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A Quantitative Study of Authentic Leadership, Authentic Followership, and
Organizational Commitment within Christian Higher Education

Submitted to Southeastern University

Jannetides College of Business, Communication, and Leadership

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership

Daniel E. McDonald V

March 24, 2023

Jannetides College of Business, Communication, and Leadership
Southeastern University

This is to certify that the dissertation prepared by:

Daniel E. McDonald V

titled

**A QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP,
AUTHENTIC FOLLOWERSHIP, AND ORGANIZATIONAL
COMMITMENT WITHIN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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Abstract

Organizational commitment is an important component within Christian higher education, impacted by the words and actions of authentic leaders and followers. In a time when more people left their jobs or looked for new employment than ever before, it was necessary to identify contributing factors that built and detracted from organizational commitment within this context. In this study, the researcher explored the relationships between organizational commitment and authentic leadership and authentic followership from the perspective of followers within five institutions in the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). The findings provided important context for current levels of connection between followers' perceptions of their leader's authentic behaviors and self-reflection of their own authenticity. Further, the researcher identified the correlations between each independent variable and the dependent variable, providing significant effects and potential causation within the follower's perception of leader and the follower actions. The data for this quantitative study were collected through a survey completed by 213 participants among the staff, faculty, and administration located at five different within CCCU institutions in the United States. This study contributed to the overall body of research by showing statistically significant relationships between organizational commitment and authentic leadership (self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency), and organizational commitment and authentic followership (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and psychological ownership) among respondents at the participating institutions.

Keywords: organizational commitment, authentic leadership, authentic followership, CCCU, higher education, relational transparency, psychological ownership

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the people who have steadfastly supported me through the journey of this doctoral process. To our Lord, Jesus Christ, who opened the heavens and poured out the finances and means to make this happen, along with sustaining my family and me throughout, I live in eternal gratitude and thankfulness for the good work that You will bring to completion for Your glory. This is dedicated to my wife, who is my foremost supporter and fan in spite of all of my flaws, and my kids, who put up with my absence much more than we both would have liked on a weekly basis. To my parents who have supported and spurred me on in every way imaginable, including living with us! To my in-laws, thank you for the never-ending encouragement and always asking where I was in the process. Thank you to all the people who have contributed to the completion of this process and found ways to convince me that I could make it—we share in this achievement! To the editors and readers; to my classmates, who were a vast source of encouragement and accountability; to my co-workers at SEU and Crown, who put up with a more sleep-deprived or grumpy Dee; to all of those mentors and members of my personal advisory council; and to Roy and those at SEU who saw something in me and pursued the opportunity at SEU. I am deeply grateful for the vast number of people who have joined me on this journey to a destination that I would have never imagined before someone took a chance on me in leadership up in the frozen tundra of Minnesota—thanks, Andrew.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

During the summer of 2021, more than 4 million workers quit their jobs in 1 month; this became a trend over the subsequent months, with Gallup polls reporting that 48% of workers were either looking for a job or actively considering it (Geisler, 2021). Texas A&M professor Anthony Klotz initially coined “The Great Resignation” before the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing economic upheaval. His work was published in the popular business magazine *Bloomberg* and effectively named a time when organizational commitment hit a modern-day low (Bloomberg, 2021). Higher education is not exempt from these phenomena, with Anees et al. (2021) concluding that academic and management staff face two significant issues: job stress and workload. Chen et al. (2011) remarked that the intention to quit among employees had been an important issue for over a decade. The pandemic further exacerbated the higher education industry at an alarming rate. Lew (2009) noted the lack of research among academic employees at that time. Employees in higher education and faculty have linked the job itself, interpersonal organizational relationships, and support from the administration as some of the most impactful reasons for resignation, even before the pandemic (Lok et al., 2019).

Tens of thousands of employees are leaving good jobs at companies they had a passion for, as indicated by half of current employees actively looking or considering a change, but it is not clear why this is the case. It is necessary to study the factors of organizational commitment that contribute to employee decisions from the lens of authentic leadership and authentic followership to identify behaviors that leaders and followers can view as significantly influential to the length of employment and level of commitment at each organization. Avolio et al. (2004) began discussing the mediation of authentic leadership (AL) on positive variables of organizational commitment, such as trust, hope, and emotion, which influence followers’ attitudes and behavior. The components of authentic leadership evaluated in the current study are the original factors of self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Avolio & Gardner, 2005a). In regards to authentic followership (AF), similar factors exist, with one exception: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective,

balanced processing, and psychological ownership. Gardner et al. (2021) closely connected authentic leadership with organizational commitment, calling for solid organizational and job commitment to utilization and fully embracing the four authentic leadership components. The same would hold for authentic followership.

Over the past 18 years in higher education, the researcher of this study has been part of four different institutions, each with vastly different cultures and levels of organizational commitment. Each institution also had varying levels of authenticity within leadership and followership. Smith (2020) identified some important institutional factors that can shape institutional priorities and values, such as strategic plans, program reviews, and hiring processes. Each institution determines what levels of importance and priority exist in its processes, limitations, or innovations, clearly outlining the actual values and investments. Not only is the current study relevant to Christian higher education administration, but it further expands the empirical research within this field and the areas of authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment, which have yet to provide substantial study. In addition, no identified studies have sought out followers specifically to ask about their perspective and self-reflection, which is an essential view of leadership and followership in this industry. The institutions identified by this study provide valuable insight as organizational commitment continues to decline and become more valuable and challenging to maintain with each passing day. Identifying exemplary models and significant relationships between the practice and theory within the range of institutions surveyed is necessary. These institutions can provide insight into the necessary foci of leaders and followers to create and maintain healthy levels of organizational commitment.

Statement of the Problem

Higher education, specifically Christian higher education, is not an exception to economic and cultural forces at work within the organizational context (Giauque et al., 2010). Giauque et al. cited that these organizations elicit more belonging within those environments, identified as religious commitment or prestige, often leading to considerable investment connected to worker passions and perceptions. With employees leaving at alarmingly high rates across all

industries and career fields, it is necessary to study potential positive and negative causes and contributors to organizational commitment through a specific theoretical lens: authentic leadership and authentic followership within Christian higher education. Bloom-Feshbach and Poyet (2018) referenced psychological safety, meaningful work relationships, and higher levels of engagement at work with a decrease in the likelihood of employees quitting and higher job satisfaction. These researchers also pointed to potential follower perceptions of higher organizational commitment and thriving within an organizational atmosphere from the conditions.

Regardless of the industry, administrative or leadership engagement can create a positive correlation between leader behavior and the commitment of employees (Tabbodi, 2009). Leaders can promote important components like organizational satisfaction, commitment, and cooperation among followers through style and closeness of communication with teams (Reit & Halevy, 2020). Organizations achieve levels of commitment through transparency and authenticity, a passion for the customer, and exceptional levels of commitment (Charan, 2006). Burke (2018) discussed organizations developing inspirational motivation, where the leader helps cultivate the passion that exists on the surface and deep within followers. Institutions of Christian higher education are widely known for passion, a component of organizational commitment defined as people's desire to engage and invest time and effort in activities they value, love, and consider integral to their self-identity (Vallerand et al., 2007).

Christian colleges and universities face similar problems to other organizations. Organizational commitment is as much a problem in Fortune 500 companies as in Christian colleges, economically impacting every organization and testing trust between leaders and followers; this highlights the necessity of a study of how authentic leadership impacts organizational commitment (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Kark and Shamir (2013) suggested that authentic leadership and followership could enhance commitment and many other essential factors through leader identification with the follower and follower identification with the organization. The follower perspective is an essential component of leader behavior and followers' self-perceptions. Neider and Schriesheim (2011) outlined the

following four components of authentic leadership: self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing. Followers' opinions and evaluations of leader and follower self-perceptions are crucial to understanding the potential causes of the followers' increased or decreased organizational commitment. The follower perspective effectively reverses the lens of authentic leadership from leaders' opinions and evaluations to those of followers, necessitating authentic leadership and authentic followership as contributing factors in the study.

Authentic components of organizational commitment viewed through the theory of authentic leadership contribute to the development or erosion of commitment, but frequently from the leaders' perspective. Golembiewski (2000) recommended that organizations struggling with relationships between leaders and followers consider friction points practically. As followers evaluate leaders' behaviors, they develop specific relational opinions, feelings, and leanings, often affecting the levels of organizational commitment with each follower, both toward a leader and in their self-perceptions (Grunig et al., 2003). Authentic leadership draws attention to the leader, searching for the true self, valuing self-knowledge and recognition as the essential components for successful leadership (Chaffee, 1996). Alvesson and Einola (2019) pointed out that authentic leadership is generally about knowing oneself, not evaluating one's leader's or each follower's perceptions. Core contributors of authentic leadership—ethics, character, and integrity—reference a leader's ability to bring the natural person to the stage, office, or boardroom with followers and other leaders each day (Hickman, 2016). Charisma is a vital component of authentic leadership, encouraging an interpersonal approach, emphasizing conviction and genuine characteristics in line with the leader's life experiences and profound meaning that relates to the organizational goals set forth and pursued daily (Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

Authentic leadership is often associated with high-character leaders who endear followers to the organization and goals through their complete humanity, creating a culture where everyone, both leaders and followers, are free to be themselves (Novicevic et al., 2006). Four distinctive characteristics of authentic

leadership contribute to the formalized theory and practical implementation: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Authentic leadership practitioners model consistency of behavior and an unshakeable knowledge of themselves in every situation and occasion, exemplified by beliefs, preferences, strengths, and weaknesses (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans et al., 2005; Ilies et al., 2005). Authentic leaders value and display the ability to keep promises, admit mistakes, and follow through on commitments, creating organizational commitment and momentum (Bass & Bass, 2008). Authentic leadership often provides the opportunity to consider the cause and effect of organizational impact in a growing and developing self-awareness through decisions based on organizational values and not social pressures (Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Leroy et al., 2012).

Leaders in higher education must begin looking at current situations and develop more diverse perspectives across populations, asking all contributors and different industries how to elicit a commitment to the organization and create engagement (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). Christian higher education must endeavor to practice balanced processing in evaluating past and present decisions, evaluating the impact on organizations over time, both large and small, to improve the avoidance of disadvantageous future behaviors altogether (Rawls, 1985). Wong and Laschinger (2013) studied authentic leadership, concluding that the factors positively affected organizational performance, leading to improved culture and relationship development. Healthier organizations have begun to reinforce transparency and trust, leading to a heightened organizational commitment by making processes, decisions, and information available to members of the organization. Authentic environments create cultures of shared information and innovation valued by all members, not just top-level leaders (Hickman, 2016).

Leaders must be present consistently and engage with followers, creating relationships, fostering engagement, and interacting with followers in positive, meaningful ways to allow all parties to bring their true selves to the institutions (Sidani & Rowe, 2018). Christian colleges need authentic leaders and followers, where the community is valued, and interaction and engagements are the currencies

of operation (Sidani & Rowe, 2018). If an environment existed where shared values were present, Christian colleges and universities would be the place. Many of these institutions view ethics and integrity as nonnegotiable traits for leaders and followers, aiming to foster a culture where these values are not just spoken but practiced daily and with intentionality (Trevino & Nelson, 2017). Consideration for one another and trust-building principles between each group can be accomplished through authentic interaction, allowing each person to own and implement the vision and raise the level of organizational commitment through attention to organizational vision and mission (De Cremer & van Vugt, 2002).

Purpose of the Research

With recent job changes and a declining level of organizational commitment, it is necessary to analyze the impact of authentic leadership and authentic followership from the follower's perspective to identify common themes. In the current study, the researcher quantitatively compared authentic leadership and authentic followership to organizational commitment dimensions to find correlations and significant relationships that lead to employee movement and persistence. The study measured followers' perceptions of themselves and their leaders using the ALI and the AFP. Scholars examining followership and authentic leadership have commonly mentioned the lack of empirical evidence in each theory. Much less exists involving the studies of all three variables authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment (Story et al., 2013). With authentic followership's new and evolving nature, much of the current research is new and only initially advances the theory in new areas (Sheehan, 2018). Empirical research is needed in authentic followership, most notably when combined with another factor, but especially with multiple variables in authentic leadership and organizational commitment (Roundtree, 2019). In this study, the researcher analyzed the collected data through multiple regression analysis (Hinojosa et al., 2014), exploring the higher education world with a focus on CCCU institutions to understand a relatively unstudied industry regarding authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment within Christian higher education?

H₁: A positive relationship exists between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment.

H₀₁: There is no relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment.

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between self-perceptions of authentic followership and followers' organizational commitment within Christian higher education?

H₂: There is a positive relationship between self-perceptions of authentic followership and organizational commitment.

H₀₂: There is no relationship between follower self-perceptions of authentic followership and organizational commitment.

Significance of the Research

It is necessary to expand on the initial research of VanWhy (2015) to broaden the scope of research with more institutions involved and from different geographic areas while also focusing on Christian higher education. Within college and university organizational settings, high-integrity leaders must engage and encourage followers to trust, which Leroy et al. (2012) directly related to affecting followers' organizational commitment after studying 49 teams that supported the connection between follower organizational commitment and leader behavioral integrity. Although Christian higher education is the setting for the study, many of the organizational contexts can be applied to other types and styles of organizations. Successful authentic teams identify conflict and apply both concepts of leadership and followership, keeping the goal at the center and continually clarifying the team objective using relational transparency (Dixon, 2003). The context for evaluation provides more diversity with multiple environments, sizes, contexts, and cultures to draw more diverse conclusions and correlations.

Authentic leadership is exhibited at the organizational level by identifying who leaders and followers are daily, bringing all four levels of authentic leadership to the forefront, beginning with developing open, transparent relationships with colleagues and focusing efforts on bringing each person's true self to work each day (Stone, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Kernis (2003) described this method of authentic organizational operation as "the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self in one's daily enterprise" (p. 13). Leaders who authentically utilize behavioral integrity do not just make correct and ethical decisions, but free and encourage their subordinates to operate in similar demonstrations, raising the standard and expectations for the organization (Dineen et al., 2006). Follower performance can be linked directly to organizational citizenship behaviors through authentic leadership factors, deepening organizational commitment and trust through simply empowering leaders and followers, and identification with an authentic, integrity-filled leader (Palanski et al., 2011). If results like leader consideration, interactional fairness, leader honesty, and idealized influence are outputs and by-products organizations want to produce, leaders must authentically operate with transparency and the internalized moral perspective that authentic leadership authors prescribe (Avolio & Luthans, 2011; Gardner, Avolio et al., 2005; George, 2003).

Sheehan (2018) suggested that nearly any study building on authentic followership is necessary and provides movement in the field, mentioning areas of "trust, organizational culture, values, ethics, and various forms of leadership," like authentic leadership, referring to authentic followership as an untapped area of research (p. 53). Jachowicz (2016) recommended further research concerning authentic leadership and causes of interpersonal trust, with dynamics of followers' perception of their leaders posing questions of what factors are likely to cause the building or removal of interpersonal trust. Medina (2018) referenced a need to study private organizations or universities outside research institutions to assess the less rigid, bureaucratic, and policy-driven environments of authentic leadership and organizational commitment.

Ferrer (2017) cited a lack of research measuring followers' self-perceptions, as most studies have only used follower-leader perceptions for analysis and have focused on different demographic populations. Koontz (2021) pointed to the need for more authentic followership studies, especially in collaboration with authentic leadership, not just compensating for the imbalance of authentic leadership to authentic followership but combining them, exploring further authentic followership dimensions and further linking organizational commitment. De Zilwa (2016) reinforced the need for the study to examine individual and dyadic (leader-follower) relational components, which also impact the third component of the organization at large. Terry (2019) further suggested researching different geographic regions outside of the specified areas of that study, testing different sizes and locations that might impact overall organizational commitment.

Conceptual Framework

Giauque et al. (2010) drew attention to Crewson's (1997) definition of organizational commitment, which is composed of a strong belief and acceptance of the values of, willingness to work hard for, and desire to belong to the organization (Sharma, 2022). Kaufman (2013) suggested that leaders in higher education must begin to understand the value systems of each institution before commitment can be discussed. While leaders can set organizational culture and value systems, it is the followers who primarily accomplish the mission and goals, requiring a leader who does not just adjust their leadership to accomplish the organizational goals but, most importantly, helps followers commit to the organizational goals, building momentum for the congruence of follower, leader, and organizational commitment (Tsai, 2011).

Authentic leadership draws attention to the leader's true self, mentioning that a leader's self-knowledge and recognition is the first and most essential component for successful leadership (Chaffee, 1996). Four distinctive characteristics of authentic leadership contribute to the desirability of the theory: (a) self-awareness, (b) internalized moral perspective, (c) balanced processing, and (d) relational transparency (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Authentic leaders model

consistency of behavior along with a clear and unwavering knowledge of themselves in every way (Ilies et al., 2005).

Authentic followership has been formulated and developed for a few decades now, beginning with Gardner, Avolio et al. (2005), Goffee and Jones (2006), Riggio et al. (2008), and de Zilwa (2016), leading experts to conclude that authentic followership largely mirrors the developmental process of authentic leadership, producing heightened levels of followers' self-awareness and self-regulation, creating positive follower developments and outcomes. Authentic followership often involves subordinates who identify and deal with their strengths and weaknesses, relating to their leaders and fellow followers with genuine behaviors in the best interests of their organization and its stakeholders (VanWhy, 2015).

Methodology

As per Creswell and Creswell (2018), a quantitative study evaluates the relationship between authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment. The current researcher focused on the United States within higher education, explicitly including five institutions within the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU). This study was a multiple regression analysis experiment using the 20:1 ratio (Hair, 2006), with a targeted sample size of 200 participants and a required number of at least 100. Multiple regression analyses were completed using IBM's SPSS software to determine the presence of positive relationships between authentic leadership and organizational commitment and between authentic followership and organizational commitment with statistical significance ($p < .001$; Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Surveys were disseminated by Qualtrics and sent out by each consenting institution by email directly from school human resources offices. Participation in the survey was anonymous and voluntary. Descriptive statistics captured categorical data for staff, faculty, and administration-specific answers for possible future study or further dissection. Per VanWhy (2015), the Authentic Followership Profile (AFP) is a 23-item survey using a 5-point Likert scale measuring independent variables of self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral

perspective, and psychological ownership. VanWhy reported reliability as per Cronbach's alpha (CA) of more than .81 for all dimensions mentioned. The Pearson product-moment was used to show a positive correlation between all authentic followership dimensions per the Courageous Followership Scale, with a negative correlation between authentic followership and the Antisocial Behavior Scale.

