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## Two Case Studies of the Contribution of Emotional Intelligence, Communication Style, Job Competency, Vision, and Ethics to Constituent Buy-In for Leaders

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by

David M. Schall

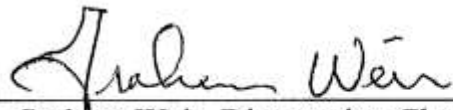
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Dr. Graham Weir, Dissertation Chair

11/20/15

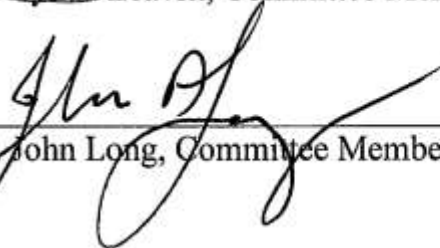
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Dr. Lynda Leavitt, Committee Member

11/20/15

Date



Dr. John Long, Committee Member

11.20.15

Date

Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work here at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree here or elsewhere.

Full Legal Name: David M. Schall

Signature: David M. Schall Date: 11/20/15

## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the similarities and dissimilarities of leadership traits that create leader buy-in for an educational leader and a football coach; specifically, emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics, between an educational leader and a sports coach. The rationale of this study was to create recent literature that provided insight for leaders in multiple areas on how to transfer leadership skills to establish common goals and missions within their organizations.

Data was collected using a survey completed by 154 volunteer participants, along with interviews of 12 volunteer participants. A focus group of four volunteer participants was completed as well. The researcher also interviewed the leaders themselves to gain their own perspective of their leadership characteristics and ability to achieve constituent buy-in.

The survey results indicated at least 87%, and in many cases, over 90%, of constituents either *strongly agree* or *mildly agree* that his or her leader maintained control of his emotions (emotional intelligence), had an accurate understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses (emotional intelligence), communicated effectively (communication style), understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively (job competency), understood the follower's responsibilities and role within the organization (job competency), successfully communicated the vision of the organization (vision), and displayed ethical behavior (ethics) throughout the course of his job. The interviews and focus group provided anecdotes and personal testimony to support the results of the survey.

The most prevailing themes that emerged from the data related to creating constituent buy-in fell under Emotional Intelligence; specifically, relationship building and making a personal connection. To that end, participants in both groups stated that the leader made them feel ‘valuable,’ ‘important,’ ‘truly knew’ them and ‘cared about them’ as much in a personal way, if not more than in a professional way. Participants indicated the leaders were also good in the other four areas as well. Statements made regarding their communication style were ‘inspiring’ and ‘clear’ while data from participant responses about job competency were ‘a good coach’ and an ‘ability to make tough decisions.’ Responses about vision were consistent in both groups in that a larger percentage of participants noted they could ‘see” the direction the organization was going because of how the leader described it and they wanted to be a part of fulfilling it. Both leaders rated high in ethics as well.

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Thank you to the leaders that have impacted my life and career so profoundly: Jim Marsh, Jim Sefrit, Scott Holley, Pat McBride, and Larry Kindbom. All of you are the reason I wanted to study leadership at the doctoral level as well as pursue the highest professional leadership roles I can in order to influence as many people as I can.

My mom and dad have had to travel down a rough road the last several years. They always supported and encouraged me through childhood, sports, marriage, fatherhood, and now in completing my dissertation. I love you both very much.

To Madeline and Colton: you didn't really understand why I didn't see you until Tuesday nights after I put you to bed on Sundays. You just knew that daddy had 'college' on Mondays and that I wasn't going to get home until after you went to sleep. I also knew that it was hard for you both that I had to spend a lot of Saturdays writing, which meant we couldn't play. Well, I'm all done now; we can play as much as you want.

I'm not here without my wife, Stephanie. She was the first one to point out that I could be a high level leader. She encouraged me when I got down and pushed me when I was tired. She never once complained about the hours I was putting in to finish my doctorate. She is my heartbeat. Banana Shoes.

Lastly, to Jesus Christ who created the ultimate model of leadership. Starting with 12 broken and fallen men, over 2,000 thousand years, you changed the world, one relationship at a time.



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## Chapter One: Introduction

### Background

In September of 2008, the investment bank Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc. filed for Chapter 11 in the largest ever U.S. bankruptcy (Berlinger & Tyrangiel, 2013). The resulting impact of this bank's failure, as well as the bankruptcies of Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, and Merrill Lynch, led to thousands of lost jobs and billions of dollars in lost retirement funds, in addition to thousands of foreclosed homes. Despite signs that these organizations were not as healthy as they appeared, it could not be proven if the failed investment firms were unable, or unwilling to see the catastrophic results waiting to happen (Berlinger & Tyrangiel, 2013). While various theories were discussed, the immediate months following the closures created many questions to be answered (Berlinger & Tyrangiel, 2013; Reavis, 2012).

Five years after the financial crisis, an increased focus was placed to explore why these four powerful investment banks collapsed. Among the reasons discussed were those who worked within the stock market misjudged the role the U.S. government would play in bailing out failing banks, there was little regulation of bank procedures, and the perception that institutions were too large to effectively manage an efficient checks and balances system within each firm (Berlinger & Tyrangiel, 2013). This researcher believed one important reason initially overlooked was the role leadership played in these failures.

Collins (2001) described in his book, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap and Others Don't*, Level 5 leaders as those who were humble but had an unwavering drive to do what was best for the organization. A Level 5 leader could be any employee, within any organization and represents the level to which every employee,

especially leaders, should strive towards (Collins, 2001). That said, it was argued that a major reason for the financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent results, was because of arrogance and the desire to serve the self, which was the exact opposite of Collins' definition (Berlinger & Tyrangiel, 2013). Berlinger and Tyrangiel (2013) further supported this theory and noted even after the market collapse, bank executives were still paid large bonuses reinforcing a “graceless lack of self-awareness and a total lack of understanding about how the rest of the world and the rest of America looked at them” (p. 22). From this statement the researcher concluded the leaders of these banks were more concerned with ensuring their own wellbeing and not the financial future of those effected by the crisis.

While greed was accepted as a cause of the financial crisis of 2008, it was not proved that illegal activity played a role (Reavis, 2012). However, it was reasonable to expect that the CEOs and upper-level management of Lehman Brothers, Goldman Sach's, Morgan Stanley, and Merrill Lynch should have assumed some responsibility for the decisions made within their companies that led to the crisis. Therefore, because the financial crisis of 2008 may have brought to light characteristics of poor leadership, it also created a logical starting point in the discussion of the qualities of a successful leader.

### **Purpose**

A review of the literature supported a connection between leaders who gained the buy-in of their followers, based on their level of *emotional intelligence* (Batool, 2013; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee 2002a; Lilley, 2012; Mayer & Salovey, 1997),



*communication style* (Batool, 2013; deVries, Bakker-Pieper, & Oostenveld, 2010; Rath & Conchie, 2008), *job competency* (Hull & Allen, 2012; Kane, 1998), *vision* (Davis, 1998; Holland & Thom, 2012; Sutor, 2009), and level of *ethics* (Kane, 1998; Maguad & Krone, 2009; Viviano, 2012). This researcher found a limited number of studies on the similarities and differences of these leadership traits from one area of leadership to another, specifically from education to athletics and athletics to education (Carr, 2012; Stauffer, 1999). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the similarities and dissimilarities of leadership traits that may create leader buy-in; specifically, emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics, between an educational leader and a sports coach.

### **Rationale**

The participants in this study included one head of a Christian school and one head college football coach. The researcher investigated which leadership skills were similar and dissimilar between an educational leader and an athletic leader, using these two leaders as a source of data. Both the head of a Christian school and the head college football coach seemed to be held in high regard by those they led, they each served their respective organizations for over 25 years and demonstrated characteristics of success during their tenure of leadership.

Stauffer (1999) indicated that while a leader in one area may receive buy-in from his followers, a question still remained concerning if or how the same leader could elicit the same level of buy-in if they were to lead in another area. He supported his point by

quoting a professor of Business Administration and founding chairman of the Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California, Bennis (1989), who stated:

The answer depends on what qualities you list as leadership attributes and on the width of the division between the areas that a leader wishes to leap across. The successful Catholic cardinal or bishop probably would not do too well as football coach at Notre Dame. And Lou Holtz or the other great Notre Dame football coaches probably would not do too well heading General Motors. But the good news is that there are more than a few leaders who have demonstrated that success is transportable, provided the chasm they attempt to cross is not too wide. (p. 15)

Similar research investigated the transferability of leadership skills between various levels of school leadership, but not between a school leader and a sports coach (Hayne, 2005), and while similar to this researcher's two compared case studies, results showed a transfer of leadership skills between the military and civilian life (Dick, 2009).

Other literature examined the transferability of leadership traits from one area of leadership to another, but those studies were more than 20 years old (Bass, 1990). Bass (1990) pointed out Dwight D. Eisenhower's transition from a successful military career to university president, and then ultimately as President of the United States in the 1950's. Therefore, the rationale of this study was to contribute to more-recent literature that provided insight for leaders in multiple areas on how to transfer leadership skills to establish common goals and missions within their organizations.

### **Research Questions**

- 1) What leadership traits create constituent buy-in for leaders?

- 2) What are the similarities and dissimilarities in leadership traits from one area of leadership to another?
- 3) How do emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach?
- 4) How are the leadership traits emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics that create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach similar?
- 5) How are the leadership traits emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics that create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach different?

### **Limitations**

This research study involved two individual case studies; one of a perceived-successful leader in education and one of a perceived-successful leader in athletics. The educational leader was the former head of school at Midwest Christian Academy (a pseudonym), a seventh through 12th grade, private, Christian school in a suburban Midwest region. The athletic leader was the head football coach of Midwest University in Urban, Midwest State (a pseudonym).

The researcher surveyed 82 teachers and staff from Midwest Christian Academy, as well as interviewed 11 teachers and the leader who served as the subject of the case study. At Midwest University, the researcher surveyed 72 players and coaches in the football program. However, unlike the case of Midwest Christian Academy, the

researcher was only able to interview two players. Other players (n= 11) previously agreed to be interviewed but were unavailable during the time of the interview. The researcher attempted to contact each player who originally agreed to be interviewed by using the contact information provided, but none of the inquiries were answered. Therefore, a possible limitation was created by the small sample for interviews, thus possibly limiting an otherwise complete perspective on the head coach's ability to create buy-in from his constituents.

The researcher held a focus group with assistant coaches from the Midwest University football program. The group consisted of one assistant coach who worked six years under the head coach, an assistant coach who worked four years for the head coach, an assistant coach who worked one year for the head coach, and an assistant coach who just completed his first season under the leadership of the head coach. Another limitation was the assistant coaches who worked a season or less under the head coach possibly provided a limited perception of his leadership abilities.

### **Definitions of Terms**

**Buy-In** - Understanding, commitment, and action in support of an organization and/or a leader's goals (Walton, 2004).

**Communication Style** - "Distinctive set of interpersonal communicative behaviors geared toward the optimization of hierarchical relationships in order to reach certain group of individual goals" (deVries et al., 2010, p. 368).

**Emotional Intelligence** - "Subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the

information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Mayer & Salovey, 1990, as cited by Lilley, 2012, p. 22);

the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to assess and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge: and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, as cited by Lilley, 2012, p. 24)

**Ethics** - A set of moral principles or values (Carroll & Bucholz, 2006); sense of right and wrong and a proper application of that sense are necessary for leaders to be taken seriously and ultimately trusted (Suitor, 2009).

**Job Competency** - A basic understanding of administrative skill of the field a leader is in and a potentially deeper understanding of specific processes (Kane, 1998). Job competency will be developed and refined from knowledge and intuition gained through experience in the field as well as other aspects of an organization's community (Kane, 1998).

**Leadership** - Position, behaviors, personal traits, and/or the results of an individual's efforts (Hull & Allen, 2012); with an ability to influence, motivate, and enable employees to contribute toward organizational success (Lilley, 2012; Mosadeghrad & Ferdosi, 2013); exhibited by one who is able to clarify purpose while enhancing relationships (Smith, 2013).

**Long time, successful head football coach** - The longer the coaching tenure, the greater the success of the team (Eitzen & Yetman, 1972).

**Long time, successful head of school** - Having served some number of years that created a kind of rhythm and confidence in the administration, trustees, faculty, students, and alumni (Cooper, 2011).

**Vision** - The direction a leader sees an organization or employee going (Viviano, 2012); is crucial to effectively lead an organization into the next phase of its existence or aid an employee in reaching full potential in his role (Davis, 1998; Holland & Thom, 2012; Sutor, 2009).

### **Summary**

The financial crisis of 2008 brought to light characteristics of poor leadership characterized by decisions made by leaders in some of the world's largest financial institutions. The discussion on poor leadership led the researcher to the questions explored in this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the similarities and dissimilarities of leadership traits that created leader buy-in for an educational leader and a football coach; specifically, emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics, between an educational leader and a sports coach. The rationale of this study was to contribute to more-recent literature that may provide insight for leaders in multiple fields and settings on how to transfer leadership skills to establish common goals and missions within their organizations.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

Successful leaders get people to follow them; therefore, this literature review sought to examine the skill sets or personality traits possessed by successful leaders who created buy-in from those they led. Innumerable books and articles were written on leadership, and many trends, theories, and perspectives were discussed, proven and discredited. It was understood that successful leaders possess one or more qualities that allow them to lead effectively (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991), and that there was no one set of qualities that lead to successful leadership (Rath & Conchie, 2008). It is also important to understand that no single leader could possess every successful leadership trait (Duncan & Harlacher, 1991; Rath & Conchie 2008). Rath and Conchie (2008) further supported these thoughts by stating:

A leader needs to know his strengths as a carpenter knows his tools, or a physician knows the instruments at her disposal. What great leaders have in common is that they each truly know his or her strengths—and call on the right strength at the right time. This explains why there is no definitive list of characteristics that describes all leaders. (p. 13)

Establishing one definition of leadership can be daunting. Broadly speaking, Hull and Allen (2012) described leadership using such terms as position, behaviors, personal traits, and/or the results of an individual's efforts. It has also been said that leaders were to be able to influence, motivate, and enable employees to contribute toward organizational success (Lilley, 2012; Mosadeghrad & Ferdosi, 2013). Smith (2013) stated

that leadership consisted of being able clarify purpose while enhancing relationships, thus creating what he called abundant leadership.

Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) stated that effective leaders were simply unlike other people, possessing key traits that included “drive, their motive for leading, honesty, integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business” (p. 48). They unpacked further their use of the word drive as a broad term to include motivation, achievement, ambition, energy, tenacity, and initiative. These authors, along with others, also pointed out that there was not much empirical evidence though, for traits such as charisma, creativity, and flexibility (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008).

Goffee and Jones (2000) indicated for business executives, such as CEOs, COOs, CFOs, and vice presidents to lead effectively, they should find ways to selectively expose some of their own weaknesses. In other words, to admit to those they lead, when appropriate, that they were not strong in a particular area or skill of the business. This could elicit a sense of trust from the people they were leading, because the admission of weakness displays self-awareness (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Self-awareness was a key element of strong emotional intelligence that was crucial to effective leadership (Batool, 2013; Lilley, 2012). These business leaders must also rely heavily on their own intuition to help guide their decision-making, as well as to manage employees with tough empathy; that was to not give people what they want, but what they need.

In looking at the successful leadership qualities of community college presidents, Duncan and Harlacher (1991) quoted the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges:



Community college presidents increasingly will need to be coalition builders. No longer will the hierarchical model of the industrial period suffice. Moving beyond day-to-day operations, future community college presidents... must be able to collaborate, bring together various constituencies, build consensus, and encourage others within the college community as well. They will need to be creative men and women who can inspire others; . . . leaders whose vision is imbued with a larger sense to educational purpose and guided by clear education practices for the institution. (p. 39)

The concept of leaders who moved from one industry to the next and whether leadership qualities they possessed and used in one area of leadership were transferrable to another was researched (Bass, 1990; Stauffer, 1999). Stauffer (1999) stated there were five “staples of leadership” (p. 3). They were personal integrity, being able to understand and handle the many unknowns that existed in any situation, connect concepts that appeared to be opposites, communicate and work with people of all cultures, and demonstrate humility in success and courage in failure.

Much of the literature reviewed for this study revealed qualities for a broader view of leadership, as well as focus on specific characteristics of successful leaders. Many sources chose to create a composite picture, from their perspective, of what a successful leader was while others chose to focus on a specific leadership characteristic (Batool, 2013; Daniels, 2011; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Lilley, 2012; Viviano, 2012). Some used terms for leadership trait groupings, such as zones or clusters in an attempt to accurately identify successful leadership characteristics (Daniels, 2011; Lilley, 2012).

Because the terminology used to describe successful leaders was so widespread throughout the literature, it was important to categorize qualities of successful leaders as succinctly as possible, as it related to this research study. In looking at leadership terminology trends for this literature review, the researcher chose to summarize qualities of successful leadership according to the following terms: emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics.

It should be noted that, however a leader's role was defined, leadership was recognized as a demanding and complex job that must have a person with not just the requisite traits, but also a plan for using them, in order for him or her to have a positive impact on the organization led (Daniels, 2011; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). Based on the opinion of the researcher, the long and perhaps even controversial history of the study of leadership will continue to be a subject with no finite end. But it must continue to be studied so that leaders in all areas have access to the best scientifically proven methods of successful leadership.

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Much research supported the importance of strong emotional intelligence skills in maximizing the positive impact and influence a leader can have on the organization he or she leads (Batool, 2013; Goleman et al., 2002a; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002b; Lilley, 2012; Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Viviano, 2012). Mayer and Salovey (1990) first introduced the term emotional intelligence having defined it as a "subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions"

(as cited in Lilley, 2012, p. 22). Mayer and Salovey (1997) refined their original definition having identifying emotional intelligence as

the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to assess and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge: and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (as cited in Lilley, 2012, p. 24)

Since the findings of Mayer and Salovey first became known, Daniel Goleman became perhaps the greatest contributor to the area of emotional intelligence and was responsible for the creation of the term Emotional Quotient (EQ) (as cited by Batool, 2013). It was thought that one's EQ, or measure of emotional intelligence, could be used a predictor of success in life (Batool, 2013; Lilley, 2012).

Three major emotional intelligence models, or ways of viewing emotional intelligence, emerged as research on this topic expanded. The models were similar in that they are were based on awareness of emotions and management of emotions. But, there was some disagreement on whether the models were based purely on intellect and cognitive abilities, or a combination of both cognitive and personality elements (Lilley, 2012). Despite the differences in opinion, Goleman et al.'s (2002a, 2002b) model seemed to have been solidified as the leader in connecting a high degree of emotional intelligence with successful leadership application in the workforce (Batool, 2013; Lilley, 2012).

Goleman et al. (2002a) connected emotional intelligence to one's self-awareness having stated, "understanding one's own emotions, personal strengths and improvement

areas, and individual values are all part of strong self-awareness skills” (as cited in Lilley, 2012, p. 27). Effective leaders must know who they are before they can lead others (Lilley 2012; Rath & Conchie, 2008). A leader should also not ask of his or herself, or an organization should not ask of its leader, to try to become an expert in all areas of leadership. While organizations may want leaders who are great communicators, visionary thinkers, and able to follow through and get things done, it is not possible for one leader to be an expert in every area. In fact, leaders should not even strive for competency in all areas, because that will actually decrease their effectiveness (Rath & Conchie, 2008).

When Davies became Chairman of Standard Chartered Bank of the UK, a bank that actually saw economic growth during a financial crisis, he started building a diverse leadership group composed of people with very different backgrounds and personalities. This was key to his success because he understood his own strengths and limitations; therefore, he felt it vital to surround himself with people who could do specific things much better than he could (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Davies was aware of what he did and did not know and realized that he did not have to be the smartest person in the room. This awareness allowed him to be able to implement a plan for success using the skills and intelligence of many different people, including himself (Rath & Conchie, 2008).

Years before his tenure, Davies’ philosophy was supported by a statement made by President John F. Kennedy who said, “Strong leaders surround themselves with advisors, not admirers” (Suitor, 2009, p. 15). This statement can be interpreted to mean successful leaders have to surround themselves with people who are strong in areas

where they are not and are free to express their views without fear. This crucial practice allows for the best chance of the right decisions to be made in the pursuit of furthering any organization (Goffee & Jones, 2000; Rath & Conchie, 2008; Viviano, 2012).

Self-management, or self-regulation of emotions depends heavily on one's emotional intelligence. Being self-regulated means one stays in control of his or her emotions (Batool, 2013). Leaders who exhibited control over their emotions, that is could regulate themselves, appeared more even-tempered, especially when under stress. They rarely verbally attacked others, made impulsive or emotional decisions, compromised their beliefs, and were able to exude more confidence from those they led (Batool, 2013; Lilley, 2012), and had a better chance of leading successful organizations (Viviano, 2012). Dungy, former head coach in the National Football League won a Super Bowl, American professional football's world championship, while with the Indianapolis Colts. Though he acknowledged there were times his voice needed to be raised to create urgency or get a player's attention, he believed that to earn and maintain credibility and trust with his team he must stay in control of his emotions at all times and not yell as a primary means of communicating with players and coached on the field (Dungy, 2007).

Batool (2013) also identified a strong correlation between social skills and emotional intelligence, having stated strong social skills were vital to building healthy relationships. Having the ability to build a strong relationship with one's leader was critical in the success for any organization, whether in education, business, or athletics. (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Most people wanted to feel their leader cared about them on a personal level, were willing to listen to them when they had input to share or a concern to

discuss, and shared a general connectedness with them (Miller & Blanchard, 2001).

When these elements of relationship building occurred, a positive environment could be established, thus creating a viable workplace. This was so, because people naturally responded better in a positive work climate (Cloud, 2013). Positive emotions created a happier atmosphere where people could thrive (Cloud, 2013). Happy people were usually more optimistic, helpful, creative, and productive (Goleman et al., 2002b, as cited in Lilley, 2012). When people felt connected to each other and supportive of each other, the brain was happiest, and the highest functioning (Cloud, 2013). The feeling of connection between workers then leads to trust. When trust was present productivity and efficiency were at their highest, because time was not wasted in trying to establish trust (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Brad Anderson, former CEO of Best Buy was very skillful in relationship building. According to Rath and Conchie (2008), one employee remarked of Anderson,

He could walk in to a store and make each employee feel like the most important contributor because he asks each person what he or she is doing, what's getting *them* excited, and what *they're* seeing in the store. He is genuinely curious about people and their own life story. (p. 65)

Anderson, who started his career at Best Buy as a sales associate, over time worked his way up to the board level of the company. He was part of the strategic planning process that helped Best Buy revolutionize the electronics industry by eliminating commission-based sales by its employees (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Initially criticized for this model, other similar companies followed suit and this sales plan

eventually became the standard in electronic device sales (Rath & Conchie, 2008).

