

**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS: A CASE STUDY OF A
RURAL INDIANA COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY**

by

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Abstract

In the corporate sector, considerable research has focused on the impact of transformational leadership in achieving and maintaining a highly effective organization. However, the bulk of research has focused on corporate and for-profit organizations; the nonprofit and social services fields require more study in this area. A greater understanding is needed of whether transformational leadership impacts organizational performance. In this qualitative single case study of a small Community Action Agency, the data revealed a transformational leadership culture clearly inspired by the leadership of the CEO. The findings were based on the primary data source of participant interviews, and numerous examples of physical cultural elements and content reviews of secondary data sources were used for triangulation. It was noteworthy to discover a specific case that clearly addresses the conflicting views in the literature as to whether leadership creates or is created by the organizational culture; in this case leadership clearly created the transformational culture. Employee perceptions of transformational leadership behaviors were consistently apparent based on responses to specific interviews questions related to the four elements of transformational leadership as described in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio & Bass, 1999).

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This is dedicated to the many people from whom I've learned about leadership, management, and the value of education--from role models in the US Air Force to colleagues in the civilian world who shared the universal values of integrity, loyalty, and professionalism. They know who they are, and I am better for having known them.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
List of Tables	viii
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction to the Problem	1
Background of the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Purpose of the Study	4
Rationale	5
Research Questions	6
Significance of the Study	7
Definition of Terms	7
Assumptions and Limitations	10
Theoretical/Conceptual Framework	12
Organization of the Remainder of the Study	14
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	15
Introduction	15
Seminal Research	16
Recent Research	17
Qualitative Research and the Case Study Methodology	33
Limitations of the Work Reviewed	37
Implications of the Literature Reviewed	39

Recommendations of the Work Reviewed	40
Conclusion	41
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY	42
Research Design	42
Sample	43
Setting	44
Instrumentation / Measures	45
Data Collection	47
Data Analysis	48
Validity and Reliability	50
Ethical Considerations	51
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS	53
The Study and the Researcher	53
Description of the Sample	55
Research Methodology Applied to Data Analysis	58
Presentation of Data and Results of Analysis	59
Summary	102
CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS	104
Introduction	104
Discussion of Data Analysis	104
Evaluation of the Methodological Approach	111
Association of the Study to Prior Research	112

Implications and Contributions of the Present Research	113
Limitations of the Study	114
Suggestions for Future Research	116
Conclusion	117
REFERENCES	120
APPENDIX. INTERVIEW GUIDE	126

List of Tables

Table 1. Participant Demographics	57
Table 2. Participant Perceptions of Transformational Leadership by <i>a priori</i> Coding	71

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Introduction to the Problem

In the corporate sector, considerable research has focused on the impact of transformational leadership in achieving and maintaining a highly effective organization. However, the bulk of research has focused on corporate and for-profit organizations. The social services field requires more study in this area. A greater understanding is needed of whether transformational leadership impacts organizational performance in social services organizations. Bass (1985) contrasted transactional and transformational leadership and the results that are obtained with each approach. Avolio and Bass's (1999) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) identifies and defines four factors of transformational leadership, and has been extensively validated. Although this study was a qualitative interview-based study, the characteristics identified in the MLQ formed the basis for structured interview questions.

Background of the Study

An organizational culture is greatly influenced by its leadership; the culture of an organization can also influence the development of its leadership. Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as "leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations--the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations--*of both leaders and followers*...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). According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and therefore transforms both.

Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) identified the relationship between transformational leadership and beneficial job behaviors using job characteristics theory, noting that “What stands out most from our results is that followers of truly exceptional leaders regarded their jobs as more challenging and important” (p. 334).

Block’s (2003) study found that supervisors who were rated high in transformational leadership were associated with higher perceived levels of mission, adaptability, involvement and consistency in the organization compared to their transactional counterparts. This study also found that employees who rated supervisors high in transformational leadership have a more positive perception of their organizational culture. Interestingly, a link also existed between proactive leadership behaviors and positive cultural ratings, while inactive leadership was associated with negative culture ratings. Holtz and Harold’s (2008) study found that employees who perceived their managers exhibited transformational leadership behaviors indicated a high degree of trust in their managers, and “employees’ level of trust in their managers affected the degree to which employees construed their managers’ explanations as adequate, legitimate, and sincere” (p. 793).

Statement of the Problem

In May of 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, which established the Community Action Agency (CAA) network and declared an unconditional war on poverty. According to the Pace Community Action Agency website (n.d.), Community Action Agencies (a form of social services organization) are private nonprofit or public organizations that were created by the federal government in

1964 to combat poverty in geographically designated areas. In order to obtain status as a Community Action Agency, an organization must be awarded this specific designation by a state or local government. A Community Action Agency has a tripartite board structure designed to involve the entire community in the alleviation or elimination of poverty. Community Action Agencies work to promote the involvement of the local community members, including elected officials, representatives from the private sector, and particularly low-income residents in evaluating the needs of the local community and addressing the causes and effects of poverty. Typically, a CAA has a board of directors composed of a minimum of (a) one third democratically elected representatives of low-income communities, (b) one-third local public officials, and (c) remaining positions allocated to representatives of private groups in the community such as business, industry, labor, religious, social welfare, and others (Pace Community Action Agency website, n.d.).

Community Action Agencies are unique in that, while most organizations that address poverty-related issues are focused on specific areas of need, such as housing, health care, job training, or economic development. Community Action Agencies provide outreach to low-income people within their designated service areas to address the various needs of this population through a “comprehensive range of coordinated programs designed to have a measurable impact on poverty” (Pace Community Action Agency website, n.d.).

Community Action Agencies are typically in an increasingly difficult position to respond to current conditions; specifically, the forces for change identified by Robbins

and Judge (2009) as (a) nature of the workforce, (b) technology, (c) economic shocks, (d) competition, (e) social trends, and (f) world politics. There is also a negative impact on job satisfaction. Based on their history in dealing with public programs, many CAAs have an entrenched organizational purpose and culture. Increased competition for public funds and tighter federal budgets are an ongoing threat to their bottom line (Smith, 2002, cited in Nernon, 2007). Community Action Agencies must also continually deal with the effects of federal programs, which silo funds and create separate funding and administrative guidelines for each funded program.

In spite of limitations experienced by most Community Action Agencies, such as budgetary limitations, competition for government funding, disparity in administrative and legal guidelines among funding sources, and existing cultural issues, the potential for success in CAAs can be enhanced by promoting transformational leadership and understanding how and why leadership cultures can be changed.

Purpose of the Study

This study furthers existing research in order to examine transformational leadership practices in a successful social services organization. The findings from this study may be useful to other social services organizations in institutionalizing transformational leadership or becoming highly effective organizations. The use of qualitative data provides a richer, deeper insight to the unique dynamics of a nonprofit organization than can be obtained by quantitative data alone. Due to the nature of people who typically work in social services, leadership must find appropriate ways of relating to subordinates; this is a particular challenge in organizations that undergo continuous

change, are subjected to extensive regulation and oversight, cannot typically offer competitive compensation, and whose consumer demands are inversely proportional to economic conditions.

Rationale

As Willis (2007) stated, case studies can be done without predetermined hypotheses and goals. Such an approach for this study is appropriate in that it provides a single bounded context (Creswell, 2007) and also describes a phenomenon within its context (Yin, 2003). The single bounded context is the organization in which the research was conducted; the phenomenon is the practice of transformational leadership within the organization as examined through qualitative data. Embry (2010) used a generic qualitative case study design with a thematic analysis approach to investigate the lived experiences of employees with a supervisor using transformational leadership. Stake (as cited in Casey and Houghton, 2010) identified three distinct types of case studies differentiated by intent: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. This research was an *instrumental* case study, which allows the researcher to focus on a specific issue or problem and identify a single bounded context in which to examine the issue (Creswell, 2007). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), when one does not know the parameters of a social setting, “heavy initial instrumentation or closed-ended devices are inappropriate” (p. 35). Structured interviews and observations were used as the inquiry methodology. It was expected that themes would emerge demonstrating similarities in perceptions of transformational leadership and identifying specific factors influencing transformational leadership.

The unit of analysis was at the organizational level. The case study examined transformational leadership practices at a Community Action Agency in rural Indiana (hereinafter referred to as “the agency”). Individual employees were interviewed and observed by the researcher to obtain perceptions of transformational leadership characteristics present in the organization. The researcher also analyzed documentation such as annual reports, minutes of meetings of the board of directors, press releases, funding levels, and grant proposals and awards.

Research Questions

The primary research question for this study was, “Does transformational leadership impact the organizational effectiveness of small community-based organizations?” This topic of inquiry was selected for its relevance to the current emphasis on social services and Community Action Agencies’ importance, especially in periods of economic depression or recession. Unlike for-profit organizations, performance cannot be measured solely on financial results.

The key construct or key phenomenon in this research is transformational leadership; specifically, Avolio and Bass’s (1999) four major elements of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The early works in the area of leadership displayed the emergence of leadership as a separate concept and not simply a function of management. Early authors consistently viewed research from the positivist epistemological and ontological perspectives, and for the most part in methodological approaches as well. Leader behaviors were addressed in terms of their impact on

performance using empirical data such as productivity as opposed to the psychological effects and impact on the individual of leadership as is more prevalent in research today.

Participant characteristics for this study were all personnel employed in the organization. As transformational leadership permeates an entire organization, any employee of the organization likely has perceptions that provide data for the study.

Significance of the Study

The study should lead to a greater understanding of how small community-based organizations develop and maintain the transformational leadership philosophies and practices for executives and middle managers in order to become highly effective. As economic conditions become worse, the demand for services provided by Community Action Agencies becomes greater as their funding decreases and becomes more competitive. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and therefore transforms both. Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) used job characteristics theory to identify the relationship between transformational leadership and beneficial job behaviors. Author-identified limitations throughout the literature, while relatively few in number, typically included the applicability or effectiveness of the measurements used to determine effectiveness or performance.

Definition of Terms

Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as, leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations--the wants and needs, the aspirations and

expectations--of both leaders and followers...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).

Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) noted that "followers of truly exceptional leaders regarded their jobs as more challenging and important" (p. 334).

Avolio and Bass (1999) developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which identified four major elements of transformational leadership: **(a) idealized influence**, which indicates whether a leader maintains subordinates' trust, faith and respect; exhibits dedication to them; appeals to their ideals, hopes and dreams, and acts as a role model; **(b) inspirational motivation**, which addresses how well a leader provides a vision; uses appropriate symbols, artifacts, or images to help others focus on their work; and makes others feel their work is significant; **(c) intellectual stimulation**, which involves the degree to which a leader encourages others to look at old problems in creative new ways; promotes an environment that is tolerant of diverse positions; and encourages people to question their own values and beliefs as well as those of the organization; and **(d) individualized consideration**, which indicates to what degree a leader displays interest in others' well-being, assigns projects based on individual ability and preference, and focuses attention on those who may be less involved in the group.

Investigative measure level questions were drawn from Avolio and Bass's (1999) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire and focused on employee perceptions of evidence of transformational leadership in existence in the organization. The relevant definitions that apply are:

Highly effective organization. (high-performance work organizations) “An organizational system that continually aligns its strategy, goals, objectives, and internal operations with the demands of its external environment to maximize organizational performance” (Kirkman, Lowe, & Young, 1999, p. 8).

Job satisfaction. “How people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs; the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs” (Spector, 1997, p. 2).

Organizational culture. “A pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration...and taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein, 1992, p. 9).

Organizational vision. “A mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization” (Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 89).

Transformational leadership. Leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations of both leaders and followers (Burns, 1978).

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions:

1. Participant responses to interview questions are not biased.
2. The elements of transformational leadership as defined by Avolio and Bass (1999) form a sound basis for investigative measure level interview questions.
3. The researcher will be an objective instrument in the research. While the researcher is trained and has experience in most of the skills required to conduct this

study, it was conducted for dissertation purposes and therefore a learning experience; accordingly, all phases of the study were approved prior to implementation and were monitored and reviewed by highly qualified dissertation committee members.

Limitations:

There are potential limitations typical to case studies, such as subjectivity and using only one organization as a basis for study; there is also a potential threat to validity based on the researcher having been a manager and consultant with a previous relationship to the organization. However, with the cooperation of the CEO of the subject organization and a clear explanation of the confidentiality requirements, this should be mitigated. While bias is always a potential threat, in this case there were no preconceived ideas and no agenda; the goal was simply to examine transformational leadership in an organization. As a former employee and consultant to this organization, the researcher is aware of some history; however, the goal was to be as objective as possible to include verbatim transcripts of interviews and taking care to not lead any participants through poorly worded follow up questions. Noticeable author-identified limitations throughout the literature that are also potential limitations in this study were sample size (Parry & Sinha, 2005), (Jaskyte, 2004), (Taylor, Taylor, & Stoller, 2008), and (DeBerry, 2010); a low response rate was also identified by several authors as a limiting factor (Jaskyte, 2004); (Lu, 2010); (DeBerry, 2010). Wang and Howell (2010) noted potential limitations in measurement of transformational leadership, stating that “it is possible that some leadership dimensions can be applied to both levels.” Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) considered the impact of an unmodeled variable (e.g., affective

disposition) on the measurements. Rafferty and Griffin (2006) identified a potential for “reverse causality” in examining how perceptions of change influence uncertainty, satisfaction, and turnover intentions, noting the possibility that the reverse relationship may have occurred.

However, several potential limitations exist. Bias on the part of the researcher is always possible; this researcher was an employee of the organization under study (2000-2002) and also performed some consulting services in 2009. Some members of the organization are still employed and have familiarity with the researcher. The researcher made clear to the organization that the integrity of the research was paramount. The organization's CEO, coincidentally a doctoral learner in the early stages of coursework toward an EdD, has stated that she is interested in accurate research findings as an assessment of the organization and a tool for further potential improvement efforts. The researcher received full support without undue influence from organizational leadership. The researcher has no personal interest in the results of the study, and the recruitment e-mail and pre-interview instructions clearly stated that the responses will be confidential and that no preconceptions are made regarding the outcome of the study. The potential conflict of interest should have no effect on the already minimal risk to participants; however, the researcher did attempt to mitigate any perceived risk associated with the potential conflict of interest by clearly informing the participants that the data were confidential and participation was strictly voluntary, and by requiring signed written consent stating same.

Since participation was voluntary, it was possible that the sample might be

smaller than desired. As with any qualitative study, particularly one that is exploratory in nature, findings will typically not be generalizable to other organizations; however, the results may equip executives and organizational development officers to develop training programs designed around transformational behaviors focused on work relationships and satisfied employees. This research may also add to the body of knowledge to what extent agency personnel receive leadership training.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This study took an interpretive approach using thematic analysis. According to Yin (2003), the case study examines a phenomenon in its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not obvious. It should be noted at the outset that some researchers argue that the case study is not a methodology; rather, it is choice of what to study (Stake, as cited in Creswell, 2007) or a “transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary heuristic that involves the careful delineation of the phenomena for which evidence is being collected” (Van Wynsberghe & Khan, 2007, p. 9). This study approached the case study as a methodology.

The specific theoretical framework used for this study is the concept of transformational leadership as defined by Burns (1978) and the four major elements of transformational leadership as described by Avolio and Bass (1999). However, the potential for additional themes over and above the four expected categories was considered in order to maintain openness to the phenomena (Creswell, 2009). The use of an inductive approach allowed for the possibility of research findings emerging from the themes inherent in raw data.

Creswell's (1994) definition of qualitative research includes the use of an emergent qualitative approach and an inductive data analysis to identify patterns or themes and a final report including the voice of participants, reflexivity of the researcher, and a description and interpretation of the problem. Avolio and Bass's (1999) seminal study identified four major elements of transformational leadership:

- *Idealized Influence*, which indicates whether a leader maintains subordinates' trust, faith and respect; exhibits dedication to them; appeals to their ideals, hopes and dreams, and acts as a role model;
- *Inspirational Motivation*, which addresses how well a leader provides a vision; uses appropriate symbols, artifacts, or images to help others focus on their work; and makes others feel their work is significant;
- *Intellectual Stimulation*, which involves the degree to which a leader encourages others to look at old problems in creative new ways; promotes an environment that is tolerant of diverse positions; and encourages people to question their own values and beliefs as well as those of the organization; and
- *Individualized Consideration*, which indicates to what degree a leader displays interest in others' well-being, assigns projects based on individual ability and preference, and focuses attention on those who may be less involved in the group.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

Chapter 2 will present a review of relevant literature review with a discussion of leadership theory, transformational leadership concepts, organizational and individual performance, organizational culture, learning, and nonprofit organizations. The tenets of qualitative research and specifically the case study methodology will also be discussed.

Chapter 3 will describe the research methodology and design and the procedures used to conduct the research. Chapter 4 will contain all data derived from the review of documentation, interview responses, and field notes and the subsequent analysis of the data collected. Chapter 5 will interpret the findings and suggest possible implications of the findings and the potential for future research in the topic of transformational leadership.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter 2 reviews existing literature related to the topics of leadership theory, transformational leadership, performance, organizational culture, learning, and Community Action Agencies; in addition, the literature supporting the qualitative methodology selected for this study will be discussed, specifically the case study. Transformational leadership refers to the leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration (Bass, 1985).

Leadership and organizational culture are two organizational factors that are tightly knit. The included references approach primarily the concepts and principles associated with transformational leadership. The application of transformational leadership in public service and the social services arena is also included. The intent was to evaluate sources with a view toward discovering previous works that addressed possible linkages between the fields from either perspective. Many relatively early references in these areas were not scholarly in nature, but were published books and not suitable as references for the purpose of this dissertation.

This chapter will address the seminal work on leadership and the most current literature on transformational leadership as relates to the research question asked in this study. Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology used to answer the questions. Chapter 4 will report on the results of the study, and Chapter 5 will analyze and interpret the findings and suggest recommendations for additional study in this area.

Seminal Research

The early works in the area of leadership displayed the emergence of leadership as a separate concept and not simply a function of management. Early authors consistently viewed research from the positivist epistemological and ontological perspectives, and for the most part in methodological approaches as well. Leader behaviors were addressed in terms of their impact on performance. Additionally, some difficulty was encountered in consistently defining leadership ratings, leader effectiveness, and subordinate performance.

