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Community College Student Affairs Professionals' Perceptions of Their Supervisor's Authentic Leadership: The Influence on Job Satisfaction and Organizational Commitment

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COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS' PERCEPTIONS

OF THEIR SUPERVISOR'S AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP: THE INFLUENCE ON JOB

SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR SUPERVISOR'S AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP: THE INFLUENCE ON JOB SATISFACTION AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Employee retention is an ongoing challenge for higher education student affairs professionals, who account for the largest employee group across the higher education workforce. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment have previously been identified as correlated with college and university employees' decision to stay or vacate their position. Authentic leadership, an evolving theory, has been associated with greater levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment in a variety of settings. However, there is a gap in the literature about the status of this relationship within community college student affairs work environments. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between community college student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and their perception of their immediate supervisor's authentic leadership.

Results indicated perceived authentic leadership significantly predicted the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals. Perceived authentic leadership also significantly predicted professionals' organizational commitment. Further, there was a significant difference in the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs practitioners by racial and ethnic identity. It is recommended community college leaders promote the development of authentic leadership qualities among those charged to lead student affairs departments to increase practitioner satisfaction and strengthen commitment to the college.

To my parents, brother, niece, nephews, and Boss.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Choosing to pursue a doctoral degree in the middle of a once-in-a-lifetime global pandemic was perhaps one of my more questionable life decisions. This entire journey has been the ultimate learning experience and pushed me to limits I didn't know existed. Yet I am grateful for how much I learned about myself and the goodness of others. I know that I would not have been successful without the support of so many people by whom I was extremely fortunate to be surrounded.

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dedication and passion each of you possesses for improving others' lives will remain with me. I look forward to continuing this vital work alongside you as we aim to continually improve the world.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A survey conducted by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) found that institutions of higher education could lose over 50% of their current staff within the next year, as over half of respondents stated they expected to look for other career opportunities (Bichsel et al., 2022). Further, research conducted across 38 states and Canada by Skyfactor Benchworks, an educational consulting firm, revealed nearly 40% of student affairs practitioners planned to vacate their positions (Alonso, 2022). These survey results should concern higher education leaders since attrition is very expensive for colleges and universities (Naifeh & Kearney, 2021). Students also suffer when student affairs professionals depart, as such departures negatively impact service quality, stifle departmental and campus initiatives, and lower morale among remaining employees (Boehman, 2007). Student affairs professional attrition also creates expertise gaps and impedes development toward initiatives meant to benefit students (Marshall et al., 2016).

Student affairs professionals are typically one of the largest employee groups at colleges and universities (Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1988), accounting for over 60% of the academic workforce (Cepin, 2015). Therefore, the attrition of individuals in these roles is of utmost importance. These individuals are the front-line employees who primarily focus on students' out-of-classroom learning and experiences (Reynolds, 2009). However, this is no easy task. Rothmann and Essenko (2007) identified shifting student demographics and limited funding as two of the many escalating pressures this employee group faces. These challenges often lead student affairs practitioners to self-sacrifice as part of their ongoing duties (Beer et al., 2015), which is "further heightened by the current 'do more with less' environment" (Naifeh & Kearney, 2021, p. 546).

Student affairs practitioners play a vital role across all higher education, especially at two-year institutions. Ozaki and Hornak (2014) asserted "student affairs is critical across all institutional types, but essential at a community college, an open access institution" (p. 79).

Attrition challenges across higher education and many other sectors intensified in recent years due to new societal, political, and economic realities. The COVID-19 pandemic and other factors prompted what has come to be known as the Great Resignation (Klotz, 2021). This phenomenon, coined by Professor Anthony Klotz of the University College of London, describes the mass exodus of millions of American workers as they began to question and challenge the workplace status quo (Klotz, 2021). Community colleges have fared worse than their four-year counterparts during the Great Resignation. EAB, a higher education consulting firm, estimated community colleges lost approximately 13% of their personnel from the beginning of 2020 until April 2022 (Zirkel, 2022). Much of this loss occurred during early 2021, while four-year institutions were reversing earlier staffing losses during the same period (Zirkel, 2022).

Johnsrud and Rosser (1997) stated that for college and university staff, the "intention to leave has been shown to be related to those affective responses to work such as satisfaction, involvement, and organizational commitment" (p. 7). Therefore, job satisfaction and organizational commitment were the variables selected as the focus of this study. Specifically, I sought to examine the influence of perceived authentic leadership (AL) upon both variables. Previous research showed job satisfaction as a significant correlator of attrition within the student affairs context (Rosser, 2004; Rothman & Essenko, 2007; Tull, 2006). However, exploration into the relationship between organizational commitment and attrition within student affairs is limited to Boehman's (2006, 2007) studies. Although Blackhurst's (2006a) study found female student affairs administrators who were mentored exhibited higher levels of

organizational commitment, the direct relationship between the commitment and attrition of participants was unclear.

As part of ongoing discussions about the Great Resignation, calls for effective leadership have been reignited. An evolving form, authentic leadership, has been associated with both greater levels of job satisfaction (Ausar et al., 2016; Darvish & Rezaei, 2011; Khan, 2017) and organizational commitment (Baek et al., 2019; Gatling et al., 2016; Jung, 2022) in a variety of settings. Thus, exploration into the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals during and since the Great Resignation was relevant and warranted.

Background of the Study

Student affairs practitioners are recognized as the largest professional group within the higher education workforce (Cepin, 2015). However, Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) noted employee retention has been a historical challenge within student affairs. The taxing nature of student affairs work is exemplified by the attrition rates within this field, especially for those who have recently entered; attrition among new student affairs professionals has been estimated at around 50% to 60% within the first five years (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). Other studies found the attrition rate of employees new to student affairs to be as high as nearly 70% over the last several decades (Cilente et al., 2006; Tull et al., 2009). Attrition rates appear to be at similar levels for mid-level professionals as well. Marshall et al.'s (2016) mixed-methods study of approximately 150 student affairs practitioners who had already left the field revealed more than 60% of participants departed within 10 years. Beyond Marshall et al.'s (2016) study, it was difficult to gauge attrition rates for those with longer lengths of employment since most of the literature focuses on those new to the field, often defined as five years or less. This study aimed

to help fill this gap by exploring whether the influence of perceived authentic leadership on job satisfaction and organizational commitment differed based upon length of employment in student affairs.

Lorden (1998) contended student affairs attrition literature is also inconsistent since few details regarding sample demographics are provided, rendering conclusions about specific demographic groups difficult to draw. Evans (1988) and Ting and Watt (1999) agreed, as both suggested more research regarding the causes of student affairs professionals' attrition is warranted, especially for women and racial minorities. This gap was important to address since experiences often vary based upon the identities one possesses. The present study aimed to help close that gap by exploring whether the influence of perceived authentic leadership among community college student affairs professionals during the Great Resignation differed based upon race and gender.

Moreover, much of the student affairs literature utilized participants employed at four-year institutions to inform findings. Latz et al. (2017) noted research examining community college student affairs is scarce. This leaves a gap in the understanding of community college student affairs professionals and hinders the understanding of differences based upon institutional type. For example, Gill and Harrison (2018) asserted student affairs at the community college level lacks guidance and intent compared to four-year institutions.

Job satisfaction has been recognized as a key factor for student affairs professionals' attrition (Rosser, 2004; Rothman & Essenko, 2007; Tull, 2006). However, this literature is limited. Tseng's (2004) meta-analysis identified only 25 studies focused on job satisfaction among student affairs professionals between 1970 and 2001. The analysis found strong, positive associations with satisfaction and other factors, including autonomy, recognition, supervisors'

leadership style, and the tasks required for the work. This study added relevant findings to existing literature. The literature review revealed only one study that explored the relationship between organizational commitment and attrition among student affairs professionals (Boehman, 2007). The author found a significant correlation between the two variables among student affairs practitioners employed at four-year institutions.

Since nearly all the studies exploring job satisfaction and organizational commitment among student affairs professionals were conducted prior to the Great Resignation, it is vital to understand how these variables may have been impacted by this global economic trend. Jiskrova (2022) asserted the Great Resignation has unsettled the contemporary American labor market, impacting both blue-collar and white-collar employees at equal rates (Sull et al., 2022). Higher-than-normal resignation rates among American workers were first identified in the spring of 2021 and continued to grow for the remainder of the year after the economy moved into recovery mode following COVID-19, and an increasing number of jobs became available (Liu-Lastres et al., 2022). However, there is limited research into the impact of the Great Resignation due to the recentness of the phenomenon (Kuzior et al., 2022; Miller & Jhamb, 2022).

Reasons employees have cited for resigning during the Great Resignation vary based upon the industry in which they were employed (Hirsch, 2021). Interestingly, these reasons are also overall different from those cited prior to the COVID-19 era. Malmendier (2021) asserted this difference is explained since working during the pandemic drastically changed the mental, emotional, and behavior processes that individuals undergo. This notion of unprecedented circumstances that led to a change in employee behavior was also noted by Montaudon-Tomas et al. (2022). The authors asserted changing times and significant insecurity led employees to realize they can pursue a different way of experiencing life. The present study aimed to fill this

gap and inform the student affairs literature while the Great Resignation is still ongoing, since reasoning among student affairs practitioners will likely differ from those cited by employees in other sectors.

These unprecedented circumstances presented a key opportunity to contribute to the student affairs literature by exploring how a more recently identified leadership style, authentic leadership, may affect community college student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Interest in this leadership style gained traction in recent years due to crises and scandals that have taken place, increasing unease and doubt within society (Northouse, 2021). In response, individuals are seeking genuine leaders who can regain their trust (Northouse, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic and Great Resignation are undoubtedly crises of magnitude that have significantly impacted all aspects of society. Fox et al. (2020) contended the unusual predicament in which higher education now finds itself necessitates authentic leadership since unpredictability can lead employees to doubt if, and how much, their institutions care about their personal and professional well-being.

Authentic leadership grew from Bass's (1985) transformational leadership model and emphasizes the need for leaders to "do what is 'right' and 'good' for their followers and society" (Northouse, 2021, p.15). In their proposed development of authentic leadership, Luthans and Avolio (2003) asserted this style of leadership comprises four positive psychological capacities: confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience. Moreover, the theory emphasizes leaders should exemplify strong emotional intelligence, long-term vision, integrity, and transparency (Northouse, 2021).

Prior research identified the significant, positive influence of authentic leadership on job satisfaction in the hospitality sector (Ausar et al., 2016; Ayça, 2019), healthcare sector (Baek et

al., 2019; Wong et al., 2020), higher education academic sector (Khan et al., 2017), and other sectors. Previous research also identified the significant influence of authentic leadership on the organizational commitment of employees within the information technology sector (Jin & Hahm, 2017; Tijani & Okunbanjo, 2020), healthcare sector (Baek et al., 2019), higher education academic sector (Jung, 2022), start-up sector (Hafiz & Indrayanti, 2022), and other sectors. The current study aimed to fulfill the need to learn more about the relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction and organizational commitment within the community college student affairs sector during modern times.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this nonexperimental, correlational study was to investigate the relationship between community college student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and their perception of their immediate supervisor's authentic leadership. This study was guided by the following research questions and sub questions:

1. What is the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

   1a. What is the relationship between the self-awareness dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

   1b. What is the relationship between the internalized moral perspective dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

   1c. What is the relationship between the balanced processing dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college

student affairs professionals?

1d. What is the relationship between the relational transparency dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

2. What is the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2a. What is the relationship between the self-awareness dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2b. What is the relationship between the internalized moral perspective dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2c. What is the relationship between the balanced processing dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2d. What is the relationship between the relational transparency dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

3. Does the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals differ based on race, gender, or length of employment in student affairs?

Professional Significance

The present study had value for multiple stakeholder groups. It aids institutional leaders and administrators in reflection upon how their leadership style may impact followers' job satisfaction and institutional commitment, thereby possibly reducing attrition. Although other studies have explored the influence of various leadership styles upon the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees within various settings, the status of this relationship for authentic leadership within the educational sector has been understudied, and not studied at all within the community college student affairs realm. Greater understanding of these variables positively impacts the field of student affairs.

Community colleges can experience negative reputational and financial consequences due to high attrition rates. Therefore, governing boards can use study findings to improve institutional policies. Educational policymakers at the local, state, and national levels will be interested in study findings since low job satisfaction and commitment among student affairs employees negatively impacts student retention and success. Scholars and researchers will also be interested in this study's findings, as there is limited research exploring leadership impact during the Great Resignation era due to the circumstantial uniqueness of this global economic phenomenon. Deeper understanding of the influence of authentic leadership upon student affairs professionals' organizational commitment and job satisfaction is necessary to counter contemporary personnel challenges and improve outcomes at America's community colleges.

Overview of Methodology

This nonexperimental, correlational study collected data through an electronic survey. This study explored the influence of the independent variable, perceived authentic leadership, upon the dependent variables of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Perceived

authentic leadership was measured utilizing the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ). The ALQ is a 16-item instrument consisting of the four dimensions of authentic leadership: relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and self-awareness (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Each of the 16 items is measured by a five-point Likert scale. Scores for each of the four dimensions were utilized to assess the employee's perception of their immediate supervisor's authentic leadership.

Participants

This research study utilized purposive and convenience sampling of student affairs professionals employed at any of the 23 colleges in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) on a full-time basis. Student affairs professionals were defined as individuals working in one or more of the current study's defined practice areas. Virginia Community College System (2022) identified 923 employees working in the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) "Academic and Student Services Staff" category, within which community college student affairs is grouped. Of these 923 employees, approximately 69% were women and 31% were men. In terms of race, this employee group was approximately 61% White, 23% Black/African American, 7.5% Asian, 3.5% Hispanic, and 4% of employees identified as two or more races (Virginia Community College System, 2022).

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants were contacted via the statewide VCCS employee directory and requested to complete an online survey (see Appendix F). Once participants clicked on the web-based survey link, an informed consent box appeared at the top of the survey, notifying participants that their participation was voluntary. Participant's consent was assumed by the researcher if they continued and completed the survey. Information regarding survey length, researcher contact

information, Old Dominion University College of Education Human Subjects Review Board information, and level of risk; and detailing how participants' personal information and answers would be kept confidential was also provided.

This research study utilized the Pearson *r* correlation and multiple linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between the dimensions of perceived authentic leadership and job satisfaction, and the dimensions of perceived authentic leadership and organizational commitment. Multiple regression was performed using each of the four subscale scores on the ALQ to predict job satisfaction. Multiple regression was then performed using each of the four subscale scores on the ALQ to predict organizational commitment. Multiple regression was also performed using demographic variables (race, gender, and length of employment in student affairs) on job satisfaction and organizational commitment to examine if differences in the influence of perceived authentic leadership existed.

Delimitations

This study was bounded by several delimitations. Boundaries for this research included delimitations of time, location, sample population, and research design. Time was a delimitation since the decision was made to begin this study in 2023 during the Great Resignation. This societal and economic phenomenon significantly altered the higher education landscape. The present study surveyed participants' experiences as community college student affairs professionals during this economic phenomenon. The Great Resignation impacted every entity of society, including governments, families, businesses, and economic sectors. Location was a second delimitation as data were collected from only the Virginia Community College System. A third delimitation was sample population, as this study only included participants who matched the selection criteria established for the study. The criteria for selection as a community college

student affairs professional was limited to individuals employed full-time in one or more of the following areas of practice: academic advising; admissions; career services; counseling services; dean of students office; disability support services; enrollment management; financial aid; health services; international students; judicial affairs/student conduct; leadership; military/veteran affairs; multicultural services; orientation/new student programs; recreation/fitness; service learning; student activities; or a similarly related area. The final delimitation was research design. The researcher determined that a correlational study evaluating the independent variable of perceived authentic leadership and the dependent variables of employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment would provide value to the field by showing the influence of the relationship. This study did not seek to determine causation, as many factors contributed to each variable that are beyond the scope of this study.

Definitions of Key Terms

- **Authentic leaders**. Authentic leaders are "those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspective, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high on moral character" (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 4).

- **Authentic leadership.** 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 followers, fostering positive self-development (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 94).

- **Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ).** A 16-item instrument consisting of four

dimensions, each measured by a five-point Likert scale: relational transparency (five items), internalized moral perspective (four items), balanced processing (three items), and self-awareness (four items) where scores are totaled to assess the perception of authentic leadership (Walumbwa et al., 2008). The ALQ has been applied in several cultures and organizational contexts (Gardner et al., 2011).

- **Great Resignation.** An economic phenomenon identified in spring 2021 that describes the mass exodus of millions of American workers as they started to question and challenge the workplace status quo (Klotz, 2021).

- **Job satisfaction**. Job satisfaction "is the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs" (Spector, 1997, p. 2).

- **Organizational commitment**. Organizational commitment is "a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization, and (b) has implication for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67).

- **Student affairs practitioner/professional.** For the purposes of this study, these terms will be used interchangeably. Individuals employed in student affairs focus primarily on students' out-of-classroom learning and experiences (Reynolds, 2009); employed full-time at a community college in one or more of the following areas of practice: academic advising; admissions; career services; counseling services; dean of students office; disability support services; enrollment management; financial aid; health services; international students; judicial affairs/student conduct; leadership; military/veteran affairs; multicultural services; orientation/new student programs; recreation/fitness; and service learning; student activities; or other. areas of practice: academic advising;

admissions; career services; counseling services; dean of students office; disability

support services; enrollment management; financial aid; health services; international

students; judicial affairs/student conduct; leadership; military/veteran affairs;

multicultural services; orientation/new student programs; recreation/fitness; student

activities; service learning; or other. If a participant in the current study selected 'other',

they were asked to identify the current area of practice in which they were employed. The

researcher then determined if the practice area entered met the study's criteria to qualify

as a student affairs area of practice.

Chapter Summary

This introductory chapter provided an overview of the research study, including the

background, purpose statement, research questions, professional significance, overview of

methodology, delimitations, and definitions of key terms. The Great Resignation has impacted

the globe, changed society, and affected employment trends in the long term. Higher education

student affairs has historically encountered attrition challenges, which will likely continue to

worsen in the future. The Great Resignation requires community colleges to examine the impact

of this phenomenon upon the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of student affairs

practitioners and develop practical solutions to combat it. I sought to find out if the influence of

perceived authentic leadership positively influenced practitioners' job satisfaction and

organizational commitment, which could potentially lower attrition within the field.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this current study was to investigate the relationship between community college student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and their perception of their immediate supervisor's authentic leadership. This chapter includes a synthesis of literature relevant to the key terms included within the study. First, I will describe the method of the literature review. Next, I will provide an overview and synopsis of the literature related to leadership, community college leadership, authentic leadership, and community colleges. Then, I will discuss and synthesize results related to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Finally, I will offer a synopsis of literature related to student affairs, community college student affairs, and the Great Resignation.

Method of Literature Review

To understand the depth of the issue of supervisors' authentic leadership on job satisfaction and organizational commitment, I used multiple approaches to seek research and scholarship on this topic. Utilization of the Monarch OneSearch tool on the Old Dominion University Library website allowed for the search of various databases and identified results from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, dissertations, and other documents. I used the following key terms for Boolean searches in the databases: leadership, community college leadership, authentic leadership, community colleges, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, student affairs, community college student affairs, and Great Resignation. The literature search was restricted to books, peer-reviewed articles, government research briefs, and policy documents. Most of the cited literature was published within the past decade. However, many of the student affairs studies cited are more than 10 years old, indicating a need for more

research into student affairs, and especially community college student affairs. Some older

sources are included for historical perspective and/or for unique relevance to the key terms.

<div align="center">**Leadership**</div>

Research interest in leadership theory and practice has gained traction over the years as

individuals ponder the characteristics of effective leaders (Northouse, 2021). Northouse (2021)

asserted good leaders are increasingly coveted by private and public organizations. Previous

studies have shown that there are a multitude of theories used to define and examine leadership

development (Bass, 2008; Dinh et al., 2014; Gardner et al., 2020; Hickman, 2016; Mumford,

2006). Fleishman et al. (1991) noted in just the past six decades, there have been over 60

classification systems established by researchers for the conceptualization of leadership.

