

2015

# Expectations of Job Satisfaction Based on Three Common Leadership Styles

Ethel Chiles  
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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Ethel Chiles

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Walden University  
2015

Abstract

Expectations of Job Satisfaction Based on Three Common Leadership Styles

by

Ethel Chiles

MBA, Capella University, 2008

BS, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, 1997

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Leadership and Organizational Change

Walden University

May 2015

## Abstract

Some leadership styles can produce job dissatisfaction, resulting in labor turnover and financial loss to organizations. Despite these known consequences, there is a lack of research on the perceptions of leadership styles on job satisfaction for hourly wageworkers. This phenomenological study was used to understand the experiences of non-management employees on how management leadership styles affected their job satisfaction. Bass's leadership theory, Herzberg's dual factor theory, and Maslow's hierarchy of needs guided this study. The primary research questions were used to explore themes in leadership styles affecting selected North Carolina employees in the workplace. Data collection included in-depth interviews with 25 hourly wageworkers who completed at least one annual performance discussion with their first-line supervisor. Utilizing Moustakas' modified van Kaam method of data analysis, 4 primary themes emerged: (a) perceptions of 3 leadership styles, (b) insights on job satisfaction, (c) observations of leader behaviors, and (d) leadership agility. The 4 primary themes and 18 subthemes indicated that participants perceived more positive experiences with transformational leaders than they did with transactional or laissez-faire leaders. The findings are important for first-line supervisors in the fields of business, finance, and education to develop strategies that may maximize positive experiences with leadership styles that will create and improve overall job satisfaction. Social change implications, given the findings, include supervisors' increased awareness of how the 3 leadership styles could provide more favorable experiences for hourly wageworkers.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Mary Beatrice Foster, and my father, the late Rev. Willie C. Foster, who instilled the tenacity and determination in me to pursue such an endeavor and to my family who continuously encouraged me during my doctoral journey. I am grateful for all the support and understanding from my brothers and sisters because I missed many family events. I dedicate this dissertation to my son, Carlton Lamar Chiles, who provided inspiration when times were tough continuously reminding me that I had to finish what I started. I acknowledge my wonderful and bright grandson, Gabriel Lee Chiles, who was an inspiration to me through loving his grandma. I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Alec Neal, who managed the home and provided me with the space, freedom, and encouragement to complete this journey. I love you all and thank you for helping me to fulfill my dream.

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I would first like to thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for providing me with the strength and help to stay on this journey until I successfully completed the goal. I would like to acknowledge the guidance and encouragement from Dr. Carol Wells who continuously reminded me that I could do this, despite the many obstacles and challenges I faced. I would like to thank Dr. Diane Stottlemeyer who became a committee member after the journey began but became a motivator for me also. Both of you compelled me to focus on my progress until I accomplished my goal.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Building an effective relationship between a supervisor and subordinate employees requires a clear understanding of the influence of leadership styles on job satisfaction. Researchers have studied leadership styles and job satisfaction for centuries and have found a positive relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction (Bhatti, Maitlo, Shaikh, Hashmi, & Shaikh, 2012; Farah & Halawi, 2010; Long & Thean, 2011; Riaz & Haider, 2010; Wells & Peachey, 2011; Wu, 2009). Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, and Frey (2013), Chung-Kai and Chia-Hung (2009), and Rowold and Rohmann (2009) focused research efforts on the influence of leadership styles and employees' performance. However, the studies did not comprehensively address two perspectives of three common leadership styles related to employee job satisfaction for subordinate employees.

The two aspects are: (a) the perceptions of employees and how leadership styles and leader behaviors of first line supervisors affect job satisfaction, and (b) the different perceptions of job satisfaction based on supervisor actions. Through the current qualitative phenomenological study, I explored the viewpoints of subordinate human resources employees' work experiences and how transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles best meet expectations of job satisfaction.

Subordinate employees report to a first level supervisor. For purposes of the present study, I used first level supervisor and front line supervisor interchangeably when referencing the reporting structure for participants. In addition, nonmanagement employees are hourly wage employees and I used both terms interchangeably when

referring to the respondents involved in the research. Definitions for each of the terms are in the operational definition section of the chapter.

Front line supervisors are in a position to influence employees' performance and job satisfaction, and thus the financial performance of the organization (Harms & Crede, 2010). Because influencing performance is important to organization success, competent front line supervisors require high levels of positive influence and confidence (Hannah & Woolfolk, 2009; Harms & Crede, 2010). In addition, human resource executives must prepare supervisors with effective leadership skills designed to manage knowledge-based employees, retain talented workers, promote job satisfaction, and minimize employee turnover (Gruman & Saks, 2011).

Turnover affects the bottom line of an organization. When turnover occurred, and employees left the company because of low job satisfaction, replacing the employees was very costly to organizations. For instance, while recruitment and training costs varied by position, the cost of hiring a new staff member ranged from one and a half to three times the individual's salary (Fuller, 2013). As such, retention of human capital is essential to sustainability of organizations.

Effective leadership skills of supervisors help to retain human capital, establish continued relationships with customers to ensure satisfaction, and generate income. The need to increase company profits created a highly competitive industry (Fuller, 2013). Thus, understanding how leadership styles affect job satisfaction is important; only satisfied workers ensured that the customers are satisfied, thus contributing to revenue



generation (Chi & Gursoy, 2009). The results indicated that managers' leadership styles are often interrelated, and as such, just as important as the bottom line.

The three leadership styles included in the study investigation have unique characteristics. According to Bennett (2009), transformational leaders possess charisma, confidence, and ethics, to influence followers, which motivates identification with leaders. The leaders then promote employees to think independently and to question traditional beliefs. Transactional leaders improve workers' satisfaction by promoting individual strengths (Bennett, 2009). However, if there is failure to obtain desired results, transactional leaders usually penalize suboptimal performance (Long & Thean, 2011). In comparison to transactional and transformational leaders, laissez-faire leaders allow followers to make decisions and provide minimal feedback (Bennett, 2009).

Awareness of the leadership style best suited to meets employees' expectations of job satisfaction has significant implications for positive social change. Informing organizational executives, supervisors, and employees of potential influences of leadership styles provides a foundation for planning effective leadership training. Chi and Gursoy (2009) determined that organizational leaders benefit from a greater understanding of employees' perceptions of how different leadership styles affect job satisfaction. As a result, the positive influences of leadership styles could reduce employee dissatisfaction and turnover.

Subsequent sections include discussion on the background of the study, the problem statement, and the purpose of the investigation. Following these sections, I include the research questions, as well as the conceptual framework adopted to achieve

the purpose of the study. In addition, I discuss the nature of the study, operational definitions, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of the significance of the study and the implications for social change.

### **Background of the Problem**

There is a relationship between low job satisfaction and turnover (Gioia & Catalano, 2011). Researchers have argued that certain leadership styles and behaviors result in low job satisfaction, causing high employee turnover (Gioia & Catalano, 2011; Yang, Wan, & Fu, 2011). The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014) indicated that 2.4 million employees quit jobs during 2014. Low job satisfaction has been the leading cause of employee turnover (Delobelle et al., 2011; Tsai & Wu, 2010).

According to Gioia and Catalano (2011), employees who feel unappreciated by managers and are dissatisfied with the leadership style tend to report low levels of job satisfaction, resulting in resignations. Managers who fail to realize the influence of leadership styles on job satisfaction of employees contribute to low job satisfaction. The failure by managers may lead to high employee turnover in the workplace, and decrease employee production, ultimately resulting in business failure (Yang et al., 2011).

Many scholars have focused on job satisfaction and leadership styles in the workplace and determined a link between leadership styles and job satisfaction (Farah & Halawi, 2010; Larson & Vinberg, 2010; Wells & Peachey, 2011; Wu, 2009).

Additionally, researchers have established a relationship between job satisfaction and leadership styles from the managers' perspectives (Bhatti et al., 2012; Long & Thean, 2011; Riaz & Haider, 2010). However in the research process of my literature review, I

did not find qualitative research that captured subordinate employees' workplace experiences with job satisfaction and leadership styles within the human resources field. Human resource employees are in positions to provide information on leadership styles practiced in companies and the subsequent influence on staff performance (Dominguez, 2011).

Conducting the present study provides benefits to different businesses. In the literature review I found multiple studies on the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction in different industries (Bennett, 2009; Bhatti et al., 2012; Wang & Howell, 2010). Wang and Howell conducted research that included supervisors from a multi-industry company and concluded that all leaders, regardless of industry, should remain flexible when motivating individuals and teams.

I addressed the gap in literature regarding the omission of hourly wageworkers' perceptions on leadership styles and job satisfaction. In a 2009 quantitative study, Bennett examined leadership styles preferred by subordinates and focused on transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles in the Information Technology (IT) field. Bennett utilized leadership styles as defined by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), and found that, of the three methods, the strongest predictor of additional effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction was transformational leadership. In 2012, Bhatti et al. conducted a quantitative study in private and public schools with randomly selected teachers ( $N = 205$ ), and found that the freedom to share and exchange views was important to job satisfaction.

Scholars determined that particular leadership styles have a positive effect on job satisfaction, helping to improve employees' job attitudes (Birasnav, Rangnekar, & Dalpati, 2011; Farah & Halawi, 2010; Harms & Crede, 2010; Lam & O'Higgins, 2010; Weinberger, 2009). Given the established relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction, organizational leaders will achieve a greater understanding of how employees perceive the importance of different leadership styles (Chi & Gursoy, 2009). Riaz and Haider (2010) identified with Chi and Gursoy's (2009) principle. Riaz and Haider (2010) posited that an enhanced understanding of how leadership styles affect job satisfaction helps when increasing employee job satisfaction, retaining employees, and reducing turnover intention. The current study provides supervisors with an enhanced understanding of the influence of leadership styles on job satisfaction for hourly paid employees.

### **Problem Statement**

Labor turnover produces significant tangible dollar cost, loss of skill sets, inefficiency, and high replacement costs (Chikwe, 2009). Organizations lost over \$200 million in tangible and intangible costs arising from labor turnover (Chikwe, 2009; Davidson, Timo, & Wang, 2010). A few of the hygiene factors that contributed to labor turnover were poor job satisfaction, corrosive supervision and leadership, and a lack of career development (Davidson, et al., 2010).

Research findings from several studies show that low job satisfaction is the leading cause of employee turnover (Delobelle, et al., 2011; Tsai & Wu, 2010). Olasupo (2011) agreed and posited that job satisfaction is an important factor in organizations and

that different leadership styles influence job satisfaction in different ways. Olasupo posited that employees demonstrate higher levels of job satisfaction when managers reflect high levels of consideration and supportive leadership behavior.

The general business problem is that there remains a lack of understanding of how job dissatisfaction, based on leadership styles, leads to high employee turnover, decreased employee production, and company failure (Yang et al., 2011). The specific business problem is that organizational leaders are unaware that front line supervisors do not understand the effect of leadership styles on subordinate employees' job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2010). In this study, I address the fact that previous qualitative studies do not include the perspectives of hourly paid employees on leadership and job satisfaction.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of conducting the current qualitative phenomenological study was to understand whether leadership styles such as transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire met employees' job satisfaction expectations. The current qualitative exploration is particularly relevant at a time when baby boomers are nearing retirement age. Thus, a new generation of workers is entering the workforce.

