

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

SERVANT LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE HAITIAN CHURCHES
IN THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Marie M. Felix-Paul

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study assessed potential solid abstract ways to empower Haitian Christian leaders by applying the concept of servant leadership to safeguard a productive church system in the Haitian American Christian community. A phenomenological approach is defined as “A study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions and perspectives relative to a particular situation” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 119). A phenomenological study seeks to answer the question, “*What is it like to experience such and such?*” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 119). Therefore, the phenomenological design was considered to better understand Haitian leaders’ awareness about servant leadership. The findings of this study emphasize that leaders should be compelled to experience self-development. In this way, Owens & Hekman (2012) stated, “Assuming the follower role and putting the follower in the leader/ trainer role” p. 798). Greenleaf (2014) described servant leadership with a question—“Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (p. 21). The “Theory of the Mind” (ToM) theory guided this study. This theory was introduced by Premack and Woodruff (1978), inspired by the work of Jean Piaget (1967), to explore ways of understanding others. Accordingly, Wellman (2002) claimed, ToM has to do with “Something more specific to an understanding of persons and minds... An understanding of mental representations (beliefs, knowledge, false beliefs, imaginings)” (p. 180-181).

Keywords: Haitian leadership, Christian, leader, servant-leadership, church system

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Dedication

First and foremost, I want to dedicate my dissertation to my Invisible Partner, the Holy Spirit of Jehovah God, who has proven His faithfulness to me throughout this journey. Honor and Praise! Second, I dedicate this work to my deceased father, Victor Felix, who wished to have one of his children complete doctoral studies. Although he died years ago, I have been blessed to make his dream come true. It is also dedicated to my sixteen-year-old daughter, Chadalya G. Paul, my fourteen-year-old son, Mark Paul, and my adopted son, Joel J. May this achievement motivate you to go further in life. Finally, my research is dedicated to my entire family, my husband, my mom, my beloved church's followers at Blessed Hours Christian Congregation, and especially, my big sister, Mrs. Plaisimond "Popo," who has always gone above and beyond with her support.

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	3
Copyright	4
Dedication	5
Acknowledgments.....	6
List of Tables	12
List of Abbreviations	13
CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN	14
Introduction.....	14
Background of the Problem	14
Historical Context	15
Leadership Struggles of the First Four Haitian Leaders	17
Dessalines and the Plantation.....	19
Sociological Context.....	21
Theological Framework	24
Statement of the Problem.....	25
Research Purpose Statement	27
Research Questions	28
Assumptions and Delimitations	28
Research Assumptions	28
Delimitations of the Research Design.....	29
Definition of Terms.....	29
Significance of the Study	30
Summary of the Design	31

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	32
Overview	32
Theological Framework for the Study	32
Biblical Aspect of Servant Leadership Scholarly Proven	33
Illustration of Servant Leaders from Old and New Testaments	36
Joseph and the Six Traits of a True Servant Leader	44
Peter, a Servant Leader	48
Barnabas (Also Called Joseph), a Servant Leader	51
Development of the Biblical Concept of Servant Leadership	52
Nuances of Servant Leadership and Biblical Servant Leadership	56
Three Stages of Biblical Servant Leadership	57
Joseph—A Confirmation of a Biblical Servant Leader	59
Application of Biblical Servant Leadership and the Church’s Spiritual Growth ..	61
Theoretical Framework for the Study	63
Origin of the Theory of Mind	64
Differences in Primates’ and Humans’ Theory of Mind	65
Differences in Primates’ and Humans’ Cognitive Development	66
Connection of the Theory of Mind and Cognitive Development Theory	66
Nature and Nurture	68
Transnational Religion in the Haitian Church Community	70
Related Literature	71
Gap in the Literature	77
Profile of the Current Study	78

Introduction.....	80
Research Design Synopsis	80
The Problem.....	80
Research Purpose Statement.....	81
Research Questions.....	81
Research Design and Methodology	81
Setting.....	84
Participants.....	85
Role of the Researcher	86
Ethical Considerations	87
Data Collection Methods and Instruments.....	88
Collection Methods.....	89
Instruments and Protocols.....	90
Research Procedures	93
Data Analysis	96
Analysis Method.....	96
Chapter Summary	101
CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS.....	103
Overview.....	103
Compilation Protocol and Measures	103
Participants.....	103
Demographic and Sample Data	104
Data Analysis and Findings	105

Data Categorization	106
Data Collection Method I.....	108
Junction of the Guiding Theory with Interview Questions.....	109
Data Collection Method II	110
Data Analysis Themes and Codes.....	111
Theme One—Dictatorial Leadership Theoretically Addressed.....	113
Theme Two—Self-centeredness	117
Theme Three—Theory of Servant Leadership	118
Theme Four—Servant Leadership in the Haitian Leaders’ Community	119
Theme Four—Lack of Knowledge Theoretically Addressed.....	122
Research Questions 1–3.....	125
Interviews.....	126
Focus Group.....	130
Evaluation of the Research Design.....	134
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS	136
Overview.....	136
Research Purpose Statement.....	136
Research Questions.....	136
Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications.....	137
Theory of Mind in Relation to Cognitive Development.....	138
Implications and Applications	141
Implications.....	141
Applications	142

Research Limitations	143
Further Research Recommendations	144
Conclusion	145
REFERENCES	148
Appendix A: IRB Approval	154
Appendix B: Recruitment Letter.....	155
Appendix C: Screening Survey for Eligibility	156
Appendix D: Consent Letter	157
Appendix E: Document Provided by Participant Makis.....	161
Appendix F: Interview Questions	163

List of Tables

Table 1. Haitian American Leader Participants' Demographics

Table 2. Themes Development and Coding

Table 3. Theory of Mind, Cognitive Development Theory, and the Findings

List of Abbreviations

Haitian American Christian Leadership (HACL)

Haitian Christian Leaders (HCL)

Haitian Leaders (HL)

New International Version (NIV)

Theory of Mind (ToM)

United States of America (USA)

CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH CONCERN

Introduction

This research study focuses on Haitian American Christian leaders struggling with the application of servant leadership within Haitian congregations. Accordingly, this researcher was devoted to assessing and understanding how Haitian American Christian leaders have perceived the concept of servant leadership in a general context and, in particular, within the Haitian church system. To better understand the phenomenon, this researcher planned to examine Haitian leadership through the lens of servant leadership, focusing on this theory's three-fold extended and refined definition.

Servant leadership is an (1) other-oriented approach to leadership, (2) manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of followers' individual needs and interests, (3) an outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others within the organization and the larger community (Eva et al., 2019).

Haitian leaders' philosophy of leading constitutes the core of conflicts between leaders of the local Christian churches and their fellow Haitian followers. Consequently, Chapter One will address the following: the background of the problem, Haitian historical leadership, the sociological context, the theoretical context, leadership struggles of the first four Haitian leaders, Dessalines and the plantation fields, statement of the problem, research purpose statement, research questions, research assumption and delimitation of the design, definition of terms, the significance of the study, and summary of the design.

Background of the Problem

Historically, Haitian leaders have practiced authoritarian leadership (Valle, 2021). Authoritarian leaders focus on self-interests and self-achievement instead of striving to be people-oriented (Valle, 2021, p. 7). A closer look at the nation's background, and the lives of the first five political leaders after the country's Glorious Independence on January 1, 1804, helps

one understand the source of the problem. Authoritarian leadership was practiced centuries after the emancipation, and the prolongation of this leadership style was tangible among Haitian clergy. This phenomenon is troublesome as “Its first forty years brought authoritarian rulers and limited broad public participation. Its leaders struggled to reconcile an economy based on plantation agriculture” (Gibson, 2020, p. 128).

Historical Context

Historically, the country of Haiti was built on a circle of ideas steeped in hate, revenge, discrimination, and a thirst for success, with no regard for how one accomplished it. After Haiti’s day of victory, famously known as the Glorious Independence of the first black country, the members of the population were divided into pieces. The martyrs became the conquerors of a country that was theirs before colonization by the French oppressors, who, in turn, reduced them to slavery after the white colonists established themselves as masters of the country.

Upon coming out of the battles of slavery, the Haitian people were determined not to return to those inhumane conditions. Their goal was to keep the nation safe and free from white leaders and prove that the Haitian people could lead themselves and achieve success. In such circumstances, many personalities at the center of the triumph expressed their determination to get revenge. Among them was the secretary of the first Haitian leader (Jean Jacques Dessalines), Chanlatte, who, in a speech titled “A mes Concitoyens” (“To my Fellow Haitians”), clearly expressed satisfaction in regard to the massacre of the white French colonists after the independence of the new nation. Chanlatte believed the massacre to be an opportunity to make the French people pay for what they had done to the enslaved Haitians.

Chanlatte also echoed and reinforced Dessalines’ speech on April 28, 1804, titled “I Have Avenged America.” Chanlatte motivated his fellow citizens to carefully watch out for and stand

up against the French enemies who had once ravaged them. In this context, Bongie reported the words of Haitian historian, Beaubrun Ardouin, expressing the rage of some Haitian leaders who motivated their fellows to stand up against their enemies and oppressors—“Chanlatte urged his fellow *citoyens de couleur* to rise against the monsters from Europe” and “*avenge God, nature, law, humanity, all of which have been desecrated in these regions of horror*” (2015, p. 807).

On December 5, 1492, Christopher Columbus discovered the island of Hispaniola (which today includes the Dominican Republic and Haiti), believing it was India. At that time, the land was also referred to as Boyo, Saint Domingue, and Perles of the Antilles (Armand, 2020). It was only called “Haiti” after its independence (Botelho et al., 2014). The country was colonized by the European French people who disregarded and mistreated the native Haitians living in Haiti. After being continuously exploited by the colonists, the enslaved Haitians finally revolted against their oppressors on January 1, 1804.

Haiti, the first black country freed from slavery, contributed to the emancipation and foundation of the Republic of Haiti (Jenson, 2009). Haiti, as a republic, was known for its struggles to survive in all aspects, often fighting with outsiders stronger than itself for the right to live freely. In this context, McClish (2012) referenced the two remarkable speeches by Frederick Douglass, the American Ambassador to Haiti from 1891 to 1898, on behalf of Haiti. The first was delivered before a small mixed-race audience, and the second was presented before a large, predominately African American, audience at Quinn Chapel on Wabash Avenue—home of the influential African Methodist Episcopal Church. Douglass acknowledged Haiti's huge and unique achievement, considering how Haitians fought French colonists and secured their independence as the first black country in the world (McClish, 2012). Thus, in regard to the revolutionary success of Haiti, McClish emphasized this remarkable victory 90 years later by

citing from Douglass' first speech, "My subject is Haiti; the Black Republic, the only self-made Black Republic in the world.... They struck for the freedom of every black man in the world" (McClish, 2012, p. 40).

Leadership Struggles of the First Four Haitian Leaders

Dessalines, the first man to lead the country after the enslaved Haitians' emancipation, is a typical example of leaders showcasing dominance through intimidating power. Haitian leaders appeared to be repeating their white leaders' behavior during slavery, where everything was done for the leaders' welfare alone. The way in which masters treated the enslaved Haitians profoundly impacted the Haitian leaders' perceptions of leadership. This real struggle encouraged Haitian people to fight against the white leaders and among themselves, a conflict that has been passed down through generations. The following is an example of the schism that occurred during the leadership of Dessalines, the first of Haiti's leaders. "There is a group of Congos, opposed to Dessalines, who, since the army's departure, have fled to the outskirts of the hills that separate the French from the Spanish part of the island" (Jenson, 2009, p. 622).

Sadly, the fellow Haitians, who had once fought together to exterminate the foreign masters who outraged them, started fighting against each other. In both situations, the common people were victims of an environment where the masters would do everything to retain their roles as the enslaved people's commanders. Similarly, Haitian leaders were willing to do anything to secure leadership positions. A good example is Dessalines's assassination, which was associated with a plot hatched by some fellow Haitian leaders and political men who led the country after his death because he lost the support of his inner circle and was assassinated by his enemies in 1806 (Popkin, 2021). "Outside of Haiti, Louverture's successor Dessalines has usually been seen as a ruthless authoritarian who drove his own former allies to assassinate him

just two years after he led them to victory over the French” (Popkin, 2021, pp. 392–393). Some scholars even believe that the conspiracy may have been helmed by Alexandre Petion and Henry Christophe, who were in line to be the next leaders after Dessalines, with Petion in the South and Christophe in the North (Dubois, 2012). “Dessalines’s story ends tragically: in 1806 he was assassinated... his body apparently ripped by an angry crowd after he was killed, and it fell to a woman named Défilée, who had been a camp follower in Dessalines’s army” (Dubois, 2012, pp. 546–547).

Petion, one of the second political leaders in the south, had the ambition of expanding his power for life; however, unfortunately, he died two years later, in 1818. Jean Pierre Boyer took his place while Christophe held power in the North. Jean Pierre Boyer, propelled by the desire to lead the whole nation, opposed Christophe, who, in turn, was betrayed by some of his soldiers who aligned themselves with Boyer’s partisans to eliminate the president of the North. In such dire circumstances, Christophe elected to commit suicide instead of being tortured to death. Finally, Boyer had the whole country under his control, a victory from the circle of betrayal, revolt, and murders so he could reap the rewards of the presidency for life.

The way in which Haitian people gained their independence was an unique achievement, as it was the first black-free country. The history of Haiti, the first independent black country in the western hemisphere, is controversial, considering its remarkable achievement in obtaining Haitian independence and its current deteriorating situation. Accordingly, Armand (2020) claimed that “overflowing with valuable natural resources and equipped with a strategic Caribbean location, Haiti was positioned to remain one of the most prosperous territories in the world” (p. 363). Nonetheless, “Haiti is currently and most commonly known as the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere” (Armand, 2020, p. 363).

Armand's (2020) affirmation was tangibly manifested through the Haitian political leaders' behavior. After the interventions of the first four leaders discussed above, one can easily comprehend the type of leadership Haiti experienced after its emancipation, where each leader attempted to govern the country for life—a devastating situation for the new nation. In Haiti, power was taken by force. It was not until about a century later, in 1957, that the country knew its first elected president, Dr. Francois Duvalier (1957–1971), surnamed Papa Doc. Duvalier was another cruel dictator that declared himself President for life seven years after his election, on May 22, 1964.

The elections of September 22, 1957, brought Duvalier to power... then declared himself president-for-life on 22 May 1964... in a gruesome 1957 massacre in the Bel-Air neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, in which scores of political enemies were buried alive. Duvalier represented himself in his discourse as being possessed of the historical spirit of the revolutionary hero Jean-Jacques Dessalines, called the savage “angel of death” (Johnson, 2006, pp. 430, 433, 435).

Dessalines and the Plantation

Dessalines had a slogan “Koupe tet, boule kay” (“Cut off heads, burn down houses”). He used this strategy to keep French masters and enemies away from the newborn country after the Haitian people achieved independence on January 1, 1804 (Gibson, 2020). Dessalines was determined to burn down houses and cut off the heads of those who tried to reinstate slavery in Haiti. “Dessalines would depend on a robust army to fend off foreign invasions, going as far in early 1805 to lead a brief assault on French forces in Santo Domingo” (Gibson, 2020, p. 129). Right after Christopher Columbus discovered the Island of Hispaniola in 1492, European men started traveling to Haiti. Upon realizing the advantages offered by the country, French colonists began to sabotage the inhabitants, who were compelled to work very hard under inhumane conditions to benefit the white men, thirsty to make a fortune to the detriment of the black Haitian population (Armand, 2020). “Within France, more than 20 percent of the

bourgeoisie were dependent upon slaves connected with commercial activity” (Buck-Morss, 2009, p. 4). Native Haitians were reduced to working as enslaved people in plantation fields. These native Haitians comprised black men and women descended from Africans brought to the new world by the Spanish starting in the early 1500s and others brought in by the French from 1625 onward to increase the number of workers (Buck-Morss, 2009).

Dessalines, as the first black political leader, planned to completely stop the immigration of French masters to the island to unify all black Haitians as one nation— “The constitution affirmed it in Article 12 that ‘no white man, regardless of nationality, may set foot on this territory as a master or landowner” (Gibson, 2020, para. 8). However, Fick (2020) reported from Gonzalez (2020) who acknowledged that Haitian independence had come at a time when the larger Atlantic economy “was still very much made up of masters and bondsmen rather than capitalist employers and free laborers” (Fick, 2020, as cite in Gonzalez, 2019 p. 126). Thus, while Dessalines protested the system of slavery, he did not plan to free the fellow Haitians working on plantations. Instead of liberating the Haitian ex-slaves working on plantations, which was considered another form of slavery, Dessalines and other Haitian leaders tried to keep workers in the fields for personal gain. Gibson (2020) explained, “Dessalines also used the army to prevent workers from abandoning the fields, which made him unpopular” (p. 130). Indeed, making almost the same political errors and repeating the same destructive learned behaviors, one scholar clearly articulated this fact as follows:

Many of the same elements seen here are authoritarian leadership, constitutions, labor and land issues, and the struggle for sovereignty would reappear in different combinations through successive administrations... This unstable period saw four presidents in quick succession until Faustin-Élie Soulouque came to power in 1847. As one Haitian proverb puts it: “Constitutions are paper, bayonets are iron” (Gibson, 2020, p. 69 as cited in Sheller, 2000).

Sociological Context

In the eyes of many, the renowned Haitian heroes deserved to be acknowledged. Those prominent figures of the Haitian revolution were important. Toussaint Breda, born on May 17, 1743, was a freedman who eventually became Governor Toussaint Louverture during the preparation period of Haiti's revolt (Girard & Donnadiou, 2013). After changing his last name from Breda to Louverture, Louverture established himself before Haiti's oppressors and in the eyes of his people. As the governor of Saint-Domingue, Louverture developed a level of prestige, which continues to be known worldwide. Even before the Declaration of Independence, Louverture, just a few years after the first enslaved people's revolt in 1771, was already successful as a freedman who enslaved people in his possession. Many scholars have reported on his achievements.

A few articles, notably by David Geggus, have helped flesh out Toussaint's background, but the revelations about Toussaint's slave-owning past continue to define Louverture studies, with traditionalists clinging to a vision of Toussaint as an idealistic emancipator while revisionists such as Pierre Pluchon emphasize his conflicted relationship with the plantation system (Girard & Donnadiou, 2013, p. 42).

The conflicted relationship that Girard and Donnadiou (2013) discussed in regard to Louverture's success can be evidenced in the aspects of daily living that seemed intertwined with the slavery they experienced. Haitians felt the need to prove they could achieve results without white masters. For example, although Popkin (2021) reported that Girard perceived Louverture as primarily motivated by a personal quest for recognition and wealth, the case of Louverture trying to move on to embrace his new status as governor was somehow restricted by his past related to the plantation system. This, in turn, led him to experience a life of struggles and fights to maintain his success. Back then, it seemed Louverture had no other choice than focusing his efforts on the plantation system, which was the characteristic of a wealthy man. Nonetheless, this

was controversial, as those working in the fields were fellow enslaved Haitians who had not yet gained their freedom. Sadly, after the tough period of slavery, the Haitian population experienced the harshest of white colonists, who created an enormous mess among themselves despite their efforts to maintain a worthy life. Consequently, they became and are, to this day, fragmented. Haitian Americans continue to constantly seek a way of identifying and establishing themselves. For instance, “Toussaint wanted to be perceived by his contemporaries as having achieved mastery of the public sphere” (Girard & Donnadieu, 2013, p. 386). Louverture, a prototype of all times for his community, remains a tangible figure of how the spirits of the members of the Haitian population burn with a desire to be well-established.

I argue that the rhetorical practices of Toussaint (as James refers to him) and Sastri, respectively, reveal not only the vexed compatibility of reform and revolution... from the consideration of race equality along with the question of sovereignty to the status of each man as a recognized spokesperson of a colonized people (Srinivasan, 2017, p. 134).

Psychologically, the Haitian population, in its entirety, was significantly affected by the outcomes of slavery. As such, this researcher applied Premack and Woodruff’s (1978) Theory of Mind (ToM) intertwined with Piaget’s (1964) cognitive development theory to assess the psycho-traumatism of the Haitian American community, especially the ecclesiastics, as the leadership damage produced by slavery seemed to be a repetitive reality within the Haitian American Christian leaders’ community. Considering the grandiosity of Haitian independence, and the battle they have been fighting currently, the incompatibility of the two is incontestable.

Piaget saw developmental psychology as a foundation for the development of the humanities and social sciences. Especially, he contended that developmental psychology could solve the riddle of the historical development of mind, philosophy, and sciences.... (Oesterdiekhoff, 2016, p. 118, as cited in Piaget & Inhelder, 1969/1966; Bringuier, 1996; Piaget & Garcia, 1989/1983).

Mentally, Haitians’ minds have been impacted, and their struggles are tangible in all aspects—financial, social, educational, and spiritual. Despite their supposed liberation, Haitian

people constantly search for autonomy as they are exposed to challenges similar to what they experienced during slavery. This situation is very controversial, considering how Haitian people triumphed over French oppressors during the days of independence and the struggles they now face regularly as they attempt to overcome opposition, misunderstanding, and diminishment of who they are and what they have accomplished. McClish (2012) affirmed the words of Douglass (1893):

“My subject is Haiti; the Black Republic, the only self-made Black Republic in the world,” Douglass begins. Douglass exposes the evil of American business interests – to whom “the welfare of Haiti is nothing, the shedding of human blood is nothing, the success of free institutions is nothing, and the ruin of neighboring country is nothing” (Frederick Douglass and the Consequences of Rhetoric, the 2 January 1893 Haiti speeches, as cited by McClish, 2012, p. 40)

Consequently, it was unsurprising to observe Haitian people pushing through to the extreme in search of self-satisfaction as all obstacles from left to right surround them. The European colonial powers and the United States of America (USA) refused to acknowledge the Haitian government after the country’s independence for fear of influencing their enslaved population. “The policy of diplomatic non-recognition persisted until France recognized the independent state in 1825; Britain sent a consul in 1826 but did not formally recognize Haiti until 1839, and the USA only in 1862” (Mongey, 2019, p. 185).

Haitians were so determined to go against barriers for self-establishment that it became apparent, even among members of the clergy who themselves were so motivated to achieve the same outcomes, that they thought of Christian leadership more as self-achievement—a position of honor—than a task to render service to others. This learned behavior became a state of mind in their daily life as a psychological deformation, as explained by ToM. Unfortunately, the literature had not yet considered the issue of Haitian Christian leadership as impacted by the authoritarian leadership style that Haitian leaders learned during slavery. This literature gap has

been addressed in Chapter Two, highlighting the significance of these impacts on the relationship between leaders and followers and the practical leadership style in Haitian congregations today.

Theological Framework

In essence, the application of servant leadership as people-oriented can considerably diminish the destructive tendencies of authoritarian leadership. This is the reason behind why this researcher proposed with the theory of servant leadership as a solution to overcome the excesses of authoritarian leadership that seemed to be adopted by the Haitian population, including the clergy. Contrary to the authoritarian leadership style, servant leaders are less indulgent in their interests, put others first, provide for others' needs, and assist in their development. Although there is "no consensus on the definition of servant leadership," according to Parris and Peachey (2013), it must be pointed out that the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership has concluded that one definition encompasses the concept in a significant way (p. 337).

A servant leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the "top of the pyramid," servant leadership is different. The servant leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible (Činčala & Chase, 2018, p. 2, as cited in Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2014)

As such, the application of servant leadership can be proposed as a strategy for Haitian Christian leaders to overcome leadership struggles and adopt a skilled leadership style to become productive servant leaders. This parallel between general and servant leadership has set the tone for the theory of servant leadership, as the application of this concept remains a key concern among most of the Haitian churches in Northeastern USA. This researcher has frequently witnessed a cold war in Haitian churches between pastors and congregation members, in instances where the congregants have been dissatisfied with their leaders' leadership philosophy.

In the following section, this researcher will address some of the conflicts observed within Haitian churches and discuss several points related to the church growth necessary for Haitian American Christian leadership to perform according to God's purpose for His people, which will address the gap through the lens of the chosen theory, namely servant leadership. It has been hypothesized that Christian leaders in Haitian congregations can strengthen their community by applying strategies associated with the servant leadership concept.

Statement of the Problem

Cho (2020) spoke about self-preservation, a theology of safety, where "Many leaders choose to be responsible for others in all... doing all by themselves, controlling everything to lead, and remaining indispensable" (p. 4). In this way, many leaders keep their leadership position safe, and seemingly, this idea of leadership safety has penetrated the mind of the Haitian American population, including the clergy. Thus, many Haitian Christian leaders who once desperately longed for success or better living conditions now passionately fight for personal achievement through leadership positioning. This idea of success propelled Haitian people to move to the USA, not only for better living but also to facilitate the acquisition of power. Coto et al., (2021) reported about the complexity of the death in Haiti's last President's assassination. Moreover, the article pointed out the greediness of Haitian leaders, who are willing to do anything to acquire power.

Laurent Dubois, a Haiti expert and Duke University professor, said questions over Moise's assassination could remain unanswered for a long time... There are so many potential players who could be behind it... it is going to be some jockeying for positions of power. That's one big worry (Coto et al., 2021, p. 14).

This shocking concern is associated with the description of Emmanuel Sanon, a physician, businessman, Christian, and pastor living in Florida. Pastor Sanon was unsatisfied with everything he possessed but hungered for power. This hunger made him the subject of a

crime because, according to him, the status of being a leader was such an honor and so self-satisfying that he had to go beyond limits despite his shepherding responsibilities. It is unfortunate to observe that among Haitians seeking a better way to secure achievements were the Haitian clergy who considered the position of Christian leadership as individual success.

Many reasons can be attributed to this thirst for self-achievement, in relation to the rejection of Haitians' success. This quest for self-achievement can be traced back to 1804 when Haiti's victory was denied by some powerful countries such as USA and France, which acted as barriers for Haiti's development. For instance, USA did not acknowledge Haiti's political accomplishments for decades. "Despite becoming an independent nation in 1804, it was not recognized as a country by the United States until nearly sixty years later in 1862" (Armand, 2020, p. 368). Conversely, France imposed a debt on Haiti and required its inhabitants to pay it back to safeguard their freedom, to which they agreed in order to remain free.

