

Local School Districts Developing Their Future Leaders

by

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

in the

Educational Leadership

Program

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

May, 2017

Local Schools District Developing Their Future Leaders

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2017

ABSTRACT

While leaders seem to mature in school districts regardless of formal training programs in place or not, a general need seems to exist to identify prospective leaders and place them in situations or leadership development programs to develop their potential. This has never been so crucial for the continued success of public school districts. Through the use of a mixed-method approach, this study was designed to identify specific leadership styles of educators and then examine how consistently these educators apply their identified leadership style to simulated, real-world scenarios. The use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X (MLQ 5X) and a leadership demographic survey were used to obtain quantitative data while qualitative data were collected through face-to-face interviews utilizing real-world scenarios. This researcher sought to answer questions of how well instruments such as the MLQ 5X can identify potential leaders and his/her leadership style, how well potential leaders apply his/her style to simulated situations, do past experiences or years of experience affect how would-be leaders respond to simulated situations, and when identified, are these potential leaders more likely to pursue a leadership position?

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

When a teacher candidate is hired for the classroom, several qualities are evaluated which inform the administrators to select the individual. Typically, the district administrators look for a competent teacher with strong content knowledge and strategies to deliver instruction. However, in addition to the obvious skills, administrators also look for other less evident dispositions such as leadership potential, the ability to interpret data, make sound decisions based on need, and other specific skills. These less evident qualities are crucial foundations for an upcoming teacher-leader. New teachers often do not immediately consider a future career in leadership, but it should be a consideration of the administration upon initial hire. The demand for strong school leadership is growing, and to remain competitive in the 21st century, *homegrown* leaders from a strong teacher pool can strengthen a district and secure school improvement for years.

The concept of homegrown leaders is not new. Many effective organizations look to select upcoming professionals within the ranks to lead. School districts are no different. Quality homegrown programs within school districts play a significant role in the continued success or failure of principals and, in turn, the long-term performance achieved by students (Lauder, 2000). However, challenges associated with leadership positions can deter a potential candidate from seeking a position. Less desirable aspects of school administration that often get much attention such as high-stakes testing, school board management, working commitments, and other troubles can cloud the career of school leadership. It becomes an administrator's duty to promote leadership careers in order to save its own. The current leaders of a district must take the time and resources to

encourage those with talent and specific leadership dispositions to become the next generation of leaders. Too often, administrators have a job outlook that involves his/her own trajectory and not one that is focused on replenishing the institutional leaders for the future. This research supplements the field that encourages current school administrators to consider the next generation and life-long sustainability of a successful school district.

While much guesswork and leaps of faith are often a part of selecting new leaders, could a model be used to better identify potential leaders to home-grow? Since leaders tend to identify with certain descriptive traits, can a district generalize certain traits needed for leadership within a particular school building with specific needs? If taxpayer-funding resources are expended to train new leaders, making informed choices to select the best possible candidates are paramount to success. Research has suggested that examining internal candidates with specific talents and tendencies is a good practice when building a leadership team. Internal candidates know the population and district demographics and can quickly fold into an existing team due to his/her familiarity and loyalty to the district. While not all administrative positions are best suited for internal candidates, some are. A prudent administrator aware of the roles needed for his or her district could effectively use a blend of internal and external hires to strengthen the team and advance the district into the future.

This research presented a value-added approach to identifying, selecting and training currently employed faculty for leadership roles. The researcher selected this topic study due to his experiences with becoming a leader in a central Pennsylvania school district. The researcher's career as an educator spans a period of almost two decades and includes experiences and education in three states around the country (PA,

OH, and TX). During this time, the researcher has been employed as an elementary classroom teacher, gifted teacher, county director of school improvement, and most recently, elementary building principal. Throughout his career, he has witnessed leadership demonstrated in a variety of settings separate of school administration. Through this observation, he began to question if his leadership success was a product of *growing* through his career and if he could have been guided earlier to become successful. While the variety of positions were important to building his credentials, what if a district could see this in its current employees and build them through internal positions and training instead of hiring individuals from the outside with large demographic learning curves?

Statement of the Problem

While leaders seem to mature in school districts regardless of formal training programs in place or not, a general need seems to exist to identify prospective leaders and place them in situations or leadership development programs to develop his/her potential. Effective school administrators of today need to be focused on sustaining effective leadership for tomorrow. This idea of self-renewal has never been so crucial for the continued success of public school districts as it is today. Even though, many young teachers often regard future advancement in school leadership as an undesirable goal, there is a responsibility of current administrators to change this mindset and to cultivate potential leaders to embrace the career.

Despite the ongoing challenges of reduced funding, increased accountability, and numerous mandates, the leadership team of a district must be carefully sculpted and built to ensure sustainability and success. However, the dilemma for many districts is that the

pool of qualified and proactive administrators is shrinking each year and fewer and fewer educators seek leadership roles. In times when states continue to cut funding for public education and increased accountability has been created around test scores and student achievement, the upcoming school leader is often discouraged and chooses not to promote. This research examined if these leaders can be identified while serving in another position in the district in the hopes that a district may offer to support the identified employee(s) to train for a career in school administration in his/her home district. In regards to this research, a central Pennsylvania district served as the initial setting to examine the ever-increasing challenges of sustaining and retaining a strong leadership team. Since the central Pennsylvania district also struggles with similar spiraling special education expenditures, mandated Common Core (PA Core in Pennsylvania) standards, retirement and benefit costs, and dropping enrollments due to charter school recruitment, the research results could serve many similar districts considering internal candidates and cultivating leaders from an existing faculty.

Second, this research examined the likelihood that two types of leaders can be identified in a district in which a prudent administrator can select from this measure which type of candidate is needed for an opening. Often administrators serve many roles besides the general expectation of managing and supervising others and/or programs. This research provides a model that will enable the district's leadership to select and cultivate the particular "type" (transactional or transformational) potential leader. The role of a leader is ever changing thus it requires leaders to focus on both instructional and managerial tasks (NAESP, 2001, p. 9); however, a district may have a greater need in one focus over another. Unfortunately, managers have no history or legacy to guide them

through this selection (Kotter, 1996, p. 18) and struggle with identifying a type of leader that would be best for a particular role. This research will help current leaders understand how to successfully navigate their organization through selecting the correct potential leader to home-grow.

Last, this study further supports the ideal that being a leader is a professional disposition and not merely a job performance. Most leaders tend to thrive in environments of adversity so it is imperative for professionals entrusted with people's children to inspire confidence in parents and communities and to project an image of quality (Schmoker, 2006, p. 30). Parents and community members are impressed with leaders that reach out and “give back” to the system. One method to demonstrate quality to others is through a leader’s desire to cultivate upcoming professionals by being a guide and mentor. This research study further advances the dispositions of good leaders and the behaviors which identify them. The study uncovers some of the hopeful leaders located in a central Pennsylvania district that, in turn, may potentially inspire others to do the same.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

A mixed method approach was used to conduct research in this study. Although quantitative data was collected from the use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X, the instrument was used more as a sorting variable to separate leadership styles (transactional and transformational) from within the participant pool and not to necessarily test a specific theory or program. Although qualitative data comprise the bulk of information in this study, quantitative data were also needed, albeit with less emphasis, to identify leadership traits. Creswell (2009) described this type of framework as

consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches being merged together in the study with one method standing out as the dominant paradigm and the other taking on a supplementary or supportive element. Similarly, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) described research using blended paradigms as “mixed methodology studies.” In addition to simple quantitative data collection by use of the MLQ 5X, qualitative data were also collected by use of structured interviews. Individuals were invited to participate in these structured interviews based on individuals’ MLQ 5X scores in transactional and transformational leadership styles.

Structured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data in the second phase of data collection. By using research-developed scenarios, participants were asked to respond as a hypothetical school leader. The interviewer scribed verbal responses as well as visual cues shared by the participants. Because each interview was also recorded, the researcher transcribed the responses at a later time. The qualitative data were later compared between interviewer and researcher.

Additionally, each interview was quantified by use of a researcher-created rubric. The rubric is a Likert style assessment that placed participants’ responses on a continuum between transformational and transactional leadership traits. Again, the interviewer and researcher scored responses and compared outcomes. The result of this technique assisted in verifying the MLQ 5X styles and further investigated the potential leaders currently employed in other positions in the district.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to determine if potential leaders exist within a central Pennsylvania school district that could be easily identified, and possibly later,

cultivated to become an administrator or teacher leader within the district. This research presents a model using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X as a sorting tool to identify transactional and transformational leaders already employed by the school district. From this, a sample of clearly distinctive employees with transactional or transformational qualities was then asked to respond to simulated scenarios common to the central Pennsylvania school district. If these employees responded to the scenario situation constant with the MLQ 5X identification, then administrators could potentially use the MLQ 5X as a quick measure to determine if certain employees would be candidates for transactional or transformational leadership roles.

Second, this research briefly examined the employees' previous experiences to suggest that certain individuals with leadership proficiencies may have affected his/her responses to the MLQ 5X and/or the authentic scenarios.

Since the central Pennsylvania school district shares many of the same demographics and challenges as other school districts across the country, this researcher is confident that this study will inform other administrators of a cost-effective and expedited method to select leaders to home-grow.

Research Questions

1. When using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to identify leadership styles in prospective leaders, will participants report distinct transformational or transactional traits?
2. Using a sample of clearly distinctive employees with transactional or transformative qualities as reported on the Multifactor Leadership

Questionnaire (MLQ), do these employees respond to leadership scenario questions consistent to their reported leadership style?

3. When responding to simulated leadership scenario questions and regardless of MLQ style, do employees with previous leadership or similar experiences answer differently than individuals without leadership experience?
4. When prospective educational leaders are identified within a school district and through the use of the MLQ and leadership scenario questions, are the recognized employees willing to pursue leadership when asked?

Procedures

Prospective leaders were identified in a large rural school district in central Pennsylvania. The school district encompasses roughly 270 square miles and consists of nine school buildings. Educators from these buildings include 301 full-time classroom teachers, school counselors, and specials (music, art, and physical education) teachers. Educators from the researcher's schools were purposely excluded from the study. Seven of the nine remaining school district buildings were included. Email invitations were sent to professional employees in these buildings inviting volunteers to participate in this research study. Volunteers were asked to respond to the email to demonstrate his/her willingness to become a participant. From these school buildings, 102 participants responded via email and completed a paper and pencil Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X) and a short leadership demographic survey. The MLQ has been used to study leadership styles in hundreds of studies, dissertations, and reports over the past 25 years (Bass & Avolio, 1993a, 1999; 2004, Berson, 1999). In addition to studies completed in the United States, the MLQ has been used to identify leadership

traits in 30 other countries as well (Bass & Avolio, 2004). For the purposes of this study, the shorter 45-item MLQ 5X was implemented for data collection. In general, the MLQ 5X identifies participants who exhibit traits in two major styles of leadership – transformational and transactional.

After scoring the MLQ 5X with the guidelines provided by www.mindgarden.com and a researcher-developed rubric, the researcher identified the five highest proficient participants that were most likely to demonstrate transformational leadership styles when compared to the norm as well as the five highest proficient participants most likely to display transactional leadership styles when compared to the norm. The creators of the MLQ 5X note that it is not specifically designed to categorize or simply label a leader as transformational or transactional. Instead, it is more applicable to identify a leader as “more transformational than the norm” or “less transactional than the norm” (Bass & Avolio, 2004). These 10 participants were then invited to partake in the second stage of data collection in the study – the face-to-face interview.

The three-scenario, face-to-face interviews consisted of a 30 minute session with an experienced interviewer. The participants were asked to respond to three authentic scenarios that could conceivably occur in any school building in the central Pennsylvania district. In addition to evaluating the participant responses, the interviewer also noted subtle or overt body language revealed by the participants. These sessions were recorded with an iPad.

The interviewer used a provided scoring rubric to determine the most likely leadership style of each participant. The rubric was constructed around the framework of a continuum that places the participant’s responses somewhere between transformational

or transactional in nature. The combined rubric score then identified each participant as favoring or applying transformational or transactional leadership styles in response to each scenario question.

Both the interviewer and the researcher used the recordings as well as the rubric to score each interview session. The researcher also used the recordings from each interview to collect additional data. In addition to the interviewer's ratings of each participant, the researcher also similarly used the rubric to develop scores for each participant. Ratings and comments from the interviewer and researcher were discussed and compared to develop themes or discrepancies and strengthen inner-rater reliability. Last, the leadership demographic survey for the 10 participants was reviewed to examine if prior leadership or service years may have affected his/her responses. By reflecting on the collected data, the researcher determined if a possible influence was evident.

Significance of the Study

Like for-profit businesses, all school districts whether charter or public need excellent and effective leaders to guide, inspire, decision make, and manage the organization. In today's complex organization leaders face a numbing combination of challenges that demand the ability to manage change effectively (Caldwell et al., 2011, p. 184). This is especially true in this age of accountability and a global market. "Regardless of the theory used to explain it, leadership has been intimately linked to the effective functioning of complex organizations throughout the centuries" (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005, p. 5). Today's leaders must become truly excellent in what they do, and to be simply good is no longer good enough (Collins 2001). Some school leaders hone skills of excellence by occasionally changing position or district. With each

new assignment come new experiences, new human interactions, and new challenges. Some school leaders thrive on the challenges of change. Others, however, sharpen leadership skills by remaining in the same position. These leaders interact well with the school culture because they have always been part of the culture. These leaders are often acquainted with school board members or other prominent stakeholders that make decisions for his/her building on a much larger scale. These types of leaders have a shared and special camaraderie as colleagues and then later continue to do so as the organizational leader.

In addition to determining the potential leaders and reviewing responses using the MLQ 5X and scenarios, this study also examined if prior leadership experience and leadership desire influenced responses on the researcher-created rubric. While this was only a small component in the overall interview data, it alluded if leadership experience, albeit inside or outside of the school, could make a difference in perceiving and responding to the scenarios as per the determination by the researcher.

Identifying and preparing capable aspiring leaders is critical in any school district that wishes to excel. Some districts identify and recruit strong candidates from outside the district, while others implement the strategy of homegrown leadership. Examples of locally developed teacher-leadership programs can currently be found in central Pennsylvania. Clarion University of Pennsylvania, found in Clarion, PA, is presently proposing its “Teacher Leaders Endorsement Program” to local graduate students studying educational leadership. The four leadership courses that comprise this program are offered to students while completing his/her graduate degree in education. The

university suggests that the program will enhance students' capabilities of being a more effective teacher-leader, coordinator, specialist, or other educational leader.

Other leadership programs offer training to enhance skills to already employed school leaders. In conjunction with Penn State University, Intermediate Unit 11 of central Pennsylvania currently offers a leadership development program that targets practicing school leaders. The "Strategic Leader in Action" (SLA) Program is an on-line course that focuses on research and best practice regarding leading effective change to better student performance in a school. Whether "in-house" or in conjunction with a local university, these types of programs appear to be growing in popularity in parts of the country. These types of programs will be discussed in later chapters.

Assumptions

The researcher assumed that participants are proficient and capable of responding to a paper and pencil questionnaire and survey. Furthermore, it was assumed that participants answered truthfully and accurately to the questions based on his/her personal knowledge.

It was assumed that the CITI-trained scenario interviewer would perform interviews in a professional manner that generated meaningful data that were aligned to the focus of this study.

Limitations of the Study

With the number of participants involved in this study (102), it was inevitable that some limitations exist because of human nature. For example, it was assumed by the researcher that all (102) volunteer participants would participate by completing the

questionnaire. The target sample number of 100 was established at the onset of the study. Research suggests that a participation rate of 100% is almost impossible to obtain in large studies. Additionally, although participants at each building were voluntarily contacted, some may have felt pressured into participating or unsure as to how his/her results will be shared or documented. Last, the researcher cannot control how the participants responded in data collection.

Another possible limitation involved participants during the actual completion of the questionnaire. Although the MLQ 5X is a user-friendly survey tool, participants may have been confused by the way in which specific questions were worded. Because the MLQ 5X asks participants to rate themselves according to specific traits, respondents may possess a skewed view of his/her own leadership abilities. This may have forced participants to either guess or leave questions blank altogether. With a 15-minute time allotment to complete the MLQ 5X, participants were able to easily complete the questionnaire within the allocated time. Again, participants may have felt pressured to just finish the questionnaire.

Similar problems may have existed during the interview stage of data collection. Because the interview scenarios were developed to assess leadership traits in situational predicaments, some respondents may have shared how *they think they should* answer and not necessarily how they would truly act as a leader in a difficult situation. Furthermore, participants might not have thoroughly understood what was being asked, which may have affected responses. Although the interviewer is an experienced administrator from a neighboring school district, the educators in the research district did not know him. He was intentionally selected by the researcher to be involved in this study for that very

reason. Unfortunately, this anonymity could have produced a limitation of trust. Because participants were not familiar with the interviewer, they could have responded hesitantly or simply shared generic answers without delving deeply as to why he/she responded in certain ways.

In addition to anonymity with participants, the interviewer was selected because of his vast experiences as an educational leader in public school districts. During several of those years, he directly supervised and was involved in the interview process of new hires. He was trained in proper interview protocol and used those skills multiple times over the past two decades. Even with a wealth of interview experience, limitations could still arise. For example, a participant might not have been as thorough in his/her response as desired and the interviewer might have been incapable of soliciting a meaningful response. Also, the interviewer might have been so focused on verbal responses that he missed subtle visual cues such as body language. A slight frown on a participant's face may have suggested misunderstanding of the question or an unwillingness to ask it be rephrased. Whether because of personality differences, shyness, or just awkwardness, some face-to-face interviews never seem to coalesce. Obviously, if a respondent is uncomfortable for whatever reason, his/her responses and willingness to share are affected by his/her feelings.

Although the interviewer received a brief training in leadership styles by the researcher and was given numerous articles about transformational and transactional leadership styles, and reference charts listing traits of differing leaders, he might not have identified subtle nuances in responses or body language.

A limitation that may have hindered results before data collection even started was the fact that some participants may have had no interest in leadership or of becoming a leader at all. If this was the case, they may have simply answered half-heartedly. It was hoped by the researcher that educators with such feelings would have simply chosen not to participate. Some classroom teachers are content in the classroom and have no ambition of becoming a building or district leader.

Scope and Delimitations

This research study occurred in one school district located in central Pennsylvania. While this district includes a wide range of demographics, the district's schools are primarily based in rural and suburban areas. The study was limited in scope to employees of the single district. The only eligible participants were employees in faculty positions. No administrators or central office staff participated in the study.

The MLQ 5X and leadership demographic survey were administered by the researcher either before or after school hours in a quiet room and private setting found in each of the buildings. The desks and chairs are consistent with the furnishings of the grade-level building.

Organization of the Study

This study followed the general five-chapter dissertation format. The researcher began this project by first compiling leadership-themed passages from professional articles, books, websites, and journals. Having been in administration for several years and amassing a respectable library of leadership-themed materials, the researcher began writing the literature review with many of these resources. The researcher's dissertation

chairperson suggested that chapter two is the preferred starting point for this type of study.

In addition to the printed resources, the researcher accessed additional materials through the library at his affiliated university. As chapter two was being written, an emphasis was placed on the history of leadership. Theorists and leadership traits were discussed. Leadership in business was connected to leadership in schools. Effective leadership being critical in this modern era was outlined. Several strategies to help schools become effective were also investigated. In the later sections of chapter two, the difficulties of the public school principal were examined in detail. Last, several leadership styles were explored. Transformational and transactional are two of these leadership styles most emphasized in the second chapter.

Chapter three was the second chapter to be written in this study. Key points cited in chapter two about transformational and transactional leadership styles are reviewed and connected to an instrument especially designed to assess these styles, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X. The research company, www.mindgarden.com, is the copyright holder of the MLQ 5X. In preparation of collecting data and writing chapter four, this researcher purchased 120 MLQ 5X questionnaires from www.mindgarden.com. He also purchased the accompanying *MLQ 5X Manual and Review Copy*. In addition to the process of data collection using the MLQ 5X, chapter three also described the second stage of data collection in this study, the scenario interviews.

A veteran educator was asked by the researcher to conduct face-to-face interviews with 10 participants who demonstrated the most proficiency at being transformational or transactional leaders as purported by the MLQ 5X responses. These interviews focused

around situational scenarios that gauged each participant's style of leadership. To assess the responses generated by these interviews, this researcher, in conjunction with several local experts, developed a scoring rubric to measure participants' application of styles of leadership.

Definition of Terms

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) – CITI is a leading provider of research education content. These web-based training materials serve millions of learners at academic institutions, government agencies, and commercial organizations in the U.S. and around the world (www.citiprogram.org).

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – ESSA is the most current reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which established the American federal government's expanded role in funding public education.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – The No Child Left Behind Act is a federal law that provides money for extra educational assistance for poor children in return for improvements in their academic progress and growth. NCLB is a recent version of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Pennsylvania Core Standards (PA Core) - These recently adopted Pennsylvania state standards mirror the content and rigor of the national Common Core Standards, but reflect the organization and design of the PA Academic Standards while including local themes and content.

Professional Learning Community (PLC) - A PLC within a school district is a group of educators who meet on a regular and scheduled basis, share expertise and ideas, and work collaboratively to improve teaching skills and the academic performance of

children. This group often includes the principal, classroom teachers, and instructional support educators.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and the MLQ 5X - The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire measures a broad range of leadership types from passive leaders, to leaders who give contingent rewards to followers, to leaders who transform their followers into becoming leaders themselves (www.mindgarden.com).

Transformational Leadership - James McGregor Burns first coined the term, transformational leadership in his 1978 book titled, *Leadership*. Transformational leadership style is demonstrated when a leader works with subordinates to identify needed organizational change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in collaboration with committed members of the organization.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to offer an approach that will enable administrators to identify potential internal candidates for leadership that possess the dispositions to be successful within the home school district. While this approach is often termed *homegrown leadership*, there is much behind the proper selection of the candidate in which resources will be spent to assume a leadership role. Districts that desire to develop selected employees to become leaders have often relied on guesswork and a candidate's own desire to lead, but that does not always result in a successful leader. This study examined the use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X and responses to simulated scenarios to identify potential candidates, albeit transactional or transformational, to be approached for training to become a school leader. While this

study occurred in a central Pennsylvania school district, it is the hope of the researcher that it can be beneficial to other schools abroad looking to home-grow leaders.

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework explains the components that informed the researcher about the styles of leadership, challenges to school leadership, and other defining movements that support the need to encourage internal employees with dispositions for leadership to seek a leading position. This chapter also guides the reader through a series of research that strengthens not only the type of successful leader but the need for current administrators to begin saving the future by training the next generation to keep their schools successful in the changing education landscape.

The following chapters discuss the methodology, results, and extensions to this research. The conclusions were driven by the research questions presented and were discussed at length regarding the possibilities of this research and the impact it could have on other districts facing leadership deficiencies or needs.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The History of Transformational Leadership

Leadership has been a topic of study in the field of social sciences for over 50 years. There has been a renewed interest in leadership theory within the last two decades. James MacGregor Burns, a presidential biographer, is often considered the general founder of contemporary leadership theory. Burns was a combatant during the Second World War and it appears that many of his views on leadership were developed as a soldier during that historic conflict. For example, Burns noticed during his tenure as a soldier that military leadership was often described in terms of traits and accomplishments of the officer (leader) and mention of the common soldier was rare. Interestingly, he observed that some of the best fighting units were those without an officer during times of heated engagement. In these instances, he described leadership coming from within the ranks. He later stated that historians often exaggerated the role of leaders and minimized those being led. Burns viewed leadership as an interaction between leaders and those being led. He concluded that leadership is followship as much as followship is leadership (Burns, 1978). In that same year, Burns (1978) shared his first detailed definition of leadership:

I define leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivation-the wants and the needs, the aspirations and expectations-of both leaders and followers. And the genius of leadership lies in the manner in which leaders see and act on their own and their followers' values and motivations. (p. 19)

The effects that a specific leadership style has on “subordinate behavior has long been central to the study of formal organizations in small groups” (Ellis, 1991, p. 309).

Companies and school districts have shown renewed interest in the study of leadership in recent years.

Meindl (1990) noted that this resurgence of interest in studying the topic of leadership appears to be accompanied by an acceptance of the distinction between transactional and transformational leadership, with an emphasis on the latter. Burns published a proposal in which he described leadership occurring in two ways – either transactional or transformational. As Burns developed his theory, he viewed these two types of leadership as being on opposite ends of a continuum. Because these styles differ so greatly, a better understanding of transactional and transformational leadership styles can be developed when contrasted one against the other.

Transactional Leadership

Whereas transformational leadership styles focus on ethics, cooperation (collaboration), and organizational integrity, transactional leadership emphasizes the process in which the leader develops an organizational goal and followers are either rewarded or punished based on their performance achieving that goal. Burns (1978) believed that transactional leadership is based on an exchange relationship between follower and organizational leader. The prime purpose of the follower (subordinate) is to do what the manager tells them to do. Followers receive certain valued outcomes such as increased wages, prestige, or empowerment when they act according to their leader's wishes (Hartog, Van Muijen, & Koopman, 1997). This process interaction between transactional leader and follower has been the keystone to many modern day organizations and school districts. This leadership style often entails monitoring of the follower to ensure results. This can be especially true within school districts where much

of school leadership relies on “expect and inspect” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 32). Principals do this by frequently collecting data on instructional practices. Tools like walkthroughs, informal and formal observations, as well as teacher portfolios provide excellent data which the principal can inspect.

This type of organization is often described as hierarchal and managerial. Some employees want rules and some want someone else to make them. Often, employees accept a hierarchal system as “desirable and view deferring to higher authority as a way of demonstrating respect” (Napolitano & Henderson, 1998, p. 82). This is a practice that many of us have had engrained in us since our childhood. Much of today’s leadership practice in the private sector as well as our schools centers on motivating others to do tasks. Task completion is sometimes rewarded by leadership. Sergiovanni wrote, “What gets rewarded gets done” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 24). He further explained:

Having the resources to “reward” can be difficult for some school districts in this current economy. Finding and matching the reward that works consistently with followers can also become difficult for the transactional leader. Additionally, followers sometimes lose their motivation to be risk-takers or grow at the personal level without the promise of reward. Sergiovanni explained this in detail. Leaders must constantly monitor the exchange of rewards for work, guess which rewards are of interest to workers and which are not, and figure out ways to keep this exchange going. As a result, workers become increasingly dependent on rewards and on their leaders to motivate them. “What is rewarded gets done” discourages people from becoming self-managed and self-motivated. (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 24)

Some researchers have found that the use of performance rewards actually becomes detrimental to the transactional leader and the organization. Although rewards initially improved productivity and results, worker performance and creativity, over time, slipped back to original levels. The ability to motivate staff with the use of extrinsic rewards lessened over time because the staff working toward those perks often felt

coerced in order to receive them. The feeling in turn affected ensuing creativity and accomplishment (Deci & Ryan, 1985). This often leads to the demise of well-intentioned merit programs.

An extension of transactional leadership goes beyond rewarding followers for desired outcomes. Followers can also receive punitive actions for not achieving desired outcomes. Transactional leadership revolves around the principle of *rational man* and reactions based on rewards and punishment. It is a fairly easy task to get people to do something. Kouzes and Posner (1995) wrote about actions beyond rewards, “Promise them a favorable review, a promotion, or a bonus if they perform exceptionally well.” The authors went on to state, “Or if the incentives don't work, threaten to report them, demote them, fire them, or punish them in some other way” (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 30). These statements echo the proverbial carrot or the stick forms of motivation.

One alternative to this rule is *what is rewarded gets done* (Herzberg, 1966). Followers have the need to feel what they accomplish is worth more than a reward received because of the direct and deliberate scrutiny of the leader. Educational leaders sometimes call this *buy-in*. Principals continuously attempt creating buy-in with staff when implementing new methods or strategies. Buy-in is the event when followers believe in the cause and then willingly apply their efforts to it. Followers want to feel a sense of accomplishment and pride because they possess an innate and personal sense of drive and determination that is fueled by a feeling of self-worth. The work is done, and it gets done without close supervision or other controls (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 26). In his book, *Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun*, author Wess Roberts addressed expectations and rewards. “Never reward a Hun for every act completed correctly.” Roberts went on

to state, “Otherwise, he will not act in the absence of your presence or without the certainty of recognition” (Roberts, 1990, p. 78). School buildings are no different. If the teacher of the month program is suddenly dissolved, it is unlikely that all teachers will continue to exert the same intense effort if that reward no longer exists.

Only leaders can transform the relationship between themselves and followers. “It is a pivotal moment in the evolution of an organization when leaders take the stand” (Senge, 1990, p. 144). What this means at the organizational level is that the moment has arrived when the organization publicly prioritizes its commitment to the well-being of its employees. Historically, “there's been a contract: an honest day's day for an honest day's labor” (Senge, 1990, p. 144). Modern day organizations look far beyond the day to day and focus on employees as long-term organizational assets.

Transactional leaders tend to align followers based on the promise of reward for their subservience under close supervision. In fact, followers often work well without direct supervision, assessing what needs to be done when and how, and making necessary decisions on their own. This can be especially true with followers that are highly driven and educated which is often the case in school district staff. Followers are people committed to purposes, the cause, and a vision of what the school is and can become, beliefs about teaching and learning, values and standards to which they adhere, and convictions (Kelly, 1998). A critical concept of *Value Added Leadership* is the focus on the important task of developing and fostering followership in contrast to forcing subordination (Sergiovanni, 1990). After all, without followers, a leader is guiding nothing.

Management

Transactional leaders create an environment where followers are coerced by reward or threat of punishment to “follow me” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 31). Teachers as well as some principals often equate this type of leadership as management. *Follow me* leadership is management-intensive. Management is a set of processes that can keep a complicated system of people and technology running smoothly. Some key components of leading any organization include “planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling, and problem solving” (Kotter, 1996, p. 25). When implemented effectively, transactional leadership frequently persuades staff members to accommodate “but it cannot inspire the kind of commitment that will make schools work and work well” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 31) because this style of leadership tends to foster a feeling of coercion and not one of followership.

Managers must also maintain a healthy balance in their own lives to maintain success. Napolitano and Henderson described manager-leaders who are most effective over time are those who “strive, regardless of how intense the pressures become, to integrate the important areas of their lives – personal, family, community, and work – with some degree of balance” (Napolitano & Henderson, 1998, p. xxv). Napolitano and Henderson (1998) described effective manager-leaders as being *whole* people.

Although the transactional style of leadership has produced promising results in many for-profit organizations, another style of leadership has been recently growing in popularity, especially in school districts. “Rather than define leadership either as a position of authority in a social structure or as a personal set of characteristics” (Heifetz,

1994, p. 20), some may find it more beneficial to describe leadership as a constellation of deliberate functions.

Kouzes and Posner (1995) concurred. They stated, “Leaders must appreciate and articulate a shared vision of the future. Leadership is also the performing art – a collection of practices and behaviors – not a position” (p. 30). These are the qualities that superintendents seek when filling the position of principal.

Often, outdated leadership models continue to be implemented and followed. There is an alternative type of leadership that redefined the relationship between leader and followers. This type of leadership is based on moral character, trust, and inspiration. Furthermore, this type of leadership empowers followers and values them as individuals with creative and valued ideas. It is transformational leadership. Bryman (1992), called this the *New Leadership*.

It was Burns (1978) who first proposed that the leadership process occurs in one of two ways, either transactional or transformational. Burns (1978), with many other supporters of transformational leadership theory, believed that the give and take relationships between leader and followers create an environment that lifts the levels of morality and motivation of everyone within the organization. Allen, Grigsby, and Peters (2015) conducted a correlational study in which findings suggested a strong relationship between transformational leaders and a positive school climate. Based partly on ethics, the transformational leadership model integrates a “commitment to values and outcomes by optimizing the long-term interests of stakeholders in society and honoring the moral duties owed by organizations to their stakeholders” (Caldwell et al., 2011, p. 2). In

schools, these stakeholders can include parents, PTAs, local business persons, and even law enforcement officers.

Transformational leadership style requires “sacrifice, dedication, and creativity” (Kotter, 1996, p. 30). This style of leadership seldom relies on coercion to achieve results. Quinn (2005) felt that a transformational leader’s focus is not on themselves but on others and that the goal is results-centered instead of comfort-centered. The reason for the popularity of this leadership style is in its connection to the individual welfare of the follower.

Motivational, moral, caring, energetic, and passionate about his/her work all describe transformational leaders. Burns also characterized transformational leaders as those leaders possessing the ability to motivate followers by appealing to higher moral values and elevated ideals (Burns, 1978). The employee that embraces the “call of such a leader response from the heart experiences the freedom that could not be found in mere compliance” (Jones, 2001, p. 755). Buy-in from the heart is essential for individual and organizational success.

Current research on transformational leadership has used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and his associates (e.g., Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994). The MLQ is discussed in detail later in this chapter. Bernard M. Bass later built on Burns’ original theories as the basis of his research.

Through his extensive study of leadership and of transformational leadership, in particular, Bass identified what he called *The Four I’s* (Sosik & Dionne, 1997). Not surprisingly, the Four I’s are grounded in moral foundations and include; “idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational

motivation” (Bass & Steidlmeirer, 1999). Expanding on the work of Burns (1978), Bass (1985), Bass and Avolio (1994), and Liethwood (1994) revised the transformational model of school leadership. The developer cited the Four I’s of Transformational leadership identified by Bass and Avolio (1994) as being necessary skills for school principals “if they are to meet the challenges of the 21st century” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 15). If they are to be successful, current school leaders must possess an array of skills and traits.

Charismatic Leadership

In 1946, Weber developed a leadership theory that focused on the leader and traits. In his early work, Weber often referred to this certain style of leadership as magic. Weber’s popular meaning for the magic was *charisma*, and one finds his work cited (e.g., Trice & Byer, 1986) in discussions of charismatic leadership (Jones, 2001). Often, the term charisma is used to refer to the individual traits of a person. The word charisma, not surprisingly, has a borrowed meaning from Christianity. Charisma translates to *gift of grace*. Perhaps certain individuals possess certain innate distinguishing personal traits or abilities that make them more likely than others to be a leader. A year later, Weber described charismatic leaders as being “set apart from ordinary men and as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities” (Weber, 1947, p. 358). Some researchers such as Bryman describe concepts similar to transformational leadership as including other personal traits. According to Bryman, these leaders are visionary, inspirational, and charismatic (Bryman, 1992). When these traits are combined and exhibited by the leader, followers are surely not far behind.

In the mid-forties, Weber (1946) described a process where the existing status quo is used as the foundation or stepping stone to another. This process is based upon a relationship between leader and follower. A leader cannot simply be popular in order to gain followership. The difference between general and charismatic leadership can be examined by comparing the levels of compliance each leadership style can exhibit over followers (Ellis, 1991).

Building on the leader-follower relationship, one group of researchers states that, a charismatic leader purposefully fosters a relationship in which leaders create a “strong personal bond with followers” (Caldwell et al., 2011, p. 3). These personal bonds or connections with followers often lead to an increase in productivity, performance, or status quo. Additionally, the charismatic leader stimulates an eager response from the organization’s followers. Followers begin a willing act of faith and commitment to purposes that are beyond their own. This commitment often leads to a new fundamental status quo (Jones, 2001). Conversely, if followers do not have faith in their leader or in the direction in which the organization seems to be heading, general followership will diminish.