Additionally, the goal for conducting the current study is to contribute to existing literature on leadership styles by: (a) revealing the perspectives of the staff, and (b) establishing a guide for first level supervisors to maximize job satisfaction. Given the value of employees to organizations, a greater understanding of the preference for leadership styles transpired. The current research included a homogeneous purposive sampling method when interviewing 25 employees who participated in semistructured,

and face-to-face interviews. The homogeneous sampling method provided a guide when describing the experience of subgroups of participants who shared common characteristics.

I probed the lived experiences of subordinate employees who had various amounts of work experiences within organizations, were of various ages, and received several performance reviews from a supervisor. Due to continuous conflict with schedules preventing face-to-face discussions, I utilized the telephone to complete two interviews. Four educational institutions in the state of North Carolina comprised the participant population.

### **Nature of the Study**

The goal of conducting the current study was to explore lived experiences of employees; therefore, utilizing the quantitative methodology did not provide the required benefit. Quantitative studies are more appropriate when forming a relationship between variables, implementing statistical analyses, and studying populations dispersed over large geographical areas. The current study methodology did not include any of the aforementioned techniques for exploring the lived experiences of workers.

A phenomenological approach entails the examination of several participants and includes examining a psychological concept in a manner to understand the true nature of the experience (Creswell, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). The psychological concept relates to a phenomenon or appearances of the meaning things have in an experience. Conducting the current research allowed observing participants' sense of real life experiences while

reporting to supervisors. Supervisors then exhibited particular leadership styles in response, which influence employees' job satisfaction.

The study included data collection through semistructured interviews of 25 human resource employees. The additional documentation used in the subsequent analyses included field and journal notes. As noted by Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (2009), a phenomenological reflection is retrospective in nature, in that the concept allows capturing and describing people's experience, perception, judgment, and remembrance. Furthermore, Connelly (2010) recommended that participants should share a direct personal account of an experience, as lived. For example, Jaromahum and Fowler (2010) conducted a phenomenological study to understand the experience of what it is like for a patient to eat for the first time after an esophagectomy.

The phenomenological approach allows for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Accordingly, I selected the phenomenological method as I explored behaviors and the reasons behind the behaviors, through lived experiences. Utilizing semistructured individual interviews was the best method to allow participants to share personal experiences of the phenomenon because I had the opportunity to follow up with probing questions. Data analysis will follow the process detailed in a modification of the Van Kaam method (Moustakas, 1994) consisting of seven steps.

The guiding questions of the interviews helped to probe into the participants' real-life experiences with transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. After conducting and transcribing interviews, I used the NVivo 10 software to capture,

organize, and analyze data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). The Institutional Review Board approved the study design before commencing data collection.

### **Research Questions**

The primary research questions were:

1. How do the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles of first level managers influence job satisfaction for nonmanagement employees?

Subquestion: What are some leader characteristics that positively influence job satisfaction?

2. How do employees perceive the differences in job satisfaction, based on transformational, laissez-faire, or transactional leadership styles?

Subquestion: How do supervisor actions influence job satisfaction?

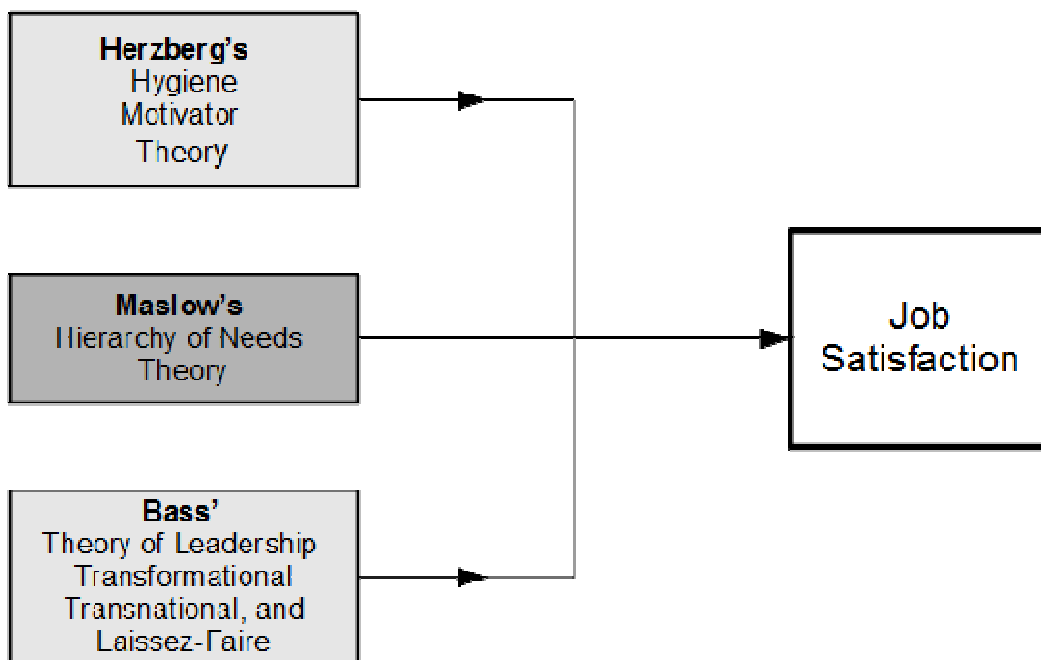
I designed the interview questions to collect information from the respondents on whether the three common leadership styles satisfied the expectations of job satisfaction. The semistructured interview questions allowed participants to share responses freely, without restrictions, or coercion, allowing for follow-up questions when appropriate. A copy of the questionnaire is in Appendix A.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for the investigation allowed focus on employee perceptions related to leadership styles and job satisfaction. According to Creswell (2009), a well-designed conceptual framework effectively guides the research. The framework provides a lens to the concepts, assumptions, research problem, purpose, theories, and structuring of the literature review (Creswell, 2009).



The conceptual framework for the study combined Herzberg, Mausner, and Syndermann's (1959) dual factor theory of motivation, Bass's (2009) theory of leadership, and Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory, due to the importance to the phenomenon of leadership and job satisfaction (Figure 1). According to Herzberg et al. (1959), two primary needs drive humans—hygiene and motivation. Herzberg identified hygiene factors, extrinsic to the job, as working conditions, company policies, and salary and relations with coworkers (Fisher, 2009; Furnham, Eracleous, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2009).



*Figure 1.* Conceptual Framework of the Current Research.

Leaders, who incorporate intrinsic motivators, encourage employees to achieve performance goals (Furnham et al., 2009). Researchers have argued that Herzberg et al. (1959) identified motivators intrinsic to the job such as achievement, development,

responsibility, and recognition (Fisher, 2009; Furnham et al., 2009; Javed & Javed, 2013). Herzberg et al.'s dual factor theory of motivation suggests that job satisfaction consists of two separate dimensions, which are satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

Consequently, utilizing Herzberg et al.'s theory is relevant to the present inquiry because the theory is related to employee motivation as well as satisfiers and dissatisfiers pertaining to job satisfaction. In fact, Yang, et al. (2011) concluded that individual job satisfaction is an antecedent of employee turnover, which increases with a rise in job dissatisfaction.

As evidenced in the literature review, leadership styles affect job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The theory of leadership includes transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles (Bass, 2009; Burns, 1978). The theory of leadership relates to a social control process that encourages leaders to inspire the voluntary participation of employees to reach organization goals. The influence promotes activities of individuals or groups to achieve goals in a given situation (Bass, 2009).

The theory by Burns (1978) and Bass (2009) supported the idea that transformational leaders have an effect on employee motivation and job satisfaction. For instance, transformational leaders look for potential motives in the followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engage the full person of the follower. Additionally, transformational leaders establish a clear vision and mission, encourage self-esteem, and gain trust and respect through charisma (Bass, 2009; Bhatti et al., 2012; Herman & Warren, 2014).

In contrast, transactional leaders focus on completion and allocation of tasks and the success or failure of performance, which brings corresponding rewards or penalties (Long & Thean, 2011). Specifically, when the followers fail to perform according to the will and direction of the transactional leaders, corrective actions occur (Riaz & Haider, 2010). Conversely, rewards follow when workers when correctly completing tasks. Transactional leaders focus on a system of rewards and incentives and assume that these rewards will motivate people.

In comparison to transformational and transactional leadership, laissez-faire supervisors employ a different focus for guiding employees. Laissez-faire leaders are willing to allow followers or employees to make decisions or complete a task without guidance or instruction (Furtner, Baldegger, & Rauthmann, 2012; Robbins, Decenzo, & Coulter, 2010). While the laissez-faire approach sometimes disrupts the workflow due to unaddressed but important issues, followers still contribute to the decision-making process.

Participation in decision-making increases job satisfaction and develops people skills (Bhatti et al., 2012). Laissez-faire leadership may be appropriate for employees who prefer complete autonomy to perform responsibilities, are highly skilled, and capable of working independently (Robbins et al., 2010). Front line supervisors who practice the laissez-faire style engage with team members for consultation and feedback, when needed.

Bass's (2009) theory of leadership was relevant to the current research because contemporary literature on leadership focused mainly on transformational and

transactional leadership styles (Long & Thean, 2011; Riaz & Haider, 2010). Although transactional and laissez-faire managers lead differently from transformational leaders, each approach has the potential to affect job satisfaction positively (Long & Thean, 2011). Bennett (2009) disagreed with the conclusion of Long and Thean (2011).

Bennett's (2009) exploration focused on IT professionals and argued that transactional leadership predicts extra effort and effectiveness, but not satisfaction. Additionally, Bennett (2009) concluded that the laissez-faire approach has the opposite effect of transactional leadership. When leaders practice the laissez-faire leadership style, fewer employees give the extra effort to accomplish the job, and leaders become less effective to followers. The results indicated that a lack of employees' extra effort to perform role responsibilities has negative influences on motivation because of unattended needs.

Maslow (1970) proposed the well-known theory of motivation, positing that humans have five primary classes of needs, fulfilled progressively. The five classes of needs are physiological, security, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. According to Maslow (1970), the satisfaction of the basic needs propels movement up the hierarchy, aiming to reach self-actualization. Some subsequent studies have shown that satisfaction of physiological security, belongingness, and esteem needs facilitate self-actualization (Duncan & Blugis, 2011; Yang et al., 2011). Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs is another classical theory that focuses on understanding the factors that motivate others and how to structure work accordingly. Based on these characteristics, I deemed

Maslow's theory as appropriate to include in the current research since Maslow proposed two levels of esteem, one derived from self, and one from others.

The two-factor theory of Herzberg et al. (1959) and Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs helped to explain that money is not a major motivating factor for excellent performance, but rather improving self-esteem. Thus, when managers design company structures and develop the working environment, leadership theories that promote self-esteem require increased attention. In Chapter 2 is a detailed analysis of the literature that also incorporates the conceptual framework of the current study.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Dissatisfiers*: Basic requirements that cause dissatisfaction if not fulfilled, but do not have an impact on satisfaction if fulfilled (Mossel & Jansen, 2010). Safety and physiological dissatisfiers are part of the needs theory, (Glassman, Glassman, Champagne, & Zugelder, 2010).