During this time, France, which had been profiting significantly from its colony in Haiti, demanded that Haiti pay it reparations for loss of income and for the slaves' freedom; otherwise, France threatened to invade the new nation and reinstitute slavery. In order to maintain its historic freedom, the 21-year-old nation decided in 1825 to pay France's demand of one hundred and fifty million gold francs (Armand, 2020, pp. 368–369).

As such, over the years, the Haitian population has been exposed to continuous fighting, causing Haitian Christian leaders to struggle to be people-oriented rather than self-focused. This indulgence in the self has rendered Christian leadership to be a position of opportunity and opened the doors for self-accomplishment. Thus, the endeavor of investing in followers to become authentic leaders for the doctrine of Christ, according to the concept of servant leadership is a serious issue for the population of Haitian American Christian leaders. As ecclesiastics claim their accomplishments using the title "Christian leader," they find themselves defending their agenda with the objective of personal success. This study will tackle this

leadership gap to highlight the significance of servant leadership application—a robust strategy to assist leaders’ and followers’ growth for better church systems and spiritual maturation. Apostle Paul encouraged the Ephesians, “Until we all reach unity in the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (NIV, 2011, Ephesians 4:13). This should be the Church’s main purpose, and Haitian American Christian leaders must strive to achieve this purpose.

Research Purpose Statement

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to explore Haitian American Christian leadership through the lens of servant leadership as essential to assist God’s people. Haitian Christian leadership was the central phenomenon of the study—a figure of authority at local churches. At this stage in the research, a central phenomenon has been generally defined as “a study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions and perspectives relative to a particular situation. In other words, a phenomenological study tries to answer the question, ‘What is it like to experience such and such?’” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 119). Thus, the ToM that Hung (2018) reported as being introduced by developmental psychologists, Premack and Woodruff (1978), inspired by the work of Jean Piaget (1964), has paved the way for researchers to explore ways of understanding others. This approach was important for this phenomenological study, as each phenomenon has a specific and unique reality, and according to Wellman (2017), the “theory of mind remains the best example of a foundational theory of everyday cognition” (p. 207).

By leveraging this theory, researchers could predict and interpret the behavior of others, as behavioral patterns are closely associated with mental concepts. “Regardless of their age, all people develop schemas or mental concepts, as general ways of thinking about, or interacting

with, ideas and objects in the environment” (Gordon & Browne, 2004, p. 143). To better understand Haitian leadership, particularly Haitian Christian leaders’ perceptions of leadership, and why it appears more authoritarian than servant leadership, special consideration must be given to their environment to comprehend the phenomenon intrinsically and extrinsically.

Thus, Gordon and Browne (2004) explain:

While others thought that the development of thinking was either intrinsic (nature) or extrinsic (nurture), Piaget thought that neither position offered a full explanation for these amazing and complex behaviors. His theory relies on both maturational and environmental factors... It is an environmental factor (p. 142).

Accordingly, the ToM theory (1978) guided this study. It was used to assume and understand Haitian Christian leaders’ perceptions regarding the concept of leadership as a whole, particularly the application of servant leadership. This is because ToM allows researchers to understand the mental states of others (Premack & Woodruff, 1978). Hence, this researcher used this mechanism to understand the phenomenon and communicate its meaning to the Haitian American Christian leaders’ population.

Research Questions

RQ1. What are the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders about the implication of servant leadership within the church system for spiritual growth?

RQ2. How does the application of servant leadership intertwine with the harmony between leaders and followers?

RQ3. How does the concept of servant leadership differ from general or traditional leadership?

Assumptions and Delimitations

Research Assumptions

The researcher assumed:

- There is a concern about Haitian American Christian leadership.

- There are tensions between Haitian Christian leaders and followers.
- There is an absence of the servant leadership theory's application.
- The Haitian church system is lacking in terms of inter-personal social development.

Delimitations of the Research Design

Due to the fragility of phenomenological research, this study would be delimited to the following:

- Haitian American Christian leaders residing in Northeastern USA
- A selected group of participants who met the study's eligibility requirements. Thus, the sampling population was surveyed partly in focus groups and one-on-one interviews. To facilitate better data collection, the interviews for the study were conducted virtually, in person, or both as fit the participants' schedules.

Phenomenological researchers depend almost exclusively on lengthy interviews (perhaps 1 to 2 hours in length) with a small, carefully selected sample of participants. The typical sample size is from 5 to 25 individuals, all of whom have had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 233).

- Data were collected from 12 Haitian Christian leaders who have been leading a Haitian congregation or a department within a Haitian church, such as the youth, women, men, children, and so on, regardless of their denomination as long as they believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as the Holy Triune-God. Other churches that did not meet the criteria of the interviews were not counted among the study participants.
- The selected participants were leaders of Haitian Christian churches, who have been leading actively and uninterruptedly for at least two years. A questionnaire with open-ended questions was used to interview these leaders regarding their perceptions of the concept of servant leadership and its application in the Haitian contemporary church system for spiritual maturation. In this way, the researcher received a clearer picture of how these leaders' perceived leadership in a general sense, particularly the theory of servant leader.

Definition of Terms

Servant leader: A servant leader first senses a natural desire to serve. Subsequently, this individual consciously chooses to lead (Greenleaf, 2014).

Biblical servant leader: These are servants who lead according to God's directions in the Bible.

Leadership: Leadership involves moving a group of people from point A to point B under a common goal.

Haitian: A Haitian is an inhabitant or former inhabitant of Haiti.

Poverty: The lack of resources to satisfy primary needs is poverty.

Leadership style: A leadership style is a leader's method of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people.

Significance of the Study

The growth of a church, in great proportion, depends on the leader as the one responsible for providing the necessary care for members' spiritual development, which requires a steady relationship between leaders and followers. Nonetheless, it was unfortunate to often observe that the relationship between Haitian Christian leaders and followers was so unhealthy as to constitute a real barrier to the church's progress. Accordingly, this researcher felt a sense of urgency to address the issue. Therefore, the extended definition of servant leadership from Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (2014) was taken into consideration for the way in which it has fleshed out the points for the development of the theory:

1. Other-oriented approach to leadership
2. Manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of followers' needs and individual interests
3. Outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others (Činčala & Chase, 2018, as cited in Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (2014)

Manala (2010) further supported the idea of servant leadership with the six traits of a pastor identified as a true servant leader.

Those with the greatest authority have the greatest responsibility to serve, (2) Servant leadership is about relationships, (3) Servant leadership seeks to support, not control, (4) Servant leaders point to others before self, (5) Servant leaders don't need titles or status, and (6) Authority is based on one's relationship to Jesus, not a position (p. 2).

Therefore, the assessment of these points combined served as the repertoire for the study, a great tool for applying servant leadership theory, in instances where Haitian Christian leaders could make provisions for their Christian leadership journey.

Summary of the Design

As phenomenology has to do with individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), and phenomenological study focuses on an individual's perception of an experience (Cerbone, 2014), this researcher focused on understanding how Haitian clergy perceived the application of servant leadership and how they comprehended the benefits they could avail from the implications of servant-leadership by leveraging a theological approach. The phenomenological design developed by Creswell and Creswell (2018) was adopted to satisfy the qualitative research requirements. Therefore, this researcher considered a natural interview setting, where leadership was practiced to properly collect the data through one-on-one, face-to-face, small group interviews, documentation, audio recordings, and video recordings sessions with participants' permission. Later, the data collected were analyzed with the researcher's judgment, using this researcher's skills and competence. Extrapolations occurred as the goal was to explore, embracing self-reflection to make proper comments and conclusions. For:

The qualitative approach includes comments by the researcher about their role and their self-reflection (or reflexivity, it is called) and the specific type of qualitative strategy being used... Qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. Researchers do not bring individuals into a lab (a contrived situation), nor do they typically send out instruments for individuals to complete (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 180).

This researcher made observations, recognizing that the issue under investigation has many dimensions and layers, and tried to portray it in its multifaceted forms. Good listening skills were employed to avoid interrupting the participants by explaining their perceptions of the subject.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review considered diverse findings from many scholars that addressed the benefits of servant leadership's application in contemporary Christian leadership in the USA, while several scholars have contributed to the Haitian Christian leadership's issue as well. Thus, the works of those regarding Haitian Christian leadership in the USA have been discussed in the chapter, highlighting the importance of this study and what other researchers and authors have not accomplished in the domain of Haitian leadership's philosophy. Therefore, the following subsections will address the theological and theoretical framework of the study, related literature on the topic, the gap in the current literature, and a profile of the current study to better comprehend how scholars have addressed (or failed to address) the Haitian Christian leadership issues.

Theological Framework for the Study

This study's theological framework was based on scholarly texts related to the Bible. The study needed to establish a structural foundation theologically. This is because it has been written, "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (NIV, 2011, Joshua 1:8). Hence, in regard to scholars' sayings, the Word of God was positioned at the center to discuss the theological aspect of the topic through the following points: 1) How does the theory of servant leadership intertwine with the Word of God to benefit the church system organization? 2) How can the application of servant leadership empower the community of Haitian American Christian leaders for a better relationship between leaders and followers to facilitate spiritual growth? The following is an outline of the biblical aspect of the theory:

1. The biblical aspect of servant leadership is scholarly proven
2. The illustrations of leaders who were practicing servant leadership from the New and the Old Testament (Joseph's, Moses's, Peter's, and Barnabas's leadership)
3. Combination of the three points redefining the concept of servant leadership by the Greenleaf Center of Servant Leadership (2014) and the six traits that identify a true servant leader pastor by Manala (2010) in the lives of the selected leaders
4. The expansion and modification of the concept of servant leadership
5. The difference between servant leadership theory and the concept of biblical servant leadership
6. Demonstration of how the application of servant leadership sustains the church's spiritual growth?

Biblical Aspect of Servant Leadership Scholarly Proven

This theory was not coined purposely in the context of the Gospel. Frick (2016) reported that “Greenleaf’s idea of servant leadership is not directly connected to Christianity or the Bible as a source. Nonetheless, he confirmed that “He was informed by the Judeo-Christian Ethic” (Činčala & Chase, 2018, p. 82, as cited in Frick, 2016). Scholars agree that the paradigm’s father, Greenleaf (1904–1990), emphasized that “the leader is first a servant” (Greenleaf, 2014, p. 35). This is why, Flaniken, aiming to support the concept of servant leadership as biblical, stated, “It can be shown that Greenleaf’s servant-leadership principles are indeed based on biblical concepts” (2006, p. 32). Throughout the Bible, scholarly confirmations of servant leadership can be found in multiple ways in both the Old and New Testaments. “I will show the relevance and significance of the Bible, written more than 2,000 years ago, to one of the most influential leadership theories of our time” (Flaniken, 2006, p. 32). Thus, this scholar attests to several scriptural references related to the concept’s principle where a servant leader is a servant first and a leader second (Flaniken, 2006).

To evidence the relationship between the servant leadership theory and the Scripture, this researcher began with several texts proposed by Flaniken (2006), Watt (2017), and Howell (2003), who thoroughly presented several servant leaders' profiles throughout the Bible. Scholars such as Winston and Paterson (2003) as reported by Rennaker, (2006), Dierendonck and Patterson (2010), and Crowther (2018) demonstrated a deep connection between the Word of God and the concept. In addition, Flaniken used a variety of biblical texts to support the relationship that exists between the two. By highlighting several verses (Mark 9:35, Philippians 2:7, Philippians 2:3, and Galatians 5:13), Flaniken (2006) stated that Jesus posed the foundation of the theory and wanted his disciples to be mindful about the philosophy of serving, in turn, "articulating the basis for servant leadership" (p. 32). Herein, Jesus modeled the idea of being a servant first, so his disciples could comprehend the necessity of becoming a servant like Him.

Flaniken (2006) focused on putting others' interests before leaders' interests—an idea that other scholars have vividly discussed. This should be normalized, as servant leaders are invoked to put the needs of those under their authority above any personal needs (Johnson, 2006). Flaniken confirmed that the idea of serving others first is strongly related to Scripture—something that is already considered a leader's main task in terms of the servant leadership theory. Flaniken understood Apostle Paul's statement to the Galatians as a level of care, a sense of sacrifice wherein leaders must be committed to "spend time with their followers, understand their needs and abilities, ask their opinions, and seek their input. They must provide the resources their followers need to be successful in their role" (p. 35). Subsequently, in the last verse, Flaniken demonstrates the value of followers as a group and individually, considering the last biblical passage where Jesus Himself captured His disciples' attention regarding the sheep. Therefore, importance must be assigned to the fact that it is not for leaders to be satisfied with

the number of their followers. Instead, complete attention must be given to the sheep individually. Flaniken (2006) asserted that the passage describing the lost sheep explains that the servant leader's heart should not serve generally but should view each person in a group individually. "If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?" (NIV, 2011, Mat. 18:12). The careful attention that leaders owe to followers, especially those who appear to be less capable, less educated, and even less fortunate, requires more consideration according to Flaniken (2006). Thus, Flaniken (2006) reported Henry in the following lines.

Even though only one sheep was lost out of 100 sheep, the one lost sheep was of no less value to the shepherd. Likewise, the servant-leader values each follower, including the least privileged or lowly. Today's leaders must be careful to value each person under their authority fairly, equitably, and without the influence of such factors as ethnicity, education, or social class (Henry, nd, as cited in Flaniken, 2006, p. 34).

The relationship between the Scripture and the servant leadership theory was continuously demonstrated. Watt (2017) referenced Jesus washing His disciples' feet in John 13:12–17 as a tangible figure of love, which can be shown to those who carry the title of servant leaders. Watt stated that, although the action is often attributed to a demonstration of humility, he interpreted Jesus' action of washing His disciples' feet as a set-up for the evidence of the intense love of God more than anything else and the establishment of what the Lord Jesus expected from the disciples and from those who are called to serve as leaders. Jesus expected His disciples to do the same for others as proof of their love, regardless of people's perception of those performing this type of job as enslaved people. The service rendered was much more important to Jesus than anything else. "The conclusion is that the above-mentioned interpretation does not correctly or fully reflect the meaning of Jesus' action of love, but that the emphasis falls on the nature of intense love" (Watt, 2017, p. 25).

Furthermore, Watt (2017) highlighted the reason behind Jesus' action as intense love, which encouraged Jesus to serve His fellows instead of feeling humiliated. Watt explained that Jesus did not intend to humiliate Himself when washing the disciples' feet, as He presented Himself as the most important One, their Lord. During the supper, "He does not call himself a humble servant, but rather the "Lord and Teacher/Rabbi" (NIV, 2011, John 13:13). "What he has done, he did as their Lord and Teacher" (Watt, 2017, p. 32). Nonetheless, it expressed how Jesus' love was focused on his followers' interests. Watt also discussed this event as a way for Jesus to cherish and value the disciples through the service rendered since "humbling servanthood in the community is defined in a radical way as the very nature of true love" (Watt, 2017, p. 31).

The following section will denote Howell's contribution to the discussion of leadership in the Bible. Howell emphasized the connection between servant leadership theory and the Scripture through the leadership style of the following leaders within the Bible: Moses, Joseph, Peter, and Barnabas. Howell had a penchant for the servant leadership theory, with Christ as a role model at the center. "New covenant servant-leaders learn, by imitating their servant-Lord, to abandon their own agendas and preferences in order to seek the good of their fellow servants (Jn 13:13–17). Through such imitation, they become servants of the great Servant" (2003, p. 19).

Illustration of Servant Leaders from Old and New Testaments

Moses, a Servant Leader

Moses is an example of a practical servant leader that supports the concept of servant leadership as biblical. To present the leader, one must reference, in particular, what happened in the wilderness while Moses was with Jehovah God on the mountain. Howell (2003) emphasized

Israel's action, which eventually led Moses into serious advocacy and a profound intercession due to Israel's idolatry.

Aaron's accommodation to the peoples' demand for gods (32:1), his aggressive complicity in fashioning golden calf-idols (32:2–4), even attempting to sanitize its worship with an altar to the Lord (32:5), and his permissive stance toward the peoples' revelry (32:25) comprise one of the most egregious cases of failing leadership in Scripture. Only the fervent intercession of Moses can avert the Lord's threat (Howell, 2003, p. 31).

Israel's disobedience, Moses' pertinent intercession, and Moses as a servant leader are the three important points that have been covered in this paragraph. After Jehovah delivered Israel from Pharaoh's hands, they spent some time in the wilderness before they reached Canaan. The desert should have been a passage to arrive at their destination; nonetheless, they did many things that did not please God, and Moses always intervened on their behalf, including in the instance with the golden calf. The golden calf was a type of god that the Israelite people had requested from Aaron for their guidance, pretending that Moses had stayed too long on the mountain. Subsequently, Aaron took their earrings and made them into an idol, casting them in the shape of a calf that they adored, saying, "These are your gods, Israel who brought you up out of Egypt" (NIV, 2011, Ex. 32:4). This, in turn, irritated Jehovah, who knew what He had done for them, and He decided to eradicate them in return. God expressed His anger to Moses in regard to the Israelites' disobedience and promised a better group of followers to Moses (Exodus 32:9–10).

However, Moses took it to the extreme, though he saw how Israel had behaved before God. Moses' intervention was beyond the limit. He dared to ask the Lord why He would do such a thing. Although Moses himself was disappointed, he could not bear to think about the destruction of his followers.

He discussed with the Lord what the other nations would say if such a thing happened. Moses' advocacy reminded God about His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and it appeared that God had graced the Israelites. Thereafter, Moses felt there was unfinished business with God; therefore, he returned to the Lord and sought His forgiveness. No one knows what he felt, but he pushed through to ask God to blot him out of the book He had written. Hence, many scholars view Moses as a real servant leader who did not pay attention to personal interest (Howell, 2003). "13 Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever" (NIV, 2011, Ex. 32:13). Moses primarily cared about was seemed to be the salvation of his followers. He prioritized their interests over his. "But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written" (NIV, 2011, Ex. 32:9–14).

The Israelites' interest came first for Moses, and he wanted to serve them first. He refused to be the leader of a great nation based on God's promise and continued with a group of very rebellious people. "But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. 'LORD,' he said, 'why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people'" (NIV, 2011, Ex. 32:11). Moses is a brilliant example of a patient servant leader who hoped that the people of Israel would get better one day. Howell stated, "His prayer discloses a heart consumed with God's glory with no thought of personal status or power" (2003, p. 31). Moses' attitudes and behavior displayed the threefold extended and refined definition of servant leadership mentioned above, like Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down

one's life for one's friends" (NIV, 2011, John 15:13). Moses was willing to lay down his life for his followers, the Israelites.

Joseph, a Servant Leader

Howell (2003) further claimed that Joseph's tribulation comprised a time of preparation to better serve his followers, more precisely, his family members placed under his command in Egypt. "Joseph experienced betrayal, slavery, false accusation, and imprisonment over a period of thirteen years before he was elevated as Vizier of Egypt" (2003, p. 297). Howell (2003) explained how Joseph's trials had prepared him for who he had been chosen to be. Joseph's tumultuous life shaped him as a leader through suffering and adversity, even unfair imprisonment, wherein he remained a pleasant servant to his God who paved the way before him. "But while Joseph was there in the prison, the LORD was with him; he showed him kindness and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden" (NIV, 2011, Gen. 39:21). Joseph was graced to the point of serving other prisoners. The Spirit of God was upon him, and God's wisdom allowed him to interpret the dreams of the officers, which, in turn, carved his path toward his destiny in the king's palace.

Scholars agree that the evidence of Joseph's productive leadership as a servant leader was well demonstrated through his experience in prison and his interaction with his brothers, who betrayed and humiliated him (Kim, 2013). However, instead of revenge, he showed mercy and served them. "Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey" (NIV, 2011, Gen. 42:25). Kim (2013) observed Joseph's progress in terms of servant leadership, "First of all, one would have to say that Joseph enters the plot as self-centered dreamer... and rises to be a profoundly transformed leader. Joseph becomes not only a powerful ruler, but also a compassionate leader" (p. 235).

Howell (2003) next presented the following three aspects of Joseph's leadership journey that align with servant leadership: 1) God's presence despite trials, 2) Joseph's integrity in the eyes of God and his surroundings, and 3) the confidence placed in God as Sovereign. Howell examined how Joseph's experience from Canaan to Egypt exposed him to trials and tribulations and brought him to his destiny of achievement and successful leadership journey. Howell claimed, "Joseph manifests a remarkable capacity, especially for someone in a leadership position, not to be victimized by a troubled past. He refused to exploit his position of authority to redress grievances against former offenders" (2003, p. 25). The behavioral leadership Joseph displayed was nothing less than servant leadership. Joseph's concern was to serve; he was neither interested in blaming nor seeking revenge on his brothers. Chapters 44 and 45 of Genesis show that all that mattered to him was reconciling with his brothers and providing the necessary care. Joseph knew that his brothers' actions were the beginning of a plan for his establishment as a leader to serve the family. "The Servant-Leader is servant first ... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" (Greenleaf, 1977, as cited in Eva et al., 2019, p. 114). In accordance with Genesis 37, one can identify Joseph's desire to serve even while he was still at his father's home, when his father Jacob sent him to check on his brothers in Shechem. He looked for them patiently, and when he heard they were at Dothan, he went to meet them there with devotion.

Howell (2003) emphasized Joseph's commitment to the Lord God. Although he was highly favored in a pagan environment, with many opportunities, he faithfully kept the covenant, and such devotion greatly contributed to the success of his leadership as a servant leader. Howell (2003) asserted that in Joseph's leadership profile, the first point, "the presence of God," was characterized by the consistency in the triumph of Joseph at every turn due to the divine favor

with which he was surrounded. Therefore, the foundation of his success as a leader was rooted within the mighty God he served faithfully. The second point, “integrity before God and man,” focused on Joseph’s commitment to the Lord. For instance, he decided to reject the proposition of Potiphar’s wife. The third point, “confidence in God’s sovereign grace,” is illustrated by Joseph’s eagerness to serve others despite the wrongs he had experienced. Joseph remained obedient to the Word of God, forgiving, and serving as needed (Howell, 2003).

In addition, other scholars, such as Smith (2020), using the life of Joseph as an example of servant leadership principles. Smith (2020) suggested that servant leadership is an evolutionary change in the concept of leadership instead of a revolutionary one. Joseph was perceived as an evolving leader who learned and matured through experience. The inexperienced Joseph, who continued talking about his dreams without understanding his siblings’ anger and jealousy, deeply changed over time and became a skillful servant leader. When facing his needy family members, especially the brothers, he did not have the time to brag about his achievements. Nonetheless, he was preoccupied with meeting their wants and serving them. In typical servant leadership fashion, he prioritized their needs over everything else (Greenleaf, 2014). Consequently, the aspects of Joseph’s life comprise the perfect biblical examples of servant leadership. “Joseph’s immaturity, Jacob’s partiality, and the brothers’ hostility become the instruments in God’s hand to orchestrate his redemptive purposes” (Howell, 2003, p. 23).

In addition, the three points redefining servant leadership from the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (2014), combined with the six traits that characterize a true servant, were tangibly observed in Joseph’s life. For instance, the fact that servant leadership is “manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of followers needs and individual interests” is comparable to the

trait, “servant leaders point to others before self.” Thus, the life of Joseph has characteristics of the first three points and the six traits of a true servant leader.

Joseph and the Three-fold Redefining of Servant Leadership

Point One

Point one is as follows: “Other-oriented approach to leadership” (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2014, p. 7). After the brothers met Joseph, who became second in command after Potiphar, he decided to keep Benjamin as his younger brother (Gen. 44:1–17). However, the long speech of Judah, who presented himself before Joseph as the one to be responsible for the others, advocated that Benjamin should return home with his brothers. Joseph did not deny Judah in his role as someone in charge, but instead listened to Judah’s advocacy entirely until he became inconsolable in their presence and could not resist shouting, “I am Joseph!” (NIV, 2011, Gen. 45:1). Joseph seemed to recognize Judah’s responsibility, and his request was accorded—not only did he go back home with Benjamin, but his family also learned that Joseph was alive and that he had met the hated brother who had turned to be their deliverer.

In an outburst of tears, Joseph reveals himself to his brothers who are at first terrified at the revelation (45:1–3), but then reassured that his intentions are reconciliation, not revenge. His unconditional offer of forgiveness towards his brothers is grounded in the profound conviction that God has superintended the affairs of his life to accomplish the deliverance of the covenant family (45:4–9) (Howell, 2003, pp. 24, 25).

Point Two

Point two is as follows: “Manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of followers’ needs and individual interests” (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2014, p. 7). The following statement by Joseph in Genesis 45:5 offered the ultimate redemption: “And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you” (NIV, 2011). One can only imagine how emotional Joseph was

at that moment; however, he tried to avoid any feelings of guilt his brothers might have. Joseph did not leave a minute for his brothers to express their regret for what they had done to him, even though one can feel their suspicion, especially when Joseph pretended that they were spies—“You have come to see where our land is unprotected. It is just as I told you: You are spies!” (NIV, 2011, Gen. 42:12, 14). Nonetheless, he consoled and comforted them several times. Furthermore, Joseph performed another act of a servant leader who prioritizes his followers’ needs when he wished to spend some quality time with Benjamin, his little brother and son of his mother. However, he prioritized Judah’s request to return home with Benjamin over his desire to spend time with his younger sibling.

Point Three

Point three is as follows: “Outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others” (Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2014, p. 7). Kenel affirmed, “The servant leader is different from the leader who lusts after power to assuage a desire for dominance” (2012, p. 4). They “help people grow and help shape the destinies of their followers by going ahead to show the way” (Kenel, 2012, p. 4). This was very much the case with Joseph, a committed servant leader.