According to the Rath and Conchie, Anderson's relationship-building approach served as one example of how showing interest in the input of those one leads can lead to successful relationship building which ultimately played a key role in the success of an organization.

Henry and Hope (2013) attempted to connect school principals' emotional intelligence and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Prior research contended that a leader's emotional intelligence impacted organizational success (Goleman et al., 2002a). And while some leaders' success was connected to their emotional intelligence, the study by Henry and Hope actually could not confirm a connection between principals' emotional intelligence and AYP. Henry and Hope (2013) proposed more research could be done to discover why some principals met AYP while others did not.

Some leaders possessed strong emotional intelligence skills naturally while others learned those skills (Lilley, 2012). But whether innate or developed, a leader's action and leadership style, which were connected to emotional intelligence, directly impacted an organization's climate (Lilley, 2012). Organizational climate, therefore, directly impacted productivity and employee retention (Goleman et al., 2002b), two things necessary for a successful organization. So, if "everything rises and falls on leadership" (Miller & Blanchard, 2001, p. ix), then it is evident a high level of emotional intelligence is a must for successful leaders.

### **Communication Style**

DeVries et al. (2010) stated a leader's communication style was a "distinctive set of interpersonal communicative behaviors geared toward the optimization of hierarchical relationships in order to reach certain group of individual goals" (p. 368). Leaders who were good communicators could manage change effectively and resolve conflicts diplomatically (Batool, 2013). "They are just as open to hearing bad news as good news and they are experts at getting their team to support them and be excited about a new mission or project" (Batool, p. 90). Communication style could be divided into individual constructs based upon which part of communication style one wanted to focus on (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). Researchers discussed how much information leaders should or could communicate to their followers and what type of communication leaders should use to motivate those they lead. Two examples follow:

**How much to communicate.** Rath and Conchie (2008) connected how much information leaders communicated to their employees with how much those employees trusted their leaders. They pointed out the chance of employees being engaged at work when they did not trust the company's leaders was 1 in 12. On the other hand, when employees did trust leadership, the chance of employee engagement during the workday changed to 1 in 2. In 2011, a St. Louis area high school suddenly dismissed a teacher amid allegations of misconduct with a student. Teachers and staff were not informed of the specific allegations regarding the incident in question until several weeks later. The lack of communication caused a slight drop in morale and created a level of mistrust by teachers of administration. Incidentally, the administrator in charge of that situation later



apologized to the staff for the delay of communication in such a serious matter (J. Marsh, personal communication, 2012).

Davies believed in over communication because it would help build an organization that had “heart and soul” (as cited by Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 50). His philosophy of over communicating everything he was doing and why he was doing it helped him quickly form relationships with key shareholders, business partners, customers, and employees (Rath & Conchie, 2008).

Pierce and Newstrom (2008) told a story about Sirroco, who served in a mid-level management role for BBG Industries in the Glass Research and Development Automations Section. According to the story, people on the team Sirroco managed came from diverse educational and professional backgrounds, including a PhD in mathematics, computer operators with high school diplomas, electrical engineers, and various research personnel (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). In order to prevent potential communications barriers, Sirroco held informal group meetings once per month where team members could freely discuss any problems they had, gain clarification on various items, and bounce ideas off one another, all while being in a relaxed, non-threatening environment. Each team member had opportunities to make informal presentations of what he or she was working on, thus giving them a sense of contribution to the group. Pierce and Newstrom (2008) continued to point out that because of the relaxed atmosphere in these meetings, team members became very comfortable with each other. Over time, work conversations turned into conversations about life and family. Business relationships turned into friendships where everyone could depend on someone else to help them in a

time of need. One such time was when five team members helped out another whose basement flooded during a rainstorm. Sirroco's communication style of holding not just regular meetings, but creating a culture of ease within those meetings, helped advance the success of this particular company.

It should be understood though that there are certain situations where there are legal implications of confidentiality or simple discretion needs to be used to protect an individual's privacy (Essex, 2012). It is in these cases that a leader's philosophy of communication should not be under scrutiny. The leader must have freedom to discern what information needs to be private and what can be shared with the organization.

**Communication to create motivation.** The type of motivating language used by leaders when communicating with followers, whether verbal or non-verbal, proved to have an influence on performance (deVries et al., 2010; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012). Leaders who used a supportive, friendly, caring, and/or warm, communication style tended to elicit higher levels of satisfaction and buy-in from those they led (deVries et al., 2010). The type of language or tone a leader used to motivate his or her followers may be connected to his or her ability to excite and influence. In fact, trust was even earned by a leader's ability to inspire and instill enthusiasm (Viviano, 2012). In the field of athletics, coaches were well known for giving inspirational speeches as a means of motivating their teams, as well as for using incentives for motivation, such as days off, increased playing time, and public recognition, as ways of motivating their athletes (Dungy, 2007; Knight 2013).

Coaches were known to also use negativity as a motivator, specifically through fear (Knight, 2013). The fear of loss of playing time, letting down the team, punishment, or being yelled at by the coach, were all examples. The effectiveness of fear as a motivational tool, whether in athletics or otherwise, was debatable. Cloud (2013) stated when persons felt they were under a negative threat from a leader who ruled with harshness, anger, or negative tones, their high level brain functions became inhibited and they moved into a fight or flight mode. That is they either pushed back or moved away. Therefore, it could be argued that leaders using this method of motivation may actually get less of what they want.

Former college basketball coach Knight's motivational style contradicted the claims by Cloud (2013). Knight used negativity as a motivator on many occasions. Telling his team they were not good enough to win a game, yelling, ridiculing, and even some physical contact with players were not uncommon actions. Yet, his basketball programs won three national championships in the 1970's and 1980's, sent numerous players into professional basketball, and produced 902 wins over 43 years while he was a head coach (Knight, 2013).

Regardless of one's belief on the best way to communicate motivation to those they lead, "inspirational leadership involves guiding and motivating with compelling vision; leaders who inspire both create resonance and move people with a shared mission" (Goleman et al., 2002a; as cited in Lilley, 2012, p. 32). The type of language or tone a leader chooses to use when communicating, the amount of information a leader

chooses to communicate, or the way a leader chooses to motivate, are all necessary elements of communication style that must be considered for effective leadership.

The term transformational leadership was closely linked to communication style (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). Bass (1985) developed a model of transformational leadership that was widely accepted as a way organizations could help employees exceed standard performance expectations. That is, there was a ‘transformation’ of the followers’ attitudes, beliefs, and values that served as a catalyst for employees to succeed, as opposed to followers simply complying with rules or directions. Leaders could inspire that transformation through the way they communicated (Marques, 2013; Stern, 2014). Bass (1985) defined ‘inspirational communication’ by stating that it came from certain leaders who were gifted in using animated, dynamic talks that appealed to the emotions of their followers. This style of communication helped the followers look beyond their own self-interests for the good of the organization or team, thus further facilitating the transformation. Pierce and Newstrom (2008) supported Bass by having identified inspirational communication as an important component of transformational leadership.

There was also a negative side to inspirational communicators. Pierce and Newstrom (2008) pointed out that people who were gifted in communicating may at times present information that made their vision seem easier to attain or even more appealing than it actually was. They referred to this as “manipulation through impression” (p. 439). Creating an unrealistic or false picture of an organization’s vision or current status could prove to be costly because the truth would eventually come to light, which could then discredit the leader or leaders. Whether the misrepresentation of

facts was intentional or unintentional, there was ultimately a loss of trust. One of the most common factors in damage to trust was poor communication (Marques, 2013).

Communication styles vary greatly. Philosophies on how much information to communicate to followers or how a leader chose to use communication to motivate could take on many different forms. However, Meyer (2014) stated for leaders to have an effective communication style they “must strive to communicate simply, clearly, and explicitly” (p. 1), foster a culture that encourages those they lead to openly debate issues and ideas with each other, and continue working to establish and maintain communication patterns that build consensus among team members.

### **Job Competency**

Job competency could be defined as a basic understanding of administrative skill of the field that a leader or individual was in and a potentially deeper understanding of specific processes (Kane, 1998). Job competency would be developed and refined from knowledge and intuition gained through experience in the field, as well as other aspects of an organization’s community (Kane, 1998). Welch, former president of General Electric, and Hatsopolous of Thermo Electron Corporation, served as examples of leaders with a high degree of job competency. Welch held a PhD in engineering, while Hatsopolous possessed a high degree of the business knowledge needed for energy-efficient appliances and the technical expertise in thermodynamics to create gas furnaces that operated with greater efficiency (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008).

Harvard professor, Kotter contended that in addition to formal education, industry specific experience was crucial to achieve job competency. Most of the successful leaders

he studied spent several years in the same industry, while leaders who struggled did not have industry specific experience (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). In fact, only 40% of the leaders in a study by Bennis and Nanus held business degrees (as cited by Pierce & Nestrom, 2008, p. 78). Whether a leader possessed a strong formal education, a lot of business experience, or a combination of both, deep knowledge of the industry they led in allowed them to make educated, wise decisions and be able to understand the ramifications of those decisions (Fernandez-Araoz, 2014; Pierce & Newstrom, 2008; Stern, 2014).

Fernandez-Araoz (2014) discussed a paper written by McClellan in 1973. In the paper, McClellan proposed that instead of intelligence, managers be evaluated on specific skills or competencies that helped predict a high level performance for the roles they were hired into. Because during that time, the advent of technology within industry made jobs more complicated, the experience or performance in lower positions was irrelevant. Instead, jobs were broken down into competencies and the focus of the search for candidates to fill those jobs was on the right combination of them (Fernandez-Araoz, 2014).

Fernandez-Araoz (2014) also presented a counter point to McClellan's five qualities necessary for good leadership, unrelated to skills or competencies. Fernandez-Araoz (2014) described motivation, curiosity, engagement, insight, and determination as more important for success. In the article, the story of Algorta was told to support the position of these qualities creating a greater chance of success over skills or competencies. Algorta was a member of a rugby team from Uruguay involved in a plane

crash in the Andes Mountains between Chile and Argentina in 1972. Sixteen of the 45 people on board survived the crash, resulting injuries, and cold weather. But it took over two months for them to be rescued. Algorta was credited for helping the group survive.

He demonstrated his motivation by playing a critical yet humble role—providing sustenance for the explorers who would eventually march out to save the group.

He melted snow for them to drink and cut and dried small pieces of flesh from the dead bodies of fellow victims to serve as food. Instead of succumbing to despair, Algorta became curious about the environment around him, taking an interest in the water coming off the ice. It flowed east, leading him, and only him, to the insight that the dying pilot had misreported their position; they were on the Argentine side of the mountain range, not on the Chilean side. His engagement and determination were also clear over those 72 days. He faithfully tended to his dying friend, Arturo Nogueira, who had suffered multiple leg fractures, trying to distract the young man from his pain. He encouraged his fellow survivors to maintain hope and persuaded them all to condone the consumption of their own bodies, should they die, describing it as an act of love. (Fernandez-Araoz, 2014, p. 1).

According to Fernandez-Araoz (2014), Algorta went on to become a successful CEO of a company in an industry in which he had no prior experience. The author contended while the experience of running a company was not the same as being stranded for two months in the mountains after a plane crash, the qualities Algorta possessed to

save himself and the other people with him were the same qualities he used to successfully lead an organization.

Hull and Allen (2012) supported the idea that it was important for leaders to possess job competency. They outlined a good example in General Robert E. Lee, of the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, during the Battle of Antietam. This battle occurred during the Civil War on September 17, 1862. At this point during the war, about the two-year mark, the South was out-manned and out-armed by the North, or Union Army, led by General George McClellan. On more than one occasion during this battle McClellan's army could have defeated Lee and the South, but for a variety of reasons, did not. One of those reasons was Lee's mastery of military strategy and logistics (Hull & Allen, 2012). Having earned perfect scores in artillery, infantry, and cavalry while at West Point, during the Battle of Antietam, Lee knew exactly what site to choose for battle and the most advantageous positions for his troops (Hull & Allen, 2012). Lee's idea was to set his men up in the shape of a semicircle so they could defend a perimeter of land while controlling the inside. Because of this 'hub and spoke' concept, Lee only had to move his troops short distances to fend off the Northern army and was always in close proximity to the necessary artillery. Hull and Allen (2012) stated Lee's decision to set up this way played a large role in the South's success in this battle. Incidentally, the hub and spoke concept, created by Lee, was the same concept used at the time of this writing by the delivery company, Federal Express. They built their hub in the Memphis, Tennessee, airport so they could fly almost all of packages through Memphis to other parts of the U.S. (Hull & Allen, 2012).



Some research seemed to indicate for leaders to be successful they should have a basic understanding of administrative skill of the field they are in and a potentially deeper understanding of specific processes (Hull & Allen, 2012; Kane, 1998). High profile, or even famous leaders, demonstrated difficulty in staying connected to some of the details of daily operations. They could get caught up in pride and attention that came with their success, losing touch with the health of the organization (Michel, 2014). While delegation of responsibilities was important, the big picture leader must still be aware of what decisions were being made (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008).

Iacocca, former president of Chrysler was responsible for leading the turnaround of the automaker in the 1980's. As a result of his success and charismatic personality, he became a best-selling author and philanthropist. But outside distractions took his focus off of his main task of leading the company (Iacocca & Novak, 1984). Iacocca admitted, "If I made one mistake, it was delegating all of the product development and not going to a single meeting" (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008, p. 441).

Zenger and Folkman (2014) explored the notion of whether leaders should possess different skills at different levels. In that they asked two questions: "Are some skills less important for leaders at certain levels of the organization? Or is there is a set of skills fundamental to every level" (p. 1). They compiled data from 332,860 people at various leadership levels within several different organizations (p. 2). Respondents were given a choice of 16 competencies to choose from and were asked to select which ones were most important. Job competency accounted for four of the top 10 choices by

respondents. Specifically, “Solves problems and analyzes issues, drives for results, displays technical or professional expertise, and displays a strategic perspective” (p. 2).

One way leaders could increase job competency was through what Groysberg (2014) called ‘developmental assignments.’ He contended that people who were given projects and tasks outside of their comfort zones would provide them exposure to new ways of doing things and new people who do them. This exposure kept their skill set current allowing them to keep up with changing trends within a particular industry. It allowed for adaptations to protect the future health of the organization, as well preserve the career of the leader (Groysberg, 2014).

In a study by Freeman and Kochan (2013), titled “University Presidents: Perspectives of the Knowledge and Competencies Needed in the 21st Century Higher Education Leadership,” 13 university presidents shared their perceptions of what was necessary for an effective presidency. Among their findings for essential job competencies were personal attributes, such as develop a personal sense of vision, humility, empathy, be able to connect with people, team building, ability to express concepts in everyday language, and work ethic, as well as fundraising, strategic planning, writing to diverse audiences, speaking to diverse audiences, and being able to work with and relate with diverse populations. The authors admitted that while the findings of the study may not be applicable to all presidents it gave a perspective, which could be helpful to a variety of organizations and constituencies (Freeman & Kochan, 2013).

Kane (1998) believed a leader’s job competency was developed and refined from knowledge and intuition gained through experience in the field, as well as other aspects

of an organization's community. Pierce and Newstrom, (2008) echoed Kane, having stated that an effective leader of an organization should have at least some initial experience working within a particular industry, but then be allowed to refine that experience over time, in order to ensure the best success a fulfilling the mission (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008).

### **Vision**

Viviano (2012) defined vision as the direction a leader sees an organization or employee going and crucial to effectively leading an organization into the next phase of its existence, or aid an employee in reaching full potential in his or her role (Davis, 1998; Holland & Thom, 2012; Suitor, 2009). Holland and Thom (2012) stated that, in business, market analysts looked for a clear vision of what the organization needed to achieve, in analyzing the health of a company. Suitor (2009) said the leader must be aware of where the organization or employee was and is at the time of the reflection, in order to see that vision come to fruition. Bennis (1989) stated that having vision was what created focus and set the agenda for an organization. It also helped the followers develop confidence in the leader. Davis (1998) gave an example of how vision could be applied in education, "A successful school principal needs to be able to diagnose the status of the school, identify critical areas in need of improvement, and establish a focused game plan for addressing needs" (p. 2).

Vision also connected with a sense of the organization's values, included long-term perspective beyond the day's crisis, and could be considered the 'heart and soul' of the organization; it was considered indispensable (Suitor, 2009). A successful leader

needed a vision for where he or she sees an organization or employee going, but that vision needed to be engrained in the culture of that organization. It should be a common vision understood, if not shared by all (Viviano, 2012).

Perhaps a misconception was that a leader had to possess a grandiose or idyllic picture of what the perfect organization should look like. While some leaders were gifted with creative visionary thinking, most were not (Davis, 1998). Though creativity in this area may be helpful, it was not always necessary. In other words, the visionary leader was one who knew what needed to be done, the steps to take in getting it done, and what the finished product would look like (Davis, 1998; Holland & Thom, 2012; Sutor, 2009). They also knew that process and the finished product were constantly evolving. They must be willing to stretch their own thinking, as well as accept the input of those around them to ensure the right course was charted (Davis, 1998; Goffee & Jones, 2000; Rath & Conchie, 2008).

In Pierce and Newstrom's (2008) report of a paper written by Conger and Kanungo, they connected vision to charismatic leadership. A person had charisma when he or she had profound and extraordinary effects on followers, because of the force of personalities (House & Baetz, 1979). Charisma was also a Greek word meaning gift (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). Charismatic leaders were shown to be more successful at getting followers to believe in their visions, especially if it seemed like it was almost unattainable.

The more idealized or utopian the goal advocated by the leader, the more discrepant, it is relative to the status quo. And, the greater the discrepancy of the

goal from the status quo, the more likely followers will attribute extraordinary vision to the leader. (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008, p. 354)

A leader became charismatic, when “he/she succeeds in changing his/her followers’ attitudes toward to accept the advocated vision” (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008, p. 354). Non-charismatic leaders on the other hand, tended to establish goals that were not too far from the status quo and were less forceful in sharing their views. Their visions could still be attained, but with less of the force of their personalities and more on the consensus of the followers (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008).

It may be logical to connect vision with one’s ability to inspire and motivate through communication, or inspirational communication. In fact, it was widely presented in Pierce and Newstrom (2008) that acceptance and carrying out of a leader’s vision by the followers depended to some extent on his or her ability to communicate. But, some research suggested that there should be a distinction between vision and inspirational communication (Barbuto, 1997; McClelland, 1975). Inspiration was defined by Downton (1973) as the action or power of moving emotions and intellect. Likewise, Yukl (1981) stated, “The extent to which a leader stimulates enthusiasm among subordinates for the work of the group and says things to build subordinate confidence in their ability to perform assignments successfully and attain group objectives” was inspiration (p. 121). The danger, according to Pierce and Newstrom (2008), of aligning inspirational communication and vision too closely was that inspirational communication may be used to simply cater to the emotions of followers, without real belief by the followers in the leader’s vision. For the purposes of this literature review any references to inspirational

communication will be defined as “the expression of positive and encouraging messages about the organization and statements that build motivation and confidence” (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008, p. 395). Any references to vision were defined as *the* direction a leader sees an organization or employee going (Viviano, 2012) and was crucial to effectively leading an organization into the next phase of its existence, or aid an employee in reaching full potential in his or her role (Davis, 1998; Holland & Thom, 2012; Suito, 2009).

Organizations with a clear vision that was understood by all stakeholders were able to create a tension between what is current and what could be, and have the ability to encourage people to work to reduce the distance between the two (Fritz, 1996; Pierce & Newstrom, 2008). For example, in education where school culture lends itself to teachers being isolated and having a common, clearly articulated vision, allowed teachers to share a common language, have the same expectations, and work together to fulfill the goals established (Lashway, 1997).

While vision may start with a leader and be initially communicated by him or her, a key responsibility of the leader was to make sure that vision continued to be pursued. Starratt (1995) stated the vision must be ‘institutionalized.’ He said all elements of an organization, such as budgeting, staff evaluation, project development, and personnel, must all be carried out with the vision in mind, or the leader begins to lose credibility. But leaders must also be able to help followers practically apply the vision in their own jobs (Starratt, 1995).

In education specifically,

Above all, principals must create a climate and a culture for change. They do this by speaking about the vision often and enthusiastically; by encouraging experiments; by celebrating successes and forgiving failures; and by remaining steadfast in the face of the inevitable problems and missteps. Experience has given advocates of vision a new appreciation for the difficulties involved, removing any illusions about a magic bullet. Yet they remain optimistic about its potential. As schools work through the challenges of vision ‘they discover that they perhaps can make the impossible possible. (Lashway, 1997, p. 4)

In 1999, former basketball coach, Wooden, was named the greatest collegiate coach of the 20th century by ESPN, and was also the first person inducted into Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player and coach, having won ten national championships as head coach of the UCLA Bruins (Perez, Van Horn, & Otten, 2014; Wooden & Carty, 2005). Wooden was a skillful visionary leader. Over a 17-year period he constructed a way to present his vision for achieving success that could be applied in athletics, business, and life. He created what he called a Pyramid of Success (Perez et al., 2014; Wooden & Carty, 2005). Wooden defined success as “peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to do your best to become the best you are capable of becoming” (Perez, 2014, p. 85).

According to Perez (2014) the pyramid consisted of building ‘blocks’ positioned in a hierarchical order, creating the shape of a pyramid, with each block containing a specific trait needed to be successful, according to Wooden’s definition. Coach Wooden used 15 different words in his pyramid to describe his vision for achieving success with

the cornerstone being “Industriousness - hard work” (p. 88). Other examples included “Enthusiasm - sincere, stimulating, and contagious love for what we are doing” (p. 89), “Self-Control - self-generated thoughts or actions that require self-discipline and good judgment based upon one’s mental and physical performance” (p. 90), and “Team Spirit - a genuine consideration for others; an eagerness to sacrifice personal interests of glory for the welfare of all” (p. 93). The pinnacle block was “Competitive Greatness - being our very best when our environment requires it” (p. 96).