Neider and Schriesheim (2011) created the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI), which the current researcher employed to measure the study's independent variables of relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, self-awareness, and balanced processing. Four items were specified for each of the four variables, conducted two tests compiled via confirmatory factor analysis to ensure content validity. A CA score of each dimension above .74 was reported for the ALI. The ALI is a validated instrument that measures employees' perceptions of their direct supervisor as an authentic leader (Van der Vaart, 2016). The ALI measures 16 items, scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*), with Cronbach's alpha coefficients indicating general reliability ($\alpha = .74$ to $.85$; Neider & Schriesheim, 2011).

The control variables for this research were experience with the organization and experience in higher education, along with the dependent variable of organizational commitment measured by the shortened Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Fields, 2013; Mowday et al., 1979). The OCQ was developed when other instruments were used to measure organizational commitment, providing limited evidence of any systemic, comprehensive efforts to determine validity, consistency, or predictive powers, leading Mowday et al. (1979) to create the OCQ. This new survey provided reasonably convincing evidence on two fronts: internal consistency and test-retest reliability. As each survey and instrument does, the OCQ has some minor issues but is generally accepted as one of the premier organizational commitment measurement tools, providing a 15-item instrument, Likert-type 7-point scale with Cronbach's alpha scores in the range of $\alpha = 0.81$ to 0.93 (Fields, 2002).

Table 1*The Measures of the Multiple Constructs by Source*

Construct	Measures	Source
Authentic Leadership (IV)	Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) 16 items using a 5-Point Likert Scale Reliability .74 to .85	(Neider & Schriesheim, 2011)
Authentic Followership (IV)	Authentic Followership Profile (AFP) 23 items using a 5-Point Likert Scale Reliability .81 to .85	(VanWhy, 2015)
Organizational Commitment (DV)	Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) 15 items using a 7-Point Likert Scale Reliability 0.81 to 0.93	(Fields, 2002; Mowday et al., 1979)
Control Variables	Experience in Higher Education Experience with the Organization	

Of more than 180 CCCU institutions, the leaders of approximately five schools agreed to participate and allow the AFP and ALI surveys to be sent out by email to all employees. Students were not considered for this survey because of their age and required permissions. All participating colleges agreed voluntarily by responding to the requisition affirmatively to help populate the study with no collection of names or personally identifiable information, reinforcing anonymity (Polston-Murdoch, 2015). Each institution received the results and information back to review after it was validated but before it was fully published, if desired.

Followers' perceptions of leaders and follower self-evaluation were described as higher-order constructs, informing generalized self-efficacy, self-esteem, emotional stability, and internal locus of control as significant key results (Joo & Jo, 2017). The processes and requirements of each institution with an accompanying institutional review board (IRB) agreeing to survey and participation were followed.

Scope and Limitations

Regarding institutional and study considerations, although there are more than 180 CCCU institutions, five were included in the current study. The choice to participate in the study was not random, but the findings may provide generalizable information to many contexts within Christian higher education. Data were collected based on self-reported disclosures and survey results (VanWhy, 2015); therefore, the bias derived from any self-reported measure should be considered when interpreting the results from this study. Lastly, the results and relationships identified from the study were taken from experiential findings from staff, faculty, and administration within the participating CCCU institutions, not necessarily from a cause-and-effect relationship that could be directly related to every instance (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Definition of Terms

Affective commitment. This describes a sense of emotional bond with the organization or deep desire to work at the organization (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Authentic followership. Riggio et al. (2008) began work on how leaders engage and intentionally empower followers to become their best selves, in the process aligning values with both the leader and follower, in turn developing cohesion in the organization, allowing followers to opt-in and choose to be led by the leader (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014).

Authentic leadership. George (2003) stated that authentic leadership begins and ends a leader's authenticity, yet Northouse (2019) called authentic leadership a complex process that highlights followers' perceptions of trustworthiness and

believability. Walumbwa et al. (2008) developed the current four-component model currently accepted as the foundational elements for the theory: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency.

Continuance commitment. This is a sense of deciding on commitment by evaluating the cost/benefit of staying or leaving, leading to staying at an organization based on non-monetary ways, including friendships, perception, prestige, or social environments (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. The CCCU is a higher education association of more than 185 institutions globally that focuses on three objectives: public advocacy, professional development, and scholarship, and experiential education, with the mission of “advancing the cause of Christ-centered higher education and helping their institutions transform students’ lives by relating scholarship and service to Biblical truth” (CCCU, 2016, para. 1).

Normative commitment. This describes a strong sense of obligation impacting a person’s desire to stay at an organization based on moral, ethical, or investment perspective based on a sense of indebtedness or charity toward the organization (Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002).

Organizational commitment. Allen and Meyer (1990) began the research on organizational commitment, setting the course for three identifiable factors: normative, affective, and continuance.

Tenure. McDaniel et al. (1988) defined *organizational tenure* as the time an individual has spent in an organization and an essential determinant of employee performance. Baek and Kim (2019) concluded that authentic leadership affected tenure, and Oh (2017) displayed a significant variance in tenure from 2 to 33 years.

Summary

Amid a tenuous portion of the world economic history, thousands of leaders and followers are leaving their current employment daily as organizational commitment shifts and declines more and more. Some predicted this occurrence, but the underlying issues of organizational commitment and how specific present or absent leaders’ impact that. Christian higher education is not immune to the same factors in the public or larger higher education world or the economic employment

demands. Studies should be conducted on the relationship between authentic leadership and authentic followership with organizational commitment, as millennials and younger generations tend to relate and react more positively to authenticity and candor (Yaacoub, 2016). Quantitative measurements were employed, utilizing the AFP and ALI with a handful of CCCU institutions, providing a geographic, size, and cultural diversity of perspective and experience from the faculty, staff, and administrative levels.

There was a need to provide more empirical evidence between authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment; therefore, this study filled a necessary gap created by the new theories and formal study (Ferrer, 2017; Sheehan, 2018; Terry, 2019). The four factors of each independent variable revealed similarities and slight differences for study, as authentic leadership and authentic followership differ only on one of the variables. Similarity and differentiation of variables could also provide a relational perspective in developing organizational commitment within the Christian higher education environment from a perspective of follower self-perception and follower perception of a leader. The populations informed segmentation between faculty, staff, and administration, but can also be looked at as a large group of contributors when removing the differentiators. The size of each institution increased the range of relatability for other organizations outside of higher education or Christian higher education, ranging from around 100 to more than 500 total employees, providing general organizational information.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Organizational commitment is essential in every industry and context, which is the reason for the current study. The context for this study involved the relationship between authentic leadership and authentic followership when improving or decreasing organizational commitment, specifically at Christian higher education institutions. Authentic leadership and authentic followership are not just techniques to commandeer support or followers; instead, they are reflections of the true self of leaders and followers who have allowed themselves to understand and be understood fully (Iszatt-White, 2019). In some ways, the practice of being and understanding one's true self as a leader or follower becomes a theory, putting word to action instead of action to the word, as seen in other cases.

As authentic leadership developed, important characteristics separated them from true authentic leaders—namely, ethics, character, and integrity, which are synonymous with trust development (Hickman, 2016). Once research began to develop, settling on a precise definition became much more complicated than anticipated, which continues to be one of the significant complexities for the theory, with different viewpoints and emphases (Gardner, Avolio et al., 2005). With a combination of viewpoints, consider a scholarly definition of authentic leadership defined as having a clear and specific knowledge about oneself in all regards (i.e., beliefs, preferences, strengths, weaknesses) and behaving consistently with that self-knowledge (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans et al., 2005; Ilies et al., 2005).

Contextually, organizational commitment within the institution of higher education is an important distinction for the current study. Many institutions in America were founded with some connection to a church or faith base, leading initially to missional commitments to the development of both moral and spiritual characteristics and well-being, although only a small number of those still maintain relationships with the church or mission of development (Marsden, 1994; Ringenberg & Noll, 2006). Many fewer religiously-affiliated colleges and universities remain connected to their original religious heritages and denominations, which led to the forming of the Christian College Coalition in 1976

(Ringenberg & Noll, 2006). Currently, the Christian College Coalition exists as the CCCU, as previously defined, which is composed of almost a few hundred schools within the United States and abroad. This study focused on institutions that are members of the CCCU, aligning with evangelical theology and powerfully integrating that theology with academics and intentional Christian faith development among their students (Ringenberg & Noll, 2006). Many of these specific institutions incorporate some amount of Bible courses or curriculum in their liberal arts degrees, in addition to chapel attendance and lifestyle covenants, which each student, staff, and faculty must agree to attend and maintain employment (Astin & Lee, 1971).

Christian colleges and universities in America will be the backdrop for this study, providing much-needed research about the followers and highly committed (or uncommitted) staff, faculty, and administration who compose some of the most loyal and unabashedly committed institutions of the present day. Many institutions have moved away from denominational ties, even within the CCCU, which creates a vital uniqueness among schools that remain loyal. In many ways, these institutions are trying to unearth the current students' authentic leadership and authentic followership, helping them understand who they are and live in alignment with that realization (Zhu et al., 2004). The impact of authentic leadership and authentic followership is not just for students. Faculty, staff, and administration must also embark on the journey to find their authentic selves at their life's calling or place of employment, which could significantly affect organizational commitment (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012).

Organizational Commitment

Mowday et al. (1979) were among the first to study the measurement of members' commitment to an organization. Mainly through the leader's lens, concerning followers, the book identified essential components of organizational commitment, one of the first to partner organizational commitment with organizational health and the impact of leader and follower behavior and relationship within the organizational context. The study presented further research on the OCQ, first developed by Porter et al. (1974) a few decades previously but

relatively unstudied and underrepresented in organizational leadership, followership, and workplace theory and practice. The study from Mowday et al. (1979) was one of the first to truly focus on organizational commitment and provide instrumented data and movement for the approach, advancing many fields, including financial performance, human resources, and organizational embeddedness, to name a few. This study began to change how leaders and executives thought about the interactions and relationships with followers within their organizations, pushing both leadership and followership theory ahead.

Herscovitch and Meyer (2002) conducted a study identifying commitment to change among organizational members, concluding that there are three dimensions: continuance (cost-based), normative (obligation-based), and affective (feelings-based). Commitment to change is more centered on an employee's level of attachment or willingness to engage with the new work rules, programs, budgets, technology, and policies presented in an organizational environment. Based on that previous study, employee motivation would take one of three forms and provide an action-based decision or result that could be related to one of the frameworks developed. This process and perspective provide a sense of uniqueness to each situation and organizational context, which is exceedingly accurate but leaves very few typical organizational dynamics in many cases. Essentially, the investigators of this study found and evaluated individuals' desire to change, in addition to the attitudes and behaviors devoted to change, which would likely lead to followers supporting any organizational change, whether enthusiastically or begrudgingly. This study began the conversation about organizational commitment; as followers' attitudes and behaviors became more open and willing to change, their commitment to the organization and willingness to accept inevitable change became stronger, along with the relationships and trust levels with leaders and executives in their organization. As research progressed, the study found that commitment to change was a stronger predictor of organizational commitment. Flexible followers cope with change and support and reinforce leadership choices toward change.

Leroy et al. (2012) studied authentic leadership behavior as a precursor to perceived leader integrity, which affects follower commitment, performance, and

success. The researchers surveyed 49 teams, within 25 different organizations, in small to similar medium-sized industries, selecting followers and leaders. The conclusions included that a positive relationship exists between authentic leadership, leader behavioral integrity, and follower work role performance, fully mediated through follower affective organizational commitment. This study showed that leaders who were open and non-defensive while interacting with their staff were perceived as being authentic, keeping promises, and aligning words with actions. Authentic leadership also showed a positive relationship to follower affective organizational commitment, increasing follower identification with organizational values, leader-follower trust, and leader identification for followers. Leader integrity also affects commitment by impacting follower work role performance, as each follower personally identifies with their leader's ability to push the organization's overall effectiveness and allows both leaders and followers to be more adaptable to changes and initiatives that occur. Leader behaviors are displayed in different ways, but when positively utilized, the effects can be necessary for organizational commitment and follower work role performance.

Jiang and Luo (2018) conducted a study comparing authentic leadership and organizational communication with employee engagement, surveying 430, with a final sample size of 391, utilizing a 7-point Likert scale questionnaire. The findings of the study showed a strong correlation between authentic leadership and organizational communication management, indicating that developing authentic leaders and promoting those same leaders might be essential to increasing organizational trust and success. In addition, the consistency of communication positively correlates to trust connecting team members and leaders, thus fostering further organizational cohesiveness and continuity. Authentic leadership shows a concern for others, creating an environment where words and actions are valued and cultivating an organizational communication system rooted in transparency and authenticity. Authentic leaders and followers are intent on inviting the other group to contribute to decision-making. Although not through consensus, decisions and interactions are an essential part of soliciting and providing feedback from the other groups, which creates some levels of accountability between leaders and followers,

further solidifying the relationship between the two groups. Leaders themselves cannot create a fulfilling work-related atmosphere but must engage followers, enabling and activating followers. Authentic leadership and engaging followers have been linked through transparent communication to increase engagement and interaction between leaders and followers. Three main takeaways from the study were to (a) develop communication mechanisms, (b) communicate relevant, complete, accurate, and substantial content to followers, and (c) disclose accurately and timely an organization's activities and plans, in addition to holding those activities accountable.

Pietraszewski (2020) reviewed theory and practice involving leadership and followership through coordinating and creating cooperation within a group to be embraced, successfully implemented, and executed; however, this is the vast minority of organizations. Multiple leadership roles were mentioned, including mentorship, rhetoric, task management, policing, and coalition representative, while both positive and negative aspects of each leadership and followership were also portrayed. Multiple predictions are made, along with different evaluations of atmospheric and environmental components that add to the complexity of organizational culture and levels of commitment or engagement. The article concluded that many leadership principles are consistent and somewhat standard across the board organizationally but applied uniquely to each context. Leadership has been more decentralized recently, becoming more information processing-oriented among leaders and followers. This change necessitates the creation, maintenance, execution coordination, and collective action within an organization more than ever before to create success and momentum within each context.

Koontz (2021) conducted a study on organizational culture from the perspective of authentic followership involving the perception of followers, explicitly mentioning organizational commitment as a contributing result of strong culture for those followers who stay and are committed and a rationale for those who choose to move on and are disconnected. Culture, as a word, is currently popular among leadership and followership groups, referring to employee or follower behaviors, values, and rituals. The study examines perceived

organizational culture and authentic followership using validated cross-sectional surveys, using a one-way analysis-of-variance test (ANOVA) utilizing the instrument of an organizational culture assessment instrument (OCAI), a 16-item survey with a 5-point Likert scale. A large global biopharmaceutical company was used for sampling, which limits the breadth of results translation, but still provides an ample number of respondents to satisfy the targeted number, with an assumed response rate of 20% and actual participation of 344, with 189 validated respondents. The study identified multiple different culture types but found no significance among the different types. Nevertheless, dominant market culture was present, as perceived by more than half of the participants. The study discussed complexities of organizational culture, which further validated the survey results involving the perception of followers but could have also been impacted by the company's restructuring at the time. One notable result was the validation of previous theories, providing solid evidence that the participants were authentic followers adapting to change in their environment with strong autonomous motivation and a genuine, enabled sense of energy to help the organization meet its goals. Participants were loyal to their beliefs and values. They exhibited behaviors and perceptions consistent with enduring followers who choose to participate in an organization's culture and success for all the right reasons.

Authentic Leadership

Terry (1993) was one of the first to bring the theory to the forefront of theoretical study, publishing his book at an early stage in theory development, urging all who read to practice and act-out leadership daily. At the time, the book was centered around a relatively new topic of authenticity-based leadership, where characteristics like vision and ethics were valued more highly than authority, transactions, or charisma. The book was primarily anecdotal, lacking empirical research in most ways, but was one of the first published ideals of the young theory, prompting further study for validation and instrumentation and effectively causing a paradigm shift in thinking about what leadership was and could be. The book centered around putting leadership principles into action, no longer theorizing about what factors might be essential or discussing them but affording leaders and

followers alike a chance to act on their ideas and inclinations, calling both to courageous action and authenticity, creating a more solid and sure foundation for relationship and connection between both at the organizational and interpersonal levels.

Avolio et al. (2004) continued unlocking the theory of authentic leadership by studying how authentic leaders impacted follower attitudes and behaviors. This research centered around the idea that leaders and followers have a positive correlation between followers' identification with their leader and the organization at large, creating a shared purpose between the two parties. The more positive interactions or endorsements that leaders gain, the more the followers' opportunity to identify with the leader is presented, creating great understandings between the two and leading to more positive follower perception. The two key results from the study showed that the great connection and relationship between leader and follower, the greater the followers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment tended to be. The research was purely theoretical, though, with no fieldwork conducted to validate the perceived relationships or resulting performance enhancements of followers and the influence of leaders. Although this was theoretical, the current study is influenced by the concepts. It seeks to validate the relationship between followers and leaders quantitatively, taking into consideration followers' perceptions of both them and leaders, identifying positive factors between the two, utilizing authentic leadership as an independent variable and organizational commitment as a dependent variable.

George (2003) began talking about authentic leadership as an action or behavior-driven theory, as leaders consistently behave ethically to create trust and positive relationships with followers based on interactions and observations. Continued emphasis was put on leaders' actions to create a better understanding for followers, creating stronger relationships. George is one of the first people to attach a working definition to authentic leadership, stating, "being yourself; being the person you were created to be" (p. 11), which underscores the initial theory he developed, understanding oneself to be truly oneself and present that person to followers, in whole truth and transparency, thus creating trust and honest,

connected relationship between leader and follower. George's work was not purely theoretical but was based on his extensive time as a corporate executive, interacting and interviewing 125 successful leaders. He was the first to attach dimensions to the theory, initially settling on five distinct dimensions of authentic leaders: (a) they understand their purpose, (b) they have strong values about the right thing to do, (c) they establish trusting relationships with others, (d) they demonstrate self-discipline and act on their values, and (e) they are passionate about their mission (i.e., act from their heart). In addition, George underscored two other significant factors and aspects of authentic leadership, although they did not make the list of five dimensions: compassion and heart. One of the redeeming qualities of authentic leadership, whether in good times or bad, is when a leader is in tune with themselves and able to be truly oneself, it gives the followers and the organization a sense of security and stability.