Leaders that establish relationships with employees based upon this shared pursuit of a moral purpose “achieve greater results than leaders who do not create this personal connection” (Caldwell et al., 2011, p. 4). This is true in any organization. Most adults can think back to his/her favorite teacher. Chances are they are remembered as favorite because there was some form of connection made between the teacher and learner.

While transactional leadership tends to motivate staff to achieve as expected, the transformational leader, on the other hand, often “inspires followers to do more than

originally expected” (Hartog et al., 1997, p. 19). Transformational leaders focus on the followers of the organization as well as their connection to each of them. When leaders act as ethical stewards, they “earn the followership that truly effective leadership requires” (Barnard & Andrews, 1971, p. 163). Simply, ethical leaders lead by example.

These leaders create reciprocal relationships with followers that lead to genuine trust and respect. It is in living the highest standards of moral leadership that leaders establish the trust and then followership of members within the organization (Ciulla et al., 2005). People need to believe that the leaders of the organization care about them. This does not mean that the organization must operate in a caretaking mode, allowing people to view themselves as victims. Instead, subordinates willingly work in an organization that displays “compassion, empathy, in concern for the individual” (Patterson, 1997, p. 57). Many transactional theorists claim the basic idea that “authority consists of reciprocal relationships: people in authority influence constituents, but constituents also influence them” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 19). Leadership is a give-and-take process. Leadership requires listening as well as communicating. The reality is that relationships are truly “investments – the yield may not be immediate, but over time they can pay very big returns” (Napolitano & Henderson, 1998, p. 97). In some respects, relationship building can be one of the most crucial tasks that a leader can perform. For today’s beleaguered manager the imperative to build relationships may seem like a daunting task; “building relationships takes time and energy, both of which most managers feel are in short supply as it is” (Napolitano & Henderson, 1998, p. 97). Fortunately, many effective leaders realize the importance of relationship building and set it as a priority. Sadly,

many other exhausted leaders try to make time and effort but the overwhelming constraints of the job get in the way of success.

The core of transformational theories is that organizational leaders transform his/her followers through their moral nature and charismatic personalities. Leaders that establish relationships with employees based upon this shared pursuit of a moral purpose create strong bonds that motivate employees far beyond the bi-weekly paycheck.

Distributed Leadership

During the last decade, the model of distributed leadership has swept through the “theory and practice of educational leadership” (Lumby, 2013, p. 581). Distributed leadership appears to be replacing many older and often criticized forms of leadership. Some of these condemned styles include heroic, charismatic, and transactional leadership. Many supporters of distributed leadership claim that this leadership concept, when used in schools, empowers many more staff members, breaks down the perceived barriers of top-down leadership, and opens new opportunities for all teachers. In general, all qualified staff willing to accept the power and accountability of shared decision-making are encouraged in this model. This increase of responsibility often includes making collective decisions affecting budgets, student behavior, curriculum, or instructional practice. Many enjoy this feeling of power and inclusion. Others feel that distributed leadership has been implemented in order to create a “mirage” (Lumby, 2013, p. 582) by actually increasing workloads and accountability of staff. Additionally, critics cite that distributed leadership disempowers some groups and actually excludes others (especially women and minorities) from the leadership process. For so many school

districts to have incorporated distributed leadership, the practice must possess some merit and benefits for these educational organizations.

In 2009, Seashore and her associates stated that distributed leadership has become a “mantra for reshaping leadership practice” (p. 157). Day et al. (2010) described a definite correlation between the “increased distribution of leadership roles” (p. 16) and the increase in student performance within our schools. Additionally, Malloy and Leithwood (2017) found that certain arrays of distributed leadership did demonstrate positive associations with student performance. Not surprising, the popularity of distributed leadership has grown proportionately with the increased mandates and school building responsibilities brought about by the reform and accountability movement.

Increasingly, distributed leadership is purposefully being promoted and practiced with the intent to “improve schools” (Lumby, 2013, p. 583). Other researchers claim that distributed leadership does improve how well students learn. Hatcher (2005) explained why distributed leadership has become so popular in literature and practice. Hatcher (2005) stated that engaging a broader group of staff “is more effective in implementing change” and also that in this era of accountability, the knowledge, background experience, and skills of “more diverse people are necessary to create successful leadership” (p. 259). It is believed that distributed leadership creates leadership opportunities for staff members that may have been previously excluded in the management process. This, in theory, benefits both staff and learners. Additionally, this leadership strategy appears not to “give any particular individual” or subgroups of staff “the privilege of providing more leadership than others” (MacBeath et al., 2004, p. 14). Others agree with MacBeath in claiming that “there are no limits built into the concept”

(Bennett et al., 2003, p. 162) as to who might be included to help improve the organization. The essential premise of this inclusionary leadership style is that staff who previously had no “formal authority” (Lumby, 2013, p. 586) gain power within the group by being included in key decision-making. Whereas some feel that distributed leadership taps into a much greater pool of knowledge and expertise, increasing the feeling of self-worth and satisfaction of the individual, others claim that teachers are willingly increasing their own workloads.

Critics of distributed leadership claim that many of the activities designed to empower teachers are, in essence, duties that many have already done all along. The difference is that these newly acquired responsibilities are now equated with leadership. Lumby feels that in distributed leadership, “empowerment does not seem to equate to the ability to do new things” but these new things have been merely “rebadged” under the guise of leadership (Lumby, 2013, p. 587). Additionally, although more staff is empowered, many may not possess the expertise or knowledge to contribute at a leader’s level. From the principal standpoint, building leaders are not always able or willing to open decision making to all staff members.

Principals simply are not afforded the luxury of time for creating consensus building on every building issue or concern. Researchers discovered that some administrators found it hard to “let go of the control, power, and responsibility” (Bolden et al., 2009, p. 265). Furthermore, some decisions, like personnel issues or student health care plans, cannot (by law) include other staff. Many decisions that are made daily in schools simply need to be addressed by someone with authority. Ultimately, depending

on the situation, there are times when an individual or small group must sometimes answer for the entire organization.

Like all theories involving educational leadership, distributed leadership is supported by some while being criticized by others. Supporters claim it as an effective way to involve and empower staff which ultimately improves student performance. On the other hand, some critics claim that it is an illusion used by authority to redistribute school building responsibilities under the guise of a new-found, empowering leadership style.

Shared Leadership Theory

Very similar to the distributive leadership model, the shared leadership theory finds its strengths in the power of the group. Pearce, Conger, and Locke (2008) described shared leadership as, “a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both” (p. 622). Much like distributive leadership, shared leadership involves peers and empowering staff. Shared leadership also includes listening to staff as well as purposefully seeking out the knowledge and advice of faculty. Shared leadership, however, incorporates a hierarchical component as well as a strong emphasis on the development of organizational vision.

In regard to organizational vision, research focusing on shared leadership suggests that “vision created collectively through shared leadership can have a powerful influence” on the “dynamics and performance of the team” (Pearce & Ensley, 2004, pp. 259-278). Whereas many previous leadership models placed the leader at the top creating his or her personal vision for the entire organization, shared leadership

encourages the input of many staff members at all levels to create a meaningful vision that positively guides everyone in the organization. Developing group consensus is actually easier when the group creates the vision together because buy-in on many key organizational goals has already been established. This strategy is especially important in times of organizational change. Pearce et al. (2008) believed that leading organizations through change isn't about a sole leader but "rather that is such an immensely complex process where leadership occurs at multiple levels" (p. 623). Research suggests that mid-level leaders, such as teacher leaders within a school, play an essential role providing organizational leadership. To find support of this stance, one need not look any further than a local school building. Although the principal is often viewed as the apex leader, countless decisions are made weekly by grade level teams, subject matter teams, and professional learning community (PLC) teams.

Like many other leadership models, shared leadership is based partly on shared decision-making. Dissimilar to models like distributed leadership is the inclusion of top-down or hierarchical leadership. Unfortunately, some organizations and school districts become too dependent on a senior decision maker and only realize their fate after the leader leaves the group. This is especially true when "leaders create dependence among the staff" (Pearce et al., 2008, p. 623) to the extent that individuals do not cultivate his/her own leadership skills. Times seem good while the leader is in place and the process is running smoothly, but this delicate process can break down literally overnight. Again, the true damage created by this type of leadership turnover is not fully felt until the ensuing chaos of the leader's departure.

Chaos can also happen while a leader is in the organization because group decision making is not always ideal. Unlike “horizontal” (Pearce et al., 2008, p. 625) leadership where the team makes most decisions as mid-level leaders, shared leadership acknowledges the fact that some *final* decisions must be made by the leader of the organization. Occasionally, the CEO, principal, or superintendent may establish the goal or mission at the top but then may delegate the duties to the team. Trying to build consensus on every issue can become cumbersome and unproductive. There are times when team members simply will not agree, and when this process becomes bogged down by indecision, the intended vision and mission become blurred. In these cases, the leader must step forward and decide for the group.

Shared leadership is a balance between consensus and compliance. It is a give-and-take process between colleagues and between the staff and top leadership. Shared leadership depends on the power and expertise of the group while also realizing the fact that the top leader might sometimes need to make the final decision. Finally, shared leadership encourages involvement through trust as well as consensus when building a vision.

Organizational Trust

The building of trust within an organization can sometimes take years to create. This is often the case when new or unfamiliar leaders come into an organization. Sosik and Dionne (1997) defined trust building as “the process of establishing respect and instilling faith” into the organization’s staff built on a leader’s “integrity, honesty, and openness” (p. 450).

Covey defined trust building in more business-like terms. He feels that successful establishments create a working, trusting atmosphere in which leadership and employees recognize that their organization is a win-win environment (Covey, 1991). Trust is not automatically awarded to anyone placed in a position of power. In fact, the opposite is often true and trust must be earned. It does not matter how proficiently a leader applies learned strategies; if people do not have trust in leadership, they will not follow. “In order to build and maintain trust, you need to demonstrate consistency, *people cannot trust what they cannot predict*; transparency, *people need to know that what they see is what they get*; and coherence, *people cannot trust what they don't understand*” (Roberts, 1990, p. 137). Earning trust and respect of followers can be achieved through action but time is still needed to develop and maintain that charge. Transformational leaders understand this basic condition and incorporate it into team building strategies.

Characteristics of Transformational Leaders

Whether new to an organization or one groomed from within, a transformational leader must demonstrate consistent moral character, positive values, and integrity to develop trust with followers. Trust plays a vital role in successful school leadership (Browning, 2014). A genuine obligation to integrity demonstrated by the transformational leader has been collectively identified by leadership researchers as the most potent component retained by leaders when attempting to establish their personal identity and credibility (Kouzes & Posner, 2010). Honesty is the bedrock of trust, consistency, loyalty, and trustworthiness without which “healthy relationships and productive organizational action are difficult to generate and impossible to sustain” (Schwahn & Spady, 2006, p. 41). Schwahn and Spady (2006) also commented on a leader’s integrity.

“Integrity is the long-term expression and embodiment of honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, honor, and consistent adherence to high-level moral principles, especially those core values and professional principles recognized and endorsed by the organization” (p. 73). Being a moral and trustworthy leader that demonstrates integrity goes beyond the school building doors. Demonstrating morality in all aspects of life can lead to happiness and fulfillment in one’s personal life as well. In much of the research written about transformational leaders, being moral and trustworthy are often cited as cornerstone traits of effective leadership. Leaders create trust through consistent and routine actions. “Leaders establish an atmosphere of trust by their daily actions” (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 16) and continue to build trust with consistent actions.

The leadership that counts, in the end, is the kind that touches people. It taps their emotions, “appeals to their values, and responds to their connections with other people. It is morally based leadership – a form of stewardship” (Greenfield, 1991, p. 12). Johnson et al. (1990) described moral leadership as being unique because it connects to what people feel is important to them and what motivates them. Being a moral leader contributes to being a trustworthy leader. In developing an organizational sense of purpose, Greenfield shared that the leaders give “certainty and purpose to others who may have difficulty achieving it for themselves.” But, the researcher continued, “being successful in providing purpose requires the trust of others” (Greenfield, 1991, p. 15). School districts and teachers often incorporate this belief in a commonly used instructional practice called modeling.

Organizational Values

In 1990, Covey wrote *Principle-Centered Leadership*. In this, Covey teaches that a clear set of positive values, when consistently acted upon, are at the heart of living a happy and successful life, and that core organizational values and leadership principles are at the heart of effective leadership. “For Covey, it all begins from that value base; without that base, we lack a true north on our personal or organizational compasses” (Schwahn & Spady, 2006, p. 30). In 1993, Tom Chappell wrote *The Soul of a Business*. He describes how leaders can do well by *doing good*. Chappell demonstrates that leaders can “act on a strong moral foundation and still have a very attractive bottom line, even over the long haul” (Schwahn & Spady, 2006, p. 30). Apparently, moral transformational leaders can reap organizational profits as well as personal riches.

Transformational leaders tend to focus on sharing his/her vision and goals with the group and then helping followers attain those goals. By openly sharing vision and goals while demonstrating traits of integrity, followers willingly become more enmeshed within the organization. These attributes create a sense of belonging within the followers as they can easily identify with the leader. This, in turn, motivates followers to higher levels of performance, and in the process, helps them develop their own leadership potential. Sergiovanni called this the *heart* of leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992). The author went on to describe the heart of leadership as more dealing with what a person “believes, values, dreams about, and is committed to – the person's *personal vision*, to use the popular term” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 7). Leader's personal visions often influence organizational vision.

When followers genuinely feel a sense of belonging within the organization and a sincere connection to their leader, they are often willing to do whatever it takes or go above and beyond to increase productivity or performance. Transformational leaders focus on their followers. When leaders place priority on benefitting individuals within the establishment, the “organization itself, and society will achieve greater profitability than leaders who are not focused on those factors” (Caldwell et al., 2011, p. 3). Obviously, the authors see the effects of transformational leaders extending beyond the organization and into the very core of society as well.

The transformational leadership model may seem idealistic and unrealistic; however, there is a growing body of scholarly evidence that challenges yesterday’s leadership models as inadequate for the demands of today’s organizations. The leaders of today are often described in characteristics that “may seem strange to our ears and somewhat foreign to our understanding: we speak of leaders as listeners, learners, and teachers; as stewards and meaning makers” (Morgan, 1986, p. 1). To be an effective leader, connections must be made with followers, goals and vision must be shared, and workers must be encouraged to take risks without threat of reprisals.

Change, often at great speed, is common for the contemporary leader. As Conner (1992) noted, today's leaders are operating their organizations at the *speed of change* and being driven by major shifts and trends. Transformational leaders do not use the intimidation of punishment to get the job done; they empower their followers, support them, and create buy-in. To be effective, today’s leader realizes that the job is too big to be done alone. To be truly effective, the leader must rely on the power of team. Moreover, today's leaders are “expected to involve and empower their people, to be

visible to their employees and constituents, to act with integrity, and to be accountable for their organization's performance and results" (Schwahn & Spady, 2006, p. 18). Effective principals do this by creating teams that require the skills of different teachers according to the goal or task of the team. Principals show presence by being in classrooms and hallways conversing with students, staff, and parents. Lastly, effective principals create and enact plans for success and increased performance.

In order for an organization to attain results, its leader must also be capable. A capable leader is valued and demonstrates a variety of traits. "The abilities to challenge, inspire, enable, model, and encourage must be demonstrated as well, if leaders are to be seen as capable" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 25). Capable leadership creates credibility within the organization. In a certain sense, leaders manage their credibility. His/her actions must be trustworthy, fair, and consistent. These leaders are "conscious of how their behavior shapes the impressions others have of them, and so they take charge of how others come to see them" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 30). Leaders maintain essential credibility by their actions- by "challenging, inspiring, enabling, modeling, and encouraging" (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 31). It is not surprising that many principal training programs incorporate these very actions.

Conversely, when a leader is perceived as having little credibility by the team, the organization, as a whole, can suffer. Roberts addressed credibility in this way, "Leaders lacking in credibility will not gain proper influence and are to be hastily removed from positions of responsibility, for they cannot be trusted (Roberts, 1990, p. 21).

Kouzes and Posner (1995) explained what happens when an organization is led by a manager who is perceived as having low credibility. When people perceive their manager to have low credibility, they're significantly more likely to

- Produce only if they are watched carefully
- Be motivated primarily by money
- Say good things about the organization publicly and criticize it privately
- Consider looking for another job
- Feel unsupported and unappreciated (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 27).

Obviously, having low credibility affects the effectiveness of the organizational leader. This, in turn, can send negative ripples throughout the entire organization, affecting everyone in varying degrees.

Effective Leadership

Effectiveness means “reaching viable decisions that implement the goals of the organization” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 22). Whether in a school building of 100 students or a multi-million dollar company, effective leadership is needed to drive change and improve performance. Recently, business people have looked at leadership to mean “providing a vision and influencing others to realize it for noncoercive means” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 15).

Effective leadership usually begins with an individual or small group that is willing to make decisions, place the organization's needs before their own and readily be accountable for good results and bad. “Organizational leaders who are perceived as dedicated to their organization . . . put their organization ahead of their own self-interests” (Caldwell et al., 2011, p. 179). This accountability does incur professional risk and often separates responsible, effective leaders from mere average ones. “It is essential to the Hunnish nation [school buildings] that we have it in our service leaders at every level who possess the skills, abilities, and attributes that will enable them to successfully

carry out their responsibilities incumbent to their office” (Roberts, 1990, p. 16).

Sergiovanni (1992) stated simply that, “Leaders, in other words, must lead” (p. 119).

Too often new leaders find that they were not (mentally, or otherwise) initially prepared for the risk and responsibility inherent to their new assignment.

“Leadership, by its very nature, implies a degree of risk and anxiety that no amount of preparation or development can ever finally eliminate” (Napolitano & Henderson, 1998, p. xxv). For some, keeping the status quo and remaining a follower is reward enough for a job well done. For others, however, followership does not create professional satisfaction. These individuals hear a calling to stand above the crowd, influence and lead it. “In popular conceptions of politics, leadership generally refers to the exercise of influence: the leader stands out in front- usually in high office influencing others” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 15). Effective leaders are often likened to an *anchor* within the organization. This is especially true in times of change. “Only leadership can get change to stick by anchoring it in the very culture of an organization” (Kotter, 1996, p. 30). Naturally, this metaphoric description of anchors in times of reform would place the leader as captain skillfully steering the ship through the uncertain winds of change.

Effective Leaders Are Willing to Take Risks

When a vision is shared across the organization, people are more prone to try new things to better the organization. Senge (1990) stated, “Shared vision fosters risk taking and experimentation” (p. 209). By nature of their position, school building leaders “face the almost daily challenge of solving problems” (Patterson, 1997, p.18). Many of these problems are only addressed by taking risk. Effective leaders model risk taking by example. These individuals demonstrate to followers that organizational growth often

occurs from lessons learned through mistakes. They show through their actions that doing something is often much better than doing nothing at all. While addressing students and faculty at Oglethorpe University (March 4, 1933), Franklin Roosevelt declared, “It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it and try another. But above all, try something.”

“Practicing inquiry and advocacy means willingness to expose limitations in your own thinking – the willingness to be wrong.” Senge continued, “Nothing less will make it safer for others to do likewise” (Senge, 1990, p. 202). This is especially true in schools. Leaders (principals) must show teachers that they are learning too, that principals are not perfect, that principals do not have all the answers, and that leaders also learn from one’s mistakes. In other words, effective leaders need to acknowledge that they too are human. Roberts commented on leaders learning from mistakes. He stated, “You must be willing to accept the simple fact that you have flaws and will need to work every day to become a better Chieftain [principal] than you were yesterday” (Roberts, 1990, p. 28). “Strategic vulnerability does not weaken your leadership;” on the contrary, it helps build trust with teachers and helps create relationships (Roberts, 1990, p. 137). When risk and obstacles are removed by the leader, followers are more likely to enjoy their work. “The leader can focus more on removing obstacles, providing material and emotional support, taking care of the management details that make any journey easier.” Sergiovanni went on to comment about leadership as, “sharing in the comradeship of the march and in the celebration when the journey is completed, and identifying a new, worthwhile destination for the next march” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 43).

Occasionally, even the best planned innovation fails. When this happens, it is imperative that the leader not become bogged down in the despair of disappointment.

Roberts (1990) calls this perseverance, *emotional stamina*. He stated,

We must ensure that our leaders at every level have the stamina to recover rapidly from disappointment – to bounce back from discouragement, to carry out the responsibilities of their office without becoming distorted in their views – without losing clear perspective, as well as the emotional strength to persist in the face of seemingly difficult circumstances. (p. 18)

What separates effective leaders from average ones is the ability to accept failure, learn from it, and then move on to tackle the next challenge.

Leaders *Walking the Talk*

Effective leaders are often described as those willing to *walk the talk*. These are leaders willing to share bold statements and then back them with their actions. “We often call such behavior ‘leadership by example.’ The concept is simple. Words are cheap, but action is not. The cynical among us, in particular, tend not to believe words but will be impressed by action” (Kotter, 1996, p. 96). Mundane leaders state the direction in which they want the organization to go but without guidance or follow through. Effective leaders set the desired organizational destination and through their actions lead it there.

The concept of walking the talk was clearly demonstrated in the early 1990s by a university president in Youngstown, Ohio. His name was Les Cochran. The first thing Les Cochran did after assuming his position as university president at Youngstown State University in July of 1992 was to purchase an abandoned building on the edge of campus and spend his free weekends working with construction crews to transform it into a residence for his family. What made this action extraordinary is that it occurred during a time when the city section of Youngstown surrounding the campus was riddled with

dilapidated and condemned housing. “While it’s not unusual for college presidents to live near their campuses, Cochran’s determination to do so attracted a great deal of attention and set the tone for his presidency. By buying and refurbishing a home in an area that he was determined to reclaim for YSU, Cochran *walked the talk*” (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 209). Cochran realized the potential risks of his decision could affect his family but concluded that risk-taking is what makes good leaders better leaders.

By moving his family to the edge of the Youngstown campus, Cochran publicly proclaimed that he would lead by doing. Cochran demonstrated a passion in his beliefs and determination to succeed. “You must have passion to succeed –a passion that drives you to prepare yourself and your followers to excel” (Roberts, 1990, p. 27). Numerous leaders claim to follow this mantra, but few truly deliver through their actions. Saying but not doing leads to undermining leader communication and trust. This is especially true when the leader is attempting to communicate the vision of the organization during times of change.

Ineffective leaders fail to put into action and behavior the words they share. In a similar vein, “telling people one thing and then behaving differently is a great way to undermine the communication of a change vision” (Kotter, 1996, p. 96). “Nothing undermines the communication of a change vision more than behavior on the part of key players that seems inconsistent with the vision” (Kotter, 1996, p. 96). Cochran clearly demonstrated through his actions at Youngstown State University that his words supported his vision and behaviors.

Developing Organizational Vision

A vision is a brief, succinct, and inspiring statement of what the organization intends to become and achieve. This statement is often forward thinking and stated in competitive terms.

Vision is crucial because successful organizations are in the constant state of change. “The problem for us today is that stability is no longer the norm” (Kotter, 1996, p. 15). Effective leaders focus the energy of the organization on the future. “Leadership establishes direction for the future, aligns people using direct communication, and is both inspiring and motivating. The end result is change, which is full of potential” (Kotter, 1996, p. 30). Schwahn and Spady (2006) used the term *visionary leadership*. The visionary leadership domain is about creating innovative possibilities that shape organizational direction and performance. Visionary leaders involve employees and other constituents in a thorough investigation of the challenges and opportunities facing their organization's future and the potential course of action (Schwahn & Spady, 2006, p. 25). Transformational leaders create a clear, future-thinking vision and empower followers in the process of enacting it. “We demand that leaders be forward looking: that they have a sense of direction, a vision for the future” (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 27). What is surprising to some is that even successful leaders must always have his/her eyes to the future. Practices or procedures that are netting positive results today can become obsolete tomorrow.

Effective principals develop clear vision for their buildings while engaging teachers in the process of improvement. These leaders “articulate a clear vision that reflects the beliefs, values, and commitments of the school community. [They] develop a

school culture that is flexible, collaborative, innovative, and supportive of efforts to improve achievement of all students” (NAESP, 2001, p. 19). School improvement often means school change or transformation. Kotter described the importance of vision in successful transformation in this way:

Of the remaining elements that are always found in successful transformations, none is more important than a sensible vision. Vision plays a key role in producing useful change by helping to direct, align, and inspire actions on the part of large numbers of people. Without an appropriate vision, a transformation effort can easily dissolve into a list of confusing, incompatible, and time-consuming projects that go in the wrong direction or nowhere at all. (Kotter, 1996, p. 7)

Effective leaders skillfully rally followers around goals, and in response, the organization as a whole strives to become better. To be a leader, one must positively influence others to “achieve mutually agreed upon and socially valued goals that help an organization stretch to a higher level.” Patterson (1997) continued, “For the most part, this definition sounds like standard rhetoric . . . but with one exception. Leadership, in this context, emphasizes helping the organization stretch to a higher level” (p. 5). This higher level which Patterson described often leads the organization to a new status quo. In schools, this centers on the performance of students.

In context of a building leader in a school district, an example of vision for improvement might be to increase overall student performance in both math and reading on state assessments by 25% within the next three years. This vision would be supported by goals that would include everyone’s commitment and effort from classroom teachers to Title I aides. “It is the leader’s job to keep the big picture view in plain sight” (Patterson, 1997, p. 18). Vision requires unwavering commitment from leadership. In Robert’s (1987) book, *Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun*, the author commented,

Committed leaders, those with a lust for leadership, a willingness to serve, will, however, be distinguishable by their wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, authority and courage. They will have a human quality in a strong commitment to their cause and to that of those they serve. (p. 25)

Roberts goes on to say, “In the end, vision, drive, energy, singleness of purpose, wise use of resources, and a commitment to a destiny worthy of his efforts become a character of a chieftain [school leader] who excels” (p. 71). Without a clear and believable vision, organizations can become doomed in a cycle of sameness and stalemate.

Effective Leaders Guide Improvement

Organizational improvement is difficult, if not impossible, when disconnect exists between the leader and followers. “In today’s complex organization leaders face a numbing combination of challenges that demand the ability to manage change effectively” (Caldwell et al., 2011, p. 184). This is especially true in today’s schools. Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet or primrose path to improve schools (Sergiovanni, 1992). Conversely, improvement can flourish when positive relationships bind staff. In the case of an ideal school building weaving its way through the process of improvement, this relationship exists between the principal and teachers. “It’s this simple: schools won’t improve until the average building leader begins to work cooperatively with teachers to truly, meaningfully oversee and improve instructional quality” (Schmoker, 2006, p. 29). Many educators believe success derives from relations beyond the principal and teachers and also includes cafeteria staff, office staff, and even the custodian. Building-wide success is a team effort.

As mentioned, improvement cannot happen without clear goals and vision. Effective leaders create a vision that inspires followers to become building blocks of

improvement. “Visions are exhilarating. They create the spark, the excitement that lifts an organization out of the mundane” (Senge, 1990, p. 208). Effective leaders create a purpose by “holding out in front of their team, business, or community a ‘reason why’ that is so big that it requires and motivates everybody's very best effort (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003, p. 100). When entire organizations are motivated by an effective leader, they begin to *stretch* (Patterson, 1997). “To lead is to influence others to achieve mutually agreed upon and socially valued goals that help an organization stretch to a higher level. For the most part, this definition sounds like standard rhetoric . . . but with one exception. Leadership, in this context, emphasizes helping the organization stretch to a higher level” (Patterson, 1997, p. 5). Effective leaders create a new status quo by stretching employees to new levels of commitment and achievement.

“Leaders need to help people affected by change move from where they see themselves in relation to the change to where they need to be in order to reach for new heights through the change process (Patterson, 1997, p. 58). In 1990, Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi coined the term *flow*. Flow is the “state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at a great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 4). This is the state of energy which every effective leader strives to attain.

Some researchers describe the effectiveness of organizational change in terms of how aligned the leader and follower team are in the change process. Senge explained this connection in terms of being *aligned* or *unaligned* (Senge, 1990). In *The Fifth Discipline*, Senge (1990) discusses the difference between aligned teams and unaligned teams. The fundamental characteristic of the relatively unaligned team is wasted energy.

Individuals may work extraordinarily hard, but their efforts do not efficiently translate to team effort. Some may call this working harder but not smarter.

In contrast, when a team becomes more aligned, the commonality of direction emerges, and individuals' "energies harmonize" (Senge, 1990, p. 234). When the energy or effort of the individual team members align, their combined total synergy begins to move the entire organization in one common direction. Senge used a diagram to show this combined common effort.

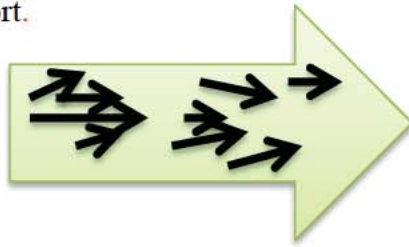


Figure 2.1. Empowering members of a team. From Senge, 1990, p. 235.

He demonstrates this with a drawing of one large arrow pointing to the right. This large arrow represents the movement of the organization. Within this arrow are nine smaller arrows (representing individuals) all, more or less, also pointing toward the right. Not all smaller arrows are pointing exactly parallel to the larger outside arrow. Senge is showing that individuals can maintain a certain degree of autonomy while still contributing to the overall movement of the organization in one common thrust. Part of aligning an organizational team is ensuring that the best qualified team members are in their best suited positions.

By building on the strength and by arranging each person in the team, the business or school enables each team member to contribute what he or she is best at doing. "This improves everyone's performance and solidifies teams by aligning the strengths of many people" (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003, p. 101). Collins (2001) became

world-renowned by liking the alignment of people and their strengths within an organization to people riding on a bus.

We expected that good-to-great leaders would begin by setting a new vision and strategy. We found instead that they *first* got the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people in the right seats-and *then* they figured out where to drive it. (Collins, 2001, p. 13)

Collins went on to explain how important qualified people are within the organization.

He suggested that the old saying, “People are your most important asset” turns out to be wrong. “People are *not* your most important asset. The *right* people are” (p. 13).

Organizational leaders must also ensure that the right people stay on the bus and that they remain motivated by feeling they are part of the organization’s pursuit of grander goals (Collins, 2001). Fullan later applied Collins’ concept of having the right people on the bus to recruiting and retaining teachers. He stated, “There is a major role in recruiting, retaining, in developing teachers and other leaders in the system – getting and keeping the right people on the bus and in the right seats” (Fullan, Hill, & Crevola, 2006, p. 97).

Although many states have adopted new systems of evaluation for educators, teacher unions continue to make getting the wrong people off of the bus a difficult endeavor.

Mobilizing Staff

Leadership has been described in terms of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) or the ability to influence others (Patterson, 1997). Influence alone, however, is not enough. A leader must be able to rally the team around a goal or idea and create buy-in. Next, the leader must strategically align the team’s effort and resources to that goal.

Blumberg (1989) calls this leadership skill creating a *sense of process*. A “sense of process is the ability to diagnose and interpret the meaning of what is occurring as people interact in any problematic situation” (p. 47). Some researchers describe this organizational process as mobilization.

The term mobilize “connotes motivating, organizing, orienting, and focusing attention (Heifetz, 1994, p. 20). Kouzes and Posner (1995) defined leadership as the “art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations” (p. 30). For principals and other leaders, creating the desire to *struggle* within the ranks of staff can be a monumental challenge. Regardless of the innovation and its intended effects on people, there will always be some staff that refuse to succumb to reform simply because they can. These staff members are often the typical naysayers no matter the attempted improvement. If unchallenged, they can be the catalysts that undermine positive change.

Similar to motivating people to *want* to follow, mobilizing staff because they believe in the vision is essential. “If there’s a clear and distinguishing feature about the process of leading, it’s in the distinction between mobilizing others to do and mobilizing others to *want* to do.” Leaders and others in positions of authority, the authors add, “can get other people to do something because of the power they wield, but leaders mobilize others to *want* to act because of the credibility they have” (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 31). Heifetz applies mobilization to communities. Heifetz stated, “Leaders mobilize people to face problems, and communities make progress on problems because leaders challenge and help them do so” (Heifetz, 1994, p. 15). If the process breaks down or the desired results are not achieved, blame then lies with leader as well as community.

Collins (2001) described organizational mobilization and momentum as one large flywheel. He depicted the mobilization within an organization as something starting out very slowly and then gaining increasing speed with focused effort and time. Change, or breakthrough (Collins, 2001) does not happen instantaneously. Collins stated that, “there was no single defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, and no miracle moment.” Instead, Collins continued, “the process resembled relentlessly pushing a giant heavy flywheel in one direction, turn by turn, building momentum until a point of breakthrough, and beyond” (p. 14). In school districts, it is commonly accepted that the implementation of any new program requires about three years of focused momentum in order to see true results or breakthrough.

Where some researchers describe organizational change as a simple series of implementations, Collins described it as a slow (at first), labor-intensive process. His process could not lead to fruition without a capable leader spearheading the momentum. Collins (2001) calls such leaders, *Level 5 Leaders*.

Level 5 Leaders

Collins’ five levels of leadership referred to a five-level hierarchy of executive capabilities, with Level Five being at the top (most effective). Level five leaders are often those managing companies through recessions and still turning large corporate profits. In school districts, they are the educational leaders ignoring resource shortfalls while creating cultures for learning resulting in consistent and substantial gains in student achievement. These leaders embody a “paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional determination. Very ambitious, to be sure, but ambitious first and foremost for the company, not themselves” (Collins, 2001, p. 39). These leaders create a vision

and through their personal unselfish drive create the flywheel (Collins, 2001) that moves the entire team forward with ever-increasing momentum.

Level Five leaders, although empathetic and modest, can lead with almost ruthless efficiency. They often lead with such tenacity that nothing will get between their vision and the end result. It is very important to understand that Level Five leadership is not simply about humbleness and unpretentiousness. It is “equally about ferocious resolve, an almost stoic determination to do whatever needs to be done to make the company great” (Collins, 2001, p. 30). Many talented leaders strive to become Level Five leaders but few actually achieve such status.

Total Leaders

Very similar to the traits of Collins’ Level Five leader, Schwahn and Spady described characteristics that make school leaders effective when implementing change. Depicting these types of leaders, the authors coined the term, *Total Leader* (Schwahn & Spady, 2006). “Total leaders are capable of striking the beneficial balance.” Total leaders “strive to be decisive and build consensus, embrace core values and be tolerant, exercise productive power and empower others, evaluate and coach, be firm and care about others, and remain concerned about the bottom line while supporting creativity” (p. 18). Placing the people on the team first while still monitoring the overall performance is very similar to strategies that transformational leaders incorporate.

Much of Schwahn and Spady’s research focused on organizational vision and mission. This is only natural since much of their work establishes guidelines for leading schools through times of change. Change or the need for change within schools inevitably affects goals, mission, and vision.

Creating and leading an organization through this process takes a special leader; a visionary. The authors described total leaders as being “purposeful visionaries; they look outside of ‘the box’ for possibilities and solutions, take initiative, are persuasive, and get results” (Schwahn & Spady, 2006, p. 19). Total leaders are risk-takers and willing to think of alternatives to the status quo. These leaders realize their resources and personnel and then send their organization on a calculated proverbial leap of faith.