Bennis's (1959) article stated two main purposes: (a) to provide a chronological outline and describe the major themes and assumptions of the application of leadership theory to administrative behavior; and (b) to develop a framework or typology for all leadership theory and research. The primary perspective was to frame leadership as it relates to organizational effectiveness. The article views leadership initially as a subset of management, referencing phases beginning with scientific management, to the human relations approach, to the revisionist phase in which a middle ground between the two extremes is both condemned and suggested, depending on the source. Bennis attempts to resolve some of the apparent conflict between the two schools, and stated that all leadership questions fall into five main issues: (a) basis and functions of authority; (b) the sources of power; (c) objectives versus relationships; (d) distance versus closeness; and (e) consensual validation and decision making.

House (1971) offered an explanation, derived from a path-goal theory of motivation, of the effects of leader behavior on subordinate satisfaction, innovation, and

performance. Using a positivist approach to the research, the experimental methods including using existing measurement scales used in previous research. His quantitative research addresses three main hypotheses: (a) leader initiating structure increases the path instrumentality for subordinates whose roles have non-routine task demands by decreasing role ambiguity; (b) informal leaders high in structure influence positively the subjective probabilities other group members assign to positively valent outcomes; and (c) leader initiating structure and consideration will have differential effects, depending on whether the task is satisfying or unsatisfying to the subordinates, and whether the task-role demands are clear or ambiguous. This article reported three quantitative studies that cumulatively tested eight specific hypotheses based on the three main hypotheses. Overall, the studies showed support for seven of the eight hypotheses, of which two were replicated.

Avolio and Bass's (1999) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) is prevalent in the literature as a measurement tool in transformational leadership research. This instrument has been validated, and has been cited extensively in the literature in various forms to examine transformational and transactional leadership. The MLQ identifies and defines four characteristics of transformational leadership: Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration.

Recent Research

Based on previous research and the subsequent acquired knowledge, numerous scientists have furthered the applications and implications of the original works on the

topic of transformational leadership. Scholar-practitioners have better defined and isolated the concepts relevant to the topic while noting that even further examination is required, particularly in terms of defining measures of effectiveness and performance.

Blankenship and Wegener (2008) stated, communicators may be able to increase processing of...messages by getting the message recipients to consider the messages in relation to important values (whether or not those values form the crux of the message content)” (p. 211). The issue of values could be a factor in a leader espousing transformational leadership in an organization, and should be considered in the analysis of interview responses.

Transformational Leadership and Performance

Transactional leaders operate within their organizational cultures following existing rules, procedures, and norms; transformational leaders can change the culture by (a) understanding it; (b) realigning the culture with a new vision, and (c) revising the organization’s shared assumptions, values, and norms (Bass, 1985, cited in Bass and Avolio, 1993). Kest’s (2007, cited in DeBerry, 2010) study, using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio and Bass, 1999), found that transformational leadership leads to higher results in effectiveness, satisfaction, and extra effort.

Early works considered leadership as more of a management behavior, with research conducted primarily in business settings. As the body of knowledge increased, more attention was focused on leadership behaviors and the impact of those behaviors on performance; ultimately, the concept of transformational leadership evolved. In addition,

greater emphasis has been given to measurement tools to more effectively define and assess what constitutes performance or improvement, both in terms of leadership as a general topic and specifically as relates to transformational leadership. The primary measurement tool used in much of the quantitative transformational leadership research is the MLQ (Avolio & Bass, 1990) or some variation internally validated for a given study.

Block's (2003) study used the multifactor leadership questionnaire and found that supervisors with higher transformational leadership ratings were perceived as having higher levels of mission, adaptability, involvement and consistency when compared to their counterparts who were rated as more transactional leaders. This study also found that employees who rated supervisors high in transformational leadership have a more positive perception of their organizational culture. Interestingly, a link also existed between proactive leadership behaviors and positive ratings of organizational culture, while inactive leadership was associated with negative culture ratings. Holtz and Harold's (2008) study found that employees who perceived their managers engaged in transformational leadership behaviors reported a high degree of trust in their manager, and "employees' level of trust in their managers affected the degree to which employees construed their managers' explanations as adequate, legitimate, and sincere" (p. 793).

Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) examined the relationships between transformational leadership in college classrooms, student learning outcomes, student participation, and student perceptions of instructor credibility. Using several types of measurement instruments administered to 165 undergraduate students, they found that "transformational leadership is positively related to student learning outcomes, student

participation, and perceptions of teacher credibility” (p. 301).

According to Jaskyte (2004), positive relationships among transformational leadership, organizational values, and cultural consensus indicate that “leadership practices...created strong cultural consensus around values that may inhibit innovation” (p. 153). Boga and Ensari (2009) confirmed that basing assessments of organizational success on employee perceptions versus economic indicators is empirically supported.

DeBerry (2010) found that a positive linear correlation exists between transformational leadership and (a) employee involvement, (b) employee adaptability, and (c) employee focus on mission. Embry (2010) found that supervisors using transformational leadership techniques (a) support the employee and (b) provide positive feedback to the employee.

Mary (2005) found the four transformational leadership factors of idealized influence, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation were correlated with positive leadership outcomes. In addition, the *transactional* leadership styles of management by exception and laissez-faire were both *negatively* associated with positive leadership. Rui, Emerson, and Luis (2010) presented a view of the importance of transformational leadership in total quality management (TQM); it is also useful in identifying the fundamentals of TQM as they relate to transformational leadership.

Rafferty and Griffin (2006) identified three characteristics of change that affected individuals' responses to change, and therefore, job satisfaction and turnover: (a) the frequency of change, (b) the planning involved in change, and (c) the impact of change

(p. 1159). They also suggested that supportive leadership had a strong influence on all three perceptions of change.

In Trzcinski and Sobeck's (2008) study of 396 nonprofits in Michigan, readiness for change was more closely related with both variables that measure perceptions and by actual variables, such as change in leadership, that could either impact the psychological climate of an organization or indicate issues in that climate.

Use of the qualitative case study method provides a wealth of options as to how one might approach the subject of transformational leadership. For example, the case could be an individual, a role, a small group, or an organization (Miles and Huberman, 1994). A review of recent literature revealed numerous studies on transformational leadership, including several qualitative case studies, mainly from an organizational perspective (Chipunza and Gwarinda, 2010; Martens and Salewski, 2009; Jenewem and Schmitz, 2008). The bulk of the research on transformational leadership found to date is quantitative in nature and generally uses some form of questionnaire or measurement instrument to collect data; some researchers have approached the topic from a mixed-methods approach. Embry (2010) used a generic qualitative case study design with a thematic analysis approach to investigate the lived experiences of employees with a supervisor using transformational leadership. This study examined how subordinates described their experience of supervisors using transformational leadership tenets and discovered two overarching themes: (a) the supervisors supported the employees and (b) the supervisors provided positive feedback to employees.

Transformational Leadership and Culture

Leadership and organizational culture are two aspects of an organization that are closely entwined. De Witte and van Muijen (1999) stated that “the evolvement of an organizational culture consistent with the vision and strategy leads to an effective and competitive organization” (p. 501). According to Schein (1985), leadership and culture are “so central to understanding organizations and making them effective that we cannot afford to be complacent about either one” (p. 327). According to Bass and Avolio (1993), leaders seeking to renew an organization will look to create organizational cultures that are “hospitable and conducive to creativity, problem solving, risk taking, and experimentation” (p. 119). Block (2003) espoused that it is incumbent upon leaders to develop the transformational leadership ability of supervisors at every level in order to change in the cultural attitudes and beliefs of employees. An organizational culture emerges largely based on its leadership; however, the culture of an organization can also affect the emergence of the organization’s leadership. Burns (1978) defined transformational leadership as “leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations--the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations--*of both leaders and followers*...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). According to Burns (1978) transformational leadership raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and therefore transforms both.

Interestingly, the literature also reveals a dichotomy as to whether organizational culture is a dependent or independent variable (Ouchi and Wilkins, 1985). Wright,

Theerathorn, Tu, Gilmore, and Lado (1992) noted that while organizational culture may influence management behaviors, top executives may also affect the culture in their organizations. Schein (1990) offered a leadership versus management perspective that leaders create culture, and managers and administrators operate within that culture; he also argued that culture is only partly influenced by leadership. According to Bennis, Goleman, and Biederman (2008), in most organizations, there are “hidden” ground rules regarding what can and cannot be said; these rules are deeply embedded and are typically resistant to change.

While many managers are aware of culture and its impact, few understand their roles and responsibilities in developing culture (Kane-Urrabazo, 2006). Schein (1993) stated that one of the most decisive functions of leadership is creating, managing, and sometimes destroying culture. A keyword search in EBSCOhost for scholarly articles containing both *leadership* and *culture* in the title obtained 238 results, with 139 of those published in the last ten years. The implications for managers are clear—as Schein (1993, in Shafritz and Ott, 2001, p. 375) stated, “Culture and leadership are two sides of the same coin in that leaders first create culture when they create groups and organizations...Cultural understanding is desirable for all of us, but is essential to leaders if they are to lead.” Accordingly, Schein (1992) provided five guidelines for the leader:

- Do not oversimplify culture or confuse it with climate, values, or corporate philosophy; culture *underlies* and largely *determines* these other variables.

- Do not label culture as solely a human resources aspect of an organization. The impact of culture goes far beyond the human side of the organization to impact and influence the basic mission and goals.
- Do not assume that a leader can manipulate culture as easily as other aspects of the organization. Culture, because it is largely determined and controlled by the members of the organization, is different; culture may end up controlling the leader rather than being controlled.
- Do not assume that there is a "correct" culture, or that a strong culture is better than a weak one. Different cultures may fit different organizations and their environments, and that the desirability of a strong culture depends on how well it supports the organization's strategic goals and objectives.
- Do not assume that all the aspects of an organization's culture are important or will have a major impact on the functioning of the organization. Some elements of an organization's culture may have little impact on its functioning, and the leader must distinguish which elements are important, and focus on those.

Preston, (2008), for example, found that although human resource management is included as a specialization in MBA or MPA programs, as of 2005 over 70% of the 30 highest-ranked schools of social work did not include even one such course. Bolkan and Goodboy (2009) examined the relationships between transformational leadership in college classrooms, student learning outcomes, student participation, and student perceptions of instructor credibility. Using several types of measurement instruments administered to 165 undergraduate students, they found that “transformational leadership

is positively related to student learning outcomes, student participation, and perceptions of teacher credibility” (p. 301). Mary’s (2005) study of human service organizations found the four transformational leadership elements (idealized influence, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation) were correlated with positive leadership outcomes, and both of the transactional leadership styles of management by exception and laissez-faire were negatively associated with positive leadership.

Blankenship and Wegener (2008) conducted four studies of the premise that consideration of important values affects issue involvement, which affects message processing, which affects attitude resistance. They found that consideration of important values when transmitting a message increased participants’ personal involvement, and this involvement motivated them to elaborate on message content. The implications are that “communicators may be able to increase processing of...messages by getting the message recipients to consider the messages in relation to important values (whether or not those values form the crux of the message content)” (p. 211).

By comparing the key cultural characteristics that promote flexibility in an organization derived from Denison and Mishra (1995): empowerment, team orientation, capability development, creating change, customer focus, and organizational learning with the four major elements of transformational leadership from Avolio and Bass’ (1999) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), an argument can be made that Community Action Agencies can improve their effectiveness through a combination of organizational culture and transformational leadership. The six cultural characteristics

are listed below, with corresponding elements of transformational leadership:

- *Empowerment*, defined as “A set of dimensions that characterize an environment’s interaction with persons in such a manner as to encourage their taking initiative to improve process and to take action” (Herrenkohl, Judson, & Heffner, 1999, p. 386), is related to the transformational leadership element *intellectual stimulation*, which involves encouraging others to look at problems in creative new ways, and *individualized consideration*, through which leaders assigns work based on individual ability and preference.
- *Team orientation* relates to the transformational leadership elements *idealized influence*, or how a leader exhibits dedication to the team, and *inspirational motivation*, which involves the leader providing a vision, using symbols, and making members feel that they contribute to the mission.
- *Capability development* is displayed by transformational leaders as *intellectual stimulation*, such as promoting creativity and encouraging people to question values and beliefs (both individual and organizational).
- *Creating change* is reflected in the transformational leadership elements *intellectual stimulation* through encouraging creativity and promoting diverse positions, and *idealized influence* by such actions as appealing to people’s hopes and dreams and acting as a role model.
- *Customer focus* links to the elements *inspirational motivation* and *individualized consideration*.

- *Organizational learning* is, by definition of transformational leadership, a common thread throughout all elements and a fundamental philosophy of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders “see everything as a learning experience and an opportunity to increase their sense of competence--actively engaged in reflecting upon their own experiences, looking from different perspectives, questioning their own assumptions and wondering how things really work” (Trautmann, Maher, and Motley, 2007, p. 275). This study also found that learning through action (including learning through committing to action, experimenting through trial and error, acting without sufficient information, acting with resistance from others, and consciously trying new approaches) is a significant predictor of transformational leadership.

Clearly, a link between positive organizational culture and transformational leadership is the emphasis on learning. Šebestová, and Rylková, (2011) defined a learning organization as an organization that is committed to learning; committed meaning that “the organization is ready to change the way it does things by combining existing knowledge or incorporating new knowledge” (p. 954). Šebestová, and Rylková, (2011) also identified the challenge facing managers as making the effort needed to learn new skills and techniques and to implement processes that engage the workforce in continuous capability development. Fiol and Lyles (1985, in Akhtar and Khan, 2011) identified four contextual factors of organizational learning: (a) corporate culture conducive to learning, (b) strategy that allows flexibility, (c) an organizational structure that allows both innovativeness and new insights, and (d) the environment that facilitates

learning. Mishra and Bhaskar (2010) devoted an entire study to the role of empowerment in an organization's learning capability and whether empowerment is an essential attribute of a learning organization. They found that of the three identified dimensions of empowerment (decision making, power sharing, and people valuing), the decision making dimension was a significant predictor of organizational learning.

Antonoaie and Antonoaie (2010) defined the learning organization as an idealized vision of an organization open to continuous adaptation and improvement, in which continuous learning is practiced by both individuals and groups, norms and values support continuous learning, and strategic decision-making is based on data analysis and feedback. Lippstreu (2010) implied that transformational leaders should expect their followers to become transformational leaders, and, assuming transformational leaders exist in the organization, stated that this should be a "fluid and automatic process" (p. 144). Transformational leaders not only affect the follower's leadership capability, but also tend to "develop the follower's self-concept, development orientation, and development motivation" (p. 144). As a result, organizations can benefit from creating a culture with a perspective toward group identity and self-development.

From this discussion, it is clear that either transformational leadership or a culture that promotes flexibility in an organization can be a key characteristic of a highly effective Community Action Agency. Whether transformational leaders create or are created by the culture is a question that exists still today in the literature; the elements of each as compared above are complementary and have been shown to predict success or effectiveness in organizations. Whether an organization focuses on cultural

characteristics that promote flexibility (empowerment, team orientation, capability development, creating change, customer focus, and organizational learning) or the transformational leadership elements (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration), the commonalities between the two are such that the question of which is the independent variable and which is the dependent variable may be difficult to determine, if not moot from a practitioner perspective.

In Schein's (1990) model of organizational culture, he describes three basic levels at which culture can be observed, felt, or heard: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions:

Artifacts are the visible aspects of the organization--structure, processes and other physical evidence that can be observed or felt; as such, they are difficult to measure. Artifacts might include buildings, art work, dress, stories, or historical artifacts on display.

Espoused values are the goals, ideals, norms, standards, and moral principles of the organization. This is commonly the level of culture that is measured through surveys or questionnaires.

Underlying assumptions are phenomena that are unexplainable when insiders are asked about the values of the organizational culture; they constitute "basic assumptions about reality" and are complex, value-driven theories that explain the world in ways important to organizational problem-solving (Schein, 1992). For example, a basic assumption might be whether people are fundamentally trustworthy. Data are gathered at

this level of culture through careful observation of behaviors to identify the underlying assumptions. According to Schein (1992), the “essence” of organizational culture exists at this level. In this study, Schein’s (1990) model will be used as a basis for examining whether a transformational leadership culture exists in the subject organization.

Transformational Leadership in Non-Profit Organizations

The issues of leadership and performance in CAAs are addressed in the literature; an increased emphasis on the cultural and leadership aspects of the unique operations of such organizations can lead to greater effectiveness. Research specific to the impact of transformational leadership in not-for profit or public service organizations has shown to be consistent with those in other types of organizations. Paarlberg and Lavigna (2010) cited the Partnership for Public Service (2009) which stated that leadership has consistently been shown to be the most important driver of employee satisfaction in the federal government. Lu (2006) found that nonprofit leaders perceived transformational leadership as valuable. Freeborough (2012), in a quantitative study of nonprofit employees, found that transformational leadership is positively correlated with employee engagement.

While nonprofit managers understand their organizational cultures and attempt to initiate values and practices that are supportive of innovation (Jaskyte, 2004), Trzcinski and Sobeck (2008) found that nonprofits with less resources were more likely to be ready for change, and that nonprofits under new leadership are less ready for change. Wirtenberg, Backer, Chang, Lannan, Applegate, Conway, et. al. (2007) reported results from a survey of nonprofit leaders that revealed that “nonprofit leaders see increasing

opportunity for OD-related work that is critical to the future of civil society” (p. 179). The survey addressed 17 areas of potential support by OD practitioners in terms of importance to nonprofits and also their effectiveness. Of those 17, five were identified as *urgent* opportunities: building leadership capacity; solving organizational problems systemically; aligning strategies, people, systems, and processes organization-wide; effectively applying organizational change principles; and effectively addressing organizational culture for collaboration and strategic alliances (p. 185).

Dutton, et al. (2001) and Wirttenberg, et al. (2007) focused specifically on nonprofit organizations in their research. Mary’s (2005) transformational leadership research focused on human service organizations, finding “A transformational style of leadership is related to perceived positive leadership outcomes in a study of social service leaders. This supports congruence between transformational leadership and the most current definition of social work leadership within the profession” (p. 117). Boga and Ensari (2009) included nonprofit organizations in their research sample. Trzcinski and Sobeck (2008) studied readiness for change in 396 small-to-medium sized nonprofit organizations in Michigan.

Wright and Pandey (2010) investigated the effect of organizational structure on the transformational leadership practices of municipal chief administrative officers. Interestingly, although it is generally believed that transformational leadership is less prominent in bureaucracies, this study of local governments supported other empirical findings that suggest public organizations are not always highly bureaucratic.

