

# DISSERTATIONS IN BRIEF

## DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS BY WKU EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP DOCTORAL PROGRAM GRADUATES

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SERVANT LEADERSHIP CONSTRUCTS AND COLLECTIVE SELF-ESTEEM**

**BY LEANN HOWELL**

Chair: Randall Capps

Committee: Dean May, Robert Field

Defense Date: October 29, 2013

Following Greenleaf's (1970) seminal work in servant leadership, much has been written on what servant leadership is, but very little written on what it does. At the center of this research is a focus on how followers perceive servant leadership constructs, and the relationship between that perception and collective self-esteem as it relates to their affiliation with the organization. The central question guiding this research is: "Is there a relationship between perceived servant leadership constructs and collective self-esteem?" Using the seven constructs, or behaviors, as defined by Patterson (2003) and the Servant leadership Assessment Instrument (SLAI) developed by Dennis (2005) and based on Patterson's constructs; in conjunction with Luhtanen and Crocker's (1993) Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSE), correlations were made identifying a statistically significant relationship between perceived servant leadership attributes and collective self-esteem among employees and volunteers of Together We Care, a small, 501(c)3 non-profit agency practicing servant leadership.

### **SECONDARY SCHOOL ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATION CERTIFICATION: STATE OVERSIGHTS, REQUIREMENTS, AND PRESSING ISSUES ATHLETES ENCOUNTER**

**BY CHRIS GADDIS**

Chair: Randy Deere

Committee: Carl Laves, Charlie Pride

Defense Date: August 28, 2013

The role of a secondary school athletic director is similar across

the United States, although the required credentials for such a position vary immensely from state to state. The athletic administrator position was originally created to improve the oversight of the increasing demands of operating an athletic program. In the past, the number of sports and participants were much smaller than today. Because of this there has not always been a call for highly trained, educated, and experienced interscholastic athletic administrators. In this study, state executive directors/liaisons for the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association provided information regarding their states demographic data, educational practices, and athletic director (AD) requirements. Finally, the state executive directors/liaisons were asked to rate ten of the most pressing issues facing athletic administrators today. Responding states were divided into one of three groups based upon the number of athletic participants in the state. Results were analyzed through frequency distribution. Data indicated no significant differences among the three groups. Although 52.27% states reported athletic administrators are required to have bachelor's degree, 41.86% indicated no certification of any kind is required to hold the AD position. Furthermore, only 34.09% of states recognize a master's degree in sports administration for a rank change/salary increase, and less than 25% require any continued education/professional development for athletic administrators. The data seemed to indicate a need for states to begin to recognize the importance of educational and certification requirements for secondary school athletic administrators. The lack of uniformity across the United States regarding criteria used to seek and develop athletic administrators raises some concern. This inconsistency or lack of requirements indicates the need for refinement to enhance the professional integrity of secondary school athletic administration across the United States. The mandates were inaccurate, and numerous findings were unanticipated.

## **SAUDI MALE PERCEPTIONS OF STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES: AN ANALYSIS OF KING ABDULLAH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS**

**BY RYAN TERRY HALL**

Chair: Barbara Burch  
Committee: Alex Poole, Ric Keaster  
Defense Date: October 31, 2013

The Saudi Arabian Government's establishment of the multi-billion dollar King Abdullah Scholarship Program (KASP), which sends students abroad for language training and university study, is responsible for tens of thousands of Saudi men studying in the United States. With the extension of the program through 2020, it is critical that education leaders in higher education and stakeholders at all levels understand the challenges and opportunities presented by this group increasingly populating American classrooms. Several studies have been conducted on international students in the U.S. over the years with just a few focusing on Saudi students specifically. There is a need for research that seeks to understand Saudi students in the U.S. now that the scholarship program has matured several years. The goals of this grounded theory study were to ascertain the rationale Saudi men in the KASP use to elect to study in the United States, how their experiences studying in the United States have affected their perceptions and aligned with their expectations, and to determine if the experiences and changes in beliefs and perceptions are aligned with the Saudi government's stated goals for the scholarship program. This study utilized a qualitative, grounded theory approach in order to ascertain the pertinent information related to Saudi students studying in the United States. Twelve Saudi men agreed to participate, and each of them ultimately participated in an hour-long, face-to-face interview. Five key patterns were identified from the research and interviews, and each of these patterns had 3-4 themes for a total of 17 themes. The patterns and themes focused on the rationale for Saudi men studying in the United States and the special issues presented by the KASP when it comes to choosing to study abroad. The study also reveals a considerable amount of understanding the men are gaining about their own culture as a result of study in the United States, the academic challenges due to a lack of preparation, particularly in reading and writing, and some concerns Saudi men have about the outcomes of the KASP conditionally-admitted students.