Total leaders understand and tap into the strengths of their team members. They create an environment that empowers their followers and utilize their strengths in the new vision. The authors state that total leaders possess an internally focused purpose that is to “empower and motivate employees to give their best to accomplish their organization's mission and vision” (Schwahn & Spady, 2006, p. 20). According to the authors, total leaders resist the notion that they actually make people powerful or actively empower them. Instead, they imagine that a “tremendous amount of power lies within each person and that their role is to create work environments that let that power and capability emerge” (Schwahn & Spady, 2006, p. 21). Total leaders incorporate total team as well as a safe environment to produce results.

Central in much of the research about effective leadership is the notion that the leader must demonstrate personal integrity and moral ethics in order to motivate followers. Total leaders are no different. The authors explained that, “not only can total leaders proudly describe and explain the key principles that guide their behavior, they also define their personal integrity around these key principles.” The authors continued, “Total leaders know when they're being true to those principles, and they feel pain and

guilt when they are not” (Schwahn & Spady, 2006, p. 21). Personal integrity affects leadership as well as professional integrity.

Modeling core values is also a key trait for total leaders. Total leaders model the core values of the organization. Additionally, total leaders model through their actions “the professional principles for others and are aware that they are modeling with a purpose.” The authors also state that “total leaders make value-based decision making the norm throughout the organization so that their moral foundation will have a life of its own” (Schwahn & Spady, 2006, p. 31).

Organizations Needing Change

Whereas “Total leaders” (Schwahn & Spady, 2006) and “Level Five leaders” (Collins, 2001) lead change through followers buy-in and empowerment, sometimes change needs a more directed approach. Improvement is often a change process that causes discomfort, frustration, and organizational anxiety. Sometimes leaders must lead change on the premise that improvement is impossible by continuing on the path of the status quo. Sometimes leaders must simply spell out the cost of inaction. Patterson (1997) stated, “Leaders must resist the natural temptation to sell proposed change using rational discourse.” The author went on to state, “Instead they must sell the need to change by exposing the pain that will result from not changing. Leaders need to help people see the urgency for change” (p. 16). Principals often create this sense of urgency by using student performance data.

When students are consistently underperforming at certain grade levels or content areas, it is the leader’s responsibility to use the data to initiate non-negotiable change. If the situation represents an opportunity to be grasped to create improvement, leaders need

to help followers of the organization “realize the price to be paid for inaction” (Patterson, 1997, p. 17). The leader clearly states to the organization in absolute terms that change is needed. Tichy and Charan (1995) called this projected sense of urgency the *burning platform* theory of change. Sometimes organizations view mediocracy as acceptable. It is the task of the effective leader to stop and reverse this cycle. Kotter (1996) cited several common scenarios in which organizational change bogs down or is jeopardized by followers.

Too much past success, a lack of visible crisis, low performance standards, insufficient feedback from external constituencies, and more all add up to: “Yes, we have our problems, but they aren’t that terrible and I’m doing my job just fine,” or “Sure we have big problems, and they are all over there.” Without a sense of urgency, people won’t give that extra effort that is often essential. They won’t make needed sacrifices. Instead they cling to the status quo and resist initiatives from above. (Kotter, 1996, p. 5)

Fortunately, this sense of urgency does not always need to be earthshattering. In fact, focused and incremental change is sometimes favored. Senge (1990) promoted his belief that improvement results are often achieved through small and focused efforts and not through expensive, large-scale initiatives. In every change event, some followers will invariably grasp onto the new direction as a welcomed challenge, while others will ignore or openly defy the course of the new vision.

Schlechtey, well-known leader in organizational change, described the role different followers play in the change process. Certain subgroups of followers within the organization simply will not want to change. Those comfortable with the status quo and unwilling to change are what Schlechtey call, *settlers*. According to Schlechtey (1993), the settlers have no desire to change or disrupt what apparently is working for them. A second more dangerous (in terms of organizational change and growth) are what

Schlechty (1993) called the *saboteurs*. Saboteurs, according to the author, believe they have every reason to interrupt whatever is being proposed and often do so with cunning precision. An example of saboteurs could be a group of teachers using a new lesson plan format required by the principal. Instead of simply adopting and using the new lesson plan, they might intentionally continue to use the old one until formally directed not to. Saboteur teachers are often described as the group that digs in when a new initiative begins and simply waits until a new principal or initiative comes down the pike. The actions of saboteurs can become more devious by purposely undermining the authority or credibility of the leader. Fortunately, saboteurs often comprise a small percentage of any organization. Opposing the saboteurs are those that willingly accept change.

Auspiciously, organizations are also made up of followers who are risk takers. Schlechty (1993) called these team members, *pioneers* and *explorers*. These are the followers who are ready to willingly make the leap of faith. These team members are vital to change and improvement. They are important so leaders can turn loose those “ready to go and count on those others to make the changes as they see the evidence of success accumulating, or push the stragglers out of the nest and expect them to catch up with those who are blazing the trail” (Patterson, 1997, p. 19). The stragglers that Patterson mentioned sometimes feel pressure to conform and eventually capitulate while others always remain on the outside unwilling to accept change.

Admittedly, this process of change is not simple and takes time to evolve to fruition and take root. Add to the mix the reality of multiple initiatives occurring simultaneously. This scenario is often the situation found in school districts. Compounding the problem is movement of leaders within or exiting the organization for

leadership positions elsewhere. More often than not, “leaders leave the organization before the initiated change has time to show its desired effects. Long-term change calls for long-term leadership” (Patterson, 1997, p. 37). This is especially true within school buildings. For a school to improve significantly, the quality building leader must be the frontrunner for longer than one school year.

Accountability in American Schools

The American student sitting in our public school classroom no longer simply competes with other children from across town; or even across the state, for that matter. The American student is now competing in a global market. The benefits of having a quality education are widely established. Michael Fullan and his colleagues stated, “The personal benefits are still a great incentive to individuals to do well. What are now much clearer are the substantial economic and social costs associated with *failure* to learn and failure to achieve one’s full potential” (Fullan et al., 2006, p. 1). No time in American history has an education been more important for life-long success of so many.

Educators have accepted the task of preparing our students for this global arena. Kotter described the effect of the global market on organizations. “A globalized economy is creating both more hazards and more opportunities for everyone.” The author went on to describe the seriousness of this event by stating, “Globalization is forcing firms to make dramatic improvements not only to compete and prosper but also to merely survive (Kotter, 1996, p. 18). The same holds true for public schools. Whereas companies survive on profit margins, schools must produce results in terms of student performance. To survive in today’s global market, schools are being held accountable.

Fullan and his associates described the connection between accountability and school reform:

The advent of accountability has significantly juiced up the rhetoric of school reform. Easily available data on student performance have provided the fuel the reformers need to generate, at least rhetorically, a white hot sense of urgency around school improvement. (Fullan et al., 2006, p. xxii)

To some, the idea of adoption of accountability measures within our schools seemed to be the next passing fad. In fact, many people across the nation balked at the notion that schools could be held responsible for every student's performance. That all changed in 2002 when President George Bush signed into law No Child Left Behind, or NCLB.

No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was a well-intentioned piece of bipartisan legislation that was adopted in 2002 and fully enacted in all states by 2006. NCLB, in terms of educational reform, is the most influential policy initiative of the last 45 years (Dee & Jacob, 2011). Jehlen suggested that No Child Left Behind is the largest social restructuring project of modern day America. (Jehlen, 2009). Supported by both Republicans and Democrats, NCLB was the Federal government's attempt to address concerns in public education by guaranteeing equal educational opportunities for all American students including minority, impoverished, and low income children (Schul, 2011).

The passage of NCLB suddenly put 50 million school students along with their three million teachers directly under the gun of accountability (Jehlen, 2009). According to the research that supported NCLB, ineffective teaching methods was listed as a chief reason for stagnant performance in many of America's schools (Schul, 2011).

Additionally, many in government felt that hodge-podge teaching initiatives used by many school districts reinforced unfocused and unchallenging curriculum. NCLB requires that all districts receiving Title I monies and instituting any new curricular or instructional practices must be supported by scientifically-based research, or SBR. The reality is that much of NCLB implementation is directly linked to school funding. In doing so, components of the bill directly affect the ways in which teachers teach. By tying Federal funding to schools with the mandates of NCLB, government brought accountability to the American education system.

The most potent piece of NCLB required states to create school accountability systems based on the results of annual student assessments in core areas (Dee & Jacob, 2011). A fundamental component of this accountability reform to improve schools is to publicize detailed information on school performance data created through high-stakes testing. For states like Pennsylvania, these data are often derived from only one or two student assessments. In this state, the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) is used to meet the performance requirements of NCLB.

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

States like Pennsylvania are held accountable and are required to hold local education agencies, or LEAs accountable for developing curricular standards for all students. LEAs are also responsible for putting systems in place to ensure that students are able to meet or exceed those standards. States and LEAs are to prove they have done so by assessing the students (*PSEA Professional Learning Exchange*, 2005). The use of the PSSA as an assessment tool in Pennsylvania creates the backbone of accountability requirements set forth by NCLB. Other indicators such as high school graduation rate are

mandated as an indicator for districts but they all are required to use the state assessments as the primary measure of progress (*PSEA Professional Learning Exchange, 2005*).

PSSA is an “annual assessment administered in commonwealth classrooms in grades three through eight, and in English language arts and mathematics”

(www.education.pa.gov).

Students’ scores in these tested content areas are ranked in descending fashion. *Advanced* is the highest range a student can achieve and exemplifies understanding of the state instituted standards, whereas a *proficient* rating indicates that the student has demonstrated adequate understanding of the content. A student rating of *basic* on the PSSA signifies that the student did not demonstrate sufficient understanding of the state established standards. Lastly, a *below basic* score denotes a clear lack of content understanding by the student. Accountability comes into play when student-generated data from the PSSA assessment are then scaled against annual predetermined cut scores established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

As mandated in the law, a school district, based on its student data, is required to achieve state-determined assessment cut scores and make adequate yearly progress (AYP). Depending on the state, AYP is determined through the use of a two- or three-year averaging formula of student data. NCLB has determined that a district does not make AYP if it “fails to meet the target in the same subject area for two consecutive years in one of the three grade spans; 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12” (*PSEA Professional Learning Exchange, 2005*).

In Pennsylvania, student data are collected in the form of a three-year rolling average. Through the use of statistical projections, the state determines the estimated

growth each student should achieve in each tested area. The conundrum of this model lies in the fact that even though many Pennsylvania students annually score a proficient or higher rating, they may not necessarily meet the requirements of projected annual growth. This predicament often affects specific groups of students. For example, a group of high achieving students in a district might attain advanced scores on the annual assessment; however, they might not fall within the projected growth range established by the state. In theory, this forces the district to examine how they instruct their higher achieving students. If assessment scores within a district consistently fail to demonstrate student growth, the district or school building could face sanctions as determined in NCLB. The worst a state can be sanctioned is the loss of funds; “schools, and their employees, can suffer worse fates” (*PSEA Professional Learning Exchange*, 2005).

Within the last three years, many states such as Pennsylvania added a new wrinkle in the use of student assessment in district accountability. These states have adopted the new Common Core Standards. Ironically, Pennsylvania adopted even more stringent standards in late 2013, dubbing them *PA Core Standards*. In 2015, PSSA “marks the first time the assessment was fully aligned to the standards” (www.education.pa.gov).

Acknowledging the difficulty of these newly adopted standards, the Pennsylvania Department of Education recently issued the following statement on its website, “Some content is now being taught a full grade level earlier than under the previous Academic Content Standards” (*The Pennsylvania Department of Education Website*, 7/23/2015). Understandably, this advanced curriculum has had school districts in the Commonwealth scrambling to make adjustments to what and how they teach. The new content and new assessment requires deeper knowledge, stronger problem solving and critical thinking

skills. The PA Core Standards are designed to “better prepare commonwealth students for college and career readiness when they graduate” (*The Pennsylvania Department of Education Website, 7/23/2015*). This direction taken by the state does not come without criticism. Many parents are not supporting this attempt at increasing rigor, knowing that their child has no intention of attending college or other advanced training beyond high school.

School districts in the Commonwealth have also experienced frustration. With the appearance of the new PA Core content on the PSSA assessment in the spring of 2015, many districts suddenly became aware of an alarming disconnect on how and what their teachers were teaching and what the state now requires students to demonstrate as mastered content and skills. In many districts across the state, scores in English Language Arts (ELA) and math, in particular, plummeted when compared to assessment results from previous years. Some school building assessment results plunged drastically.

PDE recently released this following statement on its website concerning the assessment results: “The heightened difficulty of the PA Core and the limited time between final adoption and implementation of the new PSSA have resulted in fewer students scoring proficient or advanced” (*The Pennsylvania Department of Education Website, 7/23/2015*). PDE posted additional statements recently attempting to calm educators during this vexing period. The department posted:

PDE and educators are confident that as teachers and students become more familiar with the PA Core and more resources are directed towards teaching and learning the new standards, student performance will steadily grow. With time, and as student and teacher familiarity with the new PA Core grows, student performance should steadily improve. (*The Pennsylvania Department of Education Website, 7/23/2015*)

Through these comments, it is obvious that PDE is sympathetic to the troublesome situation in which districts currently find themselves. A complete transition to the new PA Core standards requires time to develop and implement new curriculum, train teachers and staff, and provide resources to support the new curriculum. In a twist of irony, found in a link to assessment information for educators on the PDE website, the department acknowledges that although PSSAs meet the requirements established through NCLB, a single score derived from a single assessment should not be the exclusive indicator of a student's ability. PDE released the following statement:

Assessment scores represent a snapshot in time of student performance, and should not be considered the sole indicator of student achievement. Standardized assessments, like the PSSA, help Pennsylvania meet Federal and state requirements, as well as provide educators, stakeholders, and policymakers with important information about the commonwealth's students and schools, and inform instructional practices. (www.education.pa.gov)

Educators in Pennsylvania find themselves in a very unusual time in the history of education in the Commonwealth. Veteran administrators and teachers around the state are finding the rigors placed upon them through demands of accountability to be too much. Many are contemplating alternative careers. Alarming, some have already left his/her chosen profession. Some feel that the mandates set forth in NCLB simply make the job of principal too demanding and no longer worth it. Teacher leaders who have attained administrative licenses now have no desire to use them. Additionally, the mandates caused by this new era of accountability are causing many would-be educators to seek other types of future employment altogether.

Leadership Recruitment and Retention

Whether there is an actual shortage of qualified educators seeking principalships or a perceived shortage based on geographic location or performance levels of the building in which a principal position is open, school districts face the ever-increasing difficult task of recruiting and placing qualified applicants into vacant principal openings. Recruitment of quality public school leaders is an “important issue due to the shortage of qualified job applicants nationwide” (Shumate, Munoz, & Winter, 2006, p. 21). There are a few factors that limit or expand a district’s ability to fill principalships with effective leaders. The age of accountability and educational reform brought on by NCLB exacerbated the problem of too few qualified principal candidates seeking open positions. In fact, many teachers currently possessing principal certification are opting not to apply their earned skills and knowledge to the educational leadership arena. An alarming number of educators who have earned principal certification “at considerable cost to themselves or their financial sponsors (school districts) do not apply for position vacancies” (Winter et al. 2002, p. 69). Many school districts in Pennsylvania offer salary increases for teachers who attain advanced degrees or approved course credit and many university principal preparation programs enroll students who do not have an interest in pursuing a principal position. Instead “these teachers are interested in improving their salaries by increasing their position in the teacher’s salary schedule” (Pijanowski & Brady, 2009, p. 29). Many certificated educators never apply for a single leadership position. Researchers studying this phenomenon ascribe this lack of job search behavior to an increasing “lack of attraction to the principalship among public school educators as a career option” (McAdams, 1998, pp. 37-39). So why is the position of principal losing its attractive qualities in the ranks of teachers?

In one study conducted by DiPaolo and Tschannen-Moran (2003), the researchers found that 91% of would-be principals in their sample claimed stress as a leading deterrent to seek a principal position. Of these same educators, 86% identified the time required to do the job as the second leading deterrent for people who choose to opt out of school leadership after they meet the credential requirements (DiPaolo & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, pp 43-65). Other studies have identified perceived barriers that keep would-be principals from using his/her certificate. They include the possible need to relocate, loss of teacher tenure and its protections, system bureaucracy, and the increasing disrespect shown by students.

Pressures associated with state and “Federal reforms, such as No Child Left Behind Act, have also made a principalship less desirable” (Pijanowski, Hewitt, & Brady, 2009, p. 87). Other reported reasons potential candidates either drop from applicant pools or never apply at all include the effects on the family when trying to balance with work and “inadequate compensation” (Pijanowski, Hewitt, et al., 2009, p. 89). Although there have always been perceived negative aspects of becoming a principal, it was not until the age of school accountability that these perceptions translated into real numbers of declining principal applicants in some districts.

There is a link between the time a certificate holder waits to apply for a principalship and their actually doing so. The longer the potential principal waits to get a position after earning their certification, the less likely it is that they will eventually serve in a principalship. “There appears to be a drop-off in attempts to find an administrative position two years after certification” (Pijanowski, Hewitt, et al., 2009, p. 86). It is imperative that states find ways in which to entice would-be leaders into principalships.

Additionally, if prospective candidates are passed over early in their job hunt, some choose to give up on a principal position altogether. Not successfully attaining a principalship can “negatively affect a candidate’s perception of how desirable they find a job” (Pounder & Merrill, 2001, p. 46). Some candidates that are rejected for principalships begin to question their own leadership abilities or become jaded for not being given a chance to prove his/her skills. Perceptions of prospective principals aren’t the only ones affected by the reform movement. Current building principals are also feeling the pressures of accountability mandates in that student performance is now tied to their annual evaluation.

When school buildings fully implemented the mandates of No Child Left Behind, some acting principals found the added pressure of having their evaluations directly tied to student performance reason enough to question their chosen career path. “Role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload” appear to be challenging problems for principals and exasperated by reform mandates (Savery & Detiuk, 1986, pp. 272-281). The principalship has become one of the “most stressful jobs in education” (Whitaker, 1995, p. 291). Principals are accountable for everything that goes on inside of their school building and are often faced with dwindling resources and funding to deal with increasing problems. Educators vacate principalships every year because of the added stress due to the reform movement. Alarming, more than “one out of every five principals leave their position” annually (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb, 2012, p. 904). Leaders of charter schools do not fare any better. In one survey of charter school teachers and leaders conducted by the Center on Reinventing Public Education, almost

three quarters of 400 surveyed charter school principals indicated that they “anticipate leaving their current jobs within five years” (Ni, Sun, & Rorrer, 2015, p. 411).

One must realize that charter school administrators often leave their positions to seek positions in public education. Nonetheless, the numbers are alarming.

Charter school principals may leave principalships even more often than public school leaders. In a study of charter school leadership conducted by Ni et al. (2015), their findings show charter schools across America typically have a higher principal turnover rate than public schools and interestingly a very different principal changeover pattern. For example, when charter school principals left their leadership position, they often pursued positions in the public sector or left the field altogether. Conversely, when public school principals left a position, it was often to accept a position in another public system or another building within their current district.

Whether in charter or public schools, principals are finding the job increasingly overwhelming. With added job duties to fulfill mandates, building leaders are increasingly being “pulled off of the tasks that bring them the most satisfaction and are spending more time on tasks that they find less satisfying” (Pijanowski, Hewitt et al., 2009, p. 89). These less desirable tasks include a lengthy educator evaluation process, increased record keeping, and data management and interpretation. Whitaker (1995) paraphrased a principal’s comments by writing, “Principals can’t do the routine, everyday things and initiate change too” (p. 290). The reality is principals are required to do both in order to remain effective.

Some principals do not feel equipped to lead change. A pressing concern in terms of school leadership is that many principals have never been properly trained to guide an

organization through such sweeping change. The obstruction is that “most managers [principals] have no history or legacy to guide them through all this” (Kotter, 1996, p. 18). Many universities were very adept at training instructional leaders, but not agents of change. Reform within schools often requires extensive leadership training and professional development.

Many principals experience frustration in that his/her district’s professional development plan is created as a one-size fits all model. Focused professional development for district leaders is more vital now than ever before. Although well-intentioned and essential to the district’s success, professional development activities often leave principals feeling uninspired. Too often principals are simply left out of staff development programs or they participate in programs with classroom teachers who have entirely different needs. Principals have specific job requirements that are often missed in the context of staff development created for teachers. A common area of professional development that many principals feel they need is exploring strategies of effective collaboration.

Effective principals have always directly participated in and promoted collaboration. Many of the mandates wrapped into reform require the building leader to share decision making and foster collaboration with stakeholders outside of the school. Many principals simply do not know how to do this while attaining positive results. Conley (1993) has cited several skills that many current administrators lack in this age of collaboration. These skills include, “reaching consensus, facilitating groups, team building, and other group process skills” (pp. 19-28). Trying to reach consensus with one’s third grade team about common assessments is a far cry from trying to achieve

uniform agreement between 10 private sector stakeholders about how teachers can best align curriculum to instruction.

Fortunately for principals, there are collaboration opportunities that are advantageous. One strategy being used across the state of Pennsylvania to allow principals time to collaborate with each other is what many intermediate units (IU) call the *principals' roundtable*. At these meetings, regional principals are invited to monthly meetings at the IU to discuss current issues, suggestions, and possible solutions. During these valuable networking meetings, principals often discuss the day-to-day concerns of the job and the manner in which they are addressed. This time is vitally important for building leaders to be with educators that understand the common daily and continued conundrums of the principalship. Even with programs like roundtable, some principals continue to feel that the stressors are not worth the salary they receive.

At one time, it was generally accepted that a principal's salary was reward enough for the requirements of the job. With increased workloads spurred by new mandates, many current principals question this belief. With the increase in their workload, many principals are feeling that "salaries have not kept up with the increasing demands of the principalship" (Pijanowski & Brady, 2009, p. 30). Prospective principals are also aware of this problem.

Many current principal-certificated teachers do not feel that the increase of pay in becoming a principal outweighs the added stress and time required by the position. The salaries of teachers have either "significantly narrowed the pay gap with school leaders, or it even surpassed them" (Pijanowski & Brady, 2009, p. 26). It has been argued that salary discrepancy between tenured teachers and principals may not be enticing enough

to convince teachers to leave the relative safety of a classroom to the rigors of a leadership role. This general discernment that the salary is no longer equal to the requirements of the principalship has caused administrator applicant shortages in some parts of the country.

According to limited research on this topic, it appears that geographic area, performance level of the school, and salary scale can affect the principal applicant pool within school districts. Compensation of principals is often cited as a “reason why candidate pools are low” (Pijanowski & Brady, 2009, p. 26). For some districts, this is a recurring predicament. Pounder and Young (1996) addressed the need for more studies concerning principal recruitment:

Given the importance of recruitment, it is disappointing that few, if any, empirical studies exist which bear specifically on the attraction of individuals to public school administrator positions. In view of this void and the professional literature, investigators should pursue research in this area. (p. 288)

The continuous shortage of qualified principal applicants applying for leadership positions in certain geographic areas or schools with low performance ratings are continued reasons for concern for school districts. “This is a national phenomenon” (McAdams, 1998, pp. 37-38). Other researchers agree that principal recruitment has become a challenging task for school districts nationwide. Some urban districts are hit especially hard with dwindling pools of qualified candidates. The task of hiring qualified building leaders is increasingly “difficult due to the shrinking applicant pools” (Shumate et al., 2006, p. 25). In fact, assistant principal candidate pools are also being impacted.

Pending retirements and increased accountability are cited by some researchers as reasons that districts are finding it difficult filling assistant principalships as well (Duke, 1998; Golanda, 1991; Hess, 1985). Many educators around the country feel that some

states have reached the tipping point where retiring qualified principals are slowly outnumbering the number of qualified candidates seeking those vacant principal positions.

Low-performing schools are also experiencing shortages of willing applicants to fill principalships. Recruiting qualified principals into low performing schools is a “challenging task faced by school districts across the country” (Education Research Service, 2000). It is generally accepted that recruiting principals has become taxing. The chore of recruiting principals to “lead low-performing schools in a high stakes education reform environment would be an even greater administrative challenge” (Stark-Price, Munoz, Winter, & Petrosko, 2006, p. 70). Due to the overwhelming challenges, many educators considering a principalship purposely steer clear of applying in low-performing schools. Stark-Price et al. (2006) have investigated the administrative task of recruiting qualified individuals to accept principalships in low-performing public schools. They stated, “It is a time when the task of recruiting principals in public schools nationally is becoming increasingly problematic” (p. 69). School districts must make a concerted effort to recruit quality applicants to their schools. This is especially true for low-performing schools. School districts need to create “aggressive principal recruitment programs to fill impending principal vacancies” (Stark-Price et al., 2006, p. 80). Districts must find ways to recruit and increase applicant pools for vacancies within their buildings.

For the superintendent and human resource officer, having a “large and well qualified candidate pool is of critical importance” (Pijanowski, Hewitt, et al., 2009, p. 86). Hiring qualified principals is essential to the delivery of quality education programs

(Young & Castetter, 2004, pp. 86-90). Because the efficiency and length of job tenure of the superintendent within the district is directly linked to the effectiveness or failure of his or her principals, the “selection of a principal is possibly one of the most critical decisions a superintendent will make” (Pijanowski, Hewitt, et al., 2009, p. 86).

Obviously, having a high number of applicants means that a district is afforded the luxury of having many candidates from which it can single out the best finalist. However, some districts find it very difficult finding even small numbers of candidates to interview for vacant principal positions.

In November of 2008, 245 superintendents in the state of Arkansas were surveyed about their perceptions of principal shortages. According to the superintendents polled, less than half felt that the applicants who made up the leadership search pool were “qualified for the job” (Pijanowski, Hewitt, et al., 2009, p. 90). In the same study, findings demonstrate that rural schools are significantly disadvantaged in the search for new leaders. Starr (2016) offered similar findings suggesting that serving as a principal in rural schools is complicated, dissimilar, and laborious. Urban districts also find filling principalships with qualified candidates a disheartening task. Many are forced to recruit candidates with little or no leadership experience. Urban schools with higher percentages of students who are performing below mandated proficient academic levels often have little choice but to recruit principals who “bring fewer years of administrative experience to the position and who attended less competitive undergraduate colleges” (Papa, 2007, pp. 267-275). Sometimes, these districts must settle for the best from within the mediocre candidate pool.

Conversely, large or well-performing school districts often have the luxury of many qualified applicants seeking positions. Superintendents in these districts are able to be selective when seeking the best candidates for his/her buildings. Despite the reform mandates, many well-performing school districts still enjoy the amenity of having a plethora of applicants for open principalships. Several studies indicate a modest to nonexistent decrease in principal candidate pools and a “surplus of credentialed administrators for available positions” (Portin et al., 1998). Interestingly, some superintendents of small or rural districts claimed “little anxiety regarding the status of their candidate pools” (Pijanowski, Hewitt, et al., 2009, p. 91). Apparently, the time-honored practice of some rural districts growing their own leaders has had a noteworthy effect on how superintendents view their applicant pools. Whether a struggling or well-performing school district, it comes as little surprise that salary is the leverage often used to recruit quality principal candidates.

Whitaker (2003) found superintendents’ salary as the top consideration for recruiting new leaders. Other researchers also found salary as an effective recruiting tool for superintendents. Increasing the “level of compensation is viewed as the most effective way to increase the number of people who seek a career” in a principal position (Pijanowski, Hewitt, et al., 2009, p. 92). Unfortunately, many public school districts across the country are facing diminishing budgets and are not able to offer salary scales that lure qualified candidates to their buildings.

Building Leader Burnout

The principalship has become a very stressful position within the school district, much so that it can affect one’s health and commitment to one’s profession. Some

building leaders feel overwhelmed and deflated because their continued dedication to implement improvement strategies yield little results in term of increased student performance. This condition of despair and disappointment even has a name; *burnout*. While many studies have been conducted on teacher burnout and several studies have dealt with educator burnout, few studies have explicitly considered principal burnout (Whitaker, 1995, p. 288).

The term burnout conjures different meanings for different people in different fields. Regardless of the profession, burnout represents increased levels of stress and job overload. Burnout also affects “personal and professional lives and negatively impacts interpersonal relationships” (Whitaker, 1995, p. 287). Burnout may affect principals in several ways within the school building. Its consequences may be “physical, emotional, or intellectual” (Whitaker, 1995, p. 287). The rigors of the accountability era have affected the health of many administrators.

Due to the complex nature of their jobs, “principals are especially susceptible to the effects of burnout” (Whitaker, 1995, p. 287). A qualitative study conducted by Duke in 1998 delved into the reasons why principals consider leaving the position and possible causes of burnout. The study centered around interviews with four principals on the verge of leaving the principalship. Based on their responses as to why the principals would leave their jobs, four categories were created. The categories included: “fatigue, a growing awareness of self, a sense of career and timing, and the lack of preparation for the job” (Duke, 1998, p. 310). Obviously, fatigue would contribute to burnout of many exiting principals.

One researcher found the topic of principal burnout so important, he created an assessment to measure its origins. Maslach (1986) created an inventory, *The Maslach Burnout Inventory* to measure the levels of burnout found in principals. This research instrument measures three paradigms related to principal burnout: “personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization” (Whitaker, 1995, p. 288) and has been used in several studies concerning administrator burnout.

In 1982, Welch, Meideros, and Tate found job isolation associated with the principal’s role a cause of burnout. They found another cause was the inordinate amount of time and effort spent in the role of the principal, and a final cause was associated with the organizational structure of the school system. Although the reason for principal burnout can be attributed to several factors, the result is often singular; the feeling of being utterly overwhelmed. Burnout can be observed and yet another reason for would-be principals to remain in the classroom.

Principals sometimes leave positions with hopes to better his/her careers. As mentioned, some principals no longer feel his/her salary equates with the demands of the job and leave. This can have detrimental effects on the school. The departure of the principal is associated with “higher teacher turnover rates and lower student achievement gains” (Beteille et al., 2012, p. 905). Organizational stability, momentum and performance that may have taken years to achieve can suddenly be whisked away with the departure of the effective leader.

Increasingly, principals who have proven themselves successful in lower-performing schools depart to better performing buildings, are promoted to central office leadership, or “tapped to turn around other struggling schools” (Johnson & Sillman,

2012, p. 47). Principals often demonstrate preferences to work in schools with “higher achieving students from more advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds” (Beteille, et al. 2012, p. 904) and leave positions that they perceive as too stressful. Principals often use their position in schools with many poor or low achieving students as “steppingstones” to what they view as more desirable assignments (Beteille et al., 2012, p. 904). When schools know that their leader is leaving, succession plans make that transition less traumatic.

Giles and Hargreaves (2006, p. 124) found in their work that failure to pay attention to succession planning meant that the “charisma of the founding principal” was difficult to replace. “Navigating the succession in leadership is important” for the incoming and departing building leaders, for the school district superintendent and human resources director, and for the continuance of school improvement efforts (Johnson & Sillman, 2012, p. 52). This is especially true when the departing principal established a culture of innovation or change. District leadership often “underestimates the capacity needed to sustain school improvements” on the departure of an effective building leader (Johnson & Sillman, 2012, p. 52). Often, positive district momentum can be lost with the departure of one dynamic principal. As stated, principals sometimes accumulate time and experience in one district with hopes of applying elsewhere.

When a principal leaves a district, school improvement efforts can halt and student achievement drop with his/her departure. In terms of principal turnover resulting in declining levels of student achievement, “few large scale studies address the issue of principal turnover” (Miller, 2013, p. 61) and its effects on how well students perform on standardized tests.

Principals and Student Performance

Despite the current volume of research examining the situation of principals being catalysts for school improvement, “much remains unknown” (Miller, 2013, p. 60) about the effects on student performance after the departure of the building leader. Researchers point out that in many previous studies of principals’ effect on performance, methods and findings may not have been absolute. Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) stated, “There are substantial gaps in our knowledge of how leaders are most effective” (p. 627). Much of the early research studying the correlation between principal and student performance concentrated on the connection between the “principal characteristics and student test score gains” (Miller, 2013, p. 60). Researchers often tried to identify traits like charisma, intelligence, and personality as driving factors that affected student performance. Many believe that high student performance can be linked to an effective building leader. Arne Duncan, the U.S. Secretary of Education recently stated, “There’s no such thing as a high-performing school without a great principal. . . . You simply can’t overstate their importance in driving student achievement, in attracting and retaining great talent to the school” (Connelly, 2010, p. 34). Certainly in this age of accountability, research focusing on a connection between a principal and student achievement is worthwhile. Apparently, based on the number of articles on the topic, many researchers felt it a worthy topic over the past 30 years.

In 1998, Hallinger and Heck categorized studies of principal leadership into three large areas: (a) analyses of effects of leadership on student performance, (b) studies in which effects of leadership are moderated or affected by other variables, and (c) studies in which building leaders, teachers, and factors of school organization manipulate each

other as well as student learning (pp. 157-191). When the focus is placed on the effects that school leaders have on the students' performance, researchers' findings differ on the importance that the individual plays in achievement. Principals carry out a dizzying array of responsibilities and it is very difficult to determine which of these directly affect student performance. Detaching the most effective leadership traits that improve instruction across the research is difficult but, according to Hallinger (2005), three common characteristics have emerged: (a) Focusing the mission and goals of the school, (b) supporting trust and collaboration in the building, and (c) actively supporting instruction (pp. 221-239). When an effective building leader institutes these strategies, student performance appears to be affected by the principal either directly or indirectly.

Some researchers consider this influence of the principal working face-to-face with teachers a direct factor for improving student performance and deem other factors as indirect. Examples of indirect factors for some researchers include: "developing professional capacity, parent involvement, or school climate" (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012, p. 628). Much research claims that principals most often positively affect student performance indirectly. Whether directly or indirectly, Shatzer, Caldarella, Hallam, and Brown (2013) feel that the principal's leadership style appears to positively affect student performance. (Repeatedly, researchers' findings suggest little evidence that principals have a direct and obvious effect on student performance and state that effective principals most certainly affect student performance indirectly.)

Eberts and Stone (1988) found through their research that student performance gains are "positively correlated with the principal's years of prior teaching experience" and "administrative experience" (pp. 291-299). The effectiveness of any principal can

depend on that person's individual "area of expertise" (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012, p. 628). For example, a principal talented in interpreting assessment data may have a knack for finding gaps in instruction or curriculum. By identifying these gaps at the classroom level, student performance will most likely improve when these data are shared with classroom teachers and a plan is developed to fill those gaps. Again, through effective leadership, principals indirectly affect the achievement of students. "Strong leadership practices are intended to affect school processes that mediate the effects" (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012, p. 628) on student performance. It appears that successful principals positively influence staff which, in turn, affects students and their performance. In this way, principals indirectly affect student performance.

Many principals possess traits (previously discussed in this chapter) and strategies that "foster structures of exchange" (Dumay, 2009, p. 549) between staff members. These focused, collaborative actions by teachers more than likely positively affect student performance. The leadership demonstrated by an effective principal "has a strong influence on a building's professional community" (Bryk et al., 1999, pp. 751-781) and then, in turn, positively affects student achievement. This is one way in which principals influence the performance of students by influencing the ways in which teachers instruct.