When casting the vision of an organization, whether it is in business, education, or athletics, it is the responsibility of the leader to help the followers relate to it. That is, to feel some ownership of it and be able to apply it in the daily aspects of their roles. To do this takes communication, reinforcement, and modeling from the leader on a regular basis, for followers to continue buy-in to the vision and for the leader to maintain credibility with those he or she leads (Fritz, 1996; Perez et al, 2014; Pierce & Newstrom, 2008; Viviano, 2012).

### **Ethics**

Ethics was defined as a set of moral principles or values (Carroll & Bucholz, 2006) and “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision making” (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008, p. 55). That sense of right and wrong and a proper application of that sense were necessary for leaders to be effective and ultimately trusted (Suitor, 2009; Thompson, Thach, & Morelli, 2010). This sense of right and wrong and its application



projected an expression of honesty, thought, and action, while staying devoted to the principles and the profit of the organization. They were the “basis for the creation of trust that must be earned” (Suitor, 2009, p. 1). Maguad and Krone (2009) used the term moral leadership when discussing ethics. They stated that someone who practiced moral leadership always strove to operate within the confines of the highest ethical standards, based on respect for one’s rights, justice, and fairness. They continued to point out that the moral leader contradicted someone who operated under an amoral philosophy. That is, they felt the rules of business and life were different, therefore their actions and behaviors did not take into consideration whether their actions or behaviors were ethical or not. Leaders who conducted themselves on the job or in life without following high ethical standards would ultimately see the failure of the organization they led (Kane, 1998; Maguad & Krone, 2009). Conversely, an organizational climate that was ethical, fostered openness and trust, thus leading to higher employee satisfaction and greater positive results (Maguad & Krone, 2009).

In a study published in the *Journal of Educational Leadership in Action*, Bhattarai (2013) looked at identifying how the ethics of educational administrators were practiced in public secondary schools in Nepal, India. The study determined a professional code of conduct for school leaders should be clearly defined, thoroughly internalized, and focused on the context and culture of where the school leaders served. One way to accomplish this was to have stakeholders within the school, including teachers, parents, and administrators spend time discussing and establishing codes of conduct for school administrators. Including representatives from all areas of a school community could

create a “feeling of ownership, responsibility, and commitment” (p. 1). Bhattarai (2013) added there was no “silver bullet macro model” (p. 1) to establish a solid code of ethics within every environment or culture. It is up to individual settings to establish the ethical standards based on their specific stakeholders needs.

Bass and Steidlmeier (2004) stated that ethics in leadership can be examined from multiple perspectives, specifically:

The moral character of the leader, the ethical legitimacy of the values embedded in the leader’s vision, articulation, and program which followers either embrace or reject; the morality of the processes of social ethical choice and action that the leaders and followers engage in and collectively pursue. (p. 182)

Pierce and Newstrom (2008) outlined circumstances that influenced ethical leadership, stating the importance of it depended partly on the job context. That is, the more often employees’ work situations involved ethical situations, the more likely a leader’s ethical behavior would affect followers’ attitudes and conduct toward the subject. Members of an organization who worked in positions that span greater boundaries of responsibilities might have found themselves more ethically ambiguous than workers who were protected within a specific part of the organization (Thompson, 1967). These people possibly needed more guidance in making ethical decisions. Jones (1991) stated the higher the moral risk of ethical decisions, the more chances for leaders to display or perhaps not display ethical leadership to their followers. In either case, the volume of ethical decisions a leader made or the gravity of those decisions could communicate the leader’s level of ethics to those they lead thus affecting trust of the

leader in either a positive or negative direction (Pierce & Newstrom 2008). Steinbauer, Renn, Taylor, and Njoroge, (2014) looked at how a leader's ethical decision making affects followers, as well as if follower's use of "deliberate application of self-leadership" (p. 381) had an effect on moral judgment. The authors found that ethical behavior was enhanced greater if self-leadership was combined with ethical-leadership.

A leader needed to be able to communicate his or her vision for an organization in order for it to be believed in and implemented by the followers (Bass, 1985; Downton, 1973; Viviano, 2012; Yukl, 1981). While there could be many styles of communication, a leader had to determine which way best fit his or her personality. Storytelling was one such way. Auvinen, Lamsa, Sintonen, and Takala (2013) looked at how manipulation through storytelling exerted influence in leadership. The authors contended that even though manipulation had a negative connotation, the topic was actually too complex to assume it was always an unethical way of acting in leadership, and there may be situations where it was not unethical, if not necessary. For example, leaders may need to "soften hard facts of a situation to avoid annoyance or grief and maintain a good atmosphere" (p. 429). While technically, manipulative story telling may have occurred, if the leader's intentions were in the interest of the greater good of the organization, it was acceptable (Auvinen et al., 2013).

Thompson et al. (2010) examined the challenges of implementing ethical leadership within organizations. They stated several practices organizations could create and implement to help foster a culture that exuded ethical behavior. Among those practices were: establishing a code of conduct, transmitting behavioral standards through

training and other forms of communication, adding safeguards to prevent lapses in ethical behavior, and allowing for a whistleblower policy. Surprisingly though, in their study of 128 leaders, the findings showed several organizations were not following through on recommended practices that promoted ethical behavior among employees (p. 107). In fact, there were instances where leaders witnessed unethical behavior but chose not to report the incidents. The results of their study reinforced their belief that implementation of ethical leadership was challenging. They contended that too many organizations were behind when it came to overseeing ethical practices. Thompson et al. (2010) concluded by saying if organizations were to have a culture where employees stood up for values and ethics, leaders must make sure their practices were “credible, trustworthy, confidential, and safeguarding” (p. 127). Otherwise, there was no incentive for anyone to follow any code of conduct.

A leader’s ethical behavior played a crucial role in his or her ability to establish trust from those they led. Viviano (2012) believed trust was earned through the character development and leadership skills of supervisors. It was also believed that leaders must maintain an ability to be honest, regardless of consequences if they were to be truly effective (Kane, 1998; Maguad & Krone, 2009; Thompson et al., 2010).

### **Summary**

This review of literature indicated successful leadership needed to include some degree of emotional intelligence, effective communication, job competency, vision, and ethics (Holland & Thom, 2012). It should be pointed out that all of these areas were interconnected. For example, to establish a vision, a leader needed to build positive

relationships (Davis, 1998). For a leader to be able to motivate positively he or she must be in tune with his or her own emotions and the emotions of those led (Cloud, 2013; Viviano, 2012). Leaders who were effective in casting the vision for the organization they led were effective communicators (Pierce & Newstrom, 2008), and so on. For leaders to serve and grow all of these areas in the organization they lead, they must have enough awareness of their strengths and weaknesses so they can build on what they are good at and put other leaders in places where they are not as good; and so on. Possession of all of these qualities by the leader and/or their leadership team would lead to trust by the followers and result in a successful, healthy organization (Holland & Thom, 2012; Rath & Conchie, 2008).

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

#### **Overview**

This study investigated how emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics contributed to constituent buy-in of a perceived-successful leader in both fields of education and athletics. A combination of surveys, one-on-one interviews, and a focus group were used to as methods to gather the data. All data was analyzed and results are presented in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

In gaining access to the participant samples, the researcher considered that his own relationships with the leaders investigated were already established. The relationship with the head of a Christian school developed through the natural course of the researcher's job as a teacher and coach at the school where the investigated leader investigated worked. The relationship with the head college football coach developed through common friendships, along with previous experiences in working together at a youth football camp.

In gathering data about the perceived-successful educational leader, the researcher recruited a sample of faculty and staff from Midwest Christian Academy, the school that employed the researcher. These samples were chosen because much of the faculty and staff worked under the perceived-successful educational leader examined in the study.

To examine characteristics of a leader in the field of athletics, the researcher also recruited sampled participants from the Midwest University-Urban football program. The researcher verified that this organization was identified in the field of athletics as one that employed a successful leader in its head coach, through testimonials from former players

and coaches of the Midwest University football program. The researcher also chose this team for sample recruitment because of a personal connection within the program that aided in gaining access.

### **Purpose**

A review of the literature supported a connection between leaders who gained buy-in from their followers based on their levels of *emotional intelligence* (Batool, 2013; Goleman et al., 2002a; Lilley, 2012; Mayer & Salovey, 1997), *communication style* (Batool, 2013; deVries et al., 2010; Rath & Conchie, 2008), *job competency* (Hull & Allen, 2012; Kane, 1998), *vision* (Davis, 1998; Holland & Thom, 2012; Suitor, 2009), and levels of *ethics* (Kane, 1998; Maguad & Krone, 2009; Viviano, 2012). A smaller amount of literature examined the similarities and differences of these leadership traits from one area of leadership to another, specifically from education to athletics and athletics to education (Carr, 2012; Stauffer, 1999). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the similarities and dissimilarities of leadership traits that contributed to the creation of leader buy-in for an educational leader and a football coach; in the specific areas of emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics, between an educational leader and a sports coach.

### **Rationale**

The research population consisted of constituents with a relationship with one head of a Christian school and one head college football coach. The researcher attempted to investigate which leadership skills were similar and dissimilar between the two roles of leadership exhibited by both research subjects, conducting two comparable case studies.

Data gathered from 154 total participants in both case studies combined was analyzed.

As stated in Chapter One, Stauffer (1999) indicated that while a leader in one area may receive buy-in from his followers, a question still remains concerning if or how the same leader could elicit the same level of buy-in if he were to lead in another area.

Stauffer supported his point by referring to the thoughts of Bennis (1990) of the Business Administration and Founding Chairman of The Leadership Institute at the University of Southern California. Bennis (1989) believed a leader's ability to create buy-in, if he led in another area, depended on which qualities were considered leadership attributes. For example, a football coach may not be able to lead a large company and a CEO may not be able to be a football coach.

Similar research was documented that investigated the transferability of leadership skills between various levels of school leadership, but not between a school leader and a sports coach (Hayne, 2005). And, while a similar case study was conducted that showed a transfer of leadership skills between the military and civilian life (Dick, 2009), the study did not examine the transferability of leadership skills between a school leader and sports coach.

Other literature also examined the transferability of leadership traits from one area of leadership to another, however that research was more than 20 years old at the time of this writing (Bass, 1990). One example Bass (1990) reported was that of Dwight D. Eisenhower's transition from a successful military career to university president and ultimately to president of the United States in the 1950s. Therefore, the rationale of this study was to contribute to an update of the literature and possibly provide insight for



leaders in multiple areas on how to transfer leadership skills, so that leaders may be able to establish common goals and missions within their organizations.

### **Research Context**

Midwest Christian Academy, a faith-based college preparatory, private school located in Suburban, Midwest State, was the site used to gather data concerning the traits of a successful leader in education. It had an enrollment of approximately 1,000 students and 125 faculty and staff at the time of data collection (A. Turner, personal communication, 2014). It typically displayed an average annual rate of graduating high school seniors attending college of 97 to 99% (K. Kindbom, personal communication, 2013). This rate compared favorably to state public school, five-year averages for Parkway C-2 and Rockwood R-VI (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2015). These were school districts located in the same community as Midwest Christian Academy.

The Midwest University-Urban football program was chosen as the site to gather data on concerning traits of a successful leader in athletics. Midwest University is located in Urban, Midwest State, and maintained a long and rich tradition of athletic achievement that first started well over 100 years previous to this writing. Since the mid-1970s, the Bears athletic programs competed as a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Division III. Midwest University was a member of the University Athletic Association (UAA) since the beginning of the 1987-1988 season, through the completion of this study (Midwest University, 2015). Throughout its athletic history,

Midwest University continued to establish itself as both a leader and pioneer in the world of student athletics (Midwest University, 2015).

### **Research Questions**

- 1) What leadership traits create constituent buy-in for leaders?
- 2) What are the similarities and dissimilarities in leadership traits from one area of leadership to another?
- 3) How does emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach?
- 4) How are the leadership traits emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics that create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach similar?
- 5) How are the leadership traits emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics that create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach different?

### **Relationship with the Participants**

Participants were volunteers from the pool of teachers and staff of Midwest Christian Academy and players and coaches from the Midwest University-Urban football program. In neither of the research populations did the researcher have any power of coercion over the participants. The researcher worked at Midwest Christian Academy and, therefore, was on site daily with many participants as a full time teacher and coach. He was not in a position of authority over any participants. The researcher taught and

coached students in a weight room daily as his primary job responsibility and did not have any power of decision-making concerning another teacher or staff member's job status or security. Some of the research participants worked in a role ranked higher than the researcher, such as a school administrator. At Midwest University, the researcher had no professional responsibilities at the school, and therefore, had no influence over the participants' jobs or playing status.

### **Participant Recruitment**

The researcher identified and contacted two leaders who demonstrated successful leadership, measured by their longevity at one institution. 'John,' the former head of school at Midwest Christian Academy held that role for 28 years (J. Marsh, personal communication, 2013) and 'Coach K.,' the then-current head football coach at Midwest University-Urban who continued to hold that role from 1989 through the time of this study (L. Kindbom, personal communication, 2014) served as subjects in a case study on the concept of 'buy-in' and leadership. Both John and Coach K. were asked personally by the researcher to be investigated for this study and both agreed. Cooper (2011) defined a long time, successful head of school as one who served enough years to create a kind of rhythm and confidence in the administration, trustees, faculty, students, and alumni. Eitzen and Yetman (1972) defined a long-time, successful head coach by stating the longer the coaching tenure, the greater the success of the team. These definitions supported the definition of success for this research study.

Participants in the study included the two leaders who volunteered to be the focus of the study plus volunteer participants from each institution, who were followers of the

leaders. In the case of Midwest Christian Academy, the subject of the study was the former head of school, who retired in 2013. Therefore the then-current head of school, at the researcher's request, granted permission to include Midwest Christian Academy's faculty and staff as participants in the study. The then-current head of school was not studied, because the study focused on leaders who were in one place for a long period of time, and the then-current head of school was only in that role for one year. The researcher worked under the former head of school examined in this study for seven years, but only under the then-current head of school for one year. The researcher obtained written permission (Appendix A) from Midwest Christian Academy's then-current head of school to administer a survey and request volunteers for interview, to any staff member who worked under the former head of school.

The researcher received permission from the then-current head of school to meet with the Midwest Christian Academy faculty and staff during a pre-determined staff development day scheduled by the head of school, where all faculty and staff were present at one time, with the exception of the head of school investigated in this study. The all-staff meeting was not scheduled because of this research study, but for the purposes of Midwest Christian Academy's staff development. The researcher was granted time during the scheduled professional development to request participation in the study. The staff was not required to participate in the research study, since it was outside their assigned job duties. Along with a verbal description of the study and its purpose, read from a prepared script (Appendix B), each attendee received a written request (Appendix C) to volunteer for the study. The researcher used the gathered

information and responses to the surveys to categorize and analyze existence of the traits of emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics, as it related to constituent buy-in of the two leaders examined.

In the case of Midwest University, the researcher obtained verbal permission from the head football coach, written permission from the university provost (Appendix D), and written permission from the Office of Research of Midwest University (Appendix E), to meet with all football players and assistant football coaches at a pre-determined program-wide meeting, scheduled by the head coach. The scheduled meeting was intended to include all members of the program, with the exception of the head coach investigated in this study. The program-wide meeting was not scheduled because of this research study, but for the purposes of Midwest University's program development. The researcher was granted a 20-minute portion of the program development day to request participation in the study. The players and coaches were not required to participate in the study. Along with a verbal description of the study and its purpose, read from a script (Appendix B), each attendee received a written request to volunteer (Appendix C) for the study.

### **Sample Size and Selection Criteria**

The researcher selected participants based on a combination of convenience and purposive sampling. In convenience sampling, the researcher randomly selected a group of participants who were conveniently available and willing to participate in the study. In both case studies the researcher also used purposive sampling. At Midwest Christian Academy, because the leader investigated was retired and a new leader had assumed his

role, the researcher asked only those faculty and staff who worked under the leader studied to participate in the survey and interview. Again, the then-current leader of the academy was in his first year in the head of school role, and therefore the researcher determined he was not in the role long enough to produce valid and reliable data related to his abilities as a leader to create buy-in from his followers.

The researcher had no supervisory role over the participants at Midwest Christian Academy but did have several professional and personal relationships with this population that were beneficial in establishing trust regarding the motive and nature of the study. The reason this private school research site was chosen instead of a public school site was for convenience for the researcher, as he was employed on the same campus with the participants.

As stated, players and coaches within the Midwest University-Urban football program were used as participants for gathering data on a leader in athletics. The researcher used a personal relationship within that organization to gain access and establish a level of trust as to the reason and motives for the study. The researcher's background as an athlete and coach created further legitimacy with the participants. Only players who were beginning their second through fourth year of playing eligibility were asked to volunteer for the study. Four years of player eligibility was the maximum allowed under National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules (NCAA, 2015). The NCAA was the governing body under which Midwest University competed in college athletics. First-years players were asked not to volunteer for the study because

they would not be able to accurately respond to questions about Coach K.'s leadership, since they would not yet have experienced his leadership style.

Total sample size for the first case study included the subject, one former head of school (educational leader) from Midwest Christian Academy, and 82 staff members from Midwest Christian Academy. One head football coach from Midwest University-Urban (athletic leader) served as the subject, and 62 players and 10 coaches from the Midwest University football program served as the sample for the second case study.

### **Methodology/Procedures**

**Midwest Christian Academy.** After Institutional Review Board approval was granted from Lindenwood University, data collection began at Midwest Christian Academy on August 6, 2014. At that time, the survey and consent form were given to all faculty and staff who worked under the former head of school. During a designated time, at a Midwest Christian Academy staff development meeting, determined by the Academic Dean the researcher explained to the staff, that the leader, John, was the subject of a research study and they were invited to participate in a survey and possible interview seeking their perspective of his leadership capabilities. Anyone who did not work under the leader investigated or anyone, who did not wish to participate in the study was allowed to leave the room where data collection was about to begin.

On the hard copy, pen-and-paper version of the adult consent form and survey all participants received, there was a place for participants to indicate if they were willing to participate in a follow up interview at a later time. Prior to the meeting a box was placed in the front of the room on a table that staff walked by as they exited. As staff left the

room they had the option of volunteering by signing and dropping off the consent form and survey. All participants in this section of the study were volunteers who were present at this staff development meeting.

Once the participants completed and handed in the adult consent form and survey, they were told their participation was over if they did not agree to an interview. For those participants who did agree to an interview, the researcher randomly selected participants for a follow up interview at a time their convenience.

In gathering data about the leader in education, faculty and staff who worked under the supervision of the former head of school of Midwest Christian Academy were volunteer participants. The sample did not include faculty and staff not employed at Midwest Christian Academy during the former leader's assignment as head of school. He retired at the end of the 2012-2103 school year. Therefore, staff members whose first year was the 2013-2014 school year, which was the first year of the former leader's retirement as head of school, were asked not to participate in the study. An initial survey was conducted and then followed by face-to-face interviews using a convenience sample of faculty and staff who volunteered. In order to gain permission for the data collection process, the researcher obtained written permission from the current head of school (Appendix A). Since the previous head of school was the subject of this research study, the potential existed for his successor to be hesitant to allow the study to be performed. Due to the researcher's relationships with the former and then-current heads of school, both were supportive of the researcher's quest for a doctoral degree and full access was granted to appropriate faculty and staff.



A total of 82 participants were asked to answer survey questions related to their experiences under the leadership of John, the former head of school, who served Midwest Christian Academy from 1985 to 2013 (J. Marsh, personal communication, 2013). Only faculty and staff who worked under John were sampled. The theme of the survey, for those constituents who bought into the leadership style, was related to why they were able to buy in based on traits of leadership: emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics during his tenure as head of school. One survey question asked if participants were willing to participate in an interview. From the list of willing participants the researcher randomly selected 10 people for the interview.

Once the surveys and interviews of the participants were completed, the researcher surveyed and interviewed John to get his perception of his own leadership abilities. The researcher asked the leader several of the same questions the participants were asked in order to compare the responses of the participants with the responses of the leader. All of the questions could not be asked because of limited time with the leader. It was the researcher's decision to ask questions based on the flow of the interview and let the leader feel free to take it where he would like. The purpose of duplicate questions was to see if the followers' perceptions of the leader's qualities were similar or different than the perception of the leader himself. As data was collected it was coded according to themes that appeared in the participants' responses. The results of the coding process were analyzed and reported according to what was discovered.

**Midwest University.** Midwest University data collection began on August 12, 2014. At that time an in-person survey and consent form were given to all players and

assistant coaches who worked under the head football coach (Coach K.). During a designated time during a Midwest University team meeting scheduled by the associate head coach, the researcher explained to the players and staff that the leader, Coach K., was the subject of a research study and they were invited to participate in a survey and possible interview for players or focus group for assistant coaches that would seek their perspective on his leadership capabilities. The participants were told their participation was strictly voluntary and that participation, or lack thereof, had no bearing on their standing as a player or coach at Midwest University. Any player under 18 and/or had not yet completed at least one year of playing eligibility under Coach K.'s leadership, did not participate in the study.

All participants were volunteers present at this team meeting. At the time of the meeting, the researcher explained the purpose of the study (Appendix B) and the opportunity for players and coaches to volunteer as participants in the study. The hard copy, pen-and-paper version of the adult consent form and survey was administered to those who were willing to volunteer and included a place for participants to indicate if they were willing to participate in a follow up interview for players or focus group for assistant coaches. When participants were finished, the consent forms and surveys were placed in a box in the front of the room where the athletes exited. The researcher used the gathered information and responses to categorize and analyze the traits of emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics as it related to constituent buy-in of the leaders examined. Once participants turned in the survey and

consent form, their participation in the study was over unless the indicated willingness to volunteer for an interview or focus group.

In gathering data about the leader in athletics, players and coaches of Coach K., head football coach at Midwest University-Urban, were volunteer participants. Within the initial survey all volunteers were asked to answer a question indicating their willingness to participate in an interview for football players and a focus group for assistant coaches. From the participants who indicated they were willing to participate in an interview, only two players agreed to be interviewed. Again, from the pool that volunteered the researcher randomly selected four assistant coaches and one secretary to participate in a focus group.