Keskes (2014) asserted leaders possess the ability to influence followers' behavior

through the utilization of various leadership styles or approaches. Bass (2008) noted some

conceptualizations of leadership place group processes as the focal point while others focus on a

leader's personal traits. Another common theme within the conceptualization of leadership

emphasizes behaviors displayed by leaders as they work to influence group followership (Bass,

2008). Other prominent conceptualizations examine the power dynamics leaders yield to

influence followers, or the experiences and competencies that promote effective leadership

(Northouse, 2021).

Defining Leadership

Definitions of leadership vary widely within the research community and meanings

assigned to this concept are largely dependent on the individual using the term, societal

circumstances, and the subject area in which it is being studied (Northouse, 2021). Northouse

(2021), a primary text used for the study of leadership, defined this concept as "a process

whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 6).

Importantly, Northouse (2021) asserted the approach to understanding leadership as a process

indicates it is a practice that occurs within the relationship between leaders and followers,

making leadership a possibility for any individual. This section will explore the numerous ways

in which leadership has been defined between the early 1900s and modern times.

Rost's (1991) analysis of leadership citations from 1900 through 1990 found over 200

distinct ways in which the term was conceptualized. For the first 30 years of the 20th century, the

conceptualization of leadership revolved around its use as a method to maintain authority and

control over followers (Rost, 1991). At the start of the fourth decade of the 20th century, Rost

(1991) noted definitions of leadership shifted toward an attribute-based focal point where leaders

attempted to change, instead of control, followers. During this time, leadership was also viewed

as a two-way process whereby leaders could simultaneously influence, as well as be influenced,

by followers (Rost, 1991). In the 1940s, Hemphill (1949) found the definition again shifted with

the conceptualization of leadership now focused on how a leader manages the actions of a group.

Additionally, a distinction appeared between influence and force as methods by which to practice

leadership (Copeland, 1942).

At the second half of the 20th century, Rost (1991) noted the emergence of three patterns

within leadership literature. There was an extension of centering groups as the focal point within

the practice of leadership, in addition to examining leadership based upon interpersonal

dynamics, and gauging one's leadership impact based upon the ability to change group behavior.

Northouse (2021) identified the 1960s as a time of consensus among researchers with a shared

view of leadership as actions that move followers to achieve common objectives. For example,

Seeman (1960) characterized leadership as "acts by persons which influence other persons in a

shared direction" (p. 53). Ten years later, organizational behavior replaced groups as the focal point for defining leadership, with special attention placed on how leaders motivate large-scale movement toward the achievement of institutional objectives (Rost, 1991). Northouse (2021) asserted Burns's (1978) view of leadership as a two-way process of motivational and moral transformation between leaders and followers became the dominant conceptualization during this decade:

> Leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilizing by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers. (p. 425)

The 1980s displayed significant growth in writings about the theory and practice of leadership, allowing it to gain mainstream interest (Northouse, 2021). This led to a new series of leadership definitions. These emerging definitions placed attention on leadership as a method to get followers to achieve leaders' objectives, viewed leadership as a noncoercive influence, and emphasized the importance of a leader's individual qualities (Northouse, 2021). This eventually led to the development of transformational leadership, whereby leaders utilize followers' intentions to achieve the joint goals of both parties (Bass, 1985).

The final decade of the 20th century saw significant discourse within the scholarly community regarding differences between leadership and management. For example, Kotter (1990) contended the roles of management and leadership are different since management focuses on control and maintaining established norms, whereas leadership is about striving for transformation and progress. Similarly, Rost (1991) asserted management is a one-way relationship where the leader yields control compared to leadership, which is a two-way

relationship whereby leaders seek to sway followers. During the 1990s, several new leadership approaches also emerged that viewed leadership from the perspective of followers (Northouse, 2021). Among these approaches were servant leadership, followership, and adaptive leadership. Graham (1991) noted servant leadership presents leaders as servants who place the needs of their followers at the top of mind to help increase self-sufficiency, become better informed, and even adopt a more servant-like personal style. The concept of followership instead highlights the position followers play within leadership (Hollander, 1992). Lastly, in the adaptive leadership approach, Heifetz (1994) asserted followers are inspired by leaders to increase personal adaptability through acknowledging and resolving issues on their own.

The 21st century introduced morality as an important component within the practice of leadership. As a result, authentic leadership and ethical leadership gained traction among the scholarly and business communities (Northouse, 2021). Although this focus on morality gained renewed focus during the 2000s, Burns (1978) was one of the first to assert leadership as a process involving morality. Burns argued leaders are obligated to assist followers with identification of their own principles and needs as they enhance performance.

Northouse (2021) also noted leadership literature at the time increased attention on leadership communication and inclusivity, as diversity increased within American institutions. Approaches that emerged during this period include ethical leadership, spiritual leadership, humble leadership, and inclusive leadership. Brown et al. (2005) described ethical leadership as an approach that focuses on suitable behavior among those in leadership, with respect to both their behavior and their interactions with others. Ethical leaders also encourage followers to act accordingly. Spiritual leaders inspire followers by focusing on the importance of principles and an individual's purpose (Fry, 2003), whereas humble leaders utilize humility to display how

followers' efforts will result in personal growth (Owens & Heckman, 2012). Shore et al. (2018) asserted inclusive leadership occurs when leaders honor followers' uniqueness while also forging group connectivity. Authentic leadership is yet another approach that emerged at the beginning of the 21st century (Northouse, 2021). This leadership style focuses on authenticity with respect to both leaders as individuals and within the practice of leadership (George, 2003).

Authentic Leadership

Lemoine et al. (2019) identified authentic leadership as a distinctive style that aids in the comprehension of leadership as a general construct due to its focus on leaders' perception and representation of themselves. Authentic leadership grew from Bass's (1985) transformational leadership model and emphasizes the need for leaders to "do what is 'right' and 'good' for their followers and society" (Northouse, 2021, p.15). Interest in this leadership style gained traction in recent years due to crises and scandals that have taken place. Such crises and scandals include the September 11th terrorist attacks, the Enron business scandal, elevated political unrest, growing distrust of institutions, and the rise of "fake news," all of which have increased unease and doubt within society (Northouse, 2021). In response to these world events, individuals are seeking trustworthy and genuine leaders who can regain their trust (Northouse, 2021). These circumstances establish research into authentic leadership as both relevant and valuable.

Northouse (2021) contended authentic leadership is a more recently established style and "still in the formative phase of development" (p. 221), therefore likely to remain in flux as new studies are undertaken. Positive psychology and positive organizational behavior serve as the foundation of authentic leadership theory since positive attributes assist in the authentic development of a leader (Northouse, 2021). In their proposed development of authentic leadership, Luthans and Avolio (2003) asserted this form of leadership comprises four positive

psychological capacities. These capacities are confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience. Yavuz (2020) similarly noted how this leadership style aligns well with positive organizational behavior as it underscores personal experiences, attributes, and growth, which improves performance within institutions. Moreover, the theory emphasizes the need for leaders to exemplify strong emotional intelligence, long-term vision, integrity, and transparency (Northouse, 2021). Luthans and Avolio's (2003) conceptualization of authentic leadership as a learning process that takes place over the course of a leader's life implies authentic leaders are not simply "born" but instead can be "made." Northouse (2021) similarly contended "each of these attributes has a trait-like and a state-like quality" (p. 229), suggesting authentic leaders can be developed over time.

Theoretical Framework

There is no singular theoretical understanding of authentic leadership among scholars (Northouse, 2021). Instead, Chan (2005) explained approaches to defining authentic leadership arise from a variety of perspectives. These approaches include intrapersonal, interpersonal, and developmental perspectives (Northouse, 2021). The intrapersonal perspective places the internal workings of the leader at the focal point, specifically their own understanding, control, and beliefs (Northouse, 2021). Expanding upon the intrapersonal perspective, Shamir and Eilam (2005) noted those practicing this style of leadership stand out as unique by leaning on both life events and personal beliefs for guidance. In comparison, the interpersonal perspective focuses on the connection between leaders and followers, highlighting how followers react to their leaders through this shared process whereby each group simultaneously influences the other (Eagly, 2005).

Developmental Perspective

The developmental perspective of authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardener, 2005;

Gardner et al., 2005a; Walumbwa et al., 2008), by which this study approached the leadership style, "views authentic leadership as something that can be nurtured in a leader, rather than as a fixed trait" (Northouse, 2021, p. 222). The developmental perspective of authentic leadership defines it 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 followers, fostering positive self-development. (Walumbwa et al., 2008, p. 94)

Walumbwa et al. (2008) identified four major dimensions that encompass the underpinning of developmental authentic leadership theory: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Northouse (2021) asserted through life experiences, those seeking to practice authentic leadership possess the ability to better understand and improve self-utilization of each dimension. The following section explores the four primary dimensions identified by Walumbwa et al. (2008) in their approach of authentic leadership theory from a developmental perspective.

Self-Awareness

Datta (2015) noted self-awareness relates to leaders' perceptions of themselves, including their personality, intentions, sentiments, and morals. All these components encompass a leader's core and worldview (Datta, 2015). Moreover, Avolio and Gardner (2005) and Datta (2015) contended self-awareness is an ongoing process with no fixed endpoint. Whitehall et al. (2021) supported this assertion, finding statistically significant increases of participant self-awareness between pre- and post-tests after graduate students participated in an online course focused on

authentic leadership development. Kernis (2003) added attention to and acceptance of one's own feelings are also key components in building this awareness.

The experiences individuals goes through also influence their level of self-awareness. Gardner et al. (2005) asserted "trigger events" (p. 347) assist leaders to become more self-aware, for better or worse. Gardner et al. (2005) further noted those seeking to become authentic leaders should practice introspective behaviors, reflect upon the reasons for how they make sense of the world, and challenge their preconceived notions to increase self-awareness. As part of their introspection, aspiring authentic leaders will also benefit from occasionally practicing emotional fragility, as greater self-awareness often leads individuals to realize that life is fragile (Gardner et al., 2021). The accuracy of one's self-awareness has also been a topic for discussion. While deliberately choosing to focus on the parts of oneself that constitute the whole individual is how awareness of self was originally conceived (Duval & Wicklund, 1972), Gardner et al. (2005) asserted the inaccuracy of one's perception does not invalidate the practice.

Previous studies have also identified the strength of the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and self-awareness. In their meta-analysis, Miao et al. (2018) found emotional intelligence strongly correlated with authentic leadership. Northouse (2021) explained this relationship is likely because emotionally intelligent individuals possess higher levels of self-awareness and continuously contemplate upon previous encounters as they work to become more authentic in their leadership.

Internalized Moral Perspective

The internalized moral perspective dimension of authentic leadership theory emphasizes the ability of an individual to prioritize their own principles over external influences, largely through self-regulation (Northouse, 2021). May et al. (2003) noted this perspective occurs

through an ongoing learning process, as leaders work to identify, respond, and self-reflect in response to moral challenges. It is important to note authentic leaders are not innately more moral than others but instead have "developed the ability to see their role as including an ethical responsibility" (May et al., 2003, p. 247) to others. The role of others, specifically followers, is a key consideration when examining a leader's internalized moral perspective. Northouse (2021) noted internalized moral perspective plays an important role in how followers perceive the authenticity of their leader. This occurs as followers observe whether the behavior of a leader is compatible with their stated principles.

Balanced Processing

Balanced processing is another component of authentic leadership, which requires the ability to control one's feelings and impulses (Northouse, 2021). Individuals performing balanced processing work to avoid subjective analysis of information and seek input from others prior to acting (Datta, 2015). Northouse (2021) similarly noted those practicing balanced processing should seek input from those who openly share opposing opinions. In addition, leaders should maintain awareness of topic areas about which they feel strongly to minimize potential bias (Northouse, 2021).

Authentic leaders take practical steps to properly conduct balanced processing. These steps include actively listening to diverse perspectives before making decisions, avoiding defensive behaviors, and maintaining awareness of one's strengths and areas for improvement (Gardner et al., 2021). According to Northouse (2021), leaders processing information in a balanced manner are viewed as authentic since they are transparent about their personal viewpoints while also striving to maintain impartiality by seeking opposing viewpoints (Northouse, 2021). How leaders respond in light of new knowledge is an important indicator of

whether they are properly performing balanced processing. Gardner et al. (2021) asserted authentic leaders must be okay with changing their minds after considering new information and willing to take responsibility for their mistakes.

Relational Transparency

The final dimension of authentic leadership centers truthfulness at the core of one's relationships, as well as willingness to accurately show others who they are (Northouse, 2021). Northouse (2021) noted relational transparency requires discipline on the part of the leader since individuals have a choice of "who" they decide to present as their public persona. Kernis (2003) further stated relational transparency takes place when leaders properly share their fundamental state of mind, proclivities, and reasoning process. May et al. (2003) added willingness to engage in dialogue about why a specific decision was made or action was taken is also essential. Although Northouse (2021) contended all aspects of a leader's true core identity must be revealed, there are limits to the transparency a leader should display. Gardner et al. (2021) warned authentic leaders to avoid unnecessary self-disclosures to protect workplace dignity.

Practical Approach

Beyond the theoretical framework of authentic leadership, on a practical level, authentic leaders empower others to step up and lead (George, 2003). The practical approach to authentic leadership is primarily derived from George (2003) and George and Sims (2007). George (2003) relied on the author's reflections as a former corporate leader and over 100 interviews with a variety of other leaders. The author analyzed interview transcriptions, which resulted in three distinct findings. George (2003) contended that authentic leaders focus on assisting other individuals, are in touch with their foundational identity, and utilize self-principles as they carry out leadership. Moreover, authentic leaders focus on exhibiting five central characteristics. These

are purpose, values, relationships, self-discipline, and heart (George, 2003). Authentic leaders also exhibit the central attributes of purpose, passion, connectedness, compassion, intrinsic motivation, and goal-orientation (George, 2003). Moreover, authentic leaders prioritize the desires of followers and collaborate with them to coordinate activities that achieve common goals (Northouse, 2021).

George (2003) invoked the metaphor of "true north" on a compass to describe his findings that authentic leaders are solid in their personal identity and well-aware of the direction in which they want to take their leadership, guided by core values. Authentic leaders are also self-disciplined and use challenging circumstances to reinforce their principles to make decision-making easier (George, 2003). Like Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) theoretical approach to authentic leadership, George (2003) noted connectivity and building rapport with others as vital to the practice of authentic leadership. Shamir and Eilam (2005) further contended authentic leaders deeply value how others make meaning of their personal experiences. Displaying transparency and compassion toward followers to build trust was additionally identified by George (2003) as part of the practical approach to authentic leadership. Lemoine et al. (2019) supported this assertion, noting authentic leaders often discuss previous experiences that may be sensitive or awkward in an effort to share their true selves with others.

Community College Leadership

Regardless of the style those leading community colleges choose to enact, the literature revealed that this position is no easy task. Nevarez et al. (2013) asserted the multi-mission nature of community colleges means "leadership in these institutions is complex and dynamic" (p. 11). Eddy (2010) similarly noted prioritizing all institutional missions equally, in a way that best meets all stakeholders' needs, is a primary task for two-year leaders. Dougherty and Townsend

(2006) further addressed how two-year leaders' efforts are complicated by which missions must be prioritized at any given time. For example, community colleges face ongoing institutional challenges, including the curriculum, administration, and limited budgets (Nevarez et al., 2013). The financial challenges community colleges face represent a substantial point of discussion within the literature. Romano and Palmer (2016) suggested while financial challenges are common for leaders of both four-year and two-year institutions, solutions often vary based upon institutional type. Eddy (2010) identified the unique funding structure of two-year institutions as a significant leadership challenge, compared to that typically employed by their four-year counterparts.

Nevarez et al. (2013) noted public perception, calls for increased responsibility, and politics are some of the other peripheral influences impacting two-year institutions. In response, Nevarez et al. (2013) suggested those at the top of the organizational hierarchy are required to focus on initiatives to increase students' goal attainment and completion rates, support short-term employment training, and focus on advancing the economic interests of their service area. Expanding upon students, specifically, Eddy (2010) asserted the wide range of needs across diverse student bodies is a challenge for community college leaders. To meet these needs "requires future leaders and administrators at each level of the community college hierarchy to use theory as a tool to guide their practice and ultimately, transform their institutions" (Nevarez et al., 2013, p. 1). By utilizing a theoretical approach, Nevarez et al. (2013) asserted those in charge will be better equipped to appreciate diverse perspectives, prepare for unintended outcomes, and minimize the negative effects of organizational politics to better calculate responses to various topics and strategically direct constituencies toward wanted results.

Several researchers contended examining community colleges through an organizational theory lens may prove useful for those leading. Nevarez et al. (2013) identified four primary components of community college organizational theory. The authors first assert community colleges are designed to be collaborative. In other words, employees, divisions, and all other structural factors are interdependent and influence each other via guidelines and methods (Nevarez et al., 2013). Nevarez et al. (2013) next pointed to forms of unofficial and official control that should be both recognized and influenced by community college leaders to attain positive results (Greve & Mitsuhashi, 2007). Two-year institutions also possess a "distinctive culture" and "subcultures" (Nevarez et al., 2013, p. 10). Jones (2007) noted beliefs, conduct, and expectations, among other factors, often guide cultures. Nevarez et al. (2013) stressed the importance for two-year leaders to better utilize shared responsibilities, objectives, and the institutional mission to build consensus among internal and external stakeholders. Lastly, Nevarez et al. (2013) emphasized the need for leaders to embrace continual transformation because of ongoing shifts in external forces. The authors further warned failure to embrace continual transformation risks institutional survival. This was supported by Eddy's (2010) suggestion that modern community college leadership requires those in charge to embrace and utilize skill sets and life experiences differently than their predecessors.

Development of Community Colleges

The development of American community colleges should be placed within the context of the growth across all of higher education, particularly during the 20th century (Cohen et al., 2013). Beach (2011) stated higher education institutions within the United States were originally formed based on the European model of liberal arts education and Catholic seminaries; however, higher education remained extremely localized, religion-based, and inequitable through the mid-

19th century. Public secondary and postsecondary educational opportunities in America were ushered in later in this century, with public four-year institutions becoming permanent after passage of the second Morrill Act in 1890 (Witt et al., 2004). Despite this expansion, Beach (2011) noted higher education access remained largely restricted to wealthy white males throughout the first half of the 20th century. Lower-level, government-sponsored institutions dedicated to semiprofessional preparation were eventually formed (Beach, 2011). These institutions were originally known as "normal schools" and helped significantly expand postsecondary education opportunities for previously excluded Americans (Beach, 2011).

In 1901, Joliet Junior College, located in Illinois, became the first junior college in the United States (Beach, 2011). Vaughan (2006) noted Joliet played a vital role in the future development of what would come to be known as community colleges. Joliet reinforced the ability of tax funds to support postsecondary education, displayed the need for educational institutions that meet local community needs, and showed the possibility and sensibleness of transferring coursework between two-year and four-year institutions. As part of the focus on the transfer of credit between these different types of institutions, accreditation became an important consideration. In 1917, the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools developed accreditation standards for both public and private junior colleges. These standards focused on key areas such as governance, funding, admissions procedures, and faculty credentialing (Vaughan, 2006).

Ayers (2017) noted junior colleges developed at the beginning of the 20th century and were viewed as innovative institutions at the time. Beach (2011) contended junior colleges were advocated by those who sought to create a more logical and effective system of education within the United States. The development of junior colleges was also part of a strategy implemented to

meet the demands of increasing numbers of high school graduates seeking postsecondary opportunities. Junior colleges were originally very assorted and generally autonomous (Brint & Karabel, 1991). Bahr and Gross (2016) further asserted these colleges were originally conceived as two-year institutions dedicated to university preparation. Junior colleges were often located on high school campuses, in individual facilities, or on the campuses of four-year institutions.