Joseph had the opportunity to embrace the culture of Egypt, as he was already in a position of honor, and deny his faith. On the contrary, with no hope that one day he would get his family back, he remained faithfully attached to his God, who, in turn, paved the way before him to lead the family to restoration. Despite Joseph’s family’s distance, he valued some traditions of his country of birth. Kim (2013) claimed that Joseph had lost much in terms of identity. But, owing to his position, he had to act as an Egyptian and become accustomed to the culture of Egypt. The dress code was very meaningful for Joseph, as he had been favored with a special

garment from Jacob, his father. However, he was eventually compelled to embrace the style of a foreign culture. Kolia affirmed:

firstly, Joseph acknowledges the God of his forefathers, and not any god of Egypt when explaining the meaning of dreams... Secondly, Pharaoh gives Joseph the Egyptian name “Zaphenath-paneah” (Gen 41:45), which is not used—the Hebrew name Joseph is preferred... Finally, Joseph’s final wish before his death is that his bones be taken back with the Israelites when they return to the Promised Land (Gen 50:25) (Kolia, 2022, p.6).

Joseph and the Six Traits of a True Servant Leader

Those with the greatest authority have the greatest responsibility to serve, (2) Servant leadership is about relationships, (3) Servant leadership seeks to support, not control, (4) Servant leaders point to others before self, (5) Servant leaders don’t need titles or status, and (6) Authority is based on one’s relationship to Jesus, not a position (Manala, 2010, p. 2).

First Trait

The first trait is as follows: “those with greatest authority have greatest responsibility to serve” (Manala, 2010, p. 2). This is contrary to the traditional law of leadership, which sees leaders as heroes. “The traditional view of leadership is dominated by approaches that basically attribute greatness, power, and extraordinary characteristics to the leader” (Sobral & Furtado, 2019, p. 210).

Although it is undeniable that Joseph had the greatest responsibility in Egypt after Potiphar, owing to his assigned position, Joseph understood this trait of servant leadership, evidencing his great responsibility toward his family, for which the Lord had prepared him. He assumed his responsibilities dutifully from the very first time he met his brothers until he led them to the land, as Jehovah predicted to the patriarch Abraham: “Then the LORD said to him, ‘Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there’” (NIV, 2011, Gen. 15:13).

Joseph was “the first of the Hebrew nation to migrate to Egypt before the Hebrew population grows (Ex. 1:7)” (Kolia, 2022, p. 371). Jacob and his entire family moved to Egypt according to the Word of God. “So, Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land” (NIV, 2011, Gen. 47:11). Hence, the authority of Joseph was wisely used, as he greatly served not only the members of his family but also Egyptians (Gen. 43:56–57).

When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere (NIV, 2011).

Second Trait

The second trait is as follows: “Servant leadership is about relationship” (Manala, 2010, p. 2). So much has already been said about Joseph’s relationship with his followers, particularly his brothers. However, the connection between Joseph and his brothers was not restricted by human nature. Joseph ignored everything from the past mistreatment, which would be a barrier against their family’s bond. He testified about how God helped him move from the struggles in his past to joy and satisfaction:

Joseph named his firstborn Manasseh and said, “It is because God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.” The second son he named Ephraim and said, “It is because God has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering.” (NIV, 2011, Gen. 41:51–52)

In the country of Egypt, nothing negative was revealed about Joseph’s leadership. Joseph pleased Pharaoh as he led the Egyptians faithfully (NIV Gen. 41:37, 55): “The plan seemed good to Pharaoh... When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians: ‘Go to Joseph and do what he tells you.’”

Third Trait

The third trait is as follows: “Servant leaders seek to support, not to control” (Manala, 2010, p. 2). Joseph offered unparalleled support to his brothers. No one could tell if there was tension between the two entities when they met again. Although Joseph was in a controlling position, aware of God’s will and his role as a servant, he prioritized the service over the title of second in command after Pharaoh. Genesis 42:6–9 presents a very emotional scene of Joseph before his brothers, years after the betrayal conflict when he had been sold. He remembered that God allowed that to happen so he could be at their service. Thus, he said, “No harm will overtake you; no disaster will come near your tent. For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways” (NIV, 2011, Psalm 91:10–11). Joseph proved himself a mature leader by focusing more on their interests than his. Paul also admonishes in the New Testament: “Not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others” (NIV, 2011, Phil. 2:4).

Fourth Trait

The fourth trait is as follows: “Servant leaders point to others before self” (Manala, 2010, p. 2). As the scene continued to play out in Chapter 42, Joseph had different reactions where he seemed very hard on his brothers, which appeared to be a way to cope with his emotions. Often, he had to hide himself to cry: “They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter. He turned away from them and began to weep, but then came back and spoke to them again” (NIV, 2011, Gen. 42:23–24).

Joseph’s actions, including his strategy to see Benjamin, his younger brother, were designed to satisfy their needs. He gave enough provision and ordered that they get their money

back. While Joseph could have taken the money and even requested double the amount, he was concerned with their needs instead (NIV, 2011, Gen. 42:25–26, 35).

Fifth Trait

The fifth trait is as follows: “Servant leaders don’t need titles or status” (Manala, 2010, p. 2). Until Joseph burst out in tears, he never told his brothers about his title and all the privileges he enjoyed in Egypt. However, he used his status, more specifically, the doors that God had opened before him, to make his brothers comfortable: “When portions were served to them from Joseph’s table, Benjamin’s portion was five times as much as anyone else’s. So, they feasted and drank freely with him” (NIV, 2011, Gen. 4:34).

Sixth Trait

The sixth trait is as follows: “Authority is based on one’s relationship to Jesus, not a position” (Manala, 2010, p. 2). Jesus was clear in his declaration to Peter: “‘No,’ said Peter, ‘you shall never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered, ‘Unless I wash you, you have no part with me’” (NIV, 2011, John 13:8). The parting with Jesus is that connection that Christian leaders must search for.

Joseph displayed great insight into his relationship with God throughout his life. Under Potiphar’s wife’s attack, behind jail bars and from a position of great honor, Joseph kept his faith because of his profound relationship with the Lord. Sometimes a leader gets the position but does not access the Lord’s guidance and empowerment, which causes much strife for the organization. Leaders must not confuse power and position, as servant leaders need power to exercise their leadership duties and serve others: “This does not necessarily mean that the servant leader avoids power, but rather that he or she will use power as a means to serve others” (Sun, 2013, as cited in Dierendonck, 2011). Therefore, in this context, having a relationship with Jesus meant having a

relationship with His Almighty Father. His Holy Spirit can guide the servant leader according to the need.

Joseph had a similar experience when he faced Potiphar's wife with boldness. In prison, the Holy Spirit inspired and directed him to explain the dreams to Pharaoh's officers. Joseph's explanation of the officers' dreams was accurate. As Joseph predicted, within three days, both officers experienced the reality of their dreams (NIV, 2011, Gen. 40:12–13, 18–19).

Finally, when it was time for Joseph's deliverance, he could explain a dream to Pharaoh because of his relationship with God. He acknowledged, "I cannot do it, but God will give Pharaoh the answer he desires... It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has shown Pharaoh what he is about to do" (NIV, 2011, Gen. 41:16, 28). Christian leaders need a vital connection with God, and not just the leadership position.

Peter, a Servant Leader

Howell (2003) referenced John 21:15–17 to present detailed information about Apostle Peter's ministry life. He first considered Jesus' emotional conversation with Peter, where Peter was questioned three times about his love for Him. Peter tolerated the questions first two times until Jesus asked for the third time, "Do you love me?" (NIV, 2011, John 21:17). Howell (2003) understood Jesus' persistence to accentuate the connection of a servant leader's love for God and the care given to the sheep. Howell discussed how much the Lord knew Peter's sincerity despite past failures. Nevertheless, it was important for Jesus was to make Peter comprehend that the care required for the sheep must be equivalent to his love for Jesus. This was why Jesus asked Peter for the second time, "Simon Peter, do you love me more than these?" (NIV, 2011 John 21:16). The third time, Jesus connected the love Peter expressed for Him to the care provided for

the flock. “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you,” Jesus said, ‘Feed my sheep’” (John 21:17).

“What Jesus underscores with such sanctified redundancy is that if, as it is true, Peter loves Him, then that love must be translated into the ministry of caring for His spiritual lambs” (Howell, 2003, p. 213). According to Howell, Peter was commissioned to shepherd the lambs as the leader of the apostles and the rock to form the church of the Lord Jesus. Thus, Peter’s dual roles of fisherman and shepherd made him a comprehensive and confessional leader who surrendered everything under God’s power. The molded servant leader was not proud of being with the Lord Jesus, which could have brought him popularity. Instead, he presented Jesus, the world’s Savior, the ultimate Servant, and King to come. “Peter could have used his intimacy with the historical Jesus to nurture a cult-like following among the second generation of believers. However, he placed his entire ministry under the authority of God’s Word” (Howell, 2003, p. 220).

Peter had several interactions with Jesus, during which Jesus rebuked him as someone opposed to His mission as a suffering servant, more precisely, referring to his sacrifice on Calvary. Lacking maturity, the devil found an open door to use Peter against God’s will, as he always tried to confront Jesus when talking about his death and sufferings. Howell (2003) saw this as Peter’s ignorance and something very controversial, considering his confession about Jesus being the Messiah. However, Peter “speaks in a way implying that he knows more of God’s will than the Messiah himself” (2003, p. 209). Nonetheless, Jesus is aware of his weaknesses, and the devil speaking through him told Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns” (NIV, 2011, Mat. 16:23).

Conversely, Jesus interceded on Peter's behalf so he could overcome the devil's plan and become mature. Peter had much to learn about Jesus' mission on earth—the legacy he would be responsible to continue. Eventually, Peter would understand the meaning of Jesus' sufferings and voluntary offer sacrifice. After denying Jesus during his arrest, Peter acknowledged his weaknesses and repented, which allowed him to interact with the Lord again, who spoke to him about his ministry after he matured to the extent needed to execute his calling. Howell (2003) recognized Peter's calling and growth as a servant leader and claimed, "At the conclusion he is commissioned to shepherd the lambs. The two metaphors for evangelistic and pastoral roles respectively will be Peter's life work as the foundational 'rock' of the church... This is the fullest measure of restoration there could be" (2003, pp. 213–214). Subsequently, Howell described Peter's leadership profile using the following three points: the first was Jesus' patience and faithfulness toward his leader-in-training. Howell emphasized Jesus' patience toward Peter's conflicting thoughts and emotional reactions. Jesus assisted, empowered, and assigned Peter the ministry of shepherding after He had restored him (Luke 24:34). The second aspect of Peter's leadership profile was Peter's dual role to fish and feed believers (John 21:15–17), which was confirmed at the beginning of the Book of Acts when Peter engaged in his roles as evangelist and pastor (Acts 2). The third aspect, the centrality of the Word of God, involves Peter as "the confessional leader." Peter understood Jesus' mission as the Son of man, a suffering servant on earth, and later the King of the universe (Howell, 2003).

Manila (2021) confirmed Jesus' "message of self-denial." "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself... For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and that of the Gospel will save it" (NIV, 2011, Mark 8:34). Subsequently, after maturation, that same idea of self-denial would become Peter's central theme of encouragement.

“¹³ But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed” (NIV, 2011, 1 Peter 4:13–13).

This passage serves as evidence that Peter has matured as a servant leader and matched the threefold points redefining the servant leadership theory: 1) Other-oriented approach to leadership, 2) Manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of followers’ needs and individual interests, and 3) Outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others (Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2014, p. 7). Howell (2003) further confirmed Peter’s growth, “Peter’s dramatic failure of faith is behind him now. After the Lord’s ascension, he takes his place as leader of the renewed apostolic team as they pray and wait for the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:12–14) (2003, p. 214).

Barnabas (Also Called Joseph), a Servant Leader

Although not as well-known as the other apostles, Barnabas played an important role in the early church. Many scholars, such as Howell (2003) and others, admire his dedication to serving the Lord Jesus through the service rendered to his fellows in Christ. The meaning of his name coincides with his ministerial actions throughout his missionary works. Barnabas, also known as the “Son of encouragement,” sold a field he owned, brought the money, and placed it at the apostles’ feet (Acts 4:6–37). Considering the threefold extended and refined definition of servant leadership and the six traits of a true servant leader pastor, this section examines Barnabas’ works and behavior regarding these points.

Scholars acknowledge that Barnabas’ ministry was remarkable because of how he served others. His meeting with Apostle Paul might not have been his first missionary action, but the following biblical portions were considered for the satisfaction of the characteristics mentioned

above in regard to servant leadership. As popular and full of grace as Apostle Paul was, he had not been a Christian at a young age. As “Saul,” he was already a member among the well-educated scribes and Pharisees, according to Dr. Luke, who reported about his education:

I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today (NIV, 2011, Acts 22:3).

Nevertheless, Saul met the author of salvation, Jesus Christ, on his way to Damascus. After his conversion to Christianity, the Lord needed someone willing and available to assist Saul as a newborn in Christ, but others seemed too scared to face Saul at the beginning of the process. Even Ananias, to whom the Lord had spoken in a vision, expressed his fear, explaining how Saul was a danger to Christians, to which the Lord replied, “Go! For I am choosing him as an instrument to proclaim my Name” (NIV, 2011, Acts 9:15).

Later, Apostle Paul did tremendous work in distributing the Gospel, but someone was still needed to present him before the other apostles such as Peter, John, and James. Everyone was afraid of him, as they knew what he had done. The brothers of the same congregation in Jerusalem were hesitant to approach him. Nonetheless, Barnabas, as a servant leader, prioritized Saul’s needs over his safety. No one knew how perplexed he was before making the decision, but risky or not, the service was rendered.

When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul, on his journey, had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus, he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus (NIV, 2011, Acts 32:27–28).

Development of the Biblical Concept of Servant Leadership

Therefore, as mentioned above, several scholars reported on servant leadership theory and its relationship with the Scripture. They presented facts throughout the Old and New

Testaments, with clear illustrations of servant leadership, particularly through the lives of Moses, Joseph, Peter, and Barnabas. However, other scholars, such as Patterson and Winston (2003) reported by Rennaker (2006), Sun (2013), and Crowther (2018), contributed to the expansion of the servant leadership theory. Therefore, Joseph's leadership, as a typical example of the biblical concept of servant leadership, will be discussed, as his contributions were considered by one of the scholars who discussed the expansion of servant leadership. "The internal issues of integrity and forgiveness come to the forefront here as of prime importance. These were the issues that kept Joseph's leadership on track for long term, even building a leadership legacy" (Crowther, 2018, p. 136).

Even since Greenleaf (1977) developed the servant leadership theory, its use has never been stagnant. "Robert K. Greenleaf is recognized as the contemporary founder of servant-leadership" (Greenleaf, 2014, p. 22). As leadership has gradually become a subject of interest, especially during the twenty-first century, the servant leadership theory has captured the attention of many. Crowther (2018) emphasized the importance of a person being a servant on the inside more than the service rendered. Crowther stated, "With Jesus, it is more than serving—it is becoming a servant, it is ontological, it involves who one becomes as a person. Then leadership proceeds from the person of the leader" (2018, p. 139). Servant leadership's application can serve as an effective tool in secular and Christian organizations. Others have also been inspired by the theory and sought new ways of development. Therefore, the twenty-first century introduced an explosion of research in new leadership and leadership development areas. "During this period, Patterson (2003) developed a virtue-based model for leadership" (Crowther, 2018, p. 140).

Although Greenleaf (1977) is acknowledged as the father of servant leadership theory, it is important to note that this was not the first time people heard of the theory of “servant leadership.” However, “the seminal works of Robert K. Greenleaf established servant leadership in 1977 from a different perspective than other leadership theories” (Davis, 2020, p. 381 as cited in Ruiz et al., 2010). In ancient times, the idea of servant leadership was promoted by some well-known philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, as well as business owners and Christian organizations. “Although Robert K. Greenleaf coined the term servant leadership in 1977, servant leadership is not a modern concept” (Kenel, 2012, p. 24).

Many literary sources have contributed to the expansion of the servant leadership theory ever since Greenleaf (1977) laid its foundation to present servant leadership as people-oriented and a way of serving others, which mostly had to do with the leader’s behavior. As this study’s focus is leadership in a Christian setting, this researcher considered the works by the following scholars: Winston and Patterson (2003), Dierendonck and Patterson (2010), and, in particular, Crowther (2018), who displayed a deep focus on the interconnectedness of servant leadership theory and the Scripture.

Servant and biblical servant leadership place an emphasis on serving others. Nonetheless, biblical servant leadership focuses more on the internal aspects rather than the external aspects of the servant leader. Crowther (2018) explains, “The Scriptures heartily endorse servant leadership, with some nuances and expansions” (p. 150). Thus, these nuances were addressed, focusing on the transformation of the heart that must occur for spiritual growth before the servant leader becomes accomplished, which matters extensively to the developmental aspect of biblical servant leadership.

Before acknowledging the nuances between servant leadership theory and the biblical servant leadership concept, this researcher wanted to consider Sun's (2013) socio-cognitive approach, which is similar to the biblical concept of servant leadership. Sun suggested servant leaders' expressive behavior, "what I do," is based on "who I am" on the inside. Hence, Sun (2013) made an important contribution to the literature by fleshing out an aspect of the identity of servant leaders and examining how such identity contributes to self-concordant behaviors. As servant leadership is concerned with "what I do," Sun sheds light on this concept by identifying four attributes that demonstrate how "what I do" is a result of "who I am." "Calling, humility, empathy, and agape love are attributes that servant leaders cognitively refer to when processing socially relevant information, and which define their sense of self" (Sun, 2013, p. 547).

Being other-oriented, servant leaders are seen as moral leaders (Graham, 1995). Their leadership approach is to elevate the moral and ethical behaviors of their followers (Greenleaf, 1977), and for this reason, the servant identity is self-schemas that are organized around a set of moral attributes (Sun, 2013, p. 546).

The First Attribute: Calling

Sun (2013) found "calling" to be the first attribute of biblical servant leadership; however, in a different way that will be discussed further in this section. According to Sun, "The outcome of such a calling will result in leaders putting their subordinates first (Liden et al., 2008) and empowering subordinates to act so that they can realize their full potential and success" (p. 547).

Second Attribute: Humility

"Humility" is the second attribute. It is not simply behavior and is mostly considered a virtue. However, this virtue should be reflected in a servant leader's behavior. Therefore, to describe humility, Sun stated, "It is considered a stable personality trait (Lee & Ashton,

2004; Owens & Hekman, 2012), or, as I suggest in this study, a stable moral attribute of the servant leader” (Sun, 2013, p. 547).

Third Attribute: Empathy

“Empathy,” the third attribute, is an important skill, a helpful tool that leaders should possess to support followers as leaders must understand the relationship between followers’ behavior and emotions. Thus, Sun (2013) described empathy as “the ability to put oneself in another’s shoes and to understand their position and point of view” (p. 548). Therefore, deep understanding for followers’ situations is needed on the behalf of Christian leaders.

Fourth Attribute: Love

The fourth attribute, “love,” is a virtue about which Apostle Peter says, “Above all, love covers a multiplicity of sins” (NIV, 1 Peter 4:8). Sun (2013) addressed this statement by asking a question and then answering the question in the following way: “Why is this attribute of agape love central to one’s perception of oneself as a servant? It is the basis for providing service from the heart and supporting others in their time of need” (p. 548).

Nuances of Servant Leadership and Biblical Servant Leadership

It is necessary to establish the difference between the servant leadership model and the biblical concept of servant leadership. Greenleaf’s theory of servant leadership (1977) has been modified in Patterson’s (2003) biblical servant leadership model because Greenleaf’s (1977) model did not refer to a specific phenomenon. “It is here that the virtue model of servant leadership is expanded based upon the biblical perspective that has the wisdom of antiquity as well as divine insights” (Crowther, 2018, p. 135). The concept of servant leadership was lacking before being modified, as Kuhn (1996) confirmed, “When existing theory does not explain observed phenomena, a new theory emerges” (Kuhn, 1996, as cited in Dierendonck, and

Patterson, 2010, p. 170). Thus, “Patterson (2003) bridged the gap between being leader-focused and being follower-focused by developing a working theory of servant leadership that created a stage for more specific research. She defined the values, or virtues, on which servant leadership is based” (Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010, p. 170). Consequently, the three stages of biblical servant leadership developed by Crowther (2018) were acknowledged to better understand the concept.

The preparation stage, or the pre-leadership stage, involves developing the internal issues of character, forgiveness, and integrity along with the other internal issues that relate to this deep soul development through an understanding of suffering and developing a proper worldview. Then the foundation is further developed by love, matured by a character that fits within the parameters of biblical love (Crowther, 2018, p. 137).

Three Stages of Biblical Servant Leadership

In this section, this researcher will share the content of the three stages developed by Crowther (2018) for biblical servant leadership. In the first stage of biblical servant leadership development, leadership is incomplete. This is the pre-leadership stage, where the leader as a person begins to develop the internal issues of character, such as forgiveness and integrity, and where biblical love is experienced eventually. In this first stage, the soul is transformed into a servant, and the mind that is a part of the soul begins to renew. These changes are just the beginning of the transformation process. They are mostly external, akin to moving from one room to another.

The second stage can be compared to the endeavor of rebuilding the rooms in a house. This is where the leadership takes place. A person is a leader at some level due to the internal work intrinsic to the nature of the leader. Crowther (2018) stated, “Calling bridges the gap between the two stages” (p. 137). Therefore, as outlined in the theory of servant leadership, the fundamental virtue, love, occurs, and from this virtue of love flows two streams into more

virtues, humility, and altruism, which are later developed for the proper use of authority to empower and serve others.

Finally, the third part of stage two is the development of a legacy of leadership. This is where the accomplished servant leader can equip other leaders for organizational development. A leader must develop other leaders to replace or improve their present leadership. Crowther (2018) concluded, “Three stages connect to form a robust model for biblical servant leadership” (p. 138).

According to Winston and Paterson’s (2003) inputs into the development of biblical servant leadership, love is the foundation—this is a bit different from the theory of servant leadership. This focus on the love, which Winston, and Paterson (2003) contributed to the conversation, is very significant for Christian leadership, especially for the application of biblical servant leadership. Christian leaders are mandated to display the culture of God’s Kingdom, which is not specifically a visible place, but, based on love, is a way of living, a behavior, and a comportment to capture the world’s attention and evangelize regarding the Kingdom to come. Jesus was clear when answering the Pharisees about the fact that the Kingdom of God has arrived, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst” (NIV, 2011, Luke 17:21).

People can acknowledge the Kingdom of God when they observe the characteristics of those belonging to the Kingdom as ambassadors of the Kingdom: “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God” (NIV, 2011, 1 Corinthians 5:20). Witherington (2016) further cited 1 Corinthians 13 as a call for Christian leaders to be agents, stating, “Paul here is not

calling love the supreme gift, but rather the way of life for Christ's agent, it is the norm and the guide for the exercise of all gifts" (Witherington, 2016, as cited in Crowther, 2018, p. 136.).

Consequently, love should be at the center of Christian leadership. Crowther (2018) stated, "According to Patterson (2010), servant leadership is based on love" (Paterson, 2010 as cited in Crowther, 2018, p. 136). Nonetheless, the question remains as to what this kind of biblical love looks like and how it interacts with leadership issues and development (Crowther, 2018, p. 138). The idea of biblical servant leadership is rooted in the Scripture.

Love absorbs evil and has a capacity to put up with things and people that are difficult, and this love is able to pour itself out for the sake of others, following the example of Jesus Christ, who came and demonstrated true, deep, real love. This is the foundation for biblical servant leadership. Run after love (Crowther, 2018, p. 140).

Joseph—A Confirmation of a Biblical Servant Leader

Joseph was a biblical servant leader. The concept of biblical servant leadership theory finds its reality in the life of Joseph. The analysis of Joseph's leadership reflected God's two most important commandments based on love. The Lord Jesus Himself made recommendations for love on many occasions in different passages within the Bible.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these (NIV, 2011, Matthew 22:34–40, Mark 12:28–31, and Luke 10:25–28).

"The biblical concept goes deeper to issues of character and formation" (Crowther, 2018, p. 140). Joseph's leadership journey was more than simply an example of "servant leadership," but a developmental theory of servant leadership where principles related to human transformation were exemplified. Kolia affirmed Joseph's struggles in the new environment after moving away from the disturbance of his brothers. "The story of Joseph is a well-known story,

often read as a tale about a dysfunctional family, with issues of jealousy and betrayal... Joseph begins his new life as Potiphar's servant (slave) and ends up in prison" (Kolia, 2022, p. 5).

Despite all, Joseph reflected a remarkable level of maturity. Although he was living in a foreign country where the law of Jehovah was not practiced, the work for leadership growth was occurring inside him, though the current Egyptian atmosphere was not hospitable to his spiritual development. Joseph's actions displayed many examples of the fruit of the Spirit when he met his brothers who betrayed him again. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law" (NIV, 2011, Galatians 5:22).

Therefore, love, one of the main characteristics or virtues of the developmental theory of servant leadership, was tangibly noticed in Joseph's behavioral leadership, especially when he faced his brothers, who had betrayed him years ago. "They took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty... his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt" (NIV, 2011, Gen. 37:24, 28).

Moreover, even far from home, Joseph demonstrated his love for God. He fought against Potiphar's wife's proposition and showed incredible love for his fellow brothers despite his horrible past experiences. Having understood God's plan for the family and him as a chosen leader, Joseph made them comfortable, forgave them, and declared everything that had happened pertained to Jehovah's plan, which, in turn, set him up for a commendable leadership journey. He encouraged them not to be angry at themselves for selling him to the Egyptians. Instead, he assured them about his mission to go before them and prepare for them (NIV, 2011, Gen. 45:5). Smith (2020) further affirmed:

In each instance, when Joseph was promoted, he continued to utilize servant qualities as a leader. Joseph served Potiphar and refused to betray him; as prisoner-in-charge, he took

care of the other prisoners and was “in charge of all that was done” (NIV, 2011, Gen. 39:22); and as the king’s second in command, he served the people of Egypt by ensuring that the impending famine did not decimate the country (Smith, 2020, p. 6).