Supportive principals create a culture in which teachers want to instruct. "The principal's relationship with school staff likely influences job satisfaction" (Griffith, 2003, p. 336), which, in turn, relates to staff job performance. Teachers satisfied with their jobs then, affect student performance. This echoes the quality relationship building strategies used by transformational school leaders. Griffith (2003) continued, "The proposition that principal behaviors have stronger relations to outcomes associated with

staff” such as satisfaction with being a supported classroom teacher, than “student outcomes has intuitive appeal” (p. 335). Whether direct or indirect, the influences of the building leader do apparently affect student learning.

Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) published a diagram explaining the connection between the building principal and student performance. In Figure 2.2 the authors describe in their diagram the connection between principal leadership and student learning.

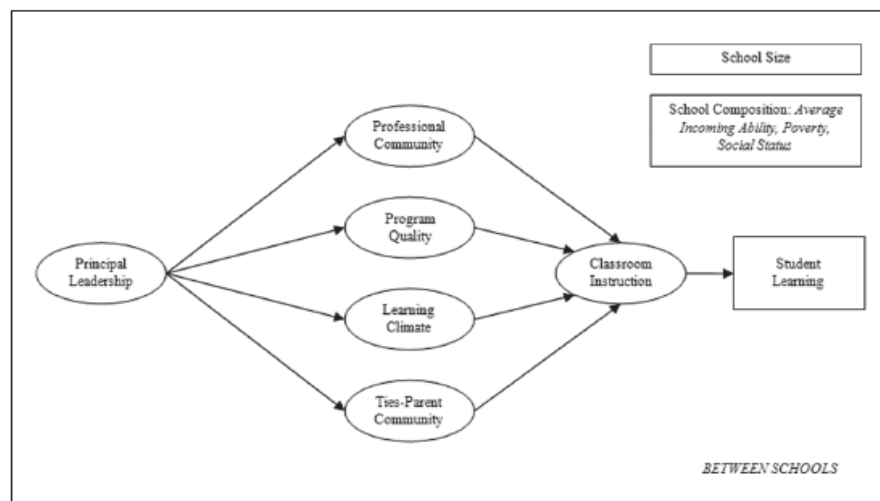


Figure 2.2. Between-school model. From Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012, p. 633.

On the left side of the diagram is an oval containing the label *Principal Leadership*. From this oval extend four arrows pointing to four additional ovals in the center of the diagram. These four ovals contain what the researchers call, *organizational factors*. Organizational factors are programs or strategies used in the building that promote increased student performance. Effective principals initiate and monitor these factors. These four factors named by the authors include: Professional Community, Program Quality, Learning Climate, and Ties-Parent Community. From these four factor

ovals, project a second set of four arrows all converging toward a larger oval on the right side of the page. Within this single oval are written the words, *Classroom Instruction*. This oval signifies the combination of organizational factors that create quality classroom instruction. From the instruction oval and pointing toward the right, is a single arrow pointing to a large rectangle along the right side of the page. Within this rectangle are the words, *Student Learning*. This is a very visual representation of how the principal oversees specific factors that then, in turn, affect instruction of the students. Student learning (performance) is ultimately the final result.

Miller (2013) studied the relationship between student performance and principal turnover in North Carolina public schools. She framed her study around what she calls a “flexible description of the relationship between principal turnover and student test scores” (p. 65). Many principal turnover studies include data from buildings that were doing poorly at the time of the principal’s departure and transition. The school might be acquiring a new leader because the “existing principal was fired, promoted, or retired” (Miller, 2013, p. 71). The school may have had an extended history of low performance. Researchers must use caution when interpreting the results of principal transitions. It cannot be discounted that student achievement may have “experienced a recovery” (Miller, 2013, p. 71) anyhow if the exiting principal remained in the building. Principal turnover usually occurs after an extended time of falling performance. Student achievement “typically rises” (Miller, 2013, p. 71) following the placement of a new building leader. Fortunately, under the leadership of an effective principal, performance typically shows signs of incremental rebound during the third year. Interestingly, student

performance then often returns to “pre-transition levels by the end of the fourth year” (Miller, 2013, p. 62) since the principal’s exodus.

If an effective leader can ultimately affect student performance, what traits does that leader possess or demonstrate that creates academic improvement? A tool was developed to measure leadership behaviors . . . the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.

The MLQ

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is one of the most commonly used instruments to “measure transformational and transactional leader behaviors” when researching organizational leadership (Tejeda, Scandura, & Pillai, 2001, p. 31). It has been used extensively when researching traits of educational leaders. The MLQ has been the principle tool used by researchers in the study of the Multifactor Leadership Theory. According to Yukl (1994), “most research on leadership theory has incorporated the use of the MLQ” (p. 353) to measure a variety of elements of transformational and transactional leadership.

The MLQ was developed by Bass by developing items that reflect current thought on transformational leadership qualities and to “verify its effectiveness” (Heinitz, Liepmann, & Felfe, 2005, p. 183). Burns’ definition of “transformational leadership along with charismatic literature” (Carless, 1998, p. 354) were used as keystones in the creation of the MLQ. Whereas Bass views transformational leadership as amplifying transactional leadership, Burns’ views transactional and transformational styles as being at opposite ends of a spectrum. Through the creation of the MLQ, Bass enhanced Burns’ concept and turned it into a tangible application. Over time, researchers attempted to adapt the MLQ to better meet their research requirements. Consequently, numerous

versions of the questionnaire have been developed including a wide range of items and factors. Inevitably, some forms are more valid and reliable than others.

The MLQ has been both praised and criticized by numerous researchers. When reviewing the MLQ research, it appears that some “inconsistent findings” have been published (Tejeda, et al., 2001, p. 31). This could be due to the number of versions that have evolved and been used since its inception. The MLQ, when used as a measure of the Multifactor Leadership Theory, offers a “rich base of information” (Tejeda et al., 2001, p. 49) about leadership style. Conversely, Yukl (1999) critically analyzed the research regarding charismatic and transformational leadership theories and the use of the MLQ. He cited that some studies have claimed “differing factor structures” (Yukl, 1999, pp. 285-305) due, in part, to the number of times the MLQ has been changed over time by researchers to better match the framework of their studies. More importantly, Yukl (1999) disputed that the majority of the conceptual discrepancies are directly attributed to the number of fundamental “conceptual weaknesses” (pp. 285-305) found throughout the transformational leadership model. An examination of the literature on Multifactor Leadership Theory reveals a number of “different measures of MLQ constructs” (Yukl, 1999, pp. 285-305). This has energized argument about the theory and has possibly limited the development of additional research on the theory. In response many researchers have created new measures based on the MLQ or have used variations of the questionnaire to collect data. While modified versions of the tool produce useful data, they make comparisons of prior research using the Bass’ original questionnaire very difficult.

All items on the MLQ are scored by implementing a 5-point Likert scale. The span of the Likert scale range from *frequently* to *not at all*. Even though the original MLQ contained 90 items and nine subscales, the developers of the questionnaire ask researchers not to modify the tool.

The version used for this study was the MLQ 5X-Short. “The reduction of items seems to be a common strategy” (Heinitz et al., 2005, p. 188). This shortened version possesses a reduced set of items from the original questionnaire and according to Tejada et al. (2001), “shows preliminary evidence of construct and predictive validity” (p. 31). This shortened version also lends itself well to the proposed targeted sample number in the data collection segment of this study. Geyer and Steyrer (1998) have reported when using the short version (MLQ 5X-Short) of the MLQ, “high correlations are produced among the transformational scales” (Geyer & Steyrer, 1998, p. 397-420). Geyer and Steyrer (1998) shared as one of their conclusions from a study conducted in 1998 that, “Based on the correlation clusters, we assume that the reduced set of factors will provide a better description of the leadership facets assessed with the MLQ” (pp. 397-420). Although this version does not contain all facets of transformational leadership found within the original questionnaire, this is additional support that the short version of the MLQ is a valuable research tool.

The MLQ Form 5X-Short contains nine Likert scale items that are sectioned into three leadership style areas. These areas include: *Transformational Leadership Styles*, *Transactional Leadership Styles*, and *Passive/Avoidant Leadership Styles*. The scale ranges from *Not at all* (0) to *Frequently, if not always* (4). The short version scales seem to be “internally consistent and empirically distinct” (Tejada et al., 2001, p. 48). When

describing the effectiveness of the MLQ 5X, researchers Schriesheim, Wu, and Scandura (2009) shared that the MLQ 5X has “earned its place as the most popular measure of transformation and transactional leadership through the effort and diligent labors of its developers and many other scholars in the field” (p. 614). Because of its reliability and the targeted sample size proposed in this particular study, the MLQ 5X was selected as the primary data collection instrument.

Turnaround

Spurred by the mandates of NCLB, many consistently low-performing schools began to explore new ways to improve student performance. One such strategy is *turnaround*. In modern context in American schools, the term turnaround refers to the “rapid, significant improvement in the academic achievement of persistently low performing schools” (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, pp. 8-38). Since the enactment of the Federal No Child Left Behind legislation in 2002, countless reform efforts initiated by struggling school districts in the United States focused improvement efforts around turnaround strategies. Turnaround approaches in schools prior to 2002 were rare. Because many inner-city public schools have histories of low-performance, urban schools were overtaken by the turnaround wave of reform. Often, these schools lacked local funding to commence any new programming or initiatives. To help states reform unproductive school district practices, the Federal government allocated vast quantities of monies through grants and Federal programming.

President Obama made turnaround a flagship for his administration's approach to educational reform when he disclosed a \$3.5 billion Federal Title I school improvement grant in the form of School Improvement Grants (SIG). The goal of the SIG program

was to offer money to school districts to *turn around* their persistently lowest performing schools (U.S. DOE, 2009). In order for an applying school to be eligible for SIG funding, the school district was required to commit to one of four strategies for turning around the school district. One such strategy in the turnaround model requires replacing the principal, at least 50% of the staff, and implementing a new instructional program. A second model called the *transformational model* also involved replacing staff and the principal and then implementing comprehensive reforms in the district's instructional programs.

SIG grants became immediately popular for many consistently low-performing school buildings, and school districts eagerly lined up to compete for this newly available money. The U.S. Department of Education's website reported that more than 800 SIG turnaround grants were in effect for the 2010-2011 school year. Many of these districts were found in states like North Carolina and Illinois (Data.Ed.Gov, n.d.). Along with access to SIG grant monies come mandates that stipulate how school districts must change the way in which they do business.

As mentioned, turnaround tactics often include the "implementation of severe personnel and organizational measures" (Peck & Reitzug, 2014, pp. 8-38) such as significant replacement of staff as well as the leadership team. Trujillo (2012) explained that through implementation of stringent "personnel maneuvers, turnarounds institute the exact conditions linked with persistent low performance" (p. 1). These conditions can include high staff turnover, organizational and leadership instability, poor culture for learning, and "racial and social economic segregation" (Trujillo, 2012, p. 1).

Additionally, to create immediate results, most or all previous management practices are completely revamped.

Many critics of turnaround claim that rather than a shiny new innovation, turnaround could be considered as a “business management concept that trickled down to education 30 years later” (Peck & Reitzug, 2012, pp. 347-381). It seems that some reform ideas like turnaround have already emerged and then been discarded in the business sector only to be later promoted as new and state-of-the-art in the education world. Business-minded approaches have an outsized influence in education policy and reform (Cuban, 2004; Ravitch, 2010; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). School reform has a habit of being cyclical in nature with a new reform always ready to replace an outdated modification.

Some critics have adamantly opposed the amount of money granted to turnaround efforts with little return in terms of increased student performance. A recent *Wall Street Journal* opinion article stated “throwing billions more at turnaround schemes seems to fail as consistently as the schools they target” (2010, p. 2). Warren Buffett, billionaire, and co-owner of the Pittsburgh-based Heinz Corporation stated:

Both our operating and investment experience cause us to conclude that turnarounds seldom turn, and that the same energies and talents are much better employed in a good business purchased at a fair price than a poor business purchased at a bargain price. (Buffet, 1979, p. 5)

Employed as a drastic school performance sanction in the 1990s and continued under No Child Left Behind, reconstitution reflected a core aspect of the turnaround strategy in that it involved “the blanket replacement of school personnel” (Malen & Rice, 2009, p. 464). This blatant clearing out of key personnel is often criticized because many of these former leaders led their organizations in very low-performing buildings and with

meager resources. Many of these critics feel that these leaders simply did the best they could with what they had at the time. Many principals feel unprepared or ill-trained to implement the drastic measures often associated with turnaround initiatives.

Principal Preparation Programs

Disappointment in the traditional principal preparation programs teamed with increased demands for principal proficiency have spurred many universities and principal training programs to redesign how to equip future principals for the job. Simply creating new programs does not mean that suddenly principals will become better leaders in this era of educational reform and accountability. Foremost, a principal preparation program must attract and enroll quality educators that possess the “potential and desire to lead” (Lauder, 2000, p. 23) in today’s high-stakes school building.

According to Lauder (2000), quality principal preparation programs should incorporate the following components:

- Entrance requirements aligned with the demands of the principalship
- Cohort models
- Clear performance-based standards
- Opportunities for individualization
- Development and assessment of skills
- Emphasis on reflective practice
- Continuous program review with input from current practitioners

(Lauder, 2000, p. 23).

Many of these components used to better develop future building leaders were absent from principal development programs just 10 or 15 years ago.

Today’s effective principals are required to possess a strong depth of knowledge, “skill to apply that knowledge in the context of their school” (Lauder, 2000, p. 24), and the wherewithal to know how to apply their skills and knowledge successfully.

Successful principal preparation programs have found it beneficial when identifying the past successes of leadership candidates. Some programs include rigorous screening processes to ensure that potential program candidates have the abilities and knowledge to become potential leaders. Other programs are built around the premise of training leadership candidates in groups called *cohorts*.

The development of cohorts has become a popular strategy for training emerging future building leaders. In a cohort, the group learns together, “from and with each other” (Lauder, 2000, p. 25). Often, this shared knowledge spans far beyond a course textbook and is rich, connecting, and meaningful. A common practice of cohort programs is to move the cohort members through a series of common scenarios or experiences with regular opportunities to reflect and share with and learn from other group members. Not surprising, many principal candidates that secure leadership positions remain in contact with cohort fellows long after the preparation program has ended. The rewards of networking and learning from one another can span one’s career. Whether in a cohort or some other preparation program, many are centered on very specific standards that are aligned to the principalship.

To incorporate performance-based standards into current principal preparation programs, many states mesh measurable, performance-based criteria into their leadership preparation curricula. For example, some states, like Texas use the *21 Performance Domains* while others use the *Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders*. States often mandate that educators enrolled in principal certification programs be required to pass a comprehensive examination based on these standards before they are awarded his/her professional certificate.

The quality, effectiveness, and popularity of principal preparation programs play a substantial role in the “long-term success or failure of school principals” (Lauder, 2000, p. 27) and their capacity to positively affect student performance. After all, is that not the essence of being a school leader?

Summary

In summary, research makes the importance of effective leadership abundantly clear. This is especially true for school building principals. Whether leaders exhibit traits that are attributed to being innate or clusters of traits that are honed during preservice and service years, the ultimate goal is the same . . . increased performance of the organization. Undoubtedly, leaders in school districts cannot transform their buildings forward without creating connections with their staff. Without these vital connections that build organizational trust, empower teachers, and merge the collective talents of all staff, principals often fall victim to burnout.

Principals indisputably face nearly insurmountable challenges. In addition to daily situations such as student behaviors and teacher evaluation systems, principals are responsible for reform mandates set forth in legislation like the No Child Left Behind Act, which decrees performance growth of all students. In some states, the principal’s job literally depends on student growth.

Realizing the daunting task that principals face, some universities and school districts are currently developing principal preparation programs to better groom developing administrators. Additionally, it is hoped that quality preparation programs will entice many effective teacher leaders from the classroom and into the principal’s office.

It is important to note that during the time these concluding statements were drafted for this chapter, the U.S. Federal government is on the verge of reauthorizing the No Child Left Behind Act. With the U.S. Senate prepared to vote soon, the new act would be christened, *Every Child Succeeds Act*. If adopted, its impact could be monumental for struggling school districts. To begin, Federal government would shift much of its involvement in education to the states, and local school districts. Although states would still be required to continue Federal achievement testing and reporting of those data results, many of the punitive accountability strategies used against school districts and their leaders could be phased out of the new reauthorization. This could have immediate and lasting effects on recruiting and retaining school leaders.

With one third of American schools still being labeled as failing, it is clear that the well-intended mandates of NCLB are not achieving the desired results. It is hoped that the *Every Child Succeeds Act* might offer better options to school leaders in creating a culture of learning and performance.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if potential leaders exist within a central Pennsylvania school district that could be easily identified, and possibly later, groomed to become an administrator or teacher leader within the district. This research incorporated a model using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X) as a sorting tool to identify transactional and transformational leaders already employed by the school district. From this, a sampling of clearly distinctive employees with transactional or transformational qualities was asked to respond to simulated scenarios common to the central Pennsylvanian school district. If these employees respond to the scenario situation consistently with the MLQ 5X identification, then administrators could potentially use the MLQ 5X as a quick measure to determine if employees would be candidates for transactional or transformational leadership roles.

It is vital that any organization, such as a school district, select the best possible candidate when filling leadership positions. Some districts cast a wide net to attract as many qualified candidates as possible while other districts look only inward at homegrown leaders. By doing this, districts are afforded the opportunity of identifying and preparing their own locally home-grown leaders in programs developed for this purpose. Although the intent of interviewing administrative candidates from inside and outside the school district is to identify the most qualified person for the job, hiring outsiders includes certain unknowns and an element of inherent risk. Local candidates provide a living resume of their accomplishments. Conversely, when a district hires only

local applicants, it is limiting itself. These potential leaders may have a narrow point of reference and leadership experiences based solely on the local environment. In this age of accountability, few districts can afford not to select the best possible candidate for each leadership position. Home-grown leadership programs could increase each local district's ability to do just that.

Appropriateness of the Research Design

The data collection focus of this study was to identify potential leaders and their leadership styles through the use of two diagnostics – the MLQ 5X and the scenario interviews. General leadership traits were identified through the use of the MLQ 5X and then those demonstrated traits were applied to simulated leadership predicaments through the scenario interviews. The goal of this study was not to critique or study the actual assessments themselves but to study the results attained by each. Because of that, a mixed method approach was selected to best conduct research to meet the goal of this study. Although quantitative data were collected from the use of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X, it was used more as a sorting mechanism to separate degrees of leadership styles (transactional and transformational) from within the participant pool and not to test any one specific theory or program. While qualitative data comprised the bulk of information needed to complete this study, quantitative data was also needed, albeit with less emphasis, to identify leadership traits. Creswell (2009) described this type of framework as consisting of both qualitative and quantitative approaches being merged together in the study with one method standing out as the dominant paradigm and the other taking on a supplementary or supportive element. Similarly, Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) described research using blended paradigms as

“mixed methodology studies.” By using the MLQ 5X to identify leadership styles preferred by the participants and then using the scenario interviews to observe how the participants apply those traits, the robustness of the data collected added considerably to the relevance of this study.

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X)

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X) is a comprehensive questionnaire that measures a variety of leadership styles. The MLQ 5X was created by Bass by developing items that reflect current thought on transformational leadership qualities and to “verify its effectiveness” (Heinitz et al., 2005, p. 183). The MLQ is the most used instrument to examine transformational and transactional leadership behavior (Avolio & Howell, 1992; Yammarino & Bass, 1990). In terms of the study of transformational and transactional leadership styles, the majority of published empirical research has incorporated the use of the MLQ (Bass, 1990). Although leadership styles such as transformational and transactional were described in great depth in chapter two, a brief summary of both is needed to connect previous research and literature to the assessment being used in the first stage of data collection in this study.

The MLQ 5X measures leadership styles from those that transform (transformational) followers into becoming potential leaders themselves, to leaders (transactional) that compensate with contingent rewards, to leaders (Laissez-Faire) that are more passive in nature. One reason to use a survey or questionnaire is to collect desired data that are not currently collected through any other source. Additionally, the use of a questionnaire often indicates that the data needed to complete the research are simply not available. Such was the case in this particular study. One advantage of using

a survey is that information can be collected from a large number of participants in a relatively short period of time (Denscombe, 2004). Additionally, this is a relatively inexpensive and effective way to collect data. The MLQ 5X costs one dollar per printed copy. Based on this array of advantages when compared to other data collection tools, the researcher decided that the MLQ 5X would be the diagnostic of choice for the initial data collection stage of his study.

The short version scale seems to be “internally consistent and empirically distinct” (Tejeda et al., 2001, p. 48). The MLQ 5X can be completed in a paper and pencil version or electronically. The paper pencil version was chosen for this study. Each version of this tool requires a paid license fee from mindgarden.com for its use and takes about 15 minutes for an average participant to complete. The MLQ is written at the ninth-grade level for ease of use. The version used for this study (MLQ 5X) possesses a reduced 45-question set of items from the original questionnaire and according to Tejeda et al., (2001), “shows preliminary evidence of construct and predictive validity” (p. 31). By measuring nine facets of leadership and then further refining responses into three higher order factors, or leadership styles, the MLQ 5X describes how educators lead.

Surveys and the MLQ

Data collection using the MLQ 5X is fairly simple. Along with experiments and case studies, surveys are one of the most widely used methodologies implemented in research (Calder, 1998). Surveys are comprised of a predetermined list of responses from which the participant may choose an answer. A quality survey or questionnaire includes every possible response from which the participant may choose a fitting reply. These types of questions are often called closed-ended questions and have dominated research

in the psychological and social sciences (Friborg & Rosenvinge, 2013). Closed-ended questions often include Likert scales. The use of the Likert scale enables the researcher to easily quantify the participants' data by counting the frequency of each survey response. Some researchers have discovered a much higher participation rate when using close-ended questions. For example, Falthzik and Carroll (1971) found in their research that some questionnaires using open-ended questioning averaged about 27% completion rates, while close-ended surveys produced response rates of about 78%. Score reliability is often higher with closed-ended questions and creates the ability of standardizing data collection (Friborg & Rosenvinge, 2013). It appears that survey participation correlates with ease of completion. Because it was the hope of this researcher to achieve the highest number of participant participation possible, this information added additional support for the choice of using the closed-ended MLQ 5X as the study's primary data collection instrument.

The MLQ 5X questionnaire incorporates the use of Likert scales and closed-ended questions. The 45 questionnaire items on the MLQ 5X prompt participants to rate the frequency of actions and behaviors of his/her leadership ideals on a 5-point Likert scale. Two versions of the assessment are available; one to rate one's leader and the other to rate themselves as a leader. Both are constructed in the same way with slight changes to how questions are framed. The Likert scales used on the MLQ 5X consist of five digits, zero through four. The number four represents *frequently, if not always* and reduces numerically to zero which indicates *not at all* (Bass & Avolio, 2000). Examples of questions rating one's leaders include: Each questionnaire item is prefaced with the phrase, *the person I am rating* and ends with leadership scenarios. Examples include:

“Provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts” and “Suggests new ways of looking at how to complete assignments” (Bass & Avolio, 2000). Based on the participant’s responses on the MLQ, the leadership style of the manager is determined. In the MLQ 5X version used in this study, “I” statements replace “The person I am rating” statements and reflect how one critiques one’s own leadership thinking and beliefs. The questions in the MLQ 5X version selected for this study begin with “I” statements. For example, “I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts.” Both versions use similar basic verbiage with differing types of application.

MLQ Leadership Styles

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X is used to determine leadership traits. These traits are aligned to specific leadership styles. One such style is Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is a keystone of this study. Transformational leadership is the ability to “*translate intention into reality*” and then to “*sustain it*” (Bennis & Nanus, 2007, p. 16). Geyer and Steyrer (1998) have reported when using the short version of the MLQ, “high correlations are produced among the transformational scales” (pp. 397-420). This leadership style is often associated with organizational change or innovation. Transformational leadership is the favored style of leadership given that it is assumed to produce results beyond expectations (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). It is generally accepted that transformational leadership styles are the most sought by organizations seeking improvement and that the leaders exhibiting these traits are in most demand. Vinger and Cilliers (2006) described transformational leaders as “change agents” (p. 1). The researchers found that if leaders possessed a high level of transformational traits, they were able to better manage organizational change. Bass

divided the section of his tool that measures transformational leadership into subsections. Heinitz et al. (2005) studied these subsections and defined them as *scales*.

Heinitz et al. (2005) described each of these scales as such: *Idealized Influence Attributed* (IIA) and *Idealized Influence Behavior* (IIB) idealize influence as the capability of exerting influence by serving as a role model. As idealized influence can reflect behavioral (leader) and attributional components (follower), the style was represented by two subdimensions.

Inspirational Motivation (IM) assesses the ability of the leader to sketch out and illustrate a vision of the future in a symbolic language that can be shared by the employees. *Intellectual Stimulation* (IS) measures that degree to which the leader tries to find new solutions, presents new ideas, and encourages the employees to question assumptions and reframe problems. *Individual Consideration* (IC) describes a leader who considers the employees as individuals, listens to them, coaches, and encourages them. An individually considerate leader acts as a coach or a mentor (p. 183). The participant results on the MLQ 5X in this study were correlated to the scales of transformational leadership.

Burns' definition of "transformational leadership along with charismatic literature" (Carless, 1998, p. 354) were used as keystones in the creation of the MLQ. Through the creation of the MLQ, Bass enhanced Burns' concept and turned it into a tangible application. Over time, researchers attempted to adapt the MLQ to better meet their own research requirements. Consequently, numerous versions of the questionnaire have been developed including a wide range of items and factors. Unfortunately, many of these distorted versions of the original instrument have lost reliability and validity for

the sake of convenience of the researcher. The MLQ 5X appears to have retained much of its intended integrity incorporated by the MLQ's original creators. Researchers supporting transformational leadership include Bryman (1992) and more recently Caldwell et al. (2011) and Hartog et al. (1997). Because the original 45 questions found on the MLQ 5X fit ideally into this study and directly support its focus, no modifications, additions, or deletions were made to the creators' original list of queries.

Paramount to this study, the MLQ 5X measures a second managerial style – transactional leadership. According to Marzano et al. (2005), an effective transactional leader sets goals, clarifies desired outcomes, and exchanges rewards and recognition for accomplishments. The researchers went on to state that the transactional leader “suggests or consults, provides feedback, and gives employees praise when it is deserved” (p. 14). In general terms, transactional leadership is defined as trading one thing for another or, *quid pro quo*. This trading occurs between the leader and subordinates. The prime purpose of the follower, or subordinate, is to do what his/her manager tells them to do. Followers receive certain valued outcomes (e.g., wages, prestige, additional responsibilities) when they act according to their leader's wishes (Hartog et al., 1997). Transactional leadership is sometimes described as a series of rewards and exchanges between the leader and their followers. Transactional leadership is often viewed as managerial and direct.

In addition to using the MLQ 5X to identify the transformational leaders demonstrating traits beyond average, the most proficient transactional leaders were also isolated. Again, Heinitz and associates (2005) broke this section of the tool into subsections, or scales. Transactional leaders are described by the following scales.

Transactional leadership within the MLQ 5X is represented by three scales (Heinitz et. al, 2005). *Contingent Reward* (CR) describes the positive and constructive exchange between leader and subordinate. The leader illustrates which goals have to be met and rewards their achievement. *Management-by-Exception active* (MbEa) characterizes a leader who is actively looking for deviations in order to avoid errors and problems. *Management-by-Exception passive* (MbEp) refers to a leader who only reacts if problems occur and standards are not met. Although transformational leadership is often preferred by organizations in flux, it is also important to identify transactional leadership qualities to address unique organizational needs and also for comparison sake. These traits were identified through participant responses on the MLQ 5X to select subjects for the second phase of data collection in this study.

It is important to note that leaders can also lean toward one type of style according to situation. Some leaders are not consistently transactional, for example, in every decision they make throughout their careers. A degree of fluidity can exist between styles for certain leaders. The influence of situational variables can affect leadership outcomes within the context of leadership styles and should not be ignored (Odumeru & Ifeanyi, 2013). This echoes the belief of the MLQ creators that the instrument was not intended to simply label a leader absolutely but to identify his/her most preferred leadership style. This is precisely the reason why this researcher specifically developed a scoring rubric based on a continuum *between* styles to more accurately assess leadership style and degrees of those styles in the second stage of data collection.

Last, the MLQ 5X also identifies non-leaders or passive leaders (Bass, 2003). Bass et al. (2003) found through their research that being a passive leader is counterproductive to the organization in which they lead. The passive leader is often described as one that avoids decision making and frequently evades using leadership authority for the good of the organization. Thus, passive leadership often implies a negative connotation in terms of organizational leadership. Because the intent of this research is to identify strong, potential educational leaders and his/her leadership styles, this study focused on two of the three leadership styles identified by this questionnaire – transformational and transactional. The intent of the researcher is not to minimize the importance of passive leaders but to focus on the two styles most often associated with strong and positive leadership in times of change. The participants with the highest scores, when compared to the average transformational and transactional traits as identified by the MLQ 5X, were included in the second stage of data collection.

MLQ Validity

In research studies that involve data collection tools such as questionnaires, it is vital to discuss the instrument's validity. The factor structure of the MLQ (5X) has been validated by both the discriminatory and confirmatory factor analysis (mindgarden.com, 2004). In terms of instrument validity, it is generally accepted that the information gathered provides evidence that the inferences about the participants in question are appropriate based on the statistics used in the analysis (Creswell, 2009). When determining the validity of an instrument, three types of evidence can be incorporated. These are the content, the construct, and the criterion of the instrument. Since 1984, the MLQ has been validated by hundreds of researchers and organizations (Kleinman, 2004).

The creators of the instrument also cite its successes. The MLQ has been used to study leadership styles in hundreds of studies, dissertations, and reports over the past 25 years (Bass & Avolio, 1993, Bass & Avolio, 1999, 2004; Berson, 1999). In addition to studies completed in the United States, the MLQ has been used to identify leadership traits in 30 other countries as well (Bass & Avolio, 2004).

A researcher can also rely on literature about the tool as well as findings published by experts in the field. Creswell suggested that an instrument already proven reliable and valid is preferable in research (2009). Because the MLQ (and MLQ 5X) has been used extensively in leadership research and has been proven a valid tool in many analyses, this researcher had chosen it as a principle diagnostic in his research. The MLQ has been shown to have a reasonably established factor structure using confirmatory factor analysis in several previous studies (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). The Mindgarden manual outlines many studies in which the MLQ and MLQ 5X have been effectively used.

When describing the effectiveness of the MLQ 5X, researchers Schriesheim, Wu, and Scandura (2009) shared that the MLQ 5X has “earned its place as the most popular measure of transformational and transactional leadership through the effort and diligent labors of its developers and many other scholars in the field” (p. 614). Geyer and Steyrer shared as one of their conclusions from a study conducted in 1998 that, “Based on the correlation clusters, we assume that the reduced set of factors will provide a better description of the leadership facets assessed with the MLQ” (Heinitz et al., 2005, p. 184). Based on proven success of the MLQ, and its sorter version MLQ 5X, by a multitude of

respected researchers and organizations, this researcher chose it (MLQ 5X) for use in this study.

The MLQ Preparatory Research

Previous to the actual educator data collection with the MLQ 5X, preparatory research was used with a group of 15 volunteers who were not affiliated with the study. These volunteers were selected by the researcher because of his/her current position and capacity to lead. Not all volunteers were educators but all are responsible for decision making or leading teams within his/her organization. Volunteers possessed at least a high school diploma and most possessed a college degree. Whenever possible, it is suggested to use preparatory research to test one's questionnaire or survey before incorporating it with the targeted sample group. Calder (1998) suggested that using preparatory research affords the researcher an opportunity to assess procedures and data collection mechanics. The preparatory research questionnaires were administered with the suggested 15-minute time limit and scored by the researcher afterwards. This trial was beneficial to the researcher twofold – first, in observing participants taking the questionnaire and second in practice scoring the questionnaire results. Questions about the MLQ 5X posed by the participants were noted along with any suggestions to improve the overall data collection experience.

Preparatory research MLQ 5X volunteers were informed that participation was optional and all information would remain confidential. Volunteers were also told that the use of his or her responses was simply to be used as preparatory research in the assessment process of the MLQ 5X and that the responses will in no way be used in the study. They were asked to complete the questionnaire in the quiet space provided and to

return the MLQ 5X to the researcher when complete. These meetings occurred informally at homes, a local church, and in a school building during summer break. All preparatory research MLQ 5Xs were completed within the allotted 15 minutes. Most volunteers completed the MLQ 5X questionnaire without questions to the researcher. Two volunteers left one or more questions blank based on statements that the questions did not necessarily align to his or her unique leadership role. Interestingly, one individual who was asked to complete the preparatory research questionnaire refused to participate. He briefly read the MLQ 5X and without explanation simply declined to finish the form.

As completed MLQ 5Xs were collected, the researcher asked volunteers to share any questions about directions or lack of question clarity. Responses shared by volunteers were noted. Three volunteers asked if they should apply the question to his/her work environment or life in general. Two volunteers asked what to do if they felt a question didn't specifically apply to them. One participant felt that certain questions made them sound "too forceful" and chose to leave them blank. Other volunteers stated that certain questions "didn't describe them at all." This only seems logical because each question is framed around a specific leadership style, which could influence a participant to answer in a manor not reflective of his/her unique style.

The MLQ Scoring Rubric Preparatory Research

While using the foundational scoring protocols set forth in the Mindgarden.com manual, the researcher, with support from other educational experts, created a scoring rubric for the MLQ 5X. The scoring rubric had undergone several edits before its last version was finalized. This one page rubric separates participant responses into the three leadership categories. By using the sum and then averages of each subgroup on the MLQ

5X rubric, the researcher was able to directly compare achieved leadership scores numerically. It is the researcher's assumption that the highest value demonstrated on the scoring rubric in a leadership style subgroup would reflect the participant's dominant leadership style.

The MLQ 5X scoring rubric categorizes leadership traits by subgroups. The order of questions on the MLQ 5X is not listed in sequential groupings of subgroups and instead are random. On the researcher-developed scoring rubric, subgroup scores are added together and then divided by the number of questions for that subgroup (usually four). Because the researcher purposely developed the grid to include all transformational traits in the left column and transactional traits in the right, one needs to simply add subgroup scores downward and divide by the number of subgroups to create an average score for each leadership trait. Transformational subgroup totals are divided by five and transactional by three.

The subgroup, Laissez-Faire is also included in the right-sided column below transactional traits. If the average score of Laissez-Faire traits was larger than both transformational and transactional traits, the volunteer's MLQ 5X score was excluded from the overall score ranking because it did not reflect an individual demonstrating the targeted study traits of transformational or transactional leaders. Incidentally, no preparatory research volunteer achieved a dominant Laissez-Faire score.

This strategy was also repeated in the actual data collection stage. If either transformational or transactional score was greater than the Laissez-Faire average, the researcher assumed that the greater average score reflects the more than average leadership style possessed by the volunteer. If both averages were equal, it was presumed

by the researcher that the volunteer derives leadership decision making from traits equally as demonstrated by the MLQ 5X. In the actual research study, those 10 participants who demonstrated the highest proficient ratings in leadership style as identified by the MLQ 5X were invited to voluntarily participate in the second stage of data collection – the scenario interviews.