Once the surveys, interviews, and focus group of the participants were completed, the researcher surveyed and interviewed Coach K. to get his perception of his own leadership abilities. The researcher asked the leader several of the same questions the participants were asked in order to compare the responses of the participants with the responses of the leader. All of the questions could not be asked because of limited time with the leader. It was the researcher's decision to ask questions based on the flow of the interview and let the leader being interviewed feel free to take it where he would like. The purpose was to see if the followers' perceptions of the leader's qualities were similar or different than the perception of the leader himself. As data was collected, it was coded according to themes that appeared in the participants' responses. The results of the coding process were analyzed and reported according to what was discovered.

**Instrumentation**

With the guidance of the researcher's dissertation chair, the survey created was given to participants consisting of seven questions that asked them about the leadership traits being examined, using a Likert Scale format. One of the questions asked how long the participant worked under the leader and another asked in what capacity the participant worked under the leader. One question on the survey gave participants an opportunity to give examples of personality traits and/or situations that made them want to follow the leadership of John. The interview consisted of 12 questions that addressed the leadership traits being examined.

At both Midwest Christian Academy and Midwest University, the surveys took approximately 15 minutes to complete while the interviews took approximately 30 minutes to complete. The focus group at Midwest University lasted for 45 minutes. The researcher also interviewed the leaders themselves, using the same 12 questions asked of the followers, to gain their own perspectives of their leadership characteristics and abilities to achieve constituent buy-in. All data was kept confidential from the leaders being investigated and sealed in a locked cabinet in the researcher's possession.

**Summary**

Once Institutional Review Board approval from Lindenwood University was granted, data was collected using a survey completed and returned by 82 participants at Midwest Christian Academy, along with interviews of 10 teachers and staff. The leader who served as the subject of the case study was also interviewed. At Midwest University, 72 surveys were completed and returned by players and assistant coaches. Two players

agreed to participate in an interview, while four assistant coaches participated in a focus group. All data was kept confidential from the leaders being investigated and sealed in a locked cabinet in the researcher's possession. The researcher also interviewed the leaders themselves to gain their own perspectives of their leadership characteristics and abilities to achieve constituent buy-in.

### **Chapter Four: Results**

As stated in Chapter One, the purpose of this study was to investigate the similarities and dissimilarities of leadership traits that contribute to leader buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a college football coach; specifically with regards to emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics. The rationale of this study was to create more-recent literature that may provide insight for leaders in multiple areas on how to transfer leadership skills, so they are able to establish common goals and missions within their organizations.

Eighty-two surveys and 10 interviews of teachers and staff were conducted at Midwest Christian Academy. Seventy-two surveys of players and assistant coaches, two player interviews, and a focus group attended by four assistant coaches, were conducted within Midwest University-Urban's football program. The following research questions were used to guide this dissertation during the data collection process.

#### **Research Questions**

- 1) What leadership traits create constituent buy-in for leaders?
- 2) What are the similarities and dissimilarities in leadership traits from one area of leadership to another?
- 3) How do emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach?

- 4) How are the leadership traits emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics that create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach similar?
- 5) How are the leadership traits emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics that create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach different?

### **Summary of Survey Questions at Midwest Christian Academy**

With the input of the dissertation chair and the committee, the researcher created survey questions for teachers and staff of Midwest Christian Academy. The questions asked teachers and staff to reflect on their experiences under the leadership of the former head of school, who is referred to as John. After creating a list of questions, the number was cut to 10, based upon discussion between the chair and the researcher. The questions were distributed via hard copy during a pre-school year teacher meeting on August 6, 2014. Teachers and staff who did not work under John were asked not to participate in the survey, because they would not have a perspective on his leadership capabilities. A total of 82 surveys were distributed and collected.

Of the 10 questions, numbers one and two were descriptive in nature. Question 1 asked, 'How long did you work under or with the leader?' The amount of time ranged from 1 year to 33 years, as displayed in Table 1. While the leader examined served at Midwest Christian Academy for 28 years, the question of how a research participant could have served under the leader for 33 years may arise. One participant worked for the leader for five years at another school in the state of Florida. In fact, this participant

moved to Midwest Christian Academy one year before the leader assumed his role at that site. When the head of school position opened after the participant's arrival, the participant informed the leader of the job opening. After the interview process, John was hired into the head of school role.

Table 1

*Midwest Christian Academy: Question 1*

<b>1-5 years</b>	<b>6-10 years</b>	<b>11-20 years</b>	<b>20+ years</b>
35 (43%)	15 (18%)	25 (30%)	7 (9%)

*Note:* Years working under leader.

A plurality of participants (43%), 35 of 82, worked under or with John between one and five years. Twenty-five more participants, or 30%, spent between 11 and 20 years under John's leadership. Another 15 people (18%) worked under or with him for a total of six to 10 years, while seven survey respondents (9%) spent 20 years or more with the leader.

Question 2 asked, 'In what capacity did you work under or with the leader?' Participant responses included a variety of titles during the time working under the leader. Those included teachers, coaches, administration, administrative assistants, and other staff, as displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

*Midwest Christian Academy: Question 2*

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Administration</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Admin. Asst.</b>
67 (82%)	3 (4%)	8 (9%)	4 (5%)

*Note:* Capacity in which participants worked under the leader.

Teachers made up 82% of the participants who completed the survey. Three participants were considered administration, four were administrative assistants, and



eight fell into a staff category. Staff included members of guidance, nurse, advancement, special services, technology, and international student services.

Questions three through nine used a five-point Likert scale. Those results are displayed in Tables 3 through 9. The Likert scale responses ranged from ‘strongly disagree,’ ‘mildly disagree,’ ‘don’t know,’ ‘mildly agree,’ and ‘strongly agree.’ Question 10 was open-ended and allowed participants to answer freely. Questions 3 and 4 specifically dealt with the leader’s emotional intelligence (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3

*Midwest Christian Academy: Question 3*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	0	0	4 (5%)	78 (95%)

*Note:* The leader maintained control of his emotions.

Of the 82 participants surveyed, 78 strongly agreed that the leader maintained control of his emotions while four said they mildly agreed that the leader maintained control of his emotions during their time working under him.

Table 4

*Midwest Christian Academy: Question 4*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	0	10 (12%)	7 (9%)	65 (79%)

*Note:* The leader had an accurate understanding of his own strengths/weaknesses.

When asked if the leader understood his own strengths and weaknesses, 65 people strongly agreed that he did, while seven answered mildly agree.’ Ten participants stated that they ‘don’t know’ if the leader understood his own strengths and weaknesses.

Table 5

*Midwest Christian Academy: Question 5*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	1 (<1%)	0	21 (26%)	60 (73%)

*Note:* The leader communicated effectively.

Question 5 focused on the leader's ability to communicate (Table 5). Sixty participants said that they strongly agreed with the statement that the leader communicated effectively. Twenty-one indicated a 'mildly agree' response, while one participant stated that he or she mildly disagreed that the leader communicated effectively. Questions 6 and 7 centered on John's level of job competency (Tables 6 and 7).

Table 6

*Midwest Christian Academy: Question 6*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	0	0	3 (4%)	79 (96%)

*Note:* The leader understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively.

In response to whether the leader understood the skills and responsibilities to do his job effectively, 79 of those surveyed stated that they strongly agreed. The remaining three participants indicated that they mildly agreed.

Table 7

*Midwest Christian Academy: Question 7*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
3 (4%)	0	0	15 (18%)	64 (78%)

*Note:* The leader understood your responsibilities and role within the organization.

When reflecting on whether the leader understood the responsibilities and role of the participant surveyed, that is the job of a person the leader was leading, 64 people said

they strongly agreed with that statement, while 15 mildly agreed. Three participants stated that they strongly disagreed. Question 8 dealt with how well the leader communicated the vision of the organization (Table 8).

Table 8

*Midwest Christian Academy: Question 8*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	0	0	5 (6%)	77 (94%)

*Note:* The leader successfully communicated the vision of the organization.

Seventy-seven of the 82 participants surveyed stated they strongly agreed that the leader successfully communicated the vision of the organization. Only five participants indicated that they mildly agreed with the statement. Question 9 asked participants to indicate the leader's display of ethical behavior within the course of his job (Table 9).

Table 9

*Midwest Christian Academy: Question 9*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	0	1 (<1%)	3 (4%)	78 (95%)

*Note:* The leader displayed ethical behavior in the decisions he made within the course of his job.

Seventy-eight people stated they strongly agreed the leader did so, while three participants indicated they mildly agreed. One participant said he or she did not know if the leader displayed ethical behavior.

Question 10 asked participants to 'Give examples of skills and/or personality traits the leader possessed that caused you to want to follow their leadership. If you prefer, you could instead include situations you witnessed or interactions you had with the leader that made you want to follow his leadership.'

Responses to this question included a wide range of categories. John's ability to develop personal connection and establish relationships was the most-mentioned quality that caused the constituents to buy in to his leadership. In this vein, one participant stated he [John] 'never seemed busy or in a hurry to talk to me.' He added John 'wouldn't just ask, how are you?', but would 'tell personal stories. He remembered facts about past conversations' and 'family members.' Several participants indicated the leader 'always addressed me by name' or 'knew me by name.' Participants remarked the impact it made on them, because John personally handed out contracts each spring with a statement regarding how much he appreciated the work that they did, many times going 'out of his way to do so.' 'He thanked me over and over for the job I was doing,' was a statement made by another participant.

Participants also listed several other comments related to John's one-to-one interactions with each of them. They stated the leader was always 'engaged' and 'personable.' He made them feel, 'valuable,' 'empowered,' and 'like an integral part of the school's success.' One participant stated, 'in his presence, he made you feel like the most important person on his schedule.' Another stated that they 'felt he loved me and had my best interests at heart.' Others remarked that he was a 'good listener,' had a 'calming effect,' 'made you feel at ease,' had an 'unguarded friendliness,' 'made eye contact,' 'had a good, friendly, hand shake,' and was 'brilliant in one-on-one interactions.'

Other participants responded that he had a 'passion for people' and 'he sought to understand people instead of making assumptions.' According to several participants

John seemed aware of when his constituents were experiencing both joys and difficulties in their personal lives. It was said by participants that he would send handwritten notes or cards on congratulations or sympathy, depending on the circumstance. One respondent said he had a way of using a ‘personal touch.’

Survey participants responded that the leader carried on his job by putting ‘others first,’ especially teachers and students. He was ‘never the main thing,’ because he knew ‘it wasn’t about him.’ He ‘respected’ and ‘always cared for everyone.’ Constituents remarked that he was an ‘advocate’ and ‘had a love for students and faculty.’ Several participants mentioned John was ‘not afraid to serve others’ and ‘would not ask someone to do something he wouldn’t do himself.’ Another said he was ‘willing to lower himself to do the miniscule details.’

John’s ability to communicate was another strong quality participants felt the leader possessed. Several responses included words and phrases such as ‘good,’ ‘clear,’ ‘effective’ communicator. Others said that he was an ‘excellent speaker’ and he was ‘clear,’ ‘concise,’ and ‘to the point.’ Interestingly, one participant, out of 82, stated he ‘wasn’t the best speaker in the world.’ But the participant respected him for continuing to do it, because ‘he knew it was part of his job.’ Constituents said he could help them ‘see the vision for the school’ and he was ‘inspiring’ in the way he did it.

Throughout the responses to question 10 it became evident that John had a strong, internal commitment to his job. One participant stated he had a ‘passion for education,’ while another noticed his ‘strong sense of commitment, calling, vision, and mission.’ He was ‘focused’ and had an ‘unshakable confidence.’ ‘Purpose and drive,’ an ‘incredibly

strong work ethic,' 'relentless,' and 'devoted to the mission,' were all words and phrases used by constituents to describe the leader's internal convictions.

Regarding challenging situations where John had a wide range of choices to make, participants stated he was 'unruffled during difficult times,' 'he made tough decisions' and 'showed resolve' while responding 'with grace under pressure.' One situation in particular occurred during this researcher's first year at Midwest Christian Academy. The incident was a shooting on the school campus when John was still head of school.

One afternoon, a distraught student brought a rifle on campus at the end of the school day and began to randomly open fire on various parts of the school grounds, as students were exiting the building and heading to sports practices. Though no innocent students were hit by bullets, as one would imagine, a chaotic scene ensued.

Administrators were running around campus trying to alert coaches who had begun practice to hide their athletes. In addition, these school leaders were trying to make sure kids did not exit the building, while also trying to protect those students and parents who were already outside in cars, about to leave for home. Very quickly, news helicopters were circling and parents who received cell phone calls from their children were arriving on scene. In short, the incident ended with the shooter sitting on a curb in the parking lot, holding the rifle in the air. He was trying to provoke the police to shoot and kill him. But one officer had the presence of mind to shoot the kid in the leg, disabling him. The young man was taken into custody without any further incident. John became the one-and-only voice that would represent us to the media. A phone blast was sent out within a few hours

to all staff and parents explaining what had happened very specifically. The message also stated very clearly that if any media were to call the homes of the school community, they were to direct all calls to the school and answer no questions. All in all, what could have been a very tragic day, ended with a much, much, better outcome. John's confidence to take the lead role in this situation and the trust already earned by his administrative team and staff was a big reason this situation had such a positive outcome (D. Schall, personal experience, 2006).

Participants indicated that John had a good sense of self-awareness and 'understood his strengths and weaknesses.' It was stated that he was 'confident, but not arrogant' and was 'secure' in who he was. He 'wasn't threatened by change' or 'new ways of doing things.' He 'always encouraged new ideas.' He was 'willing to adjust his view and reframe conflicts.' Because he was confident in his leadership abilities, he did not have to be 'heavy handed' or 'dictatorial.' One respondent knew he 'consulted with others before making decisions' while another said he encouraged 'collaboration during meetings where tough decisions were made.' He had an 'ability to delegate' responsibilities to others he felt were stronger in that area, or because he knew they could benefit from the experience. He was 'not controlling or a micromanager.' He would 'hire good people and let them do their jobs.'

It was also stated by a participant that John 'could laugh at himself.' An example of this occurred at a staff meeting. John told a story of how early in his career, he was charged by the Board of Education to create a strategic plan for the school. Because he

had never completed one before, he said he ‘bought a book’ about creating a strategic plan. This story elicited a laugh from the staff (D. Schall, personal experience, 2012).

Another participant responded that he ‘was able to admit failure and right wrong doings.’ A story to support this statement occurred at another staff meeting where the leader admitted mishandling the communication process behind the dismissal of a teacher in the middle of the school year. He apologized for not ‘coming to you sooner’ about what happened and stated that he ‘made a mistake.’ One participant was so moved by his apology, he or she stated, ‘I cried’ because ‘you just don’t hear leaders do that.’

John’s level of ethics was another area that appeared to create buy-in from his constituents, with many referring to his faith. Two participants stated that he used ‘Christian morals,’ was a ‘man of God,’ ‘Godly leader,’ he ‘lived what he preached,’ ‘led by his actions,’ and ‘lived out his faith.’ Others said he was ‘upstanding,’ ‘transparent,’ had ‘character,’ showed ‘integrity in all areas,’ and showed ‘honesty in tough situations.’ Another participant stated, ‘He never gossiped, even when prompted.’

The participants stated other, perhaps miscellaneous traits that caused constituent buy-in. They included ‘class,’ ‘genuine,’ ‘even tempered,’ ‘always pleasant,’ ‘humble,’ ‘professional,’ ‘right mixture of gravity,’ ‘complete lack of pretense,’ ‘quiet strength,’ ‘disciplined,’ ‘authentic,’ ‘joyful,’ ‘wise,’ and ‘has a presence.’ One participant summarized his or her feelings by stating that she ‘respected him more than anyone I’ve ever served under.’



### **Summary of Interviews at Midwest Christian Academy**

The researcher randomly selected and individually interviewed 10 teachers and staff from Midwest Christian Academy who worked under John, the leader examined in this research study. The length of service time spent working under John by interview participants had a range of one year to 33 years. Twelve questions in all were asked. With the input of the dissertation chair and the committee, the researcher created interview questions for teachers and staff of Midwest Christian Academy to answer. The questions asked teachers and staff to reflect on their experiences under the leadership of the former head of school, referred to as John. After creating several questions, the number was cut to 12, based upon discussion between the chair and the researcher. Participants are referred to as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, and P10.

Question 1 stated, 'Describe what it's like working under with the leader.' P1 said he was like a 'grandfather figure,' was always 'warm, encouraging,' and 'had a way of making you feel like he was with you when talking to you.' P1 added that John 'didn't make you feel rushed in a conversation' and that she 'missed him a lot.'

P2 commented, 'from the very first time we met and every other interaction we had, he always gave full attention.' Though P2 and John did not have as many interactions after the interview process, P2 stated he 'always communicated through what he said and through his body language, that he respected me.'

P3 experienced John's leadership as a staff member and parent. She stated that he 'touched a mommy's heart' by the way he interacted with her own children. John was

‘always present at games and events.’ She said he was ‘relational’ and lead ‘by his presence.’

P4, a special education teacher, worked under John for only one year, but she still felt like ‘he knew me’ and ‘knew what was going on in my life.’ He ‘made me feel welcome’ and had a ‘similar philosophy to mine’ in regards to special education.

P5 said ‘he made me feel like the most important person,’ and that he ‘felt led to follow him.’ John ‘asked specific questions about me as a person and my work.’ There was no ‘BS’ with him. He ‘would let me know how much he appreciated me.’

P6 worked under John for 28 years. He stated that John was a ‘phenomenal’ leader who was ‘humble’ as well as a ‘risk taker.’ He would ‘accept new ideas, but also challenge them.’ P6 added ‘if he [John] started a school in the desert, I would follow him.’

P7, who worked under John for five years said that she did not have a lot of ‘one-on-one interaction’ with him but ‘even in passing, when life is crazy, he stops and asks how you’re doing.’ Once John ‘remembered a story I told him from a year ago.’ ‘He really cares.’

P8 indicated that most of her interactions with John were in the hallways. But even with limited interaction with him, she stated ‘every time I passed him, he was approachable, calm, cool, body language, addressed me by name and seemed to really care.’

P9 spent four years as a student at Midwest Christian Academy while John was the head of school and she also spent the seven years previous to the interview under his

leadership, working under him as a teacher. P9 felt that he had ‘invested’ in her when she lost a job outside of education. ‘He talked to me about teaching’ and said ‘it would be good steps for my future.’

P10 worked as a teacher and coach for 15 years under John’s leadership. He responded that he ‘knew me as a person’ and he knew him in the ‘before and after stages’ of having kids. P10 mentioned that John actually knew his wife before he him did. In fact, he shared a story about the first time P10’s wife met John.

[Midwest] was looking for someone in Middle School and someone to work with the tennis teams. So she [his wife] said ‘I’ll just go check it out.’ John picks her up from the airport. He shows her around, takes her out to dinner, shows her around the school. My wife will tell me and tell anybody that one of the reasons she came to [Midwest] is because of that, right there. As the leader of the school, he could have sent somebody else, but he took the time to pick her up and show her around [Midwest] and [Urban] . . . if he’s willing to do that for someone who doesn’t even work here, I wonder what he does for someone who does work here? She said, that, right off the bat, I didn’t know him, I like that. I can work for someone like that.

Question 2 asked, ‘Are there any characteristics of the leader you like best/least?’ P1 indicated she liked his ‘strong sense of purpose’ and the fact he was ‘approachable’ and “‘listens.’ P2 stated that ‘from the very beginning, I felt like if I went to talk to him he would listen to me about a question, proposal, or concern.’

P3 recounted a story about an interaction John had with her son, who was a one-time student while he was head of school.

Back then, he was in charge of neighborhood an, um, I don't know, Noah must have been, I can't remember, maybe 8th grade . . . and John was his neighborhood leader. And he would love it because they got to go into his office. He said, 'Mom, the plans for the new school were sitting on the table and he just pushed them off' and they played UNO. That was such a wonderful example of . . . you minister to the person in front of you. And that's what he's done. Whether it be, um, a teacher who needed in his advice, his direction, his leadership or a student, or a parent, he stopped what he's doing and took notice of that. That's a great characteristic for a leader to have.

From 2009 to 2011, Midwest Christian Academy prepared to move into a new school building at another campus location. P6 and P7 shared different perspectives on John during that process. Despite those years being a 'stressful time,' P7 stated that John was the same leader and was able to keep control of his emotions regardless of the situation. Contrary to this, P6 responded that one of the things he liked least about John during this time was that he seemed to be 'making unilateral decisions,' which was 'uncharacteristic of him.'

P9 said what she liked the best about John was 'you truly feel valued,' he 'makes you feel important,' he 'listens to your complaints . . . he will hear you.' She also added 'he wants to get to know you.'

Question 3 inquired, ‘How do you describe a good leader?’ P4 responded that a good leader is a ‘servant’ and ‘puts others’ needs ahead of their own,’ and they ‘can get people to follow them without convincing them.’ P5 said good leaders have a ‘willingness to fulfill several roles.’ P2 indicated that he or she must be ‘willing to make the tough decisions based on not what is necessarily popular, but is determined best for the community.’ P7 said a good leader must ‘empower followers’ with P6 adding he or she has to ‘adjust the vision as needed based on the followers’ skills.’

P1 mentioned a good leader must be ‘trusted completely,’ is ‘humble,’ ‘knows his own strengths and weaknesses,’ and ‘doesn’t feel like he or she has all the answers.’ P3 responded that a good leader has ‘faith in the Lord to lead in glory to Him,’ ‘makes everyone feel important,’ and is ‘humble in mistakes.’

Question 4 asked the participant the question, ‘Is your leader a good leader?; Why?’ Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 10 all stated ‘yes’ to this question and referred to their answers to question three as the reasons why. P4 elaborated, saying John was ‘who I want to be.’ P8 felt he [John] was a good leader because he ‘always praised us . . . recognized the staff . . . trusted the work we were doing.’ P9 appreciated the fact he [John] had ‘opened up’ to her about his concerns with regard to retiring from Midwest Christian Academy.