In light of these circumstances, the question of how Christian leaders can meet the requirement of servant leadership was answered, as the concept is intertwined with the Word of God. This has been discussed previously to a global extent, especially when considering Joseph’s leadership, where many sources pointed him out as an accomplished servant leader. Accordingly, Spears’ (2019) contribution to keeping up with servant leadership strategies has been considered a summary to close this section.

Spears (2019) suggested, “Leaders for Christ should be able to manipulate their ego, instead of others, recognize followers as people who are by their side to be empowered and becoming leaders themselves” (p. 2). In this way, servant leadership was affirmed as a distinguished theory that promotes the growth of leaders and followers when service is rendered properly (serving first and testing one’s leadership skills through followers’ growth). “Do those served grow as persons: do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? (Greenleaf, 2014, p. 2, as quoted in Spears, 2019).

Application of Biblical Servant Leadership and the Church’s Spiritual Growth

Freed (2014), the main leader of the Barna group of researchers, proposed some leadership qualities that could help address leadership issues within the Church. Freed (2014) also suggested that leaders must not just develop a mission statement for the church organization, which they expect to impose on members of the organization, but instead, they should promote a shared vision about which everyone agrees. God’s purpose and the church’s maturation should be the main goal of the biblical servant leader.

One of the most interesting facets of our leadership research was discovering that there are four distinct leadership aptitudes. We studied this for years and realized that a leader does essentially four things: you motivate, you mobilize, you resource, and you direct people towards a shared vision. If you are a Christian leader, you would expand the “shared vision,” to say, a shared vision from God that creates transformation (Freed, 2014, p. 20).

Seemingly, Aitken (2009) took the same direction as Freed (2014) regarding the purpose of God for His church, which pertained to the whole process of transformation within the human heart (Ephesians 4:13). Accordingly, Aitken (2009) presented a pastoral leader as a transformed person and a follower of Christ Jesus—the ultimate leader of all time and the pioneer and perfecter of the faith who formed and informed those who come after Himself. “In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered” (NIV, 2011, Hebrews 2:10). Scholars such as Aitken (2009) agreed that bringing many to God’s Kingdom in a manner similar to the one followed by Jesus should be the main goal of all Christian leaders as it constitutes the core of pastoral leadership, which focuses on individual development—a concern of biblical servant leadership.

Jesus is the leader who goes before, opens the way, and makes possible the entrance of the community into the future that God has promised them. Although Hebrews does not transpose this notion into a definition of pastoral leadership among humans, this example serves to remind us to be attentive to how leadership enables the community to move into a yet unknown future... (Aitken, 2009, p. 32).

In sum, many agree by emphasizing one of servant leadership’s key concepts—putting others’ needs first. This is a biblical strategy that helps leaders and pastors overcome the struggle of being self-centered, a toxic quality for productive leadership. Such productivity is manifested through followers’ progression and the organization’s health. Collins (2002) warns Christian leaders not to be satisfied with being good, as good is the enemy of great. He affirmed that Christians are called to be great, and stated, “We did not begin this project with a theory to test

or prove. We sought to build a theory from the ground up, derived directly from the evidence” (p. 10). Level five constitutes the great level of leadership, which effective leaders must strive for. Collins (2002) elaborated on the five characteristics distinguishing skilled leadership from poor leadership and summarized servanthood leadership within the fifth level.

Five level leaders have a culture of discipline because disciplined people do not need hierarchy; when you have disciplined thought, you do not need bureaucracy, and you have disciplined action, you do not need excessive controls (p. 13).

The concept of servant leadership focuses on sustaining great results. To test the result of the service rendered, Greenleaf (2014) asked the following questions about followers maintaining growth and improvement: “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (p. 21). The levels of leadership discussed by Collins (2002) are profoundly associated with the philosophy of biblical servant leadership, especially level five, which supports the theory in terms of continuous development.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The theoretical framework for this study consists of the following three theories of human development, behavior, and interaction: 1) Biblical servant leadership theory, 2) ToM, and 3) Cognitive development theory. This section addresses 1) The origins of ToM, 2) The differences between primates’ and humans’ ToM, 3) The differences between primates’ and humans’ cognitive development, 4) The connection between ToM and cognitive development theory, 5) The contributions of nature and nurture, and 6) the transnational religion in the Haitian church community.

Origin of the Theory of Mind

The history behind the ToM is grounded in the work of Piaget (1967), which inspired Premack and Woodruff (1978) to flesh out the concept. They were inspired by Piaget's (1967) theory of cognitive development, explaining the "perspective-taking experiments with children" (Piaget, 1967, pp. 178–179). Although Piaget (1967) is not the primary author, his work played an important role in the birth of the ToM. Several scholars have acknowledged the importance of the ToM and the source of inspiration where it began. For the first time, Premack and Woodruff (1978) conducted a study investigating the similarities and differences between chimpanzees' and humans' minds. "Since then, research on mindreading, or following Premack and Woodruff (1978) and many others: "theory of mind" (hereafter ToM), has grown exponentially" (Meunier, 2017, p. 110).

This theory remains valuable even today in terms of assisting researchers in understanding others' knowledge, beliefs, emotions, and intentions. ToM "refers to the ability to ascribe thoughts, feelings, ideas, and intentions to others and to employ this ability to regulate one's behavior and to anticipate the behavior of others" (Muris et al., 2007, p. 2123). Wigger (2016) affirmed, "Like most contemporary research into human cognition, the roots of theory-of-mind studies can be traced to the work of Jean Piaget; in this case, to his perspective-taking experiments with children" (p. 6). Researchers have used this theory for many reasons, including the comparison of non-human primates and human mental development (Montgomery et al., 2010). In addition, scholars have considered various ToM applications, identified possible stereotypes, and assessed others' psychological states (Meunier, 2017). ToM is a very important tool for researchers in investigating, examining, and exploring a better understanding of a phenomenon, since "humans are uniquely talented at reasoning about the thoughts of other

members of our species” (Hoyos et al., p.1, 2020). Premack and Woodruff (1978) stated the benefits of this theory in terms of human ability and assessing the condition of the mind:

Having a theory of mind allows us to understand that others have unique beliefs and desire that are different from our own, enabling us to engage in daily social interaction as we interpret the mental states and infer the behaviors of those around us (p. 534).

Differences in Primates’ and Humans’ Theory of Mind

Before going any further, it is necessary to emphasize the difference between the chimpanzees’ ToM and humans’ intellectual growth. While Montgomery (2010) compared the two organisms, Tomasello and Call (2008) fleshed out the difference between chimpanzees, other primates, and humankind. Primates have certain abilities that allow them to understand intentions, perceptions, and even knowledge of others—this is key for researchers, as they can assume false representations in others’ minds (p. 185). According to Tomasello and Call, such a task is impossible in the ape community. “Skeptics still abound, as represented most prominently by Povinelli and colleagues. They cling to the hypothesis that chimpanzees understand only surface-level behavior (forming ‘behavioral rules’), and indeed this explanation is almost always possible for any single experiment” (Tomasello and Call, 2008, p. 187). Therefore, primates’ limitations are obvious, and it is guaranteed that human beings’ abilities make predictions and assumptions are not limited to surface-level behavior but can even identify and point out other human’s false beliefs, which, in turn, might just be a representation of reality. Tomasello and Call (2008) claimed:

Despite all of this positive evidence for chimpanzees’ understanding the goals, intentions, perceptions and knowledge of others, there is currently no experimental evidence that they understand false beliefs by, for example, predicting what another will do based on what that another knows (when the subject knows something else to be the case) (p. 190).

Differences in Primates' and Humans' Cognitive Development

There are significant differences between humans and animals regarding their cognitive abilities and how the ToM is intertwined with cognitive development theory. Premack (2010), the author of this theory, considered “belief” to simply be a mental state or perception. Premack (2010) established humans’ abilities as meta-representational, which means humans can adopt a type of behavior and teach it to others based on their unique mental representations, whereas animals are very limited regarding cognitive ability and even incapable of assuming false beliefs. “It is not a coincidence that humans both practice and teach, whereas other species do neither” (Premack, 2010, p. 30). Thus, Premack rejected Darwin’s claim, “There is no fundamental difference between humans and animals. Each offers a unique theory of difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties” (Darwin, as cited in Premack, 2010, p. 22).

Humans can not only assume other humans’ mental conditions but also do it with flexibility. Such a task is impossible for animals because of their limitations. Penn et al. (2008) also critiqued Darwin, “In the present target article, we argue that Darwin was mistaken: the profound biological continuity between human and nonhuman animals masks an equally profound discontinuity between human and nonhuman minds” (p. 109). Premack (2010) concluded:

The flexibility of human intelligence is, at one level, hardly a mystery: Humans command all cognitive abilities, and all of them are domain general, whereas animals, by contrast, command very few abilities, and all of them are adaptations restricted to a single goal or activity (p. 30).

Connection of the Theory of Mind and Cognitive Development Theory

After the work of Premack and Woodroof (1978) was introduced, the ToM and many other researchers affirmed the connection of this theory with cognitive development theory. As cognitive development theory is related to an individual’s environment according to Piaget

(1967), Gordon and Browne (2004) named it the constructivist theory, where “knowledge is actively constructed on an ongoing basis” (p. 142) and the mind is engaged with an individual’s environment for the processing of information.

Upon analysis, scholars found that the combination of two theories, ToM (1978) and cognitive development theory (1964), fit well for researchers investigating others’ perceptions. Wigger (2016) elaborated on how the environment and previous experiences continuously affect individuals. Past experiences mold behavior in the shared environment. Thus, the environment plays an important role in people’s perceptions. “If indeed our hominid ancestors took a co-operative turn, it would make good sense that the cognition necessary for co-operation would involve the ability to share attention, share intentions, and act upon joint goals” (Wigger, 2016, p. 13). In this context, the contribution of Premack and Woodruff (1978) to ToM remains very significant. Wellman (2017) claimed, “In my view, theory of mind remains the best example of a foundational theory of everyday cognition” (p. 207).

ToM focuses on mental states, or the condition of the mind related to lived experiences, resulting in the construction of people’s perception (Premack & Woodruff, 1978). Conversely, cognitive development theory involves the accumulation of skills and the capacity to process information. Therefore, the formation of an individual’s ToM is accumulated by the aspects that the mind registers from a person’s environment. ToM is considered the continuity of one’s cognitive development, where knowledge acquired from an individual’s environment is processed to form their state of mind. Thus, scholars express the relationship between the two through the following lines:

Many contemporary developmental psychologists assume that cognitive development should best be regarded as a continuous process that occurs as a result of the gradual accumulation of knowledge, skills, and information processing capacity (e.g., Case, 1998). Such a gradual process of maturation can be nicely observed in the social-

cognitive construct of theory-of-mind (Wellman, 2002, as cited in Muris et al., 2007, p. 2122).

Nature and Nurture

Several scholars have defined and elaborated on the matters of nature and nurture. Keller (2008) focused on one essential among the broad categories of definitions for nature, “existing or present by nature; inherent in the very constitution of a person or thing; innate; not acquired or assumed. The sources for this particular use of the word date from *c.* 1275 to the present” (p. 117). Nature is a genetic affair related to natural heredity.

Conversely, Piaget (1967) was very interested in comprehending the reality of things and people’s environments as he not only believed in nature but also nurture. “Piaget’s driving concern has been to understand the mechanisms by which organisms both adjust themselves to environmental demands and modify their environment in order to satisfy internal needs” (Leroy, 1977, p. 3).

Hughes et al. (2005) emphasized the contribution of both genetics and the environment to individual human development. He referenced the study of various sets of twins. Monozygotic (DZ) twin pairs were more greatly influenced by genetics, whereas the dizygotic (MZ) twin pairs were more greatly influenced by their environment. The study’s findings confirmed the possibility for individuals to be affected genetically. Nonetheless, when there is a shared environment, individuals are influenced by the nurture attributes of an environment. Although nature and nurture can lead to different human development philosophies, there is still a close connection between them, as they can affect people’s lives. A shared environmental variance can profoundly impact an individual’s behavior, as Hughes et al., (2005) argued:

A genetic contribution to ToM is indicated when the similarity in ToM task scores is greater for MZ twins than for DZ twins... Conversely, an environmental contribution to ToM is indicated if the similarity between MZ twins is less than twice the similarity

between DZ twins. In model fitting, this component is called shared environmental variance, and it indexes environmental effects that can be detected... (p. 360).

Hughes et al. (2005) elaborated on how nature and nurture are linked to differentiate individual states of mind. They claimed, "Our first aim in the present study was to examine the relative contribution of genetic and environmental influences on individual differences in the theory of mind (ToM)" (2005, p. 1). After examination between simple correlations for MZ and DZ, as Hughes et al. named them in the study, the mind's performance for each (MZ and DZ) has been demonstrated, with the genetic part and the sphere of the environment (nature and nurture) determining the differences between MZ and DZ. "The present behavioral genetic analyses pointed to significant environmental influences (both shared and nonshared) on individual differences in ToM" (Hughes et al., 2005, p. 357).

Scholars' approach regarding the connection between both theories does not mean that one cannot be used independently of the other. It simply means that cognitive development theory is associated with ToM when assuming people's states of mind. Several scholars mentioned above have affirmed ToM as researchers' ability to assume others' mental conditions. ToM is an asset, especially for those embarking on phenomenological studies, to discover others' perceptions and a tool to point out and fight against false beliefs or false representations.

Representation can be defined as anything else different from itself, which can be a picture, a graphic, a word, a perception. ToM is a meta-representation (a representation of a relationship between representations). This ability to elaborate representations about representations is considered necessary not only to live in a "world of minds" but also to symbolic play and understanding metaphors and irony (Rejón Altable et al., 2009, pp. 219–220).

Transnational Religion in the Haitian Church Community

In this section, ToM has been paired with transnational religion theory to evaluate the Haitian American Christian community in Northeastern USA and Little Haiti in Miami, Florida.

Csardas reported the following facts about transnational migration and religion:

New way religion manifests itself through practices influenced and inspired by multiple localities... On the one hand, practice can be easily learned and maintained in a new setting; on the other hand, the promises and promises of religion that are transferable and translatable lead to the acquisition of material goods through spiritual means (Csardas, 2009, p. 5, as cited in Dronen, 2018, para. 3 & 7).

Likewise, the Haitian population continuously fought to migrate to the USA for different reasons, sometimes as refugees, mostly to find a better way of living (Betty, 2007). “Socio-economic factors that compel Haitians to migrate to the USA... include, in particular, the theory of transnational identity, in which individuals choose to define themselves in relation to multiple cultures simultaneously, which has been repeatedly applied to the Haitian American population” (Betty, 2007, p. 231). Unfortunately, many Haitians are willing to travel to the USA, often under deplorable circumstances, thereby impacting the Church community.

In such situations, the Haitian church is responsible for assisting their fellows who cannot legally work upon their arrival in the United States. However, some churches may provide such assistance with interest, in instances where those who receive the aid would pay the church back that offered the help. Consequently, Haitian church leaders compete over members due to economic profits. Cullum (2017) explained how Rey et al. (2013) detailed what it was like to be a Haitian in America, including their population, trials, tribulations, and achievements. Not only did Rey et al. effectively shed light on the importance of religion in the Haitian diaspora, but they also acknowledged the successes among them. “Haitian immigrants are more likely than any other new immigrant group in the United States to become citizens, have a high school

diploma, complete some level of college education, and escape poverty” (Rey & Stepick, 2013, as cited in Cullum, 2017, p. 192).

In addition to all stereotypes attached to this minority group, Cullum (2017) emphasized the accomplishments reported about the Haitian community. Nonetheless, Rey et al. (2013) affirmed the struggles of the population regarding legal status, specifically those forced to travel to the USA in the hope of a better life, despite being undocumented. “In 1980, thousands of Haitians fleeing abject poverty and the brutal persecution of the dynastic Duvalier dictatorship took to sea in rickety sailboats in the desperate hope of reaching ‘*Miyami*’” (Rey et al., 2013, p. 59). Many Haitians continuously struggle for financial support, mostly through the church system. The problem is that when they finally get the help they need from religious institutions, they are obligated to pay in return in one way or another, “In brief, the microeconomic theory of religion holds that the religious field functions according to the logic of economics; that is, religious institutions are engaged in competition over adherents” (Rey et al., 2013, p. 59).

Related Literature

In the following section, the researcher will present the literature relevant to the concerns of the study. Ten scholarly sources will be discussed while considering the application of servant leadership within the church system. The sources utilized are as follows: Spears (2005); Bredfeldt (2006); Samra (2006); Craun and Henson (2022); and Singfiel (2018); Stepick, et al., (2001).

The first source by Spears (2005), *The Servant Leader: From Hero to Host*, discussed the notion— “What leadership can offer to today’s world that might be useful”—with the content of an interview with Dr. Wheatley in 1995, author of the book, *Turning to One Another: Simple Conversation to Restore the Future*. Spears (2005) interviewed Dr. Wheatley (1995) about her

experiences in the field. During the interview, she elaborated on many points to demonstrate the importance of everyone within an organization. The following summarizes her points of view:

1. First, leaders need to move from hero to host. This material is about welcoming followers' ideas, welcoming their ways of thinking, so they can feel their contributions are needed.
2. A true servant leader must have faith in people. Otherwise, "the fundamental respect is missing in the world... the greatest need is to have faith in people" (Wheatley, 1995 as cited in Spears, 2005, p. 48).
3. Have a deep appreciation of the whole person... Be willing to listen. Create an organization and community where people are seen as the blessing, not the problem (p. 52).
4. In conclusion, Wheatley (2005) stated, "Servant-leadership is not just an interesting idea, but something fundamental and vital for the world, and now the world that truly needs it" (p. 54).

This source fits well, considering the study's objectives. For example, most interviewees present Christian leaders as guests who are supposed to welcome people, especially followers, with their ideas. The endeavor of welcoming others' ideas is a very important point that can assist Haitian American leaders in overcoming pride and self-satisfaction. This is a remedy against dictatorial leadership, which seems to be practical in their community.

The second source by Bredfeldt (2006), is relevant to the study as it highlights the misunderstandings people often have regarding Christian leadership. "This book seeks to address that facet of leadership, especially as it relates to leading God's people in and through the local church" (p. 9). Although the objective does not mention servant leadership, it is related to the concern of this research study, as the need for the sampling population to be aware of their tasks, such as feeding the sheep, is important. The following describes four types of churches and their main goals:

1. The power church is like a market, where a visionary leader values growth through marketing strategy with the advancement of technology.

2. The pluralistic church is very structured and organized, with the board leading a small to a large congregation. Many of these churches are in decline.
3. The program church is an anti-denominational and anti-structural assembly encounter with God in a theological pluralism context.
4. The proclamation church is where clear beliefs are displayed, and priority is given to the Word of God. This small-to-moderate assembly has theological traditions in place. Therefore, this relates to the topic as this researcher emphasizes the church's growth when God has the lead through the Christian leader.

The third source by Samra (2006), focused on community—a real problem between leaders and followers in the present study. Samra explained the need for a Christian community and how it relates to individuals' maturity. He discussed the church as a community. "When this work uses the term 'church' (or community), it is primarily referring to the local community, although it will become clear in section 6.2 that the local church is the manifestation of the eschatological assembly of all believers" (p. 4). Later, Samra established the relationship between the church, believers, and the aspect of maturation. The establishment of this type of connection meets the needs of the study's population. Samra (2006) stated, "We noted an apparent connection between the local church and the fulfillment of the maturational aspect of Paul's apostolic commission" (p. 53).

The fourth source by Craun and Henson (2022), *How Servant Leaders Navigate Conflict: An Analysis of Acts 15:36–41*, addressed possible issues among Christian leaders, taking into consideration Apostle Paul and Barnabas' argument in regard to John Mark. The authors focused on three meaningful points for a good relationship among Christian leaders. Sometimes, leaders' behavioral patterns are determined by how they feel and what benefits them, but no one seems to ask, "Does this behavior please God?" Accordingly, Craun and Henson (2022) focused on "what lessons can be learned about servant leaders' conflict through a social and cultural analysis of

Acts 15:36–41?” (p. 3). Craun and Henson (2022) discussed the following three themes related to how these servant leaders navigated conflict from a biblical perspective. The first point is as follows:

Tension created by conflict, the authors explain how tension can take place whenever there is conflict, but leaders can still function as servant leaders by empowering others like Barnabas did for John Mark and Paul for Timothy, Silas, and Titus. The conflict between Paul and Barnabas demonstrates that there is a tension that exists in disagreement; however, their responses illustrate how servant leadership behaviors will be present even amid conflict (Craun & Henson, 2022, p. 4).

Through the second point, “leader maturity and conflict,” the authors established a parallel focused on leadership development between the two leaders. Craun and Henson (2022) presented Barnabas as someone aware of John Mark’s need to be assisted, as he did for Paul, but Paul seemed to be struggling between his leadership right and the responsibility of serving followers when needed. “This is why it is important for servant leaders to serve other servant leaders to prepare them for leadership” (Craun & Henson, 2022, p. 5). If Barnabas had not empowered Mark, then he would not have been prepared to assist Paul later. The third point, “effectiveness of servant leadership amid differences,” affirms that, no matter what, servant leaders are called to be effective because that is how they must serve one another effectively. “Although there was a sharp disagreement and splitting of the group within this pericope, time and principle demonstrate that servant leaders can still be effective” (Craun & Henson, 2022, p. 6).

Source five by Singfiel (2018), purposely distinguished servant leadership based on social science from what Christian leaders believe it to be. Singfiel (2018) provided a detailed description of laissez-faire leadership, which does not display behaviors related to servant leadership. This article directly relates to this researcher’s topic due to the misunderstanding of servant leadership within the Haitian church community.

In addition, leaders are lacking in terms of knowledge regarding the concept of servant leadership. This is why the points that this material aimed to cover are very much beneficial to this researcher's study. One of the main points developed in this article is self-categorization, an issue that can impact the church community. Singfiel stated, "I will explore the self-categorization process inherent in social identity theory that may cause Christian leaders to earnestly believe that they are servant leaders without demonstrating the behaviors and attributes of servant leadership" (p. 65). Accordingly, the author discussed practical considerations that can benefit leaders and followers as perceived by followers.

Source six by Stepick et al., (2001) directly reflects the sayings of most participants of the study, who were concerned about the division among the Haitian community, especially the clergy. The authors state in a tangible way the blockage that stands against the population's success assessing the three following areas, school, youth, and church. They conclude by saying "In short, the Haitian community is not a solidarity. It is not a unified force" (p. 6). A concern that was mentioned by the researcher as related to one of the research questions, "How does the application of servant leadership intertwine with the harmony between leaders and followers?". Though the content of this article is not about servant leadership, it points out the problem opposed to the application of this theory, divergence among the Haitian population, an issue affecting the harmony between leaders, followers, and the church's well-being. "The Haitian community is divided by distrust and factions based on friction between Haitian Haitians and Americanized Haitians, social class, language, and ambivalent relations to the African American community" (Stepick et al., 2001, p. 3).

Source seven is the work of Anderson (2018) and is directly related to the topic under investigation as it pertains to establish the differences between servant leadership that has its

focus on followers, while transformational leadership focuses more on organizational goals. “Thus, the purpose of this paper is to identify the conceptual and theoretical differences between these two theories... the servant and transformational leadership theories (p. 763). Hence, to better demonstrate what servant leadership stands for, the article embraces the philosophy of theory’s father, Greenleaf (1977)’ s who “if one is a servant, either leader or follower, one is always searching, listening, expecting that a better wheel for these times is in the making”. (p. 768). This emphasis puts either on leader or follower constitutes the essence of theory, which considers the growth of both leader and follower side by side. While transformational theory with Burns (1978) did not deal with the challenge of motivating followers to perform tasks, later, with Brass (1985) who reshaped Burns’ (1978) theory, where followers disappeared, and employees took their place. Burns’s (1978) theory was about political leadership and Bass’s is about managerial leadership, which shows more the focus of servant leadership as people-oriented, strictly related to the study.

The eighth study by Balthazard, et al., (2006) has its focus on dysfunctional organization, with a purpose that aims to describe how organizational culture is manifested in behavioral norms and expectations. In that sense, it relates to the topic considering the Haitian churches as Christian organization, which are called to comply with good organizational skills for productivity. Thus, the author explains the intertwinement of culture with the organizational system, which finds its reality among the population of the study.

Considered together, there is considerable evidence that culture is directly related to organizational-level performance drivers, many of which bear directly on efficiency and effectiveness, and conversely, to dysfunctional consequences. The present study examines a number of these relationships (Balthazard, et al., 2006, p.705).

Study nine is the work of Dinh, et al., (2014). This article is not about a specific type of leadership, instead, emphasizing on the growing diversity of leadership theory that helped create

an academic agenda for leadership research in the new millennium. Nonetheless, the discussion about a multiplicity of leadership types has illuminated even more the objective of servant leadership, a theory strictly related to the study.

Our review also shows how much the leadership field has developed in recent decades. To date, we have identified a total of 66 different leadership theory domains. Although this diversity has brought forth novel perspectives that enrich our knowledge of leadership, it also presents several challenges that future research must address. Notably, future research needs to develop integrative perspectives that consider how disparate leadership theories relate or operate simultaneously to influence the emergence of leadership phenomena (p. 55).

The last source, number ten, is the work of Thompson (2017) considers the spirituality of leaders within today's society. Since the study focuses on servant leadership, which was demonstrated throughout the Scripture as tool for Christian leaders, thus, that establishes the relationship between the article and the topic. Thompson (2017) shows the importance of unity and harmony as one is leading according to the Bible, the author chooses one of the biblical to explain the power of Harmony between leader and followers, and among followers themselves. "That is what defines the role of a spiritual leader. A spiritual leader is someone who leads others to a closer walk with Christ" (Thompson (2017, p. 78). Accordingly, the author chose a story from the Bible to illustrate the importance of harmony, "The four men and the paralytic" Mark 2:4 "Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on" (New International Version, 2011, Mark 2: 4).