Avolio et al. (2004) completed a study on the impact of authentic leaders on follower attitudes and behaviors, advancing authentic leadership much further than anyone before them. These scholars looked at authenticity and leadership as a distinctly different ways of leading, promoting commitment to the job by creating a definitive connection between leader and follower. Leaders can positively influence and strengthen the relationship with followers, leading to followers increased positive belief in the leader's intent and actions, and direct identification with the leader. This identification creates alignment within an organization, where trust is developed between leaders and followers, providing similar attitudes and behavior throughout the organization, building immense trust, and powerfully moving organizations forward. This concept depends significantly on the followers' perceptions of a leader and their intentions and actions, contributing to the need for this study to consider followers' perceptions of their leader and themselves. Follower perception of leadership and self-perceptions have been linked to organizational success, often elevating leaders' voices as successful leaders within the industry or general society.

Shamir and Eilam (2005) studied authentic leadership, authentic leaders, and authentic leadership development, specifically a leader's self-knowledge, self-

concept clarity, self-concordance, and personal-role merger. They concluded that this is expressed through their behavior and allows followers to identify and connect with the leader based on these factors. Authentic leaders are often skilled at sharing and connecting their distinctly authentic life experiences to their current followers' lives and context. A definition was presented for the word *eudaimonia*, defined as being true to oneself, pointing to this concept reflecting the connectivity between each leader and follower's life experiences and the actual values that guide the actions and attitudes of each person. Eudaimonic motivation could provide the most potent form of engagement for both followers and leaders, creating a state of heightened well-being, and fully displaying the attributes and endowments to the greatest extent in their organizations and communities.

Avolio and Gardner (2005a, 2005b) researched the mechanics of authentic leadership development, suggesting that followers become able or aware of their characteristics and how their behaviors help achieve organizational outcomes through the display and actions of the leader. Leaders can help followers become more self-aware and learn how to regulate positive and negative behaviors through leader's example, creating greater transparency between the groups and authentic behavior. Avolio and Gardner also pointed out that each person operates within a structure of their creation, recognizing that people always possess the choice to follow. Positive psychological capital was discussed, such as positive moral perspective, self-awareness, and self-regulation. Leaders can increase or raise the self-awareness or self-regulation of followers, helping to create internal regulatory processes and each of the four authentic leadership components through authentic behavior and self-knowledge. This process is symbiotic; as leaders learn more about their true-self and display that consistently, they are exemplifying this behavior to their followers, creating connectivity between the two and deepening potential for influence, organizational synergy, and success.

After the initial theory development, Walumbwa et al. (2008) were able to define authentic leadership in a newer way as, "A pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective,

balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with follower's, fostering positive self-development" (p. 1122). Walumbwa et al. were credited with drawing the number of components for authentic leadership theory from five to four and creating the current dimensions accepted as the theoretical constructs, effectively operationalizing the theory. In addition, this research led to the development of the first authentic leadership instrument for testing, the ALQ. While this instrument was not chosen for this study, this was the foundational instrument for the theory. Walumbwa et al. concluded that authentic leadership effectively advances follower belief in leadership and positive, sustainable organizational results, accomplished by building trust and support with followers. In addition, they found a positive relationship between authentic leadership and supervisor-rated performance.

Palanski and Yammarino (2007) conducted a study on authentic leadership and its connectivity with elements of integrity, which is considered a root construct of authentic leadership. While integrity is an individual-level concept, the connection between authentic leadership is clear, defined by a "consistency between actions and words" (p. 406). Integrity and trust were also linked in their study, creating validated reasons for followers to desire to follow their leader, showing connectivity between levels of trust and levels of integrity. Although mentioned as an individual-level concept, this can coalesce beyond individual to group and organization values and actions. Through analysis, this research proved that intra-person, dyad level, group level, and organizational level could also be associated with levels of integrity. The key to transferring value integrity to actionable integrity can be linked to the integrity and trust level between leader and follower, increasing the levels of integrity with the increase in transparency and authenticity exhibited and realized by both the follower and leader.

Ladkin and Taylor (2010) studied authenticity, concluding that it was self-referred, allowing people to begin understanding themselves from the external world. Each leader and follower's development of self-awareness was developed from experience, disseminating from the internal conversation and rumination, flowing out of the person into the external actions and behaviors by which both

leaders and followers are known. Thus, experiences help leaders become self-aware and more fully function with followers, developing trust and cohesion through more authentic interactions as each leader becomes more self-aware. Their research critique examined President Barack Obama's speaking, calling it "method acting," fully embracing his role, allowing him to connect best and be perceived as authentic by his audience. This also included some examination of authentic followership and the detailed research on authentic leadership. This could have been taking toward potential negative aspects of authentic leadership, where leaders embrace a character and lean into that persona, fully embracing the role as accurate and authentic, even though it is not truly who that leader is; however, in their head, they have completely given themselves to that ideal.

Avolio and Luthans (2011) began working with the positive psychology aspects, especially those with organizational context, showing results for greater self-awareness and behaviors in leaders, creating positive leadership development. Authenticity was described by characteristics like confidence, resiliency, transparency, optimism, future orientation, follower-first mentality, and moral/ethical in these leaders who tended to put energy into developing leaders on their team instead of manipulating situations for selfish gain. These authentic leaders were genuinely interested in the success of the followers on their teams, often displayed by the characteristics of service-related behaviors toward those followers to aid in their development. Luthans worked with Avolio early in the 2000s before joining fellow authentic leadership experts and researchers later in the decade and furthering the research on the topic, expanding the topic vastly in that time.

Neider and Schriesheim (2011) are responsible for creating the ALI, which builds on the work of (Walumbwa et al., 2008), measuring the independent variables of self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing. The current study used the ALI as an instrument. The ALI built on previous work to eliminate potential garbage parameters included with the original questionnaire, potentially inflating the first model. This instrument provided an alternative way of measuring authentic leadership. The first survey

involved 72 undergraduate and graduate participants engaged in leadership courses but still needed to cover authentic leadership in their coursework. The second survey encompassed 536 undergraduate students during a presidential race in 2008, revealing that authentic leadership could not be treated as a universal construct. The third test led the authors to determine that each dimension was not statistically significant from the other. The result caused the authors to recommend the continued testing of authentic leadership as a global dimension. Each dimension must be tested empirically and treated as an independent variable in different settings and contexts that the researchers determined.

Gardner et al. (2011) conducted a comprehensive study of authentic leadership, concluding that, at that time, a limited amount of empirical research made it difficult to assess the theory's validity and positive effects that proponents assert. After further examination, the terms authentic and leadership were evaluated, even going as far back as the root of the words, into the Greek language to define what is meant and understood presently about authenticity and the implications of this leadership style. Gardner et al. (2011) wrote about authenticity, saying that it originally meant "to have full power," which functionally within this theory describes a leader or follower should be, "the master of their own domain" (p. 1121). They continued dissecting the concept of authenticity further, creating four mechanisms that encompass authenticity: (a) awareness or knowledge and trust in one's thoughts, feelings, motives, and values; (b) unbiased processing where the leader is objective about and accepting of their own positive and negative characteristics; (c) behavior which is understood to be associated with actions that are based on one's own true preferences, values, and needs rather than merely acting to please others secure rewards or avoid punishments; and (d) relational orientation where achieving and valuing truthfulness and openness in one's close relationships (p. 1121).

Leroy et al. (2012) conducted a study regarding follower commitment and performance, specifically looking at different levels of individuals, groups, and organizations, driving integrity, improved work performance, and organizational commitment at varying levels between each distinction. The study's hypotheses

stated that authentic leadership behavior was positively related to follower perception of leader behavior and behavioral integrity, explaining the relationship between authentic leadership and follower organizational commitment. This study used the ALQ (Walumbwa et al., 2008), indicating that authentic leadership was positively related to leader behavior integrity, behavioral integrity mediated between authentic leadership and organizational commitment, and the leader's integrity was positively associated with followers' affective commitment. The study compared authentic leadership and followership dimensions from a self-reporting perspective, generally showing connectivity between authentic leadership and integrity. The findings of the study described authentic leadership as an inward-focused, reflective concept, while integrity was an outward-focused concept, specifically exemplified by perceptions of others. Based on the study, authentic leaders tend to embrace behaviors that align with the leader's values, validating their outward actions on inward principles. Authentic leaders are more capable of knowing who they are and acting accordingly, explaining those values openly, and even asking forgiveness when mistakes are made on the leader's part, leading to enhanced trust and identification between leader, follower, and the organization.

Azanza et al. (2013) conducted a quantitative study measuring authentic leadership dimensions and their relationship to organizational commitment, providing insight into the drivers for job satisfaction with 571 participants from over 100 Spanish companies with an organizational culture survey. The hypotheses ranged from positive relationships between flexible cultures and increased job satisfaction, authentic leadership, and employee satisfaction, to authentic leadership mediating between flexible culture and employee satisfaction. The findings revealed that employees who felt they were in a higher level of flexible culture at their jobs reported higher levels of authentic leadership from their leaders. The higher flexibility was positively related to job satisfaction. Employees who thought their leader practiced authenticity also reported higher levels of job satisfaction. Although the main variables were organizational commitment while studying authentic leadership, job satisfaction presented one of the more interesting possible

alternative variables for testing. This created more positive behaviors from followers who perceived authentic characteristics from their leaders, positively connecting flexible work culture to follower behavior. Azanza et al. used variables of education, organizational size, seniority, age, and years with the leader as discrete, continuous, and ordinal variables throughout the study.

Hogg and Adelman (2013) conducted a study on Uncertain Identity Theory (UIT), contrasting authentic leadership. They could, however, be used as a reverse of the lens on authentic leadership to identify how people identify or are prevented from identifying with leaders and followers. One of the keys to reducing uncertainty is the importance of the topic or cause, seeking a resolution only to solvable problems, often revolving around the most critical factors of self-identification and group identification clarity. When individuals, whether leaders or followers, know who they are, how to behave, what to think, and who others are, they can likely make an informed decision in choosing a side and identifying with one group, even in extreme situations. The initial study utilized 82 participants, using interviews and videos, showing a decline in moderating behaviors after seeing the videos. The subsequent study of 319 and 375 participants were run similarly and predictably responded comparably. The study concluded that individuals were compelled to identify with one group or another, even among the most extreme situations, which draws comparisons to the function of followers and leaders in organizational contexts for this study. There are a few scenarios where leaders and followers are indifferent to each other. Even in extreme situations, a choice is made to embrace or disengage with one another.

Hinojosa et al. (2014) conducted a hierarchical/multiple-regression analysis using the data collection method of coefficient of determinants, concluding that there was a positive relationship between the leader-follower relationship and participant confidence levels. This study specifically engaged attachment theory, using the four dimensions of authentic leadership, per the ALQ. The authors hypothesized that leaders and followers who were more secure and confident in their attachment style were more likely to behave authentically, exhibiting authentic leadership characteristics, creating higher levels of success in a positive

correlation with the confidence of each partnership. Hinojosa et al. encouraged this study, recommending the future study of congruence between leadership and followership, which this study will undertake with a multiple-regression analysis utilizing the ALI and AFP. This process creates a bond of trust between leaders and followers, enabling followers to be confident that the leader will provide a consistent and reliable environment and responsiveness to their needs. This relationship and positive interaction between the leader and follower allow followers to enact authentic followership, offering feedback, critical ideation, and potentially dissenting viewpoints to leaders' proposed decisions and plans.

Steffens et al. (2016) conducted a field study of authentic leadership in enhancing followership within a single institution of higher education in Australia. This quantitative study mainly focused on the perception of leaders and the prioritization of collective and self-interests, specifically when organizational or collective interests were prioritized above self-interests. The authors measured authentic leadership through hierarchical/multiple regression analysis and coefficients of determination, with each of the four dimensions, and the relationships to organizational commitment through self-reporting surveys and volunteer participant selection. Followers were hypothesized to be more willing to follow a leader who prioritized collective interests above leader-centric interests, creating an authentic relationship between the two—and, in turn, increasing trust and followership. Both perspectives of the leader and perspective of the follower were evaluated and used to complete the two studies with sample sizes of 74 and 255, respectively. Both studies concluded that leaders increased the perception of authenticity when organizational or collective interests were prioritized above self-interests and were more prone to be followed by followers. The current study utilized authentic leadership and organizational commitment variables, evaluated through a multiple-regression analysis, continuing to build on studies of this nature and direction.

Aguirre (2017) conducted a phenomenological study regarding leader experiences addressing the four dimensions of authentic leadership and how those are affected by the lived experiences of leaders, for good and evil. With the

growing need for authenticity in leadership, Aguirre examined some seminal causes of authenticity, from positive and negative experiences, and drives the character of authenticity to be brought out into each person's leadership. Often, leaders and followers are cultivated through their lived experiences, which helps develop specific characteristics present but not embraced before that event or experience. Results were presented, identifying some positive and negative results, including the factors that led to each of the experiences and embracing of the behaviors.

Ferrer (2017) conducted a study using the ALQ (the three-component model), looking at small businesses and how authentic leadership behaviors were perceived from both the leaders' and followers' perspectives about their organizational commitment, specifically to defense contractors. The survey accounted for 201 total respondents and controlled for variables of age, gender, experience, education, professional experience, employee status, ethnicity, job tier role, and geographical location within the workplace environment. The study sought to answer three robust research questions and found that significant relationships exist between authentic leadership and the three dimensions of organizational commitment. Conclusions and recommendations for future research also included a lack of research has been conducted regarding this aspect of organizational commitment and authentic leadership behaviors, specifically within a small business or with small business leaders, which can be tied to private Christian colleges and universities, as each is in a similar or smaller size to the surveyed defense contractors. This study also recommends exploring the control variables of income level and internal types of professional development training programs which are not considered for this study. Using a different instrument is also offered, as the ALQ does measure specific items that other instruments, such as the ALI, might cover or offer.

Bandura and Kavussanu (2018) studied the role of authentic leadership in a sports context while including factors such as enjoyment and commitment. In many ways, athletes function as followers and their coaches as leaders. While not wholly synonymous with business or organizational structure, similarities can be taken from the context. This study focused on the definition of authentic leadership as a

behavioral approach with positive psychology and ethical environments, creating the four dimensions of authentic leadership between leaders and followers, which leads to the positive organizational, team, and individual results. Trust was discussed thoroughly in the study, specifically referring to the development of trust through authenticity by coaches as the central element of developing a high-quality coach-player (leader-follower) relationship. There need to be more studies regarding authentic leadership within sports. The study surveyed 435 British college athletes, a little over half male, with a more significant majority of the athletes reporting a male coach, utilizing the ALQ and the Sport Commitment Model for evaluation of sport commitment. Athletes' perceptions of coaches' who appeared to be honest and open but also perceived as role models for the athletes were linked to their feelings of enjoyment and a genuine appreciation of the sport in which they were participating. In addition, the findings indicated that coaches who communicate openly with their athletes and act consistently toward their athletes, creating alignment between their words and behaviors, engendered an athletes' trust, thus affecting the enjoyment of the sport and having a positive effect on residual social and personal exchanges following the coach-athlete experience. Finally, the results also showed that coaches who displayed authentic behaviors fostered athletes who felt more dedicated or determined to achieve their athletic and team goals, as well as a commitment to the coach, showing a direct relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment between coach and athlete in the sport.

Ehret (2018) conducted a quantitative study with over 1,000 participants globally, utilizing the Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk), and measured the impact of a leader's expression of transparency on a follower's confidence in her or his ability while considering several covariates. The study aimed to advance authentic leadership theory, explicitly focusing on situational awareness and transparency as core concepts to authenticity, successfully advancing the theory and research associated with the theory. Several results were noted: higher leadership transparency led to higher levels of follower confidence, transparency was linked to situational awareness, and a statistical significance between different geographies,

but no statistically significant differences between gender, years of work experience, education, age, and race in the United States. A notable comment in the last chapter was essential to include in any review of research, stating, “an important aspect of leadership transparency is determining how much information to disclose, and the manner and timing in which it is disclosed” (Ehret, 2018, p. 114). Full transparency is a powerful tool, and should be used as such while creating meaningful and genuine connections with followers and organizational followers. The results showed that the degree of transparency exhibited by a leader had a positive relationship with the level of confidence perceived by the follower regarding the leader’s ability and behaviors.

Medina (2018) conducted a quantitative study of 212 followers to understand better the relationship between followers’ perceptions of leaders’ authentic leadership style (all four components of authentic leadership) and followers’ Organizational Citizenship Behavior. The survey was conducted within the National Council of Research and University Administrators, utilizing the ALQ and the Organizational Citizenship Behavior Checklist (OCB-C), a 20-item scale analyzing organizational citizenship behaviors at individual and organizational levels. For this study, the experience was a significant factor in predicting followers’ organizational citizenship behaviors at the individual level at research universities among research administrators.

Sidani and Rowe (2018) studied authentic leadership, attempting to look at the theory and concept from a different perspective. Rather than a style or preference, the researchers posited that authentic leadership could be considered a process. Followers play a crucial role in legitimizing of leaders’ authenticity, often activated by ethical or moral considerations, battling against the current topic of moral relativism that is affecting much of our current leadership, regardless of the industry or area. This research aimed at similar methodologies as leaders and followers have been tied together in previous theories and studies. The follower was more prized in this study, necessitating an embracement of the leaders’ behaviors unless deemed morally appropriate and acceptable. The authors concluded that authentic leadership is indeed a relational concept based on

follower-centric involvement, meaning followers possess much of the power that propels the organization or group forward, creating a two-way relationship that necessitates buy-in and involvement from both parties, remaining true to themselves and always acting ethically. This study was vital in establishing the importance of leadership development and followership development, which are incredibly valuable and vital to a healthy, thriving organizational culture, providing progress toward symbiotic values and behaviors.