Question 5 stated, ‘What weaknesses in leadership did the leader have?’ All participants who asked this question either didn’t suggest a weakness or were hesitant to state one. Those participants would lead in to their answers with, ‘I don’t know if this is his fault, but . . .’ or ‘I don’t know if this is necessarily a weakness, but . . .’ This

researcher reminded them that John would not know what answer they gave to this question, assuming that was part of their reservations in formulating an answer. P6 was not asked this question because the researcher felt it did not fit with the flow of the interview, while P2 felt he did not 'know him [John] well enough' to identify a weakness.

Of the participants who did answer this question with a weakness, P1 indicated that the 'why' of decision-making was not always clear. She felt like that led to 'grumbling' and 'assumptions' by staff. P10 supported the statements made by P1 by stating there 'weren't many,' but he disagreed with decisions that 'affected' people, referring to those people whose contracts were not renewed for various reasons. P10 felt there should have been more communication about 'decisions regarding personnel.' P7 felt John could have spent more 'time in the classroom.' She felt this was important for an educational leader to do because 'education changes so much,' so they need to be able to 'see what teachers can go through.' P6 responded that he simply disagreed with decisions sometimes but did not disagree with John as leader. That is, because he trusted him, he trusted John felt the decision was in the best interest of the school.

Question 6 asked, 'How does the leader deal with his emotions?' All participants felt John maintained control over his emotions, stating he was 'always in control' or 'never saw him lose it.' P4 pointed out he was 'sentimental his last year' while P8 felt he was 'a little too in control of his emotions.' She wanted to be able to see more of his 'personal side.' On the other hand, P5 felt John was 'pretty open.' He said, 'You knew when he was sad or hurt . . . he never hid anything.'

P9 said that she had seen him ‘upset and frustrated’ but felt he was good at using humor, even during ‘hard things.’ She recalled a story when she was working in the main office one evening, as she was preparing for a large summer camp Midwest Christian Academy was hosting and she was leading. She said she could hear John in his office talking with the director of advancement for Midwest Christian Academy.

This is overhearing things when I was sitting in the business office, late, when nobody else was there, working on camp or whatever. He would go into [the Director of Advancement] office and they would, I don’t know what they were laughing about, but they would just laugh. Like there be something going on, some hard thing, and they would laugh about it.

P7 mentioned that John was ‘the opposite of me and I needed that.’ He was ‘calm’ and she was ‘emotional.’ She added he had a ‘stabilizing presence’ because he ‘gives off energy that everything is going to be OK.’

Question 7 inquired, “How does the leader demonstrate that he understands his own strengths and weaknesses?” P1, P2, and P5 remembered occasions when John admitted in front of the entire faculty and staff times he was wrong. Sometimes it was the handling of a staffing situation, while other times he would admit that a policy that was added did not work and needed to be changed. They all agreed he took responsibility when he failed. P9 felt he ‘used people to help him effectively,’ such as his administrative assistant. She would proofread documents and give perspectives that others could not. P10 knew John was a person who would seek ‘counsel from wiser, more, experienced people.’ P6 said he was a ‘good steward of his talents and abilities’

and did not take his 'call for granted.' He proved that by 'filling in the parts' that were missing, 'parts' he [P6] did not possess.

Question 8 asked, 'How does the leader communicate?' P5 felt that whether John was addressing a big group or in a one-on-one situation, he kept people 'engaged with him.' P9 supported that statement by adding 'because he spoke infrequently, we listened.' P2 liked how he did not send out many 'blanket emails,' but they were 'personalized to me and my classroom.' Through that he still was able to 'let us know what was going on.' P6 said his communication style was 'based upon his character . . . clear, straightforward, didn't put on a display of brilliance, not cloudy or ambiguous.'

Participants 1, 9, and 10 felt there were potential weaknesses in what John communicated. P1 felt he 'could have done better with certain situations,' while P9 thought there were flaws in 'top-down communication.' She also felt that within the leadership structure, there was a 'breakdown in the middle, maybe.' 'John didn't know what was happening at the lower levels . . . smaller things.' P10 said he [John] was a person who believed, 'I want you to know the process but as we got bigger, that got harder.' P10 believed he 'didn't communicate much about personnel or business decisions that affected people.' 'Sometimes he didn't explain why we were going in a direction.' 'I'm not saying it was his fault, but it wasn't handled well.' The perception was that he 'didn't care.'

Question 9 asked, 'How does the leader demonstrate that he has the skills to do his job effectively?' Several participants referred back to communication when answering this question. P5 stated he was 'always well prepared . . . knew exactly what he wanted to



say.’ ‘He never spoke off the cuff.’ P7 was impressed with all the ‘different hats he wore.’ Adding that John was ‘seamless’ in whoever his audience was, whether it be faculty, the board, in interviews, with kids, or ‘as a grandpa or husband.’ P4 believed the ability to interact with families, particularly those families with kids who would receive special services, was an important skill. She stated he would tell families, “We are going to serve your whole family, not just your best and brightest.’

Question 10 inquired, ‘How does the leader demonstrate that he understands your role within the organization?’ P5 remarked how he liked it when John would ask specific questions about what kids were doing in his Physics class or how certain machines worked. He would ask follow up questions to show his interest in what was going on. P3 and P4 both worked in the special services department. They stated that John ‘could articulate special services,’ ‘he understood what it meant,’ that he spoke with ‘authority’ on it and understood the ‘why’ behind it. P8, who also worked in special services felt that John did not understand what her role at Midwest Christian Academy was. P2 shared a story about when he approached John about starting a cycling club. He said, ‘He heard me on how it could positively impact kids and was willing to look at it despite concerns that may arise.’

Question 11 asked, ‘How does the leader explain the vision of the organization?’ All participants believed John was successful at explaining the vision of Midwest Christian Academy. P1 remarked on the frequency with which he gathered the faculty together to reinforce the mission and vision of the school. P2 noticed how the vision of the school was not overshadowed, even with so much focus being on moving in to a new

building. P3 stated that the school used meeting, brochures, dessert gatherings, and types of marketing to spread the vision of the school beyond the students, staff, and parents directly associated with it. She said that he had relationships with people ‘outside the reformed [Presbyterian] faith.’ He was not ‘isolated.’

P5 said, ‘His vision of the school matched my vision.’ He told a story of when first offered a job to teach at Midwest Christian Academy. He turned it down, but John followed up with him to find out why.

When I did my sample teaching and had some conversations, I felt really, um undervalued. That my strengths, I mean, I know I have weaknesses, but my strengths were not valued and that my weaknesses, I would need to do something very drastic to change those weaknesses. I just decide that it wasn’t for me. I didn’t agree partly, but that I didn’t feel that I could make those changes. So I called and withdrew my name. John called me back and said, ‘come back in, I want to talk to you.’ Basically all my fears, he didn’t overlook my weaknesses and didn’t disagree with what the other people said, but made me see my fears were a little overblown. That my strengths were valued and that what I was good at was what they wanted. The reason I wanted to do it was because he made me see how I fit into the overall work of the school. What he said was very visionary and out there but he was very specific on how I was necessary to fulfill that. That was something I’ve never heard anybody do that before.

Question 12 inquired, ‘How does the leader demonstrate ethical behavior?’ There was no hesitation in the responses of the participants as to the level of ethics John

exhibited. All agreed he was an ethical leader. P1 stated it was ‘just who he was’ while P3 felt he ‘never tried to hide anything.’ P5 said ‘he was not one to participate in gossip and address rumors head-on’ to stop them. He added that he handled situations with students or “‘school-wide’ problems, but with respect to privacy. P6 believed ‘he handled personnel issues honestly, never gave a canned or generic response’ and that he always showed ‘sound principles that never changed.’

### **Summary of Survey Questions at Midwest University**

With the input of the dissertation chair and the committee, the researcher created survey questions for players and assistant coaches of the Midwest University- Urban football program to answer. The questions asked players and coaches to reflect on their experiences under the leadership of the then-current head football coach, referred to as Coach K. After creating a set of questions, the number was cut to 12, based upon discussion between the chair and the researcher. The questions were distributed via hard copy, following a pre-season team meal when all assistant coaches and second through fourth year players were present, on August 12, 2014. Freshman football players were asked not to participate in the survey, because they had not yet played under the head coach and would therefore not have a perspective on his leadership capabilities. A total of 72 surveys were distributed and collected. Of the 12 questions, numbers one and two were descriptive in nature.

Question 1 asked, ‘How long did you work under or with the leader?’ The amount of time ranged from one year to 12 years, as displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

*Midwest University: Question 1*

<b>&gt;1year-5 years</b>	<b>5-6 years</b>	<b>12-14years</b>
68 (94%)	2 (3%)	2 (3%)

*Note:* Years working under leader.

The majority of survey participants (94%) played under or coached under Coach K. for less than five years. Of the eight assistant coaches who participated, two worked under Coach K.'s leadership between five and six years, two coaches between 12 and 14 years, one assistant coach for three seasons, and three who worked one year or less under the leader. At the time the survey was conducted, two of the assistant coaches who participated had coached one year or less and were beginning their first seasons on the staff. One was hired four months prior to participation in the survey, and the other was hired two weeks prior to the survey administration. Therefore, the experience of these two coaches under the leadership of Coach K. was substantially limited. Both, however, provided responses on all survey questions.

Question 2 asked, 'In what capacity did you work under or with the leaders?'

Participants included second year through fourth year players and assistant coaches, as displayed in Table 11.

Table 11

*Midwest University: Question 2*

<b>Assistant Coaches</b>	<b>Players</b>
8 (11%)	64 (89%)

*Note:* Capacity in which participants worked under the leader.

Survey participants were either players competing in their second through fourth seasons under Coach K.'s leadership as well as assistant coaches. Freshman football

players were asked not to participate in the survey because they had no experience under Coach K.

Questions three through nine used a five-point Likert scale, while question 10 was open-ended and allowed participants to answer freely. Results displayed on Tables 10 through 18 align with questions 1 through 9 of the Midwest University-Urban survey. The Likert scale responses ranged from ‘strongly disagree,’ ‘mildly disagree,’ ‘don’t know,’ ‘mildly agree,’ to ‘strongly agree.’ Questions 3 and 4 specifically dealt with the leader’s emotional intelligence (Tables 12 and 13).

Table 12

*Midwest University: Question 3*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	2 (3%)	1 (1%)	21 (29%)	48 (67%)

*Note:* The leader maintained control of his emotions.

Forty-eight out of 72, or 67% of participants, responded that they strongly agreed the leader maintained control of his emotions, while 29%, or 21 participants out of 72, stated they mildly agreed. Three percent of participants said they mildly disagreed with the statement that the leader maintained control of his emotions, while only one participant said he or she ‘didn’t know.’

Table 13

*Midwest University: Question 4*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	32 (44%)	34 (47%)

*Note:* The leader had an accurate understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses.

In responding to the statement that Coach K. had accurate understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses, 66 out of 72 participants, stated they strongly agreed or mildly agreed.’ That is 91% of all survey participants. Three of those who participated in the survey stated they mildly disagreed and three participants said they ‘don’t know’ if the leader had an accurate understanding of his strengths and weaknesses. Question 5 focused on the leader’s ability to communicate (Table 14).

Table 14

*Midwest University: Question 5*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	9 (17%)	0	42 (58%)	21 (29%)

*Note:* The leader communicated effectively.

In responding to the statement, ‘The leader communicated effectively,’ 58% of participants stated they mildly agreed,’ while 29% stated they strongly agreed.’ Nine participants, or 17%, responded that they mildly disagreed with that statement. Questions 6 and 7 centered on John’s level of job competency (Tables 15 and 16).

Table 15

*Midwest University: Question 6*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	2 (3%)	1 (1%)	16 (22%)	53 (74%)

*Note:* The leader understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively.

In responding to Question 6, ‘The leader understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively,’ 96% of all survey participants, 69 out of 72, either ‘strongly agreed or mildly agreed that Coach K. understood the skills and responsibilities

needed to do his job effectively (Table 15). Two participants stated they mildly disagreed,' with one participants stating he or she did not know.'

Table 16

*Midwest University: Question 7*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
3	1 (1%)	2 (3%)	15 (21%)	54 (75%)

*Note:* The leader understood your responsibilities and role within the organization.

Responding to the statement, 'The leader understood your responsibilities and role with the organization,' 54 out of 72 respondents (75%) said they strongly agreed with that statement, with 21%, or 15 participants, stating they mildly agreed' (Table 16). Three percent stated they 'don't know,' and one participant responded he or she mildly disagreed. Question 8 dealt with how well the leader communicated the vision of the organization (Table 17).

Table 17

*Midwest University: Question 8*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	1 (1%)	0	11 (15%)	60 (83%)

*Note:* The leader successfully communicated the vision of the organization.

In responding to question 8, 83% of participants responded they strongly agreed the leader successfully communicated the vision of the organization. Eleven participants, 15%, stated they mildly agreed,' and one participant said he or she mildly disagreed.' Question 9 asked participants to indicate the leader's display of ethical behavior within the course of his job (Table 18).

Table 18

*Midwest University: Question 9*

<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
0	1 (1%)	0	4 (6%)	67 (93%)

*Note:* The leader displayed ethical behavior in the decisions he made within the course of his job.

In responding to the statement regarding Coach K.'s ethical behavior in decision-making, 99% stated they either strongly agreed or mildly agreed that he was in fact an ethical leader. One participant said he or she mildly disagreed.'

Question 10 asked participants to 'Give examples of skills and/or personality traits the leader possessed that caused you to want to follow their leadership. If you prefer, you could instead include situations you witnessed or interactions you had with the leader that made you want to follow his leadership.'

Coach K.'s ability to develop personal connections and establish relationships was a common theme throughout the responses to Question 10. Participants stated he was 'approachable,' 'personable,' 'conversational,' and 'easy to be around.' Others said he 'makes an effort to connect with players,' was 'dedicated to his players' and would 'do anything for them.' Participants remarked that he made an effort to get to them know them outside of football and learned about them as people, in addition to their roles as athletes and coaches. He was interested in 'creating better people,' stated one player, while another responded, Coach K. 'helped me more off the field with life situations than any other family member I know.' Another participant said, he 'makes me feel like I'm valuable to the organization.'



Vision was another theme throughout participant responses regarding Coach K.'s leadership. As stated in Chapter One, Viviano (2012) defined vision as the direction a leader sees an organization or employee going. It was also described as crucial to effectively leading an organization into the next phase of its existence or aid an employee in reaching full potential in his or her role (Davis, 1998; Holland & Thom, 2012; Suito, 2009). One player said, Coach K. 'sets concrete goals and pursues them,' with another player adding their coach 'makes sure everybody is behind the direction the team is going.' An assistant coach agreed with the thoughts of the player statements by saying 'he [Coach K.] has a clear goal for the program and has very well thought out steps to get to that goal.' Several participants mentioned that Coach K. was clear in establishing what his vision was and was clear in communicating the plan to fulfill it. One player remarked that Coach K. was skillful at making sure players were 'focused on the task at hand,' yet still looking ahead at what the vision for program was. Players said he was 'inspiring' and made you feel 'you're a part of something bigger.'

In Chapter One, the researcher cited Kane's (1998) definition of job competency as a basic understanding of administrative skill of the field they [participants] are in and a potentially deeper understanding of specific processes. Job competency will be developed and refined from knowledge and intuition gained through experience in the field, as well as other aspects of an organization's community (Kane, 1998). With regards to being a head football coach, job competency could include knowledge of both skill and tactical development. That is, being able to teach players how to perform physical skills, such as blocking, tackling, running, catching, and throwing, as well how to remember how to use

one's mind to execute plays and other responsibilities on the field. Many participants felt Coach K.'s job competency was high. Because he coached for several years, along with having been a player himself, one player responded that Coach K. understood the responsibilities of the players on the field along with their 'strengths and weaknesses.' One player simply stated Coach K. was 'very knowledgeable' and exhibited 'good coaching.' Several other players, as well as coaches, remarked how much preparation he did for games and practices, stating that he was very 'detail and process oriented.' In addition to his head coaching responsibilities, one player noted that he also coached special teams and defensive backs, which were specific positions. It was believed by players that because he coached individual positions in addition to overseeing the entire program, Coach K. understood more aspects of coaching the game of football. Assistant coaches felt his ability to delegate responsibilities to other coaches and that he was a 'good manager of people' also added to his level of job competency.

How Coach K. handled his emotions was another key aspect of the coach's ability to create buy-in from his players and assistants. Players used terms and phrases, such as 'calm,' with a 'commanding demeanor,' one who was in control of his emotions; not getting 'too high or too low,' and 'keeps a level head.' Players and coaches alike stated that having a 'PMA,' or positive mental attitude, was important to Coach K. Other players said that while he never used curse words or yelled at players, he would still let you know when he was not pleased. Not pleasing Coach K. was something few players wanted to succeed at. One assistant coach stated, 'What motivates people to perform for him is a fear of disappointing him.'

Passion and dedication was another theme in the description from players and coaches regarding Coach K.'s leadership. Both remarked of his 'intensity,' 'dedication to his work,' the 'time and effort' he puts in to his job, and that he was 'hard working.' Participants seemed to connect his passion and dedication areas outside of football stating his ability to teach players how to 'win in all aspects of life.' Another player said he 'demands your best effort.'

Multiple players and coaches believed Coach K. 'serves others' through his leadership. One participant said he would help out with 'trivial tasks' despite having the responsibilities of a head coach, while an assistant coach said he 'continually humbles himself to serve the men under him.' One player recalled an example of this servant leadership:

My freshman year, I watched my head coach shoo everyone away from a spilled plate in the cafeteria, get on his hands and knees, and clean the spill for ten minutes . . . he showed men how to be a man by cleaning up what was spilled.

Participants responded regarding the communication ability of Coach K. One said he was 'inspirational' while another said he was 'well spoken.' 'Effective communicator' was another phrase used. Another said he 'communicates well with a variety of player personalities.' A player stated that one way he communicated during the summer was by sending letters to each player. He stated that he appreciated the fact that the letters were 'clearly' thought out. Coach K.'s ability to communicate 'gets me excited to contribute,' responded one player.

Another common theme related to Coach K.'s ability to obtain constituent buy-in was in the category of ethics. It was stated that players and coaches wanted to emulate him. They saw his success and the values he held. One participant stated he was 'very moral' while another added he had 'character.' 'Honorable' was a word used by another participant. An assistant coach said that his 'reputation is widely known' and it's 'easy to see why he is so respected.'

### **Interview and Focus Group Responses for Midwest University**

The researcher randomly selected and focus-grouped four coaches and interviewed two players, from the Midwest University- Urban football program that played and coached under Coach K., the leader being examined in this research. The original plan by the researcher was to randomly select and interview 10 players and conduct a focus group involving seven-to-10 assistant coaches. However, only two players, referred to as 'Player B' and 'Player J' for this study, agreed to participate and complete an interview. The researcher attempted to contact 11 other players who indicated on the study consent form that they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. Using the contact email addresses given to the researcher, two emails were returned as undeliverable, and nine other emails were not returned in time to complete the data collection process.

A date and time was also scheduled to meet with randomly selected assistant coaches to conduct a focus group on November 8, 2014, a bye-week for the team. However, an extra game was added for that day after the season began, which forced the cancellation of the focus group. In talking with the associate head coach who served as

the main point of contact for data collection at Midwest University, December 12, 2014, after the season ended, was agreed upon to convene the focus group. On this day, only four assistant coaches were available, because some were out of town, others had recruiting responsibilities, and some other coaches were employed at only a part-time level during the football season. Those part time coaches were working at other jobs on the day the focus group was conducted.

The length of service time spent working and /or playing for the leader by interview and focus group participants ranged from one season to 12 years. Twelve questions were asked and responses were in depth. With the input of the dissertation chair and the committee, the researcher created interview questions for players and staff of Midwest University-Urban to answer. The questions asked players and assistant coaches to reflect on their experiences under the leadership of head football coach. After creating possible questions, the number was cut to 12, based upon discussion between the chair and the researcher. The two interview participants are referred to as Player J and Player B. Focus group participants will not be referred to by specific pseudonyms.

**Interview answers.** Two players agreed to and completed an interview, Player J and Player B. Question 1 stated, ‘Describe what it’s like working under or with the leader.’ Player B discussed some of the day-to-day responsibilities of Coach K. He mentioned that at practice, he would ‘coach corner backs’ and ‘lead special teams meetings,’ along with his head coach responsibilities. Player B made his first mention of ‘quirks’ that Coach K. had by pointing out that he did not eat on the day of a game. He did not give any explanation as to why, but that it was part of a routine he followed. On

game days, he also said a prayer before the game. He did not require everyone to join in, but did ask that they be respectful of those who did join the team prayer. Player J answered question 1 in a slightly different scope saying the leader was ‘details oriented,’ ‘knows what he’s talking about,’ ‘persistent,’ and ‘confident.’ He summarized his description of Coach K. by stating that people ‘don’t want to let him down.’

Question 2 stated, ‘Are there any characteristics of the leader you like best/least?’ Player B said he liked the ‘genuine care’ Coach K. showed toward his players. ‘He’ll ask how classes are going or how the job search is going.’ To support those statements, he shared a story about one time the team was preparing to leave for a road trip.

We were packing up to go to Carnegie [Carnegie Mellon University]. We were packing up and getting ready to board the plane and it was pouring down rain. He was out loading our bags, loading our bus, and he wouldn’t let us load our bags because he didn’t want us to get wet. That kind of threw me off for a second because a D-I [NCAA Division I] program, I bet Urban Meyer [head football coach at Ohio State University] is not throwing bags in the back of a truck in a rainstorm.

Player B said something he liked least about Coach K. was that he sometimes was slow to change drills or made logistical decisions on road trips that did not make sense to him. He added that Coach K. was sometimes awkward in social situations, but added that it was humorous at times and was actually accepted as part of his personality. Player J liked how he asked players the question, ‘Have you found your passion?’ a lot. This question, according to Player J, caused him to believe that Coach K. ‘cares about my

future even though it doesn't help him [Coach K.].' He added, 'I really feel like I'm his son.'

Question 3, stated, 'How do you describe a good leader?' Player J believed a good leader 'must serve before they can lead' and will 'do anything' for the success of the organization, even if it means they [the leader] are last. Player B believed good leaders have to be 'in tune' with the people they are leading, listen, care, and have passion for what they do.

