employee. When presented with the opportunity to join this thematic group of researchers to study Crowley's four principles

of leading from the heart, I immediately focused on what I believe to be the heart of community college campuses. This study provided me with the opportunity to meet and engage with 10 exemplary community college CHROs: eight study participants, one assisted with my field test, and one was my mentor.

While researching the literature and writing Chapter II, I gained extensive knowledge on transformational leadership, servant leadership, resonant leadership, and authentic leadership. What stood out the most, as an overall simplification of the literature, was that transformational leaders put others before themselves and have a fervent desire to see those around them achieve success. The study showed me that exemplary CHROs who lead from the heart are the same.

As a parent, chief executive officer, and pastor, I have been a leader for many years. I am grateful that as a leader, I understand the importance of continuing to grow, which prompted my desired to do this study. I had a general understanding and working knowledge of heart-based leadership but learned so much from the study participants. Through the study, I learned how much value the participants place on connection. Throughout the interviews, the participants shared lived experiences related to how hard they worked to establish trust with their employees and build connections. I appreciated the transparency from the participants who shared that they were not naturally good at being vulnerable or learned from bad experiences that they had to cultivate and recultivate a safe environment. Through the study, I learned that the employee is always first in the leader's mind because there was not much discussion about numbers, results, or productivity but instead about conversations regarding connecting with employees outside of work, exchanging recipes, laughing together to lighten the load, and crying

together when someone experienced a loss. The participants explained why it is important to give people undivided attention and how they pull and stretch employees to their maximum potential. Finally, the study participants shared how hard their employees work for them and how much they appreciate their level of commitment.

While completing this study, my sister accepted a new position with her organization. Unfortunately, her new boss did not embody any of the characteristics of the study participants. While I had to watch her suffer, I understood that it was because her new boss did not take the time to get to know her. Her boss did not know (or did not care) that my sister was a single parent to a high-energy 10-year-old. Her boss never shared personal experiences or created space for my sister to do the same. My sister struggled to understand her role and worried she was not meeting expectations because she rarely received feedback. There were no invitations or opportunities to have fun, and when she finally broke down and called me crying, I was the one to find and link her to wellness programs available to her. Through this study, I was able to identify every reason the “train was falling off the rails.”

As I move forward in my career, I will take with me every word and every piece of data I collected. I look forward to leading by example. I will communicate authentically and receive feedback well. I will look for every opportunity to support my employees’ personal and professional goals, giving them credit for accomplishments and celebrating small wins along the way. We will make time for fun, and when they move on, I will offer myself as a mentor and resource. My hope is that through my research and the work of the thematic team, many more organizations will experience the extraordinary results of heart-based leadership.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Synthesis Matrix

Maxwell, J. C. (2010). Everyone Communicates, Few Connect: What the Most Effective People Do Differently. Thomas Nelson.					X	X												
Maxwell, J. C. (2018). Developing the leader within you 2.0: HarperCollins Leadership.					X	X												
McKee, A., Boyatzis, R., & Johnston, F. (2008). Becoming a resonant leader. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.				X														
McMillan, Schumacher, & Pearson. (2010). Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry, 7th Edition. MyEducationLab Series. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.											X							
Miller, S. (2019). From supervisor to super leader. Eugene, OR: Pine Bench Publishing.					X				X									X
Morse, J. M. (1994). Designing funded qualitative research (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.											X							
Obedgiu, V. (2017). Human resource management, historical perspectives, evolution and professional development, 36(8). Retrieved from http://libproxy.chapman.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=edsbig&AN=edsbig.A516449823&site=eds-live												X	X					
Patten, M. L., & Newhart, M. (2018).											X							
Patton, M. (2002). Qualitative research and											X							
Patton, M. (2015). Qualitative research &																		
Pierre, A. B., Robert, A. C., & Richard, E. P.					X				X									X
Pereira, C. M., & Gomes, J. S. (2012). The strength of human resource practices and transformational leadership: impact on organisational performance. International Journal of Human Resource Management, 23(20), 4301-4318. doi:10.1080/09585192.2012.667434				X					X									
Popli, S., & Rizvi, I. A. (2016). Drivers of employee engagement: The role of leadership style. Global Business Review, 17(4), 965-979.					X			X	X									X
Posamentier, A. (2008). The true meaning of rewarding excellence in education. Retrieved 28 September 2020, from http://www.educationupdate.com/archives/2008/JUL/html/edit.html									X			X						
Resick, C. J., Whitman, D. S., Weingarden, S. M., & Hiller, N. J. (2009). The bright-side and the dark-side of CEO personality: Examining core self-evaluations, narcissism, transformational leadership, and strategic influence. Journal of Applied Psychology, 94(6), 1365-1381. doi:10.1037/a0016238				X					X		X							
Ricklefs, K. S. (2016). Engagement drivers					X				X									X
Roberts, C., & Hyatt, L. (2018). The											X							
Rotich, K. J. (2015). History, evolution and development of human resource management: a contemporary perspective. Global Journal of Human Resource Management, 3(3), 58-73.													X					
Sendjaya, S., & Sarros, J. C. (2002). Servant leadership: Its origin, development, and application in organizations. Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 9(2), 57-64.				X														