Gap in the Literature

A careful analysis has illustrated that all related literature does not address Haitian American Christian leadership concerns. Most articles emphasize servant leadership in one way or another, sometimes in similar or different ways, with topics related to church setting, self-

complaisance, development of the theory, or the application of servant leadership in secular and Christian organizations. Even occasional literature is close to the topic regarding Haitian leadership, focusing on political leaders. However, no scholarly research has been conducted regarding the application of servant leadership within Haitian churches in the USA—an issue that causes many problems among Haitian churches and affects the harmony between their leaders and followers. This research study attempts to eliminate this gap by examining Haitian leadership through the lens of biblical servant leadership theory.

Profile of the Current Study

This study aimed to examine Haitian American Christian leadership in the Northeastern USA through the lens of biblical servant leadership. Furthermore, this research aimed to understand Christian leadership's meaning to the Haitian American Christian leaders' community. This study aimed to assess how they perceive the application of servant leadership for better harmony between the leaders and followers of Haitian congregations. There are some particularities in the study where this researcher emphasized biblical servant leadership—something that occurred during the expansion of the theory of servant leadership with Winston and Patterson (2003), Dierendonck and Patterson (2010), and Crowther (2018). These scholars focused more on the person of the leader than the leadership principles. In this context, Patterson (2003) developed a model that is virtue-based for leadership. In support of this, Sun (2013) claimed, “Servant leaders are guided by internalized sets of high moral principles” (p. 545). Similarly, Crowther stated, “Leadership proceeds from the person of the leader” (p. 139). Thus, Crowther emphasized the transformation of a heart that occurs when one becomes an accomplished servant leader.

This researcher's approach was qualitative, leveraging the phenomenological method proposed by Creswell and Creswell (2018). Thirteen participants, who met the eligibility requirements, were selected for data collection. These participants included pastors, assistant pastors, group leaders, youth leaders, and Sunday school teachers. Several strategies were used to collect data, including on-site and virtual observation, focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews, and audio and video recordings.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This qualitative phenomenological research was concerned with the leadership styles of Haitian American Christians. This study explored and examined the Haitian population, including clergy and laity, in the Northeastern USA. The focus was on the research problem, purpose, questions, design, and methodology. In regard to the method used, the following were taken into consideration: the setting for the observations and interviews, the selected participants of the study, the researcher's role, the methods of collecting data using the instruments with careful ethical application, and the analysis of the collected data.

Research Design Synopsis

The Problem

Cho (2020) spoke about self-preservation, a theology of safety, where “Many leaders choose to be responsible for others in all... doing all by themselves, control everything in order to lead, and remain indispensable” (p. 4). In this way, many leaders keep their leadership position safe, and seemingly, this idea of leadership safety penetrates the minds of the Haitian American population, including the clergy. Thus, many Haitian Christian leaders who desperately long for success or better living conditions passionately fight for personal achievement through leadership positions. The idea of success mostly constitutes the reason behind the move of Haitian people, particularly Haitian Christian leaders, to the USA—not only for better living but also to facilitate the acquisition of power. Unfortunately, up until that point, this task remains a concern in Haitian Christian leadership—a gap that no literature has considered thus far. Therefore, this gap will be tackled in the study to highlight the leadership

issue in the Haitian churches in the USA, a serious issue affecting church members' spiritual growth.

Research Purpose Statement

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to explore Haitian American Christian leadership through the lens of servant leadership as essential to assist God's people. The central phenomenon analyzed in the study was the leadership utilized by Haitian Christian leaders. At this stage in the research, a central phenomenon has been generally defined as "A study that attempts to understand people's perceptions and perspectives relative to a particular situation. A phenomenological study tries to answer the question, 'What is it like to experience such-and-such?'" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 119).

Research Questions

RQ1. What are the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders about the implication of servant leadership within the church system for spiritual growth?

RQ2. How does the application of servant leadership intertwine with the harmony between leaders and followers?

RQ3. How does the concept of servant leadership differ from general or traditional leadership?

Research Design and Methodology

This section established the study's methodology and its justification. The phenomenological research design developed by Creswell and Creswell (2018) was considered to demonstrate the liaison between the two and how the chosen research design suited the qualitative study. The first reason behind the design choice is that the phenomenon occurs in natural settings—in the "real world" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). Creswell and Creswell (2018) confirm by saying that being able to select sites or individuals for the study is already a plus for qualitative researcher. "The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants

or sites (or documents or visual material) that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 262). Throughout this study, the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders and their congregations had the lead during the data collection process to better understand the problem, as mentioned in the research questions. This is because a “phenomenological study has its focus on individual’s perception of an experience... which means that phenomenological is to proceed without the aid of unexamined assumptions: phenomenological is to be ‘presuppositionless’ form of energy” (Cerbone, 2014, p. 12). Thus, as the research was not concerned with a hypothesis, this researcher did not examine the validity of the statistics used, even though validity is still a key factor for qualitative studies. Instead, the researcher tried to understand the manner in which the members of the Haitian clergy have perceived leadership, particularly the application of the servant leadership concept and its benefits for the church population. “The term *qualitative research* refers to a broad range of philosophies, approaches, and methods used to acquire an in-depth understanding or explanation of people’s perceptions” (Vass, et al., p.299). Hence, the phenomenological research design developed by Creswell and Creswell (2018) was adopted to satisfy these qualitative research requirements.

Some potential advantages of this qualitative study were that this writer had the opportunity to explore the phenomenon under investigation, which helped in gaining initial insights into what has previously been a phenomenon, revealing the multilayered nature of the Haitian Christian leadership, and facilitating possible theory development where “a qualitative researcher may have the chance to uncover key problems, obstacles, or enigmas that exist within the phenomenon” (Leedy & Ormrod 2018, p. 229). Indeed, the qualitative method was appropriately chosen to conduct research on Haitian Christian leadership, a tangible phenomenon

that needs to be addressed. Accordingly, the following observational protocol and interview processes were implemented to properly collect the data.

Descriptive Notes	Reflective Notes
Portrait of the participant	Personal thoughts, speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, impressions, and prejudices (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 189, as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 21)
A reconstruction of the dialogue	Pre-selected questions in relation to Haitian leadership during the observation time
A description of the physical setting	
Accounts of particular events or activities	

A qualitative observation is when the researcher takes field notes on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site. In these field notes, the researcher records, in an unstructured or semi-structured way (using some prior questions that the inquirer wants to know), activities at the research site (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 186).

Interview Process

Interviews were conducted online and in person. This investigator could observe interviewees' interactions with co-workers, church members, and group members while taking descriptive notes for the data and reflective notes for self in preparation for writing a qualitative report. This researcher used the three-interview series developed by (Seidman, 2013, as cited in Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 237) for data collection.

Although this researcher preferred to have all participants go through the same method of interview, such as an in-person conversation, some of them could not keep up with the entire three series of interviews done face-to-face due to limitations with respect to their availability. Some were done online, and others were conducted over the phone due to COVID-19. Since the spread of the virus, many people and organizations, including church institutions, have been imposing restrictions in terms of face-to-face contact, considering the ravaging and painful impact of COVID-19 on people's lives. "The pathogen was confirmed new coronavirus, which was officially named coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) ... As of February 21, 2020, a total of

76 395 confirmed cases have been reported, and 2 348 patients are reported to have died” (Tian-Tian Yao, et al., 2020, p.556).

The focus group comprised four participants with whom a series of interviews was conducted online and face-to-face. The eight other participants who were not a part of the focus group engaged in one-on-one interviews in person, through FaceTime, video call, and by phone. As suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2018), the researcher planned the following procedures: observation, audiovisual material, objects, electronic entities (emails, messages, and internet websites), and anything else that could help answer the researcher’s questions.

Data collection and recording procedures were modified as follows: three observations were made onsite or online, three-way face-to-face interview, three-way one-on-one interview done online and in person, focus group, and audio and video recordings. This researcher requested a space within the church environment where leadership usually takes place, such as the pastor’s office, not only for confidentiality but also to better observe the atmosphere as far as leadership is concerned, even though some observations were done on FaceTime.

Setting

The two churches that were selected for this research study are nicely designed and have been well-known and well-positioned in the area for at least 20 years. Both locations are in the Northeastern USA. One of them, Church 1, is well organized for observations, face-to-face interviews, and focus groups. The church is appropriately situated in a city accessible to many people belonging to the Haitian population who need spiritual support. The lead pastor willingly opened the church’s doors for activities related to the investigation process; this was the space where almost everything took place. Most study participants could be easily found at this site for observations and one-on-one interviews. After 40 years of existence (1983-2023), the church has

been well-known in the community since 1983 under the leadership of Pastor Z, who moved from one state to another to begin worship services in his living room with his wife and his four children. After a few years, the church bought and renovated a dilapidated building through sacrificial giving. Unfortunately, the tragic passing of Reverend Z in 2001 delivered an unprecedented blow to the church, and the victories of the past seemed to disappear like smoke in the sky, leading to an uncertain future as observed in the early days.

Nonetheless, the church board and district, which remained unshaken and committed, sailed through the storm with hope. Their perseverance eventually added to the church's reputation. After a year of searching, they called on Reverend X and his family to shepherd the congregation. Since 2002, this pastor and his family have faithfully led the church. The researcher of this study was pleased to meet Pastor X, who always welcomes one to return onsite as much as needed. This opportunity facilitated the process of additional data collection. As requested by the youth directors or senior pastors, these congregations sometimes comprise places that this researcher used to visit and minister, especially the youth, young adults, and women.

Participants

This researcher considered the population of Haitian Christian leaders in the USA, particularly in the Northeastern USA, regardless of the denomination to which they belong. In consideration of the researcher's research questions, which sought people's perceptions about a phenomenon, purposive sampling was adopted to generate better outcomes: "Most sampling in qualitative studies is purposive sampling—that is, it entails choosing those individuals or objects that will yield the most information about the topic under investigation" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 241).

To ensure effective participant selection and data collection, the study was limited to 12 Haitian Christian leaders with a congregation under their umbrella within the United States. In casual conversations with fellow Haitian Christian leaders, this researcher was confident that at least 12 individuals would be willing to participate in the study process—an assumption that played out as per the expectation. As remarked previously, their denomination did not matter if they were evangelical Christians who believed in the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. However, this researcher encountered some Haitian pastors and group leaders of Haitian churches who did not meet the eligibility requirement either because they had been in ministerial service for less than two years or they had been leading a congregation that did not comprise a Haitian population. In this way, in instances where the eligibility requirements were unmet, the selection of such leaders was automatically denied, as such prospective participants and any contribution of theirs was not considered.

The selected individuals comprised Haitian Christian congregation leaders that have been leading actively and uninterruptedly for at least two years within Northeastern USA. In reference to the observation and interview processes, this researcher contacted several Haitian Christian leaders with different titles who were eligible to participate in the study and showed willingness to schedule their observations and interview appointments. The initiative of scheduling interviews and observations was the researcher's focus in searching for a better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Phenomenological researchers depend almost exclusively on lengthy interviews (perhaps 1 to 2 hours in length) with a small, carefully selected sample of participants. A typical sample size is from 5 to 25 individuals, all of whom have had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 233).

Role of the Researcher

Self-examination constitutes the primary role of qualitative research. This researcher

consciously avoided mixing the data collected with the investigator's bias. As qualitative research remains unique based on the phenomenon, this researcher conducted a search to deepen her understanding of the uniqueness of how leadership functions in the Haitian church community as something specific to that community. Leedy and Ormrod (2018) suggest that researchers must be careful about their mindset when collecting and interpreting data.

Good qualitative researchers actively try to identify personal, social, political, or philosophical biases that are likely to affect their ability to collect and interpret data—this self-reflection is known as reflexivity—and take whatever steps they can to reduce such influences (p. 239).

Using the qualitative method, this researcher acted as the main instrument to draw conclusions about the phenomenon. Hence, as the human instrument, this researcher attempted to be neutral and impartial and carefully analyzed the data to fully comprehend the phenomenon. In this way, this researcher availed a clear picture of what leadership meant to the Haitian church community and comprehended the necessity of servant leadership application. Therefore, considering components of data trustworthiness, such as credibility, high data gathering quality, transferability as survey support, and dependability, this researcher described any changes in the setting and confirmability, to base her conclusions on actual data as much as possible.

Ethical Considerations

This researcher complied with the requirements of the Institutional Review Board at Liberty university. When it was time for investigation, she waited to get the approval from IRB, which to obtained in Oct. 2022. To follow up with the process the researcher watched and took the quiz for IRB approval report and documentation. Then, this researcher proceeded to establish contact with people for the selection of the sampling population making sure that an informed consent form was ready and was at their disposal. Everyone was aware of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time. Since “Most ethical issues in research fall into one of four

categories: protection from harm, voluntary and informed participation, right to privacy, and honesty with professional colleague” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 111). This researcher was concerned about the rights and safety of the sampling population, which were maintained, as stated by Liberty University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). This was because, “The people being studied must know the nature of the study and be willing participants in it, and any data collected should not be traceable back to particular individuals” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 239). The information obtained from participants was kept confidential as an imperative. To do so, this researcher assigned a pseudonym to each participant to avoid using their real names. Only the researcher knows that an electronic file was created and saved on a laptop with a secure password, which fact that the researcher’s Supervisor, Second Reader, and all future readers will be informed about. In the case of those participants who handed back their screening survey of eligibility and the signed consent form, a physical folder was created to store the documents. This folder, in turn, was saved in a locked drawer that only this researcher could access. Anything that could reveal their identity or participation in the study was hidden.

Appropriate procedures were used and implemented, following the ethical guidelines for research with humans. The researcher gave participants a formal consent form, sealed by IRB with Liberty University’s initials. In addition, the participants were aware of their rights to withdraw from the study as they pleased. Hence, using the phenomenological research design, this researcher showed respect for the participants while collecting data, and beneficence toward research subjects and fairness in the research process were applied.

Data Collection Methods and Instruments

This section briefly describes the information this researcher would need to answer the research questions, thereby shedding light on the investigated problem and how that information

was gathered. This section includes information about the data collection methods, any instruments used during the data collection, and the procedures and approvals followed during data collection, including the IRB approval process.

Therefore, the following two points were discussed to satisfy the requirement of the section: data collection methods and instruments protocols. In terms of the instrument protocols, the researcher discussed the interview process, survey questionnaires, focus groups, observations, and document analysis. Furthermore, the procedures and approvals, including the IRB approval process, were implemented.

Collection Methods

Considering the exigencies of data collection, this researcher had everything well organized during a good preparation period. Hence, the various methods used to acquire the data have been described as follows: observation, interviews, audiovisuals, and video recording. Nonetheless, before gathering the data, this researcher purposefully selected participants and sites and completed the preparation time using the four stages reported by Creswell & Creswell (2018)

(a)“the setting (i.e., where the research will take place), (b) the actors (i.e., who will be observed or interviewed), (c) the events (i.e., what the actors will be observed or interviewed doing), and (d) the process (i.e., the evolving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the setting)” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 262).

In addition, the research folder was set up, including the questionnaire page with nine questions for the interviews and a small notebook for memos (self-notes) during observation. Two more pages were created. The first page included the study’s title, its objective, and a brief description of key terms used during interview sessions. The second page was separated into two parts, with a line in the middle. One part specified the actual observations gained in the field, and

some reflective notes or interpretation memos were added to the other part. Most importantly, this researcher adopted flexibility by being careful about prejudice, bias, intuition, and any other form of her inputs that could falsify or impact the interviewees.

Instruments and Protocols

This section discusses any instruments or tools used by this researcher to collect data and how those instruments were developed and validated. A discussion was also conducted regarding the strategy used, such as the three-way interview method reported by Leedy and Ormrod (2018), and the development of these questions. The process utilized to validate the interview questions and how this researcher conducted the interview sessions were discussed. Interviews, survey/questionnaires, focus groups, observations, and document analysis were the main research instruments. Thus, detailed information about how the interviews took place, the interviewees' contributions, the location, and the date and time of the interviews was recorded. This was followed by focus groups, qualitative observation, and document analysis.

Interviews

The interview protocol was two pages long, including the topic of the study, an introduction, participants' rights, short definitions of meaningful expressions necessary for the discussion, and the content questions in the interview. The interview opened with an icebreaker question to create a good and comfortable ambiance. Devices were used for recording the interview process, including handwritten notes, audiotaping, and videotaping, as soon as the interviews began. In addition, a notepad was employed to write down important information during the interviews. The researcher started the interview process by introducing herself and going over the purpose of the study, which this interviewer had already written down in the printout provided to each participant. Subsequently, the researcher collected the signed consent

form from participants if they had not been submitted before the day of the interview, either online or in person. Normally, before the discussion of the questions, this researcher reviewed the process in its entirety, including the length (one-on-one sessions spanning 45–60 minutes or focus group sessions spanning 60–80 minutes) and the dialogue with the eight questions for discussion, and continuously reassured the participants about confidentiality.

Regarding the content of the questions, the researcher did not ask any personal questions related to participants' privacy and had low involvement with participants' personal lives. Considering data as “those pieces of information that any particular situation gives to an observer” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 84), the researcher considered the selected participants as primary sources to best shed light and provide important information related to the central phenomenon—Haitian Christian leadership. The sampling population comprised Haitian leaders who have lived experiences with the phenomenon. Thus, the discussions were focused on it, touching all facets of the phenomenon. In this way, the researcher secured a better understanding of Haitian Christian leadership. Thus, the data collected were acceptable, as certain criteria were adopted, certain limits were established, and certain standards were set up to ensure that all data were met to facilitate admission into the study. The complete interview questions can be found in Appendix F.

This qualitative researcher conducted 24 one-on-one interviews, including some face-to-face or in-person interviews, online FaceTime interviews, by phone, and three other meetings with the focus groups composed of four other participants, two video call meetings, and one meeting conducted over the phone. To safeguard better research results, seven open-ended semi-structured questions were asked to interviewees, with the conversations being voice-recorded and video-recorded. The last question, number eight, served as a mirror for Haitian Christian leaders'

self-examination, a repertoire for those participants who showed interest in applying servant leadership. It is noteworthy that a complete handout, including the questions, was given to each participant. This ensured that they could return to it, as needed, especially for the question pertaining to the six traits of a true servant leader pastor.

Surveys

To obtain accurate information regarding the study participants, demographic surveys were used to describe the sample group more correctly. In this survey, pseudonyms were assigned to each participant, and the following were recorded: their educational level, their ethnicity, the number of years for which they have been serving the church in that position, and leadership titles. A copy of the demographic is in Appendix G.

Focus Groups

Akin to one-on-one interviews, the focus group sessions underwent the same procedures with one exception, wherein the researcher requested the participants to show support and respect for each other. It did not matter how the group members answered the questions, and the researcher made it clear that respect should be given to someone's opinion regardless. The researcher provided a printout so the focus group participants could follow along. While the one-on-one discussion lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, the focus group sessions lasted for 60 to 80 minutes to collect each member's diverse point of view, which, in turn, produced a deep and rich understanding of how Haitian Christian leaders perceive leadership.

Observations

As the observational protocol, this researcher used a single page divided in the middle—one for descriptive notes and the other for reflective notes. Under the descriptive notes were the “portraits of the participants, a reconstruction of dialogue, a description of the physical setting,

accounts of particular events, or activities” (p. 189). On the other hand, the reflective notes comprised the following: “the researcher’s personal thoughts, such as ‘speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices’” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 121, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 189). Other information added “demographic information about the time, place, and date of the field setting where the observation takes place... it is necessary to mask names of people, places, and activities” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 185). To protect the participants’ confidentiality, extensive notes about the setting were omitted to avoid too specific information, for it is necessary to mask the names of people, places, and activities, as stated.

Document Analysis

This investigator had requested to collect specifically qualitative documents from each participant, such as images, emails, letters, and anything they could provide as support. However, some participants declared none, whereas others seemed reluctant to share the documents. Only one participant attached a document about President Duvalier’s dictatorial leadership, which was appropriate for the topic. This article explains the repercussions of Duvalier’s dictatorial leadership on the country, particularly on Haitian leaders 50 years after his death. The document provides a detailed explanation regarding the impact of Duvalier’s leadership on today’s leaders in the form of learned behavior. It was so negatively impactful that, up until the present times, Haitian leaders continued to display the same attitudes regarding leadership. A copy of the article has been provided in Appendix E.

Research Procedures

Upon approval by the IRB, this investigator initiated the first phone call, contacting people who were already aware of the study and who, the researcher believed, might be eligible

to participate in the study. Thus, a screening survey was emailed to the participants to verify their eligibility. Upon completion, those who met the requirements of the study were selected as participants, and an initial phone call and the informed consent form were attached to participants' emails, including the following:

1. Identification of the researcher
2. Identification of the sponsoring institution
3. Identification of the purpose of the study
4. Identification of the benefits associated with participation
5. Identification of the level and type of participant involvement
6. Notation of risks to the participant
7. Guarantee of confidentiality to the participant
8. Assurance that the participant can withdraw at any time
9. Provision of names of persons to contact if questions arise (Sarandakos, 2005, as cited in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 92).

As soon as the researcher received the signed consent form from the participants, she scheduled the three-way interviews mentioned above, based on the participants' availabilities, including one-on-one sessions conducted face-to-face, virtually, and by phone and focus groups met once in person, and twice on WhatsApp video call. As planned, this researcher was more inclined toward conducting face-to-face interviews, as observations could be done simultaneously. However, owing to some of the participants' unavailability, some interviews were conducted online through FaceTime calls, WhatsApp video calls, and by phone, as all options were offered to the participants. Nonetheless, the number of previously intended interviews took place, that is, three per participant. When reviewing the notes to see if

clarification or more explanation was needed, this researcher reached out to the participant(s) to meet the defined needs.

At the end of the discussion, this researcher asked the participants if they had any questions, anything they would like to share, or something they felt should be covered. Moreover, if needed, the researcher asked if another person could be contacted to learn more about the interview topic. Subsequently, the researcher wrapped up the discussions and thanked the participants for their time and efforts to make this study successful. In the end, the researcher reassured the participants about the confidentiality of their shared information. After completing all observations and interviews, this researcher proceeded with the analysis of the data collected.

It is critically important to validate the study. Thus, this researcher used the following strategies as evidence of integrity:

- Peer debriefing: This comprises the opinion of someone else, such as an academic advisor, about the research.
- Bracketing: This researcher bracketed her personal ideas or experiences with the data collected using memos, excluding personal thoughts from the findings.
- Triangulation: This involves justifying participants' perceptions from different sources to ensure the study's validity. Thus, this researcher used the three-interview way to ensure there is consistency in participants responses. For the most part, she repeated participants' answers and asked if stated them correctly.
- Members checking for accuracy: This researcher conducted a follow-up interview with the participants, selecting a major part of the findings, to avoid differences in their perceptions and the content of the findings. This was done through voice recordings and the repetition of participants' responses.
- Spend prolonged time in the field: The endeavor of returning to the participants in the setting would help the researcher get the certainty simultaneously. In this way, she performed member checking in a face-to-face interview, thereby safeguarding another opportunity to spend more time in the field. The more experience a researcher has with the participants in their settings, the more accurate or valid are the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 200).

Data Analysis

This data analysis section allowed the researcher to present a defined plan about how she organized and analyzed data collection with inductive reasoning. Accordingly, the researcher was “aware that data are tainted with an analytical or interpretive cast in the very process of becoming data” (Wolcott, 1994, p. 7). Hence, the two major components discussed in this category pertain to the analysis method, where information acquired about the phenomenon under investigation would be interpreted to prove the trustworthiness of the data collected.

Analysis Method

The three steps—data collection, analysis, and interpretation—are distinct from one another; they are interconnected to ensure optimum results in the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). Thus, to begin with data analysis, this researcher looked at “qualitative data analysis as a process that requires sequential steps to follow, from the specific to the general, and involving multiple levels of analysis” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 192). Hence, the ten steps proposed by Wolcott (1994) in regard to data analysis were considered to carefully analyze the data.

- Highlight findings
- Display findings
- Follow and report “systematic” fieldwork procedures
- Flesh out whatever analytical framework guided the data collection
- Identify patterned regularities in the data
- Evaluate (compare with a standard)
- Contextualize in a broader analytical framework

- Critique the research processes
- Propose a redesign for the study (pp. 29–34)

Although this researcher had planned to use qualitative computer software programs for assistance in analyzing the data, she did not have a chance to learn it comprehensively. Therefore, she adopted the winnowing strategy by Guest et al. (2012) and simultaneous procedures (the data collection and the write-up of findings). The “winnow” focuses on some information acquired from the field while disregarding other parts of the data. As the data collected from interviews and observations was large, this process helped with time management to correctly analyze the data. The second strategy, simultaneous procedures, occurred during the interview process. While interviews were being conducted, the researcher took notes and wrote memos, which, in turn, served as the narrative for the final report.

Taking the strategies mentioned above into consideration, this researcher initiated a few steps to facilitate the effectiveness of the analysis. The first step was organizing the data, where the researcher transcribed all data. This included the notes recorded on the field during observation, including personal memos and interviews. Everything collected was saved in a Microsoft Word processing file named “Data analysis doc.” Thereafter, to organize the data, this researcher inserted two tables—one for one-on-one interviews and one for focus group sessions with different categories, such as participants’ comments and researcher’s impressions and a design to label each category in Microsoft Word to better classify similar themes. This was an attempt to segregate data from the most important information to the least, beginning in terms of the meaning of the data, for:

Oftentimes the first step in the meaning-making process is to identify a list of potentially helpful ways of categorizing and coding the data... In other cases, the researcher peruses the collected data in search of general themes that seem to “pop out” as important considerations in the phenomenon under investigation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 345).

Accordingly, this researcher planned to begin with the following list of codes:

- In vivo
- Specific topics
- Characteristics and attributes
- Actions
- Processes
- Emotions
- Beliefs
- Values
- Evaluations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 345).