## **FACTORS AND INFLUENCE CONTRIBUTING TO THE COLLEGE SELECTION DECISION OF HIGH ACHIEVING HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR**

**BY DANA CLAYTON**

Chair: Barbara Burch  
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Defense Date: October 29, 2013

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of how high achieving high school seniors navigate the college search process and ultimately make a decision to attend a particular institution. Specifically, it considered how institutional reputation contributes within the search process and how students consider the influence of others such as parents, friends, etc. Students enrolled in AP or Honors courses at three private and one charter school in southwestern Indiana were administered the College Exploration Questionnaire (CEQ) in the final weeks of their senior year. The CEQ measured the level of importance students placed on various academic and non-academic factors of college. It also identified the top three reasons why a student selected a public or private institution. Based on a sample of 114 students, 67% indicated they planned to attend a public institution and 33% a private institution. Both groups placed the highest degree of importance on the quality of the academic program and identified it as the number one reason for selecting a particular institution. However, further analysis of the data revealed that students selecting private colleges placed a higher level of importance on three academic elements associated with academic quality: student/faculty ratio, international emphasis in the curriculum, and academic support services. In addition, students selecting private colleges placed a higher level of importance on the values promoted by the institution than those promoted by their counterparts. Students selecting public institutions considered cost to be more important in their final decision and also placed a higher value of importance on location, winning athletic programs, and their friends' opinions of the institution. This research found that students selecting public and private institutions place varying degrees of importance on elements comprising institutional reputation. It also found that the opinion of their peers was significantly more important to students choosing public institutions than those choosing privates. This information can be helpful to enrollment managers and higher education marketers as recruitment and

marketing plans are developed for both types of institutions.

## **A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADER'S COMMITMENT TO SAFETY AND ACTUAL INJURY RATES IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING**

**BY DAVID OLIVER**

Chair: Randall Capps

Committee: Cecile Garmon, Dennis George

Defense Date: October 24, 2013

The purpose of this study was to explore the correlation between employee perceptions of their supervisor's commitment to safety (safety climate) and the actual rate of occupational injuries among the same employees. The study also aimed to examine the relationship between the employee perceptions of their supervisor's leadership practices and the supervisor's safety climate rating. In addition, this study examined the potential influence of employee demographic factors on their responses to survey questions.

This research study sought to answer three primary questions: (1) Does a significant correlation exist between employee perceptions of his supervisor's commitment to the health and safety of workers and actual injury/illness rates within an organization? (2) Does a significant correlation exist between specific leadership practices of supervisors and their safety climate ratings as perceived by their employees? (3) Is there a significant difference in employee views on safety climate and leadership practices of their supervisor based on employee demographic variables including gender, education level, skilled versus non-skilled positions, time in position, or shift assignment?

Previous studies of similar construct focused on industrial settings such as manufacturing, construction, and oil and gas exploration. This study focused on workers engaged in maintenance type functions within the non-industrial setting of a university. The construct and findings of this study will have applicability in a variety of settings including healthcare, general business, etc. Developing an understanding of the role that supervisors play in actively driving safety programs that affect their subordinates will provide valuable insight into elements of supervisor selection and training.

A survey instrument was developed utilizing a combination of previously validated "safety climate" questions, along with selected general leadership questions. A 7- point Likert scale was employed for the safety climate and leadership practices questions. Demographic questions were included to provide critical data for application for research question three. In addition, three questions were included to solicit data regarding each respondent's injury experience for the previous 12 month period.

The results of this study will provide useful information regarding the influence of supervisor's actions upon the safety performance of their employees. In addition, the study helps validate the relationship of general leadership practices of supervisors to the overall safety climate of their work groups. While additional research into the concept and practical application of safety climate as a predictor of safety performance should be undertaken, the findings of this study will add to collective knowledge of the subject.

