Do servant, transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership styles influence mentoring competencies for faculty? A study of a gender equity leadership development program

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Abstract
This study examined whether women and men who were more skilled in one leadership style—servant, transformational, transactional, or passive avoidant—were better mentors and assessed if gender influenced leadership style or mentoring. Faculty (n = 56) who were members of one of two cohorts, participated in leadership development programs focused on gender equity at a university in the southeast U.S. The study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey design and the units of analysis were individual program participants. Initial regression analysis revealed servant leadership was positively and statistically associated with mentoring and passive avoidant leadership was negatively and statistically associated with mentoring. Transformational and transactional leadership were not statistically associated with mentor competency. Gender was not found to be associated with leadership style or mentoring. Human Resource Development professionals and those who conduct gender equity and other leadership development programs should consider the benefits of servant leadership due to its gender-neutral style and synergistic ability to develop leaders as skilled mentors.
1 | INTRODUCTION

In higher education, it is well documented that women hold fewer leadership positions than men (Cook, 2012; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Richardson & Loubier, 2008; Ryan & Haslam, 2007). This marked lack of leadership diversity in the academy (Johnson, 2016) is particularly salient in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines (Levine, González-Fernández, Bodurtha, Skarupski, & Fivush, 2015; N. Thomas, Bystydzienski, & Desai, 2015). To reverse this trend, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE program works with higher education “to increase the representation and advancement of women in academic science and engineering careers, thereby developing a more diverse science and engineering workforce” (2009, p. 2). For their part, higher education institutions determined that leadership development and mentoring are necessary, useful, and effective tools to prepare women for future administrative roles and responsibilities (Madsen, 2011).

When planning a leadership development program, practitioners, and scholars are tasked with determining what leadership style(s) should be taught. The style a leader adopts may be informed by theory (Bass & Bass, 2008; Northouse, 2018). Leadership styles differ by goal and purpose, for example, servant focuses on personal development, transformational elicits performance, transactional drives productivity, and passive avoidant intervenes to correct mistakes and punish noncompliance (Avolio & Bass, 2000; Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 1970). When employed, these theories are reflected in the leaders’ day-to-day practices. As the ability to mentor others is frequently a desired outcome of leadership development programs, program administrators are likely to assess the impact of leadership style on mentoring ability. The literature on leadership development of STEM faculty discusses developing leadership skills in general; however, there is limited specific documentation or recommendations on what leadership style(s) directly benefit both women and men in higher education gender equity leadership programs (DeFrank-Cole, Latimer, Neidermeyer, & Wheatly, 2016; Laursen & Rocque, 2009; Levine et al., 2015; Margherio, Horner-Devine, Mizumori, & Yen, 2016; O’Bannon, Garavalia, Renz, & McCarther, 2010; Richman, Morahan, Cohen, & McDade, 2001). In brief, we asked whether women and men who were more proficient in one leadership style would be more skilled mentors than those who enacted different styles.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Leader and leadership development

Organizations use a variety of Human Resource Development (HRD) approaches to invest and build organizational capacity. Over time, leader and leadership development has become central to the field of HRD and is considered a critical undertaking of HRD professionals (Ardichvili, Natt och Dag, & Manderscheid, 2016; Callahan, Whitener, & Sandlin, 2007; Madsen, 2011). Although there are many definitions of leadership, we use Yukl’s (2006), which says that “leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives” (p. 3). As a skill, organizations seek to increase individuals’ leadership capacity by providing developmental experiences. The focus of these learning experiences is leader development—increasing an individual’s intrapersonal competencies, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, and leader identity, to
enhance their leadership performance across roles (Ardichvili et al., 2016; Day, 2000; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005).

As individuals learn about different leadership theories, they can begin to align their behaviors accordingly and reap the benefits associated with enacting specific leadership styles (Barbuto Jr. & Wheeler, 2006; Bass & Bass, 2008; Day, 2000). Leadership style is described as the actions or behaviors deployed by an individual who seeks to influence other's behavior to achieve a goal (Bass & Bass, 2008). While leader development focuses on intrapersonal competencies or human capital, leadership development concentrates on how to build interpersonal competencies or social capital (Day, 2000; Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014). Individuals need to build their social awareness and social skills and use interpersonal competencies to differentiate and integrate appropriate leadership behavior for the social context in which they might find themselves (Day, 2000). Both leader and leadership development are complementary and necessary, as individuals need to develop their leader competencies and apply them in the social context if their leadership is to be realized (Collins & Holton, 2004; Day, 2001; Day et al., 2014). From an HRD perspective, leader and leadership development are developmental processes, which require continual learning (Ardichvili et al., 2016; Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2009).

2.2 | Leadership styles

While there are many leadership styles, a focus on transformational, transactional, passive avoidant, and servant leadership styles is particularly germane. These styles stand out; transformational leadership is preeminent and such leaders apply vision, strategy, and ethics; transactional leadership has a long history and helps ensure work gets done in organizations; and passive avoidant is the antithesis of leadership and should be avoided (Bass & Bass, 2008). Servant leadership is a modern style, which focuses on people first, and being a positive force within and outside of the organization (Barbuto Jr. & Wheeler, 2006; Greenleaf, 1970).

2.2.1 | Leadership continuum

Burns (1978) conceptualized and distinguished between two leadership styles: transactional (exchanges that occur between leaders and associates) and transformational (the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both leader and the associate). Bass evolved the theory and specified transformational leadership occurs when "[T]he leader elevates the follower morally about what is important, valued, and goes beyond the simpler transactional relationship of providing reward or avoidance of punishment for compliance" (Bass & Bass, 2008, p. 1217). Avolio and Bass (2000) described a continuum of leadership activity that is anchored on the left by passive avoidant or non-leadership, connected in the middle by transactional or reinforcement leadership, and anchored on the right by transformational or motivational leadership. Transformational leaders set goals with a higher purpose and motivate followers to transcend self-interest to achieve outcomes that meet or exceed expectations while enhancing the follower’s self-worth (Bass & Bass, 2008).