Growth

Throughout the 20th century, junior colleges faced momentous growth. Brint and Karabel (1991) noted California was one of the states where junior colleges experienced substantial achievement due to significant support from the state's leading four-year institutions. Low private competition and a quickly growing populace also assisted in this achievement. There were only 25 junior colleges across America in 1920, which increased to 207 within two years (Cohen et al., 2013). Cohen et al. (2013) noted junior colleges existed in all except five states by 1930. There were 575 junior colleges across the United States by the end of the 1930s (Beach, 2011). These numbers exhibit accelerated growth in a short period of time.

After passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, or GI Bill, in 1944, greater demand for access to higher education led to significant enrollment increases (Witt et al., 1994). This bill essentially created a scholarship for all eligible veterans in the United States and set the model for America's current financial aid system (Vaughan, 2006). Vaughan (2006) further noted the GI Bill and subsequent financial aid programs have substantially helped increase enrollment rates and student diversity on America's community college campuses. One underrepresented group that experienced accelerated access to higher education during this time were women. From 1945 through 1975—the Mass Higher Education Era—enrollment among women rapidly grew (Cohen et al., 2013).

Starting in the late 1940s, junior colleges underwent rebranding. This was largely due to findings released in the Truman Commission's report *Higher Education for American Democracy* (Bonos, 1948). The commission was appointed by President Harry Truman in July 1946, and members were tasked to examine the functions of higher education in a democratic society (Kim & Rury, 2007). Beach (2011) acknowledged the commission's report legitimized junior colleges at the federal level and suggested these institutions be rebranded as community colleges, charged with a "broad comprehensive mission" (p. 16). The Truman Commission further proposed "whatever form the community college takes, its purpose is educational service to the entire community, and this purpose requires of it a variety of functions and programs" (Zook, 1947, p. 67).

Community college growth stagnated in the 1950s, leading many community colleges to struggle, close, or convert to four-year institutions (Vaughan, 2006). However, this trend reversed within 10 years. De los Santos (2004) described the 1960s as "the decade when we were building an average of one community college a week in this country" (p. 149). Vaughan (2006) confirmed over 450 new public community colleges opened between the 1960s and 1970s. This was due to passage of federal legislation, including the Higher Education Act. With the federal government deciding to heavily invest in institutions of higher education, states followed soon thereafter. Most states had developed public community college systems by the 1960s, with most junior colleges transformed to comprehensive community colleges by the late 1970s (Beach, 2011). As part of this shift, community college curriculums also became more comprehensive (Vaughan, 2006). Cohen et al. (2013) noted the curriculum evolved beyond university transfer programs to include science-intensive programs and vocational/technical training. Illustrating this change, 75% of students were enrolled in a transferrable liberal arts curriculum in the 1960s,

yet 20 years later, the same percentage were instead enrolled in applied degree curricular pathways, which are designed for immediate employment (Brint & Karabel, 1991).

Despite progress, particularly in relation to the community college mission, Beach (2011) identified the 1970s as a turbulent decade for American community colleges. Increased competition from four-year counterparts due to enrollment declines across the country and increased scrutiny regarding institutional efficiency led to amplified focus on increasing productivity at community colleges and the need to tout the institutions' ability to customize and meet local community and individual needs (Beach, 2011).

In the modern era, every state now has at least one public community college (Vaughan, 2006). AACC (2023) noted there are currently 932 public community colleges, 35 tribal community colleges, and 71 independent community colleges. As of 2023, more than 10.2 million students are enrolled at American community colleges, with approximately 6 million in credit programs and approximately 4 million in noncredit programs (AACC, 2023). Latz et al. (2017) asserted since the Great Recession in 2008, when student enrollment ballooned while local and state funding dwindled, interest in two-year institutions has grown.

Romano and Palmer (2016) noted tracking community college revenue and expenditure patterns is hindered due to limited timely data. Today, state and local tax revenues, along with tuition, are generally the largest community college funding sources (AACC, 2023). Romano and Palmer (2016) specifically noted, "community colleges, more than other public postsecondary institutions, rely heavily on state and local government appropriations" (p. 28). However, only 27 states utilize local tax revenues to fund community colleges (Romano & Palmer, 2016). Funding also differs by state and sometimes even varies among localities within the same state (Romano & Palmer, 2016; Vaughan, 2006). While most states utilize funding

formulas in their community college allocations, some do not (Romano & Palmer, 2016). Other streams of revenue for community colleges include noncredit and continuing education courses, and educational foundations (Vaughan, 2006). As opposed to four-year institutions, Romano and Palmer (2016) identified the difficulty for community colleges to generate funding through private fundraising, especially in lower-income rural areas.

In terms of costs, two-year institutions have managed expenses over the previous decade and reduced the amount spent per full-time equivalent (FTE) student when adjusted for inflation (Romano & Palmer, 2016). However, this has not reduced student tuition costs because public funding has been reduced simultaneously (Romano & Palmer, 2016).

Students

Students are at the core of the teaching mission of the community college (Wallin, 2004). Student demographics have shifted significantly throughout the development of community colleges within the United States, with nearly half of students from minority racial and ethnic backgrounds enrolled by the early 1990s (Beach, 2011). Bahr and Gross (2016) similarly supported findings that community colleges have become a major access point to higher education for a wide array of underrepresented groups, including first generation, low-income, non-traditional age, and students of color. By 2004, racial and ethnic minorities accounted for 36.5% of all community college enrollments nationwide, a 16.5 % increase since 1976 (Cohen et al., 2013), compared to White students, who accounted for 45% of enrollment (AACC, 2023).

Community colleges have also played a role in closing gender and socioeconomic educational attainment gaps within the United States. According to Cohen et al. (2013), the number of women receiving associate degrees from community colleges exceeded men by 1978. By 2023, women accounted for nearly 60% of community college enrollments compared

to approximately 40% for men (AACC, 2023). The socioeconomic status (SES) of community college students has also changed over time. At community colleges, the SES of dependent students is usually lower than their four-year counterparts (Cohen et al., 2013). For students entering during the 1995—1996 academic year, 28% of students came from the bottom SES quartile and 19% from the top SES quartile at public two-year colleges (Cohen et al., 2013). The most recent data available, from the 2015—2016 academic year, showed nearly 40% of dependent students from families earning less than $20,000 per year attended a public community college (Community College Research Center, n.d.).

Age is another student demographic variable that has shifted throughout the development of community colleges. According to the *American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) Directory*, the mean and median age of credit students in 1980 was 27 and 23, respectively (Cohen et al., 2013). Six years later, the mean age had decreased to 23, while the median age had increased to 25 (Cohen et al., 2013). By 2003, Cohen et al. (2013) noted community colleges in 13 states enrolled 6% or more of the population ages 18 to 44, up from nine states just four years prior. In 2008, the national mean age of students at two-year institutions was nearly 28, and median age was nearly 24 (Cohen et al., 2013). By 2023, both the mean and the median age of community college students within the United States had slightly decreased to 27 and 23, respectively (AACC, 2022).

Mission

Dougherty and Townsend (2006) noted, "questions and concerns about the community college's missions have recurred throughout the institution's history" (p. 5). Ayers (2017) asserted leaders of community colleges decided to implement mission statements in the latter half of the 20th century after "Drucker (1973) popularized the use of "missioning" as a

management strategy" (p. 10). At the time, community college advocates were required to create a convincing institutional purpose, yet this was complicated by the fact there was no single agreed-upon view (Ayers, 2017). Beach (2011) noted public two-year institutions began with a mission of college and university preparation for individuals graduating from high school. Similarly, Vaughan (2006) noted the community college mission has generally been to create postsecondary educational opportunities that help improve communities. However, the ways in which community colleges choose to accomplish this mission can significantly vary (Vaughan, 2006).

Beach (2011) stated by the early 2000s, community colleges were viewed as possessing "comprehensive missions, multiple organizational ideologies, divisive organizational cultures, and an extremely diverse student population" (p. 56). Many contemporary community college missions relate to the following components: open access; equitable student treatment; wide-ranging educational opportunities; focus on the needs of the local community; instruction and scholarship; and a commitment to enduring learning (Vaughan, 2006). Primary methods of meeting the open access and equity goals include low tuition, a wide variety of programs options, and close geographic proximity to students (Vaughan, 2006). Vaughan (2006) further asserted the goal of open access is likely the most misconstrued mission due to the misconception that there are no requirements for students to prove minimum ability for effective learning. Community colleges are also unique in that these institutions offer not only a pathway to four-year institutions but also a wide variety of options to assist students' attainment of their short- and long-term goals; further, they serve the needs of local communities, including training, developmental coursework, noncredit options, and cultural programming (Vaughan, 2006).

Ayers (2017) noted missions are now commonplace at community colleges. Beach (2011) asserted the current community college mission includes meeting the needs of communities, business, government, and an increasingly diverse student population. Latz et al. (2017) similarly noted these institutions are increasingly charged with aiding the country to recover after years of unideal economic conditions. However, Dougherty (2001) warned "community colleges are contradictory institutions" (p. 75) due to a variety of social functions that are discordant and often in flux. Beach (2011) supported Dougherty's assertion, noting the modern community college is not an easy organization to describe or govern. Dougherty and Townsend (2006) further asserted both community college leaders and public legislators must maintain better awareness of the numerous missions, conflicting at times, with which these institutions are charged. Schudde and Goldrick-Rab (2014) also agreed with the claim community colleges are institutions filled with contention, writing, "inequality is simultaneously ameliorated by increasing educational opportunity and exacerbated by failing to improve equity in college completion across key demographics, such as race and socioeconomic status" (p. 2).

Job Satisfaction

Holland (1985) identified an employee's career identity and selected field of employment as vital components of job satisfaction and effectiveness. Locke (1976) estimated nearly 3,500 articles had been written about job satisfaction by the early 1970s. Beyond interest from the research community, organizations have also begun to acknowledge the importance of job satisfaction. Oshagbemi (2013) recommended organizations place job satisfaction at the forefront and consider it a moral responsibility within the workplace since it improves the overall organization and helps prevent employee burnout. Eagan et al. (2015) identified the concept of job satisfaction as a multifaceted construct that has been redefined over time and strongly

correlates with an individual's values, needs, and emotions. In their synthesis of research findings related to job satisfaction within education institutions, Thompson et al. (1997) contended theories of job satisfaction can generally be grouped into three categories: content, situational, or process. The following sections will explore these categorizations of job satisfaction theories and highlight prevalent literature within each.

Content Theories

Content theories focus on needs and values that must be fulfilled to explain job satisfaction (Gruneberg, 1979). Theories within this categorization include Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1954) and Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Maslow's (1954) framework for human motivation is a five-level hierarchy, or priority sequence, with each level representing a component needed for the satisfaction of human needs. From bottom up, the hierarchy of needs is as follows: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow's (1954) framework implied the outcomes of work must support employees' efforts to satisfy these various needs. Hackman and Oldham's (1976) model contended there are five job characteristics that lead to a highly motivating and highly satisfying job. These characteristics include skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback.

Herzberg et al.'s (1957) two-factor theory is included under Thompson et al.'s (1997) content theory categorization. Despite being published more than 60 years ago, Herzberg et al.'s (1957, 1959) two-factor theory of job satisfaction remains a seminal work for scholarship on job satisfaction (Seifert et al., 2022). Herzberg et al.'s factors include "motivators," which are components related to work rewards (advancement opportunities, acknowledgement, additional responsibility) and "hygiene," which are components related to work environment (supervision,

policies, peer relations, and compensation). However, critiques of this theory identify problems with the methodology utilized by Herzberg et al. (1957), as the results of their study have not been replicated and conclusions have been considered flawed (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Judge et al., 2001).

Situational Theories

In comparison to content theories, situational theories of job satisfaction focus on the interactions between a job, an organization, and individuals as primary influencers. (Thompson et al., 1997). Quarstein et al.'s (1992) Situational Occurrences Theory of Job Satisfaction is included within Thompson et al.'s (1997) situational theory categorization. Quarstein et al. (1992) asserted job satisfaction results from the interaction between job characteristics, also called situational characteristics. Situational characteristics include compensation and opportunities for advancement, which can be evaluated prior to an individual's taking a job. However, situational occurrences are factors that are difficult to identify prior to one's taking a job, or factors that may not even be considered. These include supervisor recognition, failure to repair work equipment, and other similar issues (Quarstein et al., 1992). Quarstein et al. (1992) further noted overall job satisfaction is better predicted from awareness of both situational characteristics and occurrences, rather than one factor alone.

Glisson and Durick's (1988) Predictors of Job Satisfaction is a second example within the situational theories of job satisfaction. Glisson and Durick (1988) explored the interaction between employees and their work situation. The authors found job characteristics are strong predictors of satisfaction, while organizational and worker characteristics are less significant. This study also asserted job satisfaction can be improved by providing work environments in which employees apply their skills to clearly defined responsibilities (Glisson & Durick, 1988).

Process Theories

Process theories focus on interactions between factors, such as expectancies, values, and needs, as influencers of job satisfaction (Gruneberg, 1979; Locke, 1976). For example, Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction "as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (p. 1300). Equity Theory (Adams, 1963) and Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) fall within this categorization (Gruneberg, 1979). Adams (1963) contended inequity results when employees believe they are undervalued for their inputs, compared to the inputs and outcomes of other employees, which serve to establish a referent group. Adams (1963) noted the referent group includes employees in the same position across the organization, those at a different organization, and those in the closest comparable positions. Inputs involve factors such as effort invested in work, an individual's education, and prior work experience. Outcomes, then, "include pay, rewards intrinsic to the job, seniority benefits, fringe benefits, job status and status symbols" (Adams, 1963, p. 423). Equity Theory essentially suggests an employee will increase or decrease inputs or outputs to match those of the referent group, thereby decreasing perceived inequity (Adams, 1963).

The Valence-Instrumentality-Expectancy Theory links effort, performance, and outcomes to job satisfaction (Vroom, 1964). Vroom (1964) contended a motivated employee will invest effort when they believe higher performance is related to desired outcomes. Vroom (1964) theorized individuals will choose behaviors they think they can perform and believe will result in preferred outcomes.

The current study utilized industrial-organizational psychologist Paul Spector's theory as a framework for understanding job satisfaction among those employed in community college student affairs. This theory defines job satisfaction as "the extent to which people like

(satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs" (Spector, 1997, p. 2). Spector (1985) estimated that although nearly 5,000 articles had been written about job satisfaction by the mid-1980s; most focused on industrial organizations, while very few focused on employees in the human services sector. This was problematic since the industrial job satisfaction scales include variables that may not be applicable or generalizable to human services (Spector, 1985). To address this void, Spector (1985) developed a new job satisfaction instrument known as the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). The 36-item instrument measures nine components of job satisfaction, which were selected based upon a review of job satisfaction literature (Spector, 1985). These components are pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication (Spector, 1985). Based on Spector's (1985) analysis, he noted "the JSS was most strongly correlated with perceptual and attitudinal variables" (p. 705), specifically intention to quit, organizational commitment, perceived job characteristics, and opinions of supervisors. Spector's theory of job satisfaction and the tool developed to measure it were ideal for the current study since they were specifically designed to measure job satisfaction within human service, nonprofit, and public organizations (Spector, 1985), under which community colleges are categorized.

Job Satisfaction in Higher Education

The majority of higher education job satisfaction literature focuses solely on academic faculty (Tarver et al., 1999). Emmert and Taher (1992) found that, like other professionals within the public sphere, higher education employees' job satisfaction often stems from the social aspects of their work, second only to the work they perform itself. Austin's (1985) analysis of results from a survey of 260 mid-level academic administrators at a large research university revealed age, gender, autonomy, task variety, manager feedback, and a nurturing work

environment as significant predictors of job satisfaction. Additional factors that influence the job satisfaction of academic faculty and staff included gender and proximity to retirement (Austin, 1985), physical and mental health (Spector, 1997), and length of service (Bamundo & Kopelman, 1980).

Baker (1998) asserted two-year institution leaders should implement a rewards system that aims to curtail job dissatisfaction and increase motivation since motivators have been associated with greater job satisfaction. Tarver et al. (1999) explored the relationship between job satisfaction and locus of control among student affairs administrators, compared to academic administrators, along several demographic variables. The authors found significant correlations among student affairs administrators for all variables except minority status and community college employment. The study identified similar findings among academic administrators; however, significance was not found for individuals with minority status, females, those without a doctoral degree, or those who were employed at a community college. The strongest correlations between job satisfaction and locus of control were identified for older student affairs administrators and younger academic administrators (Tarver et al., 1999). More recently, Eagan et al. (2015) noted higher education job satisfaction is closely connected to an employee's relationship with the organization, intention to stay, and productivity.

Organizational Commitment

Although studies into organizational commitment date back to the 1960s, interest in this topic gained significant traction within the research community during the 1980s (Acar, 2012). Becker (1960) offered one of the first unidimensional conceptualizations, introducing the concept of "side bets" (p. 35). A side bet is essentially an evaluation of financial costs connected with remaining at or leaving an organization, conducted by the employee. Examples include

losing a pension, professional connections or seniority, and retirement benefits upon departure (Becker, 1960). Becker (1960) noted side bets can take on various forms, including generalized cultural expectations, impersonal bureaucratic arrangements, individual adjustment to social positions, and face-to-face interactions.

Mowday et al. (1982) noted commitment has also been difficult to define within the literature because some researchers approach the concept from an attitudinal perspective, whereas others utilize a behavioral approach. Utilizing data from nearly 1,400 workers from a variety of employment sectors, Mottaz (1988) supported this observation and proposed organizational commitment literature can be classified into one of two perspectives. Attitudinal commitment focuses on how employees come to think of their own values and goals in relation to the organization, while behavioral commitment focuses on how much employees feel locked into an organization and take action to deal with this feeling (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Despite the differences in research perspective when examining organizational commitment, Hunt and Morgan (1984) and Jans (1989) contended there is consensus among the research community with respect to defining this concept. These definitions generally describe organizational commitment as the extent to which a person recognizes, internalizes, and sees their role based on organizational values and goals (Jans, 1989). Several studies have also identified the point at which an individual becomes organizationally committed (Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Jans, 1989; Mowday et al., 1982). Indicators of this moment include when employees begin to internalize the goals and values of the organization, their willingness to exert effort toward the attainment of organizational goals is established, and they begin to possess a strong desire to remain with the organization. Analysis of the literature further revealed two primary conceptualizations of organizational commitment: two-factor and three-factor

conceptualization. The following sections will explore these two conceptualizations and highlight prevalent literature within each.

Two-Factor Conceptualization

The literature revealed several researchers originally suggested organizational commitment was conceptualized by two factors (Angle & Perry, 1981; Hunt & Morgan, 1994; Mayer & Schoorman, 1998; Porter et al., 1974). Mowday et al. (1982) identified Porter et al.'s (1974) model as a pioneering two-factor approach to understanding organizational commitment. This model utilized the factors of attitudinal commitment and behavioral commitment for the conceptualization of organizational commitment. Attitudinal commitment includes the ways in which an employee's personal values fit with the values of the organization, while behavioral commitment "relates to the process by which individuals become locked into certain organizations" (Mowday et al., 1982, p. 26). However, this model faced critiqued for lack of both causality and dimensionality. Meyer and Allen (1997) noted though the aim of Porter et al.'s (1974) conceptualization was to identify causal links for attitudinal commitment, causality could not be established. Mayer and Schoorman (1998) further argued Porter et al.'s (1974) conceptualization was not multidimensional, as the developers contended, and did not fully explain the process in which an individual becomes organizationally committed.

In the early 1980s, Angle and Perry (1981) utilized the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed from Porter et al.'s (1974) model as a guide for a study of lower-level bus transportation company employees and constructed two subscales of organizational commitment, which they named "value commitment" and "commitment to stay" (p. 4). The authors defined value commitment as an affective, positive organizational connection

and noted commitment to stay reflected employees' willingness to maintain their organizational commitment (Angle & Perry, 1981).