## **THE EFFECTS OF STANDARDS BASED GRADING ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN ALGEBRA 2**

**BY RACHEL ROSALES**

Chair: Marge Maxwell

Committee: Rebecca Stobaugh, Janet Tassell

Defense Date: October 29, 2013

The use of standards-based grading in American public schools is increasing, offering students, parents, and teachers a new way of measuring and communicating about student achievement and performance. Parents indicate an appreciation for this method of grading, and students at the elementary grades (K-6) have improved standardized test scores in reading and math as a result of its implementation. This study seeks to determine whether standards-based grading has the same effect on students at the high school level (grades 9-12) by comparing end-of-course test scores and posttest scores of Algebra 2 students enrolled in a standards-based graded classroom with those enrolled in a traditionally-graded classroom. Two teachers each taught two classes of Algebra 2 and graded one class using standards-based grading and one class using traditional grading methods. Students at both the honors level and the regular level of mathematics were included in the study. Honors students performed better than regular students on both assessments, but no significant difference was found between the

performance of traditionally-graded students and the students who were graded with standards-based grading. The results of this study indicate that standards-based grading may offer improved methods of communication between teachers, parents, and students and may give students a new perception of learning. Standards-based grading strategies require careful planning, dedication, and follow through. It is not an endeavor to be entered into lightly, but rather, the appropriate amount of time, resources, and preparation can provide students the chance to truly learn content at a mastery level. The mastery of material will, in turn, translate into higher success on high-stakes testing.

### **THE EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE FROM INTENSIVE INTERCULTURAL SERVICE-LEARNING THROUGH THE \$100 SOLUTION MODEL**

**BY NADIA DELEON SAUTU**

Chair: Cecil Garmon

Committee: Jie Zhang, Paul Markham, Bernard Strenecky

Defense Date: October 28, 2013

This study evaluates the effects of an intensive intercultural service-learning program on the intercultural competence of undergraduate students enrolled in Cultural Diversity in the U.S., a general education course at Western Kentucky University. This program utilized The \$100 Solution™ model, in which groups of students partnered with local immigrant and refugee families, to teach them about U.S. culture, learn about their cultures, and implement a project to assist them in their integration process. The program included two hours of out-of-classroom work for over twelve weeks. Through the principle of reciprocity, The \$100 Solution™ model provided an interaction framework in which students and refugee families met to learn from each other. This quasi-experimental study utilized pre- and post-course self-assessments of intercultural competence, as measured by the Cultural Intelligence Scale and the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale. A total of 170 students participated in the research. The data were collected from students enrolled in six sections of the course across two semesters in the 2012-2013 academic year. Three sections were control sections with no service-learning component. Three sections were treatment sections with the service learning component. Students chose whether to enroll in control or treatment sections. By comparing results from

students who completed the service-learning component with results from those who did not, this study revealed that participation in the service-learning component had a significant impact on the development of students' intercultural competence throughout the semester. According to MANCOVA utilizing pre-course scores as covariates, the only significant difference between both groups was in the cultural intelligence action scores, which measure intercultural skills. According to repeated measures ANOVA, treatment students demonstrated a significantly larger growth in cultural intelligence action and strategy scores. On the other hand, control students demonstrated a significantly larger growth in cultural intelligence knowledge scores. The largest effect size was on cultural intelligence action scores, supporting the hypothesis that, while courses with intercultural classroom content increase students' intercultural knowledge, awareness, and sensitivity, intensive intercultural service learning programs are uniquely suited to increase students' intercultural skills.

### **NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS CERTIFICATION AND TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY**

**BY LYNN HINES**

Chair: Gary Houchens

Committee: Barbara Burch, Rebecca Stobaugh

Defense Date: July 9, 2013

Due to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and state-level mandates, an economic and moral imperative requires educators today to not only accommodate differences in learning rates and allow extra time for students to experience success, teachers must foster in students the belief that success is within their reach if they keep trying. These new expectations for student learning are clashing with old conceptions of teaching and outmoded approaches and structures for teacher practices. Given the new mission of schools, finding strong models of professional development is imperative. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) is a promising model. Self-efficacy, the belief teachers' possess about their competency to impact student learning, changes teacher performance by influencing their intentions. This leads to the assumption that the higher a teacher's sense of self-efficacy, the greater a teacher's perseverance in the face of challenging instructional contexts and the higher the chance that the

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