*Dual-factor theory*: Dimension of the motivation theory that explains hygiene and motivator factors inspire humans. Hygiene factors relate to wages, quality of supervision, working conditions, and job security. Motivator factors consist of challenging work, personal growth, and recognition (Maia, 2010).

*Emotional labor*: Job characteristic involving the management of feelings intended to display facial and bodily emotions publicly. "It refers to the extent to which an employee is required to present in his or her job an appropriate emotion in order to perform the job efficiently" (Liu, Liu, & Zeng, 2011, pp. 283–284).

*First level supervisors:* First level of management responsible for individualized instruction and guidance of hourly wage workers. The professionals are responsible for achieving performance expectations used interchangeably with front line supervisor, all based on the organizational structure of leadership in the organization (Liu & Batt, 2010).

*Followers:* People who take a participative role and are willingly supportive of the teachings or views of a leader. The follower consciously works towards goals aligned with the leadership or the organization (Baker, Mathis, & Stites-Doe, 2011).

*Front line supervisors:* First level of management responsible for individualized instruction and guidance of hourly wage workers for achieving performance expectations. The term used interchangeably with first level supervisor bases on the organizational structure of leadership in the organization (Liu & Batt, 2010).

*Hygiene factors:* Extrinsic components of a job design that contribute to employee dissatisfaction when met. Examples of hygiene factors are supervision, working conditions, company policies, salary, and relationships with coworkers (Herzberg et al., 1959).

*Hourly wage employees:* Employees who are paid at an hourly rate, subject to pay for overtime beyond 40 hours per week. The term is sometimes associated and used interchangeably with nonmanagement employees (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012).

*Job satisfaction:* An employee's attitudes toward a job, which pertains to an employee's overall evaluation of the entire job (Ahmad, 2009; Robbins et al., 2010). Job satisfaction thus includes work on current responsibilities, present pay, opportunities for

promotion, supervision, people at work, and the work performed by workers (Mancheno-Smoak, Endres, Polak, & Athanasaw, 2009).

*Laissez-faire leadership*: A passive type of leadership style that generally provides employees with complete freedom to make decisions or complete tasks, as deemed necessary and appropriate (Robbins et al., 2010).

*Leadership*: The behavior of leaders who are influential in shaping the behavior and value others to attain organizational goals (Northouse, 2013).

*Leadership style*: The method a leader uses when directing, mentoring, supervising, and overseeing assigned responsibilities of subordinates within an organization (Caruthers, 2011).

*Nonmanagement employees*: Employees paid hourly and subjected to overtime pay beyond 40 hours worked per week (Fine & Gordon, 2010).

*Organizational climate*: Includes shared perceptions of employees about their work environment (Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013).

*Phenomenology*: An approach in which the researcher strives to understand the cognitive subjective perspective of the person who experiences a phenomenon and the subsequent affect the perspective has on the person's lived experience (Flood, 2010).

*Satisfiers*: Motivators that encourage performance and provide satisfaction through achievement and recognition (Herzberg et al., 1959). According to the needs theory, the key satisfiers are self-actualization, esteem, and belonging (Glassman et al., 2010).

*Self-leadership*: The process of influencing one's thoughts and behaviors through a skill dimension consisting of a cognitive, affective, and motivational-volitional process. Leading involves goal setting, generation of intrinsic motivation, and visualizing successful performance (Furtner et al., 2012; Stewart, Courtright, & Manz, 2011).

*Subordinate*: The employee who reports to the supervisor in a supervisor-employee working relationship (Riaz & Haider, 2010).

*Transactional leadership*: A leadership style based on contingent reward and punishment behavior. Supervisors positively reward individuals with praise or recognition when performing at or above expectations. Similarly, penalties in the form of correction, criticism, or other forms of punishment occur when individuals perform below expectations (Riaz & Haider, 2010).

*Transformational leadership*: A leadership style adopted by managers that expands and elevates employees' interests, encourages them, focuses on the good of the organization, and looks beyond self-interest (Bass, 2009). The leadership style promotes inspiration, charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

### **Assumptions, Delimitations, and Limitations**

#### **Assumptions**

The first assumption pertaining to this study was that human resource employees understood the scope and parameters within the study's prescribed boundaries.

Additionally, all participants worked as subordinate employees and provided honest answers to the interview questions. Further, respondents had knowledge of the front line supervisors' styles and were able to answer all interview questions. Respondents



understood the meaning of the job satisfaction concept and accurately provided responses related to the job.

### **Delimitations**

All individuals selected for participation worked for educational institutions in the state of North Carolina. The study results based on the sample size, geographic region, and the specific interest in the human resource employees were not generalized or conductive to other industries. Potential transferability could occur if the readers of the thesis choose to utilize the findings and apply them to other situations.

### **Limitations**

Limitations highlight possible weaknesses of the research (Creswell, 2009). The phenomenology is an inductive approach and does not prove a hypothesis as right or wrong, thereby allowing the opportunity for researcher bias. Utilizing the interview questions as the coding guide helps to reduce such bias and increase the likelihood of completing the study.

### **Significance of the Study**

Utilizing the phenomenological method determines the leadership style that, based on the employees' experiences, is preferred in the human resources work environments. The exploration adds to the scholarly literature with a focus on the perceptions of employees. In the current study, the participants had opportunities to share work experiences related to supervisors' leadership styles. The results of the present investigation provided another viewpoint for implementing leadership practices.

The findings benefit front line supervisors with a greater understanding of the importance of effective leadership and the effect of the leadership on employees' job satisfaction. In a competitive environment, increasing the focus on sustainability and the financial performance of the organization is easy for management (Smith & Sharicz, 2011). Instead, organizational executives should make certain that first level supervisors are utilizing the most effective leadership style to produce the highest level of job satisfaction among employees to minimize turnover.

The current study is important because the findings advance the knowledge of organizational leadership for several reasons. First, understanding employees' expectations of job satisfaction reveals whether common leadership styles meet employee's expectations. The information provides benefit to organizational managers when developing policies and approaches that increase the effectiveness of first level supervisors; it reduces employee job dissatisfaction and improves job satisfaction.

Second, recognizing the underlying causes of job satisfaction assist supervisors in improving employees' quality of work life and developing strategies that improve employee retention (Yang et al., 2011). Third, as the focus of the current study is on the workers' experiences, rather than leaders' viewpoints, the employees' perspectives are more important to the current research. Consequently, understanding employees' insights increase employees' identification with the organization and improve the quality of work life (Gardner, Wright, & Moynihan, 2011). Fourth, some managers incorrectly assume that all employees prefer the transformational leadership style because of its empowering and motivating nature.

A transformational leader capable of empowering, promoting, and encouraging employees always looks for potential motives in the followers (Bass, 2009; Mancheno-Smoak et al., 2009). As empirical evidence has suggested, the preference of a leadership style depends on the type work environment along with the skills and characteristics of the employees (Mancheno-Smoak et al., 2009). Thus, the results reported here benefit organizational leaders when identifying the leadership style best suited for an organization, and accordingly develop policies to increase job satisfaction and minimize turnover.

### **Social Change**

There is an association between job satisfaction and an organization's productivity, quality performance, and positive employee morale (Dusterhoff, Cunningham, & MacGregor, 2014). Comparatively, employee job dissatisfaction leads to limited employee retention, reduced employee production, and ultimately causes company failure (Eberly, Holtom, Lee, & Mitchell, 2009).

The positive social change implications of this research include increased knowledge that is useful for managers in the fields of business, finance, and education, needing direction on improving job satisfaction. Applying the findings of the current study provide long-term benefits for companies. Benefits include reducing employee turnover, improving the quality of work-life for workers, and changing the organizational culture. Furthermore, employees' benefits include a greater understanding of how particular leadership styles affect job satisfaction.

The findings of the study have implications for managerial practice. Human resource administrators have an important responsibility to train and educate supervisors to provide an organizational climate that promotes job satisfaction (Pereira & Gomes, 2012). Each leadership style, through managerial practice, affects the work environment and organizational climate.

The current study offers support for educating front line supervisors about employees' experiences with particular leadership styles. Research findings revealed the leadership style that best meets the employees' expectations of job satisfaction. For example, the information yielded by the study is particularly useful in developing training curricula and encouraging positive work relationships between first level supervisors and employees. Moreover, understanding that leadership meets an employee's expectation of job satisfaction benefits all levels of management, first level supervisors, managers, and corporate executives.

Meeting customer expectations are the goals of satisfied workers, thus positively affecting company image and profitability (Chi & Gursoy, 2009). The need to increase company profits creates highly competitive industries creating the desire to retain valued and best performing employees (Govaerts, Kyndt, Dochy, & Baert, 2011). Employee turnover is very costly and due to the resulting loss of production, company profits decline (Laureani & Antony, 2010). Reduced contributions to neighborhood programs, youth community outreach, and community involvement in the business sector, negatively affecting social contributions, can occur when the earnings of companies decrease.

Loss of production due to employee turnover also leads to business failure, resulting in a direct impact on the lives of individual citizens. A study conducted by Skudiene and Auruskeviciene (2012) revealed that internal and external corporate social responsibility affects internal employee motivation. A lack of high performance of employees negatively affects social responsibilities of corporations. The effect is particularly important in the times of economic downturns, characterized by unprecedented challenges to remain competitive (Busic, Robinson, & Ramburuth, 2010).

The results of the study further benefit corporate executives because the knowledge obtained from the findings becomes beneficial when training first level supervisors. The knowledge helps when developing effective leadership skills designed to manage knowledge-based employees, retain talented workers, and promote job satisfaction (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Additionally, the findings from the current investigation provide benefits to human resource administrators. Administrators are better able to train supervisors to increase job satisfaction and potentially create a productive environment for employees, the company, and the wider communities.

### **Summary and Transition**

Chapter 1 included an introduction and establishment of the study background, problem statement, purpose, nature, and research questions. In addition, discussions include the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study. A section on the implications of social change concluded the chapter. Chapter 2 includes a review of the literature related to job satisfaction and leadership styles.

A detailed discussion on the methodology and data collection process associated with the study comprises Chapter 3. The findings of the investigation are included in Chapter 4 and information on the setting such as: demographics, data collection process, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness are also presented. Chapter 5 encompasses a discussion and interpretation of the findings, the limitations of the current research, followed by recommendations for future studies, implications of the present findings for positive social change, and the conclusions.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

In Chapter 2 is a summary of discussions on research findings that provide more attention to the importance of leadership styles. Moreover, I present the lack of focus on the needs and expectancies of subordinate employees in the literature. In addition, I discuss current and past studies on leadership and job satisfaction including populations from private and public organizations.

In the first section of the current chapter, I address the problem and the purpose statements, the conceptual framework, and include an in-depth discussion on leadership. In the second section of the current chapter, I focus on the themes of past and current studies on leadership and job satisfaction, leadership associated with management, followership, and human resources. Finally, I conclude the chapter with attention to the gap in the literature and provide a summary of the literature review.