Adigüzel and Kuloğlu (2019) conducted a quantitative study of almost 500 white-collar employees from the public and private sectors, evaluating authentic leadership and emotional intelligence in organizational outcomes. Emotional commitment has some connectivity with followership in that the employee with more significant amounts of both understands and accepts the organizational goals and values and expresses attachment and ownership of them. It also creates feelings of belonging between leaders and followers. When leaders are more authentic and create trust with employees, followers identify with that characteristic or value which strengthens follower motivation to reach goals, even increasing that motivation relative to the strength of the connection between the leader and follower's trust and authenticity. Connections between authentic leadership and emotional commitment were tied together positively, as leaders were more authentic and transparent, emotional commitment and organizational commitment rose positively with that, leading to higher organizational retention and heightened organizational identity, which positively connects authentic leadership to organizational commitment and higher performance and success throughout the entire process.

Alvesson and Einola (2019) conducted a study on the literature of authentic leadership, taking to task many of the theory's basic tenants and providing some legitimate critiques of possible shortcomings and flaws with the theory and different components of practice. These critiques are fair and point to a need for continued research and unearthing of not just theory but practice and behaviors that join the two. Some of the pointed critiques of authentic leadership bear out issues with a lack of leadership components, over-positivism, or looking past back

behaviors in favor of the previous relationship developed (giving the benefit of the doubt too often), and in general considering all negative aspects of current and former leadership, as there are many examples of what not to do in our current world. While Alvesson and Einola might not be moving the research on the theory of authentic leadership forward, the article provides a realistic check on where the theory is at and what still needs to be overcome, as critiques often do. Authentic leadership is appropriately attached to positivity, as there is a positive relationship between the four dimensions of the theory and developing a relationship and organizational synergy between leaders and followers. The valid points made in the study are more a collective compilation of advances and studies that need to take place, as well as the shadow side of any leadership theory. Suppose women and men are leading and following in organizations. In that case, there will always be unethical or immoral behavior, but this is not authentic leadership and should not define now or at any point. Instead, this study should caution readers, implementers, or proponents of authentic leadership that there is always an option to use power or influence for good or bad, to motivate or manipulate, and to bring life or death. For authentic leaders, there is wisdom and reality, not complete negativity, urging champions for authentic leadership to continue to grow the theory and behave in alignment with espoused and actual values.

Iszatt-White (2019) reflected on authentic leadership in their study using a literature review to answer early stated questions—as they called it, “interrogating the literature within the field” (p. 358). Most of the publications lacked depth but were published in the same academic journal based on leadership, were from America, and were almost always one-sided in their research or positivity toward authentic leadership. Iszatt-White made direct intentions to get to the depth and root of the authentic leadership construct, attempting to sort unbiased through the research and contributors to the theory to discover where authentic leadership is as a theory and construct within current reality. The main factor that begins to separate authentic leadership from other theories, specifically transformational leadership (TL), is the knowledge of self, measured almost exclusively quantitatively, and general appreciation and participation in ethical and moral rightness. Because

authentic leadership is a practice-based construct, it became necessary for the researcher to marry the theory and practice, recommending future research to move towards an actionable, authentic display and away from the inner self-knowledge and positive psychological currents that have guided theory development. In essence, this scholar found that it is more important to act out authentic leadership than to talk about it, pushing qualitative, people-oriented research to increase and flowery, feel-good authentic leadership theory to begin looking at ways to increase actionable character and integrity within everyday relational situations.

Sandhu and Dastgeer (2019) conducted a study measuring the potential gaps between psychological empowerment and authentic leadership behavior, showing an impact on the employee job level outcomes, such as work engagement, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. The study included a sample of 238 respondents, predominantly male, and posited that authenticity from a leader can increase the connectivity and employee-level outcomes of an organization, creating higher rates of productivity, longer tenures, and more satisfying work cultures and conditions altogether. The authors utilized an adapted ALQ with a 5-point Likert scale, and LMX 7-point Likert scale allowed Sandhu and Dastgeer to predict that connectivity between leader and follower results from authentic leadership and psychological empowerment. The structural distance was also noted to have a direct effect on moderating relationships between the two factors of authentic leadership and psychological empowerment related to the proximity of leaders to followers and vice versa, remarking that the distance leaders keep from followers directly relates to the relationships developed and levels of trust between the two parties in organizational contexts.

Terry (2019) focused on studying the positive personal sentiments instead of the negative, but studied authentic leadership and authentic followership within the areas of job involvement and organizational commitment through quantitative, nonexperimental, regression study, sampling 83 respondents and utilizing the ALI, Job Involvement Questionnaire, and OCQ, while also controlling for gender, education, and tenure. Both hypotheses were supported, showing that followers' perception of a leader's authentic leadership is related to the employee's job

involvement and organizational commitment. Terry studied entrepreneurial organizations from the state of Michigan, which does limit the translatability of results, but provides enough diversity that could be related to many situations. The findings of this study reinforced the previous work done by Kouzes and Posner (2003), who posited that leadership is not about leaders, but about the followers and the influence a leader had or has on those followers. The results of Terry's study also point to the actions or behaviors of a leader having a positive relationship with the perceptions and behaviors of those followers, especially within the concepts of organizational commitment and employee job involvement. This study focused more on organizations that may have been marginalized or excluded by previous studies, choosing specifically smaller, entrepreneurial organizations in a specified area of the state. Follower job involvement and organizational commitment can translate directly to positive outcomes, just as opposing forces can contribute to failures. As Terry discussed, however, the method for analyzing organizational success by profits would be a potential residual factor of authentic leadership, not a direct result of leader authenticity, although organizationally valuable. The information and study may be more applicable to entrepreneurial organizations than to further developing authentic leadership theory and behavior.

Gardner et al. (2021) conducted a study by answering both positive and negative questions, using antecedents to authentic leadership theory to provide an honest look at the strengths and weaknesses of much of the literature compiled in recent years. Some critiques addressed valid positive and negative aspects of authentic leadership, giving a well-balanced perspective to the study. Authentic leadership is a complex theory to pin down because the practice of authentic leadership is more vitally important than the theory development, in some ways, making the concept and dimensions unwanted, fake, or questionably authentic if leaders act in the truest sense of their "authentic self." The positive side of authentic leadership can turn into a utopian ideal that brings all the good feelings, results, actions, and dispositions, without any of the bad or shadow side, effectively motivating and creating a perfectly symbiotic relationship between the leader and follower, leading to success, higher productivity, and longevity with the tenure of

employees and leaders. The negative side or shadow side of authentic leadership begs questions of whether leaders or followers are acting in the authenticity—or whether that is even possible—leaning toward leader manipulation, with ulterior motives toward the leader’s selfish gain being the root cause of any pseudo-authenticity between leaders and followers within an organizational setting. The vulnerability or disdain for either extreme is noted strongly, but the truth and practical implications of the theory are probably somewhere in the middle of the exemplifying. Self-protection, pride, and many other factors certainly play a pivotal role in the making and development of authentic leaders, as their focus changes from self to follower. It is a fair question to ask whether humans are capable of authentic leadership, but one’s chosen perspective and reality should reflect a brighter hope for humanity.

Sharma (2022) conducted a quantitative, nonexperimental correlation study utilizing the multiple regression analysis and the ALI, AFP, and a shortened OCQ, within the context of Fiji, using tenure as a moderator to evaluate the relationship between authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment. The study also used age and education as control variables for the 156 participants responding. The results validated the positive relationship between authentic leadership dimensions and organizational commitment, including a disproof of tenure as a moderating variable between authentic leadership and organizational commitment. Authentic leadership was not the only independent variable analyzed, however, as authentic followership was also compared relationally to organizational commitment, extending dramatically the small volume of research on followership, specifically authentic followership. Tenure did not have a moderating effect on authentic followership and organizational commitment either. Both authentic leadership and authentic followership were positively related to organizational commitment, providing empirical evidence that should encourage leaders to embrace tenants of authentic leadership and authentic followership to help create increased levels of organizational commitment within organizations, which would practically insist that each leader begin to delve into their persona and core personal beliefs to present those daily to followers, showing

who they are and aspire to be with more than words. This study was conducted in a relatively unique location and convenience sampling, along with the lengthy time required to complete the survey by participants, which could have affected data with survey response bias. Three weeks for response is reasonable, as well as potential cultural biases in the North American-Oceanic settings. The practical implications of these findings included: leaders satisfying the higher-order needs of followers, authentic leadership could be practiced while also meeting the leadership and followership roles, utilizing self-reflection and self-awareness to bolster both skills and practical theories, and that both authentic leadership and authentic followership when applied together can increase the satisfaction of follower's basic needs.

Authentic Followership

As leadership theory grew in popularity throughout the 1980s, one theory has always stood in contrast and relative acceptance to leadership: before one leads, one must learn to follow. Many leaders have declared this for decades, built explicitly into the military culture in America at West Point, as leaders, officers, and cadets are conditioned to learn by following to develop leadership character and behavior (Litzinger & Schaefer, 1982). Building leadership or followership traits through experience contrasts with the early great-man theory (Burns, 1978). It takes more of a traits approach (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991), with gathering skills as a follower that create a more informed and aware leader, capable of empathy, industry, and specific organizational knowledge, in addition to the four dimensions of authentic followership. Followership is reversing the lens of leadership, putting followers' needs in front of leaders' needs, effectively making decisions with the masses in mind rather than the top few, leading Chaleff (1995) to claim that "the mark of a great leader is the development and growth of followers: the mark of a great follower is the growth of leaders" (p. 30). This dyadic relationship between leader and follower depends extensively on the development, depth, and strength of the interactions and growth between the two groups (Hollander, 1992). At the dawn of the 21st century, Colangelo (2000) noted that the follower role had gained new attention, which brought with it an increased level of responsibility, shifting from

the past theory of leaders necessitating follower development to follower empowerment as organizations began coordinating followers' independence.

Follower roles have shifted as leadership and followership styles have adapted to new organizational demands and found ways to create more remarkable organizational successes and health. In many ways, followership became a new organizational leadership style or perspective, emphasizing followers' development and empowerment over the leaders' needs, the largest and most potentially important force of any organization (Kelley, 1992). Lee et al. (1992) discussed and studied personal characteristics and experiences that followers bring to the organization upon entry, helping understand what shapes the subsequent work attitudes and behaviors during both organizational entry and continuation, impacting continued work attitudes and behaviors throughout any employee's tenure. Followers behave differently in different contexts, leading Beckerleg (2002) to conduct a study on principals and their role in followership, concluding that "leadership lies in polishing and liberating and enabling the variety of gifts people bring to the organizations" (p. 61), referring to it as an art of leadership. Authentic followership takes a different look at followership in general, moving from a simple change of perspective to a pattern of behavior that fosters greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency of followers, fostering their positive self-development (Epperson, 2015; Leroy et al., 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Gardner, Avolio, Luthans et al. (2005) also developed a self-based model of follower development, effectively joining the leader and follower with a need for further development from each perspective. The basis of the model remained the same, finding authenticity, knowing oneself, and acting in congruence with one's most authentic self. Their study continued the thought that authentic followership is a critical component of leader development, not simply a strategy that disseminated from authentic leadership to be more successful, but would truly develop the four dimensions of authentic leadership within the leader as they positively identified and acted out their truest self. The authors pointed to follower outcomes of the leadership behavior, which could benefit both parties: workplace well-being, trust,

and engagement, which would contribute toward organizational commitment. One of the most critical components of this study was identifying the gap in knowledge between leaders and followers, which this current study attempts to answer as the relationship between authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment is developed.

Baker (2007) discussed the early foundational theories of followership, tracing it back to Chaleff's (1995) initial work starting from 1955, leading to his book in 1995, involving social science research regarding followers and followership as the theory developed in the 1980s and became more recognized. This article provides a foundational element to the study of followership that had yet to be theoretically provided. The theory is explored from beginning to end, including great man theory. Included in the results are the notions that followership has its roots in social exchange theories, attribution, and small group theories, disseminated from social sciences and psychology fields, explaining why followership and organizational behavior are littered with these concepts and foundational elements. Followership includes a follower-first idea that works if followers find the relationship and agreement beneficial. Baker's work addresses much of the leader-follower relationship, identifying benefits and drawbacks for each perspective and periodically referring to it as transactional, especially when the theory and practicality are one-sided, as social-exchange theories tend to be.

Kellerman (2008) wrote a book dissecting many leadership theories and shifting focus toward followership, providing a foundational look at followership and views of current and future leadership based on modern-day phenomena. This article presented a case in which leaders and persons in authority are growing weaker than previous generations, and followers are growing stronger comparatively, creating a sizeable shift in the leader-follower relationship and pushing followership to the forefront of organizational dynamics. These phenomena are represented in political and societal examples within modern-day exemplifying by societal divisions and upheaval within the leader-follower dynamics. The article focused on the shift in power from leader to follower, reinforcing that outcomes are shifting away from just leadership but are more dependent on

followers assuming higher levels of responsibility and engaging in shared outcomes of the organization. Leadership is no longer given or assumed by position or organizational structure, fundamentally changing the structural distribution of power in many organizations. Kellerman stopped short of referring to the perceptions and shifts in organizational dynamics as a leadership crisis; however, after reading the book, that can easily be assumed and concluded from the contents.

Pitron (2008) conducted a qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study based on the thought that leaders should promote followership while each follower increases the understanding of whom they are as a follower and increases organizational performance. The study examined 20 aerospace companies that the government contracted in Florida. The purpose of the study aimed to identify exemplary follower behavior patterns using Kelley's (1992) exemplary followership style. Participants were predominantly male, with most of the sample having more than 10 years with the organization, participating in voluntary, open-ended interviews, resulting in 15 overall attributes. The findings of the study validated the existence of the phenomenon of exemplary followership and the influence of this behavior on the scheduled performance indices (SPI) and cost performance indices (CPI), suggesting that exemplary followership has a positive influence on organizational performance, potentially encouraging leadership communities to focus more on followers and the relationship with them in practical opportunities.

Riggio et al. (2008) composed the first comprehensive book addressing how followers contribute to effective leadership and organizational commitment, success, and culture. This book examined theory and practice, promoting a positive followership ideal and identifying the role followers play in forming new roles in the leader-follower organizational relationship. Many of the foremost authorities on followership, especially authentic followership, contributed to the book, creating and unpacking newer ideas and theories that could contribute to organizational change and success as new models of followership emerged throughout the book and explorations. The most impactful component of the book is the recommendations for future leader-follower relationships and fresh ideas for both

theoretical and practical implementations, covering a wide array of topics and contributions to followership from many of the foremost authorities and researchers to date, providing critical theory and practice movement and momentum for the development of followers especially, but also providing adequate, leader-centric information to help both grow in a positive direction. This book was highly influential in moving the theory and practice forward, providing real examples to both parties.

Kilburn (2010) conducted a study examining the typologies of followership, concluding that two specific activities became highly evident in successful leadership-followership: (a) support for the leader and (b) challenging of the leader. The study utilized Kelley's (1992) Followership Questionnaire with 20 questions and a forced-choice scale, bringing attention to the concept of followership that had remained relatively wide-open for research to that point in time. The author concluded that followers contribute significantly to leaders' success; examining what type of followers adhere to specific follower scenarios and leaders' identities, the study could prove helpful for leaders to understand followers better and what motivates and creates effective followership. A connection was also developed between an informed leader and an effective leader, necessitating that leaders seek to understand followers and what creates the environment where both leaders and followers thrive and experience organizational success. The study heavily emphasized the need for leaders to engage and understand followers, seeking to identify what type of followers are in the organization, to help them commit and become more effective followers, adhering to the organizational structure and goals.

Crossman and Crossman (2011) conducted a study exploring followership and the development of modernized definitions and implications from those definitions to offer one themselves. Their study identified many descriptive, prescriptive, and situational theories revolving around followership and the leader-follower relationship and dynamic. These scholars dated the concept and initial theory formation back to the 1930s, although researchers at the point of this study were still described as being in their infancy. Through their article, they sought to

clarify the topic of followership as a concept, giving an expert review of the literature and developing momentum for the theory of followership itself, noting that authentic followership specifically is characterized by a desire to be organized, experience a sense of excitement, receive recognition, and develop a need to belong, as followers take their cues from leaders who set a positive example. The article provided an encouraging perspective for leadership and followership, showing that building an organization and organizational culture around these concepts and outcomes is overwhelmingly positive, impactful, and far-reaching. Understanding the context in which each leader and follower operates rose to the forefront of the article to implement successful operational strategies and leader-follower relational development.

Story et al. (2013) conducted a study evaluating the psychological capacity between leaders and followers and the effect on the quality of the relationship between the two. Specifically, the physical distance and relationship quality were negatively associated, but the 166 participants—both leaders and followers—did show some positive relationships between distance and relationship quality. From both perspectives, the leaders who acted with higher psychological capacity developed and were perceived to have a stronger leader-follower relationship. Leader-member exchange theory mediated the effect of physical distance between leader and follower; however, this mediator did not necessitate inclusion in the current study. Much further research was suggested in studying the attitude of the leader and follower as it relates to leader and follower's psychological capacity within different contexts and organizational circumstances.

Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) conducted a theory and research review of followership theory, positing that there is no leadership without followers. Thus, followers often need to be included in the research of the formula of the equation. The study identified two theoretical frameworks for followership and its study: a necessity of reversing the lens and a constructionist approach. Much of followership has often been ignored in favor of leadership conversation or at least leadership perspective. Similar to Uhl-Bien et al., the current researcher was interested in the follower perspective of the followers and themselves. Reversing

the lens must look inward at the followers themselves and outward at the leader and their behaviors. Both leaders and followers generate outcomes, exemplifying the constructionist approach mentioned, driven by the process approach, often controlled by the followers' behaviors or ability to understand and solve problems at the organizational level. Each refers to multiple levels that create the leader-follower relationship, relationship level, process level, and outcome level. All contribute to the success and culture of an organization. Reversing the lens is not a license to do what is done on the leadership side and transpose the questions and assumptions to the follower. Instead, it must examine followership across all perspectives as the demands, and organizational shifts continue to increase and develop.