During discussions, especially during the focus group interviews, the researcher paid close attention to the participants' emotional reactions as they debated Haitian leadership as the *leve jwen* (learned behavior) that even impacts the Christian leaders' community. Everyone wanted to talk about how some distorted characteristics manifest among Haitian clergy and what they believe to be the source of the problem. The above list of codes was modified with a subject for each finding and different codes associated with participants' most common, consistent, and repetitive statements. Sub-categories or subcodes were found under each category or code.

This comprised the division of the data into meaningful, individually coded units. As “The data need to be systematically broken into small segments—perhaps individual phrases or sentences, or paragraphs—that will be coded separately” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 346). Therefore, after going back and forth among the strategies, descriptive coding was done after transcribing the interviews and reading through them all. Subsequently, the researcher assigned a single word or short phrase for the best responses to the topic. As evidence of the priority

assigned to participants' voices, this researcher initiated another round to reclassify the data for further connection, discovery, and deeper understanding through a coding clean-up process.

This process of refining and strengthening codes is sometimes referred to as coding clean-up and often involves deleting, merging, and renaming codes in order to reduce the number of codes and organize them. Initial coding cycles can produce a large number of codes, and such clean-up helps researchers develop and organize a manageable list of codes to apply to data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 347).

Hence, in the second round, this researcher continued with the implementation of the classification strategy, where data were categorized more largely and clearly into different groups of sentences (Chapter Four). This strategy helped one comprehend Haitian Christian leaders' perceptions and find the meanings of the data (Creswell, 2013, as cited in Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 351). Consequently, multiple meanings and experiences were uncovered.

During interviews and observations, the researcher planned to collect documents and images that could serve as evidence of shared testimonies, if any. Therefore, coding for images was supposed to be applied as well. Nonetheless, only one document from one participant in the focus group was provided. Hence, the eight steps discussed before to code the images were not executed. In conclusion, the researcher, being aware of the term "researcher-as-instrument," was very careful as she knew that the human mind could be influenced.

Trustworthiness

This qualitative researcher ensured that the data collected were subject to display credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability under the umbrella of trustworthiness, which are very much necessary for the validity of the research. Thus, the researcher carefully reviewed the following to present the data collected with proper ethics and accuracy and ensure that the findings received reasonable credit.

Credibility

According to the complication of the phenomenological concern, this researcher remained diverse when collecting data from participants of high and low positions—from senior pastors to group leaders. To examine the collected data, “the branch of philosophy that deals with nature, source, and validity of knowledge, questioning the source of knowledge is epistemology. It seeks to answer questions like, “What is true? And how we know it?” (Knight, 2006, p. 20). This researcher considered epistemology as it helps to justify people’s beliefs. In other words, the study of epistemology deals with such issues as dependability of knowledge’ (Knight, 2006, p. 20). Accordingly, this researcher questioned the foundation of the beliefs of the Haitian Christian leaders to understand why they think the way they do. However, dependability was associated with confirmability by focusing on actual data and avoiding possible mistakes at the conclusion. In addition, this researcher considered the other branch, questioning the value, “What is of value” because “Value systems are not universally agreed upon... because axiological systems are built upon conception of reality and truth” (Knight, 2006, p. 28).

Dependability

Dependability was demonstrated by clearly outlining how the research context, processes, and procedures of the study took place in such an orderly way that the reader could replicate the study (Leedy and Ormrod, 2018).

Confirmability

Qualitative studies can present similar conclusions from different researchers regardless of the strategies used. This qualitative researcher was the study’s instrument in the same way that an oscilloscope, questionnaire, or multiple-choice achievement test are instruments. Thus, to avoid being biased by her expectations and giving too much credit to her human mind or her

researcher's judgment. In this way, considering data similarities one researcher can confirm the other.

Qualitative researchers adhered to the standard of confirmability. That is, they make a concerted effort to base their conclusions on their actual data as much as possible to describe their data-collection and data-analysis processes in considerable detail—such that other researchers might draw similar conclusions from similarly collected and analyzed data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 239).

Transferability

Transferability pertains to the insightfulness of the study. This researcher was aware of the importance of creating a sense of desire within the readers while going through the lines. Therefore, the significance of the study can be discovered, which makes the research transferable. In this way, it can be used by other researchers (Leedy & Ormond, 2018).

Chapter Summary

This chapter applied the phenomenological research design to explore and comprehend Haitian Christian leadership as a phenomenon through the lens of servant leadership. Haitian leadership was the central phenomenon. This investigation required the implementation of some organizational steps to understand the meaning of this phenomenon.

Accordingly, this researcher considered the Haitian community of Christian leaders as the sample, the selected participants from whom she learned the “how” of the study. One of the settings for observation and interviews would be where Haitian Christian leadership took place. This researcher assured participants about confidentiality and their free will to leave the study if, for some reason, they could not continue. Nevertheless, this researcher protected the research participants, developing trust with them while promoting the integrity of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 88). One should point out that again, before this researcher initiated any contact, she waited for approval from the IRB of Liberty University. Subsequently, she prepared

the informed consent form to mail or attach to participants' email addresses. A copy of the form can be found at the appendix section, Appendix A.

This researcher began to collect data through observation in the setting, using face-to-face, one-on-one in person, and focus group sessions of four participants for interviews. After the data collection, the researcher proceeded to data analysis of the data coding strategies for interviews. These strategies were executed repetitively to share a clear idea and an adequate understanding of participants' perceptions. For example, at first, this writer used descriptive coding using her memos from the field after going through the transcribed data. Second, she used *in vivo* coding—a very good way for the researcher to make participants' voices heard. The third was associated with the revision process, where data were grouped into segments with similar themes for the researcher to better solve the research problem. In addition, the application for image coding, which was supposed to be a part of the findings, was omitted. Complete respect for the study with all the components of trustworthiness, such as credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability, were in place, in addition to the use of many strategies, triangulation, extended time on the field, and members' check.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Overview

This qualitative phenomenological research study aimed to discover the views of Haitian Christian leaders concerning leadership and the application of servant leadership within their community. This chapter provides a detailed description of the qualitative data collected from participants of this study in the USA, especially in the Northeastern USA, regarding Haitian Christian leaders' lived experiences of leadership and the meaning they attach to it. The following three research questions were selected to properly address the problem of Haitian Christian leadership and fully comprehend the perceptions of Haitian leaders about the phenomenon under investigation—Haitian American Christian leadership. To avail the ecclesiastic Haitian leaders' points of view about the issue, these research questions of the study were addressed.

1. What are the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders about the implication of servant leadership within the church system for spiritual growth?
2. How does the application of servant leadership intertwine with the harmony between leaders and followers?
3. How does the concept of servant leadership differ from general or traditional leadership?

Thus, this chapter will focus on the compilation protocol, the demographic and sample data, the data analysis and findings organized by research questions, and the research design evaluation.

Compilation Protocol and Measures

Participants

This researcher collected data from nine participants scheduled for one-on-one interviews. Thereafter, through one focus group of four participants. In total, 13 Haitian

American Christian leaders were selected as participants for the study. Each member of the sampling population was observed at least three times, sometimes onsite within the church environment and in the pastor's office where leadership occurs. Other observations were done virtually, in instances where this researcher observed Haitian Christian leaders interacting with followers and church board members. Each participant was interviewed three times. Altogether, 30 interviews were conducted, including 27 one-on-one interviews, and 3 interviews with the focus group sessions of 4 participants done in person and virtually. In total, 39 observations were generated.

All members of the sampling population met the eligibility criteria to participate in the study process. Upon reception of the letter of eligibility by the IRB at Liberty University on October 18, 2022, (Appendix A) the first phone call was initiated, and emails were sent out with a recruitment letter and screening survey for the eligibility attached. All participants were 18 years old or older, of Haitian background, and the target population of the churches or the groups they lead are either Haitian residents in the USA or Americans of Haitian nationality. Among the selected Haitian Christian leaders were two senior pastors, an associate pastor, a pastor's assistant, an outreach pastor, two youth directors, a youth director's assistant, two Sunday school superintendents, a Sunday school coordinator/teacher, a worship team director, and a minister of education. They have all been actively ministering and have been in the field for at least two years without interruption, which agrees with the study criteria of eligibility.

Demographic and Sample Data

Table 1

Haitian American Leader Participants' Demographics

Codes' Names	Gender & Age	Race	Educational Level	Leadership Position
Mery	Male 63	Haitian-American	BA – Theology	Senior Pastor
Zion	Male 62	Haitian-American	Dr. of Education PhD	Senior Pastor
Holdo	Male 40	Haitian-American	MDIV Discipleship	Pastor's Assistant
Mezu	Male 55	Haitian-American	BA – Theology	Outreach Pastor
Nel	Male 52	Haitian-American	MAR Master in Religion	Associate Pastor
Makis	Male 42	Haitian-American	Completed high school	Youth Leader
Peter	Male 55	Haitian-American	Master of Art in Church Ministries	Minister of Education
Beccy	Female 29	Haitian-American	BS Nursing	Youth Director's Assistant
Vonda	Female 27	Haitian-American	BS Nursing	Worship Team Leader
Hach	Male 41	Haitian-American	BA Theology	Sunday School Superintendent
Kensky	Male 48	Haitian-American	BSW Social Work	Sunday School Superintendent
Willy	Male 35	Haitian-American	MA in Technology	Sunday School Coordinator
Mano	Male 35	Haitian-American	Completed High School	Youth Leader

Data Analysis and Findings

In this section, a discussion on how data were collected and what was discovered will be described. A clear and detailed explanation of what happened during observation times, the researcher's interaction with participants during the three-interview series and focus group, and the process of securing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon will be highlighted. The three-interview strategy was profitable, as the researcher was able to position participants' lived experiences in the first interview session. In the second one, the researcher received concrete details of specific experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation. Finally, in the

third one, the participants reflected on the meaning of their lived experiences. This is to say that “the first two interviews lay a foundation for the third one” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 233).

The findings of exploration about the Haitian Christian leadership in Northeastern USA result from the iterative data-collection-and-interpretation process.

Data Categorization

This section reports on Haitian Christian leadership and the application of servant leadership as described by the participants of the study, what this researcher had discovered regarding the qualitative phenomenon under investigation. This is because, “The basic procedures in reporting the results of a qualitative study are to develop descriptions and themes from the data... to present these descriptions and themes that convey multiple perspectives from participants and detailed descriptions of the setting or individuals” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 199). This researcher utilized the winnowing strategy to separate important data evidence of the phenomenon’s essence while leaving aside some less important ones. Furthermore, a complete descriptive portrait of what participants had reported will be displayed in the lines below by leveraging a descriptive Table 2, categorizing participants’ views of leadership in a general sense, their perceptions of Haitian leadership, their understandings of Haitian Christian leadership, and their views of servant leadership. After a self-introduction of the investigator, a brief explanation of the study’s objective, and short definitions of important themes related to the study, the following questions were asked and discussed by the sampling population to get a rich and deep understanding of how they perceived “leadership” and what it means to them.

Interview Questions

1. Please introduce yourself.
2. How do you understand leadership in a general sense?

3. What are your perceptions of the Haitian leadership since the birth of the nation until these days?
4. How do you perceive Haitian Christian leadership in the USA in terms of church development?
5. How do you see the application of servant leadership in Haitian churches?
6. How do you understand the adoption of this theory in terms of harmony between leaders and followers? Please feel free to share your experience, if any.
7. According to your understanding, how does servant leadership differ from general leadership? Feel free to share your experience(s), if any.
8. Self-examination through the works of Manala (2010), GCFSL (2007), and Mark 10:42–44 (NIV).
9. Considering the works of scholars, how do you measure yourself to the following attributes/behaviors of a servant leader?

Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership Servant Leadership Characteristics

1. Other-oriented approach to leadership
2. Manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of followers' needs and individual interests
3. Outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others (Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2014).

Manala's Six Traits of a True Servant Leader

1. Those with the greatest authority have the greatest responsibility to serve
2. Servant leadership is about relationships
3. Servant leadership seeks to support, not control
4. Servant leaders point to others before themselves
5. Servant leaders don't need titles or status
6. Authority is based on one's relationship to Jesus, not a position (Manala, 2010, as cited in Ball, 2019, p. 17)

Data Collection Method I

This researcher conducted nine semi-structured open-ended interviews, with questions that were intentionally chosen to allow participants to share their experiences, thoughts, emotions, and expectations. These questions were framed to make participants feel comfortable talking about what they have experienced regarding leadership, whether good or bad. However, one additional question was not mentioned in the paper, where participants were asked to walk this researcher through their leadership journey for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. After most participants responded, this researcher repeated what the participants had just said to ensure they had been quoted correctly, and they were asked to feel free to tell this investigator if the repeated statements were correct.

Question number one allowed participants to express their way of thinking in a general sense, as they understood it. Some asked if they could just provide a definition, and this researcher answered that it would be acceptable if the definition reflects the way in which the participants think about leadership. Question number two opened the doors for participants to think about leadership within the church system, even though the question addressed Haitian leadership, not precisely Haitian Christian leadership. Most of the interviewees readily compared secular Haitian leadership with Haitian Christian leadership. Question number three evaluated leadership within the Haitian churches. This researcher could feel emotions, frustration, doubt, and perplexity. We delved deeper into this question either with the focus group or one-on-one interview. The atmosphere gradually changed as the participants expressed their lack of satisfaction concerning Haitian leadership.

Most participants related the type of leadership in the Haitian churches to what had happened centuries, decades, and years ago. Haitian leadership is a dictatorial leadership that

also finds its way into the church system. Even those born in the United States complained with statements affirming and confirming how this type of leadership damages the Haitian churches. Some of the statements are commonly consistent for theme development and are coded. They are listed in Table 2 in the first theme category as dictatorial leadership. For example, the youth director, Makis, born and raised in the United States, shared his experiences and feelings when he had a chance to read about President Duvalier, who exercised power in such a destructive way that its impact is felt until today. Makis sent an article to this researcher, explaining how the dictatorship model is still in place even though President Duvalier died over 50 years ago in 1971 (Appendix E).

Questions 4, 5, and 6 were central as the participants walked this investigator through their experiences of leadership as Haitian leaders. They shared their aspirations of seeing the application of servant leadership becoming a reality among the Haitian churches in the USA. They also showed interest in learning more about the theory.

Junction of the Guiding Theory with Interview Questions

The researcher must emphasize that this question brings to the table the saying of Piaget (1967), who spoke about nature and nurture, in instances where individuals learn behavior from their environment. The participants revealed this when they said, “Haitian Christian leaders continue with the traditional leadership that was practiced since the independence of the country” (Peter, individual interview, November 07, 2022), “Being a leader does not mean being a dictator” (Beccy, focus group interview, November 26, 2022), and “Being Haitian or Christian Haitian, it is still Haitian, that is why we’re still practicing the same dictatorial leadership... The reality of the Haitian population explains it” (Mery, focus group interview, November 26, 2022).

This entails a coordination of what this researcher noted in Chapter Two about Piaget (1967)'s statement, who explained the impact of the environment on the individual, thereby inspiring Premack and Woodruff's (1978) theory that guided the study—ToM. Herein, attention is given to the phenomenon and its surroundings. The human participant is a natural being whose environment nurtures those two components, “the perception and the environment.” Gordon and Browne (2004) refer to it as the constructivist theory, where knowledge is actively constructed on an ongoing basis. This researcher will elaborate more about this in Chapter Five.

Data Collection Method II

This researcher collected data from different sources, such as observations, interviews, and audio and video recordings, repeating to interviewees what they had said, additional information after the interview sessions, reflective notes, personal comments, and impressions to better classify similar themes. To get the best out of what participants shared, the consideration of consistent and repetitive themes that presented commonality among participants' responses was organized from the strongest to the weakest. In addition, this researcher started coding all the data, which involved taking text data or images gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labeling these categories with a theme, often based on the actual language of the participant (called an *in vivo* term) (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data were arranged based on the major, unique, and most common themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). Therefore, a narrative passage conveyed the analysis findings using two of the three categories of codes—expected codes and surprising codes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

It must be noted that the participants were encouraged to speak until they had fully expressed their thoughts for this researcher to holistically understand their lived experiences.

This investigator also listened to additional voice recordings requested after the interviews from those participants who agreed to walk this researcher through their leadership experiences in more depth. Five participants sent their voice messages through WhatsApp or regular iPhone voice messages. These participants were assured of the confidentiality of their voice messages saved in the researcher's personal phone with a password known only by this investigator and the phone used by this investigator.

Data Analysis Themes and Codes

Accordingly, going through the data carefully, this researcher analyzed the themes by circling the major themes colored in green (most important in commonality), coloring the in-between themes in yellow and putting them in parenthesis (less repetitive or unique), and underlining and coloring the themes that were not too significant in blue. Subsequently, the researcher categorized them using a few words or short phrases that constituted the codes. Thus, the themes were associated with the codes from the collected data. A column was designated for each theme, and the top of the column included the theme subject with the participants' names on the first column, and different quotes from participants were positioned under each category of themes.

Therefore, out of the 13 participants, this researcher chose five from the sampling population to form Table 2. Within the Table, theme development and coding in instances where consistency, commonality, and repetition were noticeable. This descriptive table resulted from participants' responses broken down into segments for better repartition, better analysis of collected data, and a complete understanding of what the phenomenon under investigation meant to the Christian leaders in the Haitian American community.

Table 2*Organizing Table – Themes Development and Coding*

Code Name	<u>Theme 1</u> Dictatorial Leadership	<u>Theme 2</u> Self-centered	<u>Theme 3</u> Absence of the Application of Servant Leadership	<u>Theme 4</u> Lack of Education
	<u>Expected codes</u> Haitian Christian leaders use traditional leadership	<u>Expected codes</u> Haitian Christian leaders often see themselves and their families	<u>Expected codes</u> This type of leadership is not practicable even at 50%	<u>Surprising codes</u> According to this researcher' experiences, Haitian leaders do not know what leadership entails
Peter	-Authoritarian leadership is common to Haitian people -They proudly claim, "I am the pastor"	-Haitian leaders are not willing to share power -Toutes les idees viennent du Pasteur (All ideas should come from the pastor)	-That would be a benefit for the entire community, including the	
Nel	Haitian leaders are commanders	-Haitian leaders do things according to themselves - Followers' participation is missing in Haitian leadership	Most of the time, the congregation serves the leaders	Haitian Christian leaders need to learn about it
Hodo	When they say Haitian leadership, they automatically see leadership as negative	-Absence of community -Absence of teamwork in ministry	Haitian leaders do not bring people together for the common good. There is no application of servant leadership	-A lot of the Haitian leaders are not educated. -They are focused on the calling but very limited in terms of knowledge
Mano	Haitian leaders are not good at making a decision	Haitian leaders do not minister together	Haitian leaders must humble themselves	Haitian leaders feel unprepared in terms of leadership. Assistance to those who do not have an education

Code Name	<u>Theme 1</u> Dictatorial Leadership	<u>Theme 2</u> Self-centered	<u>Theme 3</u> Absence of the Application of Servant Leadership	<u>Theme 4</u> Lack of Education
	<u>Expected codes</u> Haitian Christian leaders use traditional leadership	<u>Expected codes</u> Haitian Christian leaders often see themselves and their families	<u>Expected codes</u> This type of leadership is not practicable even at 50%	<u>Surprising codes</u> According to this researcher' experiences, Haitian leaders do not know what leadership entails
Hach	Leadership in the Haitian community is all about tradition	For the most part, Haitian Christian leaders do not see others	It would be good servant leadership, but the leaders are too dogmatic	They focus more on their calling, despite limitations in terms of knowledge

Theme One—Dictatorial Leadership Theoretically Addressed

Theme one was discussed in consideration of research question 1 “What are the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders about the implication of servant leadership within the church system for spiritual growth”. This researcher took a long time to fully comprehend the theme, “Dictatorial leadership,” and its meaning within the context of Haitian Christian leadership. This researcher heard it first from the participants who were more advanced in age, that is, those in their early 60s. They referred to dictatorial leadership to describe Haitian leadership in general. Thereafter, the young adults claimed that all they had heard about Haitian leadership was that it was a dictatorship. Remembering how Van Manen (1997) focused on the importance of the historical approach in the domain of phenomenological meaning, one was curious to know the source of the themes and asked participants to elaborate more about it, taking history into consideration.

Pastor Mery from the focus group elucidated the dictatorial leadership of President Duvalier, who led Haiti from 1957 to 1971. Nevertheless, Makis intervened to share, what he had read from an article, that Duvalier had been president from 1957 to 1964. From 1964 onward, he declared himself president for life until he died in 1971 and was succeeded by his son, Jean Claude Duvalier. Pastor Mery wanted to share President Duvalier's actions as a circle, a mindset, and a learned behavior to which every Haitian is subjected. Accordingly, he stated, "They continue with the same thing. Think about it, in a small country like Haiti, currently, 125 are running for the presidency compared to the USA with only two, Democrats and Republicans... and it is 90% the same in the Haitian church system. I do not exclude myself" (Mery, focus group interview, November 19, 2022). To prove that leadership was common to Haitians, Pastor Mery shared the lived experiences with his parents, who were more like chiefs than parents.

Similarly, in his adulthood, he was no different from his children. However, lately, he realized and admitted that he acted more as his children's boss than their father. He saw himself as someone to whom service must be rendered. He thought saying "thank you" or "please" would lower his position in his family. Hence, he concluded by saying, "Haitian leadership within the church is halfway the same because Christian or not, we are Haitian, and the reality we're living in explains it well" (Mery, focus group interview, November 26, 2022).

Historically, one can easily see the mentality of the Haitian community, which revolves around the continuity of dictatorial leadership. When they lead, they command—this is also the case within the congregations. This understanding proved very beneficial to this researcher's understanding and consciously facilitated the phenomenon's meaning. "The reason for reflecting is to discover the historical approach and suppositions that may hold promise in rendering human

experience interpretable and understandable in our present time” (Van Manen, 1997, p. 346).

This is to say that the historical context shed light on the connection between the theme

“Dictatorial Leadership” and the phenomenon under investigation, “Haitian leadership,” when

Pastor Mery stated again:

To tell you the truth, this type of leadership has been practical in the Haitian community for years, a very long time, from Haiti to America. President Duvalier had done the best he could to keep the power, killing, exile, tortures, etc. Haitian leaders are too concentrated on themselves; when they do something, they prefer to go alone. If they go with others, they impose whatever they want to do. This is dictatorial leadership! (Mery, focus group interview, November 26, 2022).

Hach claimed that contemporary leaders use traditional leadership from Haiti. “There is no strategy in place. It is very dogmatic, and that makes me understand if there is no change, this is a continuity of what existed before” (Hach, individual interview, November 16, 2022). A fourth participant, Vonda, added, “Leadership is missing in the Haitian community, and it crosses over within the church system as well. There is a lot of competition, no unity among churches, and between brothers and sisters... the church is dying” (Vonda, individual interview, November 8, 2022). Pastor Nel claimed, “Haitian leadership is a directive, commander, and subjects” (Nel, individual interview, November 16, 2022). As the themes were chosen based on commonality, consistency, and repetition of ideas and expressions among 13 participants, this researcher chose 8 out of 13 responses, which facilitated the findings. In this way, the maximum was quoted.

To answer the question about Haitian American leadership in the church system, Peter said without hesitation, “Authoritarian leadership is common to Haitian leaders in general” (Peter, individual interview, November 5, 2022). Kensky declared, “Haitian leadership is an old model. They refuse to learn new styles of leadership. They rather continue with the same thing from centuries ago” (Kensky, individual leadership, November 17, 2022). Beccy confirmed,

“Being a leader does not mean being a dictator” (Beccy, individual interview, November 19, 2022).

The theme, “dictatorial leadership,” was the first among the selected themes as a part of the Haitian lived experiences and all that it means to them. This type of leadership was established in the old times of the country, which, in the contemporary age, crossed over from generation to generation, eventually entering the church system. This researcher chose ToM as an ideal for guiding the study. It allowed this investigator to uniquely interpret the mental state of the Haitian Christian population, assuming they perceive leadership as a self-achievement position. This decision was right, owing to the following reason:

Having a theory of mind allows us to understand that others have unique beliefs and desires that are different from our own, enabling us to engage in daily social interaction as we interpret the mental states and infer the behaviors of those around us (Premack & Woodruff, 1978, p. 534).

Therefore, Haitian American Christian leaders seem to consider leadership as an honorific position that is supposed to be enjoyed by the leader. This is a mindset and a learned behavior that Haitian leaders get through nurture. This finding was confirmed by the study participants through the following expressions, “This is a tradition, it crosses over, there is no change, they continue with the same thing, that’s not their fault it is the environment” (Vonda, individual interview, November 8, 2022). These expressions explained the continuity of what happened before, which is why this researcher noted the following sentences and quotations by considering the impact of environmental nurture on an individual’s behavior in the literature review.

In the context of the cognitive developmental theory, the aspects of nature and nurture were considered side by side along with ToM to better comprehend the root, the origin, and the environment of Haitian leadership. According to Piaget (1967), cognitive developmental theory

is a theory of the environment. Therefore, while individuals can be molded by “nature,” a shared environment causes individuals to be influenced by the nurturing example of other humans, even overwhelming “nature.” As Hughes (2005) argues:

A genetic contribution to ToM is indicated when the similarity in ToM task scores is greater for MZ twins than for DZ twins... Conversely, an environmental contribution to ToM is indicated if the similarity between MZ twins is less than twice the similarity between DZ twins. In model fitting, this component is called shared environmental variance, and it indexes environmental effects that can be detected... (p. 360).

Theme Two—Self-centeredness

(Question 2). How does the application of servant leadership intertwine with the harmony between leaders and followers?

This researcher discussed self-centeredness before elaborating on the concept of servant leadership, as they are opposing attitudes. In this way, the differences between these two entities were more evident, and one could better see how self-centeredness was not aligned with the idea of servant leadership. As data analysis was initiated, both findings were found to be relevant to the research’s objective, discovering the Haitian Christian leadership, as many of the sampling population addressed the issue of self-centeredness in consideration of servant leadership.