The result of the literature review established a link between job dissatisfaction and turnover (Yang et al., 2011). Kim et al. (2010) and Yang et al. (2011) concluded that individual job satisfaction is an antecedent of employee turnover. Reported results by Samuel and Chipunza (2009) were consistent with Kim et al. (2010) and Yang et al. (2011). According to Samuel and Chipunza (2009), supervisors have a responsibility for leading discontented and disconnected employees. Some leaders may not understand how certain leadership styles affect low job satisfaction and increased employee turnover.

The literature review (Bhatti et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2010; Long & Thean, 2011; Riaz & Haider, 2010; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Yang et al., 2011) firmly establishes a positive relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction. Despite the

conclusions, extant studies in the field have disregarded the hourly wage employees' experiences with job satisfaction and leadership styles. Researchers (Farah & Halawi, 2010; Wells & Peachey, 2011; Wu, 2009) do not agree on the leadership style that most positively influences job satisfaction, based on the perceptions of nonmanagement employees. Instead, several studies included the perspectives of leaders, supervisors, and managers (Bhatti et al., 2012; Long & Thean, 2011; Riaz & Haider, 2010).

The literature review did not identify any current phenomenological research studies on hourly wagers' discussions of real life experiences with first level supervisors as related to leadership style and job satisfaction. Specifically, there was no available research that captured employees' lived experiences on job satisfaction and leadership styles within the human resources field. In fact, Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) believed that one of the most interesting omissions in both theory and research on leadership is the absence of studies on followership with leadership.

### **Literature Review Search Strategies**

I used the following online research databases to search for applicable literature to conduct the review: ProQuest Central, Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, ABI/INFORM Complete, Emerald Management Journals, Thoreau, Business Source Direct, and Science Direct. Additionally, the literature searches included dissertations, journal articles, books, and government reports. Keywords used in the search were: *leadership styles, organizational performance, job satisfaction, transformational leadership, laissez-faire leadership, and transactional leadership. Additional keywords included Herzberg, Maslow, motivational theory, employee turnover, job satisfaction and*



*performance, turnover, phenomenology, leadership, and motivational leadership*. The literature search filters limited articles to peer-reviewed journals and professional journal articles published since 2009.

The literature review included historical references that provided foundational theories from noted authors on motivation, leadership, and hierarchy of needs. Specifically, theoretical foundations reviews included job satisfaction, leadership theories, and motivational theories. Theories relative to the current study included Herzberg's et al. (1959) dual factor theory of motivation, Bass's (2009) theory of leadership, and Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs. Additionally, discussions on Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory of intrinsic motivators were relative to the study. In Table 1 is a summary of the resources utilized when conducting the current research study.

Table 1

*Literature Review Sources*

<b>Source</b>	<b>2009 and later</b>	<b>Prior to 2009</b>	<b>Total</b>
Nonpeer-reviewed or books	18	10	28
Dissertations	4	0	4
Peer-reviewed Articles	166	0	166
Total	188	10	198
Percentage of total	95%	5%	100%

### **Problem Statement and Purpose**

High voluntary terminations pose a problem for the sustainability of organizations (Kim et al., 2010; Wan & Fu, 2011). In 2014, more than two million employees quit jobs for the period ending in June 2014 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). The trade, transportation, and utility industries experienced the highest number of turnover. Labor turnover caused significant profitability losses, loss of competitive advantage, high inefficiencies, and high replacement costs (Davidson et al., 2010; O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, Lapiz, & Self, 2010). Hygiene factors that contribute to labor turnover are poor job satisfaction caused by ineffective supervision/leadership, low morale, and a lack of career development (Davidson et al., 2010).

The general business problem is that job dissatisfaction, based on leadership styles, led to high employee turnover, decreased productivity, and business failure (Gioia & Catalano, 2011; Kim et al., 2010; Yang, et al., 2011). The specific business problem is that organizational leaders do not understand the effect of leadership styles on job satisfaction for subordinate employees (Kim et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2011). In fact, low job satisfaction was a leading cause of turnover (Davidson et al., 2010; Delobelle et al., 2011). Rehman, Sharef, Mahmood, and Ishaque (2012) suggested that leadership styles played a role in the retention of employees or labor turnover, resulting in job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The reported results were consistent with other research findings, which revealed that leadership styles influence job satisfaction (Chaudhry & Husnain, 2012; Voon et al., 2011).

The purpose of conducting the current qualitative phenomenological study was to understand which leadership style, transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire, best meets employees' expectations of job satisfaction. I explored the lived experiences of employees with various years of job experience as first level supervisors, age levels, and several performance reviews with a supervisor. The current qualitative study is particularly relevant at a time when baby boomers are nearing retirement age, and a new generation of workers is entering the workforce (Hewitt, Pijanowski, Tavano, & Denny, 2012). An effective leadership style could positively influence the new workforce and achieve job satisfaction.

### **Leadership**

Bass (2009) explained that Aristotle developed the early principles of leadership, owing to the belief that leaders must set moral examples. The classical approach to leadership traces to Taylorism, a theory based on production through control (Taylor, 1911), also known as autocratic, traditional school, and conventional. In fact, research on leadership exists for more than 100 years, according to McCleskey (2014). Additionally, Tebian (2012) acknowledged that leadership has transitioned through many dimensions over time.

Although there are numerous years of research on leadership, Rehman et al. (2012) contended that leadership is still misunderstood but remains important to organizational sustainment. Moreover, Voon et al. (2011) concluded that because employees are the most valuable assets in an organization, hiring capable leaders that lead and motivate employees to achieve organizational goals remains paramount.

Organizational executives must focus on today's leaders due to unprecedented challenges faced, and due to accelerating internal, and external work environments (Hannah, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2012; Voon et al., 2011). Any organization that plans to remain profitable in the current environment cannot underestimate the importance of well-trained leaders with proven skills and capabilities.

### **Definition of Leadership**

There are many ways to define leadership and Bass (2009) postulated that in order to define leadership accurately, long and lengthy discussions are necessary. Bass (2009) defined leadership as:

The focus of group processes as a personality attribute, as the art of inducing compliance, as an exercise of influence, as a particular kind of activity, as a form of persuasion, as a power relation, as an instrument in the attainment of goals, as an effect of interaction, as a differentiated role, and as the initiation of structure.  
(p. 26)

In a 2012 study, Bhatti et al. argued differently and indicated that leadership is a social influence process. Bhatti et al. posited that leadership is the pursuit of voluntary participation of employees to achieve organizational goals through the influence of group or individual activities. Chaudhry and Husnain (2012) suggested that leadership includes the ability of a leader to influence a group toward a vision to accomplish organizational goals. Northouse (2013) recently proposed that leadership occurs in groups and requires influence as well as common goals. Additionally, Northouse posited that leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of employees to achieve a mutual goal.

Bass (2009), Northouse (2013), and Bhatti et al. (2012) all agreed that leadership is a process.

For the purpose of conducting the current study, leadership is a process where an individual is influential in shaping the behavior and values others to attain organizational goals (Northouse, 2013). Understanding the progression of leadership theories parallels the transitions of the definitions of leadership. A review of the evolution of leadership theories provides understanding and clarity on the progression of leadership.

### **The Evolution of Leadership Theories**

The study of leadership theories is essential to gaining a greater understanding of the progress and transition of leadership (Martinez, 2014; McCleskey, 2014). In a recent quantitative study, Nichols and Cottrell (2014) focused on the outcome of trait desirability as compared to the level of leadership positions in an organization. Participants consisted of 413 undergraduates comprised of 199 men, 212 women, with ages ranging from 17 to 40 years. The research findings revealed that trait desirability is different in low-level leaders than in high-level leaders. For low-level leaders, first level supervisors, interpersonal skills are more desired; whereas, the preference is for dominate traits in high-level leaders (Nichols & Cottrell, 2014).

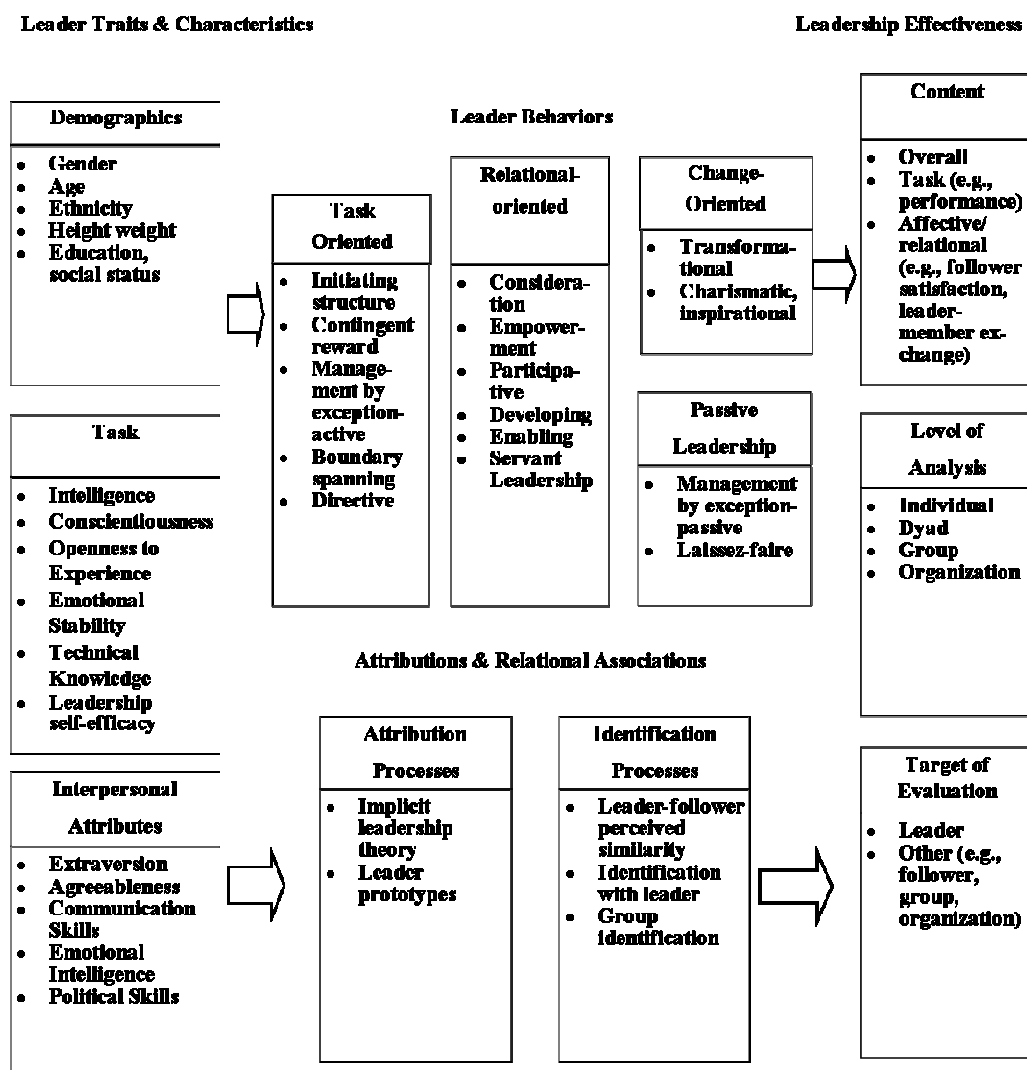
The fundamental belief is that leadership is a trait of extraordinary individuals. In fact, the concept in the Great Man Theory progressed the study of leadership traits (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011; McCleskey, 2014; Riaz & Hadler, 2010). The concept of the Great Man Theory (DeRue et al., 2011) implied that leaders are born and not made. DeRue et al. (2011) traced the transition of the trait theory to

behavioral theories. Bodla and Nawaz (2010) suggested that since early leadership researchers focused on trait theories in leadership, the interest has shifted towards the behavior of leaders. Criticisms increased on the trait paradigm, which encouraged leaders to look beyond traits of leaders to determined leadership behaviors to produce leadership effectiveness. A summary model demonstrating the interaction between characteristics and traits of leaders is in Figure 2.