Transformational leadership consists of idealized influence (be ethical, serve as role models, and inspire followers to identify with and emulate the leader), inspirational motivation (using motivation, followers are inspired to commit to the leader’s vision and go beyond self-interest), intellectual stimulation (challenge the status quo, innovate, and problem-solve to achieve the leader’s vision), and individualized consideration (provide a supportive environment to meet each employee’s unique needs while furthering their growth and development) (Bass & Bass, 2008). Idealized influence and individualized consideration are consistent with the relational competencies associated with leadership development (Bass, 1985).

From a developmental perspective, Bass (1985) indicated that transformational leaders mentor others. As a transformational leader, the individual comes to recognize that when they serve as a role model, share an
inspirational vision, ask followers to think outside of the box, and meet the unique developmental needs of their employees, they are, respectively, using idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, which are directly transferrable to mentoring (Chun, Sosik, & Yun, 2012; Day et al., 2009). As individuals build their transformational leadership competencies, they may use these behaviors in their mentoring repertoire to provide psychosocial and career support (Chun et al., 2012).

Transactional leaders are likely to be successful mentors. As part of the contingent reward (CR), leaders set goals, help employees develop the competencies for goal achievement, and set rewards (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). When mentors establish learning contracts with their protégés, mentors initiate support and direct the pair’s activities to fulfill the contract and reward the protégé as they succeed (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). These actions likely facilitate the career development of the protégé, builds trust between the mentor and protégé, increases the protégé’s job satisfaction, all of which are ways mentors provide psychosocial support to their protégés (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). Although transactional behavior supports aspects of the mentoring relationship, it is a poor replacement for transformational leadership and likely results in weaker mentoring relationships (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000).

Passive avoidant leadership is characterized by punishments and avoidant behaviors as it “strives to maintain the status quo through delay, absence and indifference” (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000, p. 372). As mentoring is based on a positive relationship where the mentor actively seeks positive career and developmental opportunities for their protégés, acts as a positive role model, and provides psychosocial support, there will likely be a negative relationship between passive avoidant leadership and mentoring (Banerjee-Batist, Reio Jr, & Rocco, 2019; Day, 2000; Noe, 1988; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000; Yukl, 1994). The passive avoidant leader shirks their responsibility and is indifferent toward their subordinates, this leadership style is in stark contrast to servant leadership, which we discuss next (Bass & Bass, 2008).

### 2.2.2 Servant leadership

When launching an institution, a servant leader “starts on a course toward people-building with leadership that has a firmly established context of people first. With that, the right actions fall naturally into place” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 31). Over time, theorists built upon Greenleaf’s (1970) conceptualization of servant leadership (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, & Liden, 2019). Barbuto Jr. and Wheeler (2006) theorized servant leadership to include altruistic calling (a fundamental personal desire to serve others and meet their needs), emotional healing (use of empathy and listening to help others heal from hardship or trauma, and create an environment where employees feel safe to speak), wisdom (ability to see and interpret environmental cues and anticipate what is to come), persuasive mapping (provide a compelling vision of the future based on reason and inspire others to support it), and organizational stewardship (a desire to leave a positive legacy in the organization and society). Together these constructs manifest when servant leaders facilitate the personal and professional growth of others by meeting their professional development and organizational needs. Thus, they ensure “followers develop in a positive direction” (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006, p. 308). Due to the developmental focus of servant leadership, such leaders are likely to be good mentors.

Several studies address servant leadership and mentoring: Steinbeck’s (2009) determined a moderately strong positive relationship between mentors’ behavior and effectiveness; Paul and Fitzpatrick (2015) revealed servant leadership predicted student-advising satisfaction; and Jackson (2009) discovered that writing mentors applied servant leadership to their clients. Mentors with greater learning goal orientation and servant leadership were found to provide their protégés with better role modeling, career development, and psychosocial support (Egan, 2005; Godshalk & Sosik, 2000). Further, those with servant leadership behaviors may be more receptive to training and development, likely to evolve their mentoring schemas and become more effective mentors over time (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019). This research suggests that as individuals grow as servant leaders, their skills in identifying and meeting others’ needs increase, and these leaders will demonstrate the interpersonal relational skills necessary of mentors to meet the
career and psychosocial needs of their protégés (Allen, Eby, & Lentz, 2006; Jackson, 2009; Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015; Steinbeck, 2009).

Both servant leadership and transformational leadership "emphasize the importance of appreciating and valuing people, listening, mentoring or teaching and empowering followers"; yet these leadership styles are distinct (Barbuto Jr. & Wheeler, 2006; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004, p. 354). Servant leaders concentrate on serving followers' needs, cultivating their relationship with others, and trusting their followers to act in the best interest of the organization (Sims & Morris, 2018; Stone et al., 2004). As compared to transformational leaders who motivate followers to meet organizational goals (Barbuto Jr. & Wheeler, 2006).