Preparatory research with the completed MLQ 5X and the scoring rubric worked as intended, with only a couple minor changes to spacing and textboxes. By using the MLQ 5X scoring rubric with preparatory research participant responses, numeric scores were produced in each of the leadership categories. Most preparatory research volunteers demonstrated more than average preference in the transformational leadership style. When scored with the rubric, two preparatory research volunteer participants demonstrated stronger than average traits as transactional leaders. Finally, as mentioned, no preparatory research volunteer was found to have scored predominantly in Laissez-Faire leadership when using the MLQ 5X scoring rubric.

Worth noting, it was discovered when using the preparatory research scoring rubric that a volunteer purposefully left three questions unanswered on the MLQ 5X. The volunteer shared that she did not “know how to answer the questions correctly.” While scoring, the researcher marked these answers on the rubric as zeroes. This created a scoring dilemma for the researcher and so he later asked each participant in the actual study to try to complete all answers to the best of his/her abilities.

Because the researcher-developed scoring rubric worked as anticipated, its final version was also used in the MLQ 5X data collection of the 102 volunteer participants in the actual research study.

Leadership Experience and Demographic Survey

To better understand the background of each volunteer participating in the MLQ 5X data collection, the researcher, in conjunction with several local educational experts, created a leadership experience and demographic survey. This researcher was interested in seeing if any specific demographic data might affect how one answers leadership style questions on the MLQ 5X. For example, would a veteran teacher leader answer MLQ 5X leadership questions differently than, say, a first year educator? The short survey includes such questions asking about experience in a school building, gender, and past leadership experiences. Written in very generic terms, the survey is user friendly and easy to complete. To protect volunteer participant anonymity, no identifying information was asked on the leadership experience demographic survey. The survey took no longer than five minutes to complete and ended by asking the participant if he/she plans to pursue a leadership position one day in the future.

Preparatory Research and the Demographic Survey

To apply preparatory research to the leadership demographic survey, it was distributed to all volunteers taking the MLQ 5X questionnaire. The researcher explained that the purpose of the survey was for preparatory research only and that data collected would not be used in the actual study. Volunteers were given a brief period of time before taking the MLQ 5X to complete the leadership demographic survey. The researcher collected the survey and the MLQ 5X when both were completed by the volunteer. Thirteen of the 15 volunteer participants completed and returned his/her demographic survey. It was undetermined as to why two volunteers chose not to complete the demographic survey. Interestingly, and possibly coincidentally, volunteers

that shared the most number of years in education on the survey were almost always identified as transformational on the MLQ 5X. Other interesting data were collected during the preparatory researching of the demographic survey. For example, it was discovered that volunteers possessed tenure ranging one year to 29 years of experience. Additionally, volunteer participants shared the number of leadership positions in which they held. That number ranged from one to eight. The leadership demographic survey was used in its finalized form with all participants completing the MLQ 5X in the actual data collection segment of the study. This researcher was curious to discover if the trends found in the preparatory research process were also reflected in the actual data collection progression.

Scenario Interview

Structured face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data in the second phase of data collection. By using researcher-developed scenarios, participants were asked to respond as a hypothetical school leader. Participants for the scenario interviews were selected based on MLQ 5X ratings. The purpose of the interview was to observe the participants' abilities to apply leadership traits and knowledge to challenging, real world leadership situations. The interviewer scribed responses as well as visual cues shared by the participants. Because each interview was recorded by using an iPad II, the researcher also transcribed the responses at a later time. To increase inter-rater reliability, the qualitative data were compared between interviewer and researcher.

Additionally, each interview was quantified by use of a researcher-created rubric. This rubric was developed by the researcher in conjunction with several experts in local school districts and universities. The rubric is a Likert style instrument that places

participants' responses on a continuum between transformational and transactional leadership traits. To find a sum of each leadership style, the researcher added each column to develop a score. The researcher logged each score at the space provided at the bottom of the rubric. Whichever leadership style received a greater numeric value, the researcher presumed that to be the style most dominant of the participant. Again, the interviewer and researcher both scored responses by using the rubric and compared outcomes.

Scenario Development and Selection

The scenarios used in the second phase of data collection in this study were created by the researcher and several local experts from public school districts and universities. The scenarios were designed to demonstrate leadership traits as identified by the MLQ 5X. Each scenario was constructed to elicit responses trending toward transformational or transactional leadership styles on the continuum rubric. Additionally, the goal of the scenarios was to see how well participants were able to apply leadership traits to simulated situations. The scenarios were based on situations (very similar) that the researcher and other educators have experienced in the last 20 years in public education. Because of the 30 minute timeframe of the interviews, the original list of eight scenarios was reduced to three. This was done by the researcher asking five experienced elementary principals, an experienced high school principal, and a superintendent to critique and select the most authentic situations that they felt might produce meaningful dialogue best aligned to the goals of the study. Through consensus, it was decided that the final three scenarios were the most challenging, real world, and situations requiring higher order thinking and application of leadership skills. To assess

the effectiveness of the scenarios, each was preparatory researched with volunteer participants during the earlier stage of this study.

Preparatory Researching the Scenario Interview

To preparatory research the scenario interviews, this researcher asked a local expert educator, who would partake in the actual research study, to participate in a preparatory research program to assess the quality of the scenarios and the interview process. In preparation of the actual research study, this educational expert completed the required online Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training modules. The interviewer's credentials are further detailed later in this chapter.

To preparatory research the scenario interview portion of the study, the researcher established meeting times and dates between the expert interviewer and three volunteer participants. All three volunteer participants possess college degrees in the field of education. Two had earned advanced degrees. Although the focus of this preparatory research activity was to test the interview process, this researcher felt it important that the volunteers have a background in education. These criteria were necessary because the scenario questions are so specific to leadership decisions that are made in a school setting. For example, a non-school leader might not be completely aware of the definition, implications, or ramifications of "zero tolerance" in the first scenario question. None of the volunteer participants were included in the actual study.

A meeting date and time was established for the interviewer and researcher to meet with each volunteer participant. The interviews were conducted in a quiet room of the researcher's home. Unlike the actual study in which participants will be recorded, the researcher was a passive observer and note-taker so no recording device was used. The

researcher and interviewer timed each session and scribed volunteer responses. At the end of each interview and after the volunteer was excused, the researcher and interviewer compared observations, notes, and ideas. This comparison and discussion afterwards ensured that both the interviewer and researcher were looking for the ways in which leadership traits were being shared through participant responses and not necessarily looking for *the right answer*. This comparison of results served to strengthen inter-rater reliability of data.

Because the researcher was acquainted with all volunteers in the scenario interview preparatory research, he was able to informally ask each participant questions about the interview process. Volunteer participants freely shared his/her feelings and insights about the interview process. Several key findings were discovered during these preparatory research interviews. For example, it was quickly discovered that volunteer participants experienced trouble responding to the entire scenario. Two volunteers stated that they were “visual learners” and would have felt better seeing the scenario. The complexity and length of each scenario also added to volunteer frustration. The interview time lengthened when the interviewer was asked to reread the scenario. To eliminate each of these problems, a solution was derived by the researcher and interviewer. It was decided that the interviewer would provide each participant a laminated, large print card with each scenario printed on it during the actual interviews.

Second, it was discovered through the preparatory research interviews that participants had questions about specific details in each scenario. For example, one participant asked if it “would be acceptable to call the superintendent if the situation was actually happening?” Another volunteer asked if his/her action would be “following

district policy?” Inevitably, similar questions would be asked during the actual interviews so the researcher and interviewer agreed that his generic response would be, “try your best” if specific content questions arise. It was decided that his responding to questions could manipulate a participant’s response. This strategy worked well during the actual interviews.

Third, it was discovered that the allotted minutes for the interview is adequate for participants to respond. Because each session was timed, it was found that an average interview lasted 24 minutes. That time would later adequately suffice for educators in the actual interviews.

Fourth, it was discovered that the interviewer was not certain when to go onto the next scenario. He immediately realized during the first preparatory research interview that by asking probing questions to move the interview along could imply to the participant that they need to add to his/her response. Questions like, “Do you need more time?” or “Are you done with your answer and ready to move on?” could indicate to the participant that the interviewer was looking for more information from him/her. It was determined that the interviewer would wait until a noticeable pause before moving onto the next scenario.

Last, it was decided that similar to teacher interviews, the interviewer would refrain from using positive comments like, “good” or “That is interesting.” The interviewer would attempt not to nod his head in agreement. These comments or gestures could skew the data by indicating to the participant that his/her answer was satisfactory to the interviewer.

The Scenario Interview Rubric

To quantify and better understand qualitative results gained through the scenario interviews, the researcher in collaboration with several local educational experts developed a rubric designed to measure one's leadership style.

In conjunction with a Youngstown State University expert, it was decided that the rubric would be created around a continuum that placed participants' responses on a scale between traits demonstrated by transformational (left column) leaders and traits exemplified by transactional leadership styles (right column). The notion of creating the rubric around a continuum for each question was important because some leaders do not demonstrate one specific leadership style in every situation. The continuum was designed to demonstrate whether leaders actually do rely on one leadership style continuously or waiver back and forth between styles depending on the challenge at hand. This Likert scale type rubric was developed based on previous proven rubric designs as well as research focused on transformational and transactional leadership styles. The original rubric was refined by the researcher and with help from local experts to its final form.

In addition to the Likert scale at the top section of the rubric, there is an additional section for interviewer comments based on participant responses and reactions. This comment section was included to highlight pertinent participant responses as well as subtle cues such as body language.

Preparatory Researching the Interview Rubric

Before preparatory researching the interview rubric, it was decided by the researcher that the interviewer would complete each rubric only after each interview was

complete and not during the conversation. The interviewer shared that he would be more effective at data collection if he were to use a note pad and pencil in order to quickly log volunteer participant responses. Only after each interview was complete and with the help of his handwritten notes did the interviewer then use the scoring rubric to tally the volunteer participant responses. The interviewer felt that by referring to his own notes, his critique of the interview while using the rubric would be more accurate. The researcher agreed to also adhere to this strategy. By doing so, the researcher and interviewer abided by the same process in order to be consistent during the interview data collection procedure. It was later decided by the researcher and interviewer to maintain this tactic during the actual data collection.

After each scenario session ended and the volunteer participant excused, the researcher and interviewer completed the scenario rubric individually. The researcher and interviewer then discussed scoring of the rubric. Handwritten notes were referenced for accuracy. Individual scores were discussed and justified. After consensus was reached (if needed), the researcher and interviewer continued to the next section. This preparatory researching process again proved to be valuable.

During the preparatory researching of the scenario rubric, it was discovered that some of the wording on the original document seemed to convey a negative connotation. For example, on the transactional column, a statement that included the word *outdated* was edited to read *routine*.

Because one volunteer shared that it was difficult to follow along with the lengthy scenarios and that she was “a visual person,” it was determined large print, laminated versions of each scenario would be placed on the table during the actual interviews.

To avoid anxiety during the actual scenario interviews, participants were made aware beforehand that an iPad II would be used during the sessions as a recording device so that the researcher can score his/her responses at a later time. This information was shared on the Letter of Consent as well as in the email invitation to participate.

An additional strategy used to relieve anxiety was reminders that participants may withdraw from the study at any time. Again, this was stated on the Letter of Consent. A similar printed statement was displayed on the table in front of the participant during the actual scenario sessions. Lastly, due to the real-life content of each scenario, participants would be asked by the interviewer at the end of each response if they are comfortable and willing to move on to the next scenario.

It is important to note that preparatory research results found by the interviewer were very similar to those discovered by the researcher. This is crucial indicating that both experts extract important response information correspondingly and also score similarly. It was then expected by this researcher that results would be alike in the actual data collection as well.

Assumptions of Rubric Success

Although the interviewer was trained specifically for his role in the study by the researcher and is a veteran administrator, how he scores volunteer responses may have greatly varied from the researcher's critique. It was assumed that because the interviewer and researcher share very similar educational and experiential backgrounds, the ratings, when compared, of each volunteer participant should be fairly consistent between the two raters.

It was assumed that when asked about the preparatory research scenario process, the volunteers were truthful offering meaningful feedback to better streamline the procedure for the actual study. It was also assumed that because the volunteers earned an education degree that they understood and answered in ways that added value to the scenario question structure and clarity.

An additional assumption was that volunteers shared responses in a way that enabled the interviewer and researcher to score his/her responses on the rubric continuum somewhere between transformational and transactional. It was also assumed that the volunteers' responses would score on either side of the continuum demonstrating a specific leadership style. However, his/her responses may have reflected a consistent answer of "neither," which to this researcher, indicated a blend of transformational and transactional leadership styles or a different leadership style altogether.

It was assumed that the scenario questions were written at a level at which volunteer participants would easily understand. It was also assumed that the volunteer participants would share responses that in some way reflect a specific leadership style as indicated on the rubric.

It was assumed the volunteer participants would be able to respond to the three scenario questions within the allotted time.

Sampling

Survey sampling enables the researcher to accurately estimate the traits or opinions of a large target population without the need of collecting data from all individuals of that population. Sampling in educational research enables the researcher to generate meaningful data based on part, rather than the whole population (Ross, 2005).

The purposes of a survey is a way of gathering information about a specific group of individuals in order to then develop reliable conclusions about the entire population. This in turn, maximizes external validity (Calder, 1998). Sampling enables the researcher to collect data from subgroups and then use that information to make generalizations to the entire population of interest. These generalizations may be in the form of estimates for one or more specific traits found within that population (Ross, 2005). Survey sample is especially useful when a participant population is very large or distributed across a large geographic area. The term sample survey is often used because the entire population is not participating in the actual data collection. Because of the large number of district employees as well as expansive geographic size, survey sampling was used in this study capturing the essence of the population from, literally, every corner of the school district.

For this study, 102 of the 301 district educators were included in the collection of questionnaire data. To avoid issues of coercion, the two buildings that are under the supervision of the researcher were purposefully excluded from the study. Although the staff from two entire buildings was omitted, the researcher was confident that the target sample number of 100 participants for the study was achievable with the remaining seven school buildings in the district. Actually, 102 participants ultimately participated. Because participants are educators residing within the boundaries of the district as well as individuals driving from distances up to an hour away, this researcher also felt that this sample was representative of the population from this general area of Pennsylvania. In fact, the study results could be generalized to many of the rural public school in this region of the country. The volunteer participant sampling of educators in this research included ones with diverse backgrounds, levels of education, and experiences.

Cluster sampling is defined as selecting a group of participants from one area. Cluster sampling is often used when it is geographically impossible to conduct a simple random sample. For example, instead of surveying teachers from across the entire state, teachers can be surveyed from across a very large local school district. In the case of this research study, the geographic area consisted of local school buildings spread across 258 square miles. Educators in seven of the nine school buildings received questionnaires. Because many of the personnel in the Central Office are already employed in leadership positions (superintendent, assistant superintendent, director of human resources, etc.), they were deliberately excluded from the research study.

To avoid threats of coercion, volunteers were contacted directly by the researcher in the form of an electronic email invitation to participate. In this email invitation, the general goals of the study, a brief explanation of the MLQ 5X, and a meeting time (after school) and place (faculty room) were shared. It is important to note that the researcher had acquired previous approval from his superintendent to use the district's email and school buildings for purposes of this study. No other forms of recruitment such as flyers or handwritten invitations were implemented. Additionally, the researcher did not use a second email invitation to recruit further participants.

Volunteer participants demonstrated his/her willingness to participate by meeting at the prearranged time and place to complete the MLQ 5X and the leadership demographic survey. Although potential participants from all seven remaining school buildings were invited to participate, logistical and cost constraints made surveying every eligible staff member in the school district difficult for this study. Because of the size of

the local district and to attempt to attain data truly representative of the entire area, volunteer cluster sampling were used in the initial stage of data collection.

District Sample Population

In educational research, it is important that the researcher describes the population (Ross, 2005). Of the 301 full-time educators in this district, 158 of them possess one or more graduate degrees. The remaining 143 have earned at least a bachelor's degree and many of those individuals are currently working toward an advanced degree. Six percent of district educators also possess a valid principal's certificate (J. Shepler, personal communication March 30, 2017). This researcher was unable to determine the actual number of certificated personnel that have or plan to interview for administrative positions. Highly Qualified Teacher rating for the district currently stands at 100%. Common in many rural school districts in this section of central Pennsylvania, the population of educators in this research study consists of 98% Caucasian adults. The difference in ratio of district employee females to males is atypical with females outnumbering males almost three to one. Ages of educators range from 22 years of age to a retiring staff member that was 66 years old. The majority of educators reside within the district.

Although many teachers have moved between relatively close grade levels, the moves were often limited to grade level bands for which they were certified. For example, high school educators rarely repositioned to teach at the primary levels. Similarly, elementary staff rarely relocates to the high school level. The average number of years in education as a district educator is 14.3 years. What is very interesting is the fact that the average number of service years within the school district is 12.9. This

indicates that the vast majority of educators in this district started his/her teaching career in this district and has remained here throughout his/her entire career. This could be attributed to the average teacher salary which is above the state average- \$53,400.

Another factor could be the distance of travel between available positions between school districts in this region of Pennsylvania. The fact that many educators in this study have been employed only by this district adds strength to the research question set forth by this study. Because many of the teachers are “home-grown,” would it be beneficial for the district, and ones like it, to create a leadership development program that also develops home-grown administrators? Student enrollment for the 2015-16 school year was 3,795 students.

MLQ Data Collection

To begin the data collection process, The MLQ (5X) license was purchased from www.mindgarden.com. One hundred twenty questionnaires were acquired through the license. Fifteen of the questionnaires were used to preparatory research the survey process with non-study participants. To best collect data from a cross section of the local school district, 102 MLQ 5X questionnaires were divided amongst the seven eligible school buildings in the district. As previously stated, the researcher’s two school buildings were excluded from the study. Based on logistics, time, and cost, the sample size of 100 reflects a realistic representation of the overall educator staff across the district. Correctly selecting a sample from the target population for a formal study is an important step in the research process (Summers, 1991). As previously reported, 100 educators from kindergarten through the 12th grade were included in the target population. Astonishingly, 102 volunteers ultimately participated in the data collection.

These educators included classroom teachers, Title I instructors, specials teachers, and school counselors. Educators outside of the classroom are sometimes excluded from research studies. Because many of these individuals also aspire to become leaders, this researcher purposely included them in the target population. The target population is sometimes referred to as the widespread population of people of interest to the researcher that possess combinations of desired characteristics (Summers, 1991). The established sample size represented much of the educator staff across the district but also encompassed the entire geographic region of the entire district. Sample size is invariably a compromise between practical constraints and research necessities (Calder, 1998). When the staff numbers found within the researcher's two buildings were subtracted from the target population, the goal of 100 participants was a reasonable representation of the district as a whole.

The ambition of this researcher was to achieve a participation rate of 100% with the MLQ 5X. Because the researcher is affiliated with the district, it was anticipated that the participation rate should be high. The estimated sum of MLQ 5Xs allotted to each building was developed as a percentage based on the number of certified educators found in each building. This was done because of the great disparity in teacher numbers found within each building. For example, 75 educators are housed at the high school whereas some of the smaller elementary schools only staff about 15 certified professionals. These allotted estimates later proved invaluable because the building (high school) with the most educators actually netted one of the lowest volunteer participation rates.

To help assure participant confidentiality, volunteer names were not written on the MLQ 5X. Instead, participant names were printed on a separate blank sheet of paper

that was placed in the envelope with the questionnaire and the survey. The sole purpose for this name page was to identify eligible participants for the second stage of data collection.

Upon delivering the MLQ 5X surveys on the predetermined date, the researcher described the intended purpose, the administration process, and collection procedure to all attending volunteers. Blank envelopes containing the data collection tools were administered to all participants. Volunteer participants were asked to read, date, and sign the Letter of Consent, complete the leadership experience demographic survey, complete both sides of the MLQ 5X, and print his/her name on the blank piece of paper. At the end of the data collection session, all materials were placed back into the original blank envelope by the participants. Although no identifiable information was included on either the survey form or MLQ 5X, all collected data were placed in a locked drawer at the researcher's home until scoring.

Building principals were not present for data collection nor made known of participating staff members' names.

The purpose of inviting participants through a voluntary email was to decrease researcher bias in sample selection and to minimize sampling error regarding the overall population (Summers, 1991). The term population refers to the individuals for which information is sought (Calder, 1998). Because every certificated educator in each eligible building was invited in the same manner to participate in the research study, those choosing to respond to the email invitation were random.

Each completed MLQ 5X was scored by the researcher according to directions included in the *MLQ Manual & Review Copy* purchased from www.mindgarden.com and

the researcher-developed scoring rubric. Close attention was paid by the researcher to the scores in areas of transformational and transactional leadership. Participants were not simply sorted by the labels of transformational or transactional. Per the recommendation suggested in the *MLQ Manual & Review Copy* by Mindgarden, participants instead were labeled as “more transformational than the norm” or “less transactional than the norm.” This confirms the notion used for the creation of the interview scenarios and accompanying scoring rubric that a continuum exists between the two leadership styles.

Because the MLQ 5X generates a quantitative value, participants were ranked according to a score derived from his/her responses on the scoring rubric. Scores were tabulated on an Excel spreadsheet and stored on the researcher’s personal laptop. To protect individuals’ confidentiality, no participant names were used on the spreadsheet.

Since one goal of this research was to use the MLQ 5X to identify top-rated and proficient participants, the highest scoring numeric values were identified and rank ordered. These top-scoring participants from the MLQ 5X were identified for further involvement in the study. Five top-scoring transformational as well as five top-scoring transactional teacher leaders created a stratified sample for the second stage of data collection. The highest ranked participants who demonstrated strong transformational traits were separated from the overall group to be included in the second stage of data collection. Similarly, the most affluent transactional leaders were also identified to be included in the interview stage of the study. These prospective volunteers were contacted by email invitation from the researcher and invited to participate in the final stage of data collection.

Scenario Interviews

The second data collection stage in this study consisted of face-to-face interviews. Interview methods have received a fair amount of empirical investigation (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Educators demonstrating most proficient in transformational and transactional leadership styles as indicated by the scores from the MLQ 5X questionnaire were invited to partake in the culminating stage of data collection in this study. These teacher leaders were invited to participate in face-to-face interviews responding to questions about simulated school scenarios which he/she could encounter as a school leader.

The interview data were based on a series of fictional scenario questions. These questions contain scenarios that any building administrator in central Pennsylvania could easily encounter as a building leader. The scenarios were developed by the researcher in conjunction with several administrators from three school districts and one university. Several building principals were also asked during the preparatory researching process for his or her input to strengthen the effectiveness of each question. It was the goal of the scenario developers to create realistic, higher-order, thought provoking circumstances that are also aligned to the strengths of transformational and transactional leaders. The objective was to create quality scenarios that not only identify leadership style traits but, more importantly, to see how those traits were applied by the prospective leaders. For example, would a participant identified by the MLQ 5X as possessing transformational leadership traits share examples of creating and maintaining trust or encouraging others to be creative by thinking of new ways of solving old problems? Would an identified transactional leader only react through his/her responses when a certain standard or

expectation was not achieved? The accompanying scoring rubric is a form of Likert scale that places participant responses somewhere on a hierarchy between transformational and transactional leadership. This is the same rubric developed and tested in the preparatory research process. Based on expert suggestions during the preparatory researching process, minor edits were made to the original rubric.

Types of Interviews

Interviews are one way in which researchers collect valuable data from research participants. The literature on interviewing as a data collection method is especially robust (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). Researchers may wish to take whatever steps are necessary to maximize data quality while minimizing burden on respondents (Sturges & Hanrahan, 2004). One way to achieve this is by interviewing by phone.

Although telephone interviews are preferred by some researchers, this researcher elected to use the face-to-face interview method. Though face-to-face interviews can be more demanding on the participants as well as the interviewer, it was hoped that foregoing the conveniences of phone interviews would provide richer and fuller participant responses.

As stated by McCracken (1988), participation as a respondent in a qualitative interview can be “time-consuming, privacy endangering, and intellectually and emotionally demanding” (p. 27). One advantage to a face-to-face interview is the information that can be visually noted by the interviewer. For example, body language such as arms being crossed or a frown on the participant’s face might indicate discomfort or uncertainty when answering. Conversely, a smile or nodding head might indicate confidence in one’s response. A capable interviewer will pay attention to these nonverbal

cues and record them as part of the interview data. These indicators will also affect the speed at which the interview proceeds. The way in which the interviewer asks a question and then reacts to the respondent's behavior and answer can also have an effect on the information processing in the time needed to answer question (Loosvelt & Beullens, 2013). This type of information acquired during a face-to-face interview is valuable and impossible to observe during a phone interview. Although much more involved and time consuming, the researcher felt that based on the literature regarding face-to-face interviews, the overall data and observations made through this strategy were worth the added effort, cost, and planning. For these reasons, a veteran interviewer was recruited to perform the face-to-face interviews for this study. Again, it was the hope of this researcher that the tradeoffs in convenience of phone interviews were outweighed by the robustness of the data collected face-to-face.

The Interviewer

To help collect meaningful data, an expert at interviewing was recruited to conduct the interviews. The CITI-certified interviewer in this study is an effective educator possessing 32 years of experience in the field of public education. Three of the most current years have been served as a respected district superintendent. He has held positions as high school social studies teacher, coach, and principal. Purposefully chosen by the researcher to provide participants some level of anonymity, the experienced interviewer is an employee from outside the school district and has not been previously acquainted with the participants. Having participated in over 200 educator job interviews, the interviewer possesses a wealth of interviewing skills and techniques.

Experienced interviewers develop an acute sense of pacing during interviews. Knowing that the same questions must be asked to each participant, it is up to the interviewer to establish the speed of the session. Interview *speed* is the pace at which an interview proceeds (Loosvelt & Beullens, 2013). Much like the process of asking job interview questions, the length of the research questioning should be almost the same for every interview (Loosvelt & Beullens, 2013). The observant interviewer should be able to sense when questioning speed must increase or slow down. Olson and Peytchev (2007) found that the experiential background of the interviewer may also drastically affect the pace at which the interview is conducted. Based on previous research, it is assumed that a greater level of experience results in a higher interview speed. During research interviews, it is presumed that the participant and interviewer both establish the speed of the interview.

A participant's level of education and/or experience may also affect the speed at which an interview proceeds. A well-trained interviewer presents questions at an interview speed quickly adapted to the cognitive capacity of the respondents. The interview should progress at the comfort level of the interviewee (Loosvelt & Beullens, 2013). Obviously, this capacity cannot be identified immediately and sometimes takes one or two questions for the interviewer to establish an appropriate pace of questioning to match the respondent's experiential or educational level. Loosvelt and Beullens (2013) considered education level a *proxy variable*. The keen interviewer should also pace the interview upon the time needed for the participant to respond. Response *latency* is the time that it takes a respondent to answer the posed question and is considered an indirect indicator of the amount of information processing necessary to answer a question

(Bassilli et al., 1996). Consequently, if a participant does possess a higher level of education or training, the speed at which responses are shared might increase significantly. This researcher was confident that the experienced interviewer would conduct quality scenario-interview sessions.

Preparing the Interviewer

The interviewer was trained to conduct proper teacher interviewing by a previous human resource director as well as two former superintendents. Similar to teaching position interviews, the face-to-face interviews in this study needed to be structured, consistently repetitive in nature, well-paced, and designed to collect as much meaningful data as possible in a relatively brief period of time. Additionally, interviews needed to occur in an environment in which the participants felt at ease and willing to share openly with the interviewer. To produce an adequate response, the trained interviewer applied many of the same basic process strategies as in, say, a job interview. It is believed that if the interviewer is trained in the key principle of standardized interviewing procedures, then he/she should have only limited impact on the respondent's replies (Loosvelt & Beullens, 2013). The researcher met with the interviewer several times prior to the data collection process to review the responsibilities required of him in this study and to confirm his commitment to the research process. Afterwards, interview questions, expectations, and protocol were discussed in detail.

During the summer months prior to the anticipated data collection, the researcher and interviewer met several times to discuss the upcoming process of data collection tools and processes. During the initial meeting, each scenario question was read and discussed. Since the interviewer assisted in editing the final scenarios, he was already

familiar with the content of each. The anticipated length of the interview was discussed and established to be 30 minutes for each participant. The iPad II recording device and directions for its use were reviewed. The researcher explained to the interviewer during the summer meetings that each participant would be an educator from an elementary, middle, or high school and from any content area. The expectations of the interviewer's behavior were reviewed and many similarities were made to teacher job interviews. It was discussed that during each interview session, the participant would be presented three scenarios to which he/she would respond. The researcher shared a rubric that was designed specifically for this study and how to use it to score participants' responses. During the initial meeting, it was presented to the interviewer that each interview will be recorded with an iPad II and that participants may withdraw from the study at any time. The reason for recording each session, as explained to the interviewer, was to enable the researcher to also accurately score the responses of each participant at a later time. Additionally, the recordings could be used by the interviewer to review participant comments that may have seemed vague or indistinct during the interviews. Notes were later compared and compiled by the interviewer and the researcher by using these recorded sessions.

During these summer meetings, the researcher engaged in lengthy conversation with the interviewer about traits commonly found in transformational and transactional leaders. Several leadership style articles were given to the interviewer to be later perused at his convenience. Additionally, the researcher provided a summarized list of leadership traits as well as sample anticipated responses to the scenario situations that participants might share highlighting his/her preferred leadership style. Lastly, a copy of the MLQ

5X and its purpose was shared with the interviewer and discussed at some length. The researcher and interviewer met on several occasions throughout the summer to discuss transformational and transactional leadership and how each can be applied to the interview scenarios, scoring rubrics, refine the interview process, and engage in general sharing of the completed dissertation chapters to this point. In addition to actual meetings, this researcher and interviewer exchanged numerous and frequent phone calls, emails, and texts in regards to the study parameters. The interview process was preparatory researched with several educators. Adjustments to the interview questions as well as the process were made in preparation of the actual data collection during the upcoming school year.

Planning for the Interviews

For the convenience of participants, a local school building was used as the interview site. These meetings at school occurred during non-school hours to limit interruptions as well as maintaining a level of participant anonymity. A quiet room with a large conference table was selected as the meeting place. Bottles of drinking water were provided to both individuals. A poster stating that participants may withdraw from the study at any time was taped to the table in front and in plain sight of the volunteers. Large-print, laminated scenarios were on the table between the individuals. The casually-dressed interviewer positioned across from the participants in a nonthreatening posture and made the volunteer feel as secure and as comfortable as possible. Participants were reminded by the interviewer that he/she may withdraw from the study at any time while they signed the Letter of Consent. A timing device was used to monitor the length of interviews. The interviewer explained the process of the interview before each

participant's session. This included directions such as the ability to ask a scenario be reread or the tempo of the session be slowed. After each scenario was read aloud to the participant, the interviewer scribed detailed notes based on participant responses. These notes would later be used to more accurately complete the scoring rubric.

Variables

Although this study design does not involve introducing some new innovation or strategy to then later assess its effectiveness, some variables still exist that may have affected its results.

First, some participants that volunteered to complete the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5X might have felt that this is just "one more thing" that they are asked to do. Participants may have had reservations about how confidential the data collection process was. Furthermore, some participants may not have truly understood what was being asked on every MLQ 5X question. All of these conditions, singly or in combination, may have affected how committed each participant was when answering the MLQ 5X questions. Obviously, this could slightly skew the overall results of the questionnaire.

Because the volunteer sample population for the MLQ 5X included 100 educators from most of a public school district, invariably a wide span in teaching experience and advanced education existed between participants. The years of experience of the participating educators could have been another variable that affected data results. Veteran teacher-leaders may have had a better understanding of the MLQ 5X questions as well as the application of information from each question when compared to more recently hired educators. Many experienced teachers have participated on committees,

performed duties as grade-level or team leaders, or acted as building or association representatives. It is hard to dispute that calling upon these past experiences affect how one answers questions concerning leadership. This became especially evident in the latter part of the study. Tenure and past experiences affected how participants applied skills to hypothetical situations. Newly hired or non-tenured staff might simply not yet have acquired the experiential base to accurately process the application of leadership traits to simulated scenarios when compared to veteran staff.

In addition to the length of experience, where these experiences took place could also be a variable that affects overall data. For example, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the vast majority of educators employed by this district have never been employed anywhere else. These educators are familiar with the community and the culture found within his/her building. They are familiar with school board members and other key stakeholders. These educators are accustomed to goals and expectations set forth by the district over a longer duration of time. Conversely, experienced educators hired from outside the district will not possess these luxuries. What these individuals could possess, however, are lessons learned from past experiences in other places. His/her trade-off in terms of lacking a community connection over a long period of time is experience in problem-solving, planning, and leading in varied environments. In regards to this study, the variable of being a home-grown educator or not may have affected how participants responded to both the MLQ 5X questions as well as scenario situations.

Another variable in this study that could have affected the significance of the data, specifically the interview data, was the lack of established rapport between the

interviewer and participant. Although the intent of this arrangement was purposeful and designed to protect participant anonymity and confidentiality, the very nature of being interviewed by a stranger may have skewed how participants chose to respond to the scenarios.

For example, participants may have withheld true feelings or beliefs from his/her statements because they were unsure as to how his/her shared information would be used in the study. Simpler yet, participants may have screened what they shared simply because they were not familiar with the interviewer asking the questions.

Contrariwise, the fact that interviewer and participant had not been previously acquainted appeared to elicit deeper and more meaningful responses. As expected by this researcher, the participants seemed to feel comfortable in the professionalism and personality exhibited by the interviewer which, in turn, invited in-depth response. Additionally, it appeared that participants felt comfortable in the environment in which the interviews took place as well as the measures taken to ensure confidentiality.

Summary

In this study, a mixed-method approach was used. Data were collected through quantitative and qualitative means. Before the actual data collection commenced, all instruments in the study were preparatory researched with groups of individuals not affiliated with the actual study. The researcher, as well as his committee, felt that preparatory researching the data instruments and their scoring components was essential for success of the study. The initial preparatory researched data collection instruments were the MLQ 5X, leadership demographic survey, followed by scenario interviews. The preparatory researched MLQ 5X was scored according to the guidelines established in the

manual purchased from Mindgarden.com and use of a researcher-developed scoring rubric. To quantify volunteer participant scenario responses, scoring rubrics were developed by the researcher in conjunction with other experts. The preparatory researched scenario interviews were conducted by a CITI-trained expert and the researcher. Results were scored by the researcher and interviewer and then compared. By preparatory researching the instruments, the process, and the scoring rubrics, this researcher felt confident that the actual data collection in the next chapter is accurate, efficient, and meaningful to the field of education.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA COLLECTION AND RESULTS

In this age of school accountability and shrinking revenues, districts across the state are trying to find innovative ways of identifying and training effective educators for leadership positions. One strategy adopted by school districts is to identify and groom potential leaders within the ranks of its own staff. The purpose of this study was to explore the tools needed and possibilities of districts' abilities to identify candidates for homegrown leadership. If this study could identify the instruments needed as well as a process to implement an effective leadership search and professional development program, districts across the state could benefit in terms of time, efficiency, and cost. This chapter describes ways in which data were collected and analyzed to support the purpose of the research study. Data collection affords the researcher a unique opportunity to open doors to new thoughts and information previously undiscovered. In the case of this specific research, the researcher was unable to locate any previously conducted study of its kind.