Epperson (2015) studied the role of modeling in developing leader and follower authenticity in the workplace. In the qualitative case study, two regional chapters of national nonprofit organizations were interviewed, and multiple leader and follower conclusions were reached. Authentic behavior was discussed between the leader and follower, which created a positive relationship between developing authentic behaviors and followers being motivated to act on authentic behaviors and display those themselves. Additionally, there was a positive connection between leaders developing follower authenticity by enhancing follower knowledge about how and when to use authentic behaviors contextually within the organization. Last, the effect impacts both leader and follower, as followers impact leaders' authenticity in the workplace by enhancing the leaders' knowledge of how and when to use authentic behaviors, showing that it translates both directions within healthy and positive organizational culture when both leaders and followers are behaving authentically, each takes their cues from the other. The study was necessitated by recent scandals, at the time, developing honesty and transparency in organizations, allowing leaders and followers to serve as a checks and balances system with each other to maintain integrity within both populations.

VanWhy (2015) conducted an instrument development study, the Authentic Followership Profile (AFP), measuring the four dimensions of authentic followership as independent variables. This scholar's study pushed against the

theme that organizational leadership was focused solely on leaders, suggesting that followers were fundamental to a leader's success and developed specific followership dimensions which were discrete from authentic leadership. VanWhy called the differences between authentic leadership and authentic followership crucial, suggesting that although some may be familial, the need for a follower-centric mindset, as opposed to a leader-centric mindset, is important. Connections were established between leader success, follower success, and organizational success, each becoming more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and utilizing those for the success and betterment of the organization. These comments and conclusions necessitated the development of an instrument to measure and test the followership dimensions, creating the AFP. This instrument was chosen as the best option to test authentic followership comparative to organizational commitment, including the survey in the current study, using tenure as a moderator between authentic leadership and organizational commitment, also utilizing a multiple regression analysis to evaluate authentic followership dimensions.

De Zilwa (2016) was one of the first to challenge the four-dimension model of authentic followership, proposing a three-component model which was quite different than previously accepted theoretically and practically. Through this new model, the author cautioned against authoritarian setting use, seemingly wholly grounded in positive psychology models, the dimensions leading to enhanced follower strengths and capacities, strengthened dyadic relationships (leader-follower), and deepened organizational culture by improved organizational performance. De Zilwa also noted that tenure could influence authentic followership, but only looked at authentic followership and organizational commitment, not contemplating authentic leadership or leadership components in the discussion. The study and general perspective shared were follower-centric, discounting much of the leadership theory and vital leadership behaviors, although recommending all models of authentic followership and followership, in general, be tested. Notably, the author showed incredible frustration that the literature showed extensive testing and consideration for authentic leadership, but very little towards authentic followership construct development or study. No mention of the

AFP or VanWhy's (2015) research was made in the study; however, it was in its infancy at the time, providing an instrument and empirical opportunity for testing and consideration comparative to almost all previous studies.

Hamlin (2016) addressed the leader-centric culture in which current organizations, leaders, and followers' function. Written from a followership perspective, Hamlin addressed stereotypes, organizational dynamics, and how to thrive in the leader-follower relationship while de-stigmatizing the label of follower and what culture or organizational labels might use to diminish the role that follower play in success and development. Although the book did not necessarily contribute profoundly to empirical research, the collection of thoughts and literature, even the varied perspective, provides a unique view of the concept and followers. This research and perspective provide a much different look, combining Biblical, organizational, and personal significance, which most academic studies would not include, but provides valuable information and context to the current study examining authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment within the guise of Christian higher education. Even the concept of Christian followership is introduced, although not a formalized theory, as Hamlin promoted the relational side of followership, both in leader-follower, God-humanity, and in just about every way, mentioning that this book was written with the notion that followership is for everyone, regardless of creed, culture, or religion.

Sheehan (2018) conducted a study involving followership and spiritual calling, connecting it to Hamlin (2016) on Christianity and faith integration. The quantitative study of authentic followership was essential and contributed directly to the current study and similar methodology. Given the connection of calling to Christianity and faith, the study allowed both sacred and secular calling to be defined and researched throughout the study, allowing evidence to be related to the contexts of each person instead of making wholesale statements. The Faith at Work Scale and Authentic Followership Profile were used as the instruments administered to 334 respondents, a majority of whom identified as Christian, within a vast array of industries and perspectives. This study found a significant

relationship between calling and authentic followership, especially among the adult population, as opposed to the student population surveyed and represented. This study also informed the current study by prompting the researcher to delve into the adult and professional staff perceptions and observations, as opposed to the student perspectives within Christian higher education. The Christian perspective from this study will also be used in the current study, which will inform the research conducted, further researching the sacred side of authentic followership.

Alvesson and Blom (2019) studied and reviewed both leadership and followership, specifically authentic followership, noting differences between manager behavior, voluntarily submitting to be a follower, and leadership skepticism. Followers have their priorities and understandings, giving followers a unique perspective of leadership and a valuable perception of what will cause commitment to the organization and develop momentum for success. In this article, follower language is exchanged for the term subordinate, referencing any scenario or personnel described as nonmanager or nonleader in the current context. Many practical situations are discussed in the article, including organizational exhaustion with change initiatives, inspirational tactics, and new corporate vision or values, which are no strangers to attempts in organizations to create commitment. When considering leadership, the researchers set forth six different modes that could be situationally used to help achieve organizational commitment, success, and positive culture: leadership, management, power, peer influencing, teamwork, and autonomy. These are referred to as different modes for organizing, half of them being given to the hierarchy and the other half given to equality and influence distributed with all the players in an organization, regardless of level. These different modes give followers an array of opportunities to perceive and experience various elements of creating successful results in any organization, not subscribing to just one method, but showing that each person and group needs different interactions with those tasked with driving a group forward toward success to accomplish the goals, including openness and authenticity.

Bastardo and Van Vugt (2019) reviewed followership literature, deciding that followership is a logical, inevitable occurrence that results from any group

activity or coordination of a multiperson activity. Followership is described as a voluntary activity, the researchers noted, and underscored an important difference in the voluntary component over being submissive, stating that followers are not submissive but adaptive and often match their styles to the styles of their leaders, creating smooth coordination within organizational behaviors. This study also described a rarely addressed topic of what typifies a poor follower, defining this organizational participant as an “individual who does not coordinate well with the leader and/or other followers” (Bastardo & Van Vugt, 2019, p. 90), even describing specific examples: accepting bribes or supporting bad leaders, undermining the leadership or leadership position, and unpredictability in their actions. This study looked specifically at followership motivations, behaviors, and outcomes from many different perspectives, including evolutionary, role-based, and constructionist, providing a versatile research perspective and opportunity to discuss many different follower stylistic differences and behavioral approaches that frequently occur when a follower is given preference in evaluation versus just the leader within organizational dynamics.

Roundtree (2019) conducted a qualitative study focusing on the generational cohort of millennials from a leadership and followership perspective, giving leaders a view of what might motivate and inspire their workforce toward organizational success. This scholar utilized generational, trait, and followership theories, identifying differences in leadership traits and inspirational characteristics that promoted followership from the follower’s viewpoint. A millennial workforce is a diverse group, presenting a large number, but also composed of nearly half of the group, bringing a racial minority more than 10% above any previous generation from a diversity standpoint. The findings revealed that the millennial generation poses the most significant leadership and followership challenges of any generation within recent, modern history, with the author recommending that followers be referenced and engaged in finding out what preferences and behaviors of leaders affect them both from a positive and negative view. The researcher of the current study also sought followers’ perception of leaders and self-perception to adequately inform leaders and followers about the methods for positive and negative influence

that may help or hinder organizational commitment and success. The study found that millennials seek leadership traits that provide autonomy, motivate, promote collaboration, and build confidence, with followers remaining focused on motivational outcomes and organizational health and success.

Petersen and Laustsen (2020) wrote an article on the preferences for dominant leaders from a psychological perspective and utilizing adaptive followership theory. Preferences for dominant leaders often shift rapidly across followership, as changes are necessary and often reflect the needs of the organization at large; when situations are more extreme, organizations often prefer more dominant leaders to provide more vital and decisive leadership for high social conflict environments, like politics. The correlation of conflict level in an organization is an integral part of understanding followers' needs, often craving more dominant leadership. Neutral situations presented as a scenario where followers preferred non-dominant leaders; however, extraordinarily positive or negative situations necessitated a preference for dominant leadership, effectively looking for organizational stability from leaders. Emotions were also attached to the demand for dominant leadership, such as anger, hatred, anxiety, and fear, which can be pointed to in many different historical choices for the selection and emergence of dominant leaders in politics. Strangely enough, the same dominant characteristics that would move followers to select those leaders during conflict times is the same motivation that pushes followers to avoid dominant leaders in neutral or peaceful times, as followers look for qualities such as warmth and trustworthiness, attempting to achieve collective decision-making opposed to decisive, authoritative leaders during the conflict. Inevitably, these authors found that dominant leaders impede or detract from followership. The relationship between dominance and levels of conflict is positively related within specific contexts, such as political or organizational turmoil scenarios.

Reit and Halevy (2020) composed an article about leadership and followership on the topic of hierarchy, looking at the perspective of leaders and followers. Many questions are posed about hierarchy and from whichever angle its viewed. These authors referred to it as necessary to any organization, just as

mountains and weather are features of any geographical location. Their article posited that leaders and followers can speak into the structure of organizations and are not helpless bystanders with the idea of the structure in which they reside or function. This reverses the lens, just as the theory of followership does, asking how each participant in organizational structure helps shape the design, alignment, and functionality of each agency in which they work. Both leaders and followers have a voice and impact regarding the structure they reside within, leading the authors to reference how individuals and groups manage each situation as the process of negotiating different exchanges between all organizational members. The authors proposed that two options— rational-function and relational-communal—are viable within the tradeoff scenario of organizational hierarchy, answering an overarching question for the article regarding whether the hierarchy is good or bad for organizational health and success. The first concept emphasizes a deferral to leaders based on trust in leadership to prioritize the success of the group or organization. This model also assumes that the most capable leader has been put in charge, maintaining that the meritocracy benefits the organization most through coordination and cooperation, reasoning that the best or most competent people best run organizations. The second theory evolves around interactions between leaders and followers, as followers voluntarily trust leaders and leaders trust followers, valuing transparency and consistency most of all. High organizational visibility and consistent interaction create an optimal leader-member exchange scenario. Both leaders and followers generally have opinions on hierarchy, leaving little middle ground, essentially depending on the individual's evaluation of the hierarchy present around them in their organization. These dyadic lenses allow viewing organizational hierarchy from multiple different perspectives and considering all voices present, at times fulfilling employees' needs through relational development, at other times being based on the interpretation of skills and qualities that provide organizational benefits, including serving organizational and group members' best interests.

Sharma (2022) conducted a quantitative study using tenure as a moderator, evaluating the relationship between authentic leadership, authentic followership,

and organizational commitment, using age and education as control variables. This investigator utilized the AFP and OCQ, finding significant positive relationships between authentic leadership and organizational commitment, as well as authentic followership and organizational commitment. Through convenience and snowball sampling, tenure was disproved as a moderator for this study of 156 respondents from North America and Oceania. The separating factor for the positive relationship produced through the study only differed with the unique factor that authentic followership possesses, psychological ownership, which showed a statistically significant relationship with organizational commitment, separate from authentic leadership and the other three shared components. In many ways, the current study mirrored the Sharma study, taking this as a crucial previous study to build upon, only in a different context and with potentially different results because of the industry and persons involved. This researcher concluded that leaders' behavior toward their followers was tremendously impactful and significantly influenced the relationship between the two parties, providing a pivotal component for leaders and followers to pay attention to within organizational dynamics, especially commitment to the organization.

Higher Education

Brown and Sargeant (2007) studied the relationship between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and religious commitment at a private Christian college, given the pseudonym of Akra University, located in the Caribbean. The study filled a necessary gap in research for job satisfaction and organizational commitment within higher education. Limited studies have been done similar to this in private religious institutions. An analysis of variance was conducted using the motivational-hygiene theory due to the managerial nature of the empirical and theoretical relevance to the study. More than 500 employees were surveyed, with 263 responding and participating, representing a phenomenal response rate of nearly 70%. The study showed a direct relationship between an employee's tenure and the organizational commitment expressed. Although more than half of the respondents have been working at the institution for 4 years or less, the longer the tenure of an employee, the more positive organizational commitment

measurements and relationships existed and extrinsic motivation factors. Contrary to assumptions of an extrinsic nature, intrinsic job satisfaction factors presented no significant difference based on tenure at the organization, showing that intrinsic motivation, in this case, can be found in hiring, but not grown through organizational involvement or processes, unlike extrinsic factors. Unsurprisingly, significant differences exist between intrinsic, extrinsic, job satisfaction, and religious commitment among workers at the institution of study.

Joeckel and Chesnes (2012) conducted a study on faith-based higher education, specifically the 110 institutions affiliated with the CCCU, to gauge the strengths and weaknesses of these differentiated institutions. Although denominational churches have faced declines, at this point, faith-based higher education had braved the recent housing crisis and was still growing exponentially, leading to this study. The results showed that faculty and students were consistent with their firmly held beliefs, both theologically and politically. The respondents were notably open and honest with researchers, describing feelings of inferiority to research institutions or admitting burnout and heavy workload issues in their roles; however, they stayed true to why they initially began employment at their institution. As the study was conducted, the reasons for organizational commitment and engagement rose to the top of responses painting a consistent and admirable climate where other-than-extrinsic factors were closely held as employees felt a more profound calling and commitment to their work.

Billot et al. (2013) conducted a qualitative study on followership in higher education, some 38 different narratives collected from academic professors at seven different worldwide institutions. The investigators looked at the leader-follower relationship and interactions, pointing to the improvement of the student learning experience through a socio-constructivist framework exemplifying the relationship between student and teacher, framed as the relationship of the leader and follower. Their results showed that a significant relationship between teachers and leaders is affirmed by students' and followers' learning, which drew connections to leaders' affirmation by the engagement of followers. Teachers and the professors in this study showed a strong disdain and discomfort for being identified as a follower, but

function in both the leader and follower roles, depending on the scenario in which they contextually exist. Higher education and academia often value critical thinking and independent thought more than the structure of their existence, which puts faculty at a specifically unique disadvantage within the leader-follower relationship in many situations. The three main leader-follower themes that became apparent throughout the research were negotiation, responsibility, and mutual respect, which directly and indirectly impact the academic development and student-learning experience. Within the current context, especially amidst the current pandemic context, when stress is added to the student-faculty relationship, academic leaders must serve the needs of their followers to find success and development between the leader and follower.

More research within higher education is needed, as Daniels (2016) pointed out, specifically about employee engagement, which becomes even more challenging to find information regarding faith-based higher education, as defined by this study as the CCCU. Many faith-based colleges and universities utilize the Best Christian Workplace Institute (BCWI) as a measure of employee engagement or organizational commitment to diagnose the health and well-being of their current staff, faculty, and administration (Lopus, 2007). In many ways, there is an additional factor of commitment within faith-based high education, as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is found within higher education in general. Faith-based campuses tend to incorporate a spiritual, motivational factor, which can account for purpose and inspiration that unites and engages employees further past structural differences toward application and carrying out the mission of each unique institution (Daniels, 2016). The work is more than just work or a job on many of these faith-based campuses. Much of Daniels's qualitative case study was composed of two universities that stood out on the annual BWCi surveys for the decade before the conducted research. This author concluded that commonalities within the mission, community, empowered human resources department, and positive momentum stood out comparatively at both institutions, highlighting the potential unusually high employee engagement and organizational commitment secret combinations on those campuses. Furthermore, the recommendations from

the study for leaders in faith-based higher education are to celebrate institutional identity, model the desired behavior, practice relational leadership and employee empowerment, cultivate a culture of gratitude and recognition, and designate an office responsible for workplace culture. When set against the current landscape of widespread job change and dissatisfaction, the current study aimed to identify and build on the study of Daniels to continue to identify any relationship between current workplaces within faith-based higher education connect with engagement and heightened organizational commitment, through the lens of authentic leadership and authentic followership, as this is a trust building and currently desirable practice among leaders and followers.

Steele (2017) conducted a qualitative study specifically about women in leadership who left Christian higher education, which could undoubtedly connect to low or decreased organizational commitment. Women in administration is indeed a minority field within Christian higher education, unfortunately, but well worth studying the contributing factors that lead to the ultimate results. Voluntarily leaving a role after working so hard to achieve some of the senior-leadership roles represented is an extreme indication of significant influences that led these participants to re-evaluate their careers, jobs, and identities to let go of such hard-to-attain prestigious opportunities. Steele found that conditions for leaving were created by contributing factors of job satisfaction, institutional conditions, changes in leadership, and relationships with supervisors. The organizational commitment exhibited by these senior leaders can provide insight into some of the factors of higher education that provide positive and negative reinforcement and feelings of connectivity. The authenticity shown through the interviews and emerging themes helps evaluate authentic leadership and followership, in addition to how these leaders perceived their leaders and reflected on their own leadership and followership.

Chafra and Erkutlu (2017) researched the relationship between authentic leadership and two factors of psychological ownership and self-concordance within the university setting of 13 institutions in the country of Turkey. This study utilized different testing instruments than the current study but similar objectives or fields.

The field of authentic leadership and organizational commitment are related, even tangentially, to the fields of this study, which provided results of a positive relationship with employees' perceptions of psychological ownership and self-concordance and a positive relationship with authentic leadership and job embeddedness. At the core, the present study seeks to understand and find relationships between employee attitudes connected with authentic leadership, finding that social exchange theory is the primary method of authentic leadership affecting followers. Some of the study's limitations that may not be present in the current study include the use of faculty as participants, which could provide different perspectives and relationships between leaders and followers, especially within the university or college setting. Faculty have different perspectives, as do staff and administration, creating a differentiator for the current study that could continue to advance the empirical data within authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment. Similarly, to this study, follower opinions and perspectives were sought and evaluated instead of leader viewpoints, for which there is much less study and research.