Theologically, Lui’s (2019) statement presents the key concept of servant leadership as putting the need of others first, which is a biblical strategy, as he discussed, to assist leaders and pastors in overcoming the struggle of self-centeredness—a toxic attitude warring against productive leadership.

The study participants perceived self-centeredness as an ethic of the Haitian population, including Haitian Christian leaders. Although the word “self-centeredness” was not specifically mentioned, the participants’ parallel expressions after analysis were transcribed as such. The participants appeared to be very unhappy that Haitian Christian leaders were displaying selfish

behavior, a stigma that they attached to one another. “Haitian Leadership is despotic; they only see themselves” (Peter, individual interview, November 6, 2022). “With Haitian leaders, teamwork is an issue. That is egoism” (Peter, individual interview, November 6, 2022). “Haitian leaders do not listen to other’s points of view” (Becca, individual interview, November 26, 2023). “I do not want to think about the basic in terms of unity. Everyone looks for their own interest” (Nel, individual interview, November 23, 2022).

Theme Three—Theory of Servant Leadership

Theme three was discussed in regard to the research question 3, “How does the concept of servant leadership differ from general or traditional leadership?” While all participants mentioned something beneficial in terms of applying the servant leadership theory in the church system, thereby answering research question three. It was interesting to observe interviewees express their wishes to see the application of servant leadership within the Haitian church system. They stated the following about the concept’s implication, “I think if every head pastor was trying to be a servant leader, we would have a better church, and the church would have a better impact on the world; we miss that piece! Anyway, there would be less leaders” (Perter, individual interview, November 5, 2022). “The application of servant leadership would give to members a sense of belonging to the church when they feel valuable” (Vonda, individual interview, November 8, 2022). “Servant leadership is all about leading with love, which brings harmony between leaders and followers” (Vonda, individual interview, November 8, 2022). “Servant leaders always receive order from God, so they make good decisions” (Mano, individual interview, November 8, 2022). “Servant leaders put people above themselves” (Hodo, individual interview, November 7, 2022). “It would be heaven on earth in our churches” (Nel, individual interview, November 23, 2022).

Finally, Pastor Mezu claimed, “It is not easy to practice this type of servant leadership because it seems Haitian followers would prefer an authoritarian leadership” (Mezu, focus group interview, November 19, 2022). This part of the statement, “It seems Haitian followers would prefer an authoritarian leadership” (Mezu, focus group interview, November 19, 2022), echoed controversiality when considering the way in which those participants complained about Haitian authoritarian leadership and their desire for the application of servant leadership instead. Thus, this statement proved again that Haitian leaders are victims of their environmental traditions that have grips on them, and no one can do anything different than the Power of the Word, which can change humankind, including the mind. “For the Word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints, and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart” (NIV, Hebrews 4:12). This researcher examined the Haitian American Christian leadership through the lens of servant leadership as a solution to cure the avidity of those leaders’ false beliefs, thinking of leadership as a position of command.

Theme Four—Servant Leadership in the Haitian Leaders’ Community

The discussion for theme four focused on the research question two ““How does the application of servant leadership intertwine with the harmony between leaders and followers?” This researcher was focused on perceptions and meaning for the journey of this study. Hence, it was important to wonder whether the Haitian Christian leaders have false beliefs regarding leadership, which, in turn, creates tension between the two entities—leaders and followers. It was this researcher’s task to understand the perceptions of the sampling population. This is because “Phenomenological study is a study that attempts to understand people’s perceptions and perspectives relative to a particular situation” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 233).

The second research question also probes this research area. Indeed, the participants' responses called for applying servant leadership to create a solid connection between leaders and followers. "The concept can surely bring harmony," said Beccy when this researcher replied, "Could you please elaborate more on how harmony will take place?" She elaborated, "Servant leadership is about other's interest first, right? So, when people see a leader working for their interests, they want to trust you, and since there is trust, there's harmony" (Beccy, individual interview, November 12, 2022). "Followers become closer to leaders and feel comfortable investing time and money in everything" (Beccy, focus group interview, November 19, 2022). "Of course, the means to the end leads followers to discover their potential automatically" (Zion, individual interview, November 15, 2022), "Servant leadership is about love. When people feel love, they feel valuable, and that creates harmony" (Makis, focus group interview, November 19, 2022).

Therefore, the participants' responses reinforced the idea that "The servant leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible" (Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2014, as cited in Činčala & Chase, 2018, p. 2). Therefore, the implications of the servant leadership concept can defeat the negative impact of nurture, which is only possible through the acceptance of becoming a servant leader. As the population of Haitian American Christian leaders is supposed to have its foundation within the Scripture, the power of the Scripture can clean them from the inside, removing all distorted thoughts about leadership from the preparation stage until leadership has been fully developed. This is possible by leveraging the biblical aspect of servant leadership.

The biblical model for servant leadership is a very detailed model; however, it can clearly be shown in stages. The preparation stage or the pre-leadership stage involves developing the internal issues of character, forgiveness, and integrity along with the other internal issues that relate to this deep soul development through an understanding of suffering and

developing a proper worldview. Then the foundation is further developed by love, matured by character that fits within the parameters of biblical love (Crowther, 2018, p. 137).

The theory of servant leadership is the lens through which one has examined the phenomenon under investigation. It establishes the difference between Haitian dictatorial leadership and servant leadership. “The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served” (Greenleaf, 1970, as cited in Spears, 2019, p. 2). The idea of serving seems to be out of the reality of the Haitian laity. Therefore, highlighting the difference between the two and applying this concept of servant leadership can be a remedy to assist Haitian American Christian leaders overcome the dictatorial idea of commanding followers instead of serving them. The sampling population of the study was aware of the differences between the two leadership types, which is why all the participants expressed their desire to have the concept applied within the Haitian congregations while acknowledging the gravity of authoritarian or dictatorial leadership for church development. Hence, they addressed it in the following statements, “Servant leadership is about putting yourself in someone else’s shoes, General leadership is authoritarian imposing on others whatever comes to mind” (Willy, individual interview, November 17, 2022). “Servant leadership is Jesus’ leadership. Washing disciples’ feet was a great example, but for the general leadership, they are working for a mega church to their own profit” (Peter, individual interview, November 7, 2022). “There is a huge difference between the two. “With servant leadership, leaders are servants; with general leadership, followers are servants” (Beccy, focus group interview, November 19, 2022). “General leadership is very dogmatic and does not see about others, while servant leadership cares about others” (Hach, individual interview, November 9, 2022). Thus, it was proven that the concept of servant leadership was necessary as it satisfies the need for the

phenomenon of Haitian American Christian leadership, answers research questions, and provides strategies to rebuild the Haitian American Christian leaders' community for productive leadership, as anticipated in Chapter Two.

Greenleaf said, "All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his or her own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group" (Greenleaf, 1977, as cited in Spears, 2019, p. 4).

Theme Four—Lack of Knowledge Theoretically Addressed

Although this category of findings was not directly mentioned in the study, it is strictly related with the research question one "What are the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders about the implication of servant leadership within the church system for spiritual growth? This researcher was concerned about assuming that the sampling population might not be knowledgeable of the study's key concept of "servant leadership." Accordingly, short definitions of some expressions related to the study, including the definitions of general and servant leadership, were provided. The researcher developed a list of eight interview questions. Question number nine was a challenge to self-examination—something participants could go through, as needed, to facilitate their leadership journey. The content of question number nine served as a standard to evaluate some biblical individuals selected as servant leaders in the Old and the New Testaments. This could also be considered as a mirror for Haitian American Christian leaders to measure themselves as servant leaders. Thus, question number nine was more self-evaluation than a question to tabulate. Number nine in the questionnaire applied this researcher's concern, being aware that the participants might be lacking in education when it comes to servant leadership. The content of question nine will be outlined below, followed by participants' reactions to it (appendix F).

Question Nine: As a self-examination, consider the works of the following scholars, Manala (2010) and Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (2014), added to this passage from the Scripture, Mark 10:42–44. A combination to assist participants in measuring themselves in regard to the application of the theory. How do you measure yourself as a servant leader to these characteristics of servant leadership concept? Here are some prompts:

1. Three characteristics of servant leaders by the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (2014)
 - a. Other-oriented approach to leadership
 - b. Manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of followers' needs and individual interests.
 - c. Outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others (Robert K Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership in 2014)
2. Six traits of a true servant leader pastor by Manala (2010).
 - a. Those with the greatest authority have the greatest responsibility to serve.
 - b. Servant leadership is about relationships.
 - c. Servant leadership seeks to support, not control.
 - d. Servant leaders point to others before themselves.
 - e. Servant leaders do not need titles or status.
 - f. Authority is based on one's relationship to Jesus, not a position (Ball, 2019, p. 17, as cited in Manala, 2010).
3. In Mark 10:43–44, Jesus says, "Jesus called them together and said, you know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (NIV).

Before reviewing participants' reactions to interview question nine, the researcher would like to share what was recorded about the last category, finding four, "Lack of education." As previously stated, a provision was made to inform the participants about the application of servant leadership. When it was time to answer questions four and five, most of the participants

displayed signs of people who had not heard about the existence of servant leadership before. They just relied on the word “servant,” thinking servant leaders are there to serve; however, they were not aware of the idea of serving first and placing the followers’ interests before the leader’s interests.

Therefore, when asking questions about the concept, this researcher reminded them about servant leadership, mostly during the first and second rounds of interviews. This approach was followed, for example, for the following questions “4) How do you see the application of servant leadership in the Haitian churches?” and “5) How do you understand the adoption of this theory in terms of harmony between leaders and followers?” Herein, the researcher added, “Please feel free to share your experience, if any.” The lack of understanding of the theory evidenced some answers. To answer question four, Beccy replied, “I think Haitian pastors have good hearts, but because of their ways of acting, I do believe there is servant leadership mixed with dictatorial leadership” (Beccy, focus group interview, November 26, 2022). There truly cannot be a *mélange* between these two, as they intrinsically oppose each other. The answer proved the extent to which they are unfamiliar with the theory, adding to the problem of education in a general sense that they pointed out about themselves. They continued, “Haitian leaders are unprepared to lead; they need a different approach” (Mano, individual interview, November 8, 2022). “After independence, 1804, there was no system of education whatsoever” (Zion, individual interview, November 14, 2022). “H. L. focus on the calling, but they are very limited about the knowledge” (Hodo, individual interview, November 8, 2022). “I realize Haitian leaders do not know what leadership is” (Hach, individual interview, November 11, 2023). “It’s chaos. It could be better; we are stuck in what we knew before” (Kensky, individual interview, November 11, 2022). “I think Haitian Christian leaders need to learn more about leadership through

seminars or workshops” (Nel, individual interview, November 16, 2022), and “I would say they are doing their best, but some of them are not educated... no college degree for the most part” (Hodo, individual interview, November 7, 2022).

It was demonstrated how the Haitian American Christians perceived leadership through all conversations with participants, as reported in Table 2. Not only did Table 2 reflect their points of view, but it also showed the necessity of applying servant leadership. Therefore, in alignment with the research questions, this researcher will more profoundly depict the participants’ statements concerning the Haitian Christian leaders’ perceptions in the Northeastern USA. In addition, an exploration of the meaning they attributed to leadership through the lens of servant leadership shall be examined.

Research Questions 1–3

1. What are the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders about the implication of servant leadership within the church system for spiritual growth?
2. How does the application of servant leadership intertwine with the harmony between leaders and followers?
3. How does the concept of servant leadership differ from general or traditional leadership?

These research questions served as a guide and sought to answer the Haitian Christian leaders’ points of view when applying servant leadership concepts within the Haitian churches for spiritual growth. The researcher did not ask about the education issue ahead of time; however, it had been anticipated that the lack of knowledge about the theory of servant leadership would become apparent. Therefore, the researcher prepared a resource describing the various aspects of servant leadership to guide the discussion. She provided a list of nine attributes of a servant leader, three points redefining the theory from the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership and six traits of a true servant leader pastor. Furthermore, she added the Lord

Jesus' statement, "Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (NIV, Mark 10:44).

To facilitate better data analysis, this researcher considered data collected from all participants, one-on-one three-way interviews, and focus group sessions composed of four people, each with the following participants' code names: Pastor Hach, Mano, Vonda, Dr. Zion, Hodo, Peter, Hodo, Mano, Pastor Mery, Makis, Beccy, Willy, and Kensky. After the reception of the screening survey for eligibility, informed consent forms (Appendix D) were emailed and collected before or during the first interview. This researcher had to select them from those who could not scan and email them back or wait for the first in-person interview. It was clearly said, more than once, that no one was obligated to participate. Participation was voluntary, and the participants could withdraw at any time. Fortunately, the participants willingly agreed to participate in the research study.

Interviews

Hach

Pastor Hach was very diligent in participating in the study. Although he has his office hours in the evening from 4:00 to 8:30 pm, as the senior pastor occupies the office during the daytime and after 3:00 pm, he asked the researcher to come and observe onsite and then proceeded to his first in-person interview. Pastor Hach has been the church's Sunday School Superintendent for about four consecutive years. During the 15 minutes of observation, this researcher remained quiet and tried to distinguish between the actual observations, which constituted the data gained on the field and her interpretations memos, striving to be more objective and avoiding subjective impression (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 263).

Pastor Hach interacted with the church members mostly over the phone to ask questions about the Sunday morning program that he had to check before printing, reached out to members

absent from services for some time, and called those who visited the last worship service to welcome them. With almost all the accessories, such as a printer machine, copier, fax machine, desk computer, and almost everything needed within an office area, Pastor Hach seemed to perform his job joyfully.

Pastor Hach participated in a three-interview series, one-on-one, on the following dates in November 2022: Wednesday the 9th, 7:20–7:45 pm; Friday the 11th, 5:30–6:15; and Wednesday the 16th, 7:10–7:55. The first research question was as follows: “What are the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders about the implication of servant leadership within the church system for spiritual growth?” In a general sense, Pastor Hach sees leadership as a position that someone occupies within an organization to give directions, a supreme authority where everyone has eyes on the leader. According to his experience, he thinks there is a lack of leadership within the Haitian community because the leaders do not know enough about effective leadership. In his perception, Haitian leaders use traditional leadership based on dogmatism, which is a self-perpetuating dynamic. Pastor Hach thinks the same thing happening with Haitian leaders in the world happens with Haitian Christian leaders within the church, as they do not think outside the box, so the church fails to grow. He stated:

Though Haitian Christian leaders are supposed to see followers before themselves, they firstly see themselves and their family. Many come here in the USA for the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and leave the sheep in Haiti. So, I do not think the application of servant leadership is there even at 50% (Hach, individual interview, November 9, 2022).

Vonda

Vonda is a young adult who has been a worship team leader for six years. She displayed enjoyment as she led the team. This researcher was privileged to observe her interactions with the senior pastor and other team members. She showed commitment to her job and shared her desire to grow in her work. Nonetheless, she mentioned facing some challenges, owing to the

lack of support and togetherness. She felt badly that people barely acknowledge her work and encourage her. She stated:

When people ask me about ministry, I always say, be prepared for criticism. I am trying to overlook the challenges to please God; that is what matters to me. I want to be an example, but sometimes I ask myself, is it necessary to go through that? But I like what I am doing knowing that one God will say well done to me” (Vonda, individual interview, November 08, 2022)

Mano

Mano is a young adult married man who has been working as a youth director for four years. This researcher observed him virtually and onsite interacting enthusiastically with his assistant and doing Bible studies for the church youth. He shared his partnership with the assistant, where they take turns educating the youth. At the same time, Pastor Mano displayed some frustration when it came to his satisfaction concerning leadership, even though he remarked that it is good to work as a youth leader as one gets to see their students’ development. Mano acknowledges this is very difficult and overwhelming, even though you get assistance from the team. Emotionally, he thinks he does not get the help needed as a youth leader, as he feels that the leaders do not adequately assist the followers. He thinks it would be great to apply servant leadership to help leaders make good decisions and understand their followers’ struggles better. He affirmed:

If Haitian leaders understand what the church population is going through... members are complaining how pastors do not reach out (Mano, individual interview, November 09, 2022).

When this researcher asked him to elaborate more on what he meant by “if pastors understand and know the church population,” he said, “They are working full time in other job, don’t really have time for followers.”

Zion

Pastor Zion, 62 years old, has been a senior pastor in his church for more than 15 years. He is married and has a family of four. He has a Ph.D. in education. Pastor Zion travels and works with some African institutions and universities. He believes that Haitian leadership was messed up in the beginning due to slavery, so they cannot function properly when it comes to leadership, even though they eventually achieved their independence. His perception of leadership is “to do and to be.” He claimed that Haitian leadership is damaged because no education system has been implemented. He appeared very reluctant to say anything about the type of leadership that was going on in the Haitian churches.

Nevertheless, he felt he could identify some Haitian churches where the pastors can be considered servant leaders. Unfortunately, he did not identify these pastors and churches. In addition, it was surprising to hear Pastor Zion state, “I don’t believe in perception; I believe in facts.” To avail some concrete insights, this researcher reassured him, “Okay, just tell me what you think according to the facts you know.” He displayed some frustration when talking about Haitian Christian leadership and finally affirmed, “Servant leadership is about empowering people, but that is not what is happening. They are manipulators, not only Haitian but all of them, Haitian or not” (Zion, individual interview, November 16, 2022).

Peter

Peter was very anxious to share his leadership experiences as a pastor and the one in charge of his church’s education department. He acknowledged the cultural differences that Haitian pastors have been working on and affirmed that the leaders are more preoccupied with having mega-churches than focusing on members’ spiritual formation. “They have followers when they see their own profit, but there is no vision related to God’s purpose.” According to him, the Haitian Christian leadership is a failing one. Therefore, he concluded that the

application of servant leadership is not in place, as church leaders imitate the Haitian leadership more than Jesus Christ. He stated:

Authoritarian leadership is common to Haitian leader with the concept of servant leadership, we would have a better church, a better impact on the world... *L'Haitien en general est un etre autoritaire* ("The Haitian in general is an authoritative being") (Peter, individual interview, November 6, 2022).

Nel

Pastor Nel has a master's degree in religion (MAR) from Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and has worked as an associate pastor for the last six years. His idea about leadership is that a leader is a servant; church leaders in the Haitian community do things according to what they think, which is incorrect. When this researcher enquired about his view concerning Haitian leadership, he declared, "Things don't really change." This researcher asked again, "What do you mean by things don't really change? Elaborate a little bit more." He replied, "You know, Haitian leaders have been dictators for years and continue to be. Unity is non-existent, and it is almost the same thing in the church system. That is why it would be good to have the application of servant leadership as something that can fix the Haitian leadership problem within the churches." Accordingly, he claimed:

Servant leadership would be like training for heaven, where love and compassion will be visible without leaders thinking about their own interests. For, as Jesus taught the harmony should come from the leader who guide followers. Thus, we will have a real church (Nel, individual interview, November 21, 2022).

Focus Group

The focus group had four participants, Pastor Mery, Pastor Mezu, Youth Director Makis, and the Youth Director's assistant, Sister Beccy. This researcher met the focus group participants twice virtually on Wednesday, the 2nd of November, from 7:30 to 8:38 pm, and Saturday, the 19th, from 7:30 to 8:40 pm. A third session was conducted on a telephone conference call on Saturday the 26th, from 7:30 to 8:25 pm. This researcher observed them online in a leadership

environment where interactions between leaders and followers, lead pastors, and group leaders took place. Pastor Mery, the senior pastor, displayed a high degree of humility. No one was afraid to critique behaviors within the Haitian churches, in general, and to their church, if needed. Pastor Mery was the first to say, “Haitian leadership is very dictatorial.” He continued, “I must confess, I am not an exception.” Hailing from the same congregation, his honesty facilitated freedom of speech in the environment. He cited many examples of the actions he had seen other leaders take, including himself. He also shared how much he opposed the endeavor of taking advice from his children, even though they were teenagers and young adults.

If I asked them to do something, I would not say please or thank you because I thought they are my kids they owe me that. I guess it is the fact that my mom and my dad raised me that way. I never expected any thank you from them. They are the chiefs, that’s set. Sometimes my children said daddy you could at least say please and thank you... It took me time to realize it is okay, even necessary, to say please and thank to my kids. Haitian leaders like to impose their points of view on others. That’s dictatorial leadership. 90% of the Haitian are like that. Christian or not, that is the reality of Haitian (Mery, focus group interview, November 26, 2022).

Subsequently, Pastor Mezu came up with an analogy of the teacher and their classroom, explaining how the teacher’s interests should be focused on the successes of their students. He stressed that servant leaders must also see things in this way. Occasionally, he tried to prove how much he knew about leadership. He said that there are different types of leadership. Eventually, the following question was raised: “Why are we discussing Haitian leadership?” As this researcher answered the question, another participant stated, “It is not a matter of the type of leadership, but what do you think of Haitian leadership?” At this stage, the conversation became complicated, and this researcher intervened, saying, “Pastor Mezu, I am not saying that Haitian leadership is a type of leadership; however, I am in search of your perception in regard to Haitian leadership. How do you comprehend leadership when it comes to the Haitian community?” Finally, he said, “Now I got it. There is a little bit of servant leadership, even though we don’t

always listen to people's points of view. You know, it takes time to put our opinions aside. The best is to pray" (Mezu, focus group interview, November 26, 2022).

Beccy

Beccy, 29 years old, with a bachelor's degree in nursing and currently working on her master's in nursing, was very outspoken in all the meetings. She has been serving as the youth assistant director for six years. She explained her joy in assisting the youth director and being the worship leader simultaneously while sharing her struggles with the church elders, who often try to impose their ideas on the young ones. Born and raised in the United States, she believes her culture differs from that of her Haitian parents. She shared how much she had to fight to ensure that the youth could have their Sunday School lesson books. One of the pastors mandated that the whole church must study the same lessons, but she wanted to come up with something new that matched the teenagers' interests.

It is so difficult to integrate new things into the church. Elders wanted to do things a certain way and tend to look at you as kids. When the older put their culture over the youth, that created disconnection among church members, and that's why often the youth leave the Haitian church. Therefore, I think it would be good to have in place the application of servant leadership, so we will have people who are serving while they are leading (Beccy, focus group interview, November 26, 2022).

Makis

Makis was born and raised in the USA. He has been the church's youth director for the past seven years. He is married and enjoys time with his family while working with youth. This researcher had the privilege to meet him and the entire youth group upon receiving the invitation to open the youth's revival meetings by preaching the opening sermon. His diligence and sense of motivation with young people were obvious. Makis explained, "All I hear about Haitian leadership is that it's a lot dictating stuff." Pastor Mery stopped him to say, "For the most part, that's not their fault, but the environment" (Mery, focus group interview, November 19, 2022).

This researcher asked, “Makis, can you please give us more information about what you heard and how do you perceive the Haitian leadership?” He replied, “Somehow, I see it. I say it, that is all? I will email you an article titled, ‘François Duvalier Died 50 Years Ago, and His Dictatorship Still Lingers over Haiti.’”

Hodo

Hodo holds a master’s degree in Discipleship Ministries (MDiv). He is married and a father of two. He and his family belong to the same church where he has been an assistant pastor for three years and had been a youth leader for fourteen years. According to him, leadership is about coaching, that is, taking people from Point A to Point B. He says everywhere Haitians go, they push people away. When this researcher asked if the actions associated with the outcome of pushing them away has something to do with the Haitian leadership. He replied, “No, it is like when they say Haitian leadership, automatically it is bad leadership.” Hodo made somewhat contradictory statements. For instance, he declared that he had worked with a great lead pastor but later complained that Haitian Christian leaders do not bring people together for the common good, so it does not appear that the application of servant leadership is in place in his church.

Haitian leaders do the best they can, but a lot of them are not educated, have no college degree. However, I feel the church leaders do not cooperate; they are not united either among themselves or with other pastors. It’s all about competition. There is no teamwork, which is a spiritual handicap, leadership in the Haitian community is a concern (Hodo, individual interview, November 8, 2022).

Willy

Willy is a graduate student with a master’s degree in technology who has worked for six years as a Sunday School coordinator and teacher. He was interviewed on Saturday afternoon, October 22, 2022, from 5:15 to 5:35 pm in a meeting with the Sunday School teachers in the presence of the superintendent, Brother Kensky, who introduced this interviewer to the group of teachers. This researcher remained quiet and watched Brother Willy interact with the Sunday

School instructors, debating on a lesson they had been preparing and listening to others' ideas. In his interview, he spoke about the Haitian leadership as a crisis, a system that does not offer growth. As a result, the youth leave the church when they turn eighteen. Thus, he affirmed:

I do not see servant leadership in the Haitian churches because leaders and followers are supposed to work together to achieve a goal. All the churches look the same; they don't grow because the system is based on leaders' ways. In the Haitian church, we're missing that piece of servant leadership (Willy, individual interview, November 8, 2022).

Kensky

Kensky has a master's degree in social work. He recently married a woman from his church. He has been working as a Sunday School Superintendent for about ten years, having previously held the role of a teacher for five years. He knew leadership was about influence, but he felt there was no other way to improve Haitian Christian leadership, as it is molded by secular Haitian leadership. Church leaders adopt the same leadership as the secular world. Therefore, there is no possible development for the church. He claimed:

It is unfortunate that Haitian leaders cannot influence, while it is mostly chaos, lack of administration, and lack of discipline. It could be better, but we're stuck with what we knew before. It would be a positive thing to have the application of servant leadership. We would have less leaders, more servants, and the action of serving would make a big difference (Kensky, individual interview, November 11, 2022)

Evaluation of the Research Design

Although the choice of the research design was well established, this section shall discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the data collection methods. The methodological strength of the study is mostly focused on the three-interview series, the three-way strategy, which has set the tone for data collection. The first part of the interview is an open door—a warm welcome that invites participants to feel comfortable when sharing details about their life histories. The strength of this first part is that, for about an hour, the researcher had the opportunity to listen to participants' lived experiences in detail for deeper comprehension and place it in the context of

the central topic “Haitian Christian leadership.” The second interview required the participants to provide information related to families, schools, and communities (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018). The strength of the second part was revealing, particularly during the time that participants had to point out tangible details pertaining to their families or communities. This specific moment was crucial in getting a rich understanding of the phenomenon. Finally, the third part of the interview resulted from the two first interviews, which paved the way for participants to understand the meaning of these experiences—an important aspect that the researcher must understand. Hence, phenomenological design strategies could draw out Haitian American Christian leaders’ perceptions of leadership in such a tangible way that the meaning became clear and palpable. This is because, ‘The process of phenomenological research is to create a text of the lived experience by process of insightful invention; it is an act of “seeing” meaning’ (Van Manen, 1997, p. 13).