2.3 | Leadership development and mentoring

Mentoring style "refers to the [observable] behaviors or strategies that mentors employ" and will change over time based upon mentoring and other experiences (Nyanjom, 2020, p. 250). Mentoring is an effective leadership development strategy, occurs in a context, and enhances protégés' intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies (Day, 2000). As leadership and mentoring are participatory practices, what leadership behaviors individuals enact will influence their mentoring competencies (Day, 2000). We theorize that the intrapersonal style of the leader will influence the interpersonal relational skills they use when mentoring. Moreover, the quality of mentoring will differ based on the leadership lens or style used by the mentor. The limited research on this topic indicates that through mentoring, mentors increase their personal development as leaders (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2006; Ghosh & Reio, 2013). Employing transformational leadership behavior positively relates to both mentors' and protégés' career development, role modeling, psychosocial support, and effectiveness and/or job satisfaction (Chun et al., 2012; Godshalk & Sosik, 2000; Scandura & Williams, 2004; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). There is limited research that directly links leadership style to mentoring ability within individuals.

Mentoring may be a one-on-one relationship where someone in a more senior role provides guidance to someone less experienced. This traditionally paired relationship is called hierarchical mentoring and occurs within organizations where typically, both mentors and protégés benefit from mentoring (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; Ghosh & Reio, 2013). Mentoring is associated with increased job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee retention and conversely, turnover intention (Aremu & Adeyaju, 2003; Germain, 2011; Stallworth, 2003; Walsh, Borkowski, & Reuben, 1999). Mentors were likely to experience increased recognition, job performance, job satisfaction, and leadership skill (Chun et al., 2012; Ghosh & Reio, 2013). When mentors act as coaches, counselors, role models, and confidants they provide their protégé with psychosocial support and the protégé reap the benefits of their mentor’s sponsorship and guidance on how to navigate their organizational career successfully (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). When the mentor is considered a role model, the protégé benefits from greater confidence, self-efficacy, and job performance (Dickson et al., 2014). Furthermore, the ability to mentor can be learned and encouraged (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019).

Research to determine the effects of synergy among leadership styles on mentor effectiveness is one aspect that has been neglected (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; Godshalk & Sosik, 2000; Kim, 2007). As mentoring is pivotal to career success, HRD professionals concern themselves with the design and conduct of mentoring programs to meet individual and organizational needs (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; Hezlett & Gibson, 2005). Organizations use mentoring programs to onboard and develop employees (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019). Mentoring is also a tool used to support leaders and leadership development (Chun et al., 2012; Day, 2001; Poon, 2006). Further, organizations are well served to select and groom mentors who possess the leadership styles necessary to be successful mentors. As individuals grow their interpersonal leadership skills, over time their mentoring skills, schema, and style will expand (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2013; Nyanjom, 2020). Individuals’ mentor style will reflect their identities, including their leader, gender, and mentor identities (Nyanjom, 2020). More research is needed to address the confluence of leadership, mentoring, and leadership.
2.3.1 Gender, mentoring, and higher education

Research indicates that when mentored, women leaders were more likely to have expanded networks, experienced greater career planning, and consider themselves better leaders (Dickson et al., 2014). Formal mentoring programs are important for women because they may experience more institutional barriers to establishing informal relationships than their male counterparts (Dickson et al., 2014). To be effective, mentors need skills to successfully navigate gender and cultural differences, orient protégé’s to the organization, and transfer their competencies (Chesler & Chesler, 2002).

As higher education continues to experience extraordinary challenges, leaders with exceptional skills to ensure organizations succeed are needed at the top and all leadership levels (Rubin, 2004). One reason there is a lack of leaders, Madsen (2011) argues, is there are “fewer women positioned to take on such critical roles” (p. 4). Organizations that desire to advance change and establish an effective leadership cadre should encourage leadership development practices like mentoring, as it is considered an effective tool (Bonebright, Cottledge, & Lonquist, 2012; Madsen, 2011; White, 2012). Although leadership development programs for women in higher education have existed for decades, scholarly research is limited and much needed to provide guidance on leadership interventions, including mentoring that can develop women’s leadership skills (Madsen, 2011).

2.3.2 Gender, mentoring, and leadership

Mentoring is offered and employed as one career development strategy to help address the inequity of women not progressing in their careers, proportionally to their participation in the labor force (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; Eagly & Carli, 2007). Abundant research exists on gender and mentoring and includes the examination of the difficulties associated with cross-gender mentoring and the value organizations often place on having more masculine versus feminine cultures (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; Ensher & Murphy, 2011). Unlike men in higher education, women faculty were more likely to be in mentoring relationships and provide more mentoring due to the gender-based expectations of their students (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; Griffin & Reddick, 2011; J. W. Smith, Smith, & Markham, 2000). Women faculty encountered more challenges in mentoring male protégés (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; K. M. Thomas, Willis, & Davis, 2007). Nonetheless, the male and female role expectations associated with mentoring did not differ by gender (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019; Walsh et al., 1999).

The research found women who were mentored enjoy more organizational success (Ragins, Townsend, & Mattis, 1998; Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003). O’Brien, Biga, Kessler, and Allen’s (2010) meta-analysis determined women and men were just as likely to report that they were a protégé and receive similar career development opportunities. As mentors, women provided more psychosocial support than men did; while male mentors provide more career development support than female mentors do (O’Brien et al., 2010).

Just as gender was found to be differentiating within mentoring experiences, gender may influence leadership. Leadership was historically conceptualized and studied more with a masculine lens (Bierema & Callahan, 2014; Kark, 2004; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011). Gender research found women and men displayed different levels of transformational leadership (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003). Earlier meta-analyses (Eagly & Carli, 2003) indicated women demonstrated a more democratic (or participative) style and less autocratic (or directive) style than men in relationship to the exercise of power. When compared to men, women leaders were more transformational and used CR systems (Eagly & Carli, 2003). These behavioral differences were small but consistent. Leader gender differences may vary based on the woman’s racial identity (Sims & Carter, 2019).