Degreenia (2018) conducted a study within the higher education setting, specifically addressing two main variables from the current study. Organizational commitment and job satisfaction can be both positively and negatively impacted by leadership, especially when looking at faculty culture and the residual decisions made by leadership, prompting the study to continue the research on authentic leadership within higher education. Authentic leadership approaches created meaning amidst challenging environments, leading to positive organizational commitment and increased performance. This study looked at the perceptions of faculty toward the authentic leadership of departmental leaders, their job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Overall, authentic leadership was positively correlated to the perceptions of leaders from faculty within the institutions examined, creating positive levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Although there was a typical participation rate for the study, the higher education industry and land-grant institutions provided valuable and essential information to continue to grow the level of research between authentic

leadership, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction within the specific context. Higher education presents in many forms. Although this context does not relate to the current study, it provides a follower perspective, examines authentic leadership and organizational commitment, and encourages further research within higher education in different contexts.

Anderson (2020) conducted a study on generative leadership, which focuses on developing an enjoyable employee-centric culture and improving employee satisfaction and engagement within the specific organization. Relationship and relationship development is a crucial component of Anderson's study, as senior leaders in the CCCU participated in the study through a qualitative, semistructured interview process resulting in 13 main themes from the conversations and interactions. These thirteen themes were intentional relationships, leadership confidence, development orientation, authentic leadership, spirituality, informed decision-making, resourcing staff, anchored leadership, leading self, focused leadership, optimism, honesty, and humility. This study is connected philosophically to authentic leadership and followership studies and directly related to organizational commitment, which the researcher of the current study sought to measure. Conclusions from the study related to authentic leadership study and practical implications demonstrate the need for continued and expanded leadership development at the general organization level and individually for each member, building cultures that seek improvement, both personally and organizationally. The five respondents provided both deep understanding and openness to the rich value that the process and topic of a qualitative study of this nature can help all embrace. The connection with the CCCU will be essential to connect and continue to build upon the current study, although different methodology and overarching topics but expressing similar general perspectives and populations of interest.

Redwine (2020) conducted a mixed methods study in Christian higher education centered around a need for empirical studies on employee engagement and workforce engagement within the industry. The study utilized two instruments of the Best Christian Workplace Institute (BCWI) survey, delving into employee engagement and organizational culture. The study involved six institutions within

the CCCU that administered the BCWI survey to their campus and received results of *toxic* or *critical* overall scores in the employee engagement or organizational culture range. A correlation was not found between being a Christian and employee engagement or organizational commitment; however, previously mentioned studies have found that religious commitment within Christian higher education has been quite powerful and influential in employee engagement and organizational commitment. The study does not provide empirical evidence that there is no connection between being a Christian and employee engagement. Several themes from the study were developed: (a) true and deliberate faith integration, (b) leadership, (c) trust and communication, (d) mission integrity, and (e) hard decisions. These themes led to three important categorical findings: (a) engagement efforts and results, highlighting the intentional efforts of the university to address concerns brought to light through the survey as well as the results that ensued; (b) institutional spiritual vitality, focusing on the reciprocal relationship between an engaged workforce and campus spiritual climate; and (c) influence of university mission, giving attention to the impact of mission integrity for the work of all institutions, both internally and externally. This work within the CCCU is essential. The current researcher aimed to build upon this type of research, as leadership and other prominent themes can continue to connect both research opportunities.

Gilliam (2020) conducted an exploratory qualitative case research study within private, nonprofit, higher education institutions, referring to decisions and outcomes among leaders. Semistructured interviews were conducted using open-ended and sequenced consistency of questioning for 60–90 minutes, leading to recording, coding, and theme development at the four study sites that voluntarily agreed to participate. Leadership decisions and outcomes heavily influence both strategic and operational factors, influenced by nearly unlimited numbers of factors, resulting in outcomes that could be measured in institutional effectiveness, financial viability, organizational identity, and organizational mission adherence, to name a few. This scholar explored the influence of interrelationships in institutional viability, sustainability, and institutional identity within the context of organizational challenges and adaptations that each must engage in regularly

through the decision and outcome process. The type of institutions identified characteristically compose more than one-third of all higher education institutions and have historically been important to national social and economic sustainability in America. The findings revealed that decision-makers are deeply connected to their organizations, and institutional reputation is deeply connected to stakeholder experience through success and failure. The respondent institutions expressed difficulty in measuring outcomes from missional importance, specifically with students, faculty, and staff. The decisions made by leadership impact the institutional reputation of all stakeholders. The study's five main results were as follows: (a) organizations must understand how stakeholders perceive the relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability of the institution, (b) institutions need to clearly define relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability in terms of stakeholder expectations and experience, (c) stakeholder affinity is determined by their experience with the institution, (d) institutional viability is measured both quantitatively and qualitatively, and (e) effectiveness is also measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. Lastly, there were three identified actionable findings from the study: (a) establish and strengthen impactful relationships with prospective and current stakeholders to promote and ensure life-long association between the institution and its present and future stakeholders; (b) establish a compelling identity and persuasively communicate it consistently, broadly, and frequently through all stakeholders in a variety of channels to advocate for the institutional reputation and its viability actively; and (c) implement decision-making processes that explicitly link decision and outcomes with stakeholder perceptions and experiences as they relate to institutional relevance, distinctiveness, and affordability.

Stone (2021) conducted a study on authentic leadership at an academic institution with the aim of measuring organizational commitment and adult turnover for followers between the ages of 18–29. Although different instruments were used compared to the current study, they instead surveyed students who were employed and had a direct supervisor. This study could propose levels of significance between leaders and followers, especially for those first entering the

workforce and considered emerging adults. The quantitative study addressed younger emerging adults as employees, which could be identified as followers, noting that this population is nearly five times more likely to turnover from their current jobs earlier in their careers than older generations. The study found no correlation between authentic leadership and turnover intentions among emerging adults, and there was a negative correlation. Authentic leadership action was shown to impact organizational tenure and commitment positively. Nevertheless, affective organizational commitment strategy and methodology had little effect on organizational commitment and minimizing turnover intentions.

Card-Sessoms (2022) produced a study within higher education that evaluated community colleges in Texas, involving authentic leadership and organizational commitment with the relatable characteristic of employee trust. Fittingly, trust has always been associated with authentic leadership and organizational commitment, and a positive relationship is found between higher levels of organizational trust and affective organizational commitment. The population of this quantitative study was employees of community colleges, utilizing one of the instruments of the current study, the Authentic Leadership Inventory. The 109 participants presented a small subsection of higher education, producing a significant positive correlation between authentic leadership and trust in leadership and a significant, positive relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment. This positive result develops consistency with prior studies, showing an increase in levels of employee trust and affective organizational commitment when higher levels of authentic leadership are present from leaders. Followers were surveyed, like the current study; however, only a few studies have been done in the community college sector of higher education, asking followers' perceptions of leaders about the three variables in the study.

Gopalan (2022) conducted a study utilizing the Authentic Leadership Inventory, like the current study, examining authentic leadership's effect on work-life balance and organizational support among followers at educational institutions of higher education in America. Managers and leaders were excluded, consulting only followers for their thoughts and opinions on the variables and electronic

surveys. Authentic leadership shows a significant and statistically positive relationship to work-life balance. The findings of this study confirmed the correlation between increased employee identification with an authentic leader and organization, creating heightened positive emotions, optimism, and perceived higher levels of work-life balance. Participants were recruited from higher education, but through a survey research company, out of the more than 4,300 higher education institutions in America. Only 100 participants consented to participate in the study, but all were followers, building upon appropriate exemplification for the current study.

Gibbs (2022) conducted a recent qualitative phenomenological study on work calling and the effect on organizational engagement, its impact on their leadership style, and influences within the organizations they become part of the development. The general perspective in this study is that each faculty and staff have a part in building each organization and institution because of their significant calling to bring them to faith-based institutions of higher education. Motivations, including prestige, legacy, calling, and service orientation, are some of the main reasons faculty choose to enter leadership positions in higher education. Often personal accomplishments and recognition are brushed aside in favor of serving the greater good, achieving meaningful purpose in their work, creating impact in the institution, and influencing the organization positively. The study utilized self-determination theory (SCT), logotherapy, and work (as) calling theory (WCT) to engage in open-ended interviews with thirteen individuals, ranging in 10–25 years of faculty experience, including nearly half of them being first-generation college graduates and scholars. This author reached several basic conclusions and expanded the available research on employee engagement and organizational commitment in Christian higher education: (a) work calling played a significant role in the decision to enter into higher education leadership positions, (b) these individuals working in their calling have high rates of job satisfaction, (c) participation in active work on equitable resource allocation, these individuals with work callings have higher rates of career commitment, (d) participants were actively looking for areas to help, and (e) higher education leaders who are working

within their calling make significant impacts on the academy (all faculty) and the institutions they serve. The study contributes to the need for further organizational commitment research, especially within Christian higher education, where specific research on authentic leadership, authentic followers, and organizational commitment are seldom analyzed, as the current study aims to advance while connecting elements of faith-based institutions, which deals with a significant level of calling and Gibbs's study.

Cardenas (2022) surveyed 150 followers about the perception of authenticity among their leaders, indicating that relational transparency played a significant role in predicting employee well-being. Employee well-being and psychological ownership are also important factors in organizational commitment, contributing to the current study's hypotheses that authentic leadership and authentic followership positively correlate with increased organizational commitment within Christian higher education. Authentic leaders create trust with followers through open and honest relationships, in turn being given authority to lead by followers. Social exchange theory was discussed, proposing that once employees feel cared for and respected by their leaders, optimism, positivity, and increased production are viable and usual outcomes. The relationship developed by authentic leadership leads to natural relational development, often intentional, often creating a mirroring effect between leader and follower. Cardenas surveyed followers, asking them about the perceptions of their leaders, correlating authentic leadership with positive relationships with employee well-being, happiness at work, and employees' emotional bond to the organization.

Summary

This section contained a synthesis of the contributing literature with theoretical constructs of authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment. The literature provided information and research about the following: (a) authentic leadership and the theoretical and practical implications associated with the four dimensions of practice, (b) authentic followership and the connection to followers' perceptions of leadership and themselves with what engages followers and creates organizational connectivity with leadership and

commitment, (c) organizational commitment theory and how commitment culture is nurtured or destroyed by leaders at the organizational levels, and (d) the context of higher education and the need for advancement of research within each of the three variable fields, especially from the perspective of the follower. Many studies have shown that leader behavior and leadership style can affect follower behavior and perception in a positive way (Avolio et al., 2004; Walumbwa et al., 2008; Wong & Laschinger, 2013).

Gaps and recommendations for future research were gathered and presented throughout the literature review, pointing to the goal of this study to close those gaps and fulfill the recommendations. One of the more underrepresented research areas is the followers' self-perceptions of authentic followership and authentic leadership, as many respondents constantly transition between a leader and follower daily. The ability of leaders and followers to create and maintain organizational commitment through authentic behaviors is essential, and identifying those relationships will provide both parties with valuable, practical recommendations to set in motion. Each study presented a connection with the current study variables and context, allowing for a comprehensive review of contributing factors.

It was vital to examine the followers' perceptions of the leaders and their self-perceptions in a meaningful context to provide evidence and correlation with organizational commitment. The meaningful context to the current researcher was Christian higher education, where he has spent his whole career and is committed to helping move toward health in every way. This analysis helped the researcher to test the proposed hypotheses and address gaps in the literature by identifying the positive and negative factors on the relationships between the three variables, moving forward the research associated with Christian higher education and the individual variables.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

The researcher of this study answered the following question through multiple regression analysis: What is the relationship between authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment based on follower self-perceptions and follower perceptions of leadership among staff, faculty, and administration within Christian higher education? The researcher determined the presence of relationships between authentic leadership and organizational commitment, authentic followership, and organizational commitment. A quantitative research approach allowed for an examination of the relationships among variables for testing existing objective theories (Creswell, 2018). The researcher compared data from both models to identify and address any relationship that might be present.

Research Design

Multiple regression analysis is chosen as the most preferable method when contending with one dependent variable but more than one independent variable, which included eight independent variables for Kabacoff and Girden (2010). According to Creswell (2018), just as important as the primary methodology, then is the contributing scales and instruments, which utilized Likert scales for all instruments, necessitating the use of a Cronbach's alpha coefficient score to display internal reliability (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The researcher explored the relationship between authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment with staff, faculty, and administration in Christian higher education within the CCCU. Each dimension of the independent variables was compared, as well as each dimension of the dependent variable, utilizing a multiple regression analysis for thorough statistical significance evaluation. Each dimension of the independent variables was compared, as well as each dimension of the dependent variable, utilizing a multiple regression analysis for thorough statistical significance evaluation. As sociological

and economic factors continue to influence each industry, it is necessary to expand the empirical knowledge of Christian higher education, especially from the perspective of the follower.

Research Question 1

RQ1: What is the relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment within Christian higher education?

H₁: There is a positive relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment.

Research Question 2

RQ2: What is the relationship between self-perceptions authentic followership and followers' organizational commitment within Christian higher education?

H₂: There is a positive relationship between self-perceptions of authentic followership and organizational commitment.

Null Hypotheses

H₀₁: A There is no significant relationship between followers' rating of their leaders' components of authentic leadership to the employees perceived or actual level of organizational commitment.

H₀₂: A There is no significant relationship between followers' rating of their leaders' components of authentic followership to the employees perceived or actual level of organizational commitment.

Instruments and Variables

Quantitative research allows for testing theories by examining the relationships among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). While the results of quantitative surveys have provided an indication of the opinions and attitudes of some populations, this represents only a portion of the population overall, yet still provides generalizable findings (Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1993). Three survey instruments were utilized for data collection in the current study.

The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) was the instrument for testing organizational commitment theory and perception among participants (Fields, 2013; Mowday et al., 1979). The OCQ is a 15-question survey that presents a direct method for asking sentimental and reactionary questions for how a person feels about their organization utilizing a 7-point Likert-scale with a Cronbach's alpha ranging between 0.69 and 0.91 (Al-Yami et al., 2019). The Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) was used as the instrument to measure authentic leadership theory and perception among participants (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). The ALI is a 16-question survey that equally divides each of the four sections and components of the theory utilizing a 5-point Likert-scale to identify authentic leadership characteristics and perceptions among followers and their leaders with a Cronbach's alpha between 0.74 and 0.85 (Levesque-Côté et al., 2018). Lastly, the Authentic Followership Profile (AFP) was selected as the instrument for testing authentic followership theory and perception among participants (VanWhy, 2015). The AFP is a 23-question survey that divides each of the four sections and components of the theory utilizing a 5-point Likert-scale to identify characteristics and perceptions among followers and their leaders with a Cronbach's alpha above 0.80 (Dailey, 2019).

Dependent Variable

The analysis included one dependent variable: the participants' self-reported organizational commitment (OC). This variable was measured by the OCQ and was the dependent variable in both research questions.

Independent Variable

Research Question 1 had four independent variables: the four factors of AL, self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing, as measured by the ALI. Research Question 2 had four independent variables: the four factors of AL, self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and psychological ownership, as measured by the AFP.

Demographic Information

A few questions were asked to identify demographic factors and organizational commitment at the beginning of each respondent's survey. As literature references, there are many different variables which can aid in the determination of organizational communication (Khan et al., 2013). Ferrer (2017) also mentioned that demographic variables such as age, professional experience, ethnicity, and education can have significance with the three dimensions of organizational commitment.

Sampling

For sample-size, the sample had to be large enough to produce statistical significance based on permissive ability to sample within the institutional context. Participants elected to participate based on a series of emails offering the opportunity without compensation, were required to be at least 18 years of age, and were required to be employed by the disseminating and granting institution to be eligible for participation. Based on this, convenience sampling was employed based on status of institutional employment (Cozby & Bates, 2018). The survey information was self-reported, focusing on the thoughts and feelings of participants about authentic leadership and authentic followership from the perceptions of their leaders and themselves on organizational commitment.

Overall, the sample is evenly distributed among ages ranging from 18–61, 18–29 ($N = 49$), 30–39 ($N = 43$), 40–50 ($N = 51$), and 51–61 ($N = 46$), with a smaller number over the age of 62 ($N = 24$), with 92% being White. Additionally, 68% were categorized as staff, 32% had been employed at their current institution 2 years or less, and 38% had been working in higher education overall for 5 years or less. A majority also reported a graduate degree or higher, educationally, GED or high school diploma ($N = 17$), bachelor's degree ($N = 62$), master's degree ($N = 91$), and doctorate or professional degree ($N = 43$).

Table 2*Internal Reliabilities for Factor Scales*

Variable	Items	Type	Consistency (α)	Questions on Survey
Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI)	16	Interval	0.74 – 0.85	8 – 23
Self-Awareness	4		.72	8,12, 16, 20
Internalized Moral Perspective	4		.69	9, 13, 17, 21
Balanced Processing	4		.71	10, 14, 18, 22
Relational Transparency	4		.76	11, 15, 19, 23
Authentic Followership Profile (AFP)	23	Interval	>0.80	24 - 46
Self-Awareness	6		.65	24–29
Relational Transparency	4		.78	30–33
Internalized Moral Perspective	6		.85	34–39
Psychological Ownership	7		.83	40-46
Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)	15	Interval	0.69 – 0.91	47–61

Note. Authentic Leadership and Authentic Followership were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *frequently* and a 7-point Likert scale for Organizational Commitment ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Table 3*Demographic Statistics for Experience at Current Institution*

	<i>N</i>	%
1–2 Years	70	33%
3–5 Years	43	20%
6–10 Years	53	25%
11–15 Years	24	11%
16+ Years	23	11%

Note. *N* = 213.

Table 4*Demographic Statistics for Employment Status*

	<i>N</i>	%
Staff	145	68%
Faculty	8	28%
Administration	60	4%

Note. *N* = 213.

Table 5*Demographic Statistics for Education Level*

	<i>N</i>	%
GED or High School	17	8%
Diploma Equivalency		
Bachelor's Degree	62	29%
Master's Degree	91	43%
Doctoral or Professional Degree	43	20%

Note. *N* = 213.

The sample has less experience than anticipated, totaling 78% with less than 10 years at their institution and 87% with 19 years or less experience overall in higher education.

Table 6*Demographic Statistics for Experience in Higher Education*

	<i>N</i>	%
1–5 Years	81	38%
6–10 Years	57	27%
11–19 Years	47	22%
20–29 Years	20	9%
30+ Years	8	4%

Note. *N* = 213.