Hunt and Morgan (1994) later postulated organizational commitment is a multidimensional construct that should assess global commitment and constituency-specific subgroup. Global commitment referred to commitment to the overall organization. Commitment to constituency-specific groups referred to commitment to work groups, supervisors, or top management (Hunt & Morgan, 1994). Moreover, global commitment was identified as a key mediating construct of organizational outcomes, and constituency-specific commitments were identified as precursors to global commitment (Hunt & Morgan, 1994). Hunt and Morgan (1994) also found the constituency-specific commitments to top management and direct supervisors to be the most important factors, which suggests a link between both organizational support and commitment. Fjortoft's (1993) study of organizational commitment among higher education faculty supported Hunt and Morgan's (1994) findings. The author conducted a study to identify the variables that predict organizational commitment and found department policy, institutional reputation, department meeting participation, and department administrative style to be the strongest. Moreover, Fjortoft (1993) identified factors that predicted department commitment (constituency-specific) were different from those that predicted commitment to the university (global).

Mayer and Schoorman (1998) proposed the terms continuance commitment (to participate) and value commitment (to produce) after identifying the linkage between Angle and Perry's (1981) conceptualization and March and Simon's (1958) concept of employees' decision to produce (value commitment) and participate (continuance commitment). Mayer and Schoorman's (1998) study of nearly 150 employees at a large financial organization found

continuance commitment associated with tenure, retirement benefits, education, and age.

Conversely, value commitment was associated with participation, perceived prestige, job

involvement, and role ambiguity. Mayer and Schoorman (1998) vitally noted increasing one type

of commitment within their model did not automatically affect both commitments.

Three-Factor Conceptualization

The approach to understanding factors of organizational commitment underwent a

paradigm shift around the 1990s. Mowday et al. (1982) identified how the former paradigm

approached organizational commitment dualistically. In other words, an individual was viewed

as either committed or not committed. Several studies identified the limits of this approach

(Angle & Perry, 1981; Mayer & Schoorman, 1998; Penley & Gould, 1988), which prompted

further research. This subsequently led to the development of several organizational commitment

models comprising three factors (Penley & Gould, 1988; Jans, 1989; Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Penley and Gould (1988) asserted the two primary outlooks of organizational

commitment are instrumental and affective, and that employee behavior also depends on the

emotional, or affective, attachment to the organizational values. The authors' model expanded

Angle and Perry's (1981) model and adapted Etzioni's (1961) model, which contained

instrumental and affective attachment. On the one hand, the instrumental view of organizational

commitment focuses on trade-off, specifically how "an employee exchanges his or her

contributions for the inducements provided by the organization" (p. 44). On the other hand, the

affective view focuses on the connection an employee has with the organization and its values

(Penley & Gould, 1988). Penley and Gould's (1988) study utilized five samples and concluded

organizational commitment is multidimensional, and asserted the two dimensions of affective

commitment should be separated into moral and alienative dimensions. Thus, Penley and Gould

(1988) developed a three-factor conceptualization of organizational commitment that includes moral commitment, calculative commitment, and alienative commitment. The authors noted the addition of the alienative dimension is indicative of an affective organizational connection and "emanates from a perceived absence of alternatives" (Penley & Gould, 1988, p. 47). In other words, this commitment type "is a negative organizational attachment which is characterized by low intensity of intentions to meet organizational demands coupled with intentions to retain organizational membership" (Penley & Gould, 1988, p. 48). Penley and Gould's (1988) study further asserted commitment originates from the individual's personality-based predispositions, supervisor influence, and organizational culture.

In another proposed three-factor conceptualization, Jans (1989) critiqued Porter et al.'s (1974) model as limited in scope. Thus, the author worked to develop an organizational commitment model that addressed the "nonwork" factors influencing commitment utilizing 1,300 military officers. Jans's (1989) model utilized the conceptual framework of Schein (1978), resulting in a three-factor conceptualization. These factors are career/life stage, work-family interaction, and career prospects/job involvement (Jans, 1989). Jans (1989) found nonwork factors had a significant impact on long-term organizational commitment and contended there is likely a "career cycle effective in organizational commitment" (p. 264). However, all participants in this study were male and members of the Australian military, rendering findings limited.

In the early 1990s, Meyer and Allen (1991) developed a three-component model of organizational commitment, which has become predominant based upon review of subsequent organizational commitment literature. The authors' model comprises affective, continuance, and normative commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), and is the model that the current study utilized to measure the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the organizational commitment of

community college student affairs practitioners. The following section explores model development, for which several of the previously described models served as the foundation.

Meyer and Allen's Three-Component Conceptualization

Meyer and Allen (1991) noted the goal of developing their model was to offer a synthesis of existing organizational commitment models and serve as a guide for future studies. The researchers defined "commitment [as] a psychological state that (a) characterizes the employee's relationship with the organization, and (b) has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). Thus, the authors' three components are affective, continuance, and normative commitment, each of which has varied behavioral implications (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer and Allen (1991) further asserted each component is a development of various antecedents, and individuals can exhibit one, two, or all three based on their experience(s).

Affective Commitment

Angle and Perry's (1981) and Mayer and Schoorman's (1988) value commitment overlays conceptually with Meyer and Allen's (1991) affective commitment dimension. This dimension involves the desire or emotional attachment to stay with an organization. Affective commitment was specifically defined as "the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). Mowday et al. (1982) illustrated personal, structural, job-related, and work experiences as antecedents to affective commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) utilized the first two of these antecedents and combined the latter two to describe what they consider to be work experience.

Continuance Commitment

Angle and Perry's (1981) and Mayer and Schoorman's (1988) inclusion of continuance commitment is like Meyer and Allen's (1991) dimension of continuance commitment. This dimension involves the costs related to leaving or staying with an organization. Meyer and Allen (1991) defined continuance commitment as "an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization" (p. 67), and they found employees who remained with an organization because they needed to do so exhibited this type of commitment. Meyer and Allen (1991) noted side bets, investments, and availability of alternatives were antecedents to continuance commitment. Building on side bets from Becker (1961), Meyer and Allen (1991) described this term as loss of benefits or privileges, acquired nontransferable skills, potential uprooting of family, or disrupting relationships. The higher the associated costs of leaving, the more likely an individual will stay committed based on continuance commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

Normative Commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) defined normative commitment as "a feeling of obligation to continue employment" (p. 67). This label was originally introduced by Wiener (1982), who observed commitment as internalized pressures in two separate types of beliefs. The first was a "moral obligation to engage in a mode of conduct reflecting loyalty and duty in all social situations in which he has a significant personal involvement," while the second type makes one perform in ways "consistent with organizational mission, goals, policies, and style of operations" (Wiener, 1982, p. 423). Meyer and Allen (1991) found employees who stayed with an organization because they felt they ought to do so demonstrated normative commitment.

Student Affairs

For the purposes of this literature review, the terms "student affairs professional" and "student affairs practitioner" will be used interchangeably, just as they are within scholarship. Student affairs practitioners are typically one of the largest employee groups at colleges and universities (Sagaria & Johnsrud, 1988), accounting for over 60% of the academic workforce (Cepin, 2015). Cepin (2015) noted student affairs professionals are recognized as the largest professional group within the higher education workforce and are employed at a variety of higher education institutions across the nation. Naifeh and Kearney (2021) noted student affairs departments often reflect the pyramid structure found within organizational charts at most colleges and universities, with most positions close to the bottom. At the core of their role, student affairs practitioners focus primarily on students' out-of-classroom learning and experiences (Reynolds, 2009).

The U.S. Department of Education (2019) identified more than 7,000 postsecondary Title IV institutions, including both public and private two-year and four-year institutions. Many postsecondary institutions employ student affairs professionals. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022) reported the career field of postsecondary administrator, which includes student affairs professionals, consisted of approximately 210,100 employees in 2021. However, there is no centralized listing of student affairs professionals from which to obtain a more precise number.

Historical Overview of Student Affairs

In a review of more than 400 institutional histories of higher education organizations, Rhatigan (1974) asserted student affairs professionals were mostly uninformed about the vital role history has played in the development of their field. This was a cause of concern for

Rhatigan (1974), as the author contended it left readers with the impression that perhaps those employed within student affairs were unneeded or played an insignificant role at colleges and universities. In a synthesis of student affairs research from 1996 to 2015, Hevel (2016) noted Rhatigan's critique was mostly ignored at the time by higher education researchers and those employed within student affairs.

During the 1970s and 1980s, little research was conducted with respect to student affairs (Antler, 1987; Clifford, 1989). However, the mid-1990s saw a significant rise in the number of articles and books published (Hevel, 2016). Hevel's (2016) findings were supported by Conley (2001), who noted higher education staffing research was limited until the late 1990s when Winston and Creamer (1997) developed a supervision model specifically focused on higher education student affairs as a unique labor market. The authors defined supervision within higher education as "a management function intended to promote the achievement of institutional goals and enhance the personal and professional capabilities of staff" (Winston & Creamer, 1997, p. 42).

As research continued throughout the late 1990s and into the early 2000s, the historical development of student affairs was identified as an important concept that student affairs practitioners needed to better understand. As a result, two well-known student affairs professional organizations, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) included "History, Philosophy, and Values" as a competency for practitioners (Hevel, 2016).

Professionalization of Student Affairs

Early attempts to professionalize the student affairs role took place when deans of men and deans of women at various colleges and universities collaborated to examine challenges,

which eventually led to the development of student affairs professional organizations (Hevel, 2016). Another major professionalization strategy included the development of student affairs graduate programs (Klink, 2014). Despite these attempts at professionalization, Miller and Pruitt-Logan (2012) identified several challenges. For example, deans of women were typically poorly compensated in comparison to more senior administrators (Miller & Pruitt-Logan, 2012), which was part of the aim to correct. Moreover, as deans of women attempted to professionalize their roles, they were overwhelmingly passed over for promotion in favor of men or even fired in the process (Hevel, 2016). Beyond sexism, Hevel (2016) also identified racism as a barrier for student affairs practitioners at the onset of this role. Black individuals were prohibited from student affairs employment at Predominately White Institutions (PWIs) for most of the 20th century (Nidiffer, 2000).

Role of Student Affairs

Hevel (2016) contended student affairs can be traced back to the administrators hired to focus on the well-being and conduct of students at institutions of higher education. Specifically, the roles of deans of women and deans of men were predecessors to what is currently understood as the role of student affairs practitioners (Hevel, 2016). Hevel (2016) noted these positions were created due to institutional leaders and professors becoming less interested in supervising student behavior as co-education increased at American colleges and universities. With this newly created void, Caple (1998) identified discipline and housing as the original duties for student affairs practitioners.

The assigned roles for this employee group quickly expanded thereafter to include advising student organizations, academic monitoring, healthcare record maintenance, and career counseling (Herdlein, 2005; Miller & Pruitt-Logan, 2012). Eventually, career and vocational

advising became a central responsibility for student affairs practitioners (Herdlein, 2005). In modern student affairs, practitioners are charged with supporting the holistic development of students (Waple, 2006). Schuh et al. (2016) identified the five departments commonly housed in student affairs are campus activities, counseling, orientation, student conduct, and student affairs assessment. Other common departments include career services, wellness programs, disability support services, and multicultural services (Wesaw & Sponsler, 2014). Wesaw and Sponsler (2014) further noted that, depending on the institution, there are typically more functional areas housed under the umbrella of student affairs. Ozaki and Hornak (2014) remarked that gauging the effectiveness of staff within student affairs units is complicated since many staff work across various departments and serve in many roles.

Student Affairs Research Gaps

There are several suggestions as to which topic areas future student affairs studies should address based on identified gaps. These gaps relate to the influences that lead to job satisfaction, how job satisfaction varies based on demographic variables, and more research into the experiences of student affairs professionals who are not located at the senior level. Hevel (2016) noted more research into experiences of entry- and mid-level student affairs administrators is warranted. Within existing studies on the job satisfaction of student affairs professionals, most have examined the dimensions and levels of satisfaction instead of the factors that produce job satisfaction and the connection between turnover and productivity (Volkwein & Zhou, 2003).

Hevel (2016) further contended since most of the senior-level student affairs administrators during the 20th century were White, future research into the history of lower-level administrators can potentially offer greater awareness of the diversity that exists in the field. For example, Marcus (2000) found sense of belonging varied significantly based on the race of a

community college student affairs professional. This important finding had not been identified in previous research exploring the sense of belonging among student affairs professionals. Moreover, McCoy et al. (2013) found while there are many variables that contribute to job satisfaction, gender differences have only recently been identified. The current study aimed to help close all these gaps. The following sections will address research relevant to the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of student affairs practitioners—the current study's two areas of focus.

Job Satisfaction in Student Affairs

Even though student affairs professionals constitute such a significant portion of the higher education workforce, there is a scarcity of research that has examined student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and performance (Anderson et al., 2000; Bender, 1980). The literature is also updated only periodically (Bender, 1980; Berwick, 1982; Evans, 1988; Marshall et al., 2016; Lorden, 1998; Renn & Hodger, 2007; Tull, 2006), limiting the utility of findings. Further complicating the usefulness of existing literature, Lorden (1998) contended research into student affairs attrition, with which job satisfaction is correlated (Tull, 2006), is inconsistent since few details regarding sample demographics are provided. This renders specific conclusions about various demographic groups difficult to draw (Lorden, 1998). Evans (1988) and Ting and Watt (1999) agreed, as both suggested more research regarding the causes of student affairs professionals' attrition is warranted, especially for women and racial minorities, whose experiences may vary compared to those possessing majority identities.

Importance

The literature revealed job satisfaction challenges have been a longstanding issue among student affairs professionals. In a landmark study of job satisfaction among student affairs

practitioners, Bender (1980) administered a questionnaire to over 200 NASPA members and found 66% were satisfied with their job, while 24% were dissatisfied, and 15% undecided. This study's findings were limited, however, since professionals belonging to NASPA are likely more engaged in the field. On the contrary, Lorden (1998) noted many student affairs professionals were dissatisfied with their job and intended to resign. Tull (2006) similarly found new student affairs practitioners resign from the field each year, for which job dissatisfaction is a common cause.

Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) found attrition among new student affairs professionals is estimated to be around 50% to 60% within the first five years. This is concerning since job satisfaction plays an important role in the stress of student affairs practitioners and their life satisfaction. Berwick's (1992) study identified job satisfaction as a major, significant predictor of work-related stress among student affairs professionals. Further, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and stress were identified as influential factors that affect the life satisfaction of student affairs professionals (Anderson et al., 2000). Based on more recent concerns of job loss, reductions in staff sizes, and other issues reported by student affairs practitioners (Schreiber et al., 2022), Seifert et al. (2022) asserted job satisfaction among this employee group must be acknowledged by both leaders within the field and policymakers across the globe.

Tseng's (2004) meta-analysis of 25 studies, which focused on job satisfaction among student affairs professionals between 1970 and 2001, found strong positive associations with satisfaction and other factors, such as autonomy, recognition, supervisors' leadership style, and the tasks required for the work. Other factors that influence job satisfaction among those working in student affairs include salary and benefits, job security, institutional flexibility, and work environment conditions (Bender, 1980). The following sections will closely examine the most

prevalent themes within student affairs job satisfaction research.

Workload, Stress, and Burnout

In a study examining burnout and job satisfaction using a national sample of student affairs professionals, Brewer and Clippard (2002) found participants reported lower levels of burnout and higher levels of job satisfaction compared to peers in different helping professions. However, Volkwein and Zhou (2003) found that compared to other positions on college and university campuses, student affairs professionals most often report the highest levels of work-related stress and pressure. Moreover, the work with which they are tasked is often quite different from their expectations and desires when entering the field, leading to job dissatisfaction. Stamatakos (1978) noted professionals entering student affairs often enter with idealistic goals of a calling but learn conflict exists between their ideals and the daily tasks required. Amey (1990) similarly identified how role conflict and being asked to perform tasks with which they are uncomfortable leads to job dissatisfaction among student affairs professionals if the dissonance created is left unacknowledged.

Low morale was also identified as a significant factor in the job dissatisfaction of student affairs professionals (Ward, 1995). Conley (2001) noted job dissatisfaction often appears among student affairs professionals due to role uncertainty and conflict, ongoing pressure to perform, burnout, and heavy workloads. More recently, Marshall et al. (2016) identified how the overwork of student affairs professionals leads them to burn out and leave due to job dissatisfaction. Chessman (2021) also noted an examination of student affairs professionals' well-being may help explain some of the reasons for job dissatisfaction.

Compensation and Benefits

The literature revealed student affairs professionals feel they are not fairly paid for the important work with which they are tasked. There also appears to be a mismatch between their educational credentials and compensation. Low compensation has been identified as a reason student affairs professionals become dissatisfied with their jobs and leave for better pay (Conley, 2001). Gender appears to worsen this pay disparity. In a study of 500 female student affairs administrators selected from the NASPA Member Handbook, perceived salary inequity and issues of underrepresentation primarily led to job dissatisfaction (Blackhurst, 2000b). Buchanan's (2012) analysis of demographic questionnaire information and one-hour interviews with five participants, utilizing grounded theory, revealed salaries were an important consideration for new student affairs professionals' satisfaction (Buchanan, 2012). Marshall et al. (2016) utilized a mixed methods approach to analyze data from a convenience sample of 153 student affairs professionals who resigned from the field, and found participants felt a divide between the educational credentials they possessed and the salary they were paid. However, this study was limited by the possibility that individuals in the sample exaggerated their discontent to help rationalize their choice to resign.

Work Environment and Leadership

Student affairs professionals have also continuously emphasized the roles that work environment and the leadership under which they find themselves influence job satisfaction. In a survey of 800 senior student affairs administrators, Quiles (1998) utilized a linear structural relations model to analyze responses and found work ethic, negative affectivity, demographics, and work environment as factors among other reported causes. Based on analysis of results from a survey sent to 435 members of ACPA, Tull (2006) found the perception of ineffective

management to be a key factor in student affairs professionals' attrition, as it increases job dissatisfaction. However, generalizability of the study is limited since all participants were self-enrolled ACPA members; meaning the organization likely attracts those more engaged in student affairs work. Tull et al. (2009) similarly identified effective leadership as a significant factor in the job satisfaction of new student affairs professionals. Lombardi's (2013) quantitative study, which utilized an explanatory, cross-sectional method to analyze the survey responses of nearly 850 student affairs practitioners, found that although participants reported general satisfaction with their job, they had low levels of satisfaction with the supervision they receive.

Organizational Factors and Politics

In a national study which explored mid-level student affairs administrators' intention to leave their current job, Rosser and Javinar (2003) utilized structural equation modeling to analyze survey responses from nearly 1,200 participants. Analysis revealed there was a significant reduction in student affairs practitioners' morale based on their time in the field. The analysis found that longer tenures were associated with decreased morale. Specifically, respondents reported they "perceive themselves as less loyal and committed to an institution that is less fair and caring" (p. 822). Participants in Rosser and Javinar's (2003) study also reported staff attrition as an issue within their respective units; however, due to the quantitative design of their research, reasons for this attrition were not examined.

Organizational politics have also been identified as an important factor in the job satisfaction of student affairs professionals, especially among middle managers. Neelankavil et al. (2000) found middle managers possess the capability to influence higher education institutions; yet because of their position between senior leadership and entry-level employees, middle managers are often forced to balance the interests and needs of both groups. Jones (2001)

found job satisfaction among student affairs professionals with six or more years of experience was negatively impacted by political decision-making and struggles for power. Rigid organizational policies can also impact job satisfaction, as flexibility and scheduling are valued among student affairs practitioners (Beeny et al., 2005; Buchanan, 2012).