Question 4 asked the participant the question, 'Is your leader a good leader? Why?' Both players answered 'yes' to this question. Player J referred to his answers to question 3, but added that he 'learned how to love how to play from him [Coach K.].' He went to say 'when you see and value the big picture from his eyes, you get it.' Player B supported his answer by adding that Coach K. was energetic and was 'always asking guys what we could do to better.'

Question 5 stated 'What weaknesses in leadership does the leader have?' From the researcher's perspective, it seemed that each player was either hesitant to list a weakness or had difficulty recalling one. After some time, Player B said that it appeared Coach K. sometimes favored players. But he qualified that statement that it could be because Coach K. also coached some individual positions, giving him a closer connection to them. The qualification of his answer seemed to indicate to the researcher that Player B was not blaming his coach for this but it could be construed as a natural reaction to others in that situation. Player J felt that perhaps 'more intensity' was needed at times,

especially if punishment needed to be administered to players, ‘including myself [Player J].’

Question 6 stated, ‘How does the leader deal with his emotions?’ Both participants felt Coach K. controlled his emotions well. They said he was ‘very in check,’ exhibited the same behavior even during a losing stretch, but was still ‘competitive’ in his job.

Question 7 stated, ‘How does the leader demonstrate that he understands his own strengths and weaknesses?’ Player B said that he knew Coach K. had people in his personal life to help hold him accountable. Player J remarked that he would ‘stay away’ from offensive decisions because that was not where his strengths lie. He would instead delegate that responsibility to another coach.

Question 8 asked, ‘How does the leader communicate?’ Both players felt Coach K. was a good communicator and was passionate when he spoke.

Question 9 asked, ‘How does the leader demonstrate that he has the skills to do his job effectively?’ Both players felt he was knowledgeable and in touch with the details of the game of football. One player noticed that he met with the assistant coaches often to game-plan and prepare for practice.

Question 10 stated, ‘How does the leader demonstrate that he understands your role within the organization?’ This question was not asked directly of each player, but his or her answers to other questions in the interview led the researcher to believe that Coach K. did understand each player’s role. The researcher reached this conclusion because of the participants’ description of the detail Coach K. used to in planning and conducting



practices and managing the competitive games. Their statements about his preparation, weekly goals, and instances in practice where he made coaching points, solidified Coach K.'s understanding of what players need to do to be successful as football players.

Question 11 stated, 'How does the leader explain the vision of the organization?' Player B used an analogy shared by Coach K. to illustrate staying the course toward a vision, despite fears or obstacles that could arise. He said if someone laid a 2x4 piece of lumber on the ground and asked someone else to walk across it, most people would do it without a problem. But if you put that same 2x4 100 feet in the air, most people would be afraid to do it. He went on to say 'when you think about it, it's the exact same thing.' His point was not to let fear detract you from your goals.

Question 12 asked, 'How does the leader demonstrate ethical behavior?'

Both participants agreed without hesitation that Coach K. was an ethical leader, but did not give specific examples of why they believed this.

**Focus group answers.** Participants in the focus group included assistant coaches who worked under Coach K. for six years, four years, one year, and one season. The coaches who worked six and four years answered most of the questions. The coaches with less experience did answer questions based on the time they spent with Coach K., but simply did not have as much information to share as the two coaches who worked with him for a longer time period.

The first question asked by the researcher was, 'How do you describe a good leader?' One coach stated that a good leader had to be willing to learn and adjust when things 'don't go' as planned. Another coach said they had to be confident in 'what they're

doing.’ A third participant added he or she needed to ‘have a vision and a method for carrying it out.’ The fourth coach added that good leaders must ‘deal with adversity well’ and ‘prepares for the unseen.’

All of the assistant coaches agreed that Coach K. was a good leader. They referred to their previous statements to support that claims. They also went on to add other reasons; specifically that he was an unselfish leader. They stated, ‘he would never ask anyone to do anything he hasn’t done or is willing to do.’ Adding that he put Midwest University football and the players above everything else including any special recognition or accolades. One coach recalled a story when the team was on a road trip and eating out at a restaurant and the restaurant staff did not have enough help to serve the team quickly. He said Coach K. helped wait tables to speed the process up and made sure the athletes got fed in a timely matter.

When asked about what they liked about Coach K., one assistant coach responded ‘he compliments you without even realizing it.’ He went to state, ‘he praises his coaches and appreciates our work.’ Another said that he listened to people while another said he ‘doesn’t focus on the negative’ and demonstrated joy while ‘celebrating like nobody’s business.’

When asked about weakness their leader had, they were slow to answer. In case any hesitancy to answer this question came from concern over whether or not Coach K. would be told the responses, the researcher reiterated that all responses would be kept confidential. Once that fact was made clear, one coach stated that he felt when he was in his first year working under the head coach, he ‘didn’t give me as much help’ as he

needed. He stated he felt this way because while he was a high school coach for several years, he was new to college coaching, and therefore would have liked more guidance in successfully completing the transition to college coaching. The assistant coach in the focus group with the longest tenure, six years, said that Coach K. can ‘micromanage’ and ‘take too much on’ at times if he felt he did not have the ‘right person’ to do a job. This coach recalled a time, with a slight chuckle, that he ‘literally ran away from a meeting’ to get somewhere else, because he was overscheduled. A lack of organization ‘at times’ was another weakness stated by participants.

All participants felt Coach K. was a good communicator. One coach liked how he was ‘direct’ and would always give a ‘framework for what he wants.’ Another stated, ‘He’s the best I’ve seen at talking to recruits to explain what [MidW U] football is about.’ Other coaches went on to say that he was ‘inspiring’ whether ‘talking to the team, in a small group or large group.’ They said he was ‘engaging’ and ‘you won’t fall asleep while listening to him.’ Interestingly, one coach said Coach K. would say about himself that he was not a good speaker and did not actively look for opportunities to speak in front of groups.

When asked about how Coach K. handled his emotions, the focus group mentioned he was successful. All focus group participants responded that he maintained control of his emotions, ‘not riding the wave’ of emotion that could occur during a football season. One assistant coach said that he would ‘hold his tongue’ if upset or frustrated with someone adding that he would ‘settle down’ and then find time to ‘talk in a personal way.’ This same coach believed that while the team only won four games the

past season against six losses, the team was able to achieve even that record because of the way Coach K. kept his emotions under control during periods of the year when it would have been easy to ‘lose it’ on people. All participants also agreed he worked very hard at being positive in all circumstances. ‘PMA’ or ‘Positive Mental Attitude’ was something that was stated verbally by Coach K., often throughout the in-season and off-season to both players and coaches.

All assistant coaches believed Coach K. was a ‘good’ football coach. Citing his years of experience, preparation time for all practices and games, his ability to give a ‘framework’ of practice to his assistants, his play-calling decisions in games, and his ability to relate and care for players and assistant coaches, as reasons. They also believed his skill at casting the vision of the program as a key reason for being ‘good’ at what he did. He ‘talks about winning a national championship’ and prepares each day for that goal. They felt, that while he could be a little ‘quirky,’ he was able to get the players to believe they could win a championship.

The last topic in the focus group interview related to Coach K.’s demonstration of ethical behavior. The assistant coaches with six and four years’ experience had the most accurate perspectives to share, because of their time with him. One assistant responded, ‘He and his staff do things the right way.’ He said that Coach K.’s ethics ‘comes out of his priorities,’ referring to his belief in ‘faith, family, academics, and football.’ He said he wanted to be on the NCAA committee because ‘it’s important for football.’ The other longer-tenured assistant stated that Coach K.’s ethics were demonstrated by ‘what he’s

not done.’ He said he ‘doesn’t put himself in compromising positions . . . he is who he says he is.’

### **Interviews of Case Study Subjects - The Leaders**

The researcher interviewed John, the leader investigated from Midwest Christian Academy, on October 21, 2014, and Coach K., the leader from Midwest University, on December 10, 2014. John, referred to as the long-time successful education leader, held the position of head of school for Midwest Christian Academy for 28 years before retiring in 2013. A long-time, successful head of school was defined as having served some number of years that created a kind of rhythm and confidence in the administration, trustees, faculty, students, and alumni (Cooper, 2011). Coach K. was the head football coach at Midwest University-Urban for 26 years and was the long-time successful athletic leader in this research study. He still held that position as of January 2015, the writing of this dissertation. A long-time, successful head football coach was defined as the longer the coaching tenure, the greater the success of the team (Eitzen & Yetman, 1972).

The researcher met with each individual at a location of his choice and conducted an interview with to get each leader’s own perception of his leadership abilities. The reason for this was to compare each leader’s own perception with perceptions of those they led. Some of the same interview questions asked of the research participants designated as followers of the leader were also asked of the leaders themselves. However, because of limited time with each leader, not every question was presented. The researcher wanted to allow the leader to take the conversation where he would like within

the 60-minute time allotted. While not every question was asked, the research was still able to gather a large amount of relevant data.

**John.** When the researcher asked John to describe what it was like for others to work for him, he began by explaining his philosophy of leadership. He stated: ‘identifying and holding onto great people is the measure of any good leader’s success.’ He added, ‘My philosophy was to hire great people, trust them, and provide them with an opportunity to flourish without me micromanaging them. I believe that excellent employees are motivated by this leadership model and demotivated by micromanagement.’

When asked about what John liked best and least about himself, he replied that what he liked best was that he was ‘not afraid to let go.’ He was comfortable with delegating responsibilities to others who could do complete tasks just as good, or better than he could. He said what he liked least about himself was that he could sometimes ‘trust to a fault.’ He went on to say that sometimes he did not confront situations as ‘quickly or emphatically as I should.’ ‘I give too many second and third chances.’ To support these statements, John discussed various situations with teachers and students where it could be argued that he should have dismissed them for either poor performance (teacher) or poor behavior (student). But John also added that there were situations when teachers and students who did get multiple chances became ‘success stories’ and went on to do well.

The next question asked John to describe a good leader. He responded that a good leader was a good listener.

I worked hard to be a good listener whose door was always open to faculty and staff to share concerns, joys, and new ideas. Many initiatives and programs at [Midwest] were generated by this, grass roots, open door model.

He also said a good leader had to be able to ‘spread out the praise’ and ‘accept blame.’ He indicated a good leader was humble because ‘arrogance doesn’t work.’ He said to be a good leader he or she must have ‘passion’ and ‘drive.’ In his answer John admitted that he was ‘very competitive.’ ‘When I look at the list of the top Christian schools in the country, I always wanted [Midwest] Christian Academy to be the best. Even when we were number two, I wanted us to be the best.’

The researcher asked him very directly if he was a good leader. According to the researcher, he felt John was reluctant to give an answer, but did state ‘yes.’ In giving his answer, he began describing three kinds of philosophies or principles when talking about the practice of leadership, the ‘command’ philosophy, the ‘consensus’ philosophy, and the ‘collaborative’ philosophy. He stated the command principle involved the leader acting as ‘the general’ saying ‘this is what we’re going to do,’ and essentially forcing their decisions on those they lead. He stated he ‘hates’ the consensus principle because the leader is ‘trying to meet in the middle somewhere,’ but ‘no one is happy’ anyway. He added too many schools now followed this principle. John believed the collaborative leader was the best, because he or she ‘gets the input, the ideas, and have conversations with various people you trust, but then makes the call.’ He shared a story of when Midwest Christian Academy decided to move to a standardized dress code in 2011; a decision he was in favor of but was met with resistance from others.

There were a lot of people, even on the leadership team who were not in favor of that. I remember starting that whole process, it took a year. I made up [my] mind that's what we're going to do, then it was a year of process to bring everybody along. I remember putting it up on a slide in an administrative team meeting.

'These are the three styles of decision making (command, consensus, collaborative); I want you to know that this is going to be a collaborative process. We're not going to try to work toward consensus because we'll never get anywhere. And I know is that just me making the decision is not going to work well for the community. So I'm going to listen, and we're going to listen to a lot of people and have town hall meetings, yada, yada, yada. But in the end, I'm going to make a recommendation to the board on what we should do.'

Midwest Christian Academy adopted a standardized dress code in 2011 and continued to follow it as of 2015.

The researcher told John that many of the survey responses and interviews included stories from teachers and staff who remarked how he would stop and talk to them, address them by name, and ask about family members or prior conversations. They all appreciated the fact that he did so, but were also surprised because they felt that he must have had 'a lot to do' but still stopped to talk. The researcher asked John to respond to these statements. The researcher framed the question by saying,

In the midst of difficult times, the challenging things you were going through, when someone stopped you in the hallway, your mind is everywhere else but there, but somehow you were able to bring it to them. It's easy when things are



going well but it's hard when the world is crumbling around us. How were you able to do that?

He responded,

Relationships are really important to me. That's what really drove me. People really matter to me. Relationships with teachers, with the administrative team, kids, parents. That's what motivates me. That's the hardest part about stepping down as head of school. All those relationships are gone because they were born out of that role . . . so it was easy for me.

The researcher asked John how he handled his emotions. He said that he always 'had a temper' but as he has grown older he has learned to control it better. He said that his personality was such that there was 'a lot going on inside,' and he angers slowly. But when he 'gets there,' he can 'go off.' Over time he has also learned to know that when he feels himself getting angry in a situation, he can recognize the signs and if needed, simply end the meeting or interaction, if necessary.

When asked about his communication skills, John responded that he was not comfortable with public speaking and never 'seeks opportunities' to do it. He did not feel he was a very dynamic speaker but was more comfortable in one-on-one or small group situations. This largely contrasted with the results from the survey and interviews of the followers of John. Ninety-nine percent of those surveyed either strongly agreed or mildly agreed that he communicated well. Survey participants felt he was an 'engaging' speaker, and because he did not speak often 'people listened.'

The researcher asked John about how to effectively explain the vision of the organization. He stated,

I found that having vision and dreams is the easy part of leadership. The real leadership challenge is bringing a community of various--and sometimes competing--constituencies (faculty, staff, parents, students, board members, donors, alumni, etc.) along in pursuit of the vision. I did my best to establish and maintain relationships with these various constituents in order to help them see the big picture and bring them along in pursuit of the vision and dream.

**Coach K.** When the researcher asked Coach K. what it was like for his players to play for him and his coaches to coach for him, he stated,

I would say that the number one thing is I'm going to tell you what I think. I tend to be more on the Positive Mental Attitude side. I don't like to tear people down, or tear situations down, or even feel sorry for myself. I would rather go in to every conversation with 'what can we do to be better?' That's the basis of every conversation. The 'we' could mean a lot of things. It could mean [Midwest] University; it could be just my relationship with you. I'm in the relationship business. When it's all said and done, I want that to be one of the most important parts. Not just with me, but with your teammates, your coaches, your fellow students; whatever you get into; not just how many dollars and cents you make but how successful you're going to be as a person in terms of, I've got friends who are going to support me, I've got friends who are going to be up front with me . . . that's what I want for my coaches and players.

Two major aspects of Midwest University football that Coach K. tried to reinforce every day, throughout every aspect of the football program were that ‘the program is better for you than you are for the program’ and ‘no one person is bigger than the program, even me.’ He stated the relationships that are developed between coaches and players, and between players are an integral in getting all to buy in to these aspects.

In response to the question of ‘what is a good leader,’ Coach K. started by saying that leaders could be ‘good or bad.’

You could be doing everything right, and there’s nothing wrong with that, but if everyone is over there and they’re not looking at you, then you’re not leading. A leader is someone who gets other people to do not necessarily what they want them to do, but will take them to another area of their life. Obviously a good leader then is taking them to a good area of their life. You can have bad leaders who are taking them to a bad area of life. A good leader is going to do something that is beneficial for them, even if they don’t know it at the time, and it’s going to be beneficial for the organization.

When the researcher asked Coach K. to give examples of good leaders in his own life, he used Jesus Christ as a model for what he believed to be an example of good leadership. He said Jesus was able to create a vision that was ‘good.’

Here’s Jesus saying ‘follow me.’ Leave your families; leave your job; follow me.

He helped create a vision that something good is going to come out of this.

Something so good that it’s even probably more important than your own life,

your own son, and certainly your business. Then he has this group of people who

are always doing stuff wrong. Wow, talk about a servant leader; to be able to look at them and say ‘I know you’re going to do that, I still love you! But this is still better for you than you’ll be for it.’ You talk about perfect leadership; Jesus didn’t pound on people, he didn’t keep saying please, please. He was very transparent; he just kept giving the same message to them.

Coach K. used one of the head coaches he worked for early in his career as another example of a good leader. Woody Hayes, the former head football coach at Ohio State University was such an example. Coach K. said that Woody was always striving to make his players better people. To that end, he used to give them a book called *Thirty Days for a More Powerful Vocabulary* (Funk & Lewis, 1970). He used to have the players read it and then they would discuss it. He admitted that many players may not have gotten much out of the book, but they all believed Woody cared for them simply because he was trying to help them be successful.

The researcher asked Coach K. what he liked best and least about himself as a leader. What he liked best was that he ‘cares’ about his players stating, ‘I give them whatever I can’ and ‘I listen to every kid.’ He said what he liked least was when he gets a negative attitude about something. He felt that it ‘clouds his thinking and decisions.’ But he said he empowered his assistant coaches to hold him accountable for those times as he encouraged them to mention to him that he was being negative. Another area he felt could be perceived as a weakness was that he was not into ‘exclusivity’ but was an ‘inclusive guy,’ who allowed players and coaches to stay with the program who could

have possibly been removed. He said he liked to ‘stick with them’ because he felt they could still benefit from the program.

When asked how he communicated the vision of the football program to potential football recruits, he said when he met with recruits and families inside their homes, he told them that his own life and decision-making process centered around four priorities, ‘God, family, academics, football.’ He said he realized that not everyone may agree with his belief system but he wanted players and parents to know what to expect from him should they decide to attend Midwest University. He added that even for parents who did not agree with his beliefs, they believed that he would ‘care’ for their sons and ‘there must be something more to it than just football,’ because he was being so ‘transparent.’ At that point discussions surrounded football, obviously, and which degree programs were offered, campus life, etc. Coach K. then reinforced that the ‘program is better for you than you are for the program’ and that ‘no one person is bigger than the program,’ even the head coach. He communicated to parents that he wanted to use football and the relationships within the program to help their sons be successful in life beyond football. This was his biggest, overarching vision for the players and the football program.

In communicating the vision of how to win games week-to-week, he described the ‘five core principles’ for each game that never changed. Each principle was based on statistical analysis on past games. The principles were ‘stop the run,’ ‘win the kicking game,’ ‘the Bear 60’ (# of completed passes plus the number of runs equals 60 or more), ‘turnover margin plus 2,’ and ‘more big plays than our opponent.’ He stated the reason all of these were important was if a coordinator was putting a game plan together they knew

it had to result in these goals. If for example, a defensive coordinator puts a game plan together and the other team ‘rushes for over 100 yards,’ then it becomes more difficult to predict the outcome of the game, and therefore the defensive plan for the week failed.

### Similarities and Dissimilarities in Survey Results

Tables 19 through 25 display a comparison of Midwest Christian Academy data to Midwest University data for the seven Likert scale responses given by participants in both case studies. In each table, both the total number of responses given per category, from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree,’ are displayed, along with the percentage of participant response per category.

Data in Table 19 displays the response and percentage per Likert-scale category for the prompt in question 3, ‘The leader maintained control of his emotions.’ Midwest Christian Academy rated the emotional control of the former head of school and Midwest University-Urban rated the emotional control exhibited by the head football coach.

Table 19

*Midwest Christian Academy and Midwest University: Question 3*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
MCA	0	0	0	4 (5%)	78 (95%)
MidW U	0	2 (3%)	1 (1%)	21 (29%)	48 (67%)

*Note:* The leader maintained control of his emotions. MCA - Midwest Christian Academy; MidW U - Midwest University-Urban.

Ninety-five percent of Midwest Christian Academy participants strongly agreed their leader maintained control of his emotions, while 67% of Midwest University participants also strongly agreed with the same statement. The remaining five percent of Midwest Christian Academy participants stated they mildly agreed that their leader

maintained control of his emotions. One percent of Midwest University survey participants responded ‘don’t know,’ and 3% responded ‘mildly disagree’. Data in Table 20 displays the response and percentage per Likert-scale category for the prompt in question 4, ‘The leader had an accurate understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses.’

Table 20

*Midwest Christian Academy and Midwest University: Question 4*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
MCA	0	0	10 (12%)	7 (9%)	65 (79%)
MidW U	0	3 (4%)	3 (4%)	32 (44%)	34 (47%)

*Note:* The leader had an accurate understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses. MCA - Midwest Christian Academy; MidW U - Midwest University-Urban.

For Midwest Christian Academy, 79% of participants who completed the survey strongly agreed their leader had an accurate understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses. The participants at Midwest University strongly agreed at a rate of 47%. Twelve percent responded ‘don’t know,’ and 9% mildly agreed with the statement. Forty-four percent of Midwest University participants mildly agreed and 4% mildly disagreed and ‘don’t know,’ respectively. Table 21 displays the response and percentage per Likert-scale category for the prompt in question 5, ‘The leader communicated effectively.’

Table 21

*Midwest Christian Academy and Midwest University: Question 5*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
MCA	0	1 (<1%)	0	21 (26%)	60 (73%)
MidW U	0	9 (17%)	0	42 (58%)	21 (29%)

*Note:* The leader communicated effectively. MCA - Midwest Christian Academy; MidW U - Midwest University-Urban.

Nearly 75% of Midwest Christian Academy strongly agreed that their leader communicated effectively, while 29% of Midwest University participants rated their leader in that same category. Fifty-eight percent of Midwest University participants mildly agreed with 26% of Midwest Christian Academy, saying they also mildly agreed their leader communicated effectively. Both case studies had survey participants who indicated they ‘mildly disagree’ their leader communicated effectively, with 17% coming from Midwest University and about 1% from Midwest Christian Academy. Data in Table 22 displays the response and percentage per Likert-scale category for the prompt in question 6, ‘The leader understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively.’

Table 22

*Midwest Christian Academy and Midwest University: Question 6*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
MCA	0	0	0	3 (4%)	79 (96%)
MidW U	0	2 (3%)	1 (1%)	16 (22%)	53 (74%)

*Note:* The leader understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively. MCA - Midwest Christian Academy; MidW U - Midwest University-Urban.