Data Collection Instruments

The MLQ 5X proved to be an excellent instrument well-suited for this unique research study because it enabled the researcher to clearly identify leadership styles of over 100 educators from a school district in central Pennsylvania. Further advantages of the MLQ 5X in this study were the relative ease of use, cost, and reasonable time needed to successfully collect meaningful and relevant data from a large geographic area.

A second data collection instrument used in this study was the researcher-developed leadership demographic survey (LDS). The survey identified items such as participants' ages, years of experience, and interest in pursuing a leadership position. Although the initial purpose of the leadership demographic survey was not to be correlated to the MLQ 5X data, interesting patterns arose when the results from both instruments were compared by using a correlational line graph.

The culminating data collection tool was the real-world scenario interviews. These researcher-developed scenarios were created to assess the participant's ability to apply leadership skills in his/her identified leadership style to simulated situations. The interview data collection session involved participants responding to three scenarios. These interviews were scored by the researcher as well as the interviewer.

Ultimately, data from all three collection instruments were compiled and compared. These data were used to address points of exploration posed in the four research questions.

The Leadership Demographic Survey (LDS)

The eight-question leadership demographic survey was distributed to volunteer participants with the MLQ 5X questionnaire during the initial data collection session. The leadership demographic survey focuses on items such as participants' past leadership experiences. For example, survey questions include inquiry about teacher-leadership positions held in a school district as well as other types of leadership roles found outside the school setting. A question on the survey asks if the participant "has earned or plans to earn" a principal's or other supervisory license. All 102 participants completed all questions on the paper pencil survey in five minutes or less.

According to the leadership demographic survey, the youngest educator to complete the instrument was 23 years old. Conversely, the most veteran educator was of the age of 61 years old. The range of participant age was 38 years.

The mean age of participant in this study was 40.9 years of age. Fewer very young as well as very veteran educators volunteered to complete the survey and MLQ 5X in this study. This is demonstrated in Figure 4.1. The majority of the participants were aged in the 30s and 40s. The median age of participants in this study was 41 years of age. Only one participant exceeded the age of 60 years old. The age range in this particular study mirrors the overall school district average age trends.

Several ages appeared more frequently than others. In fact, the mode age was repeated between three years of age. Occurring most frequently in the data of this study were 34, 36, and 37 years of age. Each of these data points repeated seven times. The mode, in terms of participant age, was most frequent in the mid-30s.

The range of ages was fairly close, numerically, to the next sequential number. No outstanding skewing data outliers existed either at the beginning or end of the list of educator ages. In fact, no consecutive ages within the entire surveyed population were more than two years apart. In Figure 4.1, the participants' ages are detailed in a chart.

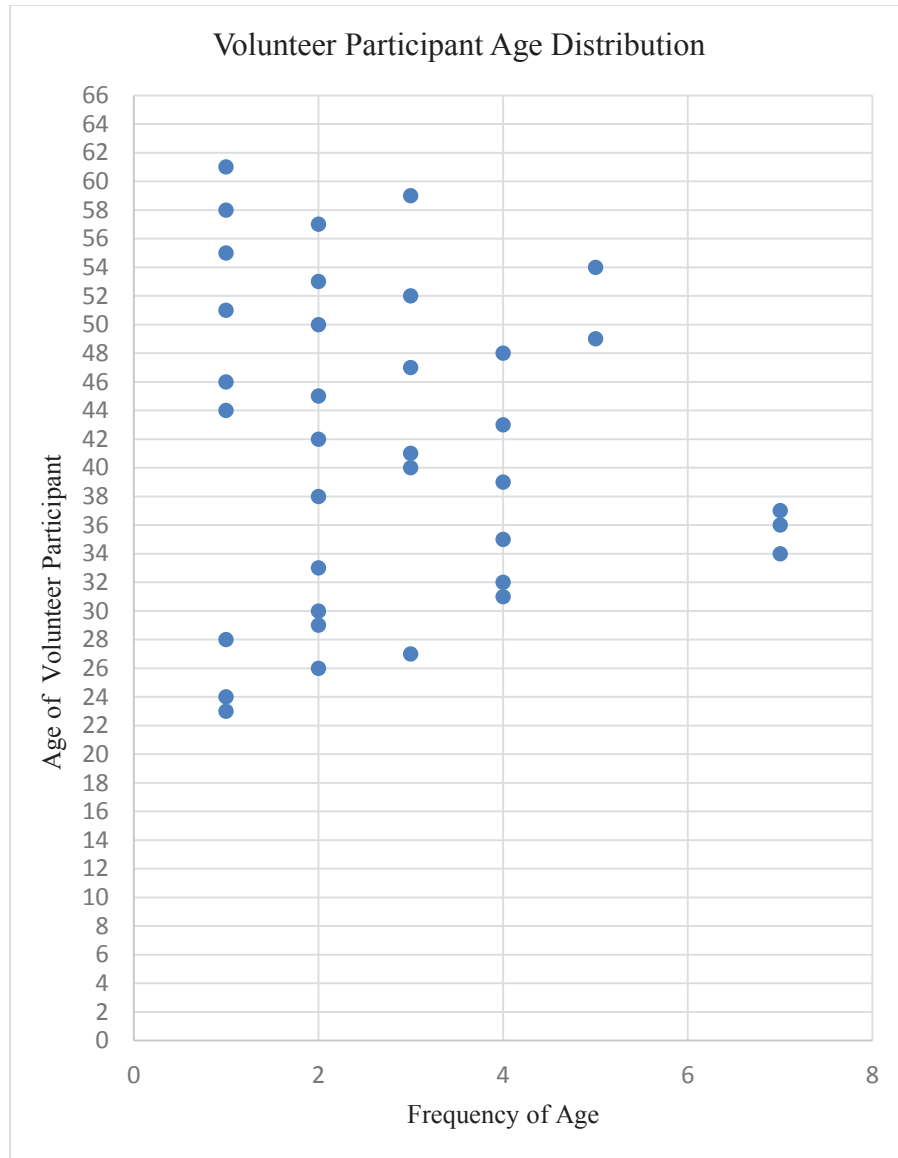


Figure 4.1. Volunteer participant age distribution.

Participant Years of Experience

Also identified on the leadership demographic survey was the number of years that each participant spent in the field of education. Participants were permitted, by the researcher, to include years of substitute teaching as experience. Although substitute teaching is not considered full time, the experience does afford the up-and-coming educator an opportunity to practice professional decision-making and flexibility, both of

which are key traits often possessed by effective leaders. Additionally, this research included participants with as little as two years of experience and up to veterans possessing 36 years.

The mean number of years of experience of participants in this study was 15.5 years of service. With a range of 2 and 36, and a span of 34 years between the least experienced to the most experienced participant, this researcher was able to collect data from a multitude of educators with varying experience. Very similar to participant ages, blatant skewing outliers did not exist in the participating population. Again, years of experience followed a very similar pattern of consecutive sequencing with no more than four years difference between any two data points.

The mode year of experience is 13. This data point occurred eight times in the responses collected. Data points numerically close to 13 reflected similar patterns. Data points 11, 12, and 14 years of experience each were represented seven times. This trend is visible in Figure 4.2. The median number of years of experience was 18.

Additional Information Discovered by the Leadership Experience Survey

The study district professional staff consisted of 301 individuals (J. Shepler, personal communication, March 30, 2017). Very similar to the study sample, the study school district reflects an atypical number of females to males. Of the 301 district professional employees, 222 (74%) are females. Male educators, in comparison, number 79 (26%). This disproportionate and atypical ratio of females to males is also reflected in the study sample.

Of the 102 volunteer participants that completed the MLQ 5X and the leadership experience survey, only 18 were males with the youngest male participant being 28 years

old and the most veteran being 51 years old. The range in male participant ages was 28 years. The mean male participant age was 39 years old. Of the 18 (18%) male participants, only seven signified that he would be interested in a leadership position.

Of the 102 volunteer participants, 84 (82%) were females. With the youngest female participant being 23 years old and the most veteran being 61 years old, the range for woman participants is 38 years. Of these 84 female participants, 12 expressed an interest in a leadership role. When females and males interested in obtaining a leadership position are combined, about 19% of the volunteer participant population in this study conveyed a desire to lead. About half (9) of the respondents interested in a leadership role are over the age of 40.

When demographic data from the leadership demographic survey (LDS) were disaggregated by gender, it can be reviewed as averages or percentages. In figure 4.2, female demographic data collected through the eight survey questions is organized numerically.

Gender	Average Age	Years of Experience in District (Average)	Outside of District Years (Average)	Teacher/Leader Positions (Average)	Outside Leadership Positions (Average)	Possess Principal License	Willing to Relocate
Female	42	12	1.8	1.12	.96	14.3%	22.6%

Figure 4.2. Female demographic data.

Similarly, male demographic data from the LDS are arranged in Figure 4.3.

Gender	Average Age	Years of Experience in District (Average)	Outside of District Years (Average)	Teacher/Leader Positions (Average)	Outside Leadership Positions (Average)	Possess Principal License	Willing to Relocate
Male	39	13.9	2.14	1	1.4	28%	50%

Figure 4.3. Male demographic data.

When gender demographics from the LDS are compared, the amount of time teaching in years, inside and outside of the district, were very similar between female and male sample participants. Similar findings were observed when comparing past leadership experiences. Only when the number of those individuals possessing a principal’s license and desire to relocate were examined was an atypical ratio between the two genders apparent, favoring male participants.

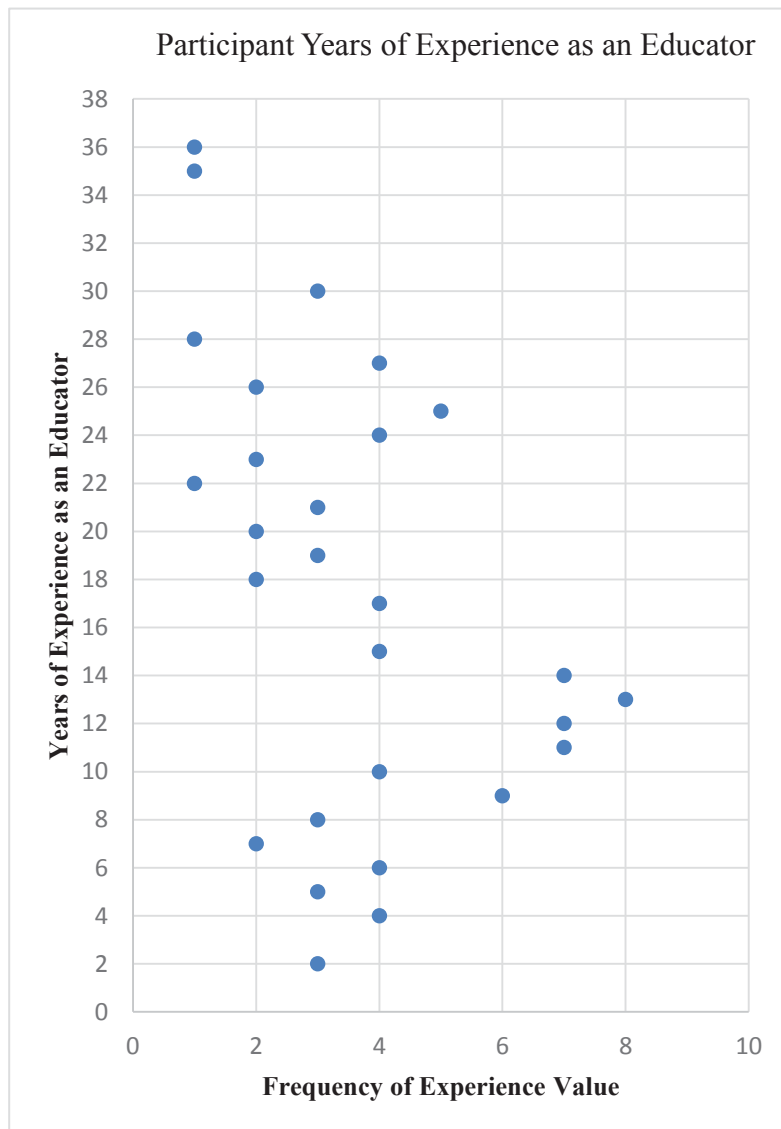


Figure 4.4. Participant years of experience as an educator.

Research Questions

1. When using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X) to identify leadership styles in prospective leaders, will participants report distinct transformational and transactional traits?

By using the researcher-developed scoring rubric in this study, the researcher was able to quantify participant responses into two main categories of leadership styles: transformational and transactional. Through the use of the simple researcher-developed rubric, participant responses were converted to a numeric score in each of the three sub score areas on the MLQ 5X: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and Laissez-Faire leadership. These scores were formulated by determining the sum of all sub scores and then dividing by the number of sub scores (five or three) for that specific leadership style. Figure 4.3 demonstrates the calculations for transformational and transactional scores as found on the researcher-developed scoring rubric.

Transformational total ($I Ia + I Ib + I m + I s + I c$) / 5 =							Transactional total ($C R + M E a + M E p$) / 3 =
Directions: Match the rating number (0-4) with the appropriate question. Then, add the column for each question and divide by the number of items to calculate an average for each subscale. List the total subscale scores with one being the highest.							

Figure 4.5. Calculations for transformational and transactional scores.

As stated in chapter three, the focus of this study was based on traits of transformational and transactional leaders. Per guidelines established in the study, any leader demonstrating a high score in Laissez-Faire leadership when compared to all other leadership styles was excluded from the study.

After using the rubric to score each participant's responses, the researcher used the Excel spreadsheet program to document results achieved by all 102 volunteers.

The researcher was able to use the Excel program to then rank order transformational and transactional scores as well as also determine a mean or average score for each leadership style.

Based on volunteer responses, the majority of respondents favor traits from one style over the other. In rarer instances, the scores achieved by participants in these two areas of leadership style were numerically similar. Incontestably, the researcher was able to use the MLQ 5X questionnaire to identify leadership styles of the 102 volunteers participating in this research study.

Transformational Leadership Style Findings

Of the 102 volunteers that had completed the MLQ 5X questionnaire, a statistically significant number of participant responses scored higher in transformational leadership when compared to transactional leadership. In fact, 99% (101 of the 102) participant responses demonstrated a favoring of transformational leadership styles when rating themselves on the 45-item questionnaire. Based on responses, two volunteers achieved scores in both transformational as well as transactional that were, numerically, very similar to one another.

Only one volunteer produced a numeric score in transformational leadership that was lower than another area. Additionally, this participant scored highest in the area of Laissez-Faire and by the parameters established in chapter three was disregarded from the targeted sample population of this study. For this reason, the participant population in MLQ 5X data collection was reduced by one to 101 total participants.

Of the 101 volunteer participants that completed the MLQ 5X, a range of 35 scored from the lowest attained score of 2.2 to 2.95. The remaining 66 respondents

scored in the range of 3.0 to 3.9. No participant scored a perfect score of 4.0 as determined on the researcher-developed scoring rubric. The mean score for transformational leaders was 3.10.

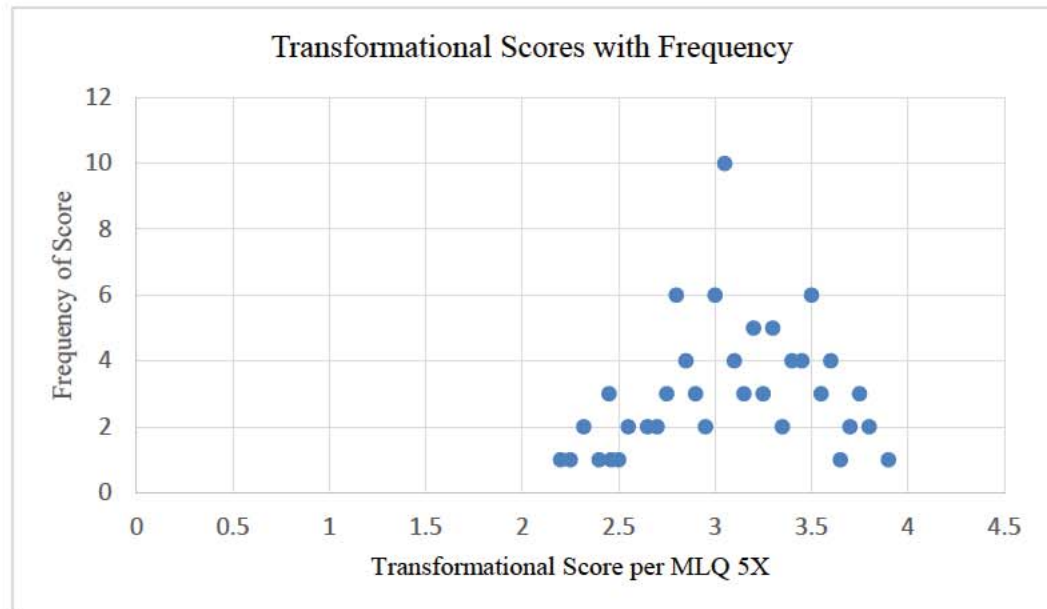


Figure 4.6. Transformational scores with frequency.

Transactional Leadership Style Findings

After review of the compiled MLQ 5X data, it was discovered that no volunteer scored highest in the area of transactional leadership. Although transactional leadership was not identified as the predominant leadership style when analyzing the MLQ 5X data and when compared to transformational leadership in this study, many participants scored high in this area. For example, 49 of the respondents scored from 2 to 2.75 in transactional leadership. Several of the participants who scored in this range also scored high in transformational leadership.

There were two mode scores for the transactional responses. They were the scores of 1.92 and 2.25. Each of those scores reoccurred 11 times in the data results. Several scores between these two values also repeated several times. These scores included 2.08 (eight repeated data points) and 2.17 with nine. The median score was 1.88. The overall values ascended in a consecutive order without any significant gaps between data points and without any distinct outliers.

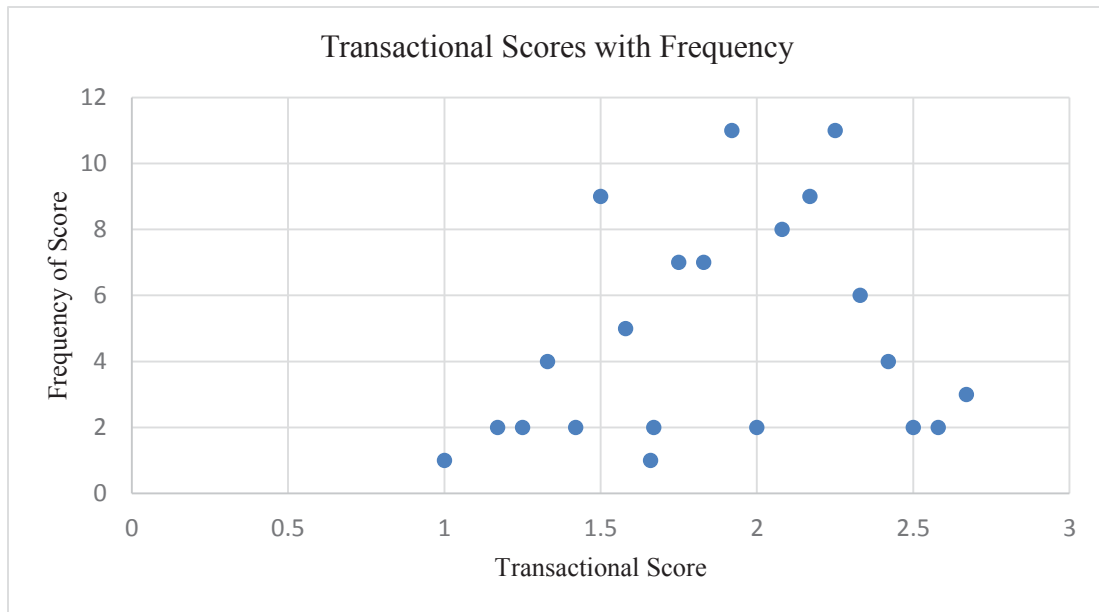


Figure 4.7. Transactional scores with frequency.

Results

In summary, the MLQ 5X consistently identified distinctive leadership styles of respondents. When coupled with a scoring device, such as the researcher-developed scoring rubric used in this study, not only were styles identified but also quantified numerically. When scores on the MLQ 5X were compared statistically, a rank order of leadership style potency was determined for each participant within and across leadership styles. Similarly styled participants were then compared with each other. This was done

numerically inputting leadership style scores on a scale. The rank ordering in this study was consistent and contained no major outliers to skew data.

2. Using a sample of clearly distinctive employees with transactional or transformative qualities as reported on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), do these employees respond to leadership scenario questions consistent to his/her reported leadership style?

Scoring the Scenario Interviews

Each scenario question was designed to create six scores on a sliding continuum of leadership traits. This rubric was researcher-designed. The items on either extreme side of the continuum receive a score of three. From these points, the degree of leadership style exhibited through responses scored toward the center labeled as “neither.” On the Likert scale continuum; *neither* is assigned a value of zero. As designed, a participant that received a highest rating of three in all six leadership style subareas, would receive a total score of 18 for that scenario question. With a total of three scenarios making up the interview, a participant could receive an overall, *perfect* score of 54 in the areas of transformational or transactional. This situation, however, did not occur once in this particular study. Table 4.1 is an example subarea found on the scenario interview scoring rubric. Because the Likert scale was created on a continuum set between two opposing leadership styles, respondents’ scores varied depending on the scenario question.

Table 4.1

Scenario Interview Scoring Rubric

Directions: Please check one block that <i>best</i> describes how the participant is applying leadership skills to this scenario.								
The leader's thinking is innovative or "outside the box"	Very Evident	Quite Evident	Occasionally Evident	Neither	Occasionally Evident	Quite Evident	Very Evident	The leader's thinking is uninspired or "inside the box"

Although the current research question did not include the participant's preferred style of leadership, Table 4.2 did include this information. When observing the summed total scores, the range of scores was 24. In general, a lower score indicated that many of the participant responses scored consistently toward the center of the Likert scale continuum. As expected, some outliers did occur but the overall total score did reflect a general pattern of neutrality in response.

Conversely, participant ratings of 30 and above indicated that this particular individual received multiple scores of two and three. These participants usually exhibited strong responses (3s) in several subareas under each scenario question. Table 4.2 illustrates the total combined score as identified by the Scenario Interview Scoring Rubric.

Table 4.2

Scenario Interview Scoring Rubric

Scenario Participant Interview Number	Transformational Sum Score of all Three Scenarios	Transactional Sum Score of all Three Scenarios	Total Score
1	23	6	29
2	0	38	38
3	31	1	32
4	8	13	21
5	3	25	28
6	10	4	14
7	1	26	27
8	21	0	21
9	15	4	19
10	5	14	19

After participants' predominant leadership styles were identified on the MLQ 5X, a researcher-developed scoring rubric was used to quantify and rank order participant responses. From those rank-ordered results in transformational and transactional leadership styles, top-scoring participants were identified. It was the hope of this researcher that these top-scoring participants would then apply his/her predominate leadership styles to simulated scenario situations.

Because all scenario interview participants were scored twice (once by the interviewer during the actual interview and once by the researcher later by watching the recordings), it was necessary to find an average of all interview scores. In essence, two

sets of data were merged to create a more accurate representation of each participant's responses. To achieve this, the sum of both data sets (one from each scorer) was calculated and then divided by two to determine a mean or average for each individual. These mean scores are represented in the charts and information below. Table 4.3 combines the two scorers' results into one averaged transformational mean score.

Table 4.3

Mean Transformational Leadership Scores of Interview Participants

Mean Transformational Leadership Scores of Interview Participants			
Participant Number	Researcher Score	Interviewer Score	\bar{X}
1	23	15	19
2	0	0	0
3	31	28	29.5
4	8	7	7.5
5	3	3	3
6	10	11	10.5
7	1	0	.5
8	21	20	20.5
9	15	19	17
10	5	4	4.5

In Table 4.4, the scores obtained from the researcher as well as the interviewer were combined into one averaged transactional leadership mean score.

Table 4.4

Mean Transactional Leadership Scores of Interview Participants

Mean Transactional Leadership Scores of Interview Participants			
Participant Number	Researcher Score	Interviewer Score	$\bar{\chi}$
1	6	5	5.5
2	38	38	38
3	1	1	1
4	13	15	14
5	25	24	24.5
6	4	5	4.5
7	26	33	29.5
8	0	1	.5
9	4	6	5
10	14	17	15.5

During the developing stages of the research questions of this study, it was not the intent of the researcher to ultimately rank order the results of the scenario interview results. The goal was to investigate alignment between the participants' results on the MLQ 5X questionnaire and his/her preferred leadership style when responding to the three scenarios.

To accomplish this, the researcher compared the results of each data collection instrument to discover if each participant’s responses were “Similar” or “Dissimilar,” (see Table 4.5). The results of this comparison are also located at the bottom of the Scenario Scoring Rubric. After the interview data were compiled by the researcher and the interviewer, the scoring rubric for each respondent was compared.

Table 4.5

Scenario Scoring Rubric

Scenario Interview Volunteer Participant Number	Leadership style as determined by the MLQ 5X	Leadership style as determined by scenario interviews (Researcher)	Leadership style as determined by scenario interviews (Interviewer)	Results of both instruments were <i>Similar</i> or <i>Dissimilar</i>
1	Transformational	Transformational	Transformational	Similar
2	Transactional	Transactional	Transactional	Similar
3	Transformational	Transformational	Transformational	Similar
4	Transactional	Transactional	Transactional	Similar
5	Transactional	Transformational	Transformational	<u>Dissimilar</u>
6	Transformational	Transactional	Transactional	<u>Dissimilar</u>
7	Transactional	Transactional	Transactional	Similar
8	Transformational	Transformational	Transformational	Similar
9	Transformational	Transformational	Transformational	Similar
10	Transactional	Transactional	Transactional	Similar

The researcher and interviewer scored each participant’s three scenario responses with very similar results. There were only a couple incidences where scoring varied slightly, but ultimately, the overall sum of each scorer negated any slight variations and

all final scores between the two scorers were analogous. As noted, because rubric results from both scorers were averaged into one final score, the overall concluding score would negate any minor differences. Table 4.6 presents the rating results of the researcher and interviewer. Joint Probability of Agreement was determined for the seven responses. The final quotient of each rater value was then compared by finding the difference between each rater's scores.

Table 4.6

Joint Probability of Agreement

Rubric Ratings	*To- 3	To- 2	To- 1	Neither	**Ta- 1	Ta- 2	Ta- 3
Frequency of Researcher Rating	6	27	48	24	29	36	13
Rating total /7	.86	3.86	6.86	3.43	4.14	5.14	1.86
Frequency of Interviewer Rating	0	27	51	15	29	55	6
Rating total /7	0	3.86	7.28	2.14	4.14	7.85	.86
Joint Probability of Agreement (Inter-rater reliability coefficient)	.86	0	.42	1.6	0	2.71	1

Note. **To- Transformational **Ta- Transactional*

Because a rating of 1 indicates strong inter-rater reliability, Table 4.6 demonstrates that the researcher and interviewer scored the majority of the participant responses similarly. The largest outlier (2.71) signifies that the interviewer awarded

slightly more scores of 2 in transactional leadership on the scoring rubric than did the researcher.

In summary of the results, eight of the 10 participants were similar in leadership styles as reported on both scoring instruments – the MLQ 5X and the researcher-designed scenario questions. At an 80% rate of similarity, this researcher feels confident that the results are consistent between leadership knowledge demonstrated on the MLQ 5X and the application of that knowledge on the researcher-designed scenario questions. In response to research question #2, this researcher is confident that participants do respond to scenario situations while applying his/her demonstrated leadership style.

3. When responding to simulated leadership scenario questions and regardless of MLQ style, do employees with previous leadership or similar experiences answer differently than individuals without leadership experience?

To delve into the experiences of each participant, a researcher-developed leadership demographic survey was distributed during the MLQ 5X sessions (see Appendix F). The survey identified items such as participants' ages, years of experience, and interest in pursuing a leadership position. The purpose of the leadership demographic survey was not intended to be used as a correlate to the MLQ 5X data. It was created to explore if general relationships exist (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7

Portion of Demographic Survey

5. Have you ever served in teacher-leader positions? <i>Please check any/all that apply:</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Team or grade level leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Superintendent's roundtable
<input type="checkbox"/> Building representative	<input type="checkbox"/> Association representative
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Assistance Program (SAP) chair	<input type="checkbox"/> PTA executive board member
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional Learning Community (PLC) chair	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
6. Have you ever served in leadership positions outside of school? <i>Please check any/all that apply:</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Team coach	<input type="checkbox"/> Church activity coordinator
<input type="checkbox"/> Girls'/Boys' Scout den leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Community activity coordinator
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

The number of participant leadership experiences, as identified on the leadership demographic survey, varied from zero to six. These activities included professional duties such as “Association Representative” and “District Trainer.” Other leadership experiences included activities such as “Scouts Den Mother” and “Church Youth Group Coordinator.” The leadership demographic survey was not designed to explore job duties or requirements to complete the supplemental leadership role. Instead, it was created to explore the types and number of “outside” leadership activities in which participants had been engaged.



Figure 4.8. Number of leadership experiences.

Interview Scenarios

Three researcher-developed scenarios were developed as qualitative data collection tools. These scenarios were designed to afford study participants an opportunity to apply his/her identified leadership styles to real-world simulated leadership challenges. Listed are the three scenarios:

Many students in this part of the state hunt deer in the late fall. It is the first week of December and an emotional support student is brought to your office by a teacher and is wearing a camouflage hunting coat. The teacher is holding a large hunting knife belonging to the student. Several other students reported that he showed them the knife on the way to homeroom. When questioned by the teacher, the student claimed that he was hunting over the weekend with his grandpa and forgot the knife was in the coat. Your district policy strictly adheres to “zero tolerance.” As a first-year building principal, how do you specifically address this situation immediately and how do you avoid similar incidences from occurring in your school in the future?

You are a second-year principal in a new district. Shortly after assuming your new position, you discover that the PTA parents in your building are very supportive . . . when they get their own way. Apparently, the previous building leader empowered this group of parents to the point that many decisions were

made without teacher or principal input. Many staff members feel that the group is very supportive and student centered but “too powerful.” Some of these PTA parents seem to be in the building more than is really needed and often witness and overhear situations that should be privy to district employees and not the public. How would you restore trust with your staff while creating a power balance with this PTA?

Rumors about a large group of eighth graders commonly smoking marijuana have erupted in your school and within the local community. In fact, parents attended last week’s board meeting to openly share their concerns about the sudden alleged drug use to the board and public. There seems to be some credibility to the reports. As a new principal to this middle school, how do you promote student buy in to stay drug-free while also addressing community concerns?

Comparing Leadership Experiences to Scenario Interview Scores

A bar graph (Figure 4.7) demonstrates a direct comparison between participant leadership experiences and his/her total score achieved during the scenario interviews.



Figure 4.9. Leadership experiences compared to scenario interview scores.

Research question #3 explores the possibility of leadership experiences affecting the way in which participants respond to complex scenario questions.

When comparing data points on a correlational line graph (Figure 4.7), there does not appear to be a clearly consistent relationship between the number of leadership experiences and the score attained through the scenario interviews. For example, one of the highest scoring interview participants (28) actually experienced no (0) previous leadership activities. On the contrary, another participant listed six prior leadership activities on her leadership demographic survey while only scoring 14 on her scenario interviews. By using a trend line (Figure 4.8), this inconsistent relationship is further observed.

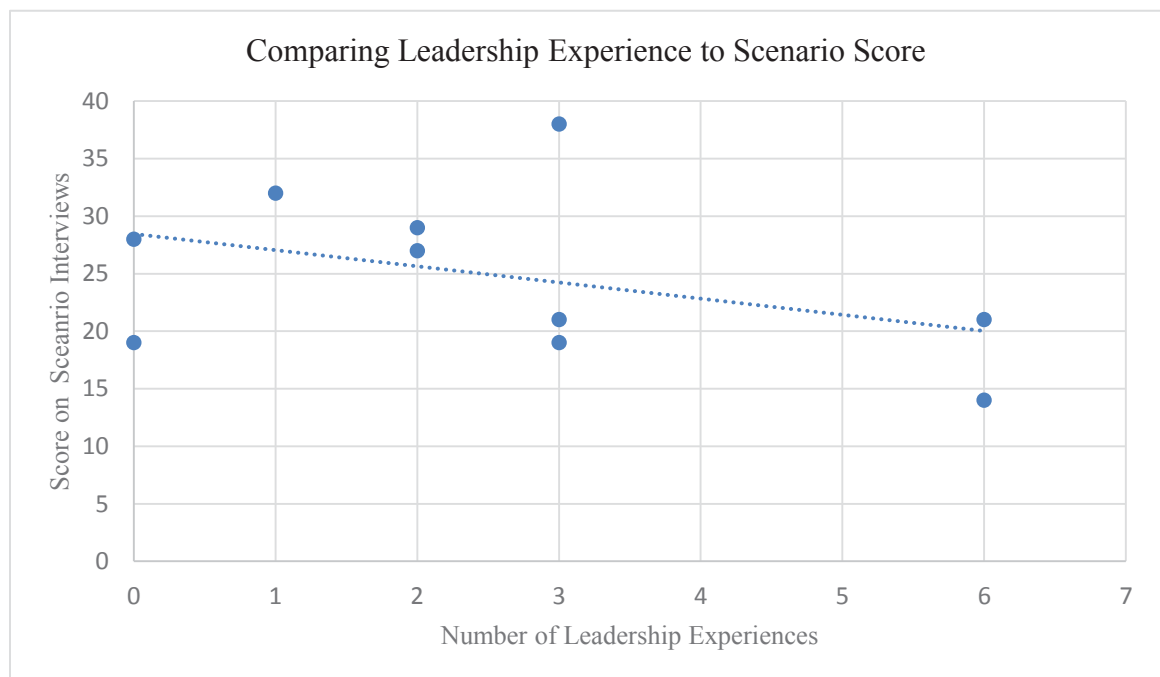


Figure 4.10. Comparing leadership experience to scenario score.

The four highest scoring participants on the scenario interviews actually had three or fewer listed leadership experiences, while the top scoring scenario interview candidates reflected only average scores (14, 21) when compared to all participants. There does not appear to be an association between the number of previous leadership activities and the ability to score highly on the study's scenario interview questions. If

prior leadership experience does not seem to influence scores attained on the scenario interview questions, the number of years as an educator or a combination might.

Comparing Years of Educator Experience to Scenario Interview Scores

All scenario interview participants were tenured educators with six or more years of experience in a school building. The mean years of experience for participants interviewed was 16 years of service. With the highest number of years of service at 27, the range of years of educational experience is 21 years. In fact, half of the 10 scenario interview participants possess 20 or more years of experience in an educational setting. Will these years of experience translate into consistently higher score attained on the scenario interviews?