The sampling method was an electronic survey tool, through Qualtrics, composed of each survey in its entirety: OCQ, ALI, and AFP, amounting to 54 total

questions (Creswell, 2018). This electronic survey tool allowed the researcher to locate numeric trends related to the attitudes and opinions of the participants of the study, further utilizing Likert scales and closed-ended questions that would more concretely communicate with the participants to find clearer results (Cozby & Bates, 2024). The survey tool aimed to identify respondents' feelings and indications of authentic leadership and authentic followership that apply to their own position and the people put in leadership within their context. Self-reflections and reports are particularly important components of human thought and behavior, as they capture much of the attitudes and opinions of participants.

Data Collection

The researcher collected data from five different private, evangelical CCCU member Christian colleges in the United States. The survey was offered to faculty, staff, and administration at each of the five institutions, and the institution agreed to send out multiple emails in attempting to gain the desired number of participants to validate the study. An online self-administered survey instrument was delivered by a third-party vendor to each institution before being sent out via mass email as a voluntary participation process. The researcher determined that a sample of at least 100 participants would satisfy the ratio of 20:1 recommended by Hair (2006). The final sample was $N = 213$.

Missing Data

The collected data were screened for missing variables and outliers in the responses through descriptive statistics analysis. All missing data represented less than 5% per variable, so listwise deletion was utilized, as only a small percentage of the sample were inconsequential and required these subsequent analytic procedures.

Outliers

After determining the procedures for handling missing data, the researcher screened the data to check univariate and multivariate outliers. To screen for univariate outliers, all variables were transformed into Z scores. Any dataset with

more than 100 cases is recommended to benefit from a more liberal guideline for identifying and eliminating outliers, which includes exclusion of any case with a Z score of ± 4.0 (Mertler & Vannatta, 2010). To screen for multivariate outliers, linear regression was used to check for Mahalanobis distances. A Chi-square table was used to determine the value at which outliers were removed at a significance level of $p < .001$. After all missing data and outliers are addressed, the final sample was $N = 213$.

Normality

All intervals and scale variables were analyzed by the researcher for assumptions of normality and checked for skewness and kurtosis. Box plots were utilized for confirmation of assumption of homoscedasticity.

Data Analysis

After the dataset was cleaned, inferential analysis was conducted. Separate multiple regression analyses were performed using SPSS to answer both research questions. Statistically significant independent variables were noted.

Ethical Considerations

Participants were required to complete the consent form, acknowledging an understanding of the purpose of the study, and demonstrating voluntary participation, giving them the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. While the researcher did collect some demographic information about each participant to serve the survey and research needs, there was no identifiable or personally identifying information collected. The ethical considerations for this study entail a complete disclosure to all participants and respondents regarding the research studies processes for data collection and overall objectives. The study takes seriously the confidentiality of the participant, including their identity and responses to questions. All participation in this study is completely voluntary and responses can be withdrawn at any time. No pressure or use of any force was conducted to encourage or gain participation in this study by any person. The questionnaire and surveys were all publicly identifiable and usable

surveys, allowing the instrument to be validated and straightforward. The consent form also provided participants with the contact information of the researcher and researching institution, as well as the lead researcher, should anything abnormal have happened during or after the research study.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher provided a rationale for the quantitative research method employed in the study of the relationship between follower perceptions and self-perceptions of authentic followership, authentic leadership, and organizational commitment. In this study, the researcher examined perceptions of leader behavior and follower self-reflections within Christian higher education among staff, faculty, and administration. Few studies have allowed followers to self-reflect on their own behavior and how it leads to or detracts from organizational commitment from the perspective of authentic leadership or authentic followership. The research design was straightforward, utilizing three validated instruments (ALI, AFP, and OCQ). It was self-administered to determine relationships between the variables using descriptive statistics.

The survey adhered to Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Training modules for integrity and professional development among learners and researchers. The data were analyzed and compiled using SPSS software and analysis, including descriptive statistics procedures leading to multiple regression testing and analysis to evaluate statistical and relational significance. This information will contribute to gaps in the current research of followers' self-perceptions within authentic leadership and authentic followership in relation to organizational commitment, as well as within Christian higher education.

Chapter 4 – Results

In conducting this study, researcher administered three validated instruments to 213 respondents working at five different CCCU institutions, including staff ($N = 145$), faculty ($N = 60$), and administration ($N = 8$) to determine the relationship between authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment. Each respondent self-reported their opinions on the perceptions of the four dimensions of authentic leadership and authentic followership and their levels of organizational commitment at their current institution.

Cronbach's alpha (α) statistical techniques for factor scales analysis, including the four independent scaled variables was utilized. The Cronbach's alpha statistic provides an expressed value between 0 and 1, prominently used in surveying to determine the internal consistency with a set scale (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). A Cronbach's alpha of .70 or higher indicates statistical reliability (Pallant, 2020).

Research Questions and Results

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment within Christian higher education?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between self-perceptions of authentic followership and followers' organizational commitment within Christian higher education?

Multiple regression analysis was conducted using authentic leadership and authentic followership component factor scales to determine significance within each dimension and how that changes the level of organizational commitment in the perception of respondents. Table 5 provides a detailed description of the factor scale analysis within each dimension of the variables.

Research Question 1

The first research question was: Is there a statistically significant relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment within Christian higher education? The research question was answered by testing two hypotheses:

H₁: A positive relationship exists between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment.

H₀₁: There is no relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment.

To test H₁, the researcher conducted a multiple regression to examine the effects of authentic leadership on organizational commitment for the sample ($N = 213$). This is reflected in Table 2, evaluating the effect of authentic leadership (self-awareness, balanced processing, internal moral perspective, and relational transparency) showed a significant correlation with organizational commitment ($F(4, 208) = 180.10, p < 0.001$), and accounted for 11.3% ($R^2 = .113$) of the variation of organizational commitment. For this model, self-awareness displayed a significant negative relationship with organizational commitment ($\beta = -.016, p < .001$). Balanced processing displayed a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment ($\beta = .245, p < .001$). Relational transparency displayed a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment ($\beta = .096, p < .001$). Finally, internalized moral perspective displayed a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment ($\beta = .029, p < .001$). Based on the responses indicated in the multiple regression analysis of the sample, H₁ was partially accepted. In addition, the multiple regression analysis of the sample response indicated that H₀₁ (null hypothesis) was rejected.

Table 7

Multiple Regression Model Examining the Main Effects of Authentic Leadership on Organizational Commitment for the Sample (N = 213)

Organizational Commitment	Model		
	<i>B</i>	β	<i>SE</i>
Self-Awareness	-.080	-.016	.636
Balanced Processing	1.375	.245*	.658
Relational Transparency	.549	.096	.744
Internalized Moral Perspective	.161	.029	.663
R ²	.113		
df1	4		
df2	208		
Adjusted R ²	.096		

Note. N = 213, $p < .001$, * denotes statistical significance

Research Question 2

The second research question asked: Is there a statistically significant relationship between self-perceptions of authentic followership and followers' organizational commitment within Christian higher education? The research question was answered by answering two hypotheses:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between self-perceptions of authentic followership and organizational commitment.

H₀₂: There is no relationship between follower self-perceptions of authentic followership and organizational commitment.

To test H₂, the researcher conducted a multiple regression to examine the effects of authentic followership on organizational commitment for the sample (N = 213). This is reflected in Table 2, evaluating the effect of authentic followership (self-awareness, relational transparency, internal moral perspective, and psychological ownership) showed a significant correlation with organizational commitment ($F(4, 208) = 113.88, p < 0.001$), and accounted for 43.9% ($R^2 = .439$) of the variation of organizational commitment. For this model, self-awareness displayed a significant negative relationship with organizational commitment ($\beta = -.043, p < .001$).

Relational transparency displayed a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment ($\beta = .144, p < .001$). Internalized moral perspective displayed a significant negative relationship with organizational commitment ($\beta = -.021, p < .001$). Finally, psychological ownership displayed a significant positive relationship with organizational commitment ($\beta = .623, p < .001$). Based on the responses indicated in the multiple regression analysis of the sample, H₂ was partially accepted. In addition, the multiple regression analysis of the sample response indicated that H₀₂ (null hypothesis) was rejected.

Table 8

Multiple Regression Model Examining the Main Effects of Authentic Followership on Organizational Commitment for the Sample (N = 213)

Organizational Commitment	Model		
	<i>B</i>	β	<i>SE</i>
Self-Awareness	-.258	-.043	.361
Relational Transparency	.958	.144*	.378
Internalized Moral Perspective	-.008	-.001	.388
Psychological Ownership	2.558	.623*	.262
<i>R</i> ²	.439		
<i>df</i> ₁	4		
<i>df</i> ₂	208		
<i>Adjusted R</i> ²	.429		

Note. N = 213, $p < .001$, *denotes statistical significance

Separated Dimensions and Demographics in Regression

To test H₁ through H₀₂, the researcher conducted a series of multiple regression and factor scales to examine the effects of each dimension of authentic leadership and authentic followership. The multiple regression model for staff ($n = 145$), faculty ($n = 60$), and administration ($n = 8$) examined the effects of four dimensions of authentic leadership and authentic followership on the dependent variable organizational commitment as demonstrated in Table 2. Although the demographic questions were asked on the survey, they were not used as control, moderating, or mediating variables in this study. The questions of age, experience,

race, and employment status were asked as demographic questions, which could have been used, but were removed from the quantitative analysis to keep the research clean and direct. In the next chapter, the researcher discusses possible avenues and recommendations for future study, which could include those factors.

Summary

Chapter 4 contained a reporting of the findings achieved in the study. In this dissertation, the researcher examined the relationship and impact of authentic leadership and authentic followership on organizational commitment within five CCCU private, evangelical colleges among staff ($N = 145$), faculty ($N = 60$), and administration ($N = 8$). Organizational commitment was measured by utilizing the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire. Authentic leadership was measured using the Authentic Leadership Inventory. Authentic followership was measured using the Authentic Followership Profile. The framework for the study was based on two research questions and four hypothesis statements.

After cleaning the data to ensure reliability, small to moderate significant effects were identified for respondent perceptions of authentic leadership and self-perceptions of authentic followership on organizational commitment reflecting minimal organizational commitment impact in their institutional and organizational context. The survey provided a meaningful glimpse at the perceptions of followers on themselves and their leaders, and the organizational commitment elicited from their perceptions and interactions.

The first research question asked: Is there a statistically significant relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment within Christian higher education? To answer Research Question 1, H_1 proposed a positive relationship exists between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment. Staff, faculty, and administration at the five different institutions reported small to moderate levels of organizational commitment on the four dimensions of the ALI and OCQ; therefore, H_1 was partially accepted. H_{01} stated: There is no relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational

commitment. The four unique factor scales of ALI (ALSA, ALBP, ALRT, ALIMP) all showed significance, both positive and negative; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The second research question asked: Is there a statistically significant relationship between self-perceptions of authentic followership and followers' organizational commitment within Christian higher education? To answer Research Question 2, H₂ proposed a positive relationship exists between self-perceptions of authentic followership and organizational commitment among the respondents. Staff, faculty, and administration at the five different institutions reports small to moderate levels of organizational commitment on the four dimensions of the AFP and OCQ; therefore, H₂ was partially accepted. H₀₂ proposed: There is no relationship between follower self-perceptions of authentic followership and organizational commitment. The four unique factor scales of AFP (AFSA, AFRT, AFIMP, AFPO) all showed significance, both positive and negative; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

Through this study, the researcher sought to fill a gap in the research of followers' perceptions and opinions of leaders and themselves within Christian higher education, specifically regarding organizational commitment. In the existing body of research, the researcher identified no previous studies that sought to understand the three variables analyzed together within Christian higher education. As newer theories and areas of growing research interests develop, it is logical to anticipate more profound questions that seek to understand statistical relationships of these concepts relating to various outcomes both inside and outside of Christian higher education. This research and subsequent findings will continue to develop and address theoretical implications from the three areas, giving critical practical applications to leaders and followers alike.

Utilizing the ALI, AFP, and OCQ, the two hypotheses presented by the researcher were tested. The following gaps were identified and addressed: (a) understanding the impact of authentic leadership and authentic followership among followers' perceptions of the leader's behavior and followers' self-perceptions relating to organizational commitment, (b) expanding the limited amount of research within Christian higher education on the relationship of authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment, (c) contributing to the limited research on Christian higher education, and (d) increasing the practical research on authentic leadership and authentic followership from the follower's perspective.

The following sections contain a review of the research questions and theoretical implications on organizational commitment from followers' perceptions of Christian higher education environments. Continuing, the researcher discusses the study's limitations, the practical implications of the findings, and recommendations for future research. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of the research for the study.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked: Is there a statistically significant relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment within Christian higher education? Two hypothesis statements provided possible results for the question, and H₁ posited a positive relationship existed between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment. H₀₁ proposed that there was no relationship between follower perceptions of a leader's authentic leadership behaviors and follower organizational commitment. The framework for authentic leadership and followers' perception of leadership was set and hypothesized through these two statements, exemplifying a relationship (or lack of relationship) between perceptions of authentic leadership and organizational commitment.

The findings for RQ1 only partially asserted H₁, which predicted that perceptions of authentic leadership (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing) related to higher positive levels of organizational commitment among staff, faculty, and administration within the Christian higher education institutions surveyed. This result was surprising, as authenticity, a general concept of leadership, has been linked to organizational commitment (Jiang & Luo, 2018; Palanski et al., 2011). Although organizational commitment levels at most Christian higher education institutions are usually high and associated with religious faith commitment and heightened levels of intrinsically motivated followers, this result did not continue the expected outcome (Giauque et al., 2010). In contrast, lower levels of follower perceptions of self-awareness, relational transparency, or internalized moralized perspective, which significantly impacted perceptions and overall personal and organizational commitment, were found among respondents.

Although a primarily positive relationship existed between authentic leadership and organizational commitment, a negative relationship existed between self-awareness. Followers perceived a negative effect of self-awareness on organizational commitment, indicating that followers did not believe leaders knew

themselves and what leaders believed at their core. In addition to the positive relationship hypothesis, the H₀₁ hypothesis was partially accepted, as the current study did not fail to prove the entire hypothesis completely. Both hypotheses were partially accepted, resulting in authentic leadership being positively related to organizational commitment for three factors and negatively associated with one factor, effectively advancing, and providing different than expected results for authentic leadership, organizational commitment, and Christian higher education.

While neither hypothesis was wholly accepted, this study served as an essential next step in utilizing these validated instruments, evaluating followers' perceptions of authentic leadership that contribute to organizational commitment. Authentic leadership has been more widely researched since the inception of the ALI (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). Still, nothing was found relating directly to CCCU institutions within Christian higher education or connecting the study to the organizational commitment from followers' perceptions. Most studies found were related and linked to perceptions from leaders. Even so, this study advances the topic and conversation about perceptions of leaders within CCCU institutions and how they may garner or diminish organizational commitment at their institution (Leroy et al., 2012; Wong & Laschinger, 2013). The OCQ (Mowday et al., 1979) has been used in many ways to evaluate feelings of organizational commitment, indicating respondents' type or style of commitment. Significant overall results and one major factor scale showed strong significance. Although the style or factor of organizational commitment is not spelled out like those of authentic leadership, these responses could be further evaluated, as indicated in the future study portion of this study.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked: Is there a statistically significant relationship between self-perceptions of authentic followership and followers' organizational commitment within Christian higher education? Two hypothesis statements provided possible results for the question. H₂ posited a positive relationship existed between follower perceptions of authentic followership behaviors and organizational commitment, while H₀₂ proposed that no relationship

existed between follower self-perceptions of authentic followership and organizational commitment. The framework for authentic followership and perception of authentic followership was set and hypothesized through these two statements, exemplifying the relationship—or lack thereof—between perceptions of authentic followership, and organizational commitment.

The findings for RQ2 also only partially asserted H₂, which predicted followers' self-perceptions of authentic followership (self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and psychological ownership) and how these factors influenced levels of organizational commitment among staff, faculty, and administration within the Christian higher education institutions surveyed. Followers indicated important feelings toward which characteristics resonated with them and which did not, providing leaders and fellow followers with insightful information about what followers were thinking and feeling to result in their levels of organizational commitment. As previously discussed, Christian higher education provides a unique environment for study, especially when asking for followers' opinions of themselves and what factors might impact their levels of organizational commitment, both positively and negatively. Psychological ownership was the most obviously positive and significant factor relating to follower organizational commitment, with relational transparency also showing a positive relationship with organizational commitment among followers. The other factors showed negative relationships, self-awareness and internalized moral perspective.

Followers' self-perceptions identify an important area of research that has yet to be fully explored but provides evidentiary support for potential causes of follower organizational commitment feelings, both positive and negative (Brown & Sargeant, 2007; Redwine, 2020). The split of two positive and two negative relationship factors was not expected, but provided a glimpse into the critical factors that followers believe were important to indicate increased or decreased organizational commitment. At some level, knowing what helps improve or detract from organizational commitment provides helpful information for leaders and followers alike in pursuing organizational momentum and commitment. The results

show that followers are impacted by scenarios where they can self-reflect on their behaviors and thoughts.

Authentic followership has been a lightly studied concept since its inception and acceptance as a validated instrument, the AFP (VanWhy, 2015). No known studies of authentic followership have occurred within CCCU institutions or Christian higher education. The current study advanced the research, explicitly measuring authentic followership concerning organizational commitment. The study's results allow CCCU leaders to delve inside the followers' thoughts and opinions and better understand how organizational commitment is grown or destroyed from the authentic followership perspective. The researcher identified areas followers value as important and contribute to their levels of followership and commitment to their organization. The OCQ (Mowday et al., 1979) allowed followers to self-reflect on their feelings of organizational commitment but stopped short of identifying which dimensions of organizational commitment were most important to them, providing another area of future study in the field of authentic followership and organizational commitment.