Measuring Transformational Leadership

Based on existing literature and previous studies, numerous researchers have increased the body of knowledge on the subject of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership refers to the leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through idealized influence (charisma), inspiration, intellectual stimulation, or individualized consideration (Bass, 1985). With a specific focus on transformational leadership, Bass (1985) compared and contrasted transactional and transformational leadership and the subsequent results obtained by using each approach. Avolio and Bass's (1999) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) identifies and defines six factors and four characteristics of transformational leadership, and was found to be extensively cited in the literature. Quantitative studies by Mary (2005), Parry and Sinha (2005), Lu(2006), Ayman, Korabik, and Morris (2009), Zagoršek, Dimovski, and Škerlavaj (2009), DeBerry (2010), and Wang and Howell (2010) all used the MLQ in some form to examine the use and degree of transformational leadership used and the effect on performance or the perceived success of organizations. This instrument has been validated extensively throughout the research. Wang and Howell (2010) also developed and validated a transformational leadership scale adapted from existing transformational/charismatic leadership scales. The dual-level scale "demonstrates acceptable psychometric properties and can be used for multilevel TFL research in the future" and "includes important TFL dimensions that have been ignored by the MLQ and previous multilevel TFL research" (p. 1139).

Qualitative Research and the Case Study Methodology

Qualitative research primarily involves analysis (often thematic) of data such as words, pictures, or objects. A qualitative researcher may not have a preconceived idea as to what he expects to discover, as opposed to quantitative research, which involves analysis of numerical data and a researcher generally knowing in advance what he/she is looking for (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Creswell (1994) offered a lengthy definition of qualitative research: inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem, starting with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems; the use of an emergent qualitative approach; data collection in a natural (or field) setting; inductive data analysis to identify patterns or themes; and a final report including the voice of participants, reflexivity of the researcher, and a description and interpretation of the problem. Miles and Huberman (1994) noted several common features of qualitative data analysis: (a) affixing codes to notes of interviews or observations; (b) noting reflections in the margins; (c) sorting through information to find relationships, themes, patterns, or differences between subgroups; (d) identifying generalizations from same; and (e) evaluating the generalizations against existing knowledge or theory.

Malterud (2001) refers to Hamberg and colleagues' claim that the established criteria for quantitative research cannot be applied to qualitative studies; they, in turn, refer to Lincoln and Guba's suggested alternative criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. They "admit that these criteria correspond with

traditional ones in some ways, comparing credibility with internal validity, confirmability with objectivity, and transferability with generalisability” (p. 483). However, Malterud (2001) espouses that qualitative research can be evaluated using the same criteria as quantitative with the addition of another criteria: reflexivity. The general concept of reflexivity is that a person’s thoughts and beliefs are inherently biased. Therefore, great care must be taken to consider any potential bias and its impact on the research. Qualitative research in general is emergent; as data evolve, research questions may be refined during the study (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Swanson and Holton (2005) presented a four-step approach to analyzing qualitative data: data preparation, familiarization, coding and generating meaning.

A case is generally defined as a phenomenon occurring in a bounded context (Miles and Huberman, 1994), (Yin, 2011). Case study research is the study of a phenomenon or issue examined through one or more cases within a bounded context (Creswell, 1994). According to Yin (1981), the case study examines a phenomenon in its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not obvious. As noted previously, some researchers argue that the case study is not a methodology; rather, it is choice of what to study (Stake, as cited in Creswell, 2007) or a “transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary heuristic that involves the careful delineation of the phenomena for which evidence is being collected” (Van Wynsberghe and Khan, 2007, p. 9). In addition, use of the case study is not limited to qualitative research; quantitative cases are prevalent in the literature, and Yin (as cited in Creswell, 2007) endorses both qualitative and quantitative approaches to development of case

studies.

Stake (as cited in Casey and Houghton, 2010) identified three distinct types of case studies differentiated by intent: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. *Intrinsic* case studies focus on a case that involves an unusual or unique situation (Creswell, 2007). An *instrumental* case study allows the researcher to focus on a specific issue or problem and identify a single bounded context in which to examine the issue (Creswell, 2007). The *collective* case study (also referred to as a multiple case study) also focuses on a specific issue or problem; however, the issue is examined in multiple cases (Creswell, 2007).

Yin (2003) classified case studies as exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. An exploratory case study is intended to define the research questions or hypotheses of a future study or “determining the feasibility of desired research procedures” (Yin, 2003, p. 5). A descriptive case study, as the name implies, describes a phenomenon within its context. The explanatory case study addresses cause-and-effect relationships and explains “how events happened” (Yin, 2003). Willis (2007) stated that case studies are about real people and real situations, and they rely on inductive reasoning, and illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study. He also identified three characteristics of case study research: (a) it allows the researcher to gather rich, detailed data in an authentic setting; (b) it is holistic and supports the idea that much of what we can know about human behavior is best understood as lived experience in the social context; and (c) it can be done without predetermined hypotheses and goals, unlike experimental research.

Creswell (2007) identified the procedures for conducting a case study based

largely on Stake's (1995) approach. First, the researcher must evaluate whether the case approach is an appropriate methodology. If so, then the next step is to clearly identify the case(s). Next, the data collection process must be determined; depending on the specific case, multiple sources may be used. Yin (2003) identified six sources of data:

documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observations, and physical artifacts. Data analysis is then conducted, which requires an analysis of themes often based on data coding. Finally, the researcher discusses the meaning, or lessons learned, from the case.

Yin (1981) replied to Miles's (1979) ASQ article entitled "Qualitative Data as an Attractive Nuisance," for the purpose of reaffirming the case study as a systematic research tool and to show that an acceptable craft has already emerged. While Yin (1981) described Miles's work as "a disarmingly candid rendition of the perils of qualitative analysis" (p. 58), he also went on to state that while major improvements in case study research are still to be made, case study practice can be dramatically improved by applying what is already known.

Embry (2010) used a used a generic qualitative case study design with a thematic analysis approach to investigate the lived experiences of employees with a supervisor using transformational leadership. This study examined how subordinates described their experience of supervisors using transformational leadership tenets and discovered two overreaching themes: (a) the supervisors supported the employees and (b) the supervisors provided positive feedback to employees.

An instrumental, descriptive case study of transformational leadership in a single

identified organization is appropriate to provide an interesting examination of the topic and add to the body of knowledge on the subject. Such an approach is consistent in that it provides a single bounded context (Creswell, 2007) and also describes a phenomenon within its context (Yin, 2003).

Limitations of the Work Reviewed

In general, much of the transformational leadership research is qualitative, and results cannot be generalized. Sample size was a noticeable author-identified limitation throughout the literature (Parry & Sinha, 2005); (Jaskyte, 2004); (Taylor, Taylor, & Stoller, 2008); (DeBerry, 2010). Low response rate was also identified by several authors as a limiting factor (Jaskyte, 2004); (Lu, 2010); (DeBerry, 2010). Qualitative samples tend to be purposive (as opposed to random); in a case study, for example, the universe is limited and random selection with small numbers of participants could result in bias (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Sampling for qualitative research requires two specific decisions: (a) What are the boundaries, or defined aspects of the case; and (b) How will the researcher “frame” the study, or qualify the fundamental constructs of the study (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

There is also potential for bias in interpreting qualitative data. Clarifying researcher bias in the beginning of a study allows readers to consider the researcher’s perspective and any assumptions or biases that could affect the study (Merriam, 1988 in Creswell, 2007). In terms of objectivity, Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested relevant questions to be asked about a qualitative study, including (a) Has the researcher explicitly identified personal assumptions, values, and biases and their possible impact on the

study; and, (b) Have opposing hypotheses or conclusions been considered? Whittemore, Chase, and Mandle (2001, in Creswell, 2007) identified four primary criteria for validation in qualitative research; among these is *integrity*, referring specifically to whether the investigators are self-critical. Miles and Huberman (1994) reiterate that in qualitative research, reliability and validity are largely driven by the researcher; a key question is the validity and reliability of the researcher as data-gathering instrument.

Numerous researchers conducted studies in one organization, thereby limiting the potential for generalization of results. This was stated in varying forms, such as “the single institutional nature of the sample (Taylor, Taylor, & Stoller, 2008); “studying only one type of organization (Jaskyte, 2004); and “limited to municipal organizations that have unionized employees” (DeBerry, 2010). Lu (2010) noted the unique feature of the population of interest as a limitation.

Wang and Howell (2010) noted potential limitation in measurement of transformational leadership, stating that “it is possible that some leadership dimensions can be applied to both levels.” Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) considered the impact of an unmodeled variable (e.g., affective disposition) on the measurements. Rafferty and Griffin (2006) identified a potential for “reverse causality” in examining how perceptions of change influence uncertainty, satisfaction, and turnover intentions, noting the possibility that the reverse relationship may have occurred.

Several of the studies were exploratory in nature; therefore, inference or causality for any observed relationships among variables could not be confirmed. Validity in qualitative research is a subject of much discussion. Maxwell (1992) addressed five

types of validity: descriptive, interpretive, theoretical, generalizability, and evaluative; and stated that in qualitative research validity refers “primarily to accounts, not to data or methods” (p. 283). Howe and Eisenhardt (1990, cited in Creswell, 2007), identified five standards for all research: (a) the research questions should drive the data collection and analysis, as opposed the other way around; (b) data collection and analysis are accomplished in a competent manner; (c) the researcher’s assumptions are clearly stated; (d) the study should have overall “warrant;” and (e) the study must add to the body of knowledge and comply with ethical standards.

Implications of the Literature Reviewed

The seminal work in the area of leadership and transformational leadership introduced several considerations to this field of study. The transition from leadership as a management technique to a separate function led to subsequent research more directly focused on leadership performance and specific leadership factors. Bennis (1959) attempted to establish a common framework for research in leadership.

Knowledge has increased with regard to characteristics of leadership, identification of specific transformational leadership behaviors that apply in improving performance, and how to measure performance. The articles discussed here did, in most cases, support the authors’ hypotheses about transformational leadership and performance or success.

Practical implications for leaders and organizations were found throughout the literature, with a trend toward leaders using different sets of behaviors to motivate both individuals and groups as a whole. According to Boga and Ensari (2009), employees’

response to change is favorable when transformational leaders communicate, coordinate, and materialize the planned change. Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) espoused that leaders could influence perceived transformational leadership by changing the language, imagery, and symbols used to communicate meaning on the job. Zagorsek, Dimovski, and Skerlavaj (2007) advised leaders that several mechanisms exist for influencing the learning process in their organization.

The quantitative measurement tools, while strongly validated, continue to be revised or adapted to specific research, but have established a firm foundation for examination of transformational leadership behaviors and perceptions of transformational leadership.

Recommendations of the Work Reviewed

A notable theme was the recommendation for training in transformational leadership. Comments such as, “Developing internal courses based on current research from peer reviewed journals could dramatically increase supervisor transformational leadership understanding and implementation” (Embry, 2010); “findings can be used to better design transformational leadership development programs” (Wang & Howell, 2010); and “findings contribute to the perennial discussion of whether leadership is innate or can be learned...all aspects of leadership can be learned and that leaders are made, not born” (Taylor, Taylor, & Stoller, 2008) indicate the support for transformational leadership and the need to further develop transformational leaders.

Another common recommendation was the call for further research in transformational leadership; specifically, for more studies with generalizable findings.

Conclusion

Transformational leadership is clearly a topic for continued research. The perspective gained from this review illustrates the need for increasingly valid measures of leadership, performance, and organizational success. More study is needed to better correlate leadership behaviors and their impact on individual and organizational performance. Knowledge gained from further study in this field can benefit scholar-practitioners from both individual leadership and organizational perspectives.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

The primary research question for this study was, “Does transformational leadership impact the organizational effectiveness of small community-based organizations?” This topic of inquiry was selected for its relevance to the current emphasis on social service and Community Action Agencies’ importance, especially in periods of economic depression or recession. This study furthers existing research in order to examine transformational leadership practices in a successful social services organization. The findings from this study may be useful to other social services and Community Action Agencies in institutionalizing transformational leadership or becoming highly effective organizations.

Research Design

A qualitative single case study was used. Semi-structured interviews, researcher observations, and examination of written records were used as the data collection methodology. The target population for this study was all full-time employees in a small community-based social services organization. The sampling was non-probability sampling, and the method was a convenience sample since participation was voluntary and there was no control over who responded. This study took an interpretive approach using thematic analysis. According to Yin (2003), the case study examines a phenomenon in its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not obvious. Such an approach for this study is appropriate in that it provides a single bounded context (Creswell, 2007) and also describes a phenomenon within its context (Yin, 2003). According to Miles and

Huberman (1994), when one does not know the parameters of a social setting, “heavy initial instrumentation or closed-ended devices are inappropriate” (p. 35).

Since this research was an interpretive study, the interview method was appropriate to obtain open-ended responses from participants. Data were triangulated through researcher observations and analysis of documentation including, but not limited to, annual reports, minutes of meetings of the board of directors, press releases, funding levels, and grant proposals and awards using Schein’s (1990) model of organizational culture, which describes three basic levels at which culture can be observed, felt, or heard: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions.

The intent of this study was to specifically identify transformational leadership practices in a successful social services organization. The purpose was neither to identify a causal relationship between leadership style and effectiveness, nor to identify examples of other leadership styles that may be present, such as transactional or laissez-faire leadership. The singular focus was to identify what, if any, tenets of transformational leadership were present in the organization and whether they facilitate the effective attainment of the organization’s goals.

Sample

The population for this study was all employees in the agency. The only inclusion criterion was that respondents must be full-time employees of the agency. No exclusion criteria were specified for the study, as the agency has no part-time employees. The sampling was non-probability sampling, and the method was a convenience sample since there was no control over who responded. It is not feasible to direct randomly

selected respondents to participate. Respondents were recruited through a letter/e-mail to all staff. A total of 20 participants responded and were interviewed by the researcher. In terms of a suitable sample size for this study, in an organization of about 120, the hope was to obtain at least 20 respondents. Had more respondents become available, a decision would have been made based on the quality of data collected to that point as to whether to continue the interview process. This ultimately was not necessary; however, depending on the responses obtained, the sample could have been expanded gradually and results analyzed as they were obtained. At the point no new information is forthcoming, it can be determined that the sample is saturated and no further responses are required (Creswell, 2009). Purposeful sampling was considered, in which the researcher would solicit respondents from only the supervisory or management ranks, but due to the potentially small sample size and in order to examine the entire organization, this approach was ruled out. In a small organization, it was considered likely that information saturation might have occurred with less than 20 respondents.

Setting

This study was conducted on-site at a small Community Action Agency in rural Indiana (also referred to as a social services organization), which holds a reputation as a highly effective organization in the social services field. Written permission was obtained from the CEO, and a private space was used for interviews to insure confidentiality. This organization was selected for the study based on its reputation within the Indiana Community Action system as a highly effective organization and the researcher's personal knowledge of the apparent progressive leadership present over the

past several years. In addition, the CEO has expressed interest in the findings as a tool for ongoing improvement.

Instrumentation/Measures

The formal data collection instrument in this study was a structured interview guide consisting of planned questions based on the four elements of transformational leadership as defined by Avolio and Bass (1999). Follow-up questions were used as needed to extract additional data, and all interviews were digitally recorded by the researcher and transcribed later by the researcher. Interview notes were written by the researcher following each interview.

For the documentation review, initial field notes were handwritten and organized by type of documentation reviewed, then typed for inclusion in the study. Initial field notes relating to observations were handwritten and organized by type of observation (individual, organizational, interviews, etc.), then typed for inclusion in the study. The interview questions are categorized by general information and the four elements of transformational leadership as follows:

General Information

1. How long have you been at [the agency]?
2. What is your job title?
3. What are your perceptions of “transformational leadership”?
4. What changes have you observed during your employment at the agency?

Idealized Influence

5. How would you describe your supervisor/manager?

6. Is it easy for you to communicate with your supervisor/manager?
7. Are you asked for your input or opinion when decisions are made?
8. What motivates you to initiate change?

Inspirational Motivation

9. Do you consider the Agency a “highly effective organization”? Why or why not? If yes, what factors contribute to this success?
10. What is the Agency’s reputation in the community?
11. Does a common vision and team spirit exist in the Agency?
12. Do you have a clear understanding of your responsibilities?

Intellectual Stimulation

13. How would you describe your working relationships?
14. Are you confident in your ability to make decisions?
15. Does your supervisor/manager trust you to make decisions?
16. Is it easy for you to admit mistakes? What happens when you do?
17. Are you encouraged to offer new ideas?
18. Is it easy for you to question the current policies or procedures?

Individualized Consideration

19. How would you describe your job satisfaction?
20. Does your supervisor/manager have a genuine interest in your success?
21. Are you encouraged to seek additional responsibility?

Data Collection

Structured interviews and observations were used as the inquiry methodology. Interviews were scheduled in one-hour increments to allow ample time for in-depth responses and follow up questions. The length of the interviews lasted between 10 and 35 minutes.

A separate private location was set up for the interview process. Participants were interviewed individually, in a separate and private room acceptable to the participant and the interviewer. A “Do Not Disturb” sign was posted on the door to the interview room. The researcher asked the planned interview questions verbatim, allowing for adequate time for the participant to reflect, formulate responses, and seek clarification as needed. During the interview, the participants were allowed to take breaks as needed if requested; however, no participant opted to do so. The researcher actively monitored the comfort level of the respondents. Upon completion of the interview, the researcher asked each respondent if he/she wished to review and approve the transcript when it is completed, and arranged for this as appropriate. Again, no participant requested this.

The types of data collected were (a) one-on-one interviews and review of digital audio recordings--sound data transformed to verbal data in transcript form and typed; (b) field observation notes--verbal data in handwritten, informal form; (c) post-interview summary notes--verbal data in handwritten (typed) form; and (d) review of annual reports, minutes of meetings of the board of directors, press releases, funding levels, and grant proposals and awards--verbal data in summary note format, handwritten.

Each type of data collected was analyzed for relevance to the topic of

transformational leadership and specifically as it related to the four identified elements of transformational leadership.