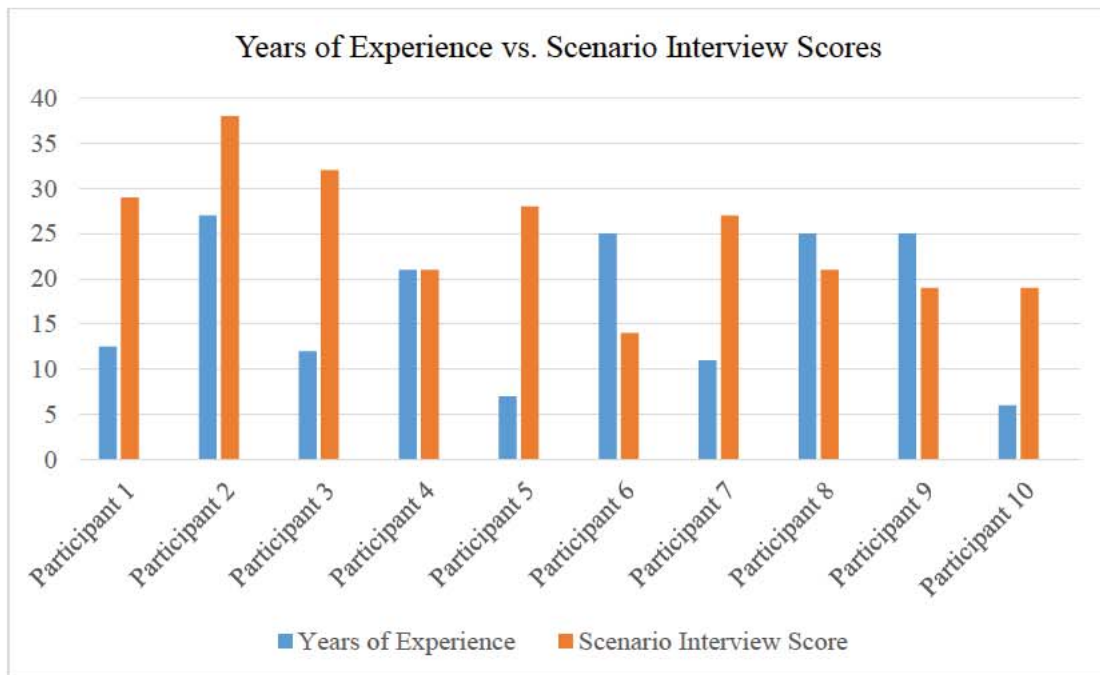


Figure 4.11. Years of experience vs. scenario interview scores.

Although not exact, some veteran participants do appear to possess higher scenario interview scores when compared to all other candidates. For example, of the

four most veteran participant educators, three attained scores of 19 or higher on the scenario interviews, while the most veteran participant educator achieved the overall highest sample score of 38. The lowest tenured staff member of six years also received the lowest interview score of 19. This trend however did not consistently continue with ascending number of years of service.

For example, one veteran educator of 25 years received an interview score of 14 while another educator with the same number of years in schools scored 21. Other than the eldest educators scoring well on the interview rubric and the least seasoned one scoring lowest, there is little else in the sense of patterns that connect years of experience to score derived from the scenario interview. Although there appears to be more relationship between scenario interview scores and years of service than past leadership experiences, this researcher would consider any claim of a relationship between these two data sets to be moderate and not absolutely conclusive.

Leadership Experience and Participant Responses

To best describe qualitative data collected during the scenario interviews, this researcher referred to the actual recordings, notes transcribed while watching the recordings, notes scribed by the interviewer, and conversation with the interviewer after the scenario sessions.

After perusing the recorded interviews multiple times to create accurate scores, the researcher then viewed the recordings specifically to identify obvious and overt forms of non-verbal communication. For example, did the participant seem nervous during the discussion? Were his/her responses in depth and sequential? Only after the researcher

transcribed detailed notes about each participant did he then contact the interviewer to review and compare findings about participant behavior.

To answer research question #3, as established, this researcher disregarded the leadership style of each participant and focused on the current and past leadership experiences of each individual. Through comments made during the interviews, qualitative data were created in order to address the dilemma posed in this question. The three scenarios posed to each participant are as follows:

All participants were afforded an equal amount of response time in the exact same setting. Questions were presented in precisely the same way by the same interviewer. Although the same timeframe was granted to each participant, the depth and amount of information shared by each participant varied greatly. Several examples are shared below.

Veteran Participants

Based on years of experience and the number of leadership experiences possessed, two participants were identified as veteran participants. Each veteran participant has been an educator for over 20 years and had been engaged in multiple leadership experiences.

Per the leadership demographic survey, participant number six possesses 25 years of teaching experience as well as six leadership events. Although this participant shared a detailed response, it is noteworthy that he/she did *not* tally any “Very Evident” scores on the scoring rubric from either the researcher or the interviewer. His/her responses were comprised of common solutions to the situations posed in each scenario as well as unique resolutions to each dilemma posed.

From the moment the educator entered the school building for the interview, participant number six was calm and talkative. He/she seemed relaxed and almost excited (smiling and laughing) to begin the interview. The interviewer described his/her demeanor as “one of professionalism and confidence.” After being seated, the participant folded his/her hands and looked directly at the interviewer. In fact, eye contact was continued throughout the entire session. During the interview, the participant acted in the same poised manner. The participant restated parts of the scenario into his/her responses and connected the scenario to real-world events. For example, participant number six shared, “This actually happened in our district before.” His/her answers were shared quickly, were very detailed, and sequential. This was demonstrated by comments such as, “I would then . . .” Additionally, several solutions were offered for each scenario. He/she smiled and joked with the interviewer.

The interviewer began scenario #2 and accidentally handed the participant the wrong printed scenario. The participant joked and asked, “Can I switch you papers?” The participant also responded to the scenario by stating, “Oh, this is a good one!” The participant continued with scenario #2 and #3 in the same confident manner offering multiple solutions.

Although his/her neck showed small red blotches, the participant exclaimed at the end of the session, “That’s it? . . . that was easy.”

When responding to the knife in school scenario (#1), the participant shared the realization that “nothing threatening happened” and that the student would be questioned as to why he had the knife. He/she went on to state that the parents would be called to the school to “discuss the situation as well as remove the knife from the learning

environment.” These types of comments were fairly common across the participants. Participant six, however, offered additional solutions to the problem. He/she went on to state that the home life of the student would be investigated. For example, “Was a divorce involved?” Additionally, this participant would create a presentation to “address the class” as well as “address all students through an assembly for other students that hunt to discuss the incident.”

Similarly in scenario two, participant six offered a detailed plan to resolve to scenario conundrum. The participant’s response began with the statement that he/she “would hope that the teachers and principal are actively involved in the PTA and its events so that this would never occur.” Participant six would “talk at a PTA meeting to show support as well as remind everyone that we are here for the students.” Additional comments included the review of sign-in procedures and “reviewing the objectives of the PTA.”

Responses to the third scenario by participant six again included a blend of conventional and nonconventional retorts. Beyond common responses were statements that included alternative approaches to address the scenario. For example, aside from typical comments like, “contact the school counselor” or “involve the ESAP Team,” he/she would “pull everyone together that could help with the situation.” He/she went on to state, “make coaches aware and try to get students involved in sports” and “involve the community to get additional help from agencies, etc.” The attitude of confidence and methodical thinking carried throughout all three scenarios.

Also listing six leadership activities on the leadership demographic survey was participant number four. Participant four possesses 21 years of experience as an

educator. Whereas participant six did not receive any rubric scores in the “Very Evident” range, participant four shared several answers scoring three points, or “Very Evident.”

Similar to participant six, participant four entered the school building confidently eager to begin the interview. He/she joked with the researcher and interviewer before the process began and sat with hands on lap. He/she began casual conversation with the interviewer before the questions began.

During the interview, participant four quickly offered detailed and methodical suggestions with determination. Although this participant also had small red blotches on the neck, his/her answers were shared with confidence. Eye contact was maintained throughout the entire interview. Participant number four also restated the question into the responses. During the interview, his/her demeanor was relaxed (arms on the table) but his/her responses were direct and deliberate.

Much of participant four’s responses to scenario one involved following policy. For example, comments included, “As the principal, you must follow policy” and “policy outlines the consequences that someone needs to pay.” Also shared, “Policy must be followed even if you don’t agree with it.” When compared to all other participants, these types of responses were fairly common for scenario #1. Participant four, much like participant six, offered information beyond common responses. For example, this would-be principal would have sat with the student and “explained what the policy means.” Additionally, “communication with the staff” would have reminded teachers of the policy and its implications.

This participant’s responses to scenario #2 echoed much of what participant six shared. When responding to scenario #3, however, participant four shared a plethora of

original and detailed ideas. Many of the responses in scenario #3 focused on relationship building and proactive solutions. For example, this participant shared ideas of “reaching out to the community for additional resources” and “involve all staff members that could help and not just the school counselor.” The participant went on, “The approach of the school to this problem is so important” and “must help all students.” The participant then shared concerns of social media by stating that the school must be cognizant of “posts made on social media sites” because those posts “could have an impact at school.” The participant ended the interview by stating, “If you help kids, the community will see it.” Again, after this second session, the interviewer commented on the confidence level as well as “quality and depth of responses” shared by the second participant.

Regardless of how this participant scored on the MLQ 5X, much of how he/she responded to scenario three echoes common traits of transformational leaders; in particular, relationship building.

Median Experience Participant

As to not just compare the extreme quantities of experience and leadership activities, this researcher next selected a participant in the median section of the sample. Participant number seven listed two past leadership experiences as well as 11 years of teaching experience on his/her leadership demographic survey. Like participant number four, participant number seven possessed several strong “Very Evident” rankings by the interviewer as well as researcher on the scenario scoring rubric.

Upon entering the school building, the participant shared that he/she was “very sick and almost cancelled” his/her interview appointment. Participant seven’s demeanor was non-animated, serious, and his/her voice was monotone. The researcher thanked the

participant for his/her dedication and introductions were quickly made with the interviewer.

When responding to each of the scenarios, this particular participant varied greatly in the sense that almost *no* consistent eye contact was maintained with the interviewer. His/her eyes focused on the printed page for the vast majority of the session. In fact, the interviewer stated after the session how “little the participant looked up from the paper.” Many of his/her initial statements began with, “Hmmm . . .” Additionally, when responding, participant number seven often played with his/her hair or glasses while contemplating a reply.

Like many other participants, policy was the focus of participant seven when responding to scenario #1. His/her responses, however, were very sort and direct. For example, participant seven shared that “zero tolerance is zero tolerance.” He/she went on to say, “Even if the kid was hunting over the weekend, he needs to be punished!” Mentioning consequences three times, this particular participant was adamant about punishment. In fact, participant seven began using arm motions to signify the importance of punishments.

Again, in response to scenario #2, participant seven’s reactions were short, reactive, and direct. “This is all on the principal” and “The principal should know what is being planned” were comments shared. He/she went on to state that, “The law clearly states that parents can’t witness events” and “that is the way it is!” Again, hand gestures were used by the participant to signify emotional response.

Scenario #3 replies also followed a reactive pattern. When responding to the third scenario, the participant generally felt that the situation “occurred outside of school and

should stay there.” He/she went on to state that, “If it didn’t happen at school, then it’s on the students and their parents.” “I can’t control what doesn’t happen at school,” the participant added.

All three scenario responses shared by participant number seven paralleled typical thinking of a transactional leader; including traditional ways of solving new problems.

Limited Experience Participants

Having included participants with much experience and average experience, this researcher next examined recordings of two participants with little experience and leadership activities. Neither participant possesses leadership activities as indicated on the leadership demographic survey. One participant (number ten) has been in education for six years, while participant number five retains seven years of educational experience.

Although this research question does not focus on the identified leadership style of the participants, it is noteworthy to state that participant number five was one of two anomalies where the participant’s MLQ 5X leadership style was dissimilar from the scenario interview rubric results.

Participant number five entered the building smiling and talkative but seemed nervous (voice). He/she was introduced to the interviewer and they began the session.

Upon beginning each of his/her responses, participant number five used the supplied pen and paper to list important information as each scenario was read by the interviewer. Incidentally, this was the only interview participant that used the notetaking option. When compared to the other participants, participant number five took a noticeable amount of time before responding to the posed scenario. Notes were reviewed as a reply was shared.

Eye contact with the interviewer was moderate throughout the session. A mix of shared eye contact with the interviewer was sporadically interrupted by moments of reading directly from the handwritten notes.

Participant number five's responses to scenario #1 were fairly consistent with many of the other participants. He/she discussed "talking to the student and parents," as well as "follow the handbook for consequences." This participant echoed an earlier participant response by stating, "Zero Tolerance is zero tolerance." In the sense of unique replies, scenario #1 consisted of moderately typical responses.

The response to the second scenario for participant number five was as equally typical. As acting principal, this prospective principal would "meet with staff to discuss what was done with the PTA" and "would have to work with the PTA." Additionally, participant number five made one real-world connection in a response. For example, the participant shared, "from experience in being in a building with a very supportive PTA . . ." The final scenario response was vague and when compared to the other participants, was without detail.

Participant five's response to scenario #3 included "discussion with students about consequences for their actions like fines." As acting principal, participant number five would contact the "Attorney General's office to bring in speakers with real-world experiences." The responses to scenario #3 by participant number five included a mix of transformational as well as transactional thinking. Although consequences were vaguely discussed, "outside the box thinking" was also demonstrated by including others in the problem-solving process. As previously stated, of the five reviewed participants, number five offered the most average responses lacking creativity, in-depth detail, and solutions.

The final participant was number ten. He/she possesses six years of experience and no additional leadership activities. He/she entered the building quietly serious. Participant number ten began the session with hands folded on the table and listened intently to every scenario. The participant reread each of the scenarios to him/herself after initially being read by the interviewer. Most of this particular participant's focus was on the printed scenarios and offered little consistent eye contact with the interviewer. At the conclusion of scenario #3, participant number ten stood up and exited the room without any comments about the scenarios. A "thank you" was shared and he/she left the building.

Participant ten's responses were more student-centered and somewhat detailed when compared to participant number five. In response to scenario #1, participant number ten started by stating that the principal "would need to understand the specific needs of the student with the knife. For example, does the child have an IEP or 504 plan?" He/she went on to state that "agency help would be involved." Ultimately, policy was stated as the deciding factor to determine "what discipline actions would be taken."

Scenario #2 was addressed again through policy. Replies included, "A procedure or policy needs to be in place to stop parents from hearing private information." Additionally, the prospective principal would "work with the PTA" and "let staff know that there is an issue but it is being addressed."

Again, in scenario #3, students were considered. Participant number ten would "Bring in speakers to educate the students about the dangers of drug use." According to participant number ten, "it's about awareness, consequences would need to be given."

In summary and when responding to research question #3, based on the actual amount of information shared during the scenario interviews, the depth of details, and the variety of solutions, the more veteran and experienced educators *do answer differently* when compared to less veteran staff.

Generally, the more veteran participants shared a wider variety of in-depth solutions to each of the scenarios posed. Additionally, real-world connections were often shared during his/her response. Veteran responses were generally more sequential and methodical. Veteran responses often included thinking outside of the school building or district. For example, several veteran participants shared that he/she would “seek support from the community” when responding. In general, the vision of fewer veteran participants was confined to the building and not global in thinking. The newer participants, typically shared less dynamic responses that centered on reactive replies. Comments like, “Zero tolerance is zero tolerance” were common.

Non-verbal communication of veterans during the interview sessions was also markedly different when compared to less-experienced educators. The more veteran participants entered the building and conducted themselves throughout the interview sessions with a noticeable sense of confidence. In general, veteran respondents laughed and joked with the interviewer. Answers were often shared quickly and without indecision. The veteran participants often restated questions into his/her responses and maintained self-assured, consistent, and obvious eye contact with the interviewer throughout the session.

4. When prospective educational leaders are identified within a school district and through the use of the MLQ 5X and leadership scenario questions, are the recognized employees willing to pursue leadership when asked?

When the leadership demographic survey data of the final 10 participants involved in the scenario interviews were reviewed, it was discovered that only *one* participant stated that he/she possesses or would pursue an administrative certificate. In fact, that particular sole participant indicated that he/she already possessed a principal's license but had not yet applied for a leadership role. Of the remaining nine participants in the final stage of data collection (scenario interviews), none shared any indication considering a leadership role in a school building or district.

This leadership interest rate of one in 10 is somewhat reflected in the overall sample population of this study. When the results of the leadership demographic survey were analyzed, a similar, but slightly higher, trend appeared to exist with the entire sample population of 102 participants. Of the 102 MLQ 5X surveyed volunteers, 19 indicated that they possess or are willing to pursue an administrative certificate. This 19% interest rate is slightly higher than the 10% discovered in the scenario interview population.

During the scenario interviews, several educators shared off the recording his/her thoughts on attaining a leadership position. The interviewer restated participant comments like, "I don't know how you guys do it" or "I could never do it." Agreeing with the researcher, the interviewer felt that these comments indicated a clear non-interest in pursuing an administrative certificate. Others indicated that they would entertain the

thought “If it was 10 years ago.” One participant seemed to waver on the notion as he/she stated that he/she “Would if I didn’t have to relocate.”

To address research question #4, the data collected in this research study does identify participants and his/her willingness to pursue a leadership position. The data collected with the final 10 scenario participants indicates a slightly lower percentage of leadership interest when compared to the overall MLQ 5X sample.

In conclusion, although identified in this study, participants partaking in the research did not show an increased willingness to pursue a leadership role when compared to the overall sample population.

Summary

The collection of data by using a composite of instruments in this study was highly effective when addressing the queries posed throughout the four research questions. The data collected by use of the MLQ 5X were complete and explicit. When each participant’s MLQ 5X was scored by using the researcher-designed rubric, clear, numeric values were constructed.

Information collected by use of the researcher-developed leadership demographic survey supplied additional participant information that was unable to be obtained through the use of the MLQ 5X questionnaire alone. The leadership demographic survey provided a more thorough “snapshot” of participants’ past leadership experiences and tenure. This vital information coupled with individual’s data collected by use of the MLQ 5X fashioned a detailed and personalized participant profile of leadership styles and experiences.

The culminating data collection instrument; the scenario interviews, were designed to encourage participants to apply leadership styles, acquired knowledge, and past experiences to real-world quandaries found in modern day schools. Through the use of a trained interviewer and researcher-developed rubric, qualitative data were compiled and then converted to numeric values for comparison.

While addressing the four research questions by use of all accumulated data, this researcher did uncover interesting patterns and discoveries. This chapter organized accumulated data into systematized charts and graphs. Chapter five unveiled additional researcher findings as well as thoughts on application opportunities created by this study and suggestions for further associated future research.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS,
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study was designed to assist school districts in identifying potential school leaders within their existing teaching pool. If proper and effective leaders are put into place, districts will most likely see an improved difference in achievement and school morale. Selecting the correct leader can change the school's landscape toward success for nearly 30 years if a vested employee is in place. The study used three methods: a commercial inventory for leadership identification, a demographic and leadership questionnaire, and a researcher-developed open-ended response interview, to assist in recognizing employees with leadership skills. The results of this study clearly demonstrated that a mixed-method approach could streamline the process of selecting potential school leader candidates.

As instructional leaders, community liaisons, and agents of change, building principals directly define the successes and failures of a school building. He/she unequivocally influences student achievement and team productively. A principalship is a delicate blending of skill application, focus of vision, and empowering of people. In this era of school choice, high-stakes testing, and dwindling budgets, public school principals find themselves in a challenging environment. While some building leaders thrive under these circumstances, others struggle under the weight of responsibility and mandates.

Those currently holding administrative positions report that one of their greatest sources of satisfaction is the ability to make the difference (Wesson & Grady, 1993). When searching for new school leaders, school districts no longer have the luxuries of time, trial and error, and seemingly limitless resources. The number of qualified candidates seems to be dwindling as well. McAdams (1998) claimed that the task of recruiting qualified principals is increasingly difficult due to the shrinking applicant pools. This is a national phenomenon. Very rural areas as well as inner-city school districts are continuously challenged by locating, hiring, and ultimately retaining, quality school leaders.

When recruiting school leaders, districts must adopt processes that streamline the identification of quality and effective leaders. Whether a district chooses to mentor homegrown leaders or cast a wider net to include candidates from abroad, it is imperative that school districts incorporate the use of proper tools and procedures to identify candidates with strong and district-desired leadership traits. The focus of this study was to create one such process.

Theories about effective leadership as well as types of leadership abound. In chapter two, a plethora of leadership styles was explored with two specific types emerging as the center of this research study; transformational and transactional leadership.

To further investigate these leadership styles in one local public school district, assessments were researched, created, and implemented into the study by this researcher. The findings directly support discovery fashioned through the four research questions. To this researcher's knowledge, no other study of its unique nature exists.

The Research Questions

The four research questions found in this study were designed to explore if specific tools and processes can be created to aid school districts in identifying quality future leaders. It is important to note that throughout the entire process of completing this study, *no* participant asked to be withdrawn.

The first research question was important because it identified an instrument, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X), as an applicable means of identifying leadership styles within the ranks of school district educators. When partnered with the researcher-developed scoring rubric, participants' leadership styles were identified as intended – transformational or transactional. These findings support the notion that school districts can indeed use instruments such as the MLQ 5X to identify potential leaders as well as his/her leadership style.

The second research question was vital to this study by exploring the possibility that once participants' leadership styles were identified, that he/she might then respond to scenario questions in accordance to his/her specific identified leadership style. Again, this research study did find evidence that does support the notion that when educators' leadership styles are identified by use of instruments such as the MLQ 5X, that he/she does, more often than not, then apply those styles to challenging simulated, real-world situations.

The importance of this question lies in the fact that if a school district uses an instrument such as the MLQ 5X with leadership candidates, then it can expect that these future leaders will respond and act to real-world events according to his/her identified leadership style. If a school district is suffering from consistently poor performance and

transformation is clearly needed, then specific candidates could be identified through this process as much needed future agents of that change.

The third research question in this study explored the notion of past experience influencing the way in which a participant might respond to specific scenario situations. Through the use of the researcher-designed leadership demographic survey, participants expressed the amount and type of past leadership experiences. The range of participant past leadership experiences spanned zero to six. Surprisingly, the number of past experiences did not appear to consistently influence how participants responded to scenario questions. This information could be useful for a district when looking for candidates to fill specific niches. For example, candidates sharing prior technology leadership experience might be better suited for a similar position. There was, however, another factor derived from the leadership demographic survey that did apparently influence participant responses.

The years of experience, as expressed on the leadership demographic survey, did seem to affect how participants responded to each scenario question. Overall, more veteran educators expressed detailed, multi-layered, and methodical solutions to most scenario situations. Conversely, less experienced educators generally shared one dimensional problem-solving strategies.

To school districts seeking out or developing new leadership, the use of a leadership demographic survey could be an indispensable tool in recruitment. Participant past experiences, as indicated on a leadership demographic survey, could better refine the search for qualified candidates and years of experience could indicate problem-solving

strategies based on acquired knowledge through countless experiences in the classroom and school building.

Through the process developed in this study, data were collected to address inquiries posed in the fourth research question. Although participant leadership styles and application of his/her styles were investigated in this project, these individuals did not generally express a heightened desire to pursue principal positions when compared to the overall sample population. This event may have been coincidental or produced by the parameters set forth in the procedures or instruments of this study. These possibilities will be further explored later in this chapter.

Conclusions

The MLQ 5X

To determine leadership style, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire short form (5X) was adopted as the initial data collection instrument for this study. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is one of the most commonly used instruments to “measure transformational and transactional leader behaviors” when researching organizational leadership (Tejeda et al., 2001, p. 31). The 45-question MLQ 5X was chosen because of its proven reputation and repeated use in studies from around the globe.

By using the MLQ 5X, this researcher felt very confident that the instrument performed as its designers intended. Based on the scoring directions outlined in the Mindgarden.com manual, this researcher designed a scoring rubric based on average scores in the three leadership styles identified by this instrument: transformational, transactional, and Laissez-Faire. Through use of the scoring rubric, quantified averages

were created in each leadership area. Per study design, scores in Laissez-Faire leadership were disregarded and scores in transformational and transactional leadership retained and compared.

The participant pool comprised of educators from four elementary schools, one middle school and one high school. To the astonishment of this researcher, 101 of the 102 volunteer participants scored transformational when compared to transactional. Only one participant scored highest in Laissez-Faire and was withdrawn from the study data. This researcher admittedly expected results that reflected a more equal ratio of both leadership styles.

It was falsely presumed that elementary teachers' thinking and in turn, leadership scoring, would differ from that of their colleagues in the middle or high school. By nature, teaching and leading at these three levels varies greatly and this researcher thought those variants would have been reflected in the scores of the two leadership styles. Again, this was an ill-conceived notion and not demonstrated in this study.

The study was conducted using a sample population of volunteer participation. This was achieved by use of school district email to contact educators with an invitation to participate in this unique study. Those individuals choosing to participate were asked to contact the researcher via a return email response. The 102 volunteers that chose to respond via email were clearly interested, by his/her actions, in becoming a participant in this study.

It is important to note that the number of 102 participants is significant because the number of 100 was set as the target sample size at the onset of this research study. Educators who did not respond to the electronic invitation were not contacted again. Did

an open email invitation from an unknown district employee cause some would-be volunteers to shy away from participation? This researcher felt that random sampling through randomizing software, for example, would not have increased the sample size. However, a randomized sample may have included more would-be leaders that were not otherwise included in this study sample.

Volunteer participants met the researcher in a quiet room before school on predetermined dates. Volunteers were given 30 minutes to complete the MLQ 5X and the leadership demographic survey. As a passive observer, the researcher overheard comments made by some of the volunteers. One participant shared while completing the MLQ 5X questionnaire, “Just circle two on every one and then you know you will be safe.” Upon scoring all MLQ 5Xs, no participant circled twos exclusively, but it did cause this researcher to slightly wonder how committed all participants were as they completed the questions.

Although participants were encouraged by the researcher to “try your best” when answering questions, some questions were obviously vague and difficult to quantify. Number seven of the questionnaire seemed to cause repeated consternation for participants. Number seven read, “I am absent when needed.” More participants asked for clarity before responding to this particular question than any other. Did ambiguous questions cause participants to automatically score him/herself low on those items and cause skewing of the data? Although this researcher found this particular question troublesome due to vagueness, he abided by the instrument’s creators’ recommendations and did not modify any of its questions.

Educators, by nature, are intelligent individuals. Realizing that the MLQ 5X measures how one rates him/herself as a leader, could participants have selected self-rating scores that they believed would make them appear as a better leader? Indeed, “Leadership” is in the name of the instrument –Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. In short, did he/she answer the way that he/she felt *they should*? This would be difficult to determine, but remains a possibility.

Because the majority of the participants took the allotted 15 minutes to complete the MLQ 5X and accompanying leadership/demographic survey, this researcher felt very confident that volunteers took the questionnaire seriously and answered accordingly. Even with some comments made during the MLQ 5X sessions, this researcher felt that it was unlikely that volunteers selected random ratings, without thought, to simply finish the activity. Additionally, based on the notion that they volunteered his/her time to participate signified to this researcher that each volunteer was dedicated to sharing accurate data.

As a passive observer during the MLQ 5X sessions, several volunteers asked the researcher if he/she should answer the questions from the lens of “personal life or professional life?” Acknowledging that this was a valid and quality question, the researcher consistently encouraged participants to select self-ratings based on his/her professional life. The justification for this decision was founded on the focus of the study –to research leadership in schools.

Because this sample of local educators reflected predominantly transformational leadership styles as determined by the MLQ 5X, this researcher wondered if using the MLQ 5X in local businesses would net similar results. This researcher surmised that the

number of for-profit employees scoring transactional would be higher when compared to transformational-thinking educators. Assuming that many business employees are employed in a reward/punishment type of work environment, this researcher imagined that more of these individuals would score transactional when compared to educators. This could be a completely misguided assumption. Nonetheless, this researcher found the prospect of using the MLQ 5X to compare leadership styles between differing types of organizations intriguing.

When using the MLQ 5X as an instrument of identifying leadership styles, why was transformational leadership identified as the overwhelmingly dominant leadership style in this sample population? This researcher can offer suppositions:

First, because the creation of the sample population was based on an email invitation, only volunteers willing to participate responded with interest to participate. One transformational leadership trait is the desire to attempt new approaches to old problems. Could this trait exhibited by transformational leaders have encouraged those from the general population invitation to step forward and participate in this particular study? Transformational leaders tend to think outside of the box. Again, could this style of thinking entice those naturally possessing transformational styles to participate in the study? Last, transactional leaders tend to motivate followers by using a system of punishment and reward. Transactional thinkers in general abide by the credo, do something to get something in return. Kouzes and Posner (1995) wrote about actions beyond rewards, "Promise them a favorable review, a promotion, or a bonus if they perform exceptionally well" (p. 30). This is not the case with transformational leaders.

Clearly, volunteer participants did not receive any workplace recompenses nor did they receive any monetary rewards equal to his/her time and efforts to participate. In organizations with transactional leaders, followers receive certain valued outcomes such as increased wages, prestige, or empowerment when they act according to their leader's wishes (Hartog et al., 1997). Voluntary participation in this particular study only offered a chance at being selected for a token gift card. Rewards distinctly did not motivate volunteers to participate.

Could the procedure of voluntary participation actually encourage transformational thinkers to participate from the ranks of the general population targeted for this study? To answer this question accurately, a second study would be required in which a random sample of the population would be utilized. In a random sample, transformational as well as transactional prospective participants would be approached by the researcher in an equal fashion. A leadership style (transformational) that favors attempting tasks without the promise of reward would not be favored through a procedure of volunteerism. Under these new parameters of random sampling, transactional thinkers might be more willing to participate.

Furthermore, the MLQ 5X was designed to identify leaders not only in the field of education but also in the private sector. As stated in a previous chapter, the MLQ 5X has been used in countless studies around the world in corporate environments. Do MLQ 5X results vary according to the sample population?

For example, the majority of respondents in this study were classroom teachers. By nature, teachers are innovative, creative, and flexible. They also encourage these traits in his/her classrooms with students. Being innovative, creative, and flexible are

trademark characteristics demonstrated by transformational leaders. If a similar study were duplicated in other school districts, would educators, by nature, score consistently transformational?

Last, although this researcher felt that the MLQ 5X performed exactly as intended by its creators, he wondered if results could be compared and validated through the use of an additional leadership questionnaire. For example, members of The Ohio State Leadership Studies team at The Ohio State University developed the *Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire- Form XII Self*. This 100 “I” question Likert-style questionnaire is very similar to questioning framed in the MLQ 5X. A comparable leadership self-assessment, the *Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire*, can be found at <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/survlead.html>. This researcher was intrigued by the possibilities of MLQ 5X participants scoring correspondingly on these similar leadership questionnaires.

Building on the foundational data collected by the MLQ 5X, two additional instruments were used to research leadership style in this study –the researcher-developed leadership demographic survey and the scenario interviews.

The Leadership Demographic Survey

The leadership demographic survey was a quick and effective instrument designed to collect basic participant demographic information. As previously noted regarding research question number three, the leadership demographic survey did produce meaningful data. Although prior leadership experiences, as discovered by the use of the leadership demographic survey, did not necessarily relate well to how

participants responded, the years of participant experience did seem to influence the quality of responses shared.

As originally designed, the leadership demographic survey was short in length and user-friendly. It consisted of checklists and areas for short answer responses. After analyzing the results of this study, this researcher pondered several minor changes that might enhance the robustness of data collected through this instrument.

Although the scenario interview participants were previously aware that this research study focused on the topic of leadership (having taken the MLQ 5X) when volunteering for the interviews, would additional questions have produced different results? For example, to better begin the interviews, a question asking participants to describe “an ideal leader” may have assisted participants in channeling and organizing thoughts about effective and meaningful leadership before he/she was asked to apply those traits to real-world scenarios. Regardless of leadership style determined by use of the MLQ 5X, this researcher is convinced that each participant would have described the ideal leader in context of his/her exhibited MLQ 5X style.

The researcher choice to include substitute teaching as experience on the survey might be an additional point worth revisiting. Although substitute teachers make countless choices throughout his/her day, rarely would he/she encounter situations where severe policy or procedural dilemmas occurred in which the building principal was not involved. Substitute teachers simply do not possess the clout or responsibility to resolve serious situations alone. As he/she should, the principal is almost immediately involved in significant incidents such as those framed in the three scenario interview questions.

Conversely, full-time teachers are often the “front line” and must act quickly when dealing with situations such as those posed in the scenario interview. Veteran teachers may have been better equipped to answer these types of questions when compared to educators with experience based mostly on years of substitute teaching. In hindsight, this researcher would have excluded substitute teaching years of experience from the leadership demographic survey.

Although the apprehensions to pursue leadership positions were well documented in chapter two, it might behoove a school district to better understand why the local candidate pool is unwilling to become building or district leaders. In hindsight, this task could have been accomplished in this study by simply adding a question to the leadership demographic survey. A question asking participants to describe his/her fears about leadership may have described *why* he/she does not wish to pursue a leadership role instead of simply discovering *if* they would pursue a leadership role.

As the researcher, I was pleased to be able to include such a range of participant experience. While participants who possess fewer than the mean number of 15.5 years might have less experience, they may have more of a desire to become a leader when compared to educators approaching retirement. Because younger participants have more years ahead of them in his/her profession, they may consider a leadership role at some time in the future. Although this study was not designed to deeply investigate this theme but based on the responses collected, it seems unlikely that many veteran educators would demonstrate the desire to attain a principal license at the twilight of his/her career. Incidentally, based on the survey responses, the majority of educators involved in this study were employed by his/her current district for the entirety of his/her career.

Because this study concentrated on identifying and developing leadership within a school district, additional future research could focus on the three-fourths less-veteran staff that still possess years of employment in their careers. By identifying these less-tenured staff members through this study process (MLQ 5X and scenario interviews) and then grooming them for future leadership positions, a district is essentially investing in the future of its continued success. Although the data collected from the most veteran staff are meaningful, district resources would only be squandered by including these individuals in leadership training and professional development when so close to retirement.

Last, the leadership demographic survey could have posed a question asking participants what the local school district could offer that might attract prospective candidates to leadership roles. Although “salary” might be a simple and common response to this question, this researcher is speculating that other options offered by the district could entice quality candidates to enter positions such as the principalship.

The Scenario Interviews

The interviews of the top scoring MLQ 5X participants occurred in a quiet district school building. All 10 interviews occurred over the course of one Saturday and one Sunday. To ensure privacy and to avoid interruptions, prior to the weekend, all staff members in that particular building were asked by the researcher not to visit the school building during either day over that weekend. All teachers, aides, and custodians complied with the researcher’s request. Based on participant reactions as he/she entered and exited the school building, the interview environment was ideal for the purposes of this research study. Although none of the participants was on staff at this particular

school building, all individuals seemed comfortable and non-threatened. None shared any concerns about the interview environment.

To address research question number two and to reiterate findings from chapter four, participants more often than not did consistently respond to scenario situations based on his/her identified leadership style. Only 20% of participants were “dissimilar” when his/her MLQ 5X leadership style was compared to scenario response results. Although the interview process worked well, this researcher is questioning if minor changes to the process could have increased the percentage of “similar” comparisons.