Nonetheless, the weak side of this strategy was associated with the consecutive repetition of the following questions: “Can you elaborate more? Can you talk more about what happened exactly?” along with the following question, “How do you see Haitian leadership since the birth of this nation these days?” While answering such a question, the participants had to elaborate on everything they had experienced in regard to the Haitian leadership, things that are either connected with a workplace, family life, or another area. A few participants in their late 50s or 60s had a lot to say in terms of how this phenomenon has impacted them, and the researcher was compelled to request additional clarification to avail a better comprehension of the problem. Therefore, the researcher, as a major instrument in this study, realized the roots of the problem as participants’ contributions were enormously beneficial.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

Chapter Five discusses what this investigator discovered from this qualitative phenomenological research study. This chapter first provides a reminder of the purpose statement and research questions. Thereafter, the research conclusion (interpretation) is presented, including implications and applications of the themes in literature and theory intertwined with research questions, limitations, and delimitations. Finally, the conclusion of the chapter provides recommendations for further research along with a summary.

Research Purpose Statement

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to explore Haitian American Christian leadership through the lens of servant leadership as essential to assist God's people. Haitian Christian leadership was the central phenomenon of the study—a figure of authority at local churches. At this stage in the research, a central phenomenon has been generally defined as “A study that attempts to understand people's perceptions and perspectives relative to a particular situation.” In other words, a phenomenological study tries to answer the question, “What is it like to experience such-and-such?” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 119).

Research Questions

RQ1. What are the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders about the implication of servant leadership within the church system for spiritual growth?

RQ2. How does the application of servant leadership intertwine with the harmony between leaders and followers?

RQ3. How does the concept of servant leadership differ from general or traditional leadership?

Research Conclusions, Implications, and Applications

The discussion of this section focused on the major themes discovered during the investigation, such as dictatorial leadership, self-centeredness, absence of servant leadership, and lack of education within the Haitian laity. These themes were developed based on the participants' lived experiences, particularly their meanings to that specific population. As a result of the investigation discovery, the Haitian community will benefit from participants' lived experiences in the future. In this way, improved application of leadership will be facilitated for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in the Haitian church system. Hence, this researcher would interpret the discovered themes intertwined with the research questions.

This researcher would share her experience of interpreting the data collected onsite and during conversations with participants. As data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation are intertwined with each other, this investigator would briefly go over data collection and data analysis, as they have already been discussed in the previous chapter and mostly pertain to the process of interpreting the data collected in its entirety through observations, focus group interviews, one-on-one interviews, audio and video recordings, and documents collected and checked.

This researcher gained a great amount of information in an unexpected way. Thus, after conducting data analysis, this researcher identified five major themes that comprise the cornerstone of the investigation in terms of results. The themes are as follows: dictatorial leadership, self-centeredness, knowledge of servant leadership, absence of servant leadership application, and lack of education in the population. Therefore, the researcher, as a major instrument in this study, realized the roots of the problem as participants' contributions were enormously beneficial.

Theory of Mind in Relation to Cognitive Development

This researcher has taken much space in elaborating on and discussing the need and justification for servant leadership theory in the Haitian church context. Herein, it is also important to mention the theory guiding the study, ToM. Therefore, ToM in association with cognitive development theory will be discussed in the context of the themes found after data analysis. The intertwining of the ToM (Premack & Woodruff, 1978) and cognitive development theory (Piaget, 1967) has already been largely demonstrated in Chapter Two, under the section discussing the theoretical framework and the ToM. This researcher was not the only one to combine the two theories, as several other scholars have done. However, before elaborating on why this researcher put the two theories together, where one is considered the extension of the other, one would explain the combination of the theories in terms of the discovered themes. The discussion will cover the actual discoveries of the researcher after the data analysis, justifying how the theories were properly chosen to address the problem of Haitian American Christian leadership. This approach allowed this researcher to use the statement of a group of scholars, Hoyos et al. (2020), who were already mentioned among those listed in Chapter Two that had supported the cooperation of the two theories.

Hoyos et al. (2020) claimed, “Humans are uniquely talented at reasoning about the thoughts of other members of our species—a skill that is critical to our ability to cooperate intelligently and to form complex social systems” (Hoyos et al., 2020, p. 1). This researcher purposely quoted these few words from the article as the statement reflected the condition in which the phenomenon under investigation was analyzed “uniquely.” A significant expression was considered during the data collection, analysis, and interpretation stages. In general, while embarking on the data evaluation process, the researcher believed that every phenomenological

research is unique. Thus, the departure point was to keep in mind that the theory guiding the study was the ToM, as stipulated in Chapter One under the research purpose statement section. Hence, while the phenomenon of Haitian American Christian leadership was examined through the lens of the servant leadership theory, the ToM and cognitive development theories were employed to ascribe a state of mind to the Haitian American Christian leaders' community and ascribe their false thinking in the leadership domain. This is because, "The knowledge and skills that allow us to infer mental states such as goals, intentions, and beliefs is referred to collectively as "theory-of-mind" (ToM)" (p. 1). However, this assumption was not considered official—something one could affirm until data was analyzed. A demonstration will follow in Table 3.

Before completing Table 3, the researcher wanted to consider the ToM and cognitive development, as they are related, and one comes from the other. Several scholars have provided their remarks regarding the liaison between the two. Hughes et al. (2005), one of the authors cited in Chapter Two, elaborated on how nature and nurture are linked to differentiate individual states of mind. They claimed, "Our first aim in the present study was to examine the relative contribution of genetic and environmental influences on individual differences in the theory of mind (ToM)" (Hughes et al., 2005, p. 1). Accordingly, not only the genetic aspect that affected Haitian leaders' state of mind, but also the environment in which people live, can set their minds according to their surroundings.

Similarly, in addition to the genetic aspect of nature, where Haitian leaders are born and raised by Haitian parents, Haitian American Christian leaders were exposed to a certain type of leadership for years, which strongly impacted their mental states and created false beliefs regarding leadership positions. In the following table, the relationship between the themes and

the formation of mental states will be illustrated. Researcher observation, data analysis, ToM, and cognitive developmental theory have confirmed these impacts.

Table 3

Justification of the Theories Guiding the Study Theory of Mind and Cognitive Development Theory

Theory of Mind (ToM)	Haitian American Christian Leaders' Perceptions	Findings	Cognitive Development
Researcher's Observation	Haitian American Christian leaders perceive leadership as an honorific position	Haitian American Christian leadership is dictatorial	Development of ToM According to nature and nurture (Natural beings and surroundings)
Researcher's Observation	Haitian American Christian leaders have false beliefs about leadership	Haitian American Christian leadership is characterized by self-centeredness	Haitian leaders' mentality
Researcher's Observation	Haitian American Christian leaders do not prioritize their followers' interests	Haitian American Christian leaders are not educated about servant leadership	Mental states formation
Researcher's Observation	Haitian American Christian leaders' learned behavior	Absence of servant leadership concept among HAACL	Mental representation

Table 3 shows the three-way connection between ToM and cognitive developmental theory to equip this researcher from observation to interpretation. Based on this researcher's experiences with the Haitian community, an assumption was made in the first column about the Haitian American Christian leadership, observing that the community of Haitian Christian leaders comprehend leadership as a position of honor, where leaders think of themselves as enjoying power and self-gratification. The ToM implies the human capacity to assume other people's mental conditions. Thereafter, the third column with the first finding confirms the

observation. The fourth column progressively shows how mental states are constructed. As an individual begins to get exposed to a certain behavior, gradually, a cognitive action is initiated until the behavior is fully learned (individual mental states). Scholars refer to this process as a meta-representation, which becomes a perception—a style of living. Therefore, in this research, Haitian leaders, after being exposed to an environment where a certain type of leadership is practiced from generation to generation, have a representation of leadership in their minds—a false belief that has been tackled by this researcher in column two. At this stage of leaders' perception, everything goes to cater to the leader's interest and self-centeredness. Cognitively, this mentality is developed, eventually becoming a way of thinking, perceiving, and representing leadership in their mind. Rejón Altable et al. (2009) calls it a meta-representation.

ToM is a meta-representation (a representation of a relationship between representations). This ability to elaborate representations about representations is considered necessary not only to live in a 'world of minds' but also to symbolic play and understanding metaphors and irony (Rejón Altable et al., 2009, p. 219).

Implications and Applications

Implications

This section explains what the study's findings meant to this researcher and how the research impacted Haitian Christian leadership. In this way, a connection between how Haitian Christian leaders see leadership was established. The possible effects of their perceptions on the Haitian population, particularly the church population, shall be identified and described within the lines below, utilizing some of the following research questions and the three-interview series questions. Most participants responded similarly in consideration of research question one, **RQ1**. What are the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders about the implication of servant leadership within the church system for spiritual growth? and the interview questions four and five “4) How do you perceive Haitian Christian leadership in terms of church dev? 5) How do you see the

application of servant leadership in the Haitian churches?” For instance, Pastor Mezu said that Haitian leaders do not develop steps so that everyone can share their inputs. Instead, they come with ideas; everyone must work accordingly (Pastor Mezu, focus group interview, November 26, 2022). Pastor Mary added, “90% of them are the same, believe me. I do not exclude myself” (Pastor Mery, focus group interview, November 26, 2023). All the answers showcased the absence of productive leadership, which can positively impact the community. Although they were conscient about it and talked about it, it seemed something was in place to resolve the problem. Hence, findings one, two, three, and four, which were discussed in Chapter Four, were evidenced by the type of impact that such type of leadership can have on the Haitian church community.

Applications

The concept of servant leadership within the Haitian churches in the USA was the main concern of this study. Theoretically, the necessity of such an application was addressed, and the participants agreed that there is an exigency. As the research emphasizes the theory, the need to incorporate the concept was proven through discussions of the findings based on participants’ statements. Two other great aspects were the particularity of the methods used to collect data and repeating back to participants their responses to verify if they had been quoted correctly. Moreover, as per this researcher’s request, the participants were requested to provide voice or video recordings, where they had to walk this investigator through their personal leadership experiences. The subjects pointed out in Chapter Two were carefully addressed. For example, the presupposition that Haitian American Christian leaders consider leadership positions more as self-achievement rather than an opportunity or a calling to serve others was justified by many declarations expressed with emotions and examples of lived experiences that were shared. After

the data analysis, all findings corroborated the leadership issue among the selected population and confirmed the need to apply the servant leadership concept. Servant leader theory was seen and discussed as a solution to heal Christian leaders from self-centeredness—a learned behavior from Haitian historical leadership. “1. Other-oriented approach to leadership, 2. Manifested through prioritizing followers’ needs and interests one-on-one, and 3. Outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others” (Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2014).

Hence, Haitian leaders, including the laity, have been exposed to a distorted dictatorial leadership, which was discussed as the first finding in the lines above. Thus, the lived experiences of the Haitian leadership leave scars on the contemporary Haitian Christian leadership. The servant leadership theory can heal such scars, as the concept’s characteristics do not promote self-satisfaction. Moreover, two of the three strategies proposed by Leedy and Ormrod (2018) were implemented for verification. The continuity associated with data collection until the categories were saturated was one of the instruments to learn more about the phenomenon. Thus, the researcher required more information, asking participants to come up with a voice or a video recording after the three-interview series, explaining some additional insights and providing more details about their leadership experiences. Moreover, the researcher sought feedback from the participants in regard to the findings and interpretations. “Continue to collect data until you are no longer gaining new insights about the phenomenon of interest” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2018, p. 301).

Research Limitations

The study presented some limitations at some points because this researcher realized it would be even better to have a population with a different background, as leadership can be an

issue in any other ethnic group. During data analysis, this researcher imagined how beneficial this research would be if the sampling population were more diverse. In addition, it was planned to have two focus groups, record all observations on site, and conduct interview sessions in person. As mentioned in Chapter Three, unfortunately, the researcher had to perform some of these steps virtually due to schedule incompatibility, even though this researcher was flexible to match whichever medium worked for the participants.

Nevertheless, the delimitation, namely including all adults from 18 and up, was an open invitation to reach an amount above the minimum, which offered the possibility for additional data collection. Although the sampling population was not diverse in terms of ethnicity, diversity could be noted in terms of gender, age, and the educational level. Therefore, the issue of this specific phenomenon was brought to the literature table, and this researcher's objective to address the literature gap about Haitian American Christian leadership was also addressed.

Further Research Recommendations

This research discovery created a sense of curiosity and creativity within Christian leadership. At the end of this journey, this researcher addressed more phenomenological issues within the Haitian population and among other groups. In this context, the researcher recommended to extend the research on the origin of this type of leadership in the Haitian American Christian community, as the learned behavior seems to have its source in slavery, where Haitian leaders first learned about leadership. This was where they first experimented with leadership, under the command of white French masters who mistreated them badly and taught them how normal it was for enslaved Black people to be at the white men's service. Considering the grandiosity of the Haitian's independence, and the battle they have been fighting afterward

until these days, the incompatibility of the two is incontestable. Scholars such as Mcclish (2012) acknowledged the Haitian struggles:

“My subject is Haiti, the Black Republic, the only self-made Black Republic in the world,” Douglass begins. Douglass exposed the evil both of American business interests - to whom "the welfare of Haiti is nothing, the shedding of human blood is nothing, the success of free institutions is nothing, and the ruin of neighboring county is nothing"- Haiti, Douglass claims, “was the first to be invaded by the Christian religion...She was also the first to witness the bitter agonies of the negro bending under the blood-stained lash of Christian slave-holders” (Frederick Douglass’ Speech cited by Mcclish, 2012, p. 40).

This gap must be tackled to point out the significance of the effects of slavery on the Haitian American Christian leaders, a serious issue affecting the Haitian church’s spiritual growth. Furthermore, the Haitian population is considered to be a minority, and as reported by Zéphir (2001), “Unlike West Indian immigrants who have been considered model minorities... a Haitian ethnic identity is stigmatized as being almost always lower class within the United States of America” (Clerge, 2012, p. 959, as cited in Zephir). Therefore, acknowledging the impact of financial struggles on Haitian leadership could be a good topic to point out their economic issues. Subsequently, the following topics could be pursued: “Impact of Slavery on Haitian American Christian Leadership,” “Education among the Haitian American Christian Leaders,” “Servant leadership within the Christian Congregations in the United States of America,” and “Economic Issues among Haitian Churches in the United States of America.”

Conclusion

This qualitative phenomenological research study was tremendously beneficial to all entities that were a part of the process—from the beginning of this investigation journey until the ending. As challenging as it could be, everything worked out well for the sampling population and, eventually, for the entire population. This is because the researcher guided the research study from a particular to a general context by pointing out a phenomenon that needs to be

addressed through research. Though many scholars proved the existence of data that correlated to the research topic, specifically, the struggle about the application of servant leadership within the Haitian American Christian churches comprised a gap that no literature had touched until this researcher brought it to the research table to be investigated. The study outcomes were mostly generated by the sampling population of the study who voluntarily dedicated their time, shared their lived experiences, and communicated what those experiences meant to them. Their contributions toward collecting data made it possible for this researcher to gain an in-depth comprehension of the issue. They discussed the historical background of the problem, so this investigator got a larger idea and a clearer picture of the problem's source. Thus, their perceptions were taken into consideration, and the data collected were analyzed and interpreted carefully, as shown in Table 3. In this table, the relevant information has been displayed to demonstrate how the researcher valued the data, particularly the participants' points of view, which allowed her to come up with four themes that determined the mental conditions of that specific population as far as leadership was concerned.

Hence, after discussing various aspects of the Haitian American Christian leadership issue, the participants understood that there is a sense of urgency to apply the concept of servant leadership to facilitate better harmony between leaders and followers and a better church system organization. Although this research had some limitations, other arrangements, such as providing participants with a handout outlining important ideas critical for applying servant leadership, were made. These arrangements are as follows: the threefold extended and refined definition of servant leadership from the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (2014), six traits of a true servant leader pastor from Manala (2010), and a significant statement from the Lord Jesus about servant leaders. Therefore, a conclusion was made about the implication of servant leadership

within the Haitian churches in the USA, and this phenomenon was generalized for the benefit of Haitian American Christian leaders.

Jesus says: “Jesus called them together and said, you know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all” (NIV, 2011, Mark 10:43–44).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval

October 18, 2022
Marie Felix-Paul
Thomas Davis

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY22-23-243 SERVANT LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE HAITIAN CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dear Marie Felix-Paul, Thomas Davis,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: October 18, 2022. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

Appendix B: Recruitment Letter

Greetings,

As a student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research to better understand the Haitian Christian leaders' perceptions regarding leadership in a general aspect, particularly, the application of servant leadership. The purpose of my research is to discover the perceptions of Haitian Christian leaders about the implication servant leadership within the church system for: Spiritual growth, productive harmony between leaders and followers, and to differentiate servant leadership from general leadership. If you meet my participant criteria and are interested, I would like to invite you to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older. They must be Haitian Christians that are actively leading a congregation mostly composed of Haitian members for at least two years without interruption. Participants, if willing, will be observed while on site where leadership is taking place as leaders are working (15 minutes). Next, some participants will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded focus group of four to six people via Zoom or in person (60-80 minutes) Last, some other participants will be asked unstructured or semi-structure questions during an audio-recorded interview via Zoom or in person (45-60 minutes). Participants are completely free to talk about their views. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

I would appreciate to count you and other leaders of your congregation among my study' participants. After a positive response, a screening survey and a consent form will be attached to your email, which you can email back to me. Otherwise, I will pick them up myself. Let me know if we can set up a time for the first focus group of interviews?

The consent document is provided as the first page of the survey. It will be given to you one week before the first focus group interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me before the first procedures.

I thank you for the time you spent to read my recruitment letter. If there is any question let me know [REDACTED]

May you be blessed and stay blessed!

Marie Magdala Felix-Paul
Doctoral student/ Principal investigator.

Appendix C: Screening Survey for Eligibility

SERVANT LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE HAITIAN CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

Investigator’s name (Doctoral student): Marie Magdala Felix-Paul

Sponsor name: Dr. Davis Thomas

Institution name: Liberty University – School of Divinity

Your name:.....

Screening questions to confirm participants eligibility:

- 1) Are you 18 years old or older?
- 2) Is your background Haitian?
- 3) What is the target population of the church, group, or youth you are leading in terms of ethnicity?
- 4) How long have you been leading this congregation/ group?
- 5) Have you ever been suspended from your position? If yes, how long?
- 6) Do you believe in the Holy Trinity (the Triune God), The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?
- 7) Is your congregation under a specific denomination? Yes No (circle)
- 8) If yes what is the denomination your church belongs to?

Appendix D: Consent Letter

Title of the Project: Servant Leadership within the Haitian Churches in the United States of America.

Principal Investigator: Marie M. Felix-Paul, Student, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years old or older, be a spiritual leader actively within a Haitian church for at least two years, without interruption. As long as participants believe in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (The Triune God). Religious denomination, like, Baptiste, Church of God, Pentecostal, etc. does not matter if participants meet the requirements for eligibility. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to explore the Haitian Christian leadership in the United States of America through the lens of servant leadership, as essential to assist God's people. Haitian Christian leadership is the central phenomenon of the study, a figure of authority at local churches.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

1. First task/procedure: A number of six to eight participants will be assigned to a focus group according to their denomination during discussion for an estimate of one to two hours. Recording through audio and/or video may be used.
2. Second task/procedure: A number of six to eight participants will be assigned to a focus group according to the number of years of leadership during discussion for an estimate of one to two hours. Recording through audio and/or video may be used.

3. Additional tasks/procedures: A number of six to eight participants will be assigned to a focus group according to their titles such as pastors, church board, Sunday school superintendent and committee, group leaders, during discussion for an estimate of one to two hours. Recording through audio and/or video may be used.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

No Direct Benefits - Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. Nonetheless, they will benefit from discussions during group meeting and handouts that will be provided.

Benefits to society include the practice of skilled leadership for better harmony among members of the community.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study: The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records. Data collected from you may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from you is shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms/codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews/focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you apart from focus group data will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Marie M. Felix-Paul. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Davis Thomas, at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review

Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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

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

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

Appendix E: Document Provided by Participant Makis

François Duvalier died 50 years ago, and his dictatorship still lingers over Haiti. Haiti is experiencing what some experts call 'Duvalierism without Duvalier'.

Milo Milfort/EFE



- François Duvalier

The political use of mysticism, the modification of the Constitution and corruption from power are some of the legacies of former Haitian dictator François Duvalier (1907-1971) that still persist in this Caribbean country 50 years after his death, according to several specialists.

Haiti is experiencing what some historians call 'Duvalierism without Duvalier'. Some regimes have even been called 'neo-Duvalierist' for their alleged human rights violations. "Duvalier established a totalitarian regime in Haiti," Haitian historian Georges Michel told Efe. According to him, for there to be a totalitarian regime, there must be a doctrinal and ideological component, which was put in place by Duvalier. "He was a great intellectual and he used that capacity to do evil," Michel said.

Duvalier, fierce dictator

"He is the only totalitarian regime we have had in Haiti's history. There have been dictatorships, but not totalitarian regimes," reiterated Michel, for whom Duvalier's "practice of theft and corruption on a grand scale" is a "legacy" that persists to this day.

April 21 marked the 50th anniversary of the death in Port-au-Prince of the doctor and dictator Duvalier, nicknamed Papa Doc. He ruled Haiti from 1957 to 1964 as president, and from that year until his death in 1971 as president for life.

Illegal arrests, corruption and political persecution were the hallmarks of his years in power, costing the lives of thousands of Haitians and sending many more into exile.

Duvalier created a personal guard to spread terror among the population, the dreaded "tonton macoutes," charged with protecting the ruler, persecuting, torturing, and murdering his opponents.

Changing the Constitution

"Every president who arrives in power draws up or modifies the constitution in order to extend his mandate," Auguste D'Méza, a political commentator and university professor, told Efe, pointing out that presidents who serve out their term of office as mandated by the constitution are "rare."

In recent months there have been numerous demonstrations in Haiti against the referendum planned for next June promoted by Moise to provide the country with a "more adequate" Constitution.

Throughout its history, Haiti has amended its constitution 23 times. In order to stay in power, Duvalier modified the Constitution several times until he established that power was hereditary and for life.

In early 1971, he introduced a constitutional amendment establishing continuity of power, which allowed his 19-year-old son Jean-Claude Duvalier to take control of the government upon his father's death in April of that year.

Jean-Claude Duvalier maintained the dictatorial legacy until a popular uprising forced him to leave the country for France on 7 February 1986.

Mysticism as a tool of power

One of the "most powerful" elements inherited from the Duvalier dictatorship is the practice of voodoo ceremonies, recalls Professor D'Méza.

For him, **Haitians still believe that it is the "luases" (spirits)** that lead you to power and that you have to use mysticism to stay in power. "These practices are very much alive. Duvalier managed to corrupt and integrate the Freemasons. So did Michel Martelly and now Jovenel Moise," he said.

For the professor, **"the use of mysticism is something strong,"** which is why Papa Doc made people believe that he was an immaterial being.

Historian Michel agrees, stating that this is not exclusive to the Duvaliers. **"All Haitian heads of state use mysticism in politics,"** he said.

When he was in power, **Jean-Claude Duvalier said he wanted to see a new economic class emerge in the country.**

The reason was that he was fighting against a certain oligarchy, D'Méza recalls. "Speeches against the oligarchs. To create a black bourgeoisie, like an alternative bourgeoisie, that was Jean-Claude's dream," he said.

Appendix F: Interview Questions

SERVANT LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE HAITIAN CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Investigator's name (Doctoral student): **Marie Magdala Felix-Paul**

Institution name: **Liberty University**

Short important definitions:

General/Traditional leadership: In this leadership style the leader is self-centered.

Servant leadership: This type of leadership is about serving others, in other words, prioritizing others interests over leaders' interests (Greenleaf, 2014).

Interview Questions:

- 1) How do you understand traditional leadership in general sense?
- 2) What are your perceptions of the Haitian leadership since the birth of the nation until these days?
- 3) How do you perceive Haitian Christian leadership in the USA in term of church development?
- 4) How do you see the application of servant leadership in the Haitian churches?
- 5) How do you understand the adoption of this theory in term of harmony between leaders and followers? Please feel free to share your experience if any.
- 6) According to your understanding, how does the concept of servant leadership differ from general leadership? Feel free to share your experience(s) if any.
- 7) Self-examination through the works of Manala (2010), GCFSL (2007), and Mark 10:42-44 (NIV).

Considering the following works of those scholars, how do you measure yourself to the following attributes/ behaviors of a servant leader?

The threefold extended and refined definition of servant leadership by the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership (2014)

1. Other-oriented approach to leadership,
2. Manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of followers needs and individual interests,
3. Outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others (Robert K

Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership in 2014).

Six traits of a true servant leader pastor by Manala (2010)

- (1) Those with the greatest authority have the greatest responsibility to serve,
- (2) Servant leadership is about relationship,
- (3) Servant leadership seeks to support, not control,
- (4) Servant leaders point to others before self,
- (5) Servant leaders don't need titles or status, and
- (6) Authority is based on one's relationship to Jesus, not a position (Manala 2010, as cited in Ball, 2019, p. 17).

Jesus says: "Jesus called them together and said, you know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10: 43-44 NIV).

***Extra question after the three-way interviews

Walk me through your personal experience leadership. Feel free to speak about your challenges and satisfactions.