Limited Advancement Opportunities

Limited opportunities for promotion have also been raised in discussions with student affairs professionals about their job satisfaction. A gender disparity has been identified in relation to advancement opportunities. Bender (1980) found significant gender differences with respect to advancement opportunities, where nearly 50% of men reported satisfaction and women reported less than half of that satisfaction rate. Conley (2001) noted to avoid being stuck in the lower levels of a higher education organization, student affairs practitioners commonly move between institutions in an effort to seek better opportunities and advance (Conley, 2001). Location can also play a role in relation to the advancement factor of job satisfaction. Rosser and Javinar (2003) noted geographic limitations that inhibit student affairs professionals' ability to develop within the field can lead to dissatisfaction, resulting in turnover. Cilente et al. (2006) also noted limited advancement opportunities were reported as a frustration that led to job dissatisfaction among student affairs professionals. In her survey of student affairs professionals' job satisfaction, Davidson's (2012) study of facets of job satisfaction among entry-level residence life staff further showed respondents were most satisfied with the work itself, yet least satisfied with opportunities for promotion.

Organizational Commitment in Student Affairs

The literature revealed limited studies on the various factors that influence the organizational commitment of student affairs practitioners. Several studies have instead explored

the connection between job satisfaction and attrition among those employed in student affairs. However, Boehman (2006) contended job satisfaction is not related to commitment but instead a systemic issue. Blackhurst et al. (1998) found the organizational commitment of women employed in student affairs was related to employment factors such as title, education level, length of employment within higher education, and length of employment in current position. However, it is unknown if the same relationship would be identified for their male counterparts. Blackhurst (2000a) analyzed the results of survey questionnaires completed by a random sample of 307 women student affairs administrators and noted mentoring can lead to increased organizational commitment. However, this effect was found only for White women and not women of color in the study.

Boehman's (2006) study utilized Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model for a quantitative study exploring the impact of organizational politics, organizational support, work/nonwork interaction, and job satisfaction on the organizational commitment of student affairs professionals. The study found overall job satisfaction, organizational support, organizational politics, and work/nonwork interaction were the most significant influencers on the organizational commitment of student affairs professionals. Further, participants did not report feeling obligated to remain in their positions due to a lack of alternative options, which was indicative of a low continuance commitment level (Boehman, 2006). Boehman (2006) also found the more emotionally attached student affairs professionals were to the institution (affective commitment), the more loyal they felt to the institution (normative commitment), and the less likely they were to feel locked into their position (continuance commitment).

A second study conducted by Boehman (2007) explored affective commitment among student affairs professionals by conducting regression analysis on survey responses from 644

participants, who were recruited from a pool of members of a national professional association for student affairs practitioners. Findings revealed "organizational support, overall job satisfaction, and organizational politics significantly contributed to the variance in affective commitment among student affairs professionals" (p. 318). Boehman (2007) also identified the vital role supervisors and senior leaders play in helping develop higher levels of organizational commitment among student affairs professionals. Boehman (2007) specifically noted, "leaders able to articulate a clear vision of the organization and involve all levels of the organization in the development of strategic plans help to create the buy-in that is a hallmark of commitment to the organization" (p. 320). The lack of more studies exploring student affairs professionals' organizational commitment, beyond whether job satisfaction influences organizational commitment, warrants further research. The current study aimed to contribute to this topic area.

Community College Student Affairs

Ozaki and Hornak (2014) asserted "student affairs is critical across all institutional types, but essential at a community college, an open access institution" (p. 79). Latz et al. (2017) noted both student affairs and community colleges experienced significant advancement around the same time. Referencing community college student services organizations, Cohen et al. (2014) stated, "Once considered the supplemental administrative services needed to assist students as they made their way through [community] college, student services now play an important role in the total student experience" (p. 214). Latz et al. (2017) similarly asserted the role of student affairs practitioners is vital to support community college students' goal attainment. However, Gill and Harrison (2018) asserted student affairs at the community college level has lacked guidance and intent compared to that at four-year colleges and universities. Related, Helfgot (2005) contended conditions within student affairs divisions are less steady compared to other

departments on community college campuses. Further, the institutional perception of community college student affairs administrators often varies, with the group sometimes seen as invaluable and at other times as a drain on resources (Helfgot, 2005).

The literature revealed community college student affairs professionals serve in a variety of roles and functions. Nevarez and Wood (2010) identified three primary functions that community college student affairs departments serve. These include technical operations (e.g., course enrollment), campus life (e.g., student clubs), and nexus operations (e.g., academic advising). Latz et al. (2017) expanded on these functions, noting student onboarding and orientation, financial aid, and counseling are additional responsibilities for community college student affairs administrators. However, since there are less operational areas at community colleges compared to four-year institutions, the staff is typically smaller (Latz et al., 2017). With fewer personnel staffing community college student affairs departments, this often translates to a fast-paced work environment that is highly controlled, student contact is constant, and multitasking is often required (Latz et al., 2017). Hirt (2006) noted another consequence of fewer employees is the need for most practitioners to be cross trained.

Helfgot (2005) used the metaphor of a never-ending roller coaster to describe the work of community college student affairs professionals. The author explained the causes of this constant "ride" include the responsive nature of community colleges, which are forced to continuously adjust based on the needs of the workforce, as well as ongoing changes in reputational standing. Other identified causes include ongoing fluctuation in financial support from the government and the wide range of requests from internal and external stakeholders (Helfgot, 2005). Expanding on one of these stakeholder groups, Hornak (2009) noted the role of community college student affairs practitioners is heavily impacted by the students served. The author remarked student

demographic characteristics are constantly shifting based on variations within local areas and society at-large, which generates special challenges as community college student affairs professionals create plans and services to enhance success.

Research exploring community college student affairs first emerged at the beginning of the 1930s; however, it is scarce (Latz et al., 2017). Creamer (1994) agreed, writing, "the quality of two-year college student services literature lags seriously behind that of four-year colleges" (p. 449). This pattern has continued, although there has been greater focus on community colleges among scholars more recently (Latz et al., 2017). Cohen et al. (2014) agreed, noting there has been a recent increase in the number of studies examining community college student affairs. Examples of this uptick include Ozaki et al. (2014), Tull et al. (2015), and Kelsay and Zamani-Gallaher (2014). Hornak (2009) framed the work of community college student affairs through an ethical lens and asserted it involves significant complexity due to the diversity of students and an unstable work environment with ongoing competing priorities. Latz et al. (2017) supported this finding by contending community college student affairs cannot be understood in the same way as the four-year context.

Community College Student Affairs: Job Satisfaction

The literature revealed most community college employee job satisfaction research focuses on academic faculty. In a significant study of community college faculty's intent to leave, Rosser and Townsend (2006) found the quality of faculty work- life balance was vital and significantly correlated with overall job satisfaction. In their study of community college part-time faculty, Valadez and Antony (2001) wrote, "community colleges must begin to work toward developing a deeper understanding of job satisfaction and develop strategies" (p. 107). Flowers (2005) analyzed data from the 1999 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) to

compare differences in job satisfaction between African American faculty at two-year institutions and four-year institutions, utilizing Herzberg's two-factor theory. The authors found two-year faculty were more likely to describe being very satisfied in their current position, compared to their four-year counterparts. Flowers (2005) further asserted the study's findings helped confirm Herzberg's contention that "hygiene" factors are associated with higher levels of job dissatisfaction but motivating factors are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction.

Marcus (2000) conducted a case study of community college student affairs professionals, and results indicated 70% of employees felt a sense of success in their position at the institution. However, disaggregation by race revealed 50% of staff of color shared this feeling compared to all but one White staff member. Limited research has also been conducted focusing on individuals located at higher levels on community college student affairs organizational charts. Tull (2014) noted little research exists on community college senior student affairs officers (SSAOs) in relation to job satisfaction. To help close this gap, the author conducted a national study of nearly 230 community college SSAOs and found officers with ambiguous roles, or those asked to perform duties outside of typical job responsibilities, had greater job dissatisfaction and were more likely to resign.

Community College Student Affairs: Organizational Commitment

Previous studies exploring organizational commitment within the community college realm have focused exclusively on faculty. Flores' (2008) phenomenological study of organizational commitment among nine community college faculty members yielded five themes the author claimed framed participants' commitment experience: service attitude, types of commitment, collegial responsibilities, collegial relationships, and institutional support. Engle's (2010) quantitative study utilized Meyer and Allen's (1991) Three-Component Model of

Organizational Commitment to investigate the predictive value of various factors on organizational commitment for both full- and part-time community college faculty. Findings revealed commitment scores were higher among full-time faculty and identified organizational support, extrinsic rewards, age, and education as significant predictors for full-time and part-time faculty. Engle (2010) additionally identified extrinsic financial rewards as a significant negative influence on part-time faculty's affective commitment. The literature review revealed no studies explicitly focused on the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals.

Great Resignation

The COVID-19 pandemic and other factors prompted what has come to be known as the Great Resignation. Jiskrova (2022) asserted the Great Resignation unsettled the contemporary American labor market and gained significant attention from researchers, as it impacted both blue-collar and white-collar employees at equal rates (Sull et al., 2022). This phenomenon, coined by Professor Anthony Klotz, describes the mass exodus of millions of American workers as they started to question and challenge the workplace status quo (Kellett, 2022; Klotz, 2021; Kuzior et al., 2022).

Higher-than-normal resignation rates among American workers were first identified in the spring of 2021 and continued to grow for the remainder of that year, after the economy moved into recovery mode following COVID-19 and an increasing number of jobs became available (Liu-Lastres et al., 2022). BLS (2022) noted in April 2021, there were over 4 million resignations traversing a wide variety of industries, including education services. This sector includes K–12 schools, colleges, universities, training centers, and other educational support services, where resignations exceeded 50,000 in this one month alone (BLS, 2022). By the end

of 2021, there were approximately 69 million job separations in the United States across all

sectors, of which nearly 47 million were made willingly (Romans, 2022).

While these staggering numbers were concerning for a wide variety of industries across

the nation, there is a research gap on the Great Resignation due to the recentness of the

phenomenon (Kuzior et al., 2022; Miller & Jhamb, 2022). Of the existing literature, most has

been limited to the service, travel, tourism, and manufacturing sectors. This is likely because

these industries have exhibited the highest attrition rates since the beginning of the phenomenon

(Hirsch, 2021), ranging from 2 to 40% (Serenko, 2022). For example, Sull et al. (2022) found

clothing retailers lost nearly three times the number of employees as airline, health insurance,

and healthcare device companies. The lack of literature exploring the impact of the Great

Resignation on other industries, including higher education and community colleges,

specifically, warrants it as a topic for further exploration.

Contributing Factors

After identification, the Great Resignation gained significant public and media interest,

becoming one of the most searched terms on Google, worldwide, by fall 2021 (Montaudon-

Tomas et al., 2022). Attention to this issue gained traction in large part because identifying the

rationale for the decision of so many employees to abruptly alter their employment patterns

moved beyond an organizational and human resource challenge to one with much greater

financial and psychological implications (Kuzior et al., 2022). Indeed, the Bureau of Labor

Statistics (2022) noted this economic phenomenon is indicative of dissatisfaction among

American workers, prompting a large segment to explore alternative employment opportunities.

In their analysis of nearly 35 million American worker profiles, Sull et al. (2022) supported this

assertion as they found employees identified toxic work environments as a major contributor to

attrition during the onset of the Great Resignation. Other identified contributors included job insecurity, lack of recognition or praise from leaders, and a feeling that employers were apathetic about employees' health and well-being. However, this analysis was limited to private, for-profit companies and may not be generalizable to other types of employers. Hirsch (2021) similarly identified poor treatment as a primary reason employees cited for quitting during the Great Resignation. Alternatively, this same study also noted companies known historically for fostering positive work environments showed less-than-average turnover during the first half of the year following the beginning of the Great Resignation (Sull et al., 2022).

Reasons employees have cited for resigning during the Great Resignation vary based on the industry in which they were employed (Hirsch, 2021). Interestingly, these reasons are also different from those cited prior to the COVID-19 era. Malmendier (2021) asserted this difference is explained since working during the pandemic drastically changed the mental, emotional, and behavior processes that individuals undergo. Similarly, Serenko (2022) contended the stress of the virus led workers to reflect and reassess their purpose, skills, career choices, and future goals, with less focus on pay. This notion of being faced with unprecedented circumstances leading to changed employee behavior was also noted by Montaudon-Tomas et al. (2022), who asserted changing times and significant insecurity led employees to realize they can pursue a different way of experiencing life. The reevaluation of priorities created a situation in which employees sought living arrangements closer to loved ones, departed expensive metropolitan areas due to the rise of remote/hybrid options, worked to identify greater personal-professional life balance, and even accelerated plans to retire (Dean & Hoff, 2021; Hsu, 2021; Kaplan, 2021). Further, the Great Resignation emerged as a significant number of employees decided to stay off the employment market and simply resign without pursuing other opportunities, which created a

disparity between labor needs and supply (Serenkno, 2022). In their case study design, Kuzior et al. (2022) confirmed their hypothesis, identifying four major factors as the cause for the Great Resignation. These factors were ethical, cultural, relational, and personal, as cited by the employees within the organizations examined. However, the study was conducted in a non-American context at a technology firm, which renders generalizability of findings limited.

Some have asserted the Great Resignation is not an isolated phenomenon but instead a trend. Klotz, the expert who originally created the term, predicted it could last for years (Lodewick, 2022). BLS and survey data from the American education sector appear to support Klotz's prediction. BLS (2022) showed an upward trend in education services sector resignations, with nearly 70,000 resignations reported in April 2022. This represents an increase of over 25% from the previous year. Moreover, a survey conducted by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) found institutions of higher education could lose over 50% of their current staff within the next year, as over half of respondents stated they expected to look for other career opportunities (Bichsel et al., 2022).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was constructed from the current literature on authentic leadership, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and the Great Resignation. Figure 1 illustrates the model of the three primary theories utilized in this study. The conceptual framework utilizes authentic leadership theory (Walumbwa et al., 2008), the Three-Component Model of Commitment (Meyer et al., 1993), and Spector's Theory of Job Satisfaction (Spector, 1997) to investigate the relationship between community college student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and their perception of their immediate supervisor's authentic leadership.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework

GREAT RESIGNATION

Relational transparency
Internalized moral perspective
Balanced processing
Self awareness

Authentic leadership perception

Job satisfaction

Gender

Race

Length of employment in student affairs

Organizational commitment
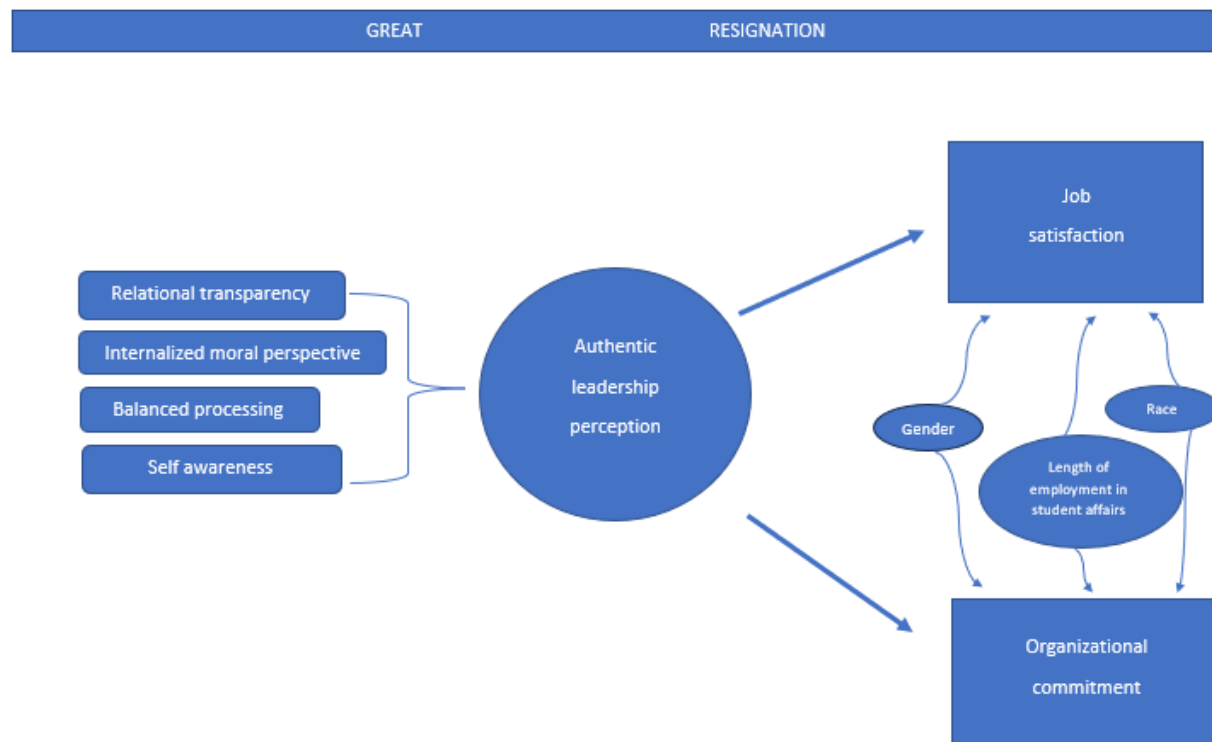
Chapter Summary

An overview of leadership and student affairs, within the community college context, was found in Chapter II. Additionally, this chapter offered a synthesis of studies on employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment in the workplace. This literature review indicated there is a gap in the literature regarding job satisfaction and organizational commitment among those employed in student affairs, particularly women and racial minorities. There is also a gap in the literature regarding how authentic leadership may influence employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment. A third gap in the literature is the limited number of studies which

explore the Great Resignation, a recent phenomenon which has forever changed how employees

operate within workspaces and impacted all employment sectors, including higher education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will explain and provide justification for the methodological decisions to conduct this study. The purpose of this nonexperimental, correlational study was to investigate the relationship between community college student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and their perception of their immediate supervisor's authentic leadership. This study was guided by the following research questions (RQs) and sub questions:

1. What is the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

    1a. What is the relationship between the self-awareness dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

    1b. What is the relationship between the internalized moral perspective dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

    1c. What is the relationship between the balanced processing dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

    1d. What is the relationship between the relational transparency dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

2. What is the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2a. What is the relationship between the self-awareness dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2b. What is the relationship between the internalized moral perspective dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2c. What is the relationship between the balanced processing dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2d. What is the relationship between the relational transparency dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

3. Does the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals differ based on race, gender, or length of employment in student affairs?

The independent variable was student affairs professionals' perceptions of their immediate supervisor's perceived authentic leadership, and the dependent variables were job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This research study examined the four dimensions of authentic leadership—self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Walumbwa et al., 2008)—to determine if job satisfaction and organizational commitment were related more closely to one dimension over another. Demographic data (race, gender, and length of employment in student affairs) were reviewed to determine if differences exist in the influence of perceived authentic leadership. This research should be of interest for

industrial and organizational psychologists, community college administrators, and student affairs employees.

This quantitative study utilized a nonexperimental, correlational approach. Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis as each research question examined the relationship among multiple variables. Quantitative research is a methodological and objective technique utilized to gain measurable information that can be presented in numerical form (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The numerical data subsequently undergoes analysis that can be used to measure and describe relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A quantitative design assumes samples are representative of the target population being explored (Goertzen, 2017). With correlation, researchers explore "the extent to which differences in one characteristic or variable are associated with differences in one or more other characteristics or variables" (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015, p. 155). Salkind and Frey (2020) noted in the case of correlational studies, variables will often be evaluated with regression analysis. Regression analyzes if and how a variable is statistically related to or associated with another variable (Thrane, 2019). Since this design does not directly manipulate the independent variable, conclusions about cause and effect cannot be drawn.