Even though the interviewer was dressed casually (no suit or tie) and greeted each participant with a welcoming demeanor, this researcher wondered if participants were intimidated by the knowledge that he was a superintendent, albeit from another school district. Although no participant shared any comment or remark of apprehension to this fact during the interviews, it may have influenced the way in which individuals responded.

Does the fact that the interviewer is a stranger to the participants and not an employee from the school district make a difference in the way in which responses are shared? This researcher is surmising that being unfamiliar to the interviewer would encourage participants to be more open and honest in his/her responses. This hypothesis, however, would need further exploration.

Although participants were made aware that an iPad II was to be used as a recording device during interviews, this researcher conjectured if the presence of this device caused some level of participant apprehension. Participants were made aware of the iPad recordings throughout several stages of this research study. It was stated on both

informed consent forms, discussed at MLQ 5X sessions, and restated in the email invitation. Participants involved in the interview stage of data collection were fully aware that a recording device would be present. Based on the fact that *no* interview participant made any comment or reference to the iPad recording device being present, let alone causes for concern, this researcher felt confident that the use of technology did not interfere with the collection of complete and meaningful data.

After scoring the final scenario interview results, the researcher and interviewer shared a common concern involving specific wording in scenario number one (knife in school incident). Both the researcher and interviewer felt certain words may have influenced the way in which participants responded to the real-world situation. In reflection, this researcher should have reworded the first scenario to not include the statement that “Your district policy strongly adheres to zero tolerance.” Based on the responses of the participants, this statement seemed to cause focus on “policy” and not alternative solutions. This was especially evident in those participants identified as transactional in style. This statement may have inadvertently limited the thought process of participants to solutions beyond strictly following district policy and nothing more. This claim can be somewhat substantiated by some responses. Interestingly, the more veteran educators commonly responded to the policy statement but then went on to offer supportive actions and plans as additional solutions to the incident.

When the time of each interview session was analyzed, it may have been possible to ask one more scenario question to each participant. No participant used all 30 minutes allotted for the interview session. Incidentally, most preparatory research volunteers did require most of the permitted time to respond. By doing so, the researcher would have

been afforded additional data to address queries posed in the four research questions. This supplementary information may have added robustness to the study's overall findings.

As with the leadership demographic survey, it may have benefitted the researcher to start the interview with a basic question about defining the "ideal leader." Again, this may have placed the participant in the mindset of contemplating what effective leaders do. Then again, would this initial leadership discussion lead to answers that the participant felt were most desired?

The design of the scenario scoring rubric proved effective through the preparatory research stage of the study. Upon scoring the actual scenario interviews, it was discovered by the researcher as well as the interviewer that having multiple text boxes in which to place comments or evidence made response scoring more difficult than first anticipated. Inordinate amounts of time were used to try to match a response to a rubric statement that it most closely matched. This was already after the fact that the participant response distinctly demonstrated evidence of transformational or transactional traits.

Each of the six rubric subcategories under each scenario has its own textbox. Comments could often be placed in two areas on the rubric or did not necessarily ideally fit into any one area. For example, if the participant responded with "I would form a committee and investigate the problem to find a new solution," his/her reply was clearly transformational. However, that same answer could fit into two categories, "thinking outside the box" or "finding new ways to solve old problems." Either way, the responses demonstrate a transformational way of thinking and were classified that way through scoring.

If one textbox was used for either leadership style, the scorer could have simply listed related comments under those styles and tabulated how many comments or how much evidence was shared to derive a final score for that subcategory. Nevertheless, participant responses collected on the designed rubric were indispensable qualitative data and clearly aligned to the specific leadership styles and the focus of this study.

It is noteworthy to discuss the scoring parallels between the researcher and interviewer. This researcher surmised that there were several reasons for this. First, the researcher supplied the interviewer with familiar resources, articles, and studies that he used in the study. Although the researcher encouraged the interviewer to also research other materials independently, much of his knowledge base was derived from common-shared materials supplied to him by the researcher. Undoubtedly, both scorers used the content of these resources when contemplating participant scores.

Second, the researcher trained the interviewer in the areas of transformational and transactional leadership. Aside from the CITI training on the ethics of data collection, the researcher was the sole source of training for the interviewer. Information about both styles deemed important by the researcher was shared with the interviewer. Although not intended, this limited training may have accounted for the scorers thinking alike when tabulating interview results.

Last, the researcher and interviewer were fellow administrators at a previous school district. While both served as principals, they partook in dozens of staff interviews together. The interviewer, the rest of the administrator team, and the researcher developed a shared and acute ability to identify similarly desirable qualities in interview candidates. Invariably when searching for the best educator candidates, the

researcher and interviewer honed similar thoughts and abilities of performing interviews as well as extracting pertinent response information through the interview process.

Having a shared past experience during structured interviews assisted the researcher and the interviewer in isolating key leadership traits shared in participant responses.

This combination of past experiences and shared information aided the researcher and interviewer thinking comparably when identifying relevant scenario information shared by respondents. This information ultimately identified each participant as transformational or transactional by the researcher and interviewer. Attaining similar results between the researcher and interviewer demonstrated additional consistency and validity of the findings discovered in the data collection segment of this study.

Additionally, the researcher and interviewer contemplated the procedure of scoring after the scenario interviews were completed. For example, the researcher and interviewer discussed separate scoring for each individual as opposed to combined scoring and discussion to reach consensus. The inter-rater reliability of the procedure used proved that, in most cases, the researcher and interviewer scored participant responses very similarly. Would consensus scoring have produced increased corresponding results? Again, further exploration would be needed to address this probe.

Implications

The implications of the findings discovered in this research study could be far-reaching. Because the selection of quality and effective leaders is so vital to school performance, districts can no longer afford to hire subpar-candidates in the hopes that he/she will improve over time.

If school districts could infuse the (or similar) procedure designed in this research study, potential leadership candidates could be identified from the school district ranks or through the hiring process of outside candidates. Additionally, not only would prospective leaders be identified but his/her leadership style could also be recognized. This information could assist school districts in matching the proper leader in the ideal school environment.

There are advantages to school districts grooming educators from within the ranks for future leadership positions. Many of these advantages were documented in chapter two. The discoveries found in this research study could help such districts.

Very rural and low-performing urban school districts commonly face difficulty when recruiting and retaining quality leaders. Many of these districts attempt to groom current teachers into future leaders. This study could serve as a framework for these districts when attempting to identify future principals and district leaders. All public school systems have hiring procedures for prospective leaders in place. The findings from this study would support and not supplant these procedures.

By using the combination of a leadership demographic survey and an instrument such as the MLQ 5X, a school district could obtain additional candidate information to help in deciding on quality candidates. For example, when searching for prospective leaders, a school district could distribute the MLQ 5X during an in-service day. By using a tool such as the researcher-developed scoring rubric, all participants' leadership styles could be identified and quantified for rank order. These records could be collected on all district educators and placed in personnel files by the human resource department.

These files could be reviewed when an internal candidate applies for a leadership position. Besides the common interview questions about strengths and weaknesses, districts could use scenario type questions to investigate how well candidates apply his/her leadership style to real-world situations. This type of information could be much more useful than responses to questions like, “Explain a time when a parent was angry.”

Candidates applying for leadership positions from outside the school district could just as easily be included in this leadership screening process. Outside candidates could be required to complete the MLQ 5X as part of his/her application packet. The MLQ 5X could be scored before the interview to provide the hiring committee additional candidate leadership style information. Questions asked at the interview could explore how well the candidate applies his/her predetermined leadership style to real-world scenarios.

Knowing the participant’s proven leadership style, a district could then match that individual to the unique needs of a specific school building or staff. Collins discussed this point in his book, *Good to Great*. He stated, “People are your most important asset” turns out to be wrong. People are *not* your most important asset. The *right* people are (Collins, 2001, p. 13). Having the right person, in this case a leader in the right school building, could lead to years of increased performance as well as satisfied teachers. This combination of positive events, in turn, often encourage quality leaders to then stay in that position and build from continued successes. Quality leaders remaining in a school building provide consistency, team building, and ultimately, increased student performance. Matching the right leader to the right building is the vital first step to achievement.

Whether new and promising leaders are already in place or quality teacher leaders are being considered for future leadership roles, school districts can create professional development opportunities to improve the quality of its prospective leaders. Some districts already have in place collaborative principal certification programs with local universities. Unfortunately, these types of programs do not always attract educators with leadership set as the ultimate goal. Although these programs are often reputable, the simple fact is, some adult students in these programs are enrolled simply because credits are needed for continued certification or the program is convenient.

Other districts have created their own leadership academies independently and without collaboration with a university. How these districts identify potential leaders varies but commonly relies solely on employee interest.

Whether a district with a leadership academy created the program in collaboration with a university or developed courses in house, it could use the results of this study to better identify prospective leaders. Additionally, because this process of using the MLQ 5X, leadership demographic survey, and scenario questions not only identifies potential leaders but also his/her leadership style, professional development opportunities could be differentiated by the district to address specific leadership styles. In a study conducted by Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016), findings suggest a need for more differentiated training for prospective principals. For example, in addition to general leadership courses or field experiences, others could be tailored to the specific needs and styles of transformational or transactional future leaders.

To begin a leadership academy by any district requires a dedicated and trained staff, vision, a supportive board of education, and a great deal of planning. If a district

chose to create a new leadership academy, it could easily use the process created in this research study to identify potential leaders and their leadership style from within the ranks of the school district. Ideally, the school district's board of education would recognize the importance of effective school building leadership and allocate funds to support an internal principal development program. Negotiated contractual agreements could include generous tuition or program reimbursements designed to increase enrollment of quality candidates into the local leadership development program.

If local funds are not available, the school district's Federal Programs director could budget incentives to teachers enrolling in a principal preparation program through Title I, Part A ARRA funds. By using such funding to develop future leaders, strict guidelines must be followed by the district. For example, a pilot program would need to be developed that is performance-based and demonstrates growth in student achievement. These programs often include important elements such as regular mentoring and teacher feedback (ed.gov).

If funding is not available from any of these sources, future leaders could be encouraged to participate in leadership development through the use of Act 48 professional development hours (PA). Additionally, PA educators could include leadership development activities in his or her Domain 4 of their educator effectiveness annual professional evaluation.

In summary, by using a combination of the MLQ 5X, a leadership demographic survey, and scenario questions, any school district could save in time, cost, and effort when trying to identify potential leaders. This simple process could distinguish potential leaders from within the ranks or assist in screening possible leadership candidates from

outside the school district. Additionally, this researcher feels strongly that this process could be used by any interested school district as a driving force to create a leadership academy to groom “homegrown” leaders. Cadres of prospective new leaders could be identified by school districts and then trained by participating in district activities that promote growth as leaders. Mentors could assist in guiding promising young leaders in decision making, planning, and preparation. Local experts could provide foundational knowledge and skill development.

In addition to possible Title I funds, districts could also budget Title II allocations to cover leadership development expenditures. To fund leadership development programs, districts could apply for Title II monies under SEC. 2101. Funds under this Federal Title II section are earmarked for programs that increase the number of highly qualified principals in school buildings. By accepting funding for this purpose, school districts then become accountable for improvements in student performance (ed.gov, 2017).

Recommendations and Extensions

By use of the leadership demographic survey, the leadership interest of participants was discovered. When sample data from the interview scenario pool as well as the much larger overall participant sample are reviewed, percentages can be determined. The leadership interest rates of 10% and 19%, respectively, do not appear to be statistically significant. To answer the final research question and based on the data collected, this researcher would state that the process of this specific study, at first, does not appear to demonstrate the ability to identify prospective leaders in the general ranks of educators within this particular school district.

However, by nature of staffing, the ratio of administrator to educator in any school district is naturally a low percentage. For example, in the district in which this study took place, approximately 11% of the entire staff is considered “administrative” or “supervisory.” It must be noted that these positions are not entirely principalships. That number is very similar to the percentages of participants interested in an administrative role, 10% - 18%. Although it is impossible to determine from this research study alone, it is conceivable that the seemingly low range of 10% - 18% interested in pursuing a leadership role is actually typical in many school districts. Based on the data collected in this study and the staff ratio employed in this particular school district, it seems plausible that in any given school district, a little over 10% of the educator staff will typically express interest in pursuing an administrative role. This could be the basis for an interesting follow-up study.

The selection of a random sample across the grades of kindergarten through 12th grade could include more individuals interested in becoming a school leader. If targeted individuals are contacted directly with an invitation to participate, would the rate of participation increase? This could only be determined if a follow-up study was designed to include random sampling.

Based on demographic and MLQ 5X data collected in this study, this researcher would recommend a follow-up study to also include the following research question: “Why aren’t more veteran educators willing to pursue leadership positions within a school district?” Because many of the veteran educators in this study demonstrated an ability to comprehensively apply his/her leadership styles to complex scenarios, this researcher would like to explore the reason that most of them have no interest in leaving

the classroom for a leadership role. The answer could be as simple as these individuals have dedicated his/her life's passion toward teaching, the classroom, and student learning. As one educator recently shared with this researcher, "Why would I leave the classroom?" He/she continued, "I love what I do."

By using the MLQ 5X in a similar fashion as the researcher in this study, a school district could identify potential leaders and his/her unique leadership style to develop customized and differentiated professional development. For example, those educators identified as transactional thinkers would place much value in activities tailored to his/her unique style of leadership. By making professional development more specialized and meaningful to the individual through differentiation, it becomes more effective for the school district as a whole.

Another tantalizing follow-up study to this research project could include principals identifying leadership styles of his/her entire staff by use of the MLQ 5X. This information could help building leaders better understand team building, empowering staff, and recruiting teacher-leaders for specific tasks, based on his/her identified leadership style. For example, when revamping policy or discipline code, transactional leaders might better be suited for the task. Conversely, if a team of teacher-leaders were assigned the task of recreating the building vision, then more transformational thinkers might be better matched for the challenge. Knowing the leadership styles of individuals could assist the building leader in assigning and completing tasks with purposeful efficiency.

Another possible variation to this particular study could introduce additional scorers to confirm the accuracy of the compiled data. A third scorer could be added to

data collection to further solidify average participant scores and increased inner-scorer reliability.

To expand on the data collected on the leadership demographic survey, different questions could be posed. For example, a follow-up study could include items to further explore the depth at which the listed participant leadership positions occurred. For example, questions inquiring the number of staff under his/her supervision, the duration in the position, and the amount of time required fulfilling the job duties. These data would add richness to responses beyond a simple indication of past experience.

An intriguing extension to this research study would be to extend the sample population across several or many school districts. Not only would this increase the number of participants sampled, it would also include individuals with a wider array of professional development, leadership, and responsibility differences. To include a district with an established leadership academy would be ideal. Additionally, districts from a variety of demographics (urban, rural, inner-city) would add transferability to many district situations. This researcher would be curious to observe how a much broader sampling of educators would affect the results on the MLQ 5X or scenario interviews. Accounting for the logistics of a much larger study would be difficult, for example arranging the face to face interviews, but the results would add great value to the results.

Comparisons of MLQ 5X and scenario interview results between public educators and charter school educators would also be an interesting future area of study. Just as public educators, a percentage of charter school educators aspire to become leaders. Such a study could discover the percentage of those charter school educators interested in

leadership positions and then compare these results to public education for patterns or differences. The process of using the MLQ 5X, leadership demographic survey, and scenario questions in this study could be mirrored and used similarly in charter schools. This researcher is interested in differences and similarities between public and charter prospective leaders.

Additionally, with payment of additional Mindgarden.com fees, individual reports can be generated and purchased for each participant. These reports include self-assessments as well as peer assessments of leadership traits. Mindgarden.com also provides a much more detailed leadership report (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Feedback Report) than was created for this study. The results from these individual reports could then be compared to “Universal” and “National” norms. Of all possible extensions to the results found in this particular research study, this researcher would most be interested in this last possibility. The potential of comparing comprehensive data from local educators to others from around the nation or world is an exciting prospect. After all, leaders and his/her styles are not just confined to school districts found in central Pennsylvania.

The extensions for further research are vast. The study provides a great foundation for many additional studies and areas of research. The extensions presented here are those to be most needed from a school principal’s perspective; however, there are many other areas of research that could extend this study further. For instance, educational psychologists or pedagogical researchers may use this study to springboard actual influences of school authority, perceptions of power, and attitudes toward positions of educational leadership. In addition, scholarship research extensions into actual and

desired leadership behaviors that result in career advancement as opposed to halted career situations could be investigated. Nevertheless, the study's extensions are valuable as a contribution to the field of school leadership in both practical and research arenas.

Summary

In summary, this mixed-model approach of data collection provided valuable information in terms of discovering results addressing the four research questions posed in this study. Each of the study's questions resulted in valuable information to assist a school district in identifying leaders. The commercial leadership style inventory (MLQ 5X) was pivotal in narrowing a population of educators to a few with the highest scores in either transactional or transformational styles. This resulted in an informed selection of possible leaders. A leadership demographic survey further demonstrated that leadership style is not influenced by previous experience but did provide interesting information regarding age and disclosed educators' interest in leadership positions. Finally, the open-ended interviews produced the third data point. These one-to-one responses provided a detailed demonstration of how a particular candidate would respond to a scenario unique to a school culture based on his/her leadership style.

The quality, effectiveness, and popularity of principal preparation programs play a substantial role in the "long-term success or failure of school principals" (Lauder, 2000, p. 27) and their capacity to positively affect student performance. The results discovered in this study could assist districts in realizing the importance of recruiting effective school leaders. Since the culmination of this research study, this researcher has already approached several local school district superintendents and offered to share the results to help in planning for future leadership development possibilities. Several of these school

district leaders have expressed a great deal of interest in learning more about the results discovered in this study. Over the next two years, this researcher will assist any of those districts interested in the investigation of a local leadership development program based on the results found within this study.

The three methods were interconnected and proved necessary to this study. This researcher believes that the MLQ 5X alone would clearly not have provided enough meaningful data to accurately address the four research questions. Similarly, findings from the leadership demographic survey and scenario interviews were directly complemented by data discovered by the MLQ 5X. For the focus of this study, none of these instruments would have been effective standing alone as the sole source of data. Only by using the amalgam of the MLQ 5X questionnaire, the leadership demographic survey, and the scenario interviews was this researcher able to successfully address the discoveries presented in the four research questions of this study.

Finally, the foundational elements of this study provide a springboard for many others to follow. The researcher recommends that this study be duplicated and used in practical hiring and identification. It is also suggested that some of the elements of the study be improved for more information and to provide a better response. Furthermore, the research could be extended into other scholarship areas in addition to school leadership, such as education psychology and pedagogical research. Overall, this study supports the ongoing need to find and hire quality leaders in schools across the nation. If the right leader is in the right school, the lasting benefits outweigh any costs and will prove to be the finest investment a district can make for a school's success!

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CITI CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details.

See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Edward Dombroski (ID: 5284036)
- **Email:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- **Institution Affiliation:** Youngstown State University (ID: 2520)
- **Institution Unit:** Educational Administration
- **Phone:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.
- **Report ID:** 18324617
- **Completion Date:** 02/07/2016
- **Expiration Date:** 02/06/2019
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 94

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY DATE COMPLETED SCORE

Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127) 01/14/16 3/3 (100%)
Students in Research (ID: 1321) 01/17/16 4/5 (80%)
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490) 01/21/16 5/5 (100%)
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491) 01/22/16 5/5 (100%)
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502) 01/24/16 5/5 (100%)
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503) 01/25/16 5/5 (100%)
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504) 01/27/16 5/5 (100%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505) 01/27/16 5/5 (100%)
Research with Prisoners - SBE (ID: 506) 01/27/16 4/5 (80%)
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507) 01/28/16 4/5 (80%)
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508) 01/31/16 5/5 (100%)
International Research - SBE (ID: 509) 01/31/16 5/5 (100%)
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510) 02/04/16 4/5 (80%)
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483) 02/07/16 4/4 (100%)
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects (ID: 488) 02/07/16 5/5 (100%)
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928) 02/07/16 4/5 (80%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution

identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program

Email: citisupport@miami.edu

Phone: 305-243-7970

Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

APPENDIX B

IRB LETTER



One University Plaza, Youngstown, Ohio 44555

Office of Research
330.941.2377
www.ysu.edu

October 31, 2016

Dr. Jane Beese, Principal Investigator
Mr. Edward Dombroski, Co-investigator
Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology & Leadership
UNIVERSITY

RE: IISRC PROTOCOL NUMBER: 010-2017
PROTOCOL TITLE: Local School Districts Developing their Future Leaders

Dear Dr. Beese and Mr. Dombroski:

Two designated reviewers of the Institutional Review Board have examined the revisions you submitted for the above mentioned protocol and determined that your project now fully meets YSU Human Subjects Research Guidelines. Therefore, I am pleased to inform you that your project has been fully approved for one year. You must submit a Continuing Review Form and have your project approved by October 30, 2017, if your project continues beyond one year.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Hripko
Associate Vice President for Research
Authorized Institutional Official

MAH:cc

c: Dr. Charles Vergon, Chair
Department of Educational Foundations, Research, Technology & Leadership

Youngstown State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, disability, age, religion or veteran/military status in its programs or activities. Please visit www.ysu.edu/ada-accessibility for contact information for persons designated to handle questions about this policy.



APPENDIX C

RESEARCH STUDY CONSENT FORM (MLQ 5X)

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear XXXXXX School District Educator:

I am Edward Dombroski, an elementary principal in the district, and doctoral student from Youngstown State University. I am conducting a study to investigate how school districts can identify potential leaders from within the ranks and if there is a program need to develop those leaders. In this study, you will be asked to complete a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ 5X). The MLQ 5X is a time-tested questionnaire that has been used in hundreds of studies and dissertations worldwide. This paper pencil survey takes about 15 minutes to complete and no identifying information is asked. You will also be asked to complete a short leadership experience and demographic survey to describe you such as years an educator, previous leadership experiences, etc. No identifying information will be asked on either form. You will meet with the trained researcher for a brief after-school staff meeting for one (1) session and your participation should take about 15 minutes to complete the MLQ 5X questionnaire. A small percentage of participants will then be asked later in the school year to partake in a 20-30 minute videotaped interview in which school scenario questions will be asked. These recordings will only be viewed by me, the researcher, and immediately erased at the end of the study.

The only breach of confidentiality in this study results from the fact that I, the researcher, will know the identities of volunteer participants. It is important to note that the researcher will *never* share any participants' name with any XXXXXX district employees or members of the YSU staff. The anticipated benefits of this study include helping school districts in Pennsylvania realize the asset of local talent within their staffing ranks and creating programs to cultivate that valuable resource. The information collected may not benefit you directly, but it is hoped that the information learned in this study may be helpful to others in the future.

Your privacy is extremely important to me and I will handle all information collected from you in a confidential manner. Any transcribed information during the study will be completed by the researcher and kept in a locked firebox at his residence. I will report the results of the project in a way that will not identify you or your school building. In fact, our school district is referred to "A district in central Pennsylvania." At the conclusion of data collection, all participant information will be delivered to Youngstown State University and kept in a locked storage area. All data will be immediately destroyed at the end of the study. I plan to present the results of the study to my Youngstown State University dissertation committee in 2017.

You do not have to participate in this study. If you chose not to participate, you can say no without losing any benefits to which you are entitled. If you do agree but feel uncomfortable, you can stop participating at *any time*. If you wish to withdraw just tell me or the contact person listed below.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact Edward Dombroski before or after school hours at (814) 653-8254 or email [REDACTED]. If you have any questions about this research study, you may email the Principal Investigator, Dr. Jane Beese at jbeese@ysu.edu or call (330) 941-2236. At that time you will have the opportunity to discuss in confidence any questions or concerns that you might have as a research participant. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, you may contact the Office of Research at YSU (330-941-2377) or at YSUIRB@ysu.edu. The IRB, composed of members of the Youngstown State University community as well as lay members of the community who are not connected with the University, have reviewed this study.

As mentioned, a small percentage of volunteers will be asked to participate in the videotaped segment, second stage of data collection later this year.

I understand the study described above and have been given a copy of this consent document. I am 18 years of age or older and I agree to participate.

Signature of Participant

Date

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APPENDIX F

LEADERSHIP/DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

MLQ Participant Demographic Information

To better understand and correlate data collected from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) participant responses, please answer the following questions:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. How many years have you been employed in education?
4. How many of those years (if any) have been outside of XXXXX school district?
5. Have you ever served in teacher-leader positions? *Please check any/all that apply:*
 - Team or grade level leader
 - Superintendent's roundtable
 - Building representative
 - Association representative
 - Student Assistance Program (SAP) chair
 - PTA executive board member
 - Professional Learning Community (PLC) chair
 - Other
6. Have you ever served in leadership positions outside of school? *Please check any/all that apply:*
 - Team coach
 - Church activity coordinator
 - Girls'/Boys' Scout den leader
 - Community activity coordinator
 - Other
7. Have you or do you plan to earn your Principal's or other supervisory license?
YES NO
8. In pursuing a leadership position, would you be willing to relocate to another school district?

APPENDIX G

TRANSFORMATIONAL/TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAITS RUBRIC

Using the Scale

“Very Evident”- The participant’s response clearly expresses mastery in this trait by demonstrating a strong understanding and application of its use in the reply. The participant shares multiple examples of this trait in his or her response to the scenario.

“Quite Evident”- The participant’s response expresses proficient knowledge of this trait by demonstrating accurate understanding and application of its use in the reply. The participant shares at least two or more examples of this trait in their responses to the scenario.

“Occasionally Evident”- The participant’s response demonstrates a general understanding and/or application of this trait. The participant shares at least one example of this trait in their response to the scenario.

“Neither”- The participant’s response does not reflect understanding and/or application of traits from either side of the continuum.

Notes to the Scorer:

- A participant response may include traits from both sides of the continuum. In this case, record specific examples under “Comments” to determine if the participant response includes evidence that favors one side of the trait continuum over the other.
- A participant response might include alternative and valid solutions to the scenario that are not included on either side of the rubric. If participant explanations are not directly reflective of transformational or transactional traits, check “Neither” in the center of the continuum.
- If a participant chooses not to respond to a specific scenario, note “No response” in the comment box.

APPENDIX H

SCORING THE MLQ 5X

Behavior	Question Number	Score	Total Score for Behavior	Behavior	Question Number	Score	Total Score for Behavior
Idealized Influence (attributed)	#10			Contingent Reward	#1		
Idealized Influence (attributed)	#18			Contingent Reward	#11		
Idealized Influence (attributed)	#21			Contingent Reward	#16		
Idealized Influence (attributed)	#25			Contingent Reward	#35		
Idealized Influence (behavior)	#6			Management by exception-Active	#4		
Idealized Influence (behavior)	#14			Management by exception-Active	#22		
Idealized Influence (behavior)	#23			Management by exception-Active	#24		
Idealized Influence (behavior)	#34			Management by exception-active	#27		
Inspirational Motivation	#9			Management by exception-passive	#3		
Inspirational Motivation	#13			Management by exception-passive	#12		
Inspirational Motivation	#26			Management by exception-passive	#17		
Inspirational Motivation	#36			Management by exception-passive	#20		
Intellectual Stimulation	#2			Laissez-Faire Leadership	#5		
Intellectual Stimulation	#8			Laissez-Faire Leadership	#7		
Intellectual Stimulation	#30			Laissez-Faire Leadership	#28		
Intellectual Stimulation	#32			Laissez-Faire Leadership	#33		
Individualized Consideration	#15			Rank order of average subscale scores from the two leadership style totals. Number one being the highest.			

Individualized Consideration	#19			1. _____ (Assumed Prominent Leadership Style) 2.	
Individualized Consideration	#29				
Individualized Consideration	#31				
Transformational total (<i>IIa + IIb + Im + Is + Ic</i>) / 5 =				Transactional total (<i>CR + MEa + MEp</i>) / 3 =	

Directions: Match the rating number (0-4) with the appropriate question. Then, add the column for each question and divide by the number of items to calculate an average for each subscale. List the total subscale scores with one being the highest.

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCENARIO QUESTIONS

Interview Scenarios

1. Many students in this part of the state hunt deer in the late fall. It is the first week of December and an emotional support student is brought to your office by a teacher and is wearing a camouflage hunting coat. The teacher is holding a large hunting knife belonging to the student. Several other students reported that he showed them the knife on the way to homeroom. When questioned by the teacher, the student claimed that he was hunting over the weekend with his grandpa and forgot the knife was in the coat. Your district policy strictly adheres to “zero tolerance.” As a first year building principal, how do you specifically address this situation immediately and how do you avoid similar incidences from occurring in your school in the future?
2. You are a second year principal in a new district. Shortly after assuming your new position, you discover that the PTA parents in your building are very supportive.....when they get their own way. Apparently, the previous building leader empowered this group of parents to the point that many decisions were made without teacher or principal input. Many staff members feel that the group is very supportive and student centered but “too powerful.” Some of these PTA parents seem to be in the building more than is really needed and often witness and overhear situations that should be privy to district employees and not the public. How would restore trust with your staff while creating a power balance with this PTA?
3. Rumors about a large group of eighth graders commonly smoking marijuana have erupted in your school and within the local community. In fact, parents attended last week’s board meeting to openly share their concerns about the sudden alleged drug use to the board and public. There seems to be some credibility to the reports. As a new principal to this middle school, how do you promote student buy in to stay drug-free while also addressing community concerns?

APPENDIX J

SCORING THE SCENARIO INTERVIEWS

Transformational/Transactional Leadership Traits Rubric

Scenario:		Directions: Please check one block that best describes how the participant is applying leadership skills to this scenario.							
		Very Evident	Quite Evident	Occasionally Evident	Neither	Occasionally Evident	Quite Evident	Very Evident	
The leader's thinking is innovative or "outside the box"		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	The leader's thinking is uninspired or "inside the box"
Specific quotes or notations made by the respondent that evidences the above rank:									
The leader is thinking about a positive future and the changes needed to get there		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	The leader is thinking about the here and now and content not to rock the boat
Specific quotes or notations made by the respondent that evidences the above rank:									
The leader is proactive		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	The leader is reactive
Specific quotes or notations made by the respondent that evidences the above rank:									

The leader motivates followers by encouraging them to put organization needs first	Very Evident	Quite Evident	Occasionally Evident	Neither	Occasionally Evident	Quite Evident	Very Evident	The leader motivates followers by playing upon their individual self-interests
Specific quotes or notations made by the respondent that evidences the above rank:								
The leader promotes new ways of thinking to solve old problems	Very Evident	Quite Evident	Occasionally Evident	Neither	Occasionally Evident	Quite Evident	Very Evident	The leader continues to promote routine ways to problem solve
Specific quotes or notations made by the respondent that evidences the above rank:								
Followers act because they are inspired by their leader	Very Evident	Quite Evident	Occasionally Evident	Neither	Occasionally Evident	Quite Evident	Very Evident	Followers act based on punishment and rewards
Specific quotes or notations made by the respondent that evidences the above rank:								

Directions: Tabulate transformational (left column) and transactional (right column) scores by adding checkmarks downward for sum. *Neither* = 0, *Occasionally* = 1, *Quite* = 2, *Very* = 3. The greater of the two scores is the presumed preferred leadership style.

Transformational Style score: _____ **Transactional Style score:** _____

APPENDIX K

SCENARIO INTERVIEW SCORES

Scenario Rubric Scores	Participant # _____	
Scenario #1 Sub scores	Transformational Score	Transactional Score
	<i>Total To Score:</i>	<i>Total Ta Score:</i>

Scenario #2 Sub scores	Transformational Score	Transactional Score
	<i>Total To Score:</i>	<i>Total Ta Score:</i>

Scenario #3 Sub scores	Transformational Score	Transactional Score
	<i>Total To Score:</i>	<i>Total Ta Score:</i>

Total Scenarios To score: _____ Total Scenarios Ta score is: _____

Volunteer Participant # _____ is predominately:
Transformational or **Transactional** or **Equal**

On the MLQ 5X, Participant # _____ was found to be:
Transformational or **Transactional**

The volunteer participant's responses on both instruments were found to be:
Similar or **Dissimilar**

APPENDIX L

MLQ 5 X (RANKED) TRANSACTIONAL SCORES

Participant Number	Transactional Score
75*	2.75
82*	2.75
27*	2.67
36*	2.67
99*	2.67
21	2.58
79	2.58
29	2.5
45	2.5
42	2.42
56	2.42
87	2.42
95	2.42
8	2.33
28	2.33
46	2.33
70	2.33
88	2.33
101	2.33
9	2.25
12	2.25
20	2.25
23	2.25
31	2.25
35	2.25
41	2.25
62	2.25
98	2.25
97	2.25
100	2.25
2	2.17
10	2.17
18	2.17
24	2.17
49	2.17
57	2.17
61	2.17

78	2.17
96	2.17
5	2.08
14	2.08
39	2.08
47	2.08
50	2.08
55	2.08
64	2.08
90	2.08
30	2
77	2
3	1.92
33	1.92
40	1.92
53	1.92
54	1.92
58	1.92
67	1.92
72	1.92
73	1.92
84	1.92
86	1.92
16	1.83
25	1.83
32	1.83
43	1.83
51	1.83
81	1.83
83	1.83
6	1.75
34	1.75
44	1.75
65	1.75
66	1.75
68	1.75
76	1.75
22	1.67
92	1.67
11	1.66
38	1.58

60	1.58
89	1.58
91	1.58
94	1.58
4	1.5
7	1.5
13	1.5
15	1.5
37	1.5
63	1.5
74	1.5
85	1.5
59	1.5
93	1.42
102	1.42
19	1.33
69	1.33
71	1.33
80	1.33
26	1.25
52	1.25
1	1.17
48	1.17
17	1

* Participant will be invited to participate in scenario interviews.

APPENDIX M

MLQ 5 X (RANKED) TRANSFORMATIONAL SCORES

Participant Number	Transformational Score
97*	3.9
61*	3.8
85*	3.8
2*	3.75
10*	3.75
55	3.75
6	3.7
70	3.7
66	3.65
68	3.6
69	3.6
72	3.6
101	3.6
22	3.55
92	3.55
98	3.55
12	3.5
33	3.5
41	3.5
45	3.5
75	3.5
96	3.5
4	3.45
17	3.45
44	3.45
100	3.45
37	3.4
73	3.4
86	3.4
87	3.4
32	3.35
102	3.35
51	3.3
54	3.3
60	3.3
78	3.3

93	3.3
24	3.25
80	3.25
83	3.25
5	3.2
13	3.2
16	3.2
38	3.2
94	3.2
50	3.15
64	3.15
91	3.15
15	3.1
40	3.1
71	3.1
76	3.1
3	3.05
9	3.05
18	3.05
19	3.05
20	3.05
30	3.05
52	3.05
57	3.05
77	3.05
99	3.05
1	3
7	3
25	3
49	3
65	3
79	3
27	2.95
36	2.95
8	2.9
62	2.9
89	2.9
26	2.85
53	2.85
82	2.85
84	2.85

21	2.8
47	2.8
48	2.8
63	2.8
88	2.8
90	2.8
29	2.75
35	2.75
81	2.75
46	2.7
67	2.7
14	2.65
39	2.65
28	2.55
56	2.55
34	2.5
95	2.46
11	2.45
42	2.45
59	2.45
23	2.4
43	2.3
58	2.3
31	2.25
74	2.2

* Participant will be invited to participate in scenario interviews.