Since the development of the Great Man Theory, theories that are more recent have evolved based on today's diverse, competitive, and technologically advanced work environments. Contemporary theories, since the Great Man Theory include leadership styles identified as servant, charismatic, situational, authentic, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire (Northouse, 2013). Eventually, the leadership focus transitioned to transformational leaders who encourage employees through motivation to exceed performance expectations (Hur, Van den Berg, & Wilderom, 2011; Lee, Cheng, Yeung, & Lai, 2011).

To comprehend the enhancement of the evolution of leadership theories, understanding the transition from the average typical leader to the diversity of the current leader is noteworthy. Avolio et al. (2009) contended that the outset of leadership studies most likely involved a man employed in a large private-sector organization in the United States. Today, the average leader consists of men and women, and include diverse cultures, different age ranges, and people with education that range from high school diplomas to college degrees (Lockard & Wolf, 2012). Avolio et al. (2009) conducted a literature review confirming that today's focus on leadership has evolved. The new

leadership focus includes followers, peers, supervisors, culture, and the entire spectrum of racial diversity. The inference from the new emphasis is that a focus on individual leaders will no longer suffice in today's field of leadership.



*Figure 2.* An Integrated Model of Leader Traits, Behaviors, and Effectiveness. Adopted from “Trait and behavioral theories of leadership: An integration and meta-analytic test of their relative validity” by D. S. DeRue, J.D. Nahrgang, N.E. Wellman, S.E. Humphrey (2011), *Personnel Psychology*, 64, pp. 7–52.

The characteristics of hourly wage employees have also evolved simultaneously with the change of the typical male leader. Today's employees are knowledge workers, work in virtual environments, have cultural differences, bring various backgrounds and beliefs, and perform from a global perspective (Lockard & Wolf, 2012). Organizational executives responsible for leadership training must remain focused since there are predictions of a 7% increase in managerial occupations from 2010 and 2020 (Lockard & Wolf, 2012).

As the number of managerial positions increase, subordinate employees will increase, to provide support to managers. As the growth rate occurs, there are opportunities to increase the diversity of team members, posing challenges for leaders based on culture, age groups, virtual work environments, and knowledge-based employees. Rehman et al. (2012) agreed with the argument that leaders face challenges in today's complex and dynamic business environment. Mahmood et al. (2012) also agreed and offered a solution. Mahmood et al. advocated that leaders with a transformational approach must manage the complexity through guiding followers in times of uncertainties. Similarly, transactional leaders who achieve success through rewards and praises meet employees' intrinsic needs (Mahmood et al., 2012).

When managers engage effective leadership styles for hourly wage workers, leadership approaches must adjust from managing leaders to staff members. In 2012, there were 75.3 million workers in the United States paid hourly wages, representing 59% of all wage and salary workers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012). The demographics of these workers were 44% women and 56% men. Additionally, on a racial



level, 69% were Caucasian, 10% were Black or African American, 5% Asian, and 15% were Hispanic or Latino.

The dynamics of the changing workplace, combined with the demographics of employees, demonstrates the necessity of the current phenomenological study. The importance of the findings evolves from the data collection, which provides education to equip today's leaders with knowledge on whether the three common leadership styles meet the employees' expectations of job satisfaction, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire.

### **Leadership Styles**

Based on Bass's (2009) leadership theories, I chose particular leadership styles for the literature review for comparison purposes. I chose the three leadership styles as the primary focus because the results of the literature review revealed that these are the most shared concepts to classify and study leadership styles (Bennett, 2009; Ghorbanian, Bahadori, & Nejati, 2012; Long & Thean, 2011). Focusing on the three leadership styles and the effects on job satisfaction is particularly important because leadership styles help to create organizational climate (Adeniji, 2011; McCarthy & Milner, 2012; Schein, 2010; Wang & Rode, 2010). When executive managers hold strategic planning sessions, organizational climate determined by the leadership styles is an important topic for inclusion on the agenda.

A favorable organizational climate enhances the relationship between effective leadership and employee-related outcomes inclusive of employees' feelings. A recent quantitative study by Pereira and Gomes (2012) disclosed that employees relate

organizational climate to the hiring practices of human resources. Wang and Rode (2010) agreed with the positive influence of organizational climate and further advocated that a favorable organizational climate enhance the relationship between effective leadership and employee-related outcomes. Harms and Crede's (2010) research posited that leaders who encourage employees positively affect the organizational climate.

The next section includes a discussion on three common leadership styles along with four alternative leadership styles. Based on the findings from the literature review, I did not include the four alternative approaches in the primary focus. The four alternative leadership styles—charismatic, situational, servant, and authentic—are for comparison purposes, evidence of a gap in the literature and consideration for further inquiry.

### **Transformational Leadership Style**

In 1978, Burns introduced the concept of transformational leadership comprised of charisma (idealized influence), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Northouse (2013) explained the four components of transformational leadership. First, charisma (idealized influence) is the degree of admirable ways a leader behaves to cause followers to identify with the leader.

Secondly, inspirational motivation is a leader's ability to create a sense of collective mission among followers by articulating a compelling vision. Thirdly, intellectual stimulation occurs when a manager provides followers with challenging new ideas that are supposed to stimulate rethinking of old ways of doing things. Fourth is the demonstration of individualized consideration, when a leader coaches and mentors, while

trying to assist each follower in achieving the fullest potential possible (Northouse, 2013).

Sadeghi and Pihie (2012) recognized that transformational leadership developed through combining trait, behavioral, and contingency approaches. Northouse (2013) agreed with Sadeghi and Pihie (2012) and acknowledged other theorists who contributed to the beginning of transformational leaders. The theorists included Bennis and Nanus (1985), Kouzes and Posner (1987), Burns (1978), and Bass (1990). Research findings disclosed that transformational leaders encourage followers to look beyond own self-interest. In addition, the transformational leader strives to achieve organizational goals, set clear goals, and reach for high expectations (Antonakis, 2012; Bushra, Usman, & Naveed, 2011; Money, 2011; Northouse, 2013). In addition, Northouse and Antonakis concluded that transformational leadership has more in common with transactional leadership than laissez-faire leadership.

### **Transactional Leadership Style**

Burns (1978) and Bass (1990) both contributed to a model that included transactional leadership, identified as the second part of the transformational leadership theory (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Transactional leaders focus on leadership-follower exchanges and entails completion and allocation of tasks, with rewards and penalties as consequences (Long & Thean, 2011). For example, if followers fail to perform according to the instructions, punitive and penalizing actions are enforced. Sadeghi and Pihie (2012) provided additional examples of the three dimensions of transactional leadership.

First, contingent rewards occur when a leader determines rewards based on followers' efforts to satisfy organizational goals. Secondly, management-by-exception (active) is demonstrated when a manager carefully observes followers and determines if mistakes occurred or the violation of rules. Third, management-by-exception (passive) happens if a manager waits for mistakes and errors before taking corrective actions.

The design of the three components of transactional leadership help transactional leaders avoid risk and focus more on efficiency by making performance expectations clear (Epitropaki & Martin, 2013). Avolio et al. (2009) pointed out that Burns (1978) and Bass (1990) realized the need for a leadership shift from a transactional model. Avolio et al. (2009) argued for a need to focus on leader and follower exchanges to a model that inspire and transform. The two pioneers of leadership increased focus on a third leadership style, called *laissez-faire*.

### **Laissez-Faire Leadership Style**

The term *laissez-faire* also means *passive-avoidant* (Bass, 1990; Bennett, 2009; Burns, 1978). The latter terminology reflects the depiction of a *laissez-faire* leader as one who avoids involvement when important issues arrive, is absent when needed, avoids making decisions, and delays responding to urgent questions (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012; Yueh, Chen, Lee, & Barnes, 2010). A *laissez-faire* leader is one who assumes no responsibility, delays decisions, and makes little effort to understand and satisfy followers' needs (Bennett, 2009).

For example, a leader who does not conduct performance discussions and maintains very limited contact with employees practices *laissez-faire* leadership. A leader

who avoids guidance and direction operates as a laissez-faire leader. Supervisors who are purely laissez-faire leaders should seek to combine that leadership style with transformational and transactional leadership styles to increase the positive effect on job satisfaction (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012).

Two researchers agreed on the behaviors and management practices of a laissez-faire leader (Northouse, 2013; Schilling, 2009). First, a leader's behavior of keeping a distance from the leadership role occurs when there are no scheduled meetings. Secondly, leaders practice the hands-off approach when avoiding decision-making. Third, a leader shows the behavior of giving up responsibilities when little contact occurs with employees. Fourth, a leader shows the behavior of displaying indifference to the needs of followers, when no effort to help followers satisfy needs occur.

Despite the commonly agreed upon characteristics of the laissez-faire leader, research findings revealed that there is effectiveness in using laissez-faire leadership when used in combination with transformational and transactional leadership styles (Pihie, Sadeghi, & Elias, 2011; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012;). Sadeghi and Pihie's quantitative study (2012) included academic deans that utilized the laissez-faire leadership style that was appropriate in the situation because the employees desired to operate with autonomy.

### **Charismatic Leadership Style**

Bass (1990) defined characteristics of charismatic leadership as influence and great referent power. Similarly, Northouse (2013) viewed charismatic leadership as "the ability to inspire, to motivate, and to expect high performance from others based on strongly held core values" (p. 395). Northouse further described the characteristics of

charismatic leadership as visionary, inspirational, self-sacrificing, trustworthy, decisive, and performance centered. A summary of the typical characteristics of a charismatic leadership style generalized from several definitions are (a) influence and great referent power, (b) determination, (c) a strong relationship with employee satisfaction, (d) inspirational, and (e) communication of expectations.

Charismatic and transformational supervisors used interchangeably, have the characteristic features of self-leadership, and charisma (Furtner et al., 2012; Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010; Rowold & Laukamp, 2009). Babcock-Roberson and Strickland (2010) proposed that charismatic leadership has a strong relationship with work engagement, which explained the relationship between a charismatic leader and organizational citizenship behavior. During the 20th century, Max Weber conceptualized charisma in organizations (Rowold & Laukamp, 2009).

The evolution of charismatic leadership traces back to extensive downsizing because companies faced global competition. The reduction in staffing negatively affected worker satisfaction and empowerment (Rowold & Laukamp, 2009). Organizations still demanded commitment and greater performance in the midst of the disappearance of long-term employment.

The need for charismatic leaders required transformational leaders to build morale and commitment. In a 2009 study by Rowold and Laukamp, 44% of employees who reported to a first level supervisor, worked for a public services company. The research findings disclosed that charismatic leaders were more dominant in the upper levels of organizational hierarchy. In comparison, first level supervisors, more concerned with the

day-to-day operations, typically do not utilize a charismatic approach. The current phenomenological study did not include the charismatic leadership style.