Implications

This study offered a glimpse into followers' process for identifying authenticity in a leader and how this impacts their organizational commitment, although none of the hypotheses were entirely accepted. In turn, followers were also asked to reflect on their authenticity and dedication to their organization(s) and evaluate their thoughts and opinions. Both perspectives are valuable and provide leaders and followers with paths to find fulfillment and connectivity in their organization through behaviors and feelings that add and subtract from their organizational commitment based on the authenticity that they perceive and elicit. In most organizational situations, followers report to leaders and each leader reports to another leader, showing very few—if any—employees who do not follow and only lead. This phenomenon is not unique to Christian higher education, higher education, or organizational culture. Still, it can shed specific light on the context of Christian higher education and how followers behave and perceive authenticity within these environments.

Jiang and Luo (2018) found a strong correlation between authentic leadership and organizational commitment, but the current researcher did not find that same strong correlation. This could speak to current conditions at the participating institutions, shift in organizational commitment feelings over the last 5 years, or a notable difference in Christian higher education comparatively. These institutions may want to consider the three impactful takeaways that contributed to significant, positive correlations between authentic leaders, followers, and organizational commitment from this previous study. Developing levels of transparency and authenticity were achieved by creating communication mechanisms and essentially operating openly and honestly, as a team or organization should, with leaders and followers. The current study presents different results in different contexts but presents a more realistic and less utopian perspective with both positive and negative relationships, than the previous study.

From a theoretical standpoint, this research contributed to the continued construct development of authentic leadership and authentic followership in relationship with organizational commitment from the followers' view, a seldom evaluated angle but potentially helpful dimension. After Avolio et al. (2004) recommended studying followers' perceptions of leaders' intentions and actions, the current results point to understanding followers' perceptions and what could contribute to or detract from follower organizational commitment. Still, more importantly, they highlight followers' crucial role in determining much of the success within organizational life, especially commitment or detachment from the mission. In most cases, very little is accomplished without followers, and their perspective matters and must be considered and kept in consideration with each strategic movement in corporate life. Many authentic environments with high levels of organizational commitment develop synergy and momentum between leaders and followers, helping create and sustain organizational success.

As discussed in this study from multiple perspectives, authenticity is validated by the feelings and opinions of those with whom you try to be authentic (Yaacoub, 2016). Authenticity, while well intended, is interpretable, leading to the necessary process of evaluating whether the translation happens from leader to

follower and vice versa (Stone, 2012). Many leaders and followers believe they are being authentic. Still, the translation and connection to other leaders and followers only happen as they think, creating a gap in actions of authenticity and identification of authenticity as a uniting or communicative force in any organizational relationship (Ferrer, 2017; Terry, 2019). Organizational commitment is increased by trust development between leader and follower, which requires investments of time and energy, which some might refer to as intentionality (Card-Sessoms, 2022).

Followers and leaders may be prone to distrust leadership, as many feel a general distrust of information and leadership at this current juncture in the United States and the world. The previous years have not drawn most closer together or united but separated and detached in many ways. Being removed from proximal relationships and having moved into a corporate world that is mainly virtual or less face-to-face than ever before, especially within Christian higher education, has not developed or strengthened trust and authenticity between leaders and followers but further exacerbated the chasm between many of the factors of authentic leadership and authentic followership, exemplified by internalized moral perspective and self-awareness showing insignificant results from the survey. Each of these factors presents an opportunity to develop authentic leadership and followership but needs more relationships currently in some of these contexts to be evident and show significance from follower perspectives, even of themselves. The values of self-awareness and internalized moral perspective, which have been so valuable to developing authentic environments, have lessened in importance during this season of history as societal and organizational dynamics change quickly within institutions. Many institutions need more resources, enrollment, and fundraising than ever before. Within Christian higher education, many institutions are foregoing their historical or denominational beliefs to move toward a more accepting position that elicits greater enrollment, fundraising, and perceptive opinions of students, parents, and donors.

This study provided a glimpse into the point-in-time perceptions of followers toward leaders and themselves in a unique time in history, both within

Christian higher education and culture. As American and Christian higher education cultures continue to adjust to changes, interpersonal relationships, and perceived authenticity have become more difficult to exhibit—and even more challenging to communicate. Followers are more skeptical of authenticity, as examples of inauthenticity abound, even within Christian higher education, and levels of trust continue to decline in many environments (Algera & Lips-Wiersma, 2012). Relational transparency and psychological ownership from follower perceptions and balanced processing from follower perceptions of leaders provide a potential solution for leaders at Christian institutions to connect and influence organizational commitment. These three characteristics or factors would be important components of current leadership to develop and grow the perceptions of authenticity and organizational commitment at their institutions, effectively advancing the research in these areas (Sharma, 2022; VanWhy, 2015).

Limitations

Although there were 339 total respondents when the survey was closed, after cleaning the data, only 213 were complete and usable by the quality data standards used for the study. The sample of just over 200 respondents and five institutions does give a wider swath of information and geographical representation; however, it still needs to be expanded in the scope of Christian higher education. The survey participation numbers were still strong and much more robust than the minimum ratios recommended by Fields (2013) to satisfy quantitative information-gathering standards. A much larger number of staff members than faculty and administration participated in the study, potentially slanting the results toward a more staff-oriented perspective. Increased faculty or administration participation could shift results and findings toward different areas of significance. Faculty could desire and perceive unique, distinctive characteristics of leadership and themselves to identify the elements that lead to organizational commitment. Even so, if the administration had participated more, the results might have altered even further, changing the role of follower to a position of leader/follower, with more respondents having more meaningful influence and

experience within leadership and perceiving leadership and themselves as differently altogether than the other two groups.

Christian Higher Education

While neither occurred, the survey should account for the fact that a significantly larger population of staff participated in the survey than the other two categories of faculty or administration. The study also only allowed for one designation, which could have eliminated a section of possible faculty. Staff and administration at smaller schools are more likely to carry some faculty or adjunct faculty teaching load, as the Department of Education provides specific designations. There could be a phenomenon linked to Christian higher education, as administrations are stereotypically more profoundly involved and spread thin because of the size and structure of each institution. Christian higher education also presents a unique environment for study due to how they are conducted—in some ways exhibiting a church-like nature, valuing relationship and harmony over profit, efficiency, and institutional progress. At other non-Christian or faith-based institutions, reactions could be different and more straightforward without the premium that Christian organizations place on demonstrating kindness at the expense of being direct and risk offending someone in many Christian higher education institutions. Because this study involved asking followers about leaders and themselves, the results may have exemplified a lack of relationship between leaders and followers, showing a perception without actual knowledge or context for followers, which would essentially indicate guessing through much of the survey based on assumptions or hearsay, not real personal experiences.

Higher Education

The survey results can be applied globally to higher education, although religiously affiliated schools are typically more prone to organizational commitment (Ringenberg & Noll, 2006). Standard higher education processes and cultures exist at most institutions. Most CCCU institutions submit themselves to the same accrediting bodies and procedures; each has faculty, staff, and administration, and the economic and social factors are similar for each institution, regardless of the context. Many parallels can be drawn between Christian higher education and

non-Christian higher education institutions, such as state colleges and private colleges, from economic, social, academic, and structural forces that weigh heavily on each institution. The study provided valuable insight into how followers perceive leaders and themselves within higher education institutional life and functionality. It informs leaders within higher education of the sound evidence for eliciting organizational commitment from authentic leadership and authentic followership philosophies and practices.

Authenticity is a trust-builder in any context, especially in higher education. The face-to-face classroom experience and personalized interaction are still highly valued among students, leaders, and followers (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002; Jachowicz, 2016). The survey results could have been different within different contexts regarding what follower's value among the dimensions of authentic leadership and authentic followership. Followers have certainly desired authenticity from leaders but could have valued or devalued the factors that lead to organizational commitment within their personal or institutional settings. Neider and Schriesheim (2011) showed significant relationships between authentic leadership and all three dimensions of organizational commitment, but the current researcher found it difficult to identify the significant relationships between the two on every dimension or factor in both variables because of lack of clarity and separation between the dimensions of organizational commitment. The researcher chose to use Christian higher education because that is the context and vocation to which he feels called and has experienced higher education. Still, many different types of institutions likely provide an exemplary education to students to satisfy their mission and obligations within this industry. State colleges, private colleges, community colleges, and Bible colleges would all probably answer or interpret questions and answers differently, as followers would perceive leaders and themselves differently according to the cultures present at those institutions.

As this survey opened, there is no way of knowing how many participants came from each institution, making it difficult to identify specific individual institutional recommendations, but these institutions do have a common pedigree, as evangelical, biblically based schools. The respondents showed some level of

organizational commitment and connection between perceptions of authentic leadership and authentic followership, but in general many of the dimensions for each theory were missing in perception of practice. With two newer presidents, this could provide evidence that it takes time to develop levels of authentic leadership and authentic followership which impact organizational commitment, but three of the schools have had their presidents in place for more than 6 years, shining a light of some potentially nonauthentic perceptions of those leaders and followers. These findings do not relegate these institutions, leaders, or followers to lower levels of organizational commitment, but instead create a call-out to fully and authentically engage with each other to create a culture where organizational commitment is valued and sought after. Specifically, leaders could use the results to implement a consistent communication method to show some of the less significant components of authentic leadership, such as: self-awareness, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective. These characteristics are still able to be displayed and could drastically impact each of these organizational cultures, even bringing life to the organizational commitment of followers today and moving forward.

Different Context, Different Results

Institutions where connectivity and relationship are valued more highly than structure or bureaucratic order could certainly appreciate authentic leadership and authentic followership more in connection with organizational commitment. Institutions who are predominantly research institutions or have little connectivity with leadership would also rate the authenticity of leaders and followers differently in their commitment to their organization. Often, organizational commitment can be tied to other topics rather than authentic leadership or authentic followership, such as compensation, notoriety, prestige, and many other factors. At times, these institutional or follower characteristics could play a more central role in determining the organizational commitment from followers rather than simply the perceptions of authenticity of leaders and themselves from followers.

The current study provided a context for followers to evaluate their leaders and themselves. Even so, there are many reasons why followers would have heightened or diminished levels of organizational commitment within both

Christian higher education and higher education in general. Some of these reasons could be measured and asked, while other measures might not be measurable, or followers might indicate that they prefer not to discuss or disclose specific sensitive areas. The current study assumed that followers would be forthright and vulnerable about their perceptions of authentic leadership and authentic followership.

Depending on each follower's context, they may not feel safe enough to answer honestly. Lower levels of psychological safety in the survey could be evidenced by the low participation rate of administration in this survey, showing a perceived level of discomfort or disengagement with taking the survey. Many fewer administrators exist compared to faculty and staff, but the low numbers suggest a diminished desire to participate, ability to participate, or knowledge of the survey was low. Potentially different results could have existed if there had been a more even distribution of staff, faculty, and administrators participating in the survey.

Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this study expand the knowledge of organizational commitment from the followers' perspectives within the context of Christian higher education. While literature points to the organizational commitment being achieved through the authentic leader and authentic followers knowing themselves and eliciting buy-in through their genuine actions, this study showed little significance from followers that authenticity, as perceived by the follower from the leader, is impactful in that regard. Much of the literature regarding organizational commitment has shown trust development as a critical indicator, and trust is developed through authentic interactions and relationships. Still, the current study showed only slightly significant results in a few of the factors of each independent variable. Results were less substantial than expected in this study, although hypotheses were partially accepted in all cases. In addition, the study was conducted in the recent post-COVID world, where culture and relationships are still re-emerging, with leadership still trying to navigate the changes that have occurred so expeditiously over the last few years. Christian higher education has changed drastically, with many schools experiencing substantial financial, enrollment, and

fundraising issues and having a new way of doing business in the online and remote worlds that current deliveries dictate.

Suggestions for Future Research – Higher Education

Focusing on one of the three surveyed groups of staff, faculty, and administration could provide more insight and depth of research for indicators of organizational commitment through authentic leadership and authentic followership. Separating staff, faculty, and administration and how they perceive leaders and self-reflect on themselves concerning authentic leadership and authentic followership might differ for each group. A much larger group of staff responded to the current study, but the results were not broken down by employment status for this study. Further research should identify leading factors related to each position, as faculty and administration would likely differ significantly from the staff majority.

Asking administrators to identify authentic leadership and authentic followership characteristics presents a different dynamic. These administrators are faced with leadership decisions and unique perspectives each day, allowing for additional and more practical views and opinions on organizational commitment contributing factors. Gaining the leadership perspective to find correlations between what followers indicated and what leaders may indicate as primary factors of authentic leadership and authentic followership that led to organizational commitment would provide a meaningful comparison between the two perspectives. Often, leaders may feel that an action is being exemplified, but feedback from followers that specific efforts should be noticed or impactful would be precious information to the suggestion that different strategies or practices must be implemented.

Suggestions for Future Research – Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment contains three factors, but the OCQ does not break the instrument into three distinct sections. Normative, affective, and continuous organizational commitment could be evaluated, just as authentic leadership and authentic followership were broken down into factor scales and identified by the components that comprise each variable. The OCQ could be

further evaluated by determining which of the responses to the three dimensions of organizational commitment were most presented in the current and future study, providing evidentiary findings for leaders and followers about why followers are motivated to maintain levels of organizational commitment. There is much to discuss from an anecdotal perspective regarding the results and applications for each form of organizational commitment. Still, the factor scales and ability to separate the variables for each authentic leadership and authentic followership make it much clearer to determine statistical significance. This could further clarify the differences in thoughts and opinions related to all three variables, while also allowing an identification of what contributes to or detracts from organizational commitment.

Furthermore, research must be continued to discuss and identify motivations connected to extrinsic and intrinsic factors that lead to organizational commitment, especially concerning authentic leadership and authentic followership. Leaders possess influence, and contain different causes, allowing each to arrive at organizational commitment for potentially various reasons. While motivations and methods differ, organizational commitment is a somewhat idealistic goal and can be differentiated within each unique organizational culture and environment for those that desire it. Followers who are motivated intrinsically might gravitate toward specific contexts more often than extrinsically motivated followers. Still, in Christian higher education, particular assumed motivations must be proven and identified. Followers could provide valuable research about how their initial or current motivation has changed compared to their leaders' perceptions of authentic leadership. Scholars can evaluate whether initial motivation would be positively or negatively affected by perceived authentic leadership characteristics of institutional leaders within Christian higher education.

Suggestions for Future Research – Authentic Leadership

Authentic leadership effectively revolves around leaders knowing who they are at their core and displaying those characteristics consistently to those around them. Perception of those characteristics by others is what makes excellent leadership and indeed endorses the authenticity of these individuals. The results of

this survey indicate that the perception of followers at the five institutions evaluated could have been more overtly authentic. Still, leaders could display and be very authentic leaders themselves. Other leadership styles would resonate with these contexts and leaders, like transformational or servant leadership. In two instances, the president at the institution is less than 2 years in that position, which is difficult to evaluate or develop a depth of relationship in such a short time. In one instance, the president has been there for around 6 years, and in the final two institutions where the president has been there longer than 10 years, the longest represented tenure being 18 years.

As with other industries, the movement in Christian higher education is no exception to the coming and going of administration and leadership at each institution. This phenomenon continues to underscore the dynamics represented in this survey, calling for further evaluation of the demographic information relating the length of leadership to the authentic leadership present at each institution. Correlations could be drawn between the length of time in leadership, and the authentic relationships developed or feelings of staff, faculty, and other administrators. Would the length of time a president or leader spends at an institution impact followers' perceptions of authentic leadership in that environment? Further research must be conducted to identify the possible significant demographic factors that positively or negatively impact followers in these institutional contexts.

Suggestions for Future Research – Authentic Followership

Authentic followers permit to be led by leaders who display the characteristics that those followers perceive as valuable and transparent. In each organization, the question becomes what aspects are promoted and what characteristics followers perceive as most important to replicate and embody with their actions. Evidence of authentic followership suggests that followers exemplify authentic characteristics and often reflect on why it matters. Organizational culture and commitment to that culture are vital to developing environments where followers are encouraged and conditioned to be authentic. Future research must be conducted to evaluate and explore the conditions that create authentic followers

who perceive themselves are organizationally committed because they engage in the factors and dimensions of authentic followership with relational transparency, self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, and psychological ownership.

Summary

This exploration of the relationship between authentic leadership, authentic followership, and organizational commitment contributed to the overall body of knowledge in each under-researched area. This study also effectively advanced each theory and construct, in addition to the studies of Christian higher education for followers and leaders, along with the instrumentation utilized. The hypotheses developed, however, were not fully validated, which predicted that the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational commitment and authentic followership and organizational commitment would have a positive relationship. The findings contributed to the existing body of literature, though, as a relationship was established between independent and dependent variables in their respective experiments. This study shed light on organizational commitment and addresses some feelings and inclinations that the authenticity of leader and follower could help develop more substantial levels of commitment within the organizations. The context of the CCCU was a unique context to survey, but provided surprising participation and meaningful results to continue advancing the work of each variable and Christian higher education.

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Appendix

SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY



NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

DATE: November 15, 2022
TO: Daniel McDonald, Joshua Henson
FROM: SEU IRB
PROTOCOL TITLE: Dissertation - A Quantitative Study of Authentic Leadership, Authentic Fellowship, and Organizational Commitment within Christian Higher Education
FUNDING SOURCE: NONE
PROTOCOL NUMBER: 22 BE 13
APPROVAL PERIOD: Approval Date: November 15, 2022 Expiration Date: November 14, 2023

Dear Investigator(s),

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects has reviewed the protocol entitled, Dissertation - A Quantitative Study of Authentic Leadership, Authentic Fellowship, And Organizational Commitment within Christian Higher Education. The project has been approved for the procedures and subjects described in the protocol.

Any changes require approval before they can be implemented as part of your study. If your study requires any changes, the proposed modifications will need to be submitted in the form of an amendment request to the IRB to include the following:

- Description of proposed revisions;
If applicable, any new or revised materials;
If applicable, updated letters of approval from cooperating institutions

If there are any adverse events and/or any unanticipated problems during your study, you must notify the IRB within 24 hours of the event or problem.

At present time, there is no need for further action on your part with the IRB.

This approval is issued under Southeastern University's Federal Wide Assurance 00006943 with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP). If you have any questions regarding your obligations under the IRB's Assurance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,
Rustin Lloyd
Chair, Institutional Review Board
irb@seu.edu