Data Analysis

It was expected that themes would emerge demonstrating similarities in perceptions of transformational leadership and identifying specific factors influencing transformational leadership in both participant responses to interviews and the content analysis of organizational documentation. Specifically, an initial framework for coding was based upon the four major elements of transformational leadership as found in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio and Bass, 1999). This use of these factors to develop “prefigured” coding using the above categories is consistent with Creswell (2007), who encourages a coding system that represents information that researchers expect to find before the study. Creswell also refers to this as “lean coding,” followed by expanding the categories as the database is reviewed. Swanson and Holton’s (2005) guidelines include a four-step approach to analyzing qualitative data: data preparation, familiarization, coding and generating meaning.

The data were analyzed using a generic inductive analysis process as described by Creswell (2007). Raw text data was “cleaned,” or prepared in a common format. The cleaned data was then read by the researcher in detail in order to identify initial themes in the data. The data were then analyzed using current ATLAS.ti qualitative data analysis software to further code and categorize specific data items. Any overlapping coding and uncoded text was examined for accuracy. The categories and coding were continually revised and refined until it was determined that an appropriate number of categories had

been developed (at least four based on the initial categories defined by the elements of transformational leadership, but not more than eight).

For this study on transformational leadership, the “clustering” technique for qualitative data (Miles and Huberman, 1994) was used for classifying indicators of transformational leadership; the specific data provided by participants and documents was linked to one of the four main elements of transformational leadership as applicable. In addition, another technique used was looking for disconfirming or negative evidence (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This technique can enrich the data and provide ongoing checks for whether analysis is accurate. Presentation of data and results of analysis was accomplished according to the following approach:

1. A detailed description of the case as a whole including setting(s) and contexts.
2. Direct interpretation of single instances that seem meaningful in light of the research question.
3. Categorical aggregation of meaning-rich instances from the data aggregated into categories of meaning, or themes.
4. Within-case analysis of themes and patterns of meaning that emerged from the data and illustrate the connections between or among the themes. These themes and patterns are described and developed using verbatim passages and direct quotes from the data to elucidate each pattern and theme.
5. Thematic synthesis of the thematic analyses within the case to present the interpretations of the integrated meaning of all the cases in the study in addition to using verbatim passages and direct quotes from the data.

6. Generalizations of the results of the interpretive phase of the study, or “lessons learned” from the case study.

Validity and Reliability

Although the sample was a convenience sample, one strength of this study is that ample flexibility existed in the sample size; additional participants could have been recruited should sufficient data had not emerged in the first sampling. Additionally, in a small organization such as the one under study, it is likely that information saturation may occur with less than 20 respondents, at which point it can be determined that the sample is saturated and no further responses are required (Creswell, 2009).

Malterud (2001) refers to Hamberg and colleagues’ claim that the established criteria for quantitative research cannot be applied to qualitative studies; they, in turn, refer to Lincoln and Guba’s suggested alternative criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, and “admit that these criteria correspond with traditional ones in some ways, comparing credibility with internal validity, confirmability with objectivity, and transferability with generalisability” (p. 483). However, Malterud (2001) espouses that qualitative research can be evaluated using the same criteria as quantitative with the addition of another criteria: reflexivity (p. 483). The general concept of reflexivity is that a person’s thoughts and beliefs are inherently biased. Therefore, great care was taken to consider any potential bias and its impact on the research. There is also potential for bias in interpreting qualitative data. As Maxwell (1992) stated, in qualitative research validity “refers primarily to accounts, not to data or methods” (p. 283). In this study, which is interview-based, the three types of validity

seeming to require the most awareness are descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical. To increase the dependability of the data, all participants were interviewed by the same researcher.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting research and disciplined inquiry, social and behavioral scientists must adhere to ethical guidelines. *The Belmont Report* (1979) states

The expression “basic ethical principles” refers to those general judgments that serve as a basic justification for the many particular ethical prescriptions and evaluations of human actions. Three basic principles, among those generally accepted in our cultural tradition, are particularly relevant to the ethics of research involving human subjects: the principles of respect of persons, beneficence and justice (p. 4).

According to Swanson and Holton (2005), respect for persons means individuals should be treated as “(a) autonomous agents capable of making decisions and choices, or (b) persons with diminished autonomy in need of special protection” (p. 430). Beneficence refers to the protection of human subjects; justice refers to equality in “bearing the burden” of research on human subjects.

In this study of transformational leadership using the methodology of structured interviews, the importance of confidentiality was highly considered. The initial contact, as well as the subsequent informed consent form, highlighted the importance of confidentiality. Interviews were conducted in a private setting, and codes were used to identify participants.

Respondents were recruited through a letter/e-mail to all personnel employed by the organization. Participation was strictly voluntary, and participants were not subjected

to coercion or other undue influence to participate; however, the organization's CEO did encourage participation for the benefit of the research to the organization, and allowed liberal work scheduling to promote participation.

The APA ethical principles state that (a) research should be conducted only with populations and in areas within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study, or professional experience; and (b) before recording the voices or images of individuals to whom they provide services, permission must be obtained from all such persons or their legal representatives.

In this study, the researcher had both education and experience in transformational leadership, interviewing, and data collection. Written permission (a written consent form) was obtained from each participant to use a digital audio recorder of the interview for transcription purposes. Strict confidentiality was maintained. Since participation was voluntarily, and data were qualitative in nature with no treatments or interventions, there were limited ethical considerations concerning the competence of the researcher.

Chapter 4 will present the results of the research to include a description of the sample obtained, the data collected, the application of the methodology, a detailed analysis of the data, and generalizations derived from the data. A discussion of the results and a detailed discussion of the conclusions will then be presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

This chapter presents the results produced from a systematic application of the research design, sampling, collection of data, and data analysis. Data collected during three days of semi-structured interviews represented participants' perceptions of evidence of transformational leadership behaviors present in the organization. Data were triangulated through content analysis of annual reports, secondary data from a 2011 internal employee survey, press releases, minutes of board meetings and staff meetings, funding documents, and selected policy manuals. This chapter includes information about the study and the researcher, a description of the sample, the research methodology applied to data analysis, presentation of data and results of analysis, and a summary.

This study examined transformational leadership practices in a small, progressive community-based social services organization. The findings from this study may be useful to other social services organizations in creating a culture of transformational leadership or becoming highly effective organizations. The use of qualitative data provides a richer, deeper insight to the unique dynamics of a nonprofit organization than can be obtained by quantitative data alone. The primary research question for this study was, "Does transformational leadership impact the organizational effectiveness of small community-based organizations?"

The Study and the Researcher

The researcher's interest in this topic is based on over twenty-five years of experience in leadership and management positions, including command assignments in the United States Air Force and director-level positions in corporate organizations. The

researcher also has extensive experience in design, development, and facilitation of leadership and management development courses and seminars. Given that the bulk of data collected was based on semi-structured interviews, which were conducted by the researcher personally, the researcher's role as an instrument is significant. According to Patton (2004), "in qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument...the credibility of qualitative methods; therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, rigor of the person doing the field work" (p.14).

The researcher has completed post-graduate courses in adult education and holds a post-master's certificate in college teaching; the knowledge and skills obtained therein are also applicable to conducting interviews requiring active listening, probing, summarizing, observing body language, and making quick judgments as to the information being disclosed. The researcher has conducted numerous interviews and surveys involving interviews. The researcher has also taught courses for academic instructors, coaches, and managers that included such skills as part of the curriculum. The researcher has experience as a management consultant, training consultant, investigator of EEO complaints, and member of an Inspector General team that evaluated the effectiveness of U.S. Air Force schools, all of which required effective listening and observational skills. The researcher has conducted extensive readings on qualitative analysis and is familiar with qualitative data collection. Further, the researcher's dissertation mentor has extensive expertise in qualitative research, and the researcher consulted with his dissertation committee to provide additional consultation on this study.

All interviews and other data collection and analysis were conducted solely by the

researcher. The APA ethical principles state that research should be conducted only with populations and in areas within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, consultation, study, or professional experience. In this study, the researcher has both education and experience in leadership, interviewing, and data collection and analysis. Since participation in this study was voluntary, and the data were qualitative in nature with no treatments or interventions, there were limited ethical considerations concerning the competence of the researcher or the researcher's effect on the data.

Description of the Sample

Participants

All participants were recruited from the population of full-time employees of the agency and voluntarily participated in the study. There were no exclusion criteria, as the agency does not have any part-time employees. Twenty respondents participated in the study from a population of 120 full-time personnel. No participants were dropped from the study during or following participation.

Of the twenty participants interviewed, 16 were identified as supervisors or managers; four were identified as frontline employees. Nineteen participants were Caucasian; one participant was African-American. Based on the US Census data from 2010, the racial demographics for the location of the agency's home county showed the population as 94.9% white and 2.6% black. This was consistent with the demographics from the other three Indiana counties in the agency's service area. Seventeen participants were women and 3 were men. Education levels of the participants ranged from high

school completion to master's degree. There were no apparent influences on the sample participants or their participation that might impact the findings of the study. Table 1 identifies participant demographics.

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Demographic	Number
Age:	
20-30 years	1
31-40 years	8
41-50 years	7
51-60 years	4
Gender:	
Male	3
Female	17
Race:	
Caucasian	19
African American	1
Highest Education Level:	
High School	3
Some college/no degree	2
Associate's Degree	8
Bachelor's Degree	5
Master's Degree	2
Years Employed at the Agency:	
0-5	8
6-10	7
11-15	3
15+	2

Other Data Sources

Data obtained in the semi-structured interviews were triangulated through informal researcher observations and a review and content analysis of annual reports, a 2010 internal employee survey, press releases, minutes of board meetings and staff meetings, funding documents, and selected policy manuals.

Research Methodology Applied to Data Analysis

The research was conducted in April 2012 through the methodology process described in Chapter 3. The primary data collection method was in-depth interviewing. The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed through a systematic coding of data. According to Yin (2009) and Stake (1995), qualitative research results are likely to be more accurate when data are triangulated. Stake (2005) suggested that triangulation decreases the potential for misconception and recommended that multiple viewpoints be considered in order to acquire deeper meaning. In this study, triangulation was used to corroborate data from various sources, including a content review of documentation to obtain data reflecting evidence of transformational leadership in annual reports, minutes of meetings of the board of directors, press releases, funding levels, and grant proposals and awards. This documented organizational information was used to identify examples of preconfigured or emergent themes or patterns (Creswell, 2007).

The primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher. An interview guide was used to conduct the one-on-one interviews, with spontaneous follow-up questions asked as appropriate to obtain additional depth in participant responses. Each participant was offered the opportunity to review completed

transcripts for accuracy, but none opted to review his/her transcripts. Post-interview summary notes were written following each interview. Field observation notes were taken by the researcher to record data related to general impressions, interpersonal communications among organization personnel, or any visible cultural artifacts. Schein's (1990) model of organizational culture describes three levels at which culture can be observed, felt, or heard: artifacts, espoused values and basic underlying assumptions. Artifacts are the visible, physical aspects of the organization that can be seen or felt, such as facilities, dress codes, pictures, etc. The use of appropriate artifacts, symbols, or images exemplifies the transformational leadership element of *inspirational motivation* identified by Avolio and Bass (1999).

Presentation of Data and Results of Analysis

Case Description

According to the organization's website, the agency is a private nonprofit corporation (also known as a social services agency) committed to community development and providing services to low-income residents in Southwestern Indiana. To improve its communities, the agency (a) develops and implements programs that assist individuals in personal development toward independence; (b) coordinates public, private and corporate resources focusing on the alleviation of poverty; (c) invests over \$7.2 million back into the local economy through employment and purchasing local goods and services; and (d) encourages self-reliance through a variety of programs offered to eliminate barriers that low-income households face daily (agency website, 2012). The stated mission of the organization is, "to provide support services that

improve the community and encourage self-reliance” (agency website, 2012).

In the community action arena, the demand for services provided by Community Action Agencies becomes greater as economic conditions become worse. Under such conditions, the available funding decreases and also becomes more competitive to obtain. Economic factors in the community contribute to concerns about security and fear of the unknown. The county unemployment rates for the four counties serviced by the agency as of February 2012 were 6.0%, 6.5%, 9.9%, and 10.6%. In the agency, some bureaucratic influence is inherent in that government funding (federal, state, and local) is the primary revenue source. Each funding agency has its own set of regulations and policies as to how funds are applied for, accounted for, and expended. This includes designating the eligibility requirements for recipients of aid monies. Given that these regulations and policies are sometimes unclear or open to interpretation, and despite the fact that some sources allow for local interpretation of rules, frontline employees and supervisors may be hesitant to make decisions since failing to adhere to funding requirements can result in penalties to the organization. How these decisions are made is reflective of the style of leadership practiced in the organization.

In the case of this agency, contemporary motivation theories, leadership styles, and change management techniques are factors that directly apply to the effectiveness of the organization. Creativity and initiative are necessary to develop ways to accomplish the mission and provide services to those in need, particularly in light of reduced budgets due to economic conditions. The current CEO has been in place for 10 years.

Each position has a job description, and a performance management system is

used for annual evaluations, salary increases, etc. A 25-member volunteer board of directors, comprised of six representatives from each county served by the agency and one parent of a Head Start participant, provides oversight and strategic planning.

The culture at the agency is promoted as a learning organization. A generally accepted definition of “learning” is “a relatively permanent change in behavior that results from practice” (Atkinson, et al., 1993). Management attention continuously focuses on creating a more empowered and creative workforce. This occurs in spite of the diversity and number of funding sources (42 at last count), each with different regulatory requirements. The guiding principle within the organization when faced with vague or absent regulation or policy regarding a specific situation is “if there’s no rule, do what makes sense.” This is clearly a postmodern perspective, and is consistent with *intellectual stimulation*, an element of transformational leadership identified by Avolio and Bass (1999). The agency’s Board of Directors established a set of core values in January 2011, stating that the core values are “guiding principles used to understand what the organization represents and how it practices,” and the “all members of the organization are expected to use, live by, and demonstrate the core values on a daily basis while executing their work responsibilities” (Core Values document, 2011). The five core values of the agency are (a) innovation--introducing new and creative ideas, anticipating change, and capitalizing on opportunities; (b) respect--treating everyone with dignity, where all are appreciated and welcomed; (c) integrity--upholding ethical standards, demonstrating honesty, and acting responsibly; (d) professionalism--utilizing the most appropriate skills and competencies with dedication to duty; and (e)

excellence--presenting quality and the best in everything the organization does. These core values are consistent with the tenets of transformational leadership as identified by Avolio and Bass (1999) used for this study.

Although a nonprofit organization, the agency has branched off a for-profit cleaning service operation, employing a staff of 15 full-time employees and producing gross revenues of approximately \$150,000 per year. In addition, an initiative is under way to create and administer a low-interest revolving loan program for small businesses, beginning with funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the State of Indiana. Yet another revenue-producing opportunity was formed by the creation of a subsidiary used to develop housing projects in the community.

Direct Interpretation

The researcher observed an atmosphere of collegiality and open communication among all levels throughout the time spent in the organization. The CEO maintains an open-door policy, and the researcher observed numerous instances of personnel freely approaching the CEO in and outside of the office to discuss issues or ask questions with no apparent uneasiness. An overall air of informality was present across the organization, as was the common use of humor.

The physical facility had been recently renovated to include remodeled office space, an employee break room with two refrigerators and a sink, and new carpeting in most offices. Several posters were displayed with leadership and teamwork themes. The exterior was landscaped and displayed prominent signage with the organization name and logo. While on a tour of the facility, the researcher noted that numerous employees

expressed appreciation and pride in the professional appearance of their offices and workspaces.

During the interviews, the researcher noted that all participants were extremely cooperative and forthcoming, and generally enthusiastic regarding their experiences at the agency and their positive perceptions of the senior leadership, particularly the CEO. The non-verbal cues observed during the interviews were very positive; in several cases participants became emotional when discussing their gratitude and satisfaction in being employed at the agency. The researcher noted that even in instances in which participants held less-than-positive perceptions of a particular indicator, in no instance was this communicated in a negative manner nor did non-verbal cues indicate negative emotion such as frustration or anger; these responses consistently appeared more “matter-of-fact.”

The content review of organizational documentation revealed a number of noteworthy examples of transformational leadership. An employee survey was in the process of being administered via the organization intranet, and a previous employee survey was conducted in 2010. The results are posted on the intranet for review by all personnel. A “Kudos Korner” was established on the organization’s intranet, allowing all personnel to recognize others for their cooperation, achievement, or assistance. An “Employee Task Force” participates in a Leadership Enhancement Program, and training is provided on leadership. Members were asked to identify their own leadership traits and embrace them. The philosophy behind the initiative is that everyone can learn to be a leader.

The agency has an organizational chart with a clear chain-of-command. One exception of particular note is the use of “management peer groups,” in which managers with at least 3 years in a management position may participate in a self-supervised peer evaluation program. Annual evaluations and quarterly performance reviews are conducted within the peer group to provide assessment and feedback from group members. In addition, online surveys are administered to the direct reports of the member managers to obtain employee perspectives and feedback on manager performance. A pilot program was initiated in January 2011, and the program has since been implemented on an ongoing basis.

Categorical Aggregation

During the interview process, several examples of common themes became apparent within participants’ responses. Specifically, when asked about their perceptions of transformational leadership (Question 3), many participants were not familiar with the term as a concept; of those participants, most equated transformational leadership to organizational change or leadership in general. However, it was apparent in the responses to subsequent interview questions that transformational leadership behaviors were clearly recognized by these participants, and also had positively impacted these participants. Another significant theme was the impact of ongoing change in the organization. Interview Question 4 asked participants what changes they had observed during their employment at the agency. Interestingly, the four participants identified as frontline employees addressed changes related to policies and procedures affecting daily work, staffing changes, or physical changes such as office layout, space, or location; the

remainder of participants (supervisors or managers) identified changes in organizational culture such as open communication, an emphasis on teamwork, empowerment in decision-making, and continuous learning. Of particular note was the unanimous perception among all respondents that constant change was not only a given, but was a positive factor in the organization.

Interview Questions 5-8 were related to the element of transformational leadership *idealized influence*. The questions were as follows: (Question 5) “How would you describe your supervisor/manager;” (Question 6) “Is it easy for you to communicate with your supervisor/manager;” (Question 7) “Are you asked for your input or opinion when decisions are made;” and (Question 8) “What motivates you to initiate change?” Responses to this category of questions reflected overall positive perceptions among participants. Participant responses to Questions 5 and 6 were extremely positive, and several references were made to the peer manager group in which selected managers report to each other for mutual accountability, advice, and mentoring. The responses to this initiative were all quite positive. Overall, 19 of 20 participants stated positive descriptions of their supervisors and positive perceptions of ease of communicating with supervisors. Among participants identified as frontline employees the responses to Questions 7 and 8 reflected a more limited and self-focused perspective, were noticeably less positive and, in a few instances, negative.