Both case studies had high ranges of ‘strongly agree’ with regards to whether or not their leaders understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively, with 96% stating so at Midwest Christian Academy and 74% at Midwest University. At Midwest University one participant answered ‘don’t know’ to that statement, while two participants mildly disagreed that their leader understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively. Data in Table 23 displays the response and percentage per Likert-scale category for the prompt in question 7, ‘The leader understood your responsibilities and role within the organization.’

Table 23

*Midwest Christian Academy and Midwest University: Question 7*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don’t Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
MCA	3 (3%)	0	0	15 (18%)	64 (78%)
MidW U	3 (4%)	1 (1%)	2 (3%)	15 (21%)	54 (75%)

*Note:* The leader understood your responsibilities and role within the organization. MCA - Midwest Christian Academy; MidW U - Midwest University-Urban.

At least 75% of participants at both Midwest Christian Academy and Midwest University answered ‘strongly agree’ with the statement that their ‘leader understood your responsibilities and role within the organization.’ However, 3% at Midwest Christian Academy and 4% at Midwest University strongly disagreed with the statement. Data in Table 24 displays the response and percentage per Likert-scale category for the prompt in question 8, ‘The leader successfully communicated the vision of the organization.’

Table 24

*Midwest Christian Academy and Midwest University: Question 8*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
MCA	0	0	0	5 (6%)	77 (94%)
MidW U	0	1 (1%)	0	11 (15%)	60 (83%)

*Note:* The leader successfully communicated the vision of the organization. MCA - Midwest Christian Academy; MidW U - Midwest University-Urban.

Ninety-four percent of Midwest Christian Academy participants and 83% of Midwest University participants strongly agreed their leader successfully communicated the vision of the organizations they lead. One participant at Midwest University stated they ‘mildly disagree.’ Data in Table 25 displays the response and percentage per Likert-scale category for the prompt in question 9, ‘The leader displayed ethical behavior in the decisions he made within the course of his job.’

Table 25

*Midwest Christian Academy and Midwest University: Question 9*

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Mildly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>Mildly Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
MCA	0	0	1 (1%)	3 (4%)	78 (95%)
MidW U	0	1 (1%)	0	4 (6%)	67 (93%)

*Note:* The leader displayed ethical behavior in the decisions he made within the course of his job. MCA - Midwest Christian Academy; MidW U - Midwest University-Urban.

At both Midwest Christian Academy, 95%, and Midwest University, 93%, survey participants ‘strongly agreed that their leaders displayed ethical behavior in the decisions they made within the course of their job. One participant responded ‘mildly disagree.’

Overall, the survey responses indicated that both John and Coach K. maintained high emotional intelligence, had an effective communication style, possessed a high level

of job competency, successfully communicated their vision, and maintained high ethical standards in their jobs. However, data from all questions showed that participants rated John more often than Coach K. in the category of ‘strongly agree’ in all five areas: emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics. Specifically, when comparing Midwest Christian Academy to Midwest University for the category of ‘strongly agree,’ response rates were 95% to 67% in Table 19 for emotional intelligence, 79% to 47% in Table 20 for emotional intelligence, 73% to 29% in Table 21 for communication style, 96% to 74% in Table 22 for job competency, 78% to 75% in Table 23 for job competency, 94% to 83% in Table 24 for vision and 95% to 93% in Table 25 for ethics. It is important to note that both leaders scored between 87% and 99% in both the ‘strongly agree’ and ‘mildly agree’ categories combined, in each of the five areas measured in this study: emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics.

Question 10 asked participants to ‘Give examples of skills and/or personality traits the leader possessed that caused you to want to follow their leadership. If you prefer, you could instead include situations you witnessed or interactions you had with the leader that made you want to follow his leadership.’ There were more similarities than differences in participant responses between Midwest Christian Academy and Midwest University.

In regards to emotional intelligence, both groups stated that each leader possessed the trait to a high degree. In Chapter One, emotional intelligence was defined as a “subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and other’s emotions,

to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions" (as cited in Lilley, 2012, p. 22); and

the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to assess and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge: and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (as cited in Lilley, 2012, p. 24)

In Chapter Two, Goleman et al. (2002a) connected emotional intelligence to one's self-awareness having stated that "understanding one's own emotions, personal strengths and improvement areas, and individual values are all part of strong self-awareness skills" (as cited in Lilley, 2012, p.27). With these definitions in mind, each group used terms and phrases to describe each leader's emotional intelligence. Midwest Christian Academy example descriptors were: 'even tempered,' 'confident but not arrogant,' 'secure,' 'wasn't threatened by new ways,' 'would laugh at himself,' 'consulted others before making decisions,' because he 'knew his strength and weaknesses,' 'calm,' and 'able to admit failure.' Midwest University responses related to emotional intelligence included: 'calm,' 'control of his emotions,' 'keeps a level head,' 'comforting,' 'willing to learn,' 'calming demeanor under pressure,' 'consistent,' 'never yells or curses,' 'knew his strengths and weaknesses,' and 'willing to delegate.' There were no differences in participants' description of each leader's level of emotional intelligence.

In Chapter Two, the researcher stated that the literature makes a connection between relationship building and emotional intelligence. Specifically, Batool (2013)

identified a strong correlation between social skills and emotional intelligence having stated strong social skills were vital to building healthy relationships. Both John and Coach K. were successful, and it appeared intentionally building relationships as a major part of their leadership philosophy. Midwest Christian Academy participants said John was ‘accessible,’ ‘made me feel valuable,’ was ‘personable,’ ‘cared about me as a person,’ ‘made me feel empowered,’ ‘truly knew me,’ ‘personally handed out contracts,’ ‘kind hearted,’ ‘told personal stories,’ ‘made eye contact,’ ‘brilliant in one-on-one interactions,’ ‘eager to greet you,’ ‘felt he loved me’ and ‘had my best interests at heart.’ Midwest University participants stated descriptors like: ‘approachable,’ ‘easy to open up to,’ ‘friendly,’ ‘makes effort to connect with players,’ ‘willingness to help off the field’ and in one’s ‘personal life,’ ‘makes me feel like I’m valuable to the organization,’ and is ‘easy to follow because he truly cares about his players and the game.’ Each leader’s ability to develop relationships and a personal connections with their constituents was the most prevailing theme of all responses from the survey.

Communication style was defined as a “distinctive set of interpersonal communicative behaviors geared toward the optimization of hierarchical relationships in order to reach certain group of individual goals” (deVries et al., 2010, p. 368). Results in this category also yielded similar results from participants. Midwest Christian Academy participants stated John was a ‘good, clear, effective communicator,’ ‘inspiring,’ ‘motivator,’ while Midwest University participants responded that Coach K. was ‘inspirational,’ an ‘effective communicator,’ ‘well spoken,’ ‘charismatic,’ and

‘communicates well with a variety of player personalities.’ There were no differences in participant responses.

Both groups of participants yielded similar responses regarding job competency. Job competency was defined as a basic understanding of administrative skill of the field they are in and a potentially deeper understanding of specific processes (Kane, 1998). Job competency will be developed and refined from knowledge and intuition gained through experience in the field, as well as other aspects of an organization’s community (Kane, 1998). Both groups felt each leader was ‘good’ at his job. Midwest Christian Academy participants stated John had an ‘ability to delegate,’ ‘read and responded to emails quickly,’ was ‘not controlling’ or a ‘micromanager,’ ‘organized,’ ‘made tough decisions’ and ‘showed resolve’ when necessary. Midwest University participants said, Coach K. was a ‘great manager of people,’ was ‘very knowledgeable,’ ‘good coaching,’ had ‘experience,’ an ‘impressive resume,’ ‘understands players strengths and weaknesses,’ ‘detail oriented’ and ‘process oriented.’ The one difference between each group of participant responses was that Midwest University made specific feedback to Coach K.’s ability to coach on the field, where Midwest Christian Academy participants did not or were not able to make parallel comparisons. The reason for this was perhaps because a football coach had more direct contact through his daily presence at practices and games, in the specific implementation of football-related processes. On the contrary, a head of a school had less daily contact with teachers, staff, and students, due to the greater ‘behind the scenes’ nature of his job.

In Chapter One, vision was defined as the direction a leader sees an organization or employee going (Viviano, 2012) and is crucial to effectively lead an organization into the next phase of its existence or aid an employee in reaching full potential in his role (Davis, 1998; Holland & Thom, 2012; Suitor, 2009). Again both groups of participants elicited very similar responses to questions concerning each leader's ability to effectively communicate the vision of the organization. Midwest Christian Academy participants stated the John 'could help me see the vision for the school,' had a 'powerful drive to accomplish school mission,' 'dreams big' and was a 'risk taker,' and 'devoted to the mission.' Midwest University participants stated Coach K. was the 'epitome of inspiring confidence,' provided a 'clear vision,' 'implements the vision,' 'inspiring,' has 'well thought out goals for the program,' 'makes sure everyone is behind where the team is going,' and gave a 'feeling that you're part of something bigger.' The one slight difference in responses was that Midwest University participants made more frequent references to Coach K.'s work toward the vision of the school. Similar to job competency, because this football coach related vision to the game plan for each week's game, could be an explanation for this fact. Midwest Christian Academy participants gave more vague responses to John's use of vision, as well as fewer responses that made specific mention of vision.

Both leaders were rated very high in regards to the ethics they displayed during the course of their jobs. Ethics was defined as a set of moral principles or values (Carroll & Bucholz, 2006); sense of right and wrong and a proper application of that sense are necessary for leaders to be taken seriously and ultimately trusted (Suitor, 2009). Midwest

Christian Academy participants used words and phrases such as ‘transparency,’ ‘upstanding,’ ‘Christian morals,’ ‘lived what he preached,’ ‘never gossiped even when prompted,’ ‘honesty in tough situations,’ ‘integrity in all areas,’ and ‘trusted.’ Similarly, Midwest University participants said ‘players want to imitate him when we see his success and values,’ ‘very moral,’ ‘strong values,’ ‘character,’ ‘honorable,’ and his because his ‘reputation is widely known,’ ‘he is so respected.’ There were no differences in participants’ descriptions of the level of ethics each leader possessed. Both were very high.

### **Similarities and Dissimilarities in Interviews and Focus Groups**

For the Midwest Christian Academy case study, 10 teachers and staff volunteered to be interviewed in a one-on-one format. At Midwest University, two players volunteered to be interviewed one-on-one and four assistant coaches agreed to participate in a focus group. The researcher also interviewed each leader to gain their own perceptions of their leadership skills and their abilities to create constituent buy-in. In this section, since there was not a similar group available for a focus group at Midwest Christian Academy, Midwest University’s focus group and interviews were grouped together for analysis and comparison to Midwest Christian Academy’s interviews. The responses of each leader were included with participant responses to illustrate the similarities and differences between the leaders’ perceptions and their followers’ and the similarities and differences between the leaders themselves.

Both groups rated the leader high in emotional intelligence. Midwest Christian Academy interview participants stated that John maintained control of his emotions,



could accurately perceive others' emotions, understood his strengths and weaknesses, and could develop relationships with those he led. Building relationships was the most often described quality that John possessed. Specifically, participants stated John was 'brilliant in one on one interactions,' was 'eager to greet you,' and 'remembered facts about past conversations.' Several participants remarked how he would stop to talk to them in the hallway despite the perceived workload and pressure of his job. These interactions made them feel 'important' and 'valuable.' When the researcher asked John about these statements and his thought process when interacting with teachers and staff in this setting, he replied, 'Relationships are important to me. That's what really drove me,' making it 'easy' to stop and talk to teachers and staff.

Midwest University participants made similar statements reporting Coach K. was able to control his emotions; he understood what he was and was not good at. He could understand others' emotions and act accordingly and was effective at building relationships. Several players said how he 'cared for them more off the field and in their personal lives.' When asked by the researcher about these statements, Coach K. replied, 'I'm in the relationship business.' He went on to say he wanted his players and coaches to be 'successful in life' beyond football, and building a relationship with them and helping them build relationships with others helped to achieve that.

Both groups felt that each leader was an effective communicator, citing instances where they addressed the groups they led collectively. Using words and phrases such as 'inspiring' 'clear,' 'effective communicator,' both groups of participants liked when their leader told stories. The majority of the participant group felt that each leader was a 'good

speaker.’ Ironically, both John and Coach K. felt they were not strong speakers and did not seek out opportunities to speak, but did rather because it was a part of their job responsibilities.

Midwest University interview and focus group participants made specific mention to Coach K.’s level of job competency. All agreed he was a ‘good football coach’ and ‘recruiter.’ They cited stories of his past coaching experience, his level of preparation, and his won/loss record while at Midwest University. Midwest Christian Academy interview participants did not make as many specific mentions to particular job skills, but gave the impression that John was extremely competent at his job. Stories of his ‘presence’ in front of a group during difficult situations, his ‘ability to make decisions,’ and his ability to communicate the vision of the school came across from participants as job competency skills. The researcher did not specifically ask John or Coach K. if they felt like they were ‘good at their job,’ but their answers to each question and the ease and detail with which they answered, along with the results each achieved, led the researcher to believe both possessed a high level of job competency. In other words, each leader exuded a ‘humble’ yet ‘confident’ idea of his own ability to lead.

Midwest University participants referred to the weekly review of team goals that Coach K. cited in preparation for each game as an example of how he communicated the vision of winning football games. But they also talked about stories he would tell to illustrate his beliefs that ‘no one is bigger than the program, not even the head coach,’ and that ‘the program will be better for you than you for it.’ Coach K. believed that both small and long-term goals needed to be communicated simply and often, if a football

program was going to achieve the vision set before them. For Midwest University and Coach K. that vision included developing successful men, graduating players, developing relationships, and winning football games.

Midwest Christian Academy participants referred to John's communication of vision when building and preparing to move to a new campus. Participants remarked how he was able to help them 'see' the outcome goals and that the vision was not just about a new building; it was about being 'better before bigger.' John stated, 'Having vision and dreams is the easy part of leadership. The real challenge is having, bringing along, sometimes competing constituencies, along in the pursuit of the vision.' The new Midwest Christian Academy campus was built and the school moved there in 2011. According to John, the vision was successfully accomplished, but not without challenges.

Both groups of participants agreed without hesitation that each leader was ethical in his decision-making. In interviewing both John and Coach K., the researcher did not ask them to answer if they were ethical. The discussion between the researcher and leader included many references to their faith (both professed the Christian faith) as a gauge for making decisions and doing things the 'right way.' The overwhelming response by participants in the survey, interview, and focus group caused the researcher to feel it was unnecessary to ask the leaders that question.

### **Summary**

The results from the surveys, interviews, and focus group created a large amount of information as to why John and Coach K. were able to achieve constituent buy-in. The survey results indicated at least 87%, and in many cases over 90%, of constituents either

strongly agreed or mildly agreed that his or her leader maintained control of his emotions (emotional intelligence), had an accurate understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses (emotional intelligence), communicated effectively (communication style), understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively (job competency), understood the follower's responsibilities and role within the organization (job competency), successfully communicated the vision of the organization (vision), and displayed ethical behavior (ethics) throughout the course of his job. The responses provided during interviews and the focus group provided anecdotes and personal testimony to support the results of the survey.

The most prevailing themes that emerged from the surveys, interviews, and focus group for these leaders to create constituent buy-in fell under emotional intelligence; specifically, relationship building and making a personal connection. To that end, participants in both groups stated that the leader made them feel 'valuable,' 'important,' 'truly knew' them, and 'cared about them' as much in a personal way, if not more than in a professional way. Participants indicated the leaders were also good in the other four areas, as well. Statements made regarding their communication styles were 'inspiring' and 'clear,' while data from participant responses about job competency were 'a good coach' and an 'ability to make tough decisions.' Responses about vision were consistent in both groups in that a larger percentage of participants noted they could 'see' the direction the organization was going because of how the leader described it, and they wanted to be a part of fulfilling it. Both leaders rated high in ethics, as well. In particular John was known not to engage in gossip, 'even when prompted to do so.' Coach K. was

respected, according to one assistant coach, because of what 'he didn't do.' That is, Coach K. did not put himself in situations that may compromise his value system.

### **Chapter Five: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the similarities and dissimilarities of leadership traits that contributed to leader buy-in for a former head of a Christian school, an educational leader, and a head college football coach, athletic leader; specifically, in the areas of emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics. The rationale for this study was to possibly provide insight for leaders in multiple areas on how to transfer leadership skills, so that leaders may be able to establish common goals and missions within their organizations.

#### **Research Questions**

- 1) What leadership traits create constituent buy-in for leaders?
- 2) What are the similarities and dissimilarities in leadership traits from one area of leadership to another?
- 3) How do emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach?
- 4) How are the leadership traits emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics that create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach similar?
- 5) How are the leadership traits emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics that create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach different?

Data was collected using qualitative measures, specifically surveys, interviews, and a focus group. Eighty-two teachers and staff at Midwest Christian Academy, the educational leader data collection site, volunteered to participate in a survey. All 82 participants returned a completed survey. Eleven teachers and staff volunteered to be interviewed, including the leader investigated. At Midwest University-Urban, the athletic leader data collection site, 72 second-year through fourth-year football players and assistant coaches volunteered to participate in a survey. All 72 participants returned a completed survey. Two players and the leader investigated volunteered to participate in an interview. Four assistant coaches volunteered to participate in a focus group. Results from the data collected were presented in Chapter Four of this dissertation, providing a discussion on the similarities and dissimilarities between leadership traits of the two types of perceived-successful leaders. This chapter presents a discussion of and conclusions drawn from this study and implications for future research.

### **Addressing the Research Questions**

**Question 1.** ‘What leadership traits create constituent buy-in for leaders?’ The ability of leaders to build relationships and establish personal connections with their constituents (emotional intelligence) was considered the most important leadership trait, according to the research. The ability to communicate clearly, effectively, and in a manner that holds the audience’s attention (communication style) was also important. Furthermore, leaders who possess a ‘servant-leadership’ approach create constituent buy-in. That is, in this study specifically, participants remarked how they liked the fact that

their leader ‘put others first’ or did not ‘ask someone to do something he wouldn’t do’ or did not ‘make the organization about them.’

Vision, the ability to communicate that vision, and designing a clear plan for implementing the vision were also necessary traits for creating constituent buy-in. Possession of honesty, transparency, and ability to admit wrong-doings were included as well in leadership traits that created constituent buy-in. In addition, leaders who were passionate about what they do and show commitment to the organization’s mission and vision were more effectively able to create constituent buy-in. Further down on the list was the leader’s ability to complete the day-to-day duties of his leadership role (job competency). While it is important, and in fact necessary, for leaders to understand how to do their job, that trait was stated as less important by constituents.

**Question 2.** ‘What are the similarities and dissimilarities in leadership traits from one area of leadership to another?’ Overwhelmingly, in both case studies participants described relationship building and personal connections or interactions as the top reason they buy in to their leader’s vision. This theme connects to the definitions of emotional intelligence, as referenced in Chapter Two. Many participants from both samples, through the survey, interview, and focus group, reported that their leader ‘cared’ about them beyond what they could provide in the context of their role. That is, there was a strong sense from several participants that the leader valued them more as people than just as a player, coach, teacher, or staff member. They cited examples when the leader(s) asked them about family situations, looking for jobs, challenges they expressed at one



time, helping them achieve success outside of their professional roles, or expressing appreciation for the jobs they did.

These results matched the responses by the leaders themselves during their interviews. John stated that people were important to him and that relationships ‘drive’ him. He felt it was easy to be relational and personal with those he led, because he enjoyed it so much. Coach K. stated he was ‘in the relationship business.’ Developing relationships with his players and staff, along with helping them develop relationships with each other and those outside of the football program was a major goal of his.

Each leader’s ability to communicate was another common theme indicated by participants that created constituent buy-in. Both John and Coach K. were considered good public speakers by their followers. They both were able to hold an audience’s attention by sharing stories, knowing their audience, remaining clear in their messages, injecting humor and gravity when appropriate, and getting across the point they were trying to make. Ironically, both leaders felt they were not strong public speakers and did not seek opportunities to do it. They would rather meet with people in one-on-one or small group settings. John and Coach K. recognized public speaking as part of their roles and needed to fulfill that duty the best they knew how. Participants in each study also stated that their leader was a ‘good listener.’ Many indicated that even if the leader did not agree with his or her point of view, he still listened to them. The leaders also brought up this specific type of scenario, during their interview. Each felt that listening was extremely important in good communication.

Midwest Christian Academy participants alluded to a ‘presence’ or ‘charisma’ that John possessed. According to Pierce and Newstrom (2008), charisma is a Greek word used for leaders who were able to influence their followers to accomplish outstanding feats. Midwest University-Urban participants made no reference to charisma or presence, but did use the word ‘inspiring’ when describing what it was like to listen to Coach K. speak publicly. A few Midwest University research participants used the term ‘quirky’ and ‘awkward’ to describe Coach K. at times in small group or one-on-one social situations. Participants were quick to add that was part of his personality and ‘it works for him.’ These traits did not appear to affect participant buy-in to Coach K. at all.

‘Servant leadership’ was used to describe both leaders. The participants believed that both leaders put the needs of others and the organization before their own. The players and coaches at Midwest University told stories that supported that claim. Teachers and staff at Midwest Christian Academy did not provide specific examples, but indicated this fact on their surveys.

Both John and Coach K. were described as passionate about their jobs and committed to the mission and vision of the organizations they led. They both did well at maintaining control of anger, and each believed in giving ‘problem’ constituents multiple chances. John felt that each staff member and student was divinely placed at the school he led; feeling that there was an obligation to provide a place for students and staff as long as possible, even when students and/or staff underperformed or created discipline issues. John admitted there were times he may have given too many chances to students, faculty, or staff, but also pointed out the success stories of those who did receive many

chances. Coach K. described himself as a person of ‘inclusivity’ not ‘exclusivity’ and believed if a coach or players were under performing, or struggled to buy into the vision of the program, they deserved a chance to improve. Coach K. felt that even if they were struggling, they could benefit by being in the football program.