There is a distinction between charisma as a component of transformational leadership style and the charismatic leadership style (Avolio et al., 2009; Mohart, Herzog, & Tomczak, 2011; Voon et al., 2011). Antonakis (2012) asserted that while charisma and transformational leadership have similarities, theoretically there are distinct differences in the leadership styles. Kwak (2012) recommended a different approach for charismatic leadership and argued that leaders must focus on enhancing followers' voice behaviors.

The transformational approach is especially useful in situations where employees do not assume ownership for improving work circumstances, because of the weakness of the charismatic leader (Antonakis, 2012). According to Riaz and Haider (2010), transformational and charismatic leadership styles are synonymous. Contrary to the concept, research results did not reveal a significant relationship between charismatic leadership and job satisfaction (Hanaysha et al., 2012).

A weakness of the charismatic leadership style emerged from a study that included undergraduate business students from a large public university. Johnson's investigation (2009) revealed that a supervisor's mood had a significant effect on the follower's outcome. Specifically, leaders must exert efforts to regulate the expressed mood to lead followers effectively. Levay (2010) offered a different criticism and stated that charismatic leaders are resistant to change and preferred the status quo. Two case studies formed Levay's (2010) inquiry, including interviews with twenty-five medical

professionals and the second case involved eight medical staff. The study population consisted of physicians and nurses, excluding any hourly waged workers.

### **Situational Leadership Style**

Situational leadership implies that effective leadership requires a rational understanding of the situation with an appropriate response while charismatic leadership involves leading dedicated followers (Grint, 2011). In 1969, Hersey and Blanchard developed the situational leadership approach to help leaders understand that different situations demanded different kinds of leadership (Northouse, 2013). The goal of situational leadership was to encourage leaders to remain flexible when adapting other leadership styles to different circumstances through two dimensions, directive leadership, and supportive leadership. Situational leadership evolved from a task-oriented approach versus a person-oriented concept (Conger, 2011). Even with the focus on the people-oriented perspective, the criticisms of the situational leadership focused on consistency, continuity, and conformity (Bass, 2009; Glynn & DeJordy, 2010).

While situational leadership is a widely known theory in the field of managerial leadership, the leadership style is among the less well-substantiated models (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). A qualitative study conducted by Larson and Vinberg (2010) focused on situational leadership with the goal of identifying common leadership behaviors from successful companies. The researchers concluded that successful leadership should include both task-oriented approaches and contingency elements.

A contingency approach allows a leader to apply a course of action developed by a self-developed course of action, dependent upon the internal and external situations for



problem-solving. Thompson and Vecchio (2009) decided that there are difficulties with endorsing the use of the contingency approach in leadership training programs. Based on that conclusion, combined with the criticisms of consistency, and conformity; including the situational leadership style in the current phenomenological study was considered and rejected.

According to Lorinkova, Pearsall, and Sims (2013), the effectiveness of the situational leadership style depends on the emotional maturity and tenure of employees. Lorinkova, Pearsall, and Sims (2013) explained that the state of follower readiness guides a leader's decision to either direct or empower employees. For example, if an employee is new to the organization, a directive leadership style may be more appropriate. In comparison, a tenured employee may need empowerment to focus on work assignments.

Moreover, employees with low levels of readiness or limited skills benefit from directing, along with providing specific instructions. To lead employees with high levels of readiness, using the situational leadership style requires a leader to delegate and empower workers. In addition, the situational leadership style entails continued analysis, resulting in a time-consuming process of an employee's performance (Lorinkova et al., 2013; Thompson & Vecchio, 2009). Situational leadership becomes more useful with newer employees requiring greater support versus directedness.

### **Servant Leadership Style**

In the late 1970s, Greenleaf explored and developed the servant leadership theory and until recently, the leadership style did not, receive much attention in the literature (Schneider & George, 2010). The expectations of servant leaders relate to a social

responsibility showing concern for the less privileged (Northouse, 2013). Parris and Peachey (2013) conducted a literature review summarizing ten characteristics of servant leadership. The characteristics are (a) listening, (b) empathy, (c) healing, (d) awareness, (e) persuasion, (f) conceptualization, (g) foresight, (h) stewardship, (i) building community, and (j) a commitment to the growth of people.

Within the last few years, researchers focused on understanding and comparing transformational leadership to servant leadership (Choudhary, Akhtar, & Zaheer, 2013; Hackett & Wang, 2012; Hunter, Neubert, Perry, Witt, Penney, & Weinberger, 2013; Latham, 2014). Transformational leaders are much more likely than servant leaders to focus on the organization's goals. Based on the ten characteristics and association with volunteer organizations, servant leadership was not appropriate for use in the current phenomenological study.

### **Authentic Leadership Style**

During the inception of transformational style, researchers identified authentic leadership; however, the style was never fully articulated (Bass, 1990; Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2013). The various viewpoints on defining authentic leadership implied that authentic leadership needed further clarification and testing. Similar to Northouse's (2013) viewpoint, Gardner, Cogliser, Davis, and Dickens (2011) offered thirteen definitions of authentic leadership based on a comprehensive literature review. Lloyd-Walker and Walker (2011) defined authentic leadership as being true to oneself rather than creating or developing an image or persona of the leader. Lloyd-Walker and Walker

(2011) concluded that a further investigation became necessary for exploring additional elements of authentic leadership.

Other characteristics of authentic leadership include self-awareness, a high set of values and moral standards, operating with integrity, transparent in the actions yielding fair, and balanced decisions (Gardner, Cogliser, et al., 2011). Understanding the similarities in characteristics between authentic leaders and transformational leaders were the foundation of a quantitative study. Zhu, Avolio, Riggio, and Sosik (2011) studied authentic transformational leadership with a focus on ways in which authentic transformational leadership influenced followers' individual and group decision-making to become future leaders.

Murphy and Johnson (2011) postulated that in some instances, authentic leaders do not develop followers into leaders, which is a dissimilar perception of a transformational leader. Based on the need for additional research combined with an inability to develop followers, authentic leadership is not included in the current phenomenological study. The leadership behaviors of authentic leadership would not affect the job satisfaction of subordinate employees.

### **Leadership Behaviors**

Several scholars identified leadership from various perspectives (Bass, 2009; Davis, 2014; Kasemsap, 2013; Tatlah, Ali, & Lahore, 2011). Leadership behavior refers to factors that influence perceptions with a goal of personalizing and stabilizing the workplace (Tatlah, Ali, & Lahore, 2011). Kasemsap (2013) defined leadership behavior as a shared influential relationship between leaders and followers with the intention to

create genuine changes and outcomes. The perspectives of leadership behavior from Tatlah et al. (2011) and Kasemsap (2013) suggested that leader-follower relationships and structured leadership behaviors are relevant to managers and subordinates (Davis, 2014). Similarly, Bass (1990) suggested that the relation and structured-oriented leadership behaviors have positive effects on job satisfaction among subordinates.

Larsson and Vinberg (2010) conducted qualitative case studies on a three-dimensional leadership behavior theory noted as a change, a structure, and a relation-orientation. The change component of the three-dimensional action theory relates to the concept that a supervisor must change the leadership style according to the situation and the desired outcome. Because of the inconclusiveness of whether a universal theory or contingency theory was more efficient, Larson and Vinberg (2010) acknowledged that others did not universally adopt the principle.

The structure aspect of the dimensional leadership theory describes the extent that a leader has to provide low or high directions to an employee. In fact, Bass (1990) advocated that the progression of low to high structure improve a subordinate's performance. There is a reduced need for structure, once the employee attains the desired performance level. In fact, Larson and Vinberg (2010) cautioned that first level supervisors must only initiate structure when needed and relevant to the situation. According to Bass (1990), job satisfaction increases when a structure combines with increased relation-orientation.

The relation-orientation factor of the three-dimensional theory was the strongest of the three factors. Relation-orientation relates to a leader's effort to develop effective

relationships with employees. For example, coaching team members contribute to high relation-orientation because practice strengthens the relationship between the supervisor and the employee (Larson & Vinberg, 2010; McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Wenson, 2010).

Larson and Vinberg's (2010) exploration consisted of four case studies using a comparative qualitative method to understand typical leadership behaviors among successful organizations. For each organization in the case study, Larson and Vinberg conducted interviews with the owner, a manager, and two subordinates. A summary of results of the case study produced nine typical behaviors of successful organizations located in Table 2.

Larson and Vinberg (2010) concluded that successful leadership includes a foundation of high relation-orientation. The four organizations included in the case study were: (a) private organization with 54 employees with no specifics on percentage of managers versus nonmanagement employees; (b) retail operations with 25 employees with incomplete data on position levels of employees; however, 69% were women and 31% were men; (c) manufacturing company with 275 employees, 20% were hourly wageworkers; and (d) healthcare company with 3600 employees consisting of 20% men, 80% women.

Table 2

*Common Groups of Leadership Behaviors of Successful Organizations*

<b>Behaviors</b>	<b>Description</b>
Strategic/visionary leader role	Clarifies organizational vision, strategies, core values, objectives, and direction of company
Communication and information	Promotes continuous communication, talk to each other, not about each other
Authority and responsibility	Leaders demonstrate authority and responsibility without control. Display of trust in subordinates
Learning culture	Provides positive and negative feedback; failures are not penalized
Worker conversations	Cross-functional discussions, leaders listen to workers and focus on their ideas
Plainness and simplicity	Encourages subordinates to make decisions on their own without meetings.
Humanity and trust	Communication and trust creates mutual confidence between leaders and subordinates
Walking around	Leaders walked around organization to discuss work items and personal feelings of subordinates
Reflective personal leadership	Leaders reflect on leadership practices, maintains positive attitudes creating positive culture

*Note:* Adpoted from “Leadership behavior in successful organizations: Universal or situation dependent?” by J. Larsson, and S. Vinberg, 2010, *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, 21, 317-334.

Yuki (2011) conducted a literature review research based on a four-dimensional theory that involved an extensive literature analysis. There was a difference in the investigative methods between Yuki’s study and Larson and Vinberg’s (2010) study. Yuki’s findings on effective leadership behavior included results from investigations

conducted more than half a century ago. Even though the exploration approaches were different, research findings from Yuki's study revealed common themes with Larson and Vinberg's study. The findings included the following four-dimensional theory with corresponding component behaviors:

1. Task-oriented dimension includes component behaviors that are clarifying, planning, monitoring operations, and problem solving.
2. Relations-oriented dimension includes component behaviors that are supporting, developing, recognizing, and empowering.
3. Change-oriented dimension includes component behaviors that are advocating change, envisioning change, encouraging innovation, and facilitating collective learning.
4. External dimension includes component behaviors that are networking, external monitoring, and representing.