Turning to servant leadership and gender, Barbuto and Gifford (2010) determined women and men exhibited leadership behaviors that were communal and agentic. These findings contradicted prior research, which found women and men displayed different levels of transformational and authentic leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Sims, Gong, & Hughes, 2017). Hogue (2016) suggested women benefit from the communal aspects of servant leadership.
because there is more congruency between being a woman and a servant leader than a woman and other types of non-communal leadership styles. Servant leadership may be unique among leadership styles because it enables "leaders to step out of gender role norms and provide the most appropriate leadership for followers" (Barbuto & Gifford, 2010, p. 16; Sims & Morris, 2018). Relative to gender and servant leadership, no support was found that women and men display different levels of servant leadership, which affirms the notion servant leadership is a gender-neutral set of leader behaviors (Barbuto & Gifford, 2010; Sims & Morris, 2018).

A meta-analysis on gender differences and leadership effectiveness had several transformational leadership studies but none on servant leadership or mentoring (Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, & Woehr, 2014). The meta-analysis suggested several factors moderate the relationship between gender and leadership on whether the rating was once done by self or other raters, organization type, the level of the leader, and the study setting (Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014). The study concluded when rated by others, women were considered more effective leaders in business and education organizations and more effective in middle management and senior roles while men were perceived as more effective in male-dominated organizations. As self-raters, men considered themselves more effective leaders than women in lower and senior managerial levels. In searching for literature that addressed gender, mentoring, and leadership, no studies were found that addressed the interaction of these constructs.

Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

**Hypothesis 1.** Transformational leadership style is positively and statistically associated with mentoring competency.

**Hypothesis 2.** Transactional leadership style is positively and statistically associated with mentoring competency.

**Hypothesis 3.** Passive avoidant leadership style is negatively and statistically associated with mentoring competency.

**Hypothesis 4.** Servant leadership style is positively and statistically associated with mentoring competency.

**Hypothesis 5.** Servant leadership style has a stronger positive association with mentoring competency than transformational leadership style.

**Hypothesis 6.** Mentoring competency levels and leadership styles will vary by gender.

### 3 | METHODS

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional design using survey methodology incorporating several measurement instruments. Leadership development participants were the individual units of analysis. This study relies on participants’ self-ratings, as it is difficult to collect rater feedback on emerging leaders and mentors when they do not have individuals whom they lead or mentor. To reduce common method bias, this study used longer scales to reduce the likelihood of one survey influencing another, intermixed different variables of mentoring and leadership in one survey, did not reveal that independent variables (leadership) were related to the outcome variable (mentoring), and collected independent variables at separate times using different survey administration tools (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

#### 3.1 | Participant sample

There were two cohorts of participants. The 28 participants in the 2017 cohort were majority women (71%), White (79%), more than half (57%) were between 40 to 49 years of age, almost half (43%) were associate professors, and
25% held the professor rank. At the time of the survey, participants reported having leadership (39%) and mentoring (57%) experience. The 2018 cohort participants \((n = 28)\) were also primarily female (71%), White (73%), with (23%) Asian representation, and no self-identified Hispanics. In both cohorts, there was only one participant self-identified as Black. In the 2018 cohort, about one-third (36%) were associate professors, and there were more tenure track professors (32%) compared with the 2017 cohort (18%). They reported having leadership (45%) and mentoring (36%) experience.

### 3.2 Survey procedures

The research team informed program participants of the research study in the program invitation and during face-to-face program sessions. An informed consent form, approved by the university’s institutional review board introduced the survey. Using participants’ email addresses, cohort members received an email inviting them to complete the survey.

The web survey tool Qualtrics was used to create a questionnaire that included demographic questions and two instruments: mentoring competency assessment (MCA) and servant leadership. The vendor web survey tool MindGarden was used to administer the transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership instrument. In year one, participants received links at the same time in the fall, September to November, to complete the Qualtrics and MindGarden surveys. In year two, based on feedback from first-year participants, participants were invited to complete the Qualtrics survey first, September through November, and then, 30 days later, the MindGarden survey, October through November. Survey completion status was monitored, and reminders were sent to complete the surveys. Despite assurances of anonymity, some participants expressed that as an “only” (e.g., women faculty in an all-male department), they were reluctant to provide identifiable demographic information. Of the 56 participants, from the 2017 and 2018 leadership development program cohorts, questionnaire completion rates were 80% for Qualtrics \((n = 48)\) and 100% for MindGarden \((n = 56)\).

### 3.3 Sample size, power, and precision

To conduct a multiple regression analysis with four independent variables—servant leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive avoidant—and one dependent variable—mentorship—to obtain a medium (0.15) to large (0.35) effect size requires a sample of 39 to 82 (Green, 1991; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Combined, both cohorts were within the adequate sample size parameters, with 48 and 56 participants completing the Qualtrics and MindGarden surveys, respectively.

### 3.4 Measures and covariates

The mentoring instruments available assess mentoring at the individual, group, and organizational levels and cover a variety of topics (Gilbreath, Rose, & Dietrich, 2007). There are mentoring scales that address career mentoring (Gilbreath et al., 2007; Scandura & Williams, 2004), career and psychosocial functions (Godshalk & Sosik, 2000; Noe, 1988; Sosik & Godshalk, 2000), mentoring in male-dominated occupations (Chun et al., 2012), mentoring relationship challenges (Ensher & Murphy, 2011), and mentoring of research scholars (Fleming et al., 2013). As this study’s subjects were tenured faculty at a Carnegie level one research university, Fleming et al.’s (2013) MCA were selected for this study. The MCA was developed to improve the skills of research mentors. This scale is based on an assessment of close to 300 mentor-protégé pairs across the United States in 16 universities. Protégés were asked to “please rate how skilled your mentor is in the following areas” (p. 1003). Overall, mentors’ self-ratings were
consistently lower than their protégés' ratings of the mentors' skills. This suggests that the perceptions of the mentors are a conservative reflection of their actual skills as confirmed by their mentees.