The current study utilized survey design. Pinsonneault and Kraemer (1993) noted the purpose of survey research is to produce quantitative descriptions of some facets of the population studied. The survey design approach allows a researcher to ask many individuals the same questions and then record the data (Neuman, 2014). A significant benefit of correlational research designs utilizing surveys is that data collection can be completed quickly (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Sample

The target population for this research study was student affairs professionals employed at any of the 23 community colleges within the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) on a full-time basis. Student affairs professionals were defined as individuals working in one or more of the following practice areas: academic advising; admissions; career services; counseling services; dean of students office; disability support services; enrollment management; financial aid; health services; international students; judicial affairs/student conduct; leadership; military/veteran affairs; multicultural services; orientation/new student programs; recreation/fitness; service learning; student activities; or other. Participants had the option to select 'other' for the area of practice in which they work based on the recognition that the name of student affairs departments may vary at different institutions. If a participant selected 'other', they were asked to identify the current practice area in which they are employed. The researcher then determined if the information submitted met the study's criteria to qualify as a community college student affairs area of practice.

A G*Power 3 analysis was used to determine a sufficient sample size for the current study. A sample of 85 participants was justified via power analysis (Faul et al., 2007). Alpha level was set at the 0.05 level and power was set at 0.80. According to Stevens (2002), sample size estimates should be based on a power of no less than 0.70. The researcher strived for a minimum sample size of 102, or an additional 20%, to allow for the offsetting of outliers and noncompleters of the survey. Gravetter and Wallnua (2013) noted the greater the sample size, the more probable the sample mean is close to the population.

Measures

Instrumentation included three existing survey instruments. The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) was adapted then utilized to measure participants' immediate supervisor's perceived authentic leadership. The ALQ was developed in 2007 and comprises 16 items with a five-point Likert scale (Avolio et al., 2007). The items include a four-item "relational transparency" subscale, a sample item being "I (My supervisor) let(s) others know who I (they) truly am (are) as a person"; a four-item "internalized moral perspective" subscale, a sample item being "My (supervisor's) actions reflect my (their) core values"; a four-item "balanced processing" subscale, a sample item being "I (My supervisor) listen(s) closely to the ideas of those who disagree with me (them)"; and a four-item "self-awareness" subscale, a sample item being "I (My supervisor) can list my (their) three greatest weaknesses." This scale was completed only by employees as they assessed their perception of their immediate supervisor's authentic leadership.

The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire has high convergent and discriminant reliability, supported by confirmative factor analysis (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Further, Walumbwa et al. (2008) found each of the four dimensions to have acceptable levels of internal validity: relational transparency (.87), internalized moral perspective (.76), balanced processing (.81), and self-awareness (.92). Global findings based on five samples from the United States, China, and Kenya have also reinforced the cross-cultural generalizability of the ALQ and found it has significant predictive reliability and validity (Roof, 2014).

The Three-Component Model of Commitment (TCM) was utilized to measure organizational commitment. The TCM was developed by Meyer et al. (1993) and contains three components of employee commitment to an organization: affective commitment (desire-based),

normative commitment (obligation-based), and continuance commitment (cost-based). The TCM Employee Commitment Survey includes three corresponding dimensions: Affective Commitment Scale (ACS), Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS), and Normative Commitment Scale (NCS). The instrument generated an overall score based on the sum of these scales. Each scale contained six questions with a 7-point Likert scale, so participants were asked to respond to a total of 18 items.

The TCM Employee Commitment Survey has statistically acceptable levels of internal validity (Meyer et al., 1993). Meyer et al. (1993) noted all three dimensions also have acceptable levels of internal reliability: Affective Commitment Scale (.82), Continuance Commitment Scale (.74), and Normative Commitment Scale (.83).

The Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS) was utilized to measure job satisfaction. The JSS was developed in 1985 and consists of 36 items with a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Spector, 1985). Spector (1985) noted 19 of the items must be reverse scored. There are nine components of the JSS: pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, coworkers, nature of work, and communication (Spector, 1985). There is a score for each component, and these were summed to create a total JSS score.

The Job Satisfaction Survey meets statistical standards for reliability and validity (Van Saane et al., 2003). The JSS has a high internal reliability of .91 (Van Saane et al., 2003). Van Saane et al. (2003) noted the JSS meets acceptable levels of both convergent and discriminant validity.

The researcher also developed and utilized a questionnaire which asked participants their current employment status, length of employment in student affairs, the student affairs area in which they primarily work, race, and gender to collect demographic information.

Procedure

Purposive and convenience sampling were employed for this study. Pathak (2011) noted with purposive sampling, a researcher develops restrictions for participants to be included in the study sample. This sampling method deliberately targets a specific group of individuals who are believed to accurately represent the population under examination (Strunk & Mwavita, 2022). Therefore, participants were contacted via the statewide VCCS employee directory and requested to complete an online survey. Prospective participants were first asked to complete an eligibility questionnaire (see Appendix A) to ensure they were full-time student affairs employees, working in one or more of the current study's defined areas of practice at a Virginia community college. Participants also had the option to select 'other' for the area of practice in which they work. If a participant selected 'other', they were asked to identify their current department. The researcher then determined if the information submitted met the study's criteria to qualify as a community college student affairs area of practice. If the department entered did not meet the study's criteria, the participant's survey was excluded.

Once eligible participants clicked on the web-based survey link, an informed consent box appeared at the top of the survey, notifying participants that their participation was voluntary. The top of the survey also shared details regarding survey length, researcher contact information, Old Dominion University College of Education Human Subjects Review Board information, and level of risk, as well as a statement detailing how participants' personal information and answers would be kept confidential. Participants were then asked to select their length of employment in

student affairs, race, and gender in the demographic portion of the survey. Next, participants rated their perception of their direct supervisor's level of authentic leadership. Participants were then asked to rate their job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

To collect the aforementioned information, the study survey was customized to contain five major sections: Eligibility Questionnaire (see Appendix A), Demographic Questionnaire (see Appendix B), Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (see Appendix C), Job Satisfaction Survey (see Appendix D), and Three-Component Model Employee Commitment Survey (see Appendix E). Collected data were anonymous and securely maintained by the researcher throughout the collection process. The survey was password protected and not shared with anyone outside of the dissertation committee. Participants were incentivized to complete the survey as they were informed they would be entered into a raffle for one of four $25 Amazon gift cards upon completion if they were willing to provide an email address.

The survey remained available to participants for 30 days after the initial invitation to participate in the study was sent. One follow-up reminder was sent one month after the initial email. A participant had to answer all questions to submit the survey. Therefore, missing data were not a concern. A pilot of the survey, which included seven participants, was conducted to gather feedback prior to full implementation. As a result of the pilot, I first learned that some of the survey instructions were unclear and made it difficult for participants to understand what was being asked on some questions. I also learned since the number of points varied on each of the different instrument scales being utilized, it led to misunderstanding among some participants. Based upon the received feedback, I clarified all instructions and added the applicable survey scale key for all questions. Participants reported 10-15 minutes as the average amount of time it took them to complete the survey. No changes were made to any of the instruments being

utilized. Therefore, the reliability and validity of the instruments were unchanged as a result of revisions made after the pilot study. Data from participants in the pilot was not used in the actual study.

Data Analysis

The collected data were first examined for sufficiency and completeness to determine if missing values were present or if any extreme outliers existed that influenced the data analysis process. Data were examined for normal distribution, homogeneity of variance, linear variable relationships, and independence of other data that may have impacted study variables. Descriptive and inferential statistical results were calculated. Means and standard deviations were calculated for all continuous variables, and a correlation matrix was presented. Frequencies and percentages were calculated and presented for the demographic variables.

The current study utilized the Pearson r correlation and multiple linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between the dimensions of perceived authentic leadership and job satisfaction, and the dimensions of perceived authentic leadership and organizational commitment. Multiple regression was conducted using each of the four subscale scores on the ALQ (transparency, self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing) to predict job satisfaction. Multiple regression was conducted using each of the four scale scores on the ALQ (transparency, self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing) to predict organizational commitment. Multiple regression was also conducted using demographic variables (race, gender, and length of employment in student affairs) on job satisfaction and organizational commitment to examine if differences in the influence of perceived authentic leadership existed.

Chapter Summary

Chapter III outlined the purpose and specific research questions which guided this study, as well as the study design and analyses utilized to address the research questions posed. The results of the study guided recommendations regarding authentic leadership and the ways in which this leadership construct influences the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs practitioners. Results also guided if the influence of authentic leadership can inform recommendations for various employee groups within community college student affairs. In Chapter IV, I report the results of this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter will serve to present the results of this research study. It begins with the research questions posed and a description of the 114 participants. The description of participants includes frequencies and percentages for the demographic variables necessary to address the research questions. Next, a description of both the independent and dependent variables utilized for this study are offered. This section includes the means, standard deviations, and correlation matrices for the variables. Following is an analysis of each of the three research questions. This analysis utilized the Pearson *r* correlation and multiple linear regression to examine the relationship between the dimensions of perceived authentic leadership and job satisfaction, the dimensions of perceived authentic leadership and organizational commitment, and whether the influence of perceived authentic leadership on job satisfaction and organizational commitment differed based on race, gender, or length of employment in student affairs. I conclude with a summary of all results presented in Chapter IV.

To examine the predictive influence of perceived authentic leadership (self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, relational transparency) on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of Virginia Community College System (VCCS) student affairs professionals, the researcher posed the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

   1a. What is the relationship between the self-awareness dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

1b. What is the relationship between the internalized moral perspective dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

1c. What is the relationship between the balanced processing dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

1d. What is the relationship between the relational transparency dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

2. What is the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2a. What is the relationship between the self-awareness dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2b. What is the relationship between the internalized moral perspective dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2c. What is the relationship between the balanced processing dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2d. What is the relationship between the relational transparency dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

3. Does the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals differ based on race, gender, or length of employment in student affairs?

Description of Participants

Of the 123 completed surveys, nine were deemed ineligible based on the study's participant criteria. Participation in this study was limited to individuals employed full-time in one or more community college student affairs areas of practice. While these nine ineligible participants were employed in a qualified area of practice, all worked on a part-time basis and thus did not meet the required participant criteria. This resulted in 114 eligible participants for this study. Data on participants' demographic characteristics, including race, gender, and length of employment in student affairs is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Sample Participants

Demographic	Frequency	Percent (%)
Race		
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0.88
Asian	0	0
Black/African American	30	26.32
Hispanic/Latino	7	6.14
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	0.88
White	75	65.78
Gender		
Man	29	25.4
Woman	85	74.6
Non-binary	0	0
Length of Employment		
0-5 years	49	42.98
6-14 years	35	30.70
15 + years	30	26.32

Note. N = 114

Description of Independent Variables

To explore the three research questions posed, this study utilized five independent variables. These variables were total perceived authentic leadership (ALQTOTAL) and each of its four dimensions: self-awareness (ALQSA), internalized moral perspective (ALQIMP), balanced processing (ALQBP), and relational transparency (ALQRT). Scores for each of the independent variables were measured by an adapted version of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ). The ALQ is comprised of 16 items with a five-point Likert scale, of which four items are summed to measure each of the four subscales of authentic leadership. Each of the subscale scores can range from four to 20, with scores in the upper range (16-20) indicating

stronger authentic leadership and scores in the lower range (15 or below) indicating weaker authentic leadership (Avolio et al., 2007). The four subscales are then summed to measure a total authentic leadership score, which can range from 16 to 80.

The collected data revealed a mean total authentic leadership score of 59.19. Specifically examining each subscale, the mean self-awareness subscale score was 14.74, the mean internalized moral perspective subscale score was 14.61, and the mean balanced processing subscale score was 14.82. These three mean subscale scores were indicative of weaker authentic leadership (15 or below). The mean subscale score for relational transparency was 15.03. This mean was slightly above the threshold indicative of weaker authentic leadership. The standard deviation for each of the independent variables were relatively small compared to their respective means, indicating data points were closely clustered around the mean and had low variability. Summary statistics for total perceived authentic leadership and each of the four dimensions are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary Statistics for Independent Variables

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
ALQTOTAL	21	80	59.19	12.22
ALQSA	7	20	14.74	3.09
ALQIMP	4	20	14.61	3.23
ALQBP	4	20	14.82	3.99
ALQRT	5	20	15.03	3.40

Note. N = 114

Description of Dependent Variables

To explore the three research questions posed, this study utilized two dependent variables. These variables were job satisfaction (JSSTOTAL) and organizational commitment (TCMTOTAL). Job satisfaction was measured by the Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS). The JSS is comprised of 36 items with a 6-point Likert scale. There are nine subscales of the JSS, which are summed to create a total JSS score. Possible scores for the JSS range from 36 to 216. Scores ranging from 36 to 108 are indicative of job dissatisfaction, while scores ranging from 108 to 144 are indicative of ambivalence. Scores ranging from 144 to 216 are indicative of job satisfaction (Spector, 1985). The collected data revealed a mean JSS score of 139.13, which falls within the ambivalent range. The standard deviation for job satisfaction was 25.57. This was small compared to the mean, indicating data points were closely clustered and had low variability.

Organizational commitment was measured by the Three-Component Model of Commitment (TCM). The TCM is comprised of 18 items with a 7-point Likert scale. There are three subscales of the TCM, which are summed to create a total TCM score. Possible scores for the TCM range from 18 to 126. Higher scores indicate stronger commitment while lower scores indicate weaker commitment (Meyer et al., 1993). The collected data revealed a mean TCM score of 74.86, lower than the median score of 76, and indicative of weaker organizational commitment. The standard deviation for organizational commitment was 19.69. This was small compared to the mean, indicating data points were closely clustered and had low variability. Summary statistics for job satisfaction and organizational commitment are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 *Summary Statistics for Dependent Variables*

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
JSSTOTAL	77	204	139.13	25.57
TCMTOTAL	30	117	74.86	19.69

Note. N = 114

Analysis of Research Question One

Research question one examined the extent to which perceived authentic leadership (AL) and each of its four dimensions: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency predicted the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals. The entire sample population ($N = 114$) was analyzed in SPSS (v.28) for this analysis. First, a correlation matrix was run to examine the relationship between job satisfaction and overall perceived authentic leadership. The correlation between job satisfaction and overall perceived authentic leadership revealed a coefficient value of 0.61, which is strong. The Pearson correlation coefficients among job satisfaction and authentic leadership are presented in Table 4. The scatterplot that represents the linear relationship between these two variables is displayed in Figure 2.

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Among Job Satisfaction and Authentic Leadership (AL)

Variable	JSSTOTAL	ALQTOTAL
1. JSSTOTAL	–	
2. ALQTOTAL	.61	–

Note. N = 114

Figure 2 *Regression Model for Authentic Leadership and Job Satisfaction*
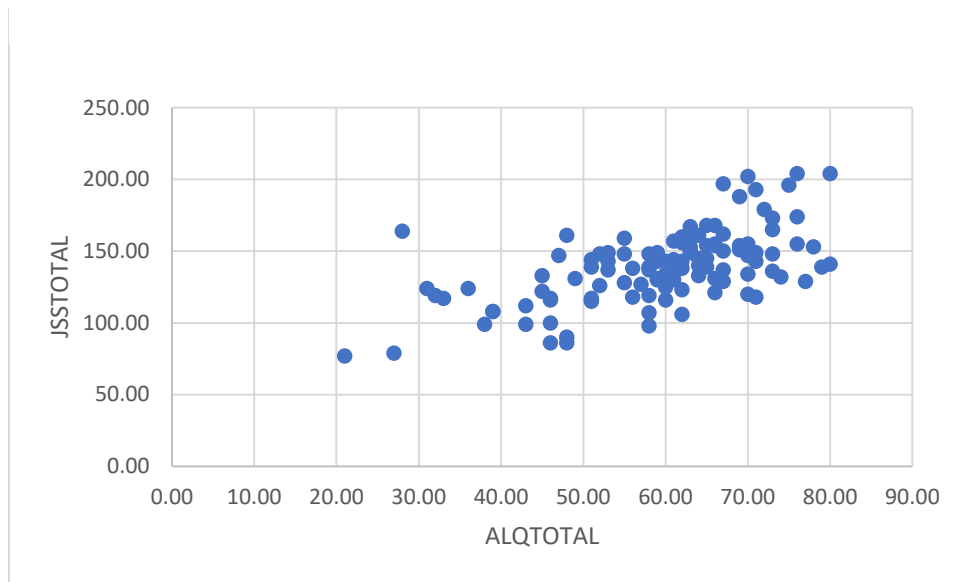
A second correlation matrix shows the relationship between job satisfaction and the four AL dimensions. The correlation coefficients indicated strong relationships between job satisfaction and each of the authentic leadership dimensions with no coefficient values below 0.52. Additionally, the correlational results demonstrated strong relationships between each of the dimensions of authentic leadership with no coefficient below 0.70 (see Table 5).

Table 5

Pearson Correlations Among Job Satisfaction and AL Dimensions

Variables	JSSTOTAL	ALQSA	ALQIMP	ALQBP	ALQRT
1. JSSTOTAL	–				
2. ALQSA	.54	–			
3. ALQIMP	.56	.70	–		
4. ALQBP	.54	.75	.71	–	
5. ALQRT	.52	.74	.70	.75	–

Note. $N = 114$

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the significance of authentic leadership on job satisfaction. A regression of job satisfaction on perceived authentic leadership accounted for a significant 36.6% of the variance in job satisfaction, $F(1, 112) = 64.76$, $p < .001$. Perceived authentic leadership significantly and positively predicted job satisfaction ($b = 1.27$, $SE = 0.16$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.95, 1.58]). Total Authentic Leadership scores significantly predicted job satisfaction. Results from this analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Analysis: Job Satisfaction and Authentic Leadership (AL)

	B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
						LL	UL
ALQTOTAL	1.27	0.16	0.61	8.05	<.001	0.95	1.58

Note. N = 114. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the significance of individual authentic leadership dimensions on job satisfaction. The self-awareness dimension of authentic leadership was not a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.17$, $p = .19$). The internalized moral perspective dimension was a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.27$, $p = 0.02$). The balanced processing dimension was not a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.15$, $p = 0.27$). The relational transparency dimension was not a significant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.09$, $p = 0.48$). Results from this analysis are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Multiple Regression Analysis: Job Satisfaction and AL Dimensions

	B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
						LL	*UL*
ALQSA	1.40	0.17	0.17	1.31	0.19	-0.72	3.53
ALQIMP	2.17	0.27	0.27	2.32	0.02	0.31	4.03
ALQBP	0.95	0.15	0.15	1.12	0.27	-0.74	2.63
ALQRT	0.69	0.09	0.09	0.71	0.48	-1.25	2.62

Note. $N = 114$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Analysis of Research Question Two

Research question two examined the extent to which perceived authentic leadership and each of its four dimensions: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency predict the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals. First, a correlation matrix was run to examine the relationship between organizational commitment and overall perceived authentic leadership. The correlation between organizational commitment and overall perceived authentic leadership revealed a coefficient value of 0.32, which is moderate. The Pearson correlation coefficients among organizational commitment and authentic leadership are presented in Table 8. The scatterplot that represents the linear relationship between these two variables is displayed in Figure 3.