Yurtkoru and Ekmekçi (2011) conducted two studies to compare and analyze the shift in the ideal and actual leader behaviors within the past five years. The scholars used a different approach than Yuki (2010) and Larson and Vinberg (2010). Instead, Yurtkoru and Ekmekçi (2011) conducted two quantitative studies and incorporated 12 behavior patterns to measure behavior styles. The population of the first inquiry consisted of 678 participants working in managerial and nonmanagerial positions. The sample from the first study consisted of 49% females and 51% males; the second study encompassed 789 participants with 50% females and 51% males. The 12 leadership behavioral patterns with descriptions include:

1. Representation— measures the degree the leader speaks for the group.
2. Demand reconciliation—how well leader reconciles conflicting demands and reduces disorder system.
3. Tolerance of uncertainty—extent the leader can tolerate uncertainty without anxiety.
4. Persuasiveness—extent leader uses persuasion and argument effectively.
5. Initiation of structure - degree the leader defines own role and lets followers know what is expected.
6. Tolerance of freedom—extent leader allows followers scope for initiative, decision, and action.
7. Role assumption—degree the leader exercises a leadership role rather than surrendering to others.
8. Consideration—extent the leader regards the comfort, well being, status, and contributions of followers.
9. Production emphasis—degree leader applies pressure for productivity.
10. Predictive accuracy—extent leader exhibits foresight and ability to predict outcomes.
11. Integration—degree leader maintains a closely-knit organization; resolves conflict.
12. Superior orientation—extent leader maintains cordial status with superiors.

Yurtkoru and Ekmekçi (2011) along with Larson and Vinberg (2010) shared similar findings that leaders who focused on initiating structure and consideration



positively influenced job satisfaction more frequently. The weakness of Yurtkoru and Ekmekçi's quantitative investigation involved economic and political issues and crisis during the time of study. The situation possibly affected the survey results. The disadvantages included leaders who focus more on productivity and transactions rather than the person's performance needs. Leaders who demonstrated a priority for high production without regard to the job satisfaction of the employee contributed to high levels of stress in the workplace (Yip & Rowlinson, 2009). The results indicated that effective leaders reduced tension in the work environment.

### **Benefits of Leadership in the Workplace**

Researchers documented the effects of stress in the workplace in several studies (Rousseau, 2011; Yip & Rowlinson, 2009). In 1974, Herbert Freudenberger introduced the effects of stress in the workplace (Rousseau, 2011). The workplace is a viable location for evaluating the risk factors and for implementing stress-reducing programs. Job related stress, also known as burnout, characterizes today's professions (Yip & Rowlinson, 2009). Transformational leadership, which promotes employee engagement, is a tool for leaders to use to increase employee motivation and morality and reduce workplace stress (McDermott, 2010).

Rousseau (2011) agreed with McDermott's (2010) argument that transformational leadership reduces stress in the workplace. Rousseau (2011) also proposed that participative climates have a 79% lower rate of burnout. Rousseau (2011) conducted a literature review concerning leadership in the workplace. She argued that leaders who

practiced transformative leadership and participative leadership contributed to the reduction of healthcare costs and lost time due to sicknesses.

Similarly, Elci, Sener, Aksoy, and Alpkhan (2012) recognized that work-related stress resulted in high turnover. The researchers conducted a quantitative study to examine how ethical leadership and work-related stress influenced high turnover intention. A weakness of the study included a cross-sectional approach limiting interpretation and understanding of the data. The quantitative inquiry involved 70 organizations from nine different industries. Participants' work positions ranged from hourly workers to middle-level managers. Elci et al. concluded that ethical leadership has a more positive effect on high turnover intention instead of participative and transformational leadership styles, as proposed by Rousseau (2011) and McDermott (2010).

Bacha and Walker (2013) disagreed with Elci et al.'s (2012) conclusion that transformational leadership did not reduce high turnover. In a quantitative study, Bacha and Walker found that transformational leadership reduces workplace stress based on the characteristics of fairness. The purpose of Bacha and Walker's study was to determine the relationship between ethical leadership and transformational leadership. Bacha and Walker along with Elci et al. decided that a leader should be responsible, operate with ethics and values, show concern for the survival of the company, and care for employees. In fact, Kim and Brymer (2011) agreed with the principle and concluded that multiple stakeholders benefitted from ethical leaders.

Today's workplace experiences a high competitive environment, causing changing facets in the workplace. For example, there is an increased focus on diversity, inclusiveness, and understanding emotional intelligence. The retirement of baby boomers along with an increase in the amount of younger people entering the workforce, virtual work arrangements, and increased knowledge workers will change the workplace environment (Baldonado & Spangenburg, 2009). The challenges require that modern leaders must have the skills and training necessary for the development of effective leader-member relationships, to encourage coworker relationships, inspire, motivate, and influence work outcomes (Li & Hung, 2009; Zeffane, 2012).

### **Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness**

In 1995, Goleman generated interest in emotional intelligence and the impact on organizations and leaders. According to Weinberger (2009), this interest grew from the inception of emotional intelligence that began in the 1990s. Weinberger (2009) challenged the original models of emotional intelligence because they excluded personality characteristics. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability of a leader to actively recognize, understand, process, and influence emotions, as well as those of others to guide feelings, through processes, and behaviors (Weinberger, 2009).

Since the early inception of emotional intelligence, refinement continues, and researchers now incorporate emotional intelligence with performance management, training and development programs, leadership effectiveness, and organizational performance (Weinberger, 2009). However, Weinberger's (2009) study findings conflicted with the results of McCarthy and Milner (2011). Weinberger's (2009)

investigation revealed that relationships between emotional intelligence, leadership styles, and leadership effectiveness are non-existent. According to McCarthy and Milner (2011), reported study results disclosed that leadership training should extend beyond coaching and include emotional intelligence.

Weinberger (2009) conducted a study with 151 managers and direct reports employed in the manufacturing industry. The purpose of the exploration was to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence of leaders who utilized transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire leadership styles. The weakness of Weinberger's (2009) study was the population, which included employees of a single manufacturing organization, presenting a limitation of generalizability based on this single investigation. Contrary to Weinberger's (2009) findings, several scholars argued that emotional intelligence is important and viewed as the critical element needed for effective leadership (Ealias & George, 2012; Hur et al., 2011; McCarthy & Milner, 2011).

In a 2012 study of 208 executives and managers, Ealias and George confirmed that positive relationships exist between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. Similarly, Hur et al. (2011) contended that human resource executives must hire leaders who possess high levels of emotional intelligence, because the candidates have great potential for becoming transformational leaders. A competent transformational leader must demonstrate emotional intelligence skills (Hur et al., 2011; Lam & O'Higgins, 2010).

### **Studies on Transformational Leadership Style**

In Yuki's (2012) study, I defined transformational leadership as a process that influences major attitude and assumption changes of employees to build a commitment for achieving organizational goals. Northouse (2013) offered a different perspective and argued that transformational leaders analyzed followers' motives to help satisfy needs, and treat employees as essential human beings. Rothfelder, Ottenbacher, and Harrington (2013) conducted a quantitative study on transformational leadership with hotel employees. The findings are consistent with other researchers who concluded that the influence of transformational leadership on job satisfaction is highly different from transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles (Li & Hung, 2009; Pradeep & Prabhu, 2011; Wang & Rode, 2010). The weakness of Rothfelder et al.'s (2013) investigation was that the use of a German hospitality industry and limited generalizability.

### **Transformational Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is employee's attitude towards job (Robbins et al., 2010) and understanding employee's mindset becomes beneficial to managers since transformational leadership positively associated with job satisfaction (Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2011; Mancheno-Smoak et al., 2009). Wells and Peachey (2011) found a positive relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance. Some researchers focused on leadership styles that guide followers to perform beyond expectations (Busic, et al., 2010; Zhu, Sosik, Riggio, & Yang, 2012).

Hamstra et al.'s (2011) quantitative study focused on a connection with job satisfaction and the relationship existing between job fit and transformational leadership

style. Participants in the inquiry consisted of psychology students with full-time and part-time jobs with an average age of 20 years. The findings indicated that if followers' foci were on promotions or prevention, transformational leadership in turn influenced a reduction in turnover intention.

Transformational leadership had a positive relationship with employees' job satisfaction (Bodla & Nawaz, 2010; Mancheno-Smoak et al., 2009). The 265 study participants from Bodla and Nawaz's (2010) investigation were faculty members and professors from public and private universities. The research included the five dimensions of transformational leadership, namely idealized influence (attributed), idealized influence (behavioral), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Bodla and Nawaz's (2010) study used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure various aspects of transformational leadership. The results showed a significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction. The scholars acknowledged that the work excluded organizational climate as a factor. Additionally, I provided recommendations of future studies to include an examination of leadership styles based on different job characteristics and employee behavior.

Transformational leadership has a positive effect on employee motivation and job satisfaction (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Bodla & Nawaz, 2010; Burns, 1978). When supervisors invited followers to contribute to the decision-making process, the strategy caused an increase in job satisfaction and developed workers' skills (Bhatti et al., 2012).

The increase in job satisfaction was attributed to transformational leaders that motivated followers to reach higher levels of potential. In addition, followers were motivated to look beyond self-interests for the good of the group and view the work responsibilities from new perspectives (Birasnav et al., 2011).

### **Cultural Values and Transformational Leadership Style**

Bass and Avolio (1994) posited that the culture of an organization affects the development of the leadership. Transformational leaders experienced challenges with the cultural transformation of organizations and must learn how to align the guidance of cultural multi-dimensionality (Mancheno-Smoak et al., 2009). In addition, Mancheno-Smoak et al. (2009) conducted a quantitative study to determine whether culture affected individual leader's inclination to engage in transformational behaviors. Mancheno-Smoak et al. studied human resource executives of a Fortune 500 company.

The four-part survey measured demographics, the cultural dimension, job satisfaction, and self-reporting frequencies of engagement in transformational leadership practices. The research results revealed evidence to support that an individual's cultural value and job satisfaction encourages a leader to exhibit transformational behaviors. Avolio et al. (2009) expressed a similar belief and proposed that a growing interest in the role of leadership across cultures.

Jung, Yammarino, and Lee (2009) agreed with Avolio et al. (2009) and advocated that one distinctive characteristic of transformational leadership is the active involvement with personal values among followers. The study included cultures of participants from Korea and the United States and focused on three goals. The goals included: (a) to test

whether transformational leadership produced a positive effect on the effectiveness of leaders across two different cultures; (b) to determine if there was a moderating effect of trust, loyalty, and value congruence across two cultures; and (c) to decide whether leaders facilitated transformational leadership when followers held collective personal values.

The research findings disclosed that a positive effect existed on leadership across two different cultures, which aligned with the findings reported by Mancheno-Smoak et al. (2009). Both studies supported Bass's (1990) view that transformational leadership is a universal phenomenon. One result that surprised the scholars was that transformational leadership and followers' attitudes are highly interconnected for U.S. participants because the same was not true for the Korean participants. The results indicated that there is a common theme, which is that transformational leadership is the preferred leadership style. Following is a review of the literature with opposing views on the transformational leadership style.