The Qualtrics survey collected demographic data (email address, title, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, organization, marital status, and dependents under age 18 in the home) to capture participants' leadership and mentoring experience. Single item measures were used, including "to what extent have you led others to achieve a goal?" and "to what extent have your mentored others?" Participants' responses were gathered by using a Likert scale with zero as none and five as very extensive. The rationale for using single-item measures was based on the research that indicated when a construct is clear, one-dimensional, seeks an overall impression, and used in leadership and mentoring studies thus, a one-item measure is appropriate (Allen, Shockley, & Poteat, 2010; Arvey, Zhang, Avolio, & Krueger, 2007; Wanous & Hudy, 2001, etc.).

In addition to the Qualtrics survey was Barbuto Jr. and Wheeler's (2006) servant leadership questionnaire (self-rater) that contained 24 questions with the subscales of altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship. The last item on the Qualtrics survey was the MCA (Fleming et al., 2013) (self-rater), which had 26 items with these subscales: maintaining effective communication, aligning expectations, assessing understanding, fostering independence, addressing diversity, and promoting professional development.

The MindGarden survey contained the multi-factor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) (self-rater) had 45 descriptive statements consist of three leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant. See Table 1, for the five scales used in this study, the original reliability scores and those obtained in this study, the number of items in the scale, and sample items.

3.5 | Data source and item completion

Survey data from the Qualtrics and MindGarden websites were downloaded as SPSS files. Cases were matched based on the email address. For each year, 2017 and 2018, 28 cases were added to one SPSS file resulting in a file with 56 cases; one for each survey respondent. Not all participants completed all the demographic and survey items. The frequency of completions were: 100% MLQ (n = 56); 86%—servant leadership, the single item questions led others and mentored others, age and gender (n = 48); and 82% mentoring (n = 46).

3.6 | Data analysis

IBM's Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS 24) software was used to analyze the data.

4 | RESULTS

4.1 | Items/instruments reliability and means

Scale level reliability (all items) was satisfactory except for transactional leadership (0.59), where the reliability of the subscales ranged from 0.66 to 0.73 (Table 1). At the subscale level, all five subscales for servant leadership (0.78 to 0.88), seven of ten subscales for the MLQ (0.53 to 0.81), and five of six subscales for mentoring competency had acceptable reliability levels (0.59 to 0.85). For the MLQ, the initial transactional leadership subscale's coefficient alpha was 0.54 and consisted of CR and management by exception active (MBEA) (Table 1). Removing item CR3 slightly improved reliability to 0.59 for the transactional scale. Subsequently, CR3 was removed and only seven items were used in the analyses of the transactional scale; this is reported in Table 1. Although reliability was low for
MLQ's subscales individual consideration (IC, 0.55) and laissez-faire (LF, 0.53), the items for these two subscales combined comprise the passive avoidant scale. Removing LF4 only marginally improved the Cronbach's alpha to 0.762 versus the all item value of 0.761. Thus, for passive avoidant, all items were retained. Relative to the mentoring subscale's addressing diversity (0.59) the mentoring subscale had two items, no further changes could be made to improve its reliability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale/subscales</th>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Sample items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Servant leadership (Barbuto Jr. &amp; Wheeler, 2006); 23 items, divided in five subscales</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>“I put others best interest ahead of my own.” “I am one whom others would turn to if others have a personal trauma,” “I am alert to what’s happening.” “I offer compelling reasons to get others to do things,” and “I believe that the organization needs to play a moral role in society.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruistic calling</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional healing</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Persuasive mapping</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational stewardship</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The multi-factor questionnaire (Avolio &amp; Bass, 2000); 45 items, divided into three major subscales from 1999 data set</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>“I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts,” “I instill pride in others for being associated with me,” “I demonstrate that problems must become chronic before I take action,” “I get others to look at problems from many different angles,” and “I am effective in representing others to higher authority.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized influence, idealized behaviors, and charisma/inspirational motivation</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual consideration</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional leadership</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingent reward</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>4/3a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management by exception (active)</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive avoidant leadership</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management by exception (passive)</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez-faire</td>
<td>NR</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mentoring competency assessment (Fleming et al., 2013); 26 items, divided into six subscales</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>“Active listening,” “employing strategies to improve communication with mentees,” “working with mentees to set research goals,” “motivating your mentees,” “taking into account the biases and prejudices you bring to the mentor/mentee relationship” and “helping your mentees acquire resources (e.g., grants, etc.).”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining effective communication</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aligning expectations</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing understanding</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering independence</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing diversity</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting professional development</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abbreviation: NR, not reported.
aFour items original study, three items this study; CR3 was removed to improve the reliability of transactional leadership.
Participants described themselves as "more than moderately skilled" (5.23 out of 7, 75%) for mentoring and for the leadership scales they were close to "agree" for servant (3.78 out of 5, 76%), "fairly often" for transformational (3.08 out of 4, 62%), "sometimes" (2.19 out of 4, 55%) for transactional, and "once in a while" (0.82 out of 4, 21%) for passive avoidance (Table 2).