Interview Questions 9-12 were related to the *inspirational motivation* element of transformational leadership. These questions were: (Question 9) “Do you consider the Agency a ‘highly effective organization’;” (Question 10) “What is the Agency’s

reputation in the community;” (Question 11) “Does a common vision and team spirit exist in the Agency;” and (Question 12) “Do you have a clear understanding of your responsibilities?” In this category, participants generally agreed that the agency was “highly effective;” their reasons for believing this included the organization’s leadership (in particular the leadership of the CEO), the positive impact on the lives of the client population, accountability in the organization, communication, passion for the work, and the commitment to organizational learning. In terms of the Agency’s reputation in the community, participant responses were mixed. Some felt the community as a whole did not understand the Agency’s mission or were unaware of its existence; this was generally attributed to the belief that community members who were not eligible or in need of the services provided simply didn’t know or care about the Agency. However, many participants were quick to say that when they encountered people who were not aware of the Agency or its services, they viewed this as an opportunity to educate the community as well as solicit support. Many participants responded that they felt the community held misconceptions about the purpose of the Agency as being solely a “handout” service that catered only to low-income clients. Some felt that a segment of the population was inherently against any type of taxpayer-funded services regardless of their impact or effectiveness. A few references were made to overcoming some apparent ill feelings about the Agency that were developed and possibly remain from the previous CEO’s relationships in the service area. Generally, the feeling among participants was that the reputation of the Agency varied according to which of the four counties in the service area was examined. This was partly due to some differences in availability or type of

programs offered among the counties, as well as some community resistance to local community development projects and the surrounding publicity and involvement of local political officials.

As relates to interview Questions 11 and 12, participants consistently responded positively overall with regard to a team spirit in the agency and clearly understanding their individual responsibilities. Some, however, stated that the team spirit had not yet “filtered all the way down” to all frontline employees; interestingly, this perception was mixed among both the frontline employee participants and the managerial employees.

Interview Questions 13-18 pertained to the element of transformational leadership *intellectual stimulation*. These questions were stated as: (Question 13) “How would you describe your working relationships;” (Question 14) “Are you confident in your ability to make decisions;” (Question 15) “Does your supervisor/manager trust you to make decisions;” (Question 16) “Is it easy for you to admit mistakes, and what happens when you do;” (Question 17) “Are you encouraged to offer new ideas;” and (Question 18) “Is it easy for you to question the current policies or procedures?”

Generally, participants expressed a very positive perception of working relationships. Terms such as “great,” “better than any other organization,” and “honest and respectful” were repeatedly used. An emphasis on teamwork, mutual support, and mutual success was consistent in responses. Participants were very confident overall in their decision-making ability, although several admitted this has developed recently based on their experiences at the agency. The obvious theme in this area was that not only were participants trusted to make decisions, they were *expected* to make decisions.

Responses to this question were consistent with themes in the responses to questions about offering new ideas and questioning policies and procedures—participants felt *expected* to look for new and better ways of doing things or for new opportunities to improve themselves and the organization. The few exceptions to this were more reflective of the regulatory nature of funding sources, which provides little flexibility in the guidelines that must be followed as dictated by each funding source, than reflective of the culture. However, again there was a marked difference between frontline employee level participants and those identified as managers or supervisors; this was more apparent in responses to Questions 16 and 17. Risk-taking was encouraged, and supported by a culture in which fear of failure is minimal. Specifically, in responses to Question 16, eight participants specifically mentioned the practice of “celebrating failures,” which involves individuals publicly sharing situations that resulted in less-than-satisfactory outcomes. This is accomplished in staff meetings, and is done so in a non-threatening manner with a stated goal of creating an opportunity for management staff to learn from others’ experiences and prevent similar issues in the future. Most participants stated that admitting mistakes had been a problem for them in the past, but that they now felt comfortable in discussing mistakes they had made or actions that had not succeeded. This was generally attributed by participants to the culture in the organization that allows for risk-taking and decision-making while limiting the fear of failure or negative repercussions when mistakes occur. Every participant that had been in the organization for over 10 years stated that the current culture in this regard was completely opposite of the culture under the previous CEO, in which micromanagement and punitive actions

were routine and people “were yelled at” or “got in trouble” when mistakes were made. Question 18 received overall positive responses, but revealed mixed perceptions among participants in the frontline employee ranks; Participant 18 stated, “I think (questioning policies or procedures) is encouraged but I don’t necessarily think that it is easy.” Participant 6 responded with a firm, “No, I don’t think so. There’s place to have a conversation about them, but they’re done, they’re handed to you.”

Interview Questions 19-21 were designed to examine the *individualized consideration* element of transformational leadership. The questions in this category were (Question 19) “How would you describe your job satisfaction;” (Question 20) “Does your supervisor/manager have a genuine interest in your success;” and (Question 21) “Are you encouraged to seek additional responsibility?”

Participant responses were consistent with the other categories in the structured interview. Job satisfaction was extremely high; “I love my job” was expressed by several participants. Question 20 received affirmative responses from all 20 participants; indicators such as “professional development,” “encouraging,” “leadership training,” and “my success reflects on their success,” were provided as examples. Nineteen of the 20 participants stated that they were encouraged to seek additional responsibility; several also considered it an “expectation.” The overall feeling was, however, that additional responsibilities were encouraged primarily as opportunities for growth and learning.

Thematic Synthesis

An initial list of *a priori* codes based upon the four major elements of transformational leadership as found in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio

and Bass, 1999) was used to provide an initial framework for coding. “Prefigured” coding, representing information that researchers expect to find before the study, was encouraged by Creswell (2007). Table 2 identifies participant responses by initial codes:

Table 2. Participant Perceptions of Transformational Leadership by *a priori* Coding

	Idealized Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individualized Consideration
Participant 1	MS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 2	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 3	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 4	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 5	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 6	MR	MS	SR	MR
Participant 7	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 8	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 9	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 10	MS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 11	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 12	MS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 13	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 14	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 15	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 16	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 17	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 18	MS	MR	MS	MR
Participant 19	SS	SS	SS	SS
Participant 20	SS	MS	SS	SS

Note. SS = strong support; MS = moderate support; MR = moderate refutation; SR = strong refutation.

Idealized Influence is described by Avolio and Bass (1999) as a leader's ability to maintain subordinates' trust, faith and respect; exhibit dedication to them; appeal to their ideals, hopes and dreams; and act as a role model. Participant 3 noted the excitement in being encouraged to expand:

My supervisor is pushing me to always go beyond what I think I'm capable of. And sometimes that's uncomfortable for me because I am a person that does like my comfort zone. I found that I am doing things in this position now that I never thought I would be. I'm giving a presentation in June with my supervisor, and it's at a national conference...something I never ever thought I would do. So it's exciting for me. It's nerve-wracking. But I'm looking forward to it.

Participant 5 described her supervisor as “highly intelligent” and “absolutely great.”

She never actually sets us down and tells us, ‘This is the answer that you're looking for.’ She will actually ask us questions and then guide us in the current direction but leave it to us to find our own answers, and she helps us to learn more about the processes. We could always go in to her for anything. She is very down to earth, very open, and very honest. She does tell straight out everything that we need to know she'll tell us where we stand with her. What she likes about your job performance, what she doesn't like, what we need to change, very straightforward, very honest, very helpful.

Numerous references were made to the practice of managers belonging to a peer group as opposed to directly reporting to an individual. Responses to this approach were highly positive. Participant 8 appreciated the trust placed in the management peer team.

I no longer have a direct supervisor. I am part of the Peer Team...we meet quarterly and there are I think seven of us. And so, that has been kind of a neat experience as well because whenever I have a questions or I need support in a certain area, then I have seven different people that I could go to, you know. Like if I find one person who is stronger with how to offer support to my staff, then I might go and see that person versus if I know another manager is better with problem solving then I might go to that manager instead.

Participant 9, also a member of a peer team, agreed:

We are allowed to do our job, we know we are respected, we have trust, we are

allowed to grow, we are allowed to make our own decisions...I just recently became a member of what we call the Peer Group, that is amazing that I actually do not have a direct supervisor. But that leads in where you can pull from several different people with their expertise...and so much better this way. Every one of them that I would go to, it would be somebody that would listen, that believes in me, wants to help me, see me grow. So it is a win-win situation.

Participant 15 felt that the trust placed in the peer team led to greater accountability.

I am on what we call a Peer Team. So I do not have really a direct supervisor...we all report to each other and we all hold each other accountable. This would be the start of the second year for that Peer Team. I have come to love and enjoy that type of process, because the accountability is a lot higher for me than if I just have one supervisor. I have more set of eyes, more ears, more mouths; I have to teach and explain things on all different kinds of levels. And then I have to hold myself accountable and be reliable more than just with one person because now I am with ten instead of just one. So it pushes me to be a better manager and a better leader because of that process.

Participant 20 appreciated the mutual support within the peer team.

They're always willing to help. It's kind of a support system. Anything I need help with, I can go to whoever is available to help or whoever is the expert in that. They're all good listeners and give constructive feedback that I can learn from. They're all very intellectual and experts at their jobs and provided me with a lot of supervised key leadership skills that I feel like I've improved since.

Participant 14 described his supervisor as "Wonderful. I mean, brings things out of me that I've never have brought out of me in my life, you know. I kind of feel like that's what I was brought here to do, you know?" Participant 16 felt that she had freedom to address any issues with her supervisor.

Just always felt I have the freedom to do all of those things. Try stuff. They're supportive so whenever I have a problem. You know a lot of people wait to have a problem and discuss them with whenever they have their evaluations but I can discuss and run in there. So when the time of evaluation comes, not that big of a deal cause I have already discussed problems along the way.

The element of *idealized influence* was consistently referenced to the organization's

CEO. Participants at all organizational levels mentioned the CEO's leadership in various perspectives. According to Participant 1, the CEO's ability to appeal to individuals' ideals, hopes and dreams is exhibited by determining what people's passions are.

We definitely are asked, "Is there more that you want to take on or is there something that you feel passionate about?" That's something that I think it's really a positive thing because [the CEO] will say, if you're passionate about something or if you have someone working on what they're passionate about then they're not going to get burned out.

Then they're going to devote more time and energy, and effort. So, it's finding what are people passionate about. Tapping into that and finding a way to add into their job. Because, obviously...you're not going to be able to be passionate about everything. But if you have those few things for people, it's a really big motivator.

The CEO explained that transforming the organization is a defined goal, and is occurring by design. A major factor in this effort is developing the people in the organization so leadership can occur at all levels.

I see myself as transforming [the agency] where I'm not the one leading processes anymore. I can lead the processes but I encourage other people to grow, so they can lead. So, it's a process of teaching others to lead. And so eventually, I step out of that. So, they're doing the leading. So, I think the number one change is training. Significant training where people--initially when I started here, there was limited training, maybe training on a process or a particular thing. But now, there's training for professional development. Truly professional development where now managers are learning leadership training and we're reading leadership books. So, change has happened with the change of the organizational name, change in our policies, change in our offices, and all that makes a difference. We purposely, deliberately change people's offices. It changes their mind-set from the daily come to work, believe, come to work and puts people in different places and connects people to different individuals.

Participant 5 described the CEO's willingness to solicit input from staff:

Whenever we have something going on in [the agency] [the CEO] asks us, "What do you think of this or what do you think of that?" and she doesn't want the common just "It was good" standard answer. She wants to know your honest opinion. She wants to know why didn't you like it. Give me the other side of it.

Tell me what you thought what was wrong with it. What we can change, what we can do different next time?

Participant 7, a manager, described her perception of the CEO, and how the leadership behaviors cascade down the organization.

She's very encouraging. I think it's kind of contagious. I think we're lucky and that from the very highest, from the top down, you have -- you feel it. You know [the CEO] wants all of us to be successful. And I think that then as our management team, we're trying so hard to help each other so we can all be successful. And then of course, then I go back to my center. And I want them to be successful because I want them to have opportunities. I want them to be managers, and lead teachers and I want them to grow and but I think we're fortunate because it's just such a big part of everything coming in from the very top down that it's contagious.

Participant 15, a manager, provided an example of the CEO providing support for her to achieve both an educational goal and a professional goal.

We had a position in our company open for 2 years...and I couldn't get it filled...it's a very specific type of function. So I sat down and talked to [the CEO] and I said, I'm going to go back to school. And she said, okay, let's make it work. And I said, that way when that position comes open again I don't have to worry about it and I can just fill it. And I know that that will be something that I can offer to [the agency] as a whole. And she said, okay, let's go. So she's worked with me and helped me through that to improve my education and improve my knowledge. That's one easily instance that I can talk about because it was very recent.

Initiating change was a very conspicuous topic in the structured interviews. The CEO addressed her motivation for change as the potential for growth:

I love change so much that I'm going to do it. And I don't know what motivates me to do it, and I would always say growth. Because growth is change. So, I have passion about it and some drive to change things just to see what happens. But it's not just because I can. It's more because I see the growth that happens from it.

Participant 7, a manager, explained her motivation toward initiating change: "Oh,

goodness, I love change. I love change. What motivates me to initiate change is because change means if I'm changing something, I found something that works better. I'm a child advocate above anything else in my life.” Participant 15, a manager, described her motivation to change as more focused on improvement.

I look at something and I try to see if we can do it better. If there's any way we can improve it, whether it becomes more cost efficient, whether we can save money, whether we can save time, whether we can prove outcomes, improve patient care. So, anything that we can do to either better educate or improve the area, that's what I would look at and see what we would need to change or implement.

Participant 16, also a manager, believed in changing things in order to see if improvements occurred.

Sometimes just for the sake of change. Some just play with it to see if it just makes things better. I'm more of a process person so if I see a breakdown in the process I want to try something different for that as far as staff. Dealing with staff is always a change. Try one thing and then work and then try another.

The participants identified as frontline employees tended to have a narrower, more personalized view of initiating change. Participant 18, a frontline employee, described her motivation for change very simply: “I think my biggest motivator is what is causing me the biggest problem.” Participant 13 responded similarly: “I guess when you see really needs to be done or something's not working.” Participant 5 made it personal as well: “Having a job I guess, because if we don't change with the times, we're not going to have a job because everything is changing right now.” Participant 6 stated his motivation for change was “Either a failure or imminent failure.”

Inspirational Motivation is the second initial code used in the data analysis. This element of transformational leadership pertains to how a leader provides a vision; uses

appropriate symbols, artifacts, or images to help others focus on their work; and makes others feel their work is significant (Avolio and Bass, 1999). Interview questions 9-12 were designed to solicit participants' perceptions in this category. One question was specifically focused on whether a common vision and team spirit exist in the Agency. The agency mission is posted on the organization's website, which is "Our mission is to provide support services that improve the community and encourage self-reliance." Each employee is expected to know the mission statement verbatim. According to the CEO,

Everyone understands our mission. Everyone can recite it. Everyone's asked to recite it. So, people get it. People say things like, well this isn't toward working on our mission. So, I hear that. Yeah, this is not you know, not meeting our mission.

Participant 1, a manager, confirmed the emphasis on the mission statement:

We have our mission statement posted. It's part of our evaluation that, can you say the mission statement. So, that's different. It's something that I think the staff worked on completing, I wasn't here then but I've heard the story where they all kind of worked together and then that's what everyone came up with.

Participant 4 stated that, "She (the CEO) does a little monthly newsletter...I think she shares that vision and she can do it in many different ways. And I think everybody really knows." Participant 5 confirmed the common vision, explaining, "Everybody works together. We're all there for the same reason. We want to see people succeed, we want to see [the agency] succeed, and we're all out there fighting for one common goal."

Participant 8 echoed these sentiments, adding

I think ultimately everybody is working for the same goal. [The CEO] has done an extraordinary job, what we have in in-service every year and it kind of brings everybody together and there is always some theme or focus and I think that really helps everyone realize you know what we are all on the same team and we are all on the same page and trying to work for the same goal. Doesn't matter if

you are in Head Start or if you are in WIC or if you are in Health Connection, you know, we are all trying to educate people and improve the community.

Participant 10 went further in mentioning the organization's core values and the emphasis on mission.

We have been working on our core values and our mission statement and making sure that everyone knows what our mission statement and the core values are not just the management team and even things like...when people did our professional development plan, there is a place for them to actually record how they represent the core values and so it is constantly reminding people of what our core values are and...I do think that people are understanding that.

Participant 15 addressed the common vision in the agency, believing it was consistent across functions regardless of specific programs.

I believe that we are all very passionate about the jobs that we do, whether it's helping the kids so that those children are educated and ready for kindergarten. Whether it's the nutritional information so that we could help fight obesity... Whether it's so that they take a proactive approach in their health care setting and go to health connection...or whether it is that they're trying to lower their energy bills, you know, maintain cost efficiency in their homes. So I do believe, you know, that part is true that we're all there for the same vision to improve the lives that we serve.

However, this view was not totally supported by two participants identified as frontline employees. For example, Participant 18 felt that a common vision existed, but had not yet reached the entire organization.

I think it exists within the management team but not sure that that trickles down to everybody after that but the management team is a pretty cohesive unit. They are pretty tight. So, I think it exists there but I don't know that it is always communicated to the other people in [the agency]. So, then people kind of rely on perception and that is not always reality. So, I would say that there is a team environment but I don't know that it is with everybody. I'd say most people but not everybody.

Participant 6 also shared the belief that the entire organization had not yet embraced the concept of a common vision.

Common vision gets lost in day to day stuff and you know...a lot of times I think people's goal is 5 o'clock. That's their vision, their goal. What they want to achieve today. That doesn't necessarily mean that people are doing poor work or that they're unmotivated or anything. It's just life. But I'm not sure a lot of people are going through their whole day just with the mission statement in their minds and the vision statement of their own or whatever, you know. I'm not really sure.

In terms of the team spirit in the organization, many participants agreed that teamwork was emphasized. Participant 1 reflected on the bonding among the management team:

I think because people want to work towards the same goal and especially on the management team, we've worked so hard to create a bond that it makes working together easier. I hate the word silos, but there aren't as many silos that the management team has very strong and very committed and very much a team where it's not them and us and someone else.

Participant 7 shared similar perceptions about the team approach.