Table 8

Pearson Correlation Among Organizational Commitment and Authentic Leadership

Variable	TCMTOTAL	ALQTOTAL
1. TCMTOTAL	–	
2. ALQTOTAL	.32	–

Note. N = 114

Figure 3

Regression Model for Authentic Leadership and Organizational Commitment
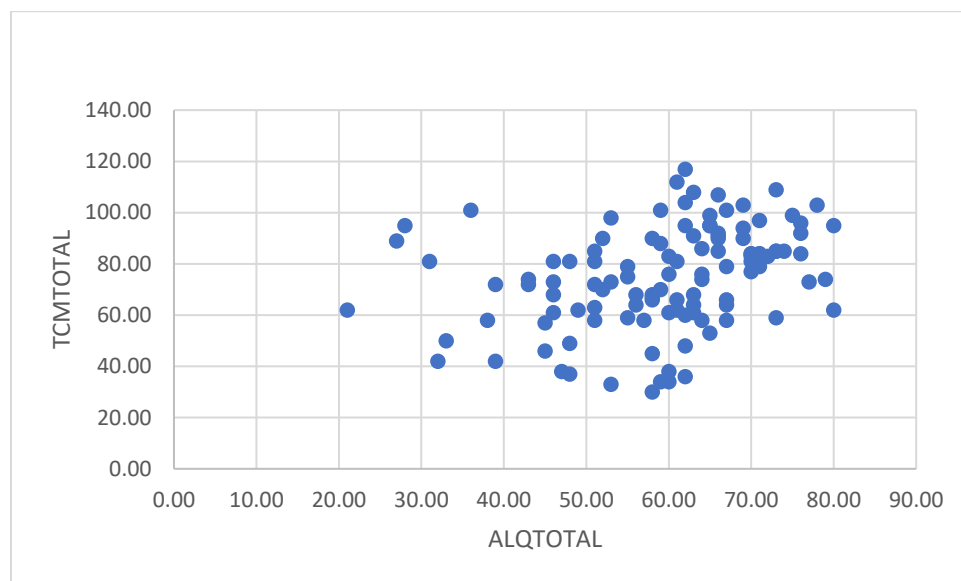
A second correlation matrix shows the relationship between organizational commitment and the four AL dimensions. The correlation coefficients indicated weak to moderate relationships between organizational commitment with no coefficient value exceeding 0.37. Additionally, the correlational results demonstrated strong relationships between each of the dimensions of authentic leadership with no coefficient below 0.70 (see Table 9).

Table 9

Pearson Correlations Among Organizational Commitment and AL Dimensions

Variable	TCMTOTAL	ALQSA	ALQIMP	ALQBP	ALQRT
1. TCMTOTAL	–				
2. ALQSA	.37	–			
3. ALQIMP	.33	.70	–		
4. ALQBP	.27	.75	.71	–	
5. ALQRT	.20	.74	.70	.75	–

Note. N = 114

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the significance of authentic leadership on organizational commitment. A regression of organizational commitment on perceived authentic leadership accounted for a significant 10.5% of the variance in organizational commitment, $F(1, 112) = 13.12$, $p < .001$. Perceived authentic leadership significantly and positively predicted organizational commitment ($b = 0.52$, $SE = 0.14$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.24, 0.81]). Total Authentic Leadership scores significantly predicted organizational commitment. Results from this analysis are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Multiple Regression Analysis: Organizational Commitment and Authentic Leadership

	B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
						LL	UL
ALQTOTAL	0.52	0.14	0.32	3.62	<.001	0.24	0.81

Note. N = 114. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the significance of individual authentic leadership dimensions on organizational commitment. The self-awareness dimension was a significant predictor of organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.40$, $p = 0.01$). The internalized moral perspective dimension was not a significant predictor of organizational commitment ($\beta = 0.23$, $p = 0.10$). The balanced processing dimension was not a significant predictor of organizational commitment ($\beta = -0.02$, $p = 0.92$). The relational transparency dimension was not a significant predictor of organizational commitment ($\beta = -0.24$, $p = 0.11$). Results from this analysis are presented in Table 11.

Table 11 *Multiple Regression Analysis: Organizational Commitment and Dimensions of Authentic Leadership*

	B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
						LL	*UL*
ALQSA	2.56	0.95	0.40	2.70	0.01	.68	4.44
ALQIMP	1.38	0.83	0.23	1.66	0.10	-.27	3.02
ALQBP	-.08	0.75	-0.02	-0.10	0.92	-1.57	1.42
ALQRT	-1.39	0.86	-0.24	-1.61	0.11	-3.10	0.32

Note. $N = 114$. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Analysis of Research Question Three

Research question three examined the extent to which the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational of community college student affairs professionals differs based on race, gender, or length of employment in student affairs. Data on participants' demographic characteristics were provided in Table 1.

To examine the extent to which the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals differs based on race, a portion of the total sample population (n = 109) was analyzed. Although this study aimed to be as inclusive as possible regarding race, the number of participants who self-identified outside of the White or Black/African American racial categorizations was too low to provide meaningful interpretations. Therefore, only participants who self-identified as White or Black/African American were included.

A regression of job satisfaction on perceived authentic leadership and race accounted for a significant 38.7% of the variance in job satisfaction, F (2, 106) = 33.45, p <.001. White employees were treated as the reference group. After controlling for race, Black/African American employees did not significantly differ in terms of the influence of perceived authentic leadership on job satisfaction compared to White employees (β = 0.14, SE = 4.33, p = 0.07, 95% CI [-0.70, 16.47]). The results of the multiple regression analysis which examined potential differences in perceived authentic leadership by race on job satisfaction are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

Multiple Regression Analysis: Job Satisfaction, Authentic Leadership, and Race

	B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
						LL	*UL*
ALQTOTAL	1.24	0.15	0.61	8.06	<.001	0.93	1.54
Race	7.89	4.33	0.14	1.82	0.07	-0.70	16.47

Note. N = 109. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

A regression of organizational commitment on perceived authentic leadership and race accounted for a significant 13.9% of the variance in organizational commitment, F (2, 106) = 8.57, p <.001. White employees were treated as the reference group. After controlling for race, Black/African American employees did significantly differ in terms of the influence of perceived authentic leadership on organizational commitment compared to White employees (β = -0.19, SE = 4.10, p = 0.04, 95% CI [-16.68, -.42]). White employees (M = 77.53) reported significantly higher levels of organizational commitment than Black/African American employees (M = 68.21). The results of the multiple regression analysis which examined potential differences in perceived authentic leadership by race on organizational commitment are displayed in Table 13.

Table 13

Multiple Regression Analysis: Organizational Commitment, Authentic Leadership, and Race

	B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
						LL	*UL*
ALQTOTAL	0.50	0.15	0.31	3.46	<.001	0.22	0.79
Race	-8.55	4.10	-0.19	-2.09	0.04	-16.68	-0.42

Note. N = 109. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

To examine the extent to which the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals differs based on gender, the total sample population (N = 114) was analyzed. Although this study aimed to be as inclusive as possible regarding gender, there were no participants who self-identified as non-binary.

A regression of job satisfaction on perceived authentic leadership and gender accounted for a significant 37.8% of the variance in job satisfaction, $F(2, 111) = 33.75$, $p < .001$. Women were treated as the reference group. After controlling for gender, men and women did not significantly differ in terms of the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.11$, $SE = 4.43$, $p = 0.15$, 95% CI [-2.34, 15.20]). Results from this analysis are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Multiple Regression Analysis for Job Satisfaction, Authentic Leadership, and Gender

	B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
						LL	UL
ALQTOTAL	1.30	0.16	0.62	8.21	<.001	0.99	1.62
Gender	6.43	4.43	0.11	1.45	0.15	-2.34	15.20

Note. N = 114. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

A regression of organizational commitment on perceived authentic leadership and gender accounted for a significant 11.2% of the variance in organizational commitment $F(2, 111) = 7.02$, $p < .001$. Women were treated as the reference group. Again, there were no significant differences in this relationship by gender ($\beta = 0.09$, $SE = 4.07$, $p = 0.34$, 95% CI [-4.14, 12.01]). Results from this analysis are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Multiple Regression Analysis for Organizational Commitment, Authentic Leadership, and

Gender

	B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
						LL	*UL*
ALQTOTAL	0.54	0.15	0.34	3.73	<.001	0.25	0.83
Gender	3.94	4.07	0.09	0.97	0.34	-4.14	12.01

Note. N = 114. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

To examine the extent to which the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job

satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals

differs based on length of employment in student affairs, the total sample population (*N* = 114)

was analyzed. A regression of job satisfaction on perceived authentic leadership and length of

employment in student affairs accounted for a significant 37.3% of the variance in job

satisfaction F (2, 111) = 32.97, p = <001. Employees working 0-5 years in student affairs were

treated as the reference group. After controlling for length of employment, there was no

significant difference in the influence of perceived authentic leadership on job satisfaction (β = -

0.08, *SE* = 2.35, p = 0.29, 95% CI [-7.13, 2.17]). Results from this analysis are presented in

Table 16.

Table 16 *Multiple Regression Analysis for Job Satisfaction, Authentic Leadership, and Length of Employment in Student Affairs*

	B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
						LL	*UL*
ALQTOTAL	1.27	0.16	0.61	8.07	<.001	0.96	1.58
EmplLeng	-2.48	2.35	-0.08	-1.06	0.29	-7.13	2.17

Note. N = 114. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

A regression of organizational commitment on perceived authentic leadership and length of employment in student affairs accounted for a significant 11.9% of the variance in organizational commitment F (2, 111) = 7.53, p = <001. Employees working 0-5 years in student affairs were treated as the reference group. Again, there were no significant differences in this relationship by length of employment in student affairs (β = 0.12, *SE* = 2.14, p = 0.18, 95% CI [-1.34, 7.15]). Results from this analysis are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Multiple Regression Analysis for Organizational Commitment, Authentic Leadership and Length of Employment in Student Affairs

	B	*SE*	Beta	*t*	*p*	95% CI	
						LL	*UL*
ALQTOTAL	0.52	0.14	0.32	3.60	<.001	0.23	0.80
EmplLeng	2.91	2.14	0.12	1.36	0.18	-1.34	7.15

Note. N = 114. CI = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Limitations

Limitations of the current study included threats to both internal validity and external validity. First, generalizability was limited since the data were collected from a community college system in one state. A second limitation on generalizability was context. Since the context of this study was a non-unionized community college system, the results may not extend to community college systems in unionized states. Another limitation concerned the usage of self-reported data. Self-reported data are inherently subjective. Since participants were commenting on the effectiveness of their immediate supervisor, their responses may have been threatened by social desirability bias. Response burden was another limitation of this study due to the length of the participant survey. Feedback from a pilot study indicated it took participants approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the survey.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results of descriptive statistics and statistical analyses used to address the research questions posed in this study. Multiple regressions were conducted to investigate the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals. Multiple regressions were also computed to investigate the extent to which the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational of community college student affairs professionals differs based on race, gender, or length of employment in student affairs.

Results indicated that overall perceived authentic leadership significantly and positively predicted job satisfaction among community college student affairs professionals. Examining the four dimensions of perceived authentic leadership, only the internalized moral perspective dimension significantly predicted job satisfaction. None of the remaining dimensions

significantly predicted job satisfaction. Results also indicated that overall perceived authentic leadership significantly and positively predicted organizational commitment among community college student affairs professions. Examining the four dimensions, only the self-awareness dimension significantly predicted organizational commitment. None of the remaining authentic leadership dimensions significantly predicted organizational commitment.

Results also indicated that the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals did not significantly differ by race. However, the influence of perceived authentic leadership on organizational commitment did significantly differ by race. This relationship was stronger for White employees compared to their Black/African American colleagues. The influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction or organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals did not significantly differ by gender. Lastly, the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction or organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals did not significantly differ by length of employment in student affairs. In Chapter V, I will interpret the results of the analyses in the context of related literature, discuss the significance of results, and offer practical recommendations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Employee retention is an ongoing challenge within higher education student affairs (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008). This reality is undoubtedly concerning since the practitioners in these departments account for the largest professional group in the total higher education workforce (Cepin, 2015). Previous studies have shown the variables utilized for this study, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, are significantly related to college and university employees' decision to either stay or vacate their positions (Johnsrud & Rosser, 1997).

The unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, identified in early 2020, forever changed the modern world and helped prompt a significant shift in the ways individuals both approach and value their employment options. This phenomenon has been termed the Great Resignation. The Great Resignation describes the mass departure of millions of American workers from their pre-pandemic careers (Klotz, 2021). These resignations *en masse* led to further attrition challenges across higher education student affairs, especially for two-year public institutions. Zirkel (2022) noted community colleges fared worse than their four-year counterparts during the Great Resignation, losing nearly 15% of their faculty and staff from early 2020 through April 2022.

Even as higher education institutions have shifted employee policies in a post-pandemic society, the challenges facing student affairs remains evident. As recently as 2022, a survey found approximately 40% of those employed in student affairs planned to leave their position (Alonso, 2022). This should be a significant cause of concern for institutional leaders as attrition is very costly (Naifeh & Kearney, 2021) and students are negatively impacted by lesser quality

services, disrupted departmental initiatives, and lowered morale among remaining staff (Boehman, 2007).

The realities of the Great Resignation in a post-pandemic world have seen calls emerge for more effective leadership within the workplace. Northouse (2021) contended interest in an emerging style of leadership, authentic leadership, gained traction in recent years due to crises that have taken place and led to heightened unease and doubt within society. Previous research found authentic leadership associated with both greater levels of job satisfaction (Ausar et al., 2016; Darvish & Rezaei, 2011; Khan, 2017) and organizational commitment (Baek et al., 2019; Gatling et al., 2016; Jung, 2022) in a variety of work environments. However, the relationship between these variables has not been explored in the community college student affairs context, rendering this study's results valuable.

This chapter begins with a review of the study's purpose statement, research questions, and research design and methods. It will also present a summary of the major findings before moving to a discussion of the meaning of this study and how results relate to existing literature. Next, I will provide recommendations for practitioners and leaders, before finally offering suggestions for future research and a conclusion of this entire research study.

Purpose Statement

This study sought to add research value by investigating the relationship between community college student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and their perception of their immediate supervisor's authentic leadership. Most research into the relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction or organizational commitment has been conducted outside of the educational sector. For this reason, this research examined the influence of these variables within higher education, specifically at the community college level.

By selecting the community college environment, this study's results help fill a gap in the existing literature.

Research Questions

Three research questions and eight sub questions guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

    1a. What is the relationship between the self-awareness dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

    1b. What is the relationship between the internalized moral perspective dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

    1c. What is the relationship between the balanced processing dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

    1d. What is the relationship between the relational transparency dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction of community college student affairs professionals?

2. What is the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

    2a. What is the relationship between the self-awareness dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2b. What is the relationship between the internalized moral perspective dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2c. What is the relationship between the balanced processing dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

2d. What is the relationship between the relational transparency dimension of perceived authentic leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals?

3. Does the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals differ based on race, gender, or length of employment in student affairs?

Summary of Methodology

This study utilized purposive and convenience sampling of student affairs professionals employed at any of the 23 colleges in the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) on a full-time basis. Student affairs professionals were defined as individuals working in one or more of the following practice areas: academic advising; admissions; career services; counseling services; dean of students office; disability support services; enrollment management; financial aid; health services; international students; judicial affairs/student conduct; leadership; military/veteran affairs; multicultural services; orientation/new student programs; recreation/fitness; service learning; student activities; or other. For participants who selected 'other', the researcher determined if the practice area entered met the study's criteria to qualify as a community college student affairs area of practice. Participants were incentivized to

complete the survey as they had the option to enter a raffle to win one of four $25 Amazon gift cards. Participants were provided with an explanation of the study, an informed consent document, and an electronic weblink to complete the survey. Follow-up reminders were sent one month after the initial invitation to participate.

To address Research Question One, collected data were analyzed using a Pearson r correlation and multiple linear regression analysis was performed to first examine the relationship between total perceived authentic leadership, the four authentic leadership dimensions (self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency), and job satisfaction. To address Research Question Two, collected data were analyzed using a Pearson r correlation, and multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between total perceived authentic leadership, the four authentic leadership dimensions (self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency), and organizational commitment. To address Research Question Three, multiple regression analysis was performed using the demographic variables (race, gender, and length of employment in student affairs), job satisfaction, and organizational commitment to predict the summed total of the ALQ scales and identify whether the influence of perceived authentic leadership varied.

Summary of Results

The results of the current study significantly contributed to the current authentic leadership (AL) literature and overall aligned well with existing findings. It is first important to note the influence of AL within educational working environments is limited, especially for higher education. In their meta-analysis of 16 studies containing nearly 4,100 participants that examined the relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction, Banks et al. (2016)

found authentic leadership to be strongly correlated with follower job satisfaction. In the same meta-analysis, the authors identified authentic leadership as strongly correlated with followers' organizational commitment based on 17 studies with 4,077 participants.

According to the research study, there was a statistically significant relationship between how community college student affairs practitioners perceived the authenticity of their immediate supervisor's leadership and how satisfied they were with their job. Walumbwa et al. (2008) were among the first researchers to validate the positive impact of authentic leadership on job satisfaction by utilizing the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire. Walumbwa et al. (2008) found the influence of authentic leadership on job satisfaction to be stronger than that of ethical and transformational leadership. Further, the authors confirmed this relationship extended beyond the American workplace context, as samples were obtained from the United States, Kenya, and China. Examining this relationship closer, the present study found there was a significant relationship between the internalized moral perspective AL dimension and practitioners' job satisfaction, specifically. Ayça (2019) similarly identified internalized moral perspective as the AL dimension which had the strongest influence on external job satisfaction for participants.

I also found a statistically significant relationship between the perception of the authenticity of an immediate supervisor's leadership and the organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals. Khan et al.'s (2017) study of employees working at public universities in Pakistan similarly found that authentic leadership significantly and positively influenced followers' organizational commitment. Similarly, Tijani and Okunbanjo's (2020) study of employees working in the information technology industry in Nigeria also found authentic leadership had a significant and positive influence on followers'

organizational commitment. Jung (2022) also explored if the perceived authentic leadership of deans and directors at Korean universities influenced the organizational commitment of professors under their supervision and found authentic leadership to influence commitment significantly and positively. The present study aligned well with all the findings and helped contribute to the literature since it showed the influence of authentic leadership extends to a variety of organizational types and global contexts, including community colleges within the United States.

Of the four AL dimensions, self-awareness was discovered to significantly predict the organizational commitment of this employee group. This aligned with Ferrer's (2017) findings which also identified self-awareness as a significant predictor of commitment. Ferrer (2017) also found the relational transparency and internalized moral perspective dimensions to significantly correlate with follower's organizational commitment although the present study did not.

I then explored whether the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs practitioners differed based on the demographic characteristics of race and gender, as well as the participant's length of time working in student affairs. Results first indicated there were no significant differences in the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals by gender. This was an important finding since much of the existing literature has focused on the gender of the leader rather than follower. The current study revealed the influence of perceived authentic leadership on job satisfaction and organizational commitment did not significantly vary by gender. Related, Liu et al. (2015) found being perceived as an authentic leader depends on the level to which the leader adhered to societal gender norms in their performance of authenticity.

For example, in Karacay et al.'s (2017) study of how perceptions of male and female followers compared in their emphasis of various authentic leader characteristics in the Middle East, the authors found significant differences where men preferred autonomy and women instead preferred authentic leaders to display care and a nurturing demeanor. While leader gender was not collected in this present study, it would be valuable for future research to examine if this impacted the degree to which student affairs professionals perceived their immediate supervisors as authentic leaders.

The study also found no significant differences in this relationship by length of employment in student affairs. Degreenia (2018) examined whether the influence of perceived authentic leadership on both job satisfaction and organizational commitment significantly differed by length of employment. The authors found no significant differences, like the present study. On the contrary, Baek et al.'s (2019) study of staff nurses in a healthcare setting found a significant relationship between authentic leadership and job satisfaction, as well as authentic leadership and organizational commitment. However, unlike the results of the current study, nurse tenure was associated with the strength of the positive association between authentic leadership and job satisfaction and authentic leadership and organizational commitment.

Results further indicated there was no significant difference in the relationship between perceived authentic leadership and job satisfaction by race. This aligned with Degreenia's (2018) study which found no significant racial differences existed in the influence of perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction of agriculture faculty at land grant universities. However, there was a significant difference identified for the influence of perceived AL on organizational commitment by race in the current study unlike Degreenia (2018). Specifically, in

the present study, this relationship was stronger for White employees in comparison to practitioners who self-identified as Black/African American.

Overall, future research is necessary to better explore the ways in which the influence of authentic leadership, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment potentially differs based upon the gender, length of employment, and race of followers. There is currently a gap in the AL literature related to these and other follower demographic variables. Future exploration would offer valuable workplace implications for both leaders and organizations.