4.2 | Demographics

Personal demographics were collected from program participants, including gender, age, marital status, number of dependents in the home under age 18 years of age, race and ethnicity, and education. Most participants were women (70%) with several men (30%), and the largest group was 40 to 49 years of age (43%), married (73%), White (70%), had children in the home (64%), and were Associate Professors (36%). All but three had doctoral degrees (94%). Most indicated they had extensive to very extensive leadership (3.68 out of 5, 72%) as well as mentoring experience (3.75 out of 5, 75%).

4.3 | Inferential analysis

A Pearson's one tail test of significance was conducted due to the directional hypotheses in this study. Table 2 presents the inter-correlations among all constructs incorporated into this study's multivariate analysis, both independent and dependent variables, as well as gender (covariate). There were significant correlations among variables, and all were at or lower than 0.7, indicating the absence of collinearity among this study's factors.

To address hypotheses one to five, regression analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between leadership styles and mentoring (Table 3). Findings revealed that the linear combination of leadership styles was significantly associated with mentoring competency ($F_{[4,41]} = 5.45, p < .01$). The correlation between the independent and the outcome variable was $R = 0.59$, $R^2 = 0.35$, and the adjusted $R^2 = 0.28$. The unstandardized regression coefficients provide added support that the two leadership scales were significant. Together, the four variables contributed 35% of shared variability. A subsequent stepwise analysis of variance revealed that servant leadership accounted for 19% of the variability ($F_{[1,44]} = 10.95, p < .01$), passive avoidant accounted for 13% of the variability ($F_{[1,43]} = 8.07, p < .01$), and combined, these accounted for 33% of the variability.

For Hypothesis 1, while the relationship between transformational leadership and mentoring competency (unstandardized $\beta = 0.30$ and a standardized $\beta = 0.16$, $p > .05$) was in the expected direction, it was not significant; this hypothesis was not supported. Regarding Hypothesis 2, the relationship between transactional leadership and mentoring competency (unstandardized $\beta = -0.02$ and a standardized $\beta = -0.02$, $p > .05$) was not in the expected direction, it was not significant. For Hypothesis 3, the association between passive avoidant leadership and mentoring competency (unstandardized $\beta = -0.46$ and a standardized $\beta = -0.32$, $p < .05$) was in the expected direction and significant; it was supported. Concerning Hypothesis 4, the relationship between servant leadership and mentoring competency (unstandardized $\beta = 0.59$ and a standardized $\beta = 0.34$, $p < .05$) was in the expected direction and significant; it was supported. For Hypothesis 5, servant leadership style has a stronger positive association with mentoring competency than transformational leadership style as revealed by the standardized $\beta$ values of 0.34 for servant leadership and 0.16 for transformational leadership; it was thus supported. To further support the regression analyses, confidence limits, which estimate population values, were generated for the variables. When the interval does not include zero, the results are considered statistically significant. Servant leadership and passive avoidant confidence intervals remained significant.

For additional insight, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted by only including those leadership styles (servant leadership and passive avoidant) that were significantly associated with the mentoring competency scale and its six subscales. Using Pillai’s trace, we found a significant effect of servant leadership on mentoring.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Race/ethnicity</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Led others</td>
<td>—0.14</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mentored others</td>
<td>—0.20</td>
<td>—0.02</td>
<td>0.73&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mentoring competency</td>
<td>—0.16</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.39&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.35&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Servant leadership</td>
<td>—0.18</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.42&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.34&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.45&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Transformational leadership</td>
<td>—0.09</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.40&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.42&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.39&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.45&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Transactional leadership</td>
<td>—0.02</td>
<td>—0.17</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.43&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Passive avoidant</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.28&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>—0.26</td>
<td>—0.26</td>
<td>—0.42&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>—0.19</td>
<td>—0.41&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>—0.20</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
<sup>b</sup>Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
competency as a whole, \( V = 0.29, F [6,38] = 2.58, p < .05 \) and a non-significant effect of passive avoidant on mentoring competency as a whole \( V = 0.23, F [6,38] = 1.91, p > .05 \). Separate univariate analysis of variance on servant leadership revealed significant effects for the mentoring subscales of communication \( F [1,43] = 7.88, p < .01 \), professional development \( F [1,43] = 4.67, p < .05 \), and fostering independence \( F [1,43] = 13.28, p < .01 \). Passive avoidant leadership had significant effects on the mentoring subscales of professional development \( F [1,43] = 8.65, p < .01 \), fostering independence \( F [1,43] = 5.20, p < .05 \), and diversity \( F [1,43] = 5.09, p < .05 \).

To determine whether the servant leadership subscales were significantly associated with mentoring competency, a regression analysis was conducted and revealed that the model was significant \( F [5,45] = 2.47, p < .05 \). However, none of the correlations between the predictor servant leadership subscales (altruistic calling, emotional healing, wisdom, persuasive mapping, and organizational stewardship) and the dependent variable, mentoring competency, were significant.

On average, men’s self-ratings were higher than women’s were on mentoring competency, servant leadership, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership (Table 4). Women’s self-ratings were higher than men’s were on passive avoidant leadership. These gender differences and effect sizes were small and not significant (Table 4). Because of the small number of men (15) compared to the women (35) in this sample, it could not be assumed the sample was normally distributed. The non-parametric test Wilcoxon signed-rank was used to assess the gender means for mentoring competency, servant leadership, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and management by exception (Marshall & Boggis, 2016). The results revealed the mean distributions between the women and men did not differ significantly; no support was found for Hypothesis 6 (Table 4).