So coming here and having this team was very different for me and it's really good, we're very supportive of each other, we work together, I think we have different views and different opinions about different things and they kind of all come together. And I think that we each have different qualities that they're also diverse that when we come together as a team, we can make some really good decisions.

Participant 10 agreed that teamwork is evident in the organization, stating, "I think that there are about twenty of us on the management team now and we have worked really hard to make that sort of a cohesive group. So, I think it is going well here." Participant 11 emphasized the team approach as well.

I think everybody works as a team. Everybody chips in and helps. If somebody's struggling, hey what can I do to help you? ...I think we foster that a lot--recently just they know that I can go and talk to somebody if I need to, maybe I don't want to go talk to a manager because I don't want...them to know but I would go and talk to a co-worker and you know, they can talk me through stuff, give me ideas, just give me suggestions and I think... the front line staff as well.

Another indicator of *inspirational motivation* is how significant members of an

organization perceive their work to be. This is related to the external reputation of the organization; therefore, a specific question was included to solicit participants' perceptions of the reputation of their organization. According to the CEO,

We've got a lot of different perceptions in the community. I've heard things like that's that place that fires people. Yes, we are. We will and because we maintain some standards. But I think people in the community understand that we have highly trained staff. If anyone hires someone that was prior agency employee, they understand they're getting a trained staff person.

Participant 1 also identified accountability as a positive factor in the organization's reputation.

I think people really feel like we provide an awesome service and we see that, especially if they would switch services like with a head start program, if they're in head start and then they switch to another child care or even they go to public school, they'll come back and be like wow. What you did was really great. I think for people that work here, that like it, we have a positive reputation. We fire people, and in a smaller community where there aren't a lot of other organizations that maybe don't hold people accountable, that can give you a negative reputation from some people. But I think overall, people think we do good work. People think we have quality staff.

Generally, participants felt that the reputation was good; however, some felt that the community at large was not fully aware of the entire mission of the agency.

Participant 3:

I think it's one that still people are not really sure what we do. I will say I work at the Community Action Agency. Oh, you do? Well, what do they do there? And they don't realize the amount of services that we do. They don't realize what we do for the community. So it's a constant educational journey even just going to the grocery store and seeing somebody and telling them what we do. So, I think it's kind of vague. We're just kind of a nebulous agency. People know we're here, Oh we're that building on the street, oh, we have the kids but they don't truly understand what we do. I think the people that need the services know, but the people that don't need our services don't know.

Participant 4:

I don't know that are immediate community recognizes us for what we are, mainly because of the clientele that we deal with. I'm not sure that everybody will ever completely understand what we do and that we are top notch. But when we get opportunities to present and people do listen, they do realize it.

Participant 5:

I think they have a very high reputation because people know that we are here to help that we are not here for hand-outs. We're here to help them get a leg up and help them succeed in their own lives and we're kind of partnering with people in the community to make the community better.

Participant 8:

I believe that [the agency]'s reputation is a very positive one. I think that within the last two years, the reputation has grown as far as who we are and what we do. When they change names, I think that people didn't really know what we did in this building but we have done a lot of marketing within the last two years which has really put our name out there, I think we are getting a lot more publicity now but I think everybody that hears about us it is positive. We are working hard to form collaborations with other agencies and other programs in the community which is very important and I think every year, it is getting better and stronger.

Participant 10:

I think we have a good reputation. I think that unfortunately, we are not as well-known as we'd like to be. And I also think that sometimes, this agency is seen as Head Start alone and people don't understand that we have all kinds of other programs in here because people see it as less for my kid, there was the Head Start and they don't understand the sort of big part of [the agency]. I think that is something also that we have been working on because we have been trying to participate more in like job fairs that they have or health fairs or things like that. We kind of try to go and get our name out there.

Participant 11 stated, "So I think we just getting out there more in the community. We're not just the hand-out agency. We're the agency just doing kind of some innovative things." Participant 13 responded, "Definitely I think (the reputation) is good, and I think people see there's a benefit to their community."

Participant 15:

I think it depends on the entity of [the agency] that you're looking at but I think that [the agency] as a whole, I think unfortunately I think what they think is that it's the hand out store that they help poor people. And that's where the poor people go and that's where poor people get stuff. And I think that is what the community tries to see, that's one of the focuses we're trying to work on so that they don't think that that's all we are.

Participant 17 said, "I think it's a really good reputation. You say you work at [the agency] and people in this area really seem to know who you are. They know about most of the programs, I think."

Participant 18:

I don't know that people always realize what we do. You know, when they ask you so what does [the agency] do? They think of Head Start because that is the most visible program. So some people don't really realize that we do the Weatherization Program, and the EAP Program and WIC and Energy Assistance and...that we do the Food Pantry. They don't necessarily put it all together in one big package.

Participant 19:

I think it is changing. I think it is still slowly changing. I think they used to view us as handouts and we are trying to change that perception that we are more than a handout, that we try to be Educational Services as well, they still think a lot of people still consider us as a handout. And a lot of people don't know what is outside of Head Start and energy assistance still I think. I think that is why where we get most of our community perceptions are built around those two programs.

Participant 20:

I think we have a good reputation. When I talk to people about [the agency], it's I hear a little bit more than what I used to. When people would say [the agency] they would just think ... Oh well that's just low income, you know. But I think more now, I'm hearing more positive things about... Oh yeah we went to your program for this, or we know that you've done this and so it's....I think it's a little more positive than what it used to be.

In addition to perceptions of the organization's reputation in determining the

presence of *inspirational motivation*, the researcher asked participants whether they felt the Agency could be described as a “highly effective organization,” and if so, what factors contributed to this success. Most responded that they did believe the Agency was highly effective; interestingly, the basis for the perceptions presented from two perspectives: the organization’s internal effectiveness and the results produced in terms of the impact on the community.

Participant 1 stated, “I think that we are an effective organization in that we do create a lot of leaders.”

Participant 2:

We have a culture of change now. People understand that is our culture. So, because of that, we’re always able to change. We’re able to grow and we believe in education and training. And that’s what makes us highly effective, being adaptable.

Participant 4:

Well, I think that we have become in this transition, a learning organization. Everybody is learning, everybody wants to learn. I think learning than we're staying on top of technologies. On top of what's the best way to serve patients in a health connection environment. We set the bar high and I think everybody shoots for that bar. But just a learning organization open to change and everybody striving for that one and be the best, you know, that there is. I think that hiring right to keep that, you know, you got to select the right leaders.

Participant 8:

This agency has totally changed me as a professional and as a person. I have learned so much in the last four years that I have been here. I was a front line staff before I worked here. And then, when I came here, it just really opened my eyes on the importance of being a professional every day because you make a difference every day.

Participant 9:

Most definitely because they do think out of the box or area always willing to change or always ready to try something new. If it doesn't work, it doesn't work. And something, I always think about [the CEO] saying, I don't like somebody telling me we can't do this because if they do, I am going to figure out a way that we can do this. It goes back to the leader, our leader. I just think it does and she believes in us, so therefore we are going to do the best we can do to pass it on down to our staff and lead them the same way she leads us to give them the power to make the decisions and have the trust in them when, wanting to see them succeed, wanting to see them grow. I have always said that I want my staff to be able to do the job where they don't need me. Makes my job much easier and it makes them feel much better.

Participant 10:

I think that there are high expectations from management team here in terms of communicating with their staff, communicating with other managers. I think that we have really good policy and procedures and processes that get followed. I think that we can prove that through things like our audits and our reviews. I mean, the last time that Head Start was reviewed, we didn't have any findings. That is unheard of.

Participant 14 also looked at high performance from an internal position, saying, "I mean, the factor in the success to me is the effectiveness of the people that work here. I mean it all goes back to [the CEO] because it has to go to the leadership."

Participant 18:

I know some people that work at other agencies and I have talked to people that work at other places and it is not this way. I mean, I have never worked at another nonprofit agency so I don't... I have direct experience there but I know that it has not been good at other places. So I am pretty confident that that is the case for us. What factors contribute to it, I would say I think [the CEO] is a pretty big contributing factor to that one. She is really into technology for example, which makes everything easier when it works. I mean, of course there are times when you got to work within what you have but I think that that she has real push to make everything easier on people and really encourages. Figure out how you can do your job easier, how you can work smarter instead of harder. Come to me with suggestions and she is very open to that.

Participant 19:

I think we are very good stewards of our dollars. We seem to get a lot out of our dollars especially when you compare us to other community action agencies, they are not creating the change or even the programs and stuff that we are. I feel like we are a leader in that. I think it is because our management team is they are all very strong leaders, I think. And I think they contribute to that.

Participant 7 felt the organization was high-performing “Because we do things that help change people's lives for the better in such a way that it is a person's choice. We give people and children opportunities for them to achieve success.” Participant 5 also viewed performance from that perspective, stating that, “because we're out there in the community, we're helping people, we're helping that community grow, we're helping better themselves and they've done awesome things.”

Several participants approached the question from both perspectives:

Participant 15:

We are effective in helping the community. We are the area's largest poverty fighting network. So we're trying to help those individuals to step out of that cycle of poverty on to trying to be some level of self-sustaining, to help them out of that cycle. So we start with that clientele and try to build them up. We help with the community because we're trying in different areas and aspects to improve what our places look like, what our facilities look like, who we are and what we do and get our information out there that we're not just a handout agency, we are actually more than that.

So we're trying to improve the community in that way. Into ourselves into [the agency], we educate and improve all that we can, so we're trying to either you know, go back to school, get the training that we need, get the education that we need. Whether it would be from our supervisors, whether it would be from an independent person, whether it would be from you know, interagency, we just try to continually to build up and build up that knowledge base.

Participant 20:

I think one of our biggest factors is our staff, managers and front line staff. I feel like we have a really dedicated staff. They are dedicated to the families we serve.

I'm mostly in the head start ... early head start programs. So, they're passionate about their jobs and they put a 100% into them. So, I think when you have that many people that love their job and do a good job at it then you're going to get good services.

Whether an individual has a clear understanding of his/her responsibilities is another indicator of the *inspirational motivation* element of transformational leadership. Participants were very definitive in responding to this question. While most responded with a simple "Yes," several used terms such as "definitely" or "absolutely." Participant 14 was "Super clear" about her responsibilities; Participant 8 elaborated somewhat:

I wear many hats, which is good. I like that. You'll never know what is going to be in store for you each day you come to work but that is another interesting thing, you know, make my job interesting, and keep me going. But I am very clear on my role and if I ever had any questions then you know I can go to [the CEO] or you know Head Start has an associate director, so I am able to go to her as well and just say you know, this is what you wanted me to do, I am a little unclear on how you wanted me to get there, could you give me a little bit of direction and they have absolutely no problem giving it to me.

Intellectual Stimulation was the next element of transformational leadership examined in the interviews. According to Avolio and Bass (1999), this element relates to the degree to which a leader encourages others to look at old problems in creative new ways; promotes an environment that is tolerant of diverse positions; and encourages people to question their own values and beliefs as well as those of the organization. Interview Questions 13-18 were designed to elicit participants' perceptions of factors in this area; specifically working relationships, decision-making processes, and the environment for risk, creativity, and critical thinking.

When asked about working relationships, all 20 participants described their working relationships as positive, using terms such as "strong," "fun," and "respectful."

Several participants mentioned mutual support; for example, Participant 3:

They're very strong, respectful, a lot of fun. A lot of fun. I know that different co-workers have different strength. So if I'm struggling with something, then I know it's a strength with a certain person, I will gravitate more towards that person and I say, I need help with this. It's mutually supportive. And there's not anybody that I wouldn't go to here that I would feel intimidated and asking for help. So I think it's a very mutually supportive environment.

Participant 20 stated, "I think they're all positive. I think with most of them, I learn as much from them as hopefully they learn from me. So, I think it's a reciprocal relationship where we both help each other." Participant 14 mentioned personal relationships that have developed: "Great... I'm not trying to be Johnny Sunshine... I'm not that way. But I feel more friendships and things here than I ever have, you know, or people that actually care and give a shit, you know."

Participant 17 was representative of most responses, stating, "I have had really good working relationships so there's nobody I really not gone along with. You don't always have to agree on things but we seem to be able to talk about them and taking care of."

Participant 7 illustrated the emphasis on organizational success as a factor in good working relationships.

I would say it's probably far better than I hear from their organizations. Because I'm not saying that we all agree, we can have varying opinions. But because we're so focused on, it's not about being right; it's about what is the best outcome. So we may have a different opinion but then in the end, it's not worth choosing, we all still -- the thing is it's going to be come out better. So its personalities are going to be put aside, it's all about that so I think it's very good.

Participants were asked two interview questions specifically related to decision-making: (a) Are you confident in your ability to make decisions, and (b) Does your supervisor/manager trust you to make decisions? Notably, all participant responses were

very immediate and definitive; all twenty expressed confidence in their decision-making ability, and 19/20 responded affirmatively that their supervisor trusted them to make decisions. Participant 1 stated, “I think [the CEO] has really tried to help people become decision makers and to say here’s how we’re going to make decisions here, you know, I want you to be a critical thinker.” Participant 11 addressed the freedom to take risks: “Yeah, because I know we don't have the atmosphere anymore of what you did was wrong, that was wrong. We celebrate failures.” Several participants mentioned the supportive environment. Participant 8:

I am pretty confident in my ability to make decisions and I know that one of the reasons I am so confident is because of the support I know that I have. So, even if they don’t necessarily agree with the decision I make, they’ll stand behind me and then will turn it into a learning opportunity so that next time, I am able to make a better decision but just knowing that I have that support behind me, gives me the confidence that I need to make the decisions.

Participant 15:

I will say when basically since I've started with [the COO and the CEO], they've left me alone. And when I've had new different directors that have come on...they basically tell them, leave her alone, she'll handle her stuff. Don't mess with her. If she needs something, she'll come to you. But other than that, just leave her and she'll be fine.

Participant 19:

I feel like I am confident in making decisions. Probably two years ago, maybe three or four years ago that would, probably would have been so true but now I am almost cocky in my ability to make decisions.

Researcher: So what changed?

Participant 19: [The CEO]. Once she became my supervisor...she pushed me to gain the confidence in myself.

When asked the question “Is it easy for you to admit mistakes, and what happens when you do,” all 20 participants responded affirmatively; many stated that their ability

to do so has developed only because of the culture created in the organization in which mistakes are considered learning opportunities not only for those who commit mistakes, but for everyone else as well. Several admitted that this was something they had found difficult to do in the past. The CEO was credited in numerous responses as the primary factor in creating the feeling of having “freedom to fail.” The specific practice of celebrating failures was mentioned by 8 of the 20 participants.

Participant 1:

But when I make mistakes, I do say I made this mistake. We had to do a big grant every 3 years and a smaller grant every year and when I copied all the information over and we started working on it, I copied the small grant. So, it was like 3 weeks, a month before the grant's due then [the CEO] is like, this doesn't seem right and we started looking and it was like -- Oh my gosh, child. We've been working on the small grant, not the big grant. And so I went into the management team, you know, and I'm like I messed this up. I say, I saved this. I wasn't even thinking...I saved the wrong thing. We've been working on the wrong one. We're going to be able to use what we have but it's one third of what we need instead of all of it. So everyone's -- we're all going to have to pitch in and get this done. And I wasn't in trouble. I didn't feel like I got scolded. I've never really felt it here. Like I've been scolded.

Participant 2:

It's very easy for me to admit mistakes because I make them all the time. Everybody knows, but one of the processes we have on our management team is we celebrate failures and that creates the atmosphere where people know they can make mistakes and laugh at them but then it also prevents people from making the same mistakes over and over because we're openly sharing. So, we have an environment where we can share our mistakes where everyone can.

Participant 3:

More so now than in the past. More so now. I am one... I am a perfectionist. And in the past, it would have just really killed me, just internally to admit that. But we've had exercises here, constructive feedback, critical feedback, whatever you want to call it. And we have that exercise. And I was able to read it with kind of a detached reflection and see, yes, I could see how some of these things

would come across without me meaning to. And so that was something our... it was an issue that I worked on. So, yes, it's a lot easier now. It still makes me cringe, but it's a lot easier.

Participant 4:

We share our failures at every management meeting. You know, we try to learn from others' mistakes, you know, hey, I made this mistake. I don't want anybody else to do it. We celebrate failures, that's the term. So, hey, you know, this is what I did. And we talk about and everybody is really like, oh, I have one this month and you know, the whole management team will share those. But we celebrate failures so that others can learn from the mistakes.

Participant 5:

When I first started here, no. But now, yes. Because one of [the CEO's] things is just celebrate your failures because everybody in this world makes mistakes.

Researcher: What happens when you admit a mistake?

Participant 5: Well of course it's talked about. They ask what we can do differently to change it and then we're given the opportunity to show that we can fix it that we change it, that we can do it more effectively the next time. It might not be right but we get a chance to try it.

Participant 7:

Well the one thing [the CEO] likes us to do is to celebrate our failures. I cannot say that I am a fan of that, to be honest. And when she also did where we did critical feedback for each other I wasn't a fan of that, actually when she proposed it I actually e-mailed her and I said...have you really thought about it? Do you think that we will accomplish...I'm more of a sandwich type of person. Does it have to be a list of all bads? Can we do some goods and bads so that nobody's feeling are hurt and maybe that's the preschool in me? I don't know, it's just me and she's like, no, no, we're not doing no warm and fuzzes, we're just going to -- and it's going to be fine. And she said it's going to be fine and -- you know, I got it and read it and it was real.

Participant 8:

It is. It wasn't at first. That was one of the things I had to learn because I am kind of a perfectionist. I like things to be perfect. So when I first started, I haven't worked here for too long and I screwed up, I messed up and one of the things that we started was celebrating your failures and since then, I have learned and I mean, the management team here has helped me learned that it is okay to make mistakes. If you are not making mistakes, then you are not taking risks.

And if you are not taking risks, then you are not making any improvements or any changes. And so, I just kind of taken that and run with it, you know, I am taking risks and I am making decisions and yes, I am going to mess up and I do mess up but I learn from it.

Participant 9:

You know, it didn't use to be (easy to admit mistakes). I will be very honest with you but as the years have gone by, it is getting better and better and something that has helped we sit in as a management team down there. Every month, and we admit what we screwed up on. And you say, you know this isn't so bad. You know, other people do it and some people do it, you know, every month they are saying something but we learn from those now, but I will be honest it took me a long time.