Discussion

The first notable finding from this study was the status of the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of current community college student affairs professionals. Participants reported being ambivalent about their job satisfaction and possessed weaker levels of commitment to their respective institutions. A second significant takeaway was how community college student affairs professionals perceived the authenticity of their immediate supervisor's leadership. Practitioners rated their immediate supervisors as weak authentic leaders on three of the four AL dimensions. These dimensions were self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing. Immediate supervisors fared better in rankings on the fourth AL dimension, relational transparency, albeit slightly.

Another noteworthy finding was the perception of being an authentic leader significantly and positively influenced community college student affairs practitioners' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Moreover, this study's results provided meaning regarding the influence of specific authentic leadership dimensions, which was more valuable than understanding this relationship simply based upon the total authentic leadership score. Internalized moral perspective was identified as the sole authentic leadership dimension that

significantly predicted job satisfaction. This dimension sits at the junction of self-regulation and one's own moral compass. From this, I drew that perception of a leader's ability to recognize their own moral flaws and how consistently they were perceived to act according to their personal moral code had an important impact on the level to which followers were satisfied or dissatisfied in their position. Having identified self-awareness as the sole dimension which significantly predicted organizational commitment provided significant meaning as well. This finding denoted that perception of how accurately a leader understands their own beliefs, feelings, and actions was important for how committed community college student affairs practitioners are to the institutions at which they are employed.

The final important area of discussion was how the influence of perceived authentic leadership on community college student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment differed based upon the personal characteristics of the employee. This study found the influence of perceived authentic leadership on organizational commitment was stronger for community college student affairs professionals who self-identified as White. Identification of this racial difference offered a reflection point as to why student affairs professionals from a racial minority group, specifically those self-identified as Black or African American, were influenced to a lesser extent, which resulted in a significantly lower level of organizational commitment to their respective community college.

Revised Conceptual Framework

Based on the results of the current research study, the researcher revised the study's conceptual framework to more accurately depict the influence of immediate supervisor's perceived authentic leadership on the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals. Figure 4 highlights internalized moral

perspective as the only authentic leadership dimension that significantly predicted job satisfaction. Self-awareness is also highlighted as the sole dimension which significantly predicted organizational commitment. Figure 4 also illustrates that of the three demographic variables examined for this research study, race was the lone variable where significant differences were identified in relation to participants' organizational commitment.

Figure 4

Revised Conceptual Framework
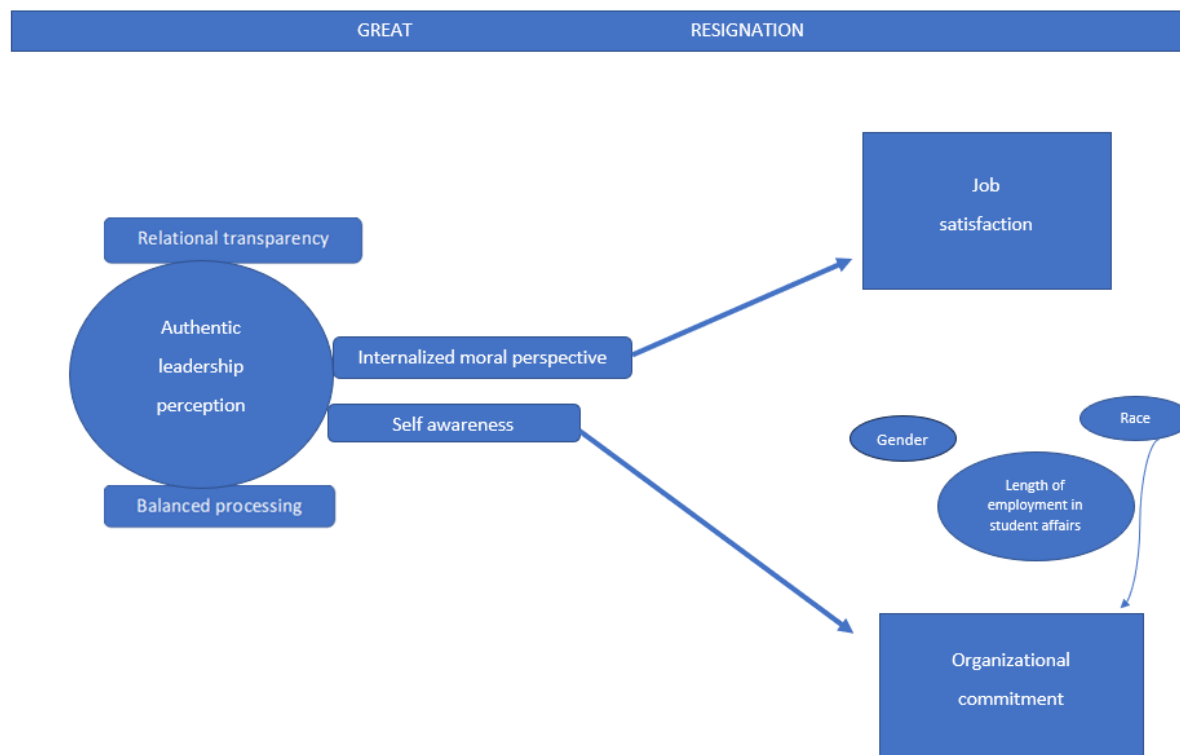
Recommendations for Leaders and Practitioners

The results of this study had several implications for practice and offered substantial insights for student affairs practitioners and institutional leaders. Similar to what Tijani and Okunbanjo (2020) suggested, it is recommended that leaders at community colleges must strengthen efforts to better understand the level to which current managers are perceived as authentic leaders. Similar to what Baek et al. (2019) recommended, it is also suggested that supervisors better recognize how the perception of their authenticity, or lack thereof, influences the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of student affairs employees under their management. To accomplish this, resources should be devoted to identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Such resources include employee surveys, focus groups, and other individualized feedback mechanisms, of which leaders can reflect upon.

It is also recommended that institutional leaders emphasize development of the four dimensions of authentic leadership (AL): self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency, amongst their student affairs leadership group, which was similarly suggested by both Tijani and Okunbanjo (2020) and Degreenia (2018). Investment in resources devoted to strengthening the development of these four AL dimensions among leaders through training programs, mentoring, and related avenues will likely lead to increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment among student affairs practitioners, as was also advocated by Degreenia (2018). It is recommended that these authentic leadership development training courses be based on action learning principles, as proposed by Baron (2016).

Community college leaders would also be wise to highlight the importance of individual characteristics and behaviors that demonstrate an internalized moral perspective, as it was found

to be the AL dimension that positively, significantly predicted practitioners' job satisfaction. It would also be wise for institutional leaders to highlight the value of individual characteristics behaviors that demonstrate self-awareness, which was the AL dimension that positively, significantly predicted organizational commitment for student affairs practitioners in this study.

Although the present study only found significance for the internalized moral perspective and self-awareness dimensions of authentic leadership for follower job satisfaction and organizational commitment, respectively, the researcher recommends the aforementioned resources focus on increasing institutional leaders' awareness of all four dimensions. The rationale for focusing on all four dimensions is based on the overall low scores for immediate supervisors on all dimensions, as ranked by their followers in the study survey.

Beyond training supervisors on how to enhance their authenticity, it is also suggested community college student affairs leaders better understand the dynamics of how followers under their supervision may be influenced based on their racial identity. It is vital that the influence of their perceived authentic leadership helps strengthen their followers' organizational commitment as much as possible, regardless of their race. Employees from racial minoritized backgrounds already face interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism which negatively impacts their lives both inside and outside of the workplace. Therefore, it is recommended community college leaders mandate diversity, equity, and inclusion training initiatives to improve the cultural competency of those in charge of student affairs departments.

Student affairs practitioners would benefit from greater awareness of the dimensions of authentic leadership and how it impacts their work performance. Understanding that self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency increases their job satisfaction and organizational commitment is important. It is also suggested

student affairs practitioners undergo training on the characteristics and behaviors associated with the four dimensions of authentic leadership so that this employee group can better advocate for peers who possess these qualities be promoted to leadership roles. Greater understanding of the importance for student affairs leaders to display an internalized moral perspective and to be self-aware would be useful to help strengthen the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of student affairs practitioners, respectively. Greater awareness of these two authentic leadership dimensions would also aid institutional leaders in identifying student affairs leaders who are weaker in their authenticity and assist those leaders to become stronger in their authentic leadership approach through constructive feedback. Identification would also aid institutional leaders in selecting individuals who are best fit to take on future leadership roles, which was similarly proposed by Degreenia (2018).

Suggestions for Future Research

The study results had crucial implications for future research on the influence of authentic leadership and community college student affairs practitioners' workplace characteristics and behaviors. As the presented study utilized a quantitative methodology to address the research questions posed, I would first recommend researchers in the future utilize a mixed methods approach to further understanding of the relationship between authentic leadership, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. I suggest future researchers utilize the quantitative results from the current study to establish interview questions for inclusion in a mixed methods study. Additionally, researchers could also utilize the quantitative results of the current study as a basis for replication to explore if results remain the same or significantly differ from my findings. Conducting a mixed methods study would allow for a more detailed understanding and greater context of why stronger perceived authentic leadership is associated

with increased job satisfaction and organizational commitment among community college student affairs practitioners beyond a numerical ranking on a Likert scale.

Scholars should examine whether the significant results identified in this study extend to other states which operate their community colleges under a different governance structure. The Commonwealth of Virginia operates with an independent state board that governs all 23 community colleges in the state. Thus, future research should work to identify the status of the relationship of authentic leadership, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in states with other governance structures: for example, states where a state board of education regulates community colleges or states where local community college boards are elected. Future research should also examine if this study's results would extend to student affairs practitioners at four-year institutions.

In other employment sectors, previous studies have also found authentic leadership to influence followers' trust, creativity, and psychological capital. Therefore, future studies should examine whether these results extend to community college student affairs practitioners. Additionally, scholars should work to identify other potential variables significantly influenced by authentic leadership. Much of the existing literature is focused on the influence of more established leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, servant leadership, and adaptive leadership, on various variables. Therefore, future studies should aim to expand knowledge of more recently emerged leadership styles, such as authentic leadership.

Scholars should also work to better understand the ways in which the personal characteristics of followers may create variations in the influence of perceived authentic leadership. Although this study utilized gender, race, and length of employment in student affairs

to identify potential variations in influence and I aimed to diversify the sample as much as possible, my efforts were not as successful as hoped. Therefore, future research is needed.

Conclusion

This dissertation explored the influence of the emerging and less well-known authentic leadership style and how it influences the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of community college student affairs professionals. Furthermore, the study examined whether this influence differed by race, gender, and length of employment in student affairs. Results confirmed student affairs professionals who work under the immediate supervision of perceived authentic leaders were more satisfied with their job and more committed to their respective community college. The influence of authentic leadership on organizational commitment also differed based upon follower's race, stronger for individuals who self-identified as White.

Why do these results matter? Amid the Great Resignation and other employee attrition challenges throughout higher education in a post-pandemic world, these results offer potential to help address these trends which negatively impact community colleges and students. Ozaki and Hornak (2014) asserted "student affairs is critical across all institutional types, but essential at a community college, an open access institution" (p. 79). Hence, community college leaders should utilize this study's results as a point of reflection to promote authentic leadership dimension characteristics across their campuses to promote greater job satisfaction and commitment among those working in student affairs. Governing boards should also take notice since previous research has identified low job satisfaction and commitment among student affairs employees hurts efforts to improve community college student retention and success, which is consistently lower compared to four-year institutions. This research produced deeper understanding of the powerful influence which authentic leadership offers when employed in

community college student affairs departments. Further, this research offered a starting point for community college leaders to begin countering the contemporary personnel challenges they often see in an effort to improve student affairs outcomes at America's community colleges for both employees and students.

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APPENDIX A

Eligibility Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this doctoral study survey.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between community college student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and their perception of their immediate supervisor's authentic leadership. Your participation in this study will contribute to better understanding community college student affairs and the influence of leadership within this field.

This survey is divided into 5 sections. The results of a pilot study indicated it will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the survey.

Your personal information and answers will remain confidential. Please note your participation is completely voluntary.

*Required

    1. Are you employed on a <u>full-time </u>basis by one of the 23 community colleges within the Virginia Community College system? *

       o Yes

       o No

    2. Please select the area of community college student affairs in which you <u>primarily</u> work?*

       o academic advising

       o admissions

       o career services

- o counseling services

- o dean of students office

- o disability support services

- o enrollment management

- o financial aid

- o health services

- o international students

- o judicial affairs/student conduct

- o leadership

- o military/veteran affairs

- o multicultural services

- o orientation/new student programs

- o recreation/fitness

- o student activities

- o service learning

- o other

3. If you selected "other" as the area of community college student affairs in which you

    primarily work in the previous question, please indicate your department/role below.

    _____

APPENDIX B

Demographic Questionnaire

1. How many years have you been employed in student affairs?*

o   0-2 years

o   3-5 years

o   6-8 years

o   9-11 years

o   12-14 years

o   15-17 years

o   18-20 years

o   20+ years

2. How do you racially identify? (you may select one or more)*

o   America Indian or Alaska Native

o   Asian

o   Black or African American

o   Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

o   White

3. How do you ethnically identify?*

o   Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin

o   Not Hispanic or Latino or Spanish Origin

4. Please select your gender identity.

o Man

o Woman

o Non-binary/non-conforming

5. <u>Optional:</u> If you would like to be entered into the participant raffle to win one of four $25

Amazon gift cards, please enter your email address: _____

APPENDIX C

Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (adapted)

Key:

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly agree

1. My supervisor can list their three greatest weaknesses.

2. My supervisor's actions reflect their core values.

3. My supervisor seeks others' opinions before making up their mind.

4. My supervisor openly shares their feelings with others.

5. My supervisor can list their three greatest strengths.

6. My supervisor does not allow group pressure to control them.

7. My supervisor listens closely to the ideas of those who disagree with them.

8. My supervisor lets others know who they truly are as a person.

9. My supervisor seeks feedback as a way of understanding who they really are as a person.

10. Other people know where my supervisor stands on controversial issues.

11. My supervisor does not emphasize their own point of view at the expense of others.

12. My supervisor rarely presents a "false" front to others.

13. My supervisor accepts the feelings they have about themself.

14. My supervisor's morals guide what they do as a leader.

15. My supervisor listens very carefully to the ideas of others before making decisions.

16. My supervisor admits their mistakes to others.

APPENDIX D

Job Satisfaction Survey

Key:

1= Disagree very much
2= Disagree moderately
3= Disagree slightly
4= Agree slightly
5=Agree moderately
6= Agree very much

Pay

1.   I feel I am being paid a fair amount for the work I do.

2.   Raises are too far and few between.

3.   I am unappreciated by the organization when I think about what they pay me.

4.   I feel satisfied with my chance for salary increases.

Promotion

1.   There is really too little chance for promotion on my job.

2.   Those that do well on the job stand a fair chance of being promoted.

3.   People get ahead as fast here as they do in other places.

4.   I am satisfied with my chances for promotion.

Supervision

1.   My supervisor is quite competent in doing his/her job.

2.   My supervisor is unfair to me.

3.   My supervisor shows too little interest in the feelings of subordinates.

4.   I like my supervisor.

Benefits

1.   I am not satisfied with the benefits I receive.

2. The benefits we receive are as good as most other organizations offer.

3. The benefit package we have is equitable.

4. There are benefits we do not have which we should have.

Rewards

1. When I do a good job, I receive the recognition for it that I should receive.

2. I do not feel that the work I do is appreciated.

3. There are few rewards for those who work here.

4. I don't feel my efforts are rewarded the way they should be.

Operating procedures

1. Many of our rules and procedures make doing a good job difficult.

2. My efforts to do a good job are seldom blocked by red tape.

3. I have too much to do at work.

4. I have too much paperwork.

Coworkers

1. I like the people I work with.

2. I find I have to work harder to my job than I should because of the incompetence of people I work with.

3. I enjoy my coworkers.

4. There is too much bickering and fighting at work.

Work itself

1. I sometimes feel my job is meaningless.

2. I like doing the things I do at work.

3. I feel a sense of pride in doing my job.

4. My job is enjoyable.

Communication

1. Communications seem good within this organization.

2. The goals of this organization are not clear to me.

3. I often feel that I do not know what is going on with the organization.

4. Work assignments are often not fully explained.

APPENDIX E

Three-Component Model of Employee Commitment Survey

Key:

1 = Strongly disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Slightly disagree
4= Undecided
5 = Slightly agree
6 = Agree
7 = Strongly agree

Affective Commitment Scale

1. I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization.

2. I really feel as if this organization's problems are my own.

3. I do not feel a strong sense of "belonging" to my organization.

4. I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this organization.

5. I do not feel like "part of the family" at my organization.

6. This organization has a great deal of personal meaning for me.

Continuance Commitment Scale

1. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.

2. It would be very hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.

3. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.

4. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.

5. If I had not already put so much of myself into this organization, I might consider working

    elsewhere.

6. One of the few negative consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of

    available alternatives.

Normative Commitment Scale

1. I do not feel any obligation to remain with my current employer.

2. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organization now.

3. I would feel guilty if I left my organization now.

4. This organization deserves my loyalty.

5. I would not leave my organization right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people

    in it.

6. I owe a great deal to my organization.

APPENDIX F

Email Accompanying Survey Instrument

Dear VCCS Student Affairs Colleague:

I hope this email finds you well.

Did you know a recent Skyfactor Benchworks survey revealed nearly 40% of student affairs practitioners plan to leave their positions? This rate should concern all of us performing this vital work. I am writing to request your assistance with a study to explore the influence of authentic leadership in community college student affairs. The study is being conducted to investigate the relationship between community college student affairs professionals' job satisfaction and organizational commitment and their perception of their immediate supervisor's authentic leadership.

Specifically, I am asking that you complete a survey. Below you will find a link to the online survey that should take 10-15 minutes. All full-time student affairs professionals employed by any of the 23 colleges within the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) in one or more defined areas of practice have been selected to participate. Participation in this survey is voluntary. If you choose to participate, please understand that all responses are strictly confidential.

Please follow this link to the survey:

<link to Google survey>

Please complete the survey within one week. Participants who choose to enter their email address will be entered to win (1) of (4) $25 Amazon gift cards! Please complete the questionnaire by December 3, 2023, to be considered in the raffle.

By taking the survey, you will help advance the research on leadership within community college student affairs. If you have any questions, please contact me at bvia002@odu.edu or the Principal Investigator, Dr. Mitchell R. Williams, at mrwillia@odu.edu.

Sincerely,
Brent Via

VITA

BRENT L. VIA
Old Dominion University
Darden College of Education, 120 Education Building
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EDUCATION

Ph.D., 2024, Community College Leadership, Old Dominion University
M.Ed., 2013, Higher Education Student Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles
B.A., 2010, Government & Sociology, University of Virginia

HIGHER EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

Associate Director of Career Planning and Development   2021–Present
    Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale, VA
Assistant Professor (Counselor)   2017–2021
    Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria, VA
Advising Center Manager   2013–2017
    Virginia Western Community College, Roanoke, VA
Graduate Advisor for Leadership and Involvement   2012–2013
    University of California, Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA

PRESENTATIONS

Via, B. (2023, June). *Improving Outcomes Beyond Completion for First-generation Low-income Students*. National Association of Student Personnel Administrators First-Generation Student Success Conference, Kansas City, MO.

Via, B. (2023, April). *How Labor Market Data Integrates with Career Development.* American Association of Community Colleges Annual Conference, Denver, CO.

Via, B. (2021, January). *Empathy & Social Justice.* Northern Virginia Community College Power Up Your Pedagogy Conference, Annandale, VA.

Via, B. (2020, December). *Implicit Bias, Systemic Racism, Privilege, and Fragility.* Northern Virginia Community College Staff Forum Council In-Service, Alexandria, VA.

Via, B. (2017, March). *Converting to a Team Advising Model.* National Academic Advising Association Virginia Drive Out to Change Conference, Wytheville, VA.

SERVICES

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, Northern Virginia Community College, 2022–
Quality Enhancement Plan Leadership Group, Virginia Western Community College, 2013–17