### 4.4 | Other analyses

Our model included the leadership styles of servant, transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant. To gain insight on what explained the fact that transformational leadership was found not to be significantly and positively associated with mentor competency, we conducted additional analysis of variance of combinations of transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant leadership. Transformational leadership did become positively and significantly associated with mentoring competency when paired only with passive avoidant leadership \( F [2,45] = 7.37, p < .01, \) with \( R = 0.505, R^2 = 0.255, \) adjusted \( R^2 = 0.221 \). In this model, passive avoidant and transformational leadership styles variability were, respectively, 17 and 8% and, combined, totaled 25%.

In preparation to assess common method bias, missing data from six to ten participants were imputed by calculating estimated means. Then, factor analysis was conducted using dimension reduction where the factor extracted was fixed to one. The total variance explained by all survey items from the extraction sums of squared loadings was 16.38 (19.50%). As this variance amount did not exceed 50%, common method bias was not supported.

### TABLE 3  Regression coefficients: Leadership style predictors of mentoring competency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>( SE )</th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>( 95% ) CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>[0.45, 4.52]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant leadership</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.34*</td>
<td>[0.06, 1.12]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>[−0.23, 0.83]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
<td>[−0.39, 0.35]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive avoidant</td>
<td>−0.46</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>−0.32*</td>
<td>[−0.84, −0.08]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Abbreviation: CI, confidence interval.

\* \( p < .05 \) level.
| Scale                  | Levene's test for equality of variance |  |  |  | t-Test for equality of means |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                        | F          | Sig | t    | df     | Sig (2-tailed) | Effect size = r | Mean difference | SE difference | Lower | Upper | |
| Mentoring competency   | 0.10       | 0.76 | 1.09 | 26.85  | 0.29           | 0.04              | 0.23            | 0.21            | −0.20 | 0.66       | |
| Leadership scales       |            |      |      |        |                |                   |                 |                 |       |           | |
| Servant                | 1.11       | 0.30 | 1.36 | 32.88  | 0.18           | 0.05              | 0.15            | 0.11            | −0.08 | 0.38       | |
| Transformational       | 0.39       | 0.54 | 0.60 | 23.76  | 0.55           | 0.02              | 0.08            | 0.13            | −0.18 | 0.33       | |
| Transactional          | 2.57       | 0.12 | 0.12 | 19.90  | 0.90           | 0.02              | 0.02            | 0.16            | −0.30 | 0.34       | |
| Passive avoidant       | 0.26       | 0.62 | −1.33| 25.40  | 0.20           | 0.07              | −0.20           | 0.15            | −0.51 | 0.11       | |

Note: Because no F test values were significant, only equal variances not assumed are reported.
To assess whether there were differences between those who did and did not complete the MLQ transformational, transactional, and passive avoidant scales (n = 56), servant leadership (n = 48), and mentoring competency (n = 46), a Wilcoxon signed rank analysis was conducted to compare mean scores. No significant differences were revealed from the standardized test statistics: transformational (t = 1.15), transactional (t = −0.25), passive avoidant (t = −0.52), servant leadership (t = −0.08), and mentoring competency (t = 1.54).

5 | DISCUSSION

This study sought to determine whether leadership style is positively or negatively, and significantly associated with mentoring competencies. We begin by discussing our findings. No support was found for Hypothesis 1: transformational leadership style is positively and statistically associated with mentoring competency or Hypothesis 2: transactional leadership style is positively and statistically associated with mentoring competency.

Each leadership style is theorized to meet a specific goal. In transformational leadership, the leader motivates their followers to achieve organizational goals, and in transactional leadership, the leader exchanges items of value with their followers when the leader’s goals are met (Bass & Bass, 2008). The lack of significant association is likely due to a mismatch between the type of narrow goals and constructs, which form the transformational and transactional leadership styles and the broad and diverse developmental competencies expected of faculty research mentors. For example, three of the four transformational leadership constructs (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation) were conceptualized to help followers rise to the challenge to meet the leader’s goal; only the fourth construct, individualized consideration, was established to meet employee’s unique needs (Bass & Bass, 2008) whereas transactional leadership’s CR construct emphasizes goal setting, the development of competencies to meet goals, and rewarding goal achievement (Sosik & Godshalk, 2000). If the mentoring competencies focused exclusively on helping protégés attain goals and enhance performance, it is likely that transformational and transactional leadership would be more strongly associated with mentoring competencies. Additional analyses found transformational leadership only became statistically significant with mentoring competency in this study when it was paired exclusively with passive avoidant leadership and only then accounted for 8% of the variability whereas servant leadership accounted for 18% of the variability. Therefore, at best, transformational leadership’s strong emphasis on goal attainment makes it a weak predictor of mentoring competency and not at all when competing against servant leadership.

We found support for Hypothesis 3, passive avoidant leadership was negatively and significantly related to mentoring competency and its’ subscales of professional development, fostering independence, and diversity. These findings are likely due to passive avoidant leadership having a strong, negative, and significant antipathetical relationship to both leadership and mentoring.

Support was found for Hypothesis 4 and servant leadership was positively and significantly associated with these mentoring subscales: communication, professional development, and fostering independence. These findings are likely due to passive avoidant leadership having a strong, negative, and significant antipathetical relationship to both leadership and mentoring.

When considering what leadership style is appropriate for leader and leadership development, choice of style provides a blueprint of leadership attitudes and behaviors but may also inform mentoring behavior. Thus, as a professional development tool, servant leadership’s employee development focus makes it a synergistic choice as it benefits leadership development and mentoring. Moreover, in comparing the findings and constructs of the servant and transformational leadership, the difference in focus—goal attainment (transformational) and employee...
development (servant leadership) are qualitatively different from one another in purpose and emphasis; thus support was found for Hypothesis 5.