Participant 10:

It is very easy. In fact, one of the things that we would do with the management team which took a little getting used to but we celebrate the failures there. We talked about the things that we screwed up on. And it does help everybody just kind of goes and we learn from each others' mistakes.

Participant 11:

Yeah, because it's a different atmosphere now. In the past, other regime, no--you know, you were just scared to death and I don't want them to know. I got to cover it up and I hope to God they never find it...

Participant 12:

We talk it over what could we have done different, you know could this be better next time, that's you know that kind of thing that's really what we do and I really try not to make mistakes but it's just an inevitable.

Participant 15:

Yes. It also helps with this agency, it helps to that there's no backlash from those mistakes. Because we look at it as, you make a mistake, we don't want anyone else to make this mistake so we're going to talk about it so we all would learn and grow. During each of the staff meetings that I have with my staff, we celebrate our failures and we all talk about what we've done so that I open it up to that level, as well as we talk about it in management meetings of our failures and what we've done so we open it up to that level. And there are no repercussions, there's

no whiplash, there's no browbeating when you've done something wrong. We might laugh about it and you know, we might make jokes, but it's never like showing up on your evaluation that you've made all these mistakes, this is everything that you've done wrong. It's more of good job for admitting those mistakes, let's move on. At least you're recognizing the areas that need improvement, or the area that you've made a mistake in.

Participant 17:

If I made a mistake, I will be the first to tell you. Oh I screwed that up. As long as you learn from it. So far I have never made a huge mistake that I can get myself in any trouble. It's kind of, we have a kind of a thing in the management team to celebrate failures, so maybe if you do screw something up you can tell what it was and laugh about it. People will give you input to make sure you learn from your mistakes.

Participant 19:

Yes, it is. I don't like to admit but yes it is easy for me to admit that and we... I don't know if you already have heard this but we have the... every month at the manager's meeting we have a celebrate failures so it is really easy to do that because we even implement that. I see how it's beneficial to do that because every time we... someone does that, we either change a process or realize something wasn't working and so it has been easy because of that.

Participant 20:

Wasn't (easy to admit mistakes) in the past but it's easier now. It's easier now.

Researcher: So what happens when you do?

Participant 20: Usually nothing, I mean nothing bad. It's usually either kind of a small little joke or whatever and then we go over it and say how can we do it differently next time? You know, what did we learn from it. But it's never, I mean, I've never made a mistake and felt like I was in trouble or going to, you know, get fired or anything.

The final interview questions asked relating to *intellectual stimulation* were whether participants (a) were encouraged to offer new ideas, and (b) found it easy to question the current policies or procedures in the organization. Eighteen of 20 participants felt they were encouraged to offer new ideas; Participants 5 and 6 responded

negatively to this question; notably, these participants were identified as frontline employees, which is a possible indicator that some leadership behaviors have not yet cascaded throughout all levels of the organization. Seventeen of 20 participants responded that it was easy to question policies and procedures; again, the three participants who responded negatively (Participants 5, 6, and 18) were frontline employees.

Participant 18:

I would not say easy. I think that it is probably something that (they) encourage and they would like to see that but it is not always easy because you don't always see the reasons why those policies are in place maybe. Or they have been in place forever and you don't really know why. Or that it is something that can't change, that it doesn't have to be that way necessarily. So it takes a lot of asking questions why. So I think it is encouraged but I don't necessarily think that it is easy.

Of those who responded positively, most stated that it was “expected, not encouraged” to offer new ideas.

Participant 10:

I think that is an expectation, not even an encouragement...when you go to conferences and things, to talk to people and find out different ways and better ways to do things all the time, yes. Yes, and again I think that is an expectation that we don't ever do anything because that's the way we've always done it. That is a mind-set that organizations get into a lot of times and that is not something that we do here. It is like, why do we do that?

Participant 14:

Yeah...I feel like everybody around here--management team, executive team, I mean has the idea or the premise that it's okay if something is not working, let's fix it. Because it's impossible to get stuff perfect. And I'm, I was, a perfectionist. But you know, I feel like if you say something that's like--and I can remember, I got a for instance on that and brought it up and changed the, you know, what the big deal. I was just like a little error in there, you know. It's the team cumulative

thing, you know, that makes the whole so I mean you know, you're perfecting it as you go.

The final three questions of the interview examined the *individualized consideration* element of transformational leadership. When asked to describe job satisfaction, all participants expressed positive feelings ranging from “good” to “I love my job.” Several participants expressed extremely high levels of satisfaction.

Participant 8:

I have been waiting my whole life to have this job. I started off as a teacher and I have loved every bit of it but I feel like this is what I am supposed to be doing. I get to make decisions. I get -- because of you know I worked as a teacher for ten years, I have really good foundation of how a good classroom can operate and services that need to be delivered to the children and the families so I got a good grasp on that but now, my satisfaction level has progressed you know since I progressed as a professional, my satisfaction level has progressed.

Participant 12:

I'm so blessed every day to come to a place that I like to work at and I have an awesome boss that is flexible, realistic that I can say whatever she can say what I need to work on. We have an open dialogue open communicate. I just I don't know I just freak out for the day which is not here anymore. So I would say overall, I would say most of the days are 10.

Participant 10:

I love my job. I mean, of course, like every other job it has its days. I mean, I was away all last week so I came back this week and my desk is piled with stuff and I am like ugh, but no, it is a very fulfilling job. I get to work with lots of different people. I have the fortunate part because of my role, I deal with our families and our customers a lot but I also deal with the management and the staff and I love it because it is different every single day, you just don't quite know what you are going to be doing. So, yes, it is a good job.

Participant 15:

I absolutely love my job. As of coming here I don't want to go anywhere else, this is where I want to stay. And I haven't felt like that in any other job that I've

had in the past. I feel very satisfied, I walk away rewarded every single day knowing that somehow, somehow I've helped someone and I haven't I mean, I'm in a medical field so what I did is I saved lives all of the time. I worked in an ICU setting, so I was always helping people but I never was rewarded at the end. I was always like, I should have done this better. I should have talked to the family better, I mean I was always browbeating myself, something should have been better. When I walk away from this job every day, I don't feel that way. I don't feel like, that, things should be better, I feel satisfied. I've never said that I loved a job before and I never understood in the past how people can truly love their job.

I've told this to [the CEO] that if there was a different CEO, I don't know that I'd feel that way. But she is so open and receptive to my ideas, to change, involvement, making myself feel empowered. She doesn't micro-manage, but she allows me to grow. Those focuses on how she handles me as a manager, helps me tremendously. So I don't know that I would I don't know that I could say that about another job, or if there was another person in that position.

Participant 19:

My job satisfaction is high. There are a few times that it is low but I think it is just because of the expectation that I am always trying to be excellent and being at our best and I think that what anybody who is in a true excellent organization, the stress can get to you at times but I would say on a scale of one to ten, it is probably a nine most of the time.

Participant 5:

Very satisfied, because we do get a chance to voice our opinions, we get the chance to try new things, we have the chance to advance and when you come in here from day 1 they have total confidence in you. There's never a trust issue or anything like that. As soon as you walk in the front door, you're one of them.

Participants were also asked if they felt their supervisor/manager had a genuine interest in their success. Participants all responded affirmatively to this question; however, the degree of positivity was quite varied. Some participants felt that their supervisor's or manager's interest in their success was based only on the impact it had on the supervisor's or manager's success.

Participant 1 stated, "She wants people to achieve and really...if her staffs aren't

achieving things and aren't performing well then it's going to look bad on her. So, I think, she has a vested interest making sure that we are successful individually."

Participant 13 believed that "all the managers have that with all their employees, because I mean it reflects them too whenever you get down to that." Again, the least positive perceptions were from frontline employees. Participant 16 responded, "Yeah. Because if I don't succeed she doesn't succeed." Participant 18 said, "I believe so because it is very closely tied to hers."

However, there were numerous very positive perceptions as well. Participant 10 stated, "Yes, definitely. That is why she (the CEO) drives us so hard is sometimes because she wants us to be successful. And she wants [the agency] to be successful, so yes." Participant 14 said, "I feel like that wholeheartedly I mean, just can't say it any stronger, probably. I mean, I feel like she's (the CEO) just got my back and I've never had that and I mean, that means a lot." Participant 3 responded, "Yes...she is constantly pushing me to go beyond what I think I can do. Giving suggestions as far as trainings, books to read, articles to read, websites to access. So, she gives that supportive background as well."

Participant 7:

She's very encouraging. I think it's kind of contagious. I think we're lucky and that from the very highest, from the top down, you have -- you feel it. You know [the CEO] wants all of us to be successful. And I think that then as our management team, we're trying so hard to help each other so we can all be successful.

And then of course, then I go back to my center. And I want them to be successful because I want them to have opportunities. I want them to be managers, and lead teachers and I want them to grow and but I think we're fortunate because it's just such a big part of everything coming in from the very

top down that it's contagious.

Participant 8:

Absolutely. If I am not successful, they are not successful. So, they are very encouraging. We always try to be constructive with one another. We see the value in constructive feedback, I do anyway. And that I believe that there are many others that believe in constructive feedback being positive. You know, everybody wants to do a good job.

Sometimes you do things that you don't even know you're doing, you don't even realize it because you just done it for so long. So it is important to have someone set you aside and say you know what, I noticed you do this all the time and I don't think you mean to do it and so you can make those changes and professional growth is just so important whether it be education, training, management, leadership whatever, it is really encouraged here.

Participant 15:

So I sat down and talked to [the CEO] and I said, I'm going to go back to school. And she said, okay, let's make it work. And I know that that will be something that I can offer to [the agency] as a whole. And she said, okay, let's go. So she's worked with me and helped me through that to one, improve my education and improve my knowledge. That's one easy instance that I can talk about because it was very recent.

Participant 19:

Participant 19: Yes, she does have a genuine interest in my success and it is almost annoying at times but yes.

Researcher: Oh, almost annoying?

Participant 19: Yes.

Researcher: How so?

Participant 19: Well, she's always encouraging me to do more as far as training and education and always pushing me a little out of my comfort zone, it comes to that sometimes. But yes, she does it with a genuine interest.

The final question examining *individualized consideration*, which was also the final interview question, asked whether participants felt they were encouraged to seek additional responsibility. With the exception of Participants 6 and 18, both frontline employees, all felt that they were encouraged. Participant 18 stated:

It just comes. I don't know that I am encouraged to do it; I think it just arrives and that has happened to me in the past year. I wasn't asked. There is no additional money, you know what I mean, and I mean, that is understandable. So, encouraged, I don't know if I would say encouraged, I would say that it just happens.

Again, several participants stated that not only were they encouraged, it was "expected" that they seek additional responsibility; this was generally perceived as leadership providing opportunities as opposed to simply requiring more work.

Participant 1:

Yes. Required. No. Sure. We definitely are asked. Is there more that you want to take on or is there something that you feel passionate about? That's something that I think it's really a positive thing because [the CEO] will say, if you're passionate about something or if you have someone working on what they're passionate about then they're not going to get burned out. Then they're going to devote more time and energy, and effort. So, it's finding what are people passionate about. Tapping into that and finding a way to add into their job. Because, obviously not every job duty -- you're not going to be able to be passionate about everything. But if you have those few things for people, it's a really big motivator.

Participant 4:

Definitely. I mean, and I think less in terms of me than I do the middle managers, we have a lot middle managers, and I mean they're encouraged to learn and grow and develop. And, you know, years ago, when we were going through the initial stages of the transformation, we had all those head start managers that had to go because they just couldn't make it, you know, they couldn't transition. And then you look at...we had teaching staff that had been here years that weren't prepared to step up, you know. And so, I think we approach everything from, yeah, everybody needs to be learning for next level and trying to, you know, take that next step up and get the education and the knowledge that they need to be able to do that.

Participant 5:

Yes, always because they like people that will step-up and do things without asking. If you see something needs to be done, step-up and do it. They like to see people who can take initiative to get the job done.

Participant 7:

I'm going to do everything I can do to help kids and families. And I'm open to whatever, wherever I need to go. I was a little -- it was hard for me to come from the one on one with kids, because I love that, I love that, and working directly with the families every day, picking them up you know, being in charge of all of that. I would talk to my supervisor and I'd say, I don't know. I feel like I don't -- you know, I'm really missing that part of it. And you know, she really talked me through, she gave me examples of the things I was doing that were reaching more people. And so through that-- then I began to see what she was saying that when before I only had that one small class, you know each year. But now, I have the ability to reach more, and so once I got over that hurdle, then I felt really comfortable.

Participant 8:

I would say yes, absolutely. As a manager of course, whenever you see anything within [the agency] that is a problem or could be a problem or a concern, whether it be in your program or not, you know, you should, you know, always take action or look into it, take it upon yourself to do that. You know, I do things every day that are not in my job description but you know, I am a manager at [the agency], so it doesn't matter if it is in my program area or not.

Participant 9:

Yes, and I have had that in the past. I have had as few as ten staff, I've had as many as twenty-nine staff. And you know, that makes me feel good that they feel that I can do that. And they will have me try you know different things; it was like she is going to have me work on our training plan. I have never done that in the past, after twenty-one years, I have never done that but I am willing to do it. So, you know, they always ask but they always want you to take that on so you can grow. You know, what I like about it is at my age, they don't look at me like you can't do anything. They know you are willing to do it, you know so they'll let you go and they are not sitting there waiting on like when is she going to retire, when is she going to leave. I feel like I am still a big part of it, you know and I have a lot of input.

Participant 11:

We give people the opportunity to grow. I mean I was a front line staff. I was a...clerk when I started. I came over and was a clerical assistant and then went into financial and then...kind of did client services on an interim basis and it's

grown so I think sometimes people don't see that, or there's a lot of people think well there's no room for me to grow, but there is. And we do foster leaders and improve leaders, want people to lead even for line staff, we give them the opportunity, you know, even with the employee task force this year. They're doing a leadership program. They're learning things that they can do to become a leader.

Participant 17:

Yeah. I think so. If you come up with an idea and they feel it's a good idea...they tell you to run with it. I think they welcome you to take on more responsibility if it's something that is good for the organization.

Participant 20:

It's actually kind of like when...I expressed that's something I wanted but based on what I wanted then my supervisor was able to say....Okay then we'll send you here...so that was a good opportunity. That was something more that I could add and that I was chosen for. So...it's also a good thing because I like that, because it helps me grow professionally.

Generalizations (Lessons learned)

According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and therefore transforms both.

Qualitative data were analyzed to examine whether transformational leadership was present in the organization. A content review of available documentation, along with researcher observations, discussions with the CEO, triangulated with semi-structured interviews of 20 voluntary participants, revealed comprehensive evidence of a transformational leadership culture Based on Schein's (1990) model of organizational culture: artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions.

A culture of transformational leadership was evident in several forms. The appearance of the facilities, recent upgrades to office areas, posters with leadership-

themes messages, and signage on bulletin boards were cultural artifacts that provided evidence of a transformational leadership culture. Espoused values consistent with transformational leadership were emergent from responses during the participant interviews. The five core values of the agency--innovation, respect, integrity, professionalism, and excellence--represent the espoused cultural values as described in Schein's (1990) model. These core values are also consistent with the tenets of transformational leadership as identified by Avolio and Bass (1999). Using results as a basis for organizational performance, it was noted that the agency implemented numerous progressive initiatives, including creation of a for-profit division of a nonprofit organization; acquiring funding and performing project development for housing initiatives in the service area, and other non-traditional methods to obtain funding in order to better serve the client base in the local communities. The ability to acquire funding is a particular challenge in Community Action Agencies due to the environment of continuous change, extensive regulation and oversight, difficulty in offering competitive compensation, and serving a population whose demands are inversely proportional to economic conditions. It was apparent that the agency's success in this area was enabled by the transformational culture in which creativity, accountability, and a focus on teamwork are not only encouraged but expected.

The qualitative data obtained through interviews clearly supported the preconfigured themes based on the four elements of transformational leadership identified by Avolio and Bass (1999). Participant responses to structured interview questions elicited comprehensive evidence of transformational leadership behaviors

perceived by organization personnel. Based on Burns's (1978) definition of transformational leadership--leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—of both leaders and followers—the efforts to create a transformational culture at the agency have resulted in the development of a corps of leaders at all levels of the organization. However, in the convenience sample obtained for this study, there are indications that the total integration of transformational leadership has yet to be completed. Specifically, although only four of the twenty participants were identified as frontline employees, those four participants accounted for a disproportionate amount of the few less-than-positive (and in some cases, negative) responses. Clearly, at the manager levels, responses suggested a comprehensive “buy-in” of the transformational approach to leadership, which was notably often attributed to the efforts of the organization's CEO.

Summary

The primary research question for this study was, “Does transformational leadership impact the organizational effectiveness of small community-based organizations?” The qualitative case study methodology was selected in order to examine the bounded system of a small Community Action Agency without predetermined hypotheses and goals. Unlike for-profit organizations, performance of nonprofit organizations cannot be measured solely on financial results.

Responses to participants interviews, triangulated with content review of documents and researcher observations, strongly suggested that transformational leadership, as defined by Burns (1978), had a significant impact on the effectiveness of

the agency. The body of data obtained provided strong evidence that the four elements of transformational leadership identified by Avolio and Bass (1999) were present in the organization, although the transformational culture may not have cascaded thoroughly into the frontline employee level.

Chapter 5 will present a discussion of the results and a detailed discussion of the conclusions. In addition, Chapter 5 will discuss the limitations and implications of the study and recommendations for further research as appropriate.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the emergent themes resulting from the case study data analysis in Chapter 4. One major conclusion was drawn from the study; this conclusion was interpreted in relation to the relevant literature and was informed by the conceptual framework, the research questions, and the data analysis process. A discussion of the data analysis, evaluation of the methodological approach, association of the study to prior research, implications and contributions of present research, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research are presented.

Discussion of Data Analysis

The broad picture that emerged from this study was that transformational leadership was clearly inherent in the organizational culture. Observations by the researcher revealed a transformational leadership culture based on numerous examples of physical cultural elements (Schein, 1990) and content reviews of secondary data sources used to triangulate the primary data source of participant interviews. Employee perceptions of transformational leadership behaviors were consistently apparent based on responses to specific interview questions related to the four elements of transformational leadership as described by Avolio and Bass (1999).