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

Information About: A Phenomenological Study of Exemplary Community College Chief Human Resource Officers Leading from the Heart

Responsible Investigator: Angela Love

The following will be Included in the Interview Protocol:

You are being asked to participate in a thematic research study conducted by Angela Love, a doctoral student from UMASS Global, a nonprofit affiliate of the University of Massachusetts. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how community college CHROs lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

I understand that:

- a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the investigators will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researchers.
- b) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding the strategies that exemplary leaders use to create personal resiliency.
- c) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher using the information provided in the invitation to participate.
- d) 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. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. In addition, the investigator may stop the study at any time.
- e) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that 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 my consent re-obtained. 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, UMASS GLOBAL, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Angela Love at alove1@mail.umassglobal.edu or by phone at (916) 214-5433 or Dr. Keith Larick (Dissertation Chair) at larick@mail.umassglobal.edu

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.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

APPENDIX C

Invitation Letter for Potential Participants

November 2021

Dear CHRO,

I am a doctoral candidate in UMASS Global Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program in the School of Education. I am conducting a qualitative phenomenological research study to describe how community college chief human resource officers lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

I am asking for your assistance in the study by participating in an interview which will take approximately 60 minutes and will be set up at a time convenient for you through a virtual setting. 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 your respective organizations. The research investigator, Angela Love, is available at alove1@mail.umassglobal.edu or by phone at (916) 214-5433 to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Angela Love, Doctoral Candidate, Ed.D.

APPENDIX D

UMASS Research Participant's Bill of Rights



UMASS GLOBAL 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 UMASS GLOBAL Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The UMass Global 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, UMASS GLOBAL, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

APPENDIX E

Interview Guide: Heart Thematic Interview Script

I would like to start by thanking you for sharing your valuable experiences with me. I know your time is precious and I appreciate your willingness to participate in this interview. Making this personal connection with you will be of great benefit to my research and I truly appreciate your contribution to this study.

My name is Angela Love, and I am an Executive Director of a nonprofit organization that provides expanded learning services to our local school districts. I'm a doctoral candidate at UMASS Global in the area of Organizational Leadership. I'm a part of a team conducting research to describe how exemplary leaders lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Our team is conducting 112 interviews with leaders like yourself. Our hope is that the information we gather will provide a clear picture of what exemplary leaders do to lead their organizations using Crowley's four principles and our work will add to the body of research currently available.

Informed Consent (START RECORDING to obtain verbal consent)

Prior to this interview you received information concerning the purpose of the research, a copy of the interview questions, Brandman University's Participant's Bill of Rights, and the Informed Consent form. After reviewing the protocols, you were offered an opportunity to ask questions concerning the research and the consent process. At that time, you provided verbal consent to be a participant in the interview. For purposes of verifying your consent would you again provide a verbal yes as to your consent that will be included in the recording of this interview. Thank you.

I will now begin the interview. When our interview is complete, I will stop the recording and conclude our interview session. After your interview is transcribed, you will receive

a copy of the complete transcripts to ensure I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas. Following your review and approval of the transcription, the data will be analyzed along with the data I have collected from the other respondents.

I would like to remind you that any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. I will be looking for themes that are present across all the interviews. In reporting out the data, I will refer to respondents by pseudonyms and not by name, work location, or employer. The digital recording will be erased three years after the publication of the dissertation in accordance with the strict guidelines set forth by the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) whose major function is to protect respondents.

Please remember that anytime during this process you have the right to stop the interview. If you do not understand the questions being asked, please do not hesitate to ask for clarification. Is there anything I can clarify before we begin?

Okay, let's get started, and again, thanks so much for your time.

Interview

Before we begin our interview questions, I want to review the purpose of this study and the four research questions that will be the focus of our interview today.

Purpose Statement:

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe how exemplary leaders (superintendents, principals, city managers, police chiefs, corporate leaders, military leaders, etc.) lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential, and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

Research Questions:

1. How do exemplary leaders lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by building a highly engaged team?
2. How do exemplary leaders lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by connecting on a personal level?

3. How do exemplary leaders lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by maximizing employee potential?
4. How do exemplary leaders lead from the heart to accomplish extraordinary results by valuing and honoring achievement

The interview questions will be preceded by a definition of the Crowley principle that is connected to those questions. The first principle is found in research question one,

Building a Highly Engaged Team.

Definition:

Building a highly engaged team is using strategies that help people become enthusiastically invested in and dedicated to work they believe is significant, meaningful, and challenging, where relationships are built on emotional connection and shared vision, and where values and commitment are based on personal strengths and interests aligned with organizational goals (Crowley, 2011; P. S. George & Stevenson, 1988; Rees, Alfes & Gatenby, 2013; Senge, Lichtenstein & Kaeufer, 2007).

Interview Questions:

1. How do you develop a team that is dedicated to their collective work?

Probe: Please share a time when you supported one of your teams that was having difficulty.