Regarding Hypothesis 6, the findings herein did not reveal gender differences associated with a relationship between mentoring competency and leadership style. There are a variety of reasons why gender differences were not found in this study, including the relatively low number of research participants (particularly the male subsample), reliance on participants to self-identify their gender, which may not be sufficiently sensitive to differentiation, and the nature of this convenience sample of subjects who self-nominated to participate in a gender equity program, which may have predisposed participants to have values and beliefs that are more similar and may differ from those who might be randomly sampled. Despite the findings, it remains important to collect data on gender differences with the hope of 1 day having instruments that can address the tangible inequities associated with gender and career attainment in higher education (Bierema & Callahan, 2014).

5.1 Limitations

This study had some limitations, including a cross-sectional design with data collection at one point in time. Therefore, the assessment of the temporal relationships among variables could not be examined. The researchers' reliance on self-reports about participants' ratings using a common survey method was also a limitation. Other limitations were that the effect size might be due to the small sample (46–56). In addition, the small number of men compared to the women in the study may explain why mean scale differences by gender were small and non-significant, which limits generalizability. The transactional leadership scale's low reliability (0.54) may be due to the small sample, the small number of scale items (8), and/or the heterogeneity of the constructs of CR and MBEA. Alternatively, individual alphas of the CR and MBEA were closer to an acceptable range (0.69 and 0.73), which provides support for keeping transactional leadership despite its low reliability herein (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Reliability was low for the construct LF, which belongs to the MLQ's passive avoidant leadership's scale and for the transformational leadership's construct of IC along with MCA's subscale diversity. Although steps were taken to mitigate common method bias and statistical analysis did not support its presence, such bias remained a concern in this study (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

5.2 Theoretical implications

To situate these findings, we return to the literature to answer the question: how does one develop as a mentor and a leader? We contend that like other professional roles, one becomes a mentor as their mentor identity develops (Chiles, 2007; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2010; Nyanjom, 2020; E. R. Smith, 2011). Identity is a social construct, which individuals use to define themselves based on their beliefs and values (Rothbard & Edwards, 2003). Moreover, identity is not fixed, but a "process of becoming rather than being," as mentoring provides opportunities for learning and professional development (Hall, 1996, p. 4; Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2010). The role of a mentor contains both psychosocial and career orientation elements (Banerjee-Batist et al., 2019). Individuals who adopt and perform the role of mentor bring their beliefs, values, and attitudes to that relationship, and, we posit, based on our findings, their leadership style(s) (Nyanjom, 2020). For example, one study determined that when the mentoring program was "very task-focused... mentors built a very task focused relationship." Conversely, when the mentoring sessions were more flexible, mentors achieved "a broader, more holistic relationship" with their protégés (Chiles, 2007, p. 740). As leaders and as mentors, individuals span both roles and work to integrate their leadership and mentoring identities (E. R. Smith, 2011).

Future research is needed to explore the intersection of leadership style and mentoring competency to determine whether the leadership style association is complementary (servant leadership), conflicting (passive avoidant), or neutral (transformational and transactional). These findings should be confirmed in other populations, with longitudinal study designs, and explored using different leadership styles and mentoring instruments.
5.3 | Practical implications

This study was conducted to provide HRD practitioners and scholars with insight on what leadership style should be encouraged when designing and implementing a mentoring program. We advance that leadership style matters, as only one style, servant leadership, was positively and strongly related (significant) to mentoring competency. Because protégés try on the skills, competencies, and attitudes of their mentor, and we advance, their leadership style, ultimately, protégés may internalize these characteristics as they emulate their mentor (Mysyk, 2007; E. R. Smith, 2011). Those embarking on leadership development and the mentoring program should help prospective mentors recognize their leadership styles and discuss how those styles may be complementary (servant), neutral (transformational), or negative (passive avoidant) while providing them with mentoring instruction.

Depending on the leadership style of the potential mentor, mentor competency development may differ in the amount on a scale from less to somewhat more, more, and much more. For example, based on the findings herein, less mentoring instruction may be needed for research faculty with a servant leadership style due to the positive (significant) relationship to these mentoring competencies—communication, fostering independence, and professional development—and, somewhat more instruction may be needed on the mentoring competencies where the positive relationship was not significant—aligning expectations, assessing understanding, and diversity. Whereas, the passive avoidant leadership style had a negative relationship with the mentoring competencies. Therefore, more instruction is needed on the non-significant mentoring competencies of communication, aligning expectations, and assessing for understanding while much training would be needed to counteract the significant negatively associated mentoring competencies of fostering independence, diversity, and professional development.

In general, HRD professionals should ensure leaders know what characterizes good mentoring by providing potential mentors with formal training, protégé feedback, and coaching as well as self-reflection (Mysyk, 2007). Because mentoring competencies and identity develops over time, organizations should first place mentor candidates in the role of protégés with purposeful and structured mentoring experiences and then transition the protégés to mentors. Collectively, these interventions are likely to yield leaders with strong mentoring skillset.

6 | CONCLUSIONS

Leadership development and mentoring are tools HRD professionals use to increase the number of women and men in the higher education leadership pipeline and elsewhere. When designing these programs, the type of leadership style enacted can reap not only the intended consequences for participants but can also bolster that leader’s ability to mentor others. Servant leadership’s employee development focus may create more development synergies associated with mentoring than other leadership styles. We encourage HRD professionals as they design leadership development programs to consider encouraging and supporting servant leadership, which yields increased socio-emotional and career development mentoring dividends for program participants.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Partial support for this work was provided by the National Science Foundation’s ADVANCE NSF project -1629934. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

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REFERENCES