Freeborough's (2012) study of transformational leadership in a nonprofit found transformational leadership is positively correlated with employee engagement; the participants in this study of the agency provided strong evidence of engagement, significantly based on transformational leadership. Similarly, the researcher noted an

atmosphere of openness and relaxed interaction among organization personnel, including the CEO. Of particular note was the observation that during the interviews, participant responses that reflected less than positive or, in some cases, negative perceptions related to the questions displayed no negative emotions or visible frustration. This may indicate a high level of engagement despite a lower level of enthusiasm.

In addition, as discussed in Chapter 4, the study revealed a consistent record of progressive organizational initiatives, development of for-profit subsidiaries, creative methods of acquiring funding, and an ongoing focus on client service and community development. For example, the cultural emphasis within the agency on constant change (on occasion, simply for the sake of change or to try something different) and the manner in which personnel seem to embrace this value can be considered a *result* of transformational leadership as well as a cause of organizational effectiveness. This overarching philosophy, coupled with the freedom to fail, has been paramount in the organization's ability to not only identify opportunities, but to implement them. It has also led to the agency becoming a true learning organization, which is a fundamental aspect of a transformational leadership culture.

Major Themes

Four *a priori* codes were identified as a basis for initial theme analysis. These codes were based on the four elements of transformational leadership as identified in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio and Bass, 1999). Analysis of data obtained in interviews, informal researcher observations, and a content analysis of organizational documentation including annual reports, a 2010 internal employee survey,

press releases, minutes of board meetings and staff meetings, funding documents, and selected policy manuals revealed support for each of the four initial themes. While no additional major themes emerged from the data, analysis revealed two noteworthy observations in addition to the major themes that will also be discussed in this chapter.

Major Theme 1: Idealized Influence

This element addresses whether a leader maintains subordinates' trust, faith and respect; exhibits dedication to them; appeals to their ideals, hopes and dreams; and acts as a role model. Participant responses reflected very positive perceptions of this element overall. Specifically, with one exception, all participants expressed very positive perceptions in describing their supervisors and the ease of communicating with their supervisors. However, frontline employees were noticeably less favorable in their perceptions of whether they were asked for input in decisions and their motivation to initiate change. This could be attributed to several causes; individual attitudes, specific supervisors, or possibly that idealized influence simply has not been fully embedded at the lower organizational level.

Major Theme 2: Inspirational Motivation

Within this element of transformational leadership, which addresses how well a leader provides a vision; uses appropriate symbols, artifacts, or images to help others focus on their work; and makes others feel their work is significant, responses were generally positive but suggested much weaker support than the other elements addressed. Participants generally felt the organization was "highly effective," yet many were not clear as to the meaning of the term. Some viewed effectiveness as a measure of internal

performance; others considered effectiveness as a reflection of the impact on the community or the achievement of the organizational mission. Participants were also mixed in their opinions of how the organization is perceived in the community. Interestingly, this did not dampen their enthusiasm for being employed by or even being associated with the organization; in fact, several participants viewed situations in which community members stated either a lack of knowledge or a negative opinion about the organization as opportunities to educate the public and improve the reputation of the organization in the community. There was strong support for whether individuals had a clear understanding of their responsibilities, but responses were mixed among both managerial and frontline employees as to whether a team spirit and common vision existed in the organization. This was mostly due to concerns that this factor of transformational leadership had not yet found its way into the majority of the frontline employee levels.

Major Theme 3: Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual Stimulation relates to a leader's tendency to encourage creativity, promote diverse positions, and encourage people to question their values and beliefs and those of the organization. Again, responses to this element of transformational leadership indicated strong support. Specifically, responses to questions about working relationships and decision-making were overwhelmingly positive throughout the sample, as were responses regarding the participants' comfort level in admitting mistakes and the effects of doing so. It was noteworthy that 8 of the 20 participants voluntarily mentioned the practice of "celebrating failures," and attributed this cultural espoused value (Schein,

1990) as a major factor in organizational and individual learning and success. However, again the responses from frontline employees were less positive in this area. This was consistent with responses to the questions related to the freedom to offer new ideas and question policies and procedures; there was overall positive support, but responses were also mixed among frontline employees.

Major Theme 4: Individualized Consideration

As the name implies, this element of transformational leadership revolves around a leader's interest in others' well-being, consideration of individual ability and preference, and promoting involvement in the group. This element overwhelmingly received the most positive responses from participants. Job satisfaction was very positive across all participants, with several expressing a love for their jobs. All participants felt that their supervisors had a genuine interest in their success; however, several stated that this was because their performance was a reflection on the supervisor. Participants felt that they were not only encouraged, but expected to seek additional responsibility; most also viewed this as a positive in that additional responsibility was a vehicle for learning and growth as opposed to simply an expectation to do more work.

A noteworthy observation relates to the degree to which the transformational leadership culture has developed throughout the organization. Interestingly, the responses from those participants identified as frontline employees were less positive and, in some cases, portrayed negative perceptions regarding some elements of transformational leadership. Since only 4 of the 20 participants fell into this category, and many of their responses did indicate support for the presence of some elements

transformational leadership, this did not constitute a major theme; therefore, it is not feasible to draw a conclusion from this data. However, this may suggest that while a transformational leadership culture is clearly present throughout the organization, some elements of transformational leadership may have yet to permeate the complete ranks of the frontline employee level. This dynamic would be consistent with the approach of cultural change beginning at the top levels in an organization and cascading through the lower levels; in this case, it is possible that this process has not yet had adequate time or focus to become totally incorporated into the frontline level of the organization.

Another noteworthy trend emerged from the data obtained from participant responses. While not a major theme, the leadership provided by the organization's CEO in the form of behaviors inherent in transformational leadership was specifically mentioned by many participants at all levels. It was evident from the responses that while a culture of transformational leadership has permeated most of the organization, the initiative to create such a culture was clearly driven by the CEO. When considering the conflicting views in the literature as to whether leadership creates or is created by the organizational culture, in this case the dynamic seems to be cyclical. The initial drive toward a culture of transformational leadership was clearly inspired by the leadership of the CEO; however, it was apparent from the data that the newly created culture in turn drives the ongoing development of organizational leadership. It was interesting to examine a specific case in which the "which came first?" question could be so definitively answered.

Finally, a significant number of responses revealed the emphasis on "celebrating

failure.” This practice was cited by participants when referring to their confidence in decision making, and their supervisors’ trust in them to make decisions. In addition, a specific interview question asked whether it was easy to admit mistakes, and what happens when one does. Every participant responded affirmatively that it was easy, and 8 of the 20 participants in responding to this question alone mentioned the fact that failures are celebrated. This is clearly a cultural value related to transformational leadership, and, as many participants with more than 10 years in the organization stated, represented a distinct departure from the culture under the previous leadership in which mistakes were covered up due to fear of reprisal or punishment; people “got in trouble” when they made mistakes.

Given the degree of support in the data for the presence of transformational leadership in the organization, the next step was to determine whether this presence has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the agency. Numerous quantitative studies using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Avolio and Bass, 1999), found that transformational leadership leads to higher results in effectiveness, satisfaction, and extra effort. In this study, the effects of transformational leadership were apparent in the observation of behaviors, cultural artifacts, and documented examples of innovative and non-traditional approaches to mission accomplishment, funding acquisition, and employee development. Therefore, based on the data obtained, it can be concluded from this study that transformational leadership has clearly impacted the effectiveness of this small community-based organization in a highly positive manner.

Evaluation of the Methodological Approach

According to Yin (1981), the case study examines a phenomenon in its real-life context. This study used Yin's (2003) six sources of data: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observations, and physical artifacts. While this case study had no predetermined hypotheses (Willis, 2007), the data obtained from these sources was then analyzed using prefigured coding representing information that the researcher expected to find before the study (Creswell, 2007). It was expected that themes would emerge identifying participants' perceptions of transformational leadership and specific behaviors demonstrating transformational leadership. As shown in the results, the prefigured coding provided a sound structure for data collection and analysis; the initial codes did in fact represent the major themes found in the data. This would seem to support the four elements of transformational leadership as defined in Avolio and Bass's (1999) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, a quantitative instrument upon which the codes were based.

As transformational leadership is universally recognized as a concept (Bass, 1999), it is consistent with the definition of a phenomenon as the "lived experiences" of people; therefore, an argument could have been made for a phenomenological or grounded theory approach. However, use of the qualitative case study method provided a wealth of options as to how to approach the subject. The bulk of the research on transformational leadership found to date is quantitative in nature and generally uses some form of questionnaire or measurement instrument to collect data; some researchers have approached the topic from a mixed-methods approach. The use of the qualitative

case study, using *a priori* coding based on well-validated elements derived from quantitative research, allowed the researcher to illuminate the reader's understanding of the phenomenon according to Willis' (2007) characteristics of case study research: (a) it allows the researcher to gather rich, detailed data in an authentic setting; (b) it is holistic and supports the idea that much of what we can know about human behavior is best understood as lived experience in the social context; and (c) it can be done without predetermined hypotheses and goals, unlike experimental research. The qualitative approach using analysis of data such as words, pictures, or objects, as opposed to quantitative research, provided a richer, more informed understanding of the case. The qualitative case study approach in this study allowed for greater flexibility in seeking meaning behind participants' lived experiences and interpreting deeper contexts around those meanings.

Association of the Study to Prior Research

This study supports previous research findings on the positive effects of transformational leadership. Bass (1985, cited in Bass and Avolio, 1993) stated transformational leaders can change the culture by (a) understanding it; (b) realigning the culture with a new vision, and (c) revising the organization's shared assumptions, values, and norms. Clearly, in the case study of this organization, this has occurred. Block (2003) found that transformational leadership was associated with higher perceived levels of mission, adaptability, involvement and consistency and a more positive perception of organizational culture when compared to transactional leaders. Freeborough (2012) found that transformational leadership is positively correlated with nonprofit employee

engagement. Mills (2007) found that employee retention was positively impacted by transformational leadership, and that the four factors of transformational leadership were statistically equal in promoting employee retention.

Numerous studies have shown that transformational leadership is linked to higher effectiveness (Kest's (2007, cited in DeBerry, 2010); learning outcomes (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009); employee focus on mission (DeBerry, 2010); and positive leadership outcomes (Mary, 2005). Boga and Ensari (2009) confirmed that basing evaluations of organizational success on employee perception versus economic indicators is empirically supported. Burns (1978) noted that transformational leadership raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and therefore transforms both.

Implications and Contributions of the Present Research

The use of qualitative data provides a richer, deeper insight to the unique dynamics of a nonprofit organization than can be obtained by quantitative data alone. This study should lead to a greater understanding of how small community-based organizations develop and maintain the transformational leadership philosophies and practices for executives, managers, and supervisors in order to become “highly effective.” The findings from this study may be useful to other social services organizations in institutionalizing transformational leadership. In organizations that are nonprofit, dependent on public funding, and have client bases whose demand increases as financial conditions deteriorate, a greater flexibility is required to continue to meet mission requirements. This may necessitate creative funding approaches or sources, redefining mission requirements, revising organizational goals, or seeking new and better methods

of conducting operations. As shown in this study, the culture created in an environment of transformational leadership not only allows, but encourages these types of initiatives.

A notable theme in the literature was the recommendation for training in transformational leadership. Numerous studies indicated support for transformational leadership and the need to further develop transformational leaders. The findings in this study indicate that understanding and applying the four elements of transformational leadership (Avolio and Bass, 1999) may (a) assist organizations in identifying individuals for leadership positions, and (b) equip executives and organizational development officers to develop training programs designed around transformational behaviors focused on work relationships and satisfied employees. As cited earlier, Preston, (2008) found that in 2005 over 70% of the 30 highest-ranked schools of social work did not include even one human resource management course. The knowledge gained from this study can benefit scholars and practitioners from both individual and organizational leadership perspectives.

Limitations of the Study

Limitation 1

As with any qualitative study, particularly one that is interpretive in nature, findings will typically not be generalizable to other organizations. Conclusions were drawn from participants' lived experiences and were based on perceptions.

Limitation 2

A potential limitation is related to the size and demographic of the research sample in a single, small organization of approximately 120. Twenty participants

responded; 19 were Caucasian, and 1 was African-American. Seventeen were female, three were male. Greenfield-Laborde (2008) found that the gender of the leader was not significant as relates to leadership styles; however, the gender (percentage) of the follower does matter as to the leader's transformational/transactional leadership styles. Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of 45 studies of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles and found that female leaders were more transformational than male leaders. The fact that the CEO happened to be female, as were 17 of 20 participants, may have affected the perceptions reported by participants.

Also, the sample was not representative and was skewed toward participants in the supervisory and management ranks; therefore, responses may not present an entirely accurate picture of the degree to which transformational leadership has been incorporated into the organizational culture. Only four participants were from the frontline employee ranks, yet their perceptions accounted for the majority of the refutation of the presence of transformational leadership.

Limitation 3

A limitation existed in the geographic region of the study. The organization and the participants were located in a four-county area in southern Indiana, making it difficult to determine whether regional characteristics or qualities existed or were emergent in this study.

Limitation 4

A final study limitation, and one that is inherent in qualitative research, is the

researcher's ability to remain objective throughout the data collection and analysis process. One of the potential biases was that the researcher had been previously employed by the organization under study.

Suggestions for Future Research

Further research is recommended to establish a more defined relationship between transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness in nonprofit organizations and, more specifically, Community Action Agencies. More study is required to examine the individual effects of the four elements of transformational leadership on organizational performance.

The research conducted provides a foundation for additional, more detailed research. As this study was a case study of a single organization, it is recommended that this study be replicated using a representative sample from similar organizations. This could minimize the impact of location on participant responses and more clearly identify if there are significant variations in responses based on geographical area. Additionally, a larger and more representative sample could improve the validity of the resulting data analysis methods. Larger sample sizes could enable researchers to use more focused data collection methods, reduce the likelihood of bias, and improve the confidence in how data is interpreted and findings are determined. It could also provide a clearer picture of the comprehensiveness of transformational leadership across all levels of the organization.

This study has enhanced learning in the field of transformational leadership; however, additional research could further expand development in this area. This study

highlighted the need for more qualitative and quantitative research on the generalizability of transformational leadership research in community-based organizations, the impact of economic conditions on nonprofit employees' commitment, and the demographic and behavioral differences between nonprofit employees and those of for-profit organizations and how these may impact leadership style, organizational culture, employee engagement, commitment, and performance.

Future studies might expand transformational leadership theory, provide further practical approaches to identify how organizations might evaluate leadership and implement strategies for more effective leadership, and examine how community-based organization leaders might create and sustain a more transformational organizational culture in community action and nonprofit environments.

Conclusion

From the results of this study, and the previous research in the field, it is clear that transformational leadership can be a major cultural factor of a highly effective organization. This may be especially true in nonprofit organizations such as Community Action Agencies. Whether transformational leadership creates, evolves from, or even *is* the organizational culture is a question still unanswered in the literature; even an agreement on a simple definition of organizational culture is lacking among experts. Is culture something an organization *is*, *has*, or *does*? Is culture *created* by the organization, or *is it* the organization? Do leaders create culture, or vice-versa? Schein (1990), a noted expert in the field, frankly stated that “little agreement on what the concept does and should mean, how it should be observed and measured, how it relates to more traditional

industrial and organizational psychology theories, and how it should be used in our efforts to help organizations” (p.109). Allaire and Firsirotu (1984) identified “diverse and complex theories of culture...characterized by assumptions, slants, and emphases” (p. 195). Ouchi and Wilkins (1985) noted that the study of organizational culture amalgamates several points of view, and that there is no single dominant view. However, Straub, Loch, Evaristo, Karahanna, and Strite, (2002) refer to Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s (1952) review of cultural definitions, which identified over 160 different definitions for the concept of culture. According to Franks (1989), the cultures actually found in an organization are neither monolithic nor static; there is typically more than one culture in an organization at any given time, and the mix of cultures may change with time or the environment.

The myriad of basic definitions, multiple epistemological perspectives, and even the lack of certainty as to whether culture or leadership constitutes the independent variable in organizational theory suggest further research is needed to better the body of knowledge on the subject. Nearly all of the relevant literature on the topic has been published in the last 25 years. Shafritz and Ott (2001) pointed out that the early works assumed that organizational cultures existed and focused on the issues related to the match between the culture and the individual; not until later did scholars begin to address how cultures are created and the relationships between culture and leadership or culture and strategic planning.

It is hoped that this study may provide further insight as to how leaders might initiate changes to proactively develop a transformational leadership culture and add to

the discussion of whether transformational leadership is an independent or dependent variable in relation to organizational culture.

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APPENDIX. INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Instructions

Good morning (afternoon). My name is Steve. Thank you for participating in my study; I really appreciate your help.

In this interview I will ask you about your experiences as an employee of [the agency]. The purpose is to get your perceptions of your experiences here. There are no right or wrong answers. I want you to feel comfortable with saying what you really think and how you really feel. I want to remind you that your responses are strictly confidential, and I cannot and will not attribute any responses. I will be compiling a report which will contain all participants' comments without any references to who made any specific comments.

If you don't mind, I will be taping our conversation. This is only for me to make sure I get all the details and still have an attentive conversation with you. Again, I assure you that all your comments will remain confidential. If you would, please sign this consent form to allow me to tape our conversation.

During the interview, you may take breaks as needed—if you want to take a break, please let me know and we'll stop the interview.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions

General information:

1. How long have you been at the Agency?
2. What is your job title?
3. What are your perceptions of “transformational leadership”?
4. What changes have you observed during your employment at the Agency?

Idealized Influence:

5. How would you describe your supervisor/manager?
6. Is it easy for you to communicate with your supervisor/manager?

7. Are you asked for your input or opinion when decisions are made?
8. What motivates you to initiate change?

Inspirational Motivation:

9. Do you consider the Agency a “highly effective organization”? Why or why not? If yes, what factors contribute to this success?
10. What is the Agency’s reputation in the community?
11. Does a common vision and team spirit exist in the Agency?
12. Do you have a clear understanding of your responsibilities?

Intellectual Stimulation:

13. How would you describe your working relationships?
14. Are you confident in your ability to make decisions?
15. Does your supervisor/manager trust you to make decisions?
16. Is it easy for you to admit mistakes? What happens when you do?
17. Are you encouraged to offer new ideas?
18. Is it easy for you to question the current policies or procedures?

Individualized Consideration:

19. How would you describe your job satisfaction?
20. Does your supervisor/manager have a genuine interest in your success?
21. Are you encouraged to seek additional responsibility?

Conclusion

That concludes the interview. If you wish to review and approve the transcript when it is completed, let me know and I will arrange this. Thank you again for agreeing to participate!