2. How do you make work meaningful for your team?

Probe: Please share an example?

3. How do you develop relationships on your team that are built on emotional connections?

•Probe: How did the development of relationships lead to a shared vision?

We now move to our second principle from research question #2, **Connecting on a Personal Level.**

Definition:

Connecting on a personal level is seeing and acting on behalf of others and authentically communicating with the intention of adding value driven by humility, concern, and love (Brown, 2015; Crowley, 2011; Hayward, 2015; Maxwell, 2010).

Interview Questions:

4. How do you communicate authentically with members in your organization?
Probe: Please share a time when this was important to the organizations' success.
5. Please describe how your humility helps you in your work. Probe: How has this developed personal connections with employees?
6. How do you show concern and love for your employees? Probe: Please share an example of how this made a difference in the performance of your employees.

Our third principle from research question #3 is **Maximizing Employee Potential**.

Definition:

Maximizing employee potential is igniting emotional drivers by promoting human well-being while proactively strengthening, teaching, and building people toward high achievement (Crowley, 2011; Burnett & Lisk, 2019).

Interview Questions:

7. How do you promote emotional well-being in your organization?
Probe: Please share a time when you experienced the benefits of promoting emotional well-being in your organization.

8. How do you create an environment that motivates staff members to high levels of achievement? Probe: Please provide a specific example.

9. How do you strengthen and build employees in a way that supports high achievement?
Probe: Please share a story of the specific strategy that you used that led to high achievement.

Our fourth principle found in research question #4 is **Valuing and Honoring Achievements**.

Definition:

Valuing and honoring achievements is praising, acknowledging, recognizing, and appreciating positive accomplishments as an expression of care through monetary and/or nonmonetary rewards, which may lead to increased job satisfaction (Brun & Dugas, 2008; Tessema, Ready & Embaye, 2013; Posamentier, 2008; Crowley, 2011).

Interview Questions:

10. Valuing and Honoring Achievements is important to inspiring employees to a higher level of satisfaction. How do you acknowledge employees' achievements at work?

Probe: Can you elaborate on how you recognize their achievements?

11. How do you ensure that your employees see that their work is valued?

Probe: Describe specific non-monetary and/or monetary practices that you use for this purpose.

12. Can you share an example of when you provide an expression of care for an employee?

Probe: Please tell me a little more about that.

This concludes the interview questions. I would like to again thank you very much for your time. If you would like, when the results of our research are known, we will send you a copy of our findings.

General Probes:

May be used during the interview when you want to get more information and/or expand the conversation with them. These are not questions you share with the interviewee. It is best to be very familiar with them and use in a conversational way when appropriate to extend their answers.

- 1. “What did you mean by.....?”**
- 2. “Do you have more to add.....?”**
- 3. “Would you expand upon that a bit....?”**
- 4. “Why do you 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?”**

APPENDIX F

Alignment Table

Research Questions	Survey Item	Analytical Technique
Research Question 1	1. abridged Job in General Scale (aJIG) . a. People on your present job. b. Job in general. c. Work on present job. d. Opportunities for promotion. e. Supervision	Data tabulated, median scores measured and analyzed, then charted and graphed. Descriptive statistics: mean, medium, mode. Information presented in tables, charts, and figures.
Research Question 2	1a. Demographic form: data input into Microsoft word.	Simple descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, and Spearman rank-order correlations displayed in tabular form.
Research Question 3	2. abridged Job in General Scale (aJIG) a. People on our present job. b. Job in general. c. Work on present job. d. Opportunities for promotion. e. Supervision	Data tabulated, median scores measured and analyzed, then charted and graphed. Descriptive statistics: mean, medium, mode. Information presented in tables, charts, and figures.
Research Question 4	2a. Demographic form: data input into Microsoft word.	Simple descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, and Spearman rank-order correlations) displayed in tabular form.

APPENDIX G

Email to Participants Describing Study and Outlining Required Participant Characteristics

Dear Participant

Your name was passed on to me by your colleagues who feel you meet the definition of exemplary human resource leader! I would appreciate your assistance.

I am a doctoral candidate in the UMASS Global Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program in the School of Education. I am conducting a qualitative phenomenological research study to describe how exemplary community college chief human resource officers lead from the heart using Mark Crowley's four principles (building a highly engaged team, connecting on a personal level, maximizing employee potential and valuing and honoring achievements) to accomplish extraordinary results in their organizations.

I am asking for your assistance in the study by participating in an interview which will take less than 60 minutes and will be set up at a time convenient for you through a virtual setting. 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 your college. As the research investigator, I am available at alovel@mail.umassglobal.edu or by phone at (916) 214-5433 to answer any questions or concerns you may have. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

Please let me know if any of the following dates work for you and I will send you a Zoom link. Additionally, please also confirm which following criteria apply to you?

1. Evidence of caring about people to accomplish extraordinary results in their organization.
2. Minimum of three years' experience in their position.
3. Recognition by their peers.
4. Recommendation by one or more recognized regional executive leaders.
5. Membership in professional associations in their field.
6. Articles, papers, or written materials published or presented at conferences.