**Question 3.** ‘How do emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach?’

Definitions of emotional intelligence included one’s ability to be aware of his or her own emotions, the ability to read others’ emotions and respond accordingly, awareness of his or her own strengths and weaknesses, and the ability to develop relationships. For a former head of a Christian school, the educational leader, emotional intelligence was demonstrated in several ways. John understood that he had a ‘temper’ but learned to ‘control it’ over time and understood when his anger started to develop. Specifically, John stated that if he felt himself getting angry in any situation, he would end a meeting before he said something he wished he would not have, or would simply hide any anger he was feeling. Another type of example where John demonstrated good emotional intelligence was when someone would be angry or frustrated about a situation and wished to talk to him. John would listen to the person express his thoughts, without interruption, and allow him to express what he felt he needed to make his point. John indicated at one point to the researcher, ‘people want to be heard.’ This recognition by John was an important factor in obtaining constituent buy-in. John was able to delegate responsibilities to others, or ‘let go,’ of areas he felt he was not as strong in. Lastly, John

was very successful in developing relationships with teachers, coaches, staff, parents, students, board members, and the surrounding school community.

Coach K., the athletic leader, exhibited emotional intelligence by not getting angry with players during games and practices but rather communicating in a calm manner. While he would raise his voice at times to create a sense of urgency, his words and tone seemed to be purposeful and under control, according to players' and coaches' statements. As an assistant coach remarked, while the team only had four wins against six losses, as of this writing the team was able to do that well because Coach K. 'didn't lose it' on people. Coach K. also displayed emotional intelligence by delegating responsibilities to others on his staff where he felt they had more expertise. For example, Coach K. did not instruct quarterbacks, instead allowing another coach to lead that part of the program. Coach K. believed he was in the 'relationship business,' which framed his philosophy as a coach; to help his players and coaches learn to develop relationships within the program but also with peers not directly connected to the Midwest University-Urban football program. Coach K. felt developing relationships was critical in helping players and coaches 'be successful' beyond football.

Communication style for a head of Christian school was also an important factor in creating constituent buy-in. John was an effective speaker in front of large groups but was also able to present his ideas well and listen to people in small group and in one-on-one settings. Participants stated John was clear in his communication in addition to really 'listening' to those he was talking to. The head college football coach was considered a good speaker when addressing his players and coaches collectively. It was also stated by

participants that he made them feel ‘cared’ about when meeting with them in one-on-one settings.

According to this research, traits of job competency of a head of Christian school, were less obvious to the participants in the educational case study. Based on their responses, the job competency of this educational leader was not a separate leadership trait, but rather a combination of some of the other leadership traits examined in this study. For example, job competency involved the day-to-day duties of meeting with school stakeholders (communication/emotional intelligence), addressing teachers and staff when necessary (communication), making decisions as they relate to the school (vision), email communication, and planning the future of the school (vision). The nature of John’s job leading a school of approximately 1000 students and approximately 100 staff, may have caused him to have limited interaction with teachers, staff, and students, because he was not directly involved in their day-to-day tasks. As a result, the constituents may not have had many opportunities to observe the day-to-day tasks that made up John’s job competency, as it relates to the definition stated for this dissertation, and therefore could not identify specific examples easily. But no participants said that the leader exhibited poor job competency, as defined in Chapter One.

Players and coaches who were under Coach K.’s leadership had more opportunities to observe his level of job competency as a specific leadership trait. Since the head coach was directly involved in planning each practice and game, all players and coaches were able to observe his ability to carry out the day-to-day tasks. As a result, the

participants stated that he was a ‘good coach’ just by watching him teach and implement various tactical and technical elements of the game.

When the head of a Christian school referred to vision, he referred to what the goals of the school were for the future; specifically how the school could best prepare students to apply what they learned once they graduated. John was effective in communicating to constituents his vision for the school he led. A head football coach’s vision related significantly to the program’s ability to win football games and referred to what lessons and skills players learned as a result of playing football that could be used for success later in life, once a degree is earned. Both leaders were successful at communicating the vision of the organizations they led.

The head of a Christian school and head college football coach in these two case studies were overwhelmingly considered ethical, or honest leaders. Both sets of participants cited the leaders’ value systems and honesty as reasons they trusted their motives and decision-making, thus creating constituent buy-in. These results supported statements by John and Coach K. themselves about the need to be honest and ethical in leadership.

**Question 4.** ‘How are the leadership traits emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics that create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach similar?’

With regards to emotional intelligence, both leaders displayed a high level of emotional intelligence. They each controlled anger, yet expressed passion for their respective jobs, recognized their strengths and weaknesses, and developed relationships

with those they led. Both sets of constituents cited emotional intelligence as a major reason they were able to buy in to the leader and the leader could also effectively established relationships with constituents.

John, the educational leader and head of a Christian school, and Coach K., the athletic leader and head college football coach, were both considered good communicators. They were able to hold their constituents' attention while clearly delivering a message any given time. Both had opportunities to communicate in large-group, small-group, and one-on-one settings.

While participants in the educational leader case study described job competency as a combination of leadership traits instead of a separate trait, and the participants in the athletic leader case study described job competency as its own trait, both groups of participants agreed the leaders possessed a high level of job competency. Both leaders stated a clear vision for the organization they led, with a plan to implement that vision. Both individuals used large-group, small-group, and one-on-one opportunities to share the vision of the organization they led. Each leader also displayed ethical behavior in how they made decisions and honored commitments made to constituents, especially in maintaining the confidence of their constituents regarding personal issues they shared with each leader.

**Question 5.** 'How are the leadership traits emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics that create constituent buy-in for a head of a Christian school and a head college football coach different?'

John, the head of Christian school, had opportunities to display how he demonstrated emotional intelligence with teachers and staff during the course of the school day in the hallways, in one-on-one meetings, and staff meetings. The head college football coach also had opportunities to display how he exhibited emotional intelligence during practices, games, team meetings, coaches' meetings, one-on-one players' meetings, and one-on-one meetings with coaches.

The educational leader used his communication skills in the context of large group, staff meetings, one-on-one teacher/staff meetings, hallway interactions, and small group, committee meetings, and email correspondence. The athletic leader communicated to players and coaches through team meetings, in practice settings, game settings, and staff meetings.

As stated earlier, examples of the job competency of the educational leader were not identified as a separate leadership trait, but a combination of other leadership traits examined in this study. So, participants stated that John exhibited job competency throughout the course of his job by having a high level of emotional intelligence, strong communication skills, and vision. As stated earlier, players and coaches who were under Coach K.'s leadership had more opportunities to observe his level of job competency as a specific leadership trait. As a result of the head coach being directly involved in planning each practice and game, all players and coaches observed his ability to carry out the day-to-day tasks. As a result, they stated Coach K. was a 'good coach' just by watching him teach and implement various tactical and technical elements of the game.



The educational leader had limited opportunity, relative to athletic leader, to share vision because of less daily contact with constituents, but still shared vision through email, periodic staff meetings, one-on-one meetings, and various written communications. The athletic leader shared vision more regularly during practices, games, team meetings, staff meetings, and one-on-one player and coach meetings.

The educational leader made ethical decisions when leading the process of building a new campus. Those decisions were related to finance and follow-through on commitments made to the school community in regards to timelines and where money was spent. The head of a Christian school also exhibited ethics in maintaining the confidence of teachers who shared extremely personal information with him regarding issues they were dealing with outside of their job at the school. The athletic leader showed ethics in decision making by following through on scholarship commitments made to players, following rules during the course of a football game, and adhering himself, to the standards set for the players and assistant coaches. The head college football coach also served on the NCAA ethics committee.

### **Discussion**

Overall, the survey responses indicated that both John and Coach K. maintained high emotional intelligence, had an effective communication style, possessed a high level of job competency, successfully communicated their vision, and maintained high ethical standards in their jobs. However, data from all questions showed that participants rated John more often than Coach K. in the category of ‘strongly agree’ in all five areas: emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics. The

daily interaction that each leader had with his followers may have had something to do with this difference. As a head of school, the equivalent to a district superintendent, regular interaction with teachers and staff were a limited simply, because John performed most of his day-to-day job duties out of sight, therefore limiting how much constituents interacted with him. That is, he may have spent time in closed-door meetings on campus, working in his office, or off campus attending meetings while teachers and staff worked in classrooms and other areas of the school. The times John was able to interact with faculty and staff were fewer, perhaps limiting opportunities for them to have less than optimal interactions. Another possible reason John scored higher in the ‘strongly agree’ categories was that his followers were adults who had much more life and work experience where they had a different perspective and appreciation of what a successful leader is, when compared to a college-aged student. Therefore, faculty and staff may not have judged John as harshly as a college-aged football player might.

Coach K. on the other hand, had more daily contact with his players and assistant coaches. The culture of college football required much more interaction in order to function at a high level. So, participants had many more opportunities to have less than completely positive interactions with Coach K. Not that the interactions were negative, but there were more chances to see someone make mistakes in leadership when you were exposed to them more often.

The concept of job competency was perceived by the researcher as the most surprising aspect of this study. The educational leader case study participants reported that a combination of other leadership traits created job competency for their leader and

that it was not a separate trait. That is, the educational leader's ability to communicate, share vision, and make decisions constituted job competency in the views of the participants, based on the definitions stated in this dissertation. According to both groups, relationship building was actually the most-often stated trait constituents were able to buy in to the leader. Participants in both groups stated they believed the leader effectively established relationships by doing things such as addressing them by name when greeting them, asking them questions about his or her personal life, and making them feel like a 'valuable' part of the organization. By feeling valuable, participants felt a greater connection to the leader and made it easier to buy in to his vision. Based on the results of this study, the leaders were successful at developing relationships because of their intentional desire to do so.

Also based on the results of this study, especially from responses of the leaders examined, each leader viewed his role as a servant to his followers. To be a 'servant leader' a leader must put the needs of those they lead (constituents) before him or herself (L. Kindbom, personal communication, December 10, 2014). They must help their constituents feel valuable about who they are and their role in the organization, along with helping them do his or her job better (L. Kindbom, personal communication, December 10, 2014). It might be said then that serving was the foundation of successful leadership. Without service at the core of a leadership philosophy, one cannot be a good leader. In its smallest form, an educational or athletic leader that served his or her constituents would include saying hello to teachers, coaches, students, parents, and/or athletes. In its biggest form, it was creating an environment that equipped teachers to help

kids learn and coaches to help players win, on the field and off. Service to followers could have also included having honest conversations with teachers, students, players, and/or coaches about performance, effort, or attitude. Further still, service could be listening to players, coaches, parents, teachers, and/or students' needs, desires, or concerns. Whatever the form service may take, constituents' needs and the needs of the organization were put before those of the leader, with the ultimate goal being the success of all stakeholders in fulfilling the mission and vision of the organization.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study looked at one long-time, perceived-successful head of a Christian school (educational leader) and one long-time, perceived-successful head college football coach (athletic leader). The results of this study supported the literature that stated the qualities that created constituent buy-in. The results also indicated that the traits that created constituent buy-in could be applied across two different roles and were more similar than dissimilar; yet the researcher believes the scope of this type of study could be expanded.

Examining successful leaders in other areas would be beneficial. Examples could be business, healthcare, entertainment, non-for-profit, technology, industrial, and finance to name a few. Then comparing and contrasting the results would be necessary to either further support the results of this study, or refute them.

Determining other definitions of success may also be warranted. This study investigated only two leaders who spent 28 years and 26 years in a leadership capacity within their respective organizations. However, length of tenure was noted throughout the

literature as only one metric of successful leadership (Cooper, 2011; Eitzen & Yetman, 1972). In the context of college athletics number of games won versus played, graduation rates of players, number of players to turn professional could also be viewed as measures of success that could occur in far less time than the leaders of this study spent in their roles. In the context of education, one could use graduation rates of students, expansion of curriculum, expansion of facilities, retention of teachers, and test scores as indicators of success. The point being that there can be any number of ways to measure success of a leader in any type of industry.

### **Conclusions**

In an effort to establish a context of what good leadership was, Chapter One of this dissertation used the financial crisis of 2008 to create a picture of what successful leadership was not. The major reason stated for the crisis was because of arrogance and the desire to serve the self (Berlinger & Tyrangiel, 2013). The leaders of the four major banks involved made decisions for their own interests and not in the interests of the organizations they led. The philosophy of those leaders was in direct contradiction to the results of this study and the expansive literature that supported which successful leadership traits created constituent buy-in. The financial leaders were not only unable to create constituent buy-in, but their leadership motivations ultimately led to their downfall and one of the most dramatic drops in the U.S. economy (Berlinger & Tyrangiel, 2013).

Leaders who were able to create constituent buy-in had many strengths and it is important to note they were not strong in every area. According to the results of this study, leaders who created constituent buy-in put the needs of the organization they led

before their own, understood their own strengths and weaknesses and delegated areas of weakness to others or sought counsel from others who were more experienced, so they could complete a task they were otherwise weak at completing. Leaders who can create constituent buy-in are also very relational. That is, they like being around people and making the people they lead feel valuable. They can communicate well in large group, small group, and one-on-one settings by speaking to others, as well as listening to what others are saying to them, even if they disagree. This study supported the idea that a successful leader is built over a period of time, through a diverse set of experiences, gained knowledge when mistakes occurred, and displayed passion, drive, and commitment. The trait that created constituent buy-in the most was treating people the way one would want to be treated, in every type of situation.

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Appendix A

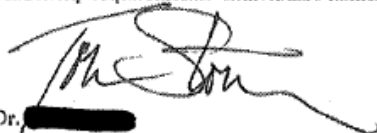
May 8, 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

FROM: [REDACTED]  
Dr. [REDACTED] Head of School  
800 Maryville Centre Drive  
[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Access to Research Data

Dave Schall has my permission to use [REDACTED] as a data collection site and to survey and interview our staff in conjunction with his research on leadership. It is understood that this data will be incorporated into his dissertation as partial fulfillment of Lindenwood University's Doctorate in Instructional Leadership requirements. Individual's names will not be included in the document.

  
Dr. [REDACTED]  
Head of School

## Appendix B

### Script read to volunteer participants

1. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Dave Schall under the guidance of Dr. Graham Weir. The purpose of this research is to see what qualities leaders possess to get people to follow them and to see if those qualities can be transferred from one leadership area to another.
2. Your participation will involve filling out a brief survey. At the end of the survey you will have an opportunity to indicate whether or not you would also be willing to participate in a follow up interview (or Focus Group for assistant coaches at MidW. U. only) on a **date at your convenience**. The amount of time involved in your participation will be 20 minutes if you complete the survey only. If you choose to be interviewed, that will take a maximum of one additional hour. Approximately 250 participants will be involved in this research at two different research sites.
3. There may be certain risks or discomforts associated with this research. Because you will be asked questions about a person whose leadership you are/were under, there may be certain uncomfortable feelings that might come from answering certain questions on the survey and/or in the interview. However, these risks are no greater than those encountered in daily life.
4. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study. However, your participation will contribute to the knowledge about leadership and may help society.
5. Your participation is voluntary and you may choose not to participate in this research study or to withdraw your consent at any time. You may choose not to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. You will NOT be penalized in any way should you choose not to participate or to withdraw.
6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.
7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, (Dave Schall 314-853-7030) or the Supervising Faculty, (Dr. Graham Wier 636-949-4315). You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.





6. We will do everything we can to protect your privacy. As part of this effort, your identity will not be revealed in any publication or presentation that may result from this study and the information collected will remain in the possession of the investigator in a safe location.
7. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, or if any problems arise, you may call the Investigator, (Dave Schall 314-853-7030) or the Supervising Faculty, (Dr. Graham Wier 636-949-4315). You may also ask questions of or state concerns regarding your participation to the Lindenwood Institutional Review Board (IRB) through contacting Dr. Jann Weitzel, Vice President for Academic Affairs at 636-949-4846.

**I have read this consent form and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I will also be given a copy of this consent form for my records. I consent to my participation in the research described above.**

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Participant's Signature                      Date

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Signature of Principal Investigator    Date

**Appendix D**

July 10, 2014

Dave Schall, MS, CSCS  
Head Strength & Conditioning Coach

[REDACTED]  
800 Maryville Centre Dr.  
[REDACTED]

Re: HRPO number: n/a  
Project Title: "Two case studies of the contribution of emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics to the creation of constituent buy-in for leaders"  
Funding Source: None

Dear Mr. Schall:

Thank you for contacting our office regarding the research project referenced above. After reviewing the proposal and documentation from our Provost, allowing you to conduct research on-site, [REDACTED] Human Research Protection Office (HRPO) determined that your research does not require review by [REDACTED] (IRB).

This determination is based upon the following:

- 1) You have, or will obtain, IRB oversight for your research activities from the IRB at Lindenwood University;
- 2) [REDACTED] employees are not performing research activities and are therefore not "engaged" in research as defined in federal guidance (<http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/policy/engage08.html>).

If further information is necessary, or if you believe we have misunderstood the intent or scope of your planned activity, please contact our office at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Manager, Expedited Team

[REDACTED]

**Appendix E**

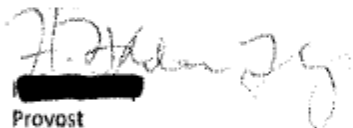
June 19, 2014

TO: Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board

FROM: [REDACTED] Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
[REDACTED]  
One Brookings Drive  
[REDACTED]

RE: Access to Research Data

Dave Schall has my permission to use [REDACTED] as a data collection site and to survey and interview our staff in conjunction with his research on leadership. It is understood that this data will be incorporated into his dissertation as partial fulfillment of Lindenwood University's Doctorate in Instructional Leadership requirements. Individual's names will not be included in the document.



[REDACTED]  
Provost  
Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

[REDACTED]

## Appendix F

### Midwest Christian Academy--Faculty & Staff Survey of “John”

1. How long did you work under or with the leader?
2. In what capacity did you work under or with the leader?

**Please circle one answer for each statement given that best represents your feelings.**

3. The leader maintained control of his emotions.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don't Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

4. The leader had an accurate understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don't Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

5. The leader communicated effectively.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don't Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

6. The leader understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don't Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

7. The leader understood your responsibilities and role within the organization.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don't Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

8. The leader successfully communicated the vision of the organization.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don't Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

9. The leader displayed ethical behavior in the decisions he made within the course of his job.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don't Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

**OVER→**

10. Give examples of skills and/or personality traits the leader possessed that caused you to want to follow their leadership. If you prefer, you could instead include situations you witnessed or interactions you had with the leader that made you want to follow his leadership.

If you are willing to participate in a follow up interview, please leave your name and contact information below. I will be contacting you to set up a time to meet at your convenience. If you are not willing to participate in an interview, please leave this space blank. Thank you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix G

### Interview Questions for Midwest Christian Academy participants

1. How do you describe a good leader? Can you provide specific examples?
2. Is your leader a good leader? Why?
3. Describe what it's like working with the leader.
4. Are there any characteristics of the leader you like best/least?
5. What weaknesses in leadership does the leader have?
6. How does the leader deal with his emotions?
7. How does the leader demonstrate that he understands his own strengths and weaknesses?
8. How does the leader communicate?
9. How does the leader show that he has the skills to do his job effectively?
10. How does the leader demonstrate that he understands your role within the organization?
11. How does the leader explain the vision of the organization?
12. How does the leader demonstrate ethical behavior?

## **Appendix H**

### **Interview/Focus Group Questions for Midwest University participants**

1. How do you describe a good leader? Can you provide specific examples?
2. Is your leader a good leader? Why?
3. Describe what it's like working with the leader.
4. Are there any characteristics of the leader you like best/least?
5. What weaknesses in leadership does the leader have?
6. How does the leader deal with his emotions?
7. How does the leader demonstrate that he understands his own strengths and weaknesses?
8. How does the leader communicate?
9. How does the leader show that he has the skills to do his job effectively?
10. How does the leader demonstrate that he understands your role within the organization?
11. How does the leader explain the vision of the organization?
12. How does the leader demonstrate ethical behavior?



### Appendix I

#### Survey Midwest University-Players and Coaches Survey of “Coach K”

1. How long did you work under or with the leader?
2. In what capacity did you work under or with the leader?

**Please circle one answer for each statement given that best represents your feelings.**

3. The leader maintained control of his emotions.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don’t Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

4. The leader had an accurate understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don’t Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

5. The leader communicated effectively.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don’t Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

6. The leader understood the skills and responsibilities needed to do his job effectively.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don’t Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

7. The leader understood your responsibilities and role within the organization.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don’t Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

8. The leader successfully communicated the vision of the organization.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don’t Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

9. The leader displayed ethical behavior in the decisions he made within the course of his job.

**Strongly Disagree   Mildly Disagree   Don’t Know   Mildly Agree   Strongly Agree**

**OVER→**

10. Give examples of skills and/or personality traits the leader possessed that caused you to want to follow their leadership. If you prefer, you could instead include situations

you witnessed or interactions you had with the leader that made you want to follow his leadership.

If you are willing to participate in a follow up interview, please leave your name and contact information below. I will be contacting you to set up a time to meet at your convenience. If you are not willing to participate in an interview, please leave this space blank. Thank you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix J

# LINDENWOOD

LINDENWOOD UNIVERSITY ST. CHARLES, MISSOURI

DATE:

TO: FROM:

STUDY TITLE:

IRB REFERENCE #: SUBMISSION TYPE:

ACTION: APPROVAL DATE: EXPIRATION DATE: REVIEW TYPE:

July 30, 2014

Dave Schall<sup>[SEP]</sup> Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board  
[625179-2] Two case studies of the contribution of emotional intelligence, communication style, job competency, vision, and ethics to the creation of constituent buy-in for leaders.

Revision

APPROVED<sup>[SEP]</sup> July 30, 2014<sup>[SEP]</sup> July 30, 2015 Facilitated Review

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this research project.

Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Facilitated Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office.

Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to the IRB.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis.

Please use the completion/amendment form for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of July 30, 2015.

- 1 - Generated on IRBNet

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years.

If you have any questions, please contact Robyne Elder at (314) 566-4884 or [relder@lindenwood.edu](mailto:relder@lindenwood.edu). Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

If you have any questions, please send them to [IRB@lindenwood.edu](mailto:IRB@lindenwood.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board's records.

### **Vitae**

Dave Schall served as Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at [Midwest] Christian Academy from 2006-2015. From 2006-2012, he also served as Physical Education teacher Department Chair. Currently, he serves as a Director of Student Life at Midwest.

Educational studies have resulted in a Bachelor of Science Degree in Physical Education and Health from Southwest Missouri State University, a Master's Degree in Kinesiology from the University of Central Arkansas. He also holds National Strength and Conditioning, American Heart Association, and United States Soccer Federation certifications.