### **Criticisms of Transformational Leadership Style**

Several researchers argued that transformational leadership has a positive impact on job satisfaction (Bass, 2009; Li & Hung, 2009; Pereira & Gomes, 2012; Pieterse, van Knippenberg, Schippers, & Stam, 2010). Contrary to the findings, other scholars' research concluded that the effectiveness of transformational leadership existed only in certain conditions (Li, Chiaburu, Kirkman, & Xie, 2013; Northouse 2013; Pieterse et al., 2010; Wang & Howell, 2010). For example, Northouse (2013) offered five criticisms of transformational leadership:



1. Conceptual clarity is vague because of the wide range of characteristics.
2. The measurement of transformational leadership using the MLQ compels researchers to question whether the four components correlated with transactional and laissez-faire factors.
3. Transformational leadership approaches leadership as a trait rather than a learned behavior.
4. Studies have not established a causal relationship that transformational leaders caused the transformation of employees and organizations.
5. A perception existed that transformational leaders are elitist, the leader's success was independent of followers' actions.

Wang and Howell (2010) reported similar criticisms but from a different perspective. The quantitative study included 215 managers and team members from multiple industries. Wang and Howell found that a transformational supervisor did not lead individuals and groups simultaneously. Pieterse et al. (2010) agreed with the group of scholars and conducted a study on government employees. The results indicated that psychological empowerment moderates the effectiveness of transformational and transactional leadership styles. Additionally, Li, Chiaburu, Kirkman, and Xie (2013) argued that transformational leadership has a greater influence on discretionary behavior than task performance. Despite the criticisms, Northouse (2013) argued that transformational leaders demonstrated several strengths:

1. There are extensive research conducted on transformational leadership utilizing qualitative methodologies and that 34% of articles in one leadership journal focused on the transformational leadership style.
2. The principle of transformational leadership is consistent with the needs and modern belief that leaders should advocate on behalf of followers.
3. Transformational leadership researchers approach leadership as a process between followers and leaders that care for the needs of others.
4. Transformational leadership extends beyond performance and rewards focuses on followers' needs, and growth.
5. Transformational leaders are morally uplifting, interested in moving employees to higher moral responsibilities, and encourages followers to transcend beyond self-interests.

### **Studies on Transactional Leadership Style**

According to Bass (2009), a subcomponent of transformational leadership is transactional leadership. The commonality between the two leadership styles is the contingent reward concept. Researchers argued that transactional leaders focused more on penalizing errors and engaged in micromanagement while transformational leaders inspired and motivated employees (Braun et al., 2013).

Riaz and Haider (2010) conducted a quantitative study that addressed employees' perceptions that supervisors tend to lean more towards the transactional leadership style instead of the transformational leadership style. Hotel staff members of a Pakistani

establishment completed survey questionnaires that resulted in several recommendations to managers.

Firstly, managers must ensure that employees have a clear vision and mission of the organization, allowing leaders to transform the information into organizational and departmental objectives. In addition, when setting departmental goals, a good idea is to involve team members. Secondly, educating leaders to balance the application of both transformational and transactional behaviors becomes necessary. The recommended approach assists first level supervisors when applying rewards, such as praise and recognition, along with correction when necessary. Thirdly, leaders must acquire the ability to use the appropriate leadership style for the environment (Riaz & Haider, 2010). Several researchers view transactional and transformational leadership styles as effective when practiced together (Pieterse et al., 2010; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012).

### **Transformational and Transactional Leadership Styles**

Transformational leadership occurs when leaders inspire followers to make a commitment to a shared vision and goals (Burns, 1978; Fitzgerald & Schutte, 2010; House & Wigdor, 1967). Comparatively, transactional leaders discuss required tasks that specify the conditions and rewards if workers meet the job requirements (Bass, 1990). According to Riaz and Haider (2010), there are growing interests in both transactional and transformational leadership styles. The researchers conducted a quantitative study to explore the effect of transformational and transactional leadership styles on career satisfaction and job success.

Participants for Riaz and Haider's (2010) investigation included lower and middle level managers employed for at least five years. The results of the study disclosed a significant relationship between transformational leadership and career satisfaction. Additionally, transactional leadership positively related to job success. The findings aligned with Bass's (1990) leadership theory, which stipulated that transactional leaders attempt to motivate followers on an existing set of personal beliefs. Conversely, transformational leaders encourage workers to move beyond personal interests for the good of the organization.

In a 2009 study, Bennett argued that Burns (1978) defined transformational and transactional leadership as opposites of each other. Bennett argued that Bass (2009) believed that leaders must demonstrate both leadership styles, depending on the situation, inferring that transactional leadership is an extension of transformational leadership. Furthermore, Bennett (2009) concluded that transformational and transactional leaders assisted with forethoughts on employees' satisfaction with first level supervisors.

Rather than agree with Bennett (2009), other researchers such as Jansen, Vera, and Crossan (2009) argued that transformational leadership closely associates with exploratory innovation, while transactional leaders facilitate exploitative innovation. For example, if organizational leaders pursue new knowledge or develop new products, the leaders were engaging exploratory innovation or transformational leadership. Some researchers proposed that exploiting existing abilities could help to sustain organizational performance through transactional leadership.

In a 2009 study, Wu stipulated that when compared to transformational leadership, transactional leadership had an enormous influence on followers' performance and innovation. Riaz and Haider (2010) agreed with Wu's concept and believed that transformational and transactional leadership were interdependent. Riaz and Haider developed a model depicting that core transformational leadership behaviors were high performance expectations, supportive leader behavior, and intellectual stimulation.

The researchers (Riaz & Haider, 2010; Wu, 2009) believed that the attributes must include contingent reward and punishment in order to produce job success, and career satisfaction. Job success and career satisfaction are the results of self-actualization, the ultimate level within the Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs (Aguinis, Gottfredson, & Joo, 2012). Aguinis et al. (2009) argued that transactional and transformational leaders must understand how to deliver effective performance feedback, regardless of positive or corrective.

Riaz and Haider (2010) posited that transformational leadership had a stronger relationship with organizational citizenship than transactional leadership. In comparison, the findings from Bennett's (2009) study indicated that the level of transformational leadership was the strongest predictor of employees' extra effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction. In addition, Bennett argued that the more leaders exhibited transformational leadership behavior, the greater the employees' desire to succeed. Even though Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, and Frey (2013) promoted the belief that transformational leadership is a teachable skill, Riaz and Haider (2010) disagreed. The arguments suggested that foresight is a primary quality of a leader and is not a concept in the design, when training

leaders. Instead, Riaz and Haider (2010) argued that vision is an innate quality, and human resource managers must look for that characteristic when hiring for leadership positions.

### **Transactional Leadership Style and Job Satisfaction**

Herzberg et al. (1959) theorized that hygiene factors called dissatisfiers, do not contribute to job satisfaction and that a lack of hygiene factors contributed to job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors that are extrinsic to the job are as supervision, working conditions, company policies, salary, and relationship with co-workers (Furnham et al., 2009). Intrinsic factors, called motivators relate directly to the job identified as achievement, development, responsibility, and recognition (Fisher, 2009).

According to Handsome (2009), there are three common leadership styles associated with job satisfaction. In a study that included 51 respondents, Handsome found that transactional leadership style has a negative relationship with job satisfaction. Transactional leadership style has a link to Herzberg et al.'s (1959) hygiene factors of supervision, company policies, and working conditions. The factors did not motivate employees or contribute to employee job satisfaction; however, the absence of transactional hygiene factors contributed to job dissatisfaction.

Transactional leaders focused more on job success rather than job satisfaction (Riaz & Haider, 2010). For example, the transactional leader concentrated on supplying employees with resources to increase productivity and to accomplish shared goals. Additionally, transactional leaders were more concerned with meeting the lower level of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, specifically physiological and safety needs. The

reward dimension of transactional leadership style has the potential to contribute to job satisfaction. Fisher (2009) acknowledged that when rewards were only based on meeting certain requirements and conditions, the results were a negative influence on job satisfaction.

Northouse (2013) argued that the conditional reward aspect of transactional leadership occurred daily in an individual's life. For example, transactional practices occur when a student receives a good grade for completing assignments correctly or when managers offer promotions if employees exceeded performance expectations. Based on the dimension of transactional leadership, some researchers concluded that transactional leaders do not positively influence employee job satisfaction; however, other scholars disagreed with the concept (Epitropaki & Martin, 2013; Long & Thean, 2011; Pieterse et al., 2010).

For example, Chaudhry and Husnain (2012) conducted an investigation using a mixed method approach with 278 banking employees. The demographics of the population included 63 entry employees, 193 middle-level managers, and 22 top-level managers. The findings of the study revealed that employees were more motivated with a transactional leader in contrast to a transformational leader. In fact, the banking industry experienced a low turnover rate under the transactional leadership style. The weakness or limitation of the study was the limited number of banks sampled and a short data collection period of six months. Chaudhry and Husnain (2012) had similar findings to Kim, Lee, and Carlson (2010) who found that transactional leaders positively affected job

satisfaction. The conditional factors were dependent on the employees' capabilities, awareness, and desires.

Kim et al.'s (2010) empirical study involved an organization in the private sector and a population of 559 employees. Nearly 50% of the employees possessed a high school diploma. The purpose of the investigation was to examine how the mediating variables of work motivation and job satisfaction contributed to leadership. Based on data collection results, transactional leadership style, contingent on team climate and organizational systems, influences work motivation, and job satisfaction. Team climate and organizational systems relate to Herzberg's et al. (1959) hygiene factors, external to the job.

The inference from the previous studies must caution leaders to avoid an approach that the same style works all instances when leading employees (Kim et al., 2010). In addition, managers must consider the diverse atmosphere and individual characteristics when choosing an appropriate leadership style. Chaudhry and Husnain (2012) agreed with the concept based on the findings of a positive relationship between transactional leadership and job satisfaction. Despite the conditional aspects that contributed to the unpopular yet positive relationship with job satisfaction, researchers and leaders criticize the transactional leadership style.

### **Criticisms of Transactional Leadership Style**

Northouse (2013) posited that when supervisors lead with a heightened focus on exchanging things of value with an employee in exchange for meeting goals, the managers exhibit characteristics of a transactional leader. The results indicated that



managers are only interested in advancing a personal agenda. For instance, when leaders seek ways to motivate employees because of poor performance issues, a transactional leader may give an employee a poor performance evaluation without discussing prior work performance (Bennett, 2009).

The two dimensions of a transactional leader are management by exception (passive) and management by exception (active). The two dimensions have perceptions of negative reinforcement patterns (Northouse, 2013). In a 2011 study, Liu et al. recommended a different perspective based on the investigative findings. The researchers conducted a quantitative investigation with 90 participants from eight organizations. The purpose was to explore the relationship between transactional leadership and emotional labor. Liu et al. found that transactional leadership reduces team innovativeness in the presence of high emotional labor.

Conversely, Chaudhry and Husnain (2012) presented findings from a study that included banking industry workers who were more motivated with a transactional leader, dispelling some of the criticisms of transactional leadership. The banking employees' performance focus was more on transactional behavior with low emotional behavior involved in day-to-day responsibilities. The results inferred that transactional leaders must adjust practices based on an analysis of the employee's emotional behavior. The results indicated that a laissez-faire leader is more appropriate in times of high emotional labor to allow independence and freedom to employees.

### **Studies on Laissez-Faire Leadership Style**

Taken from Bass's (2009) leadership field, laissez-faire leadership is not close to the transformational and transactional leadership spectrum and represents the absence of leadership. According to Northouse (2013), a supervisor who does not engage in meetings, pursues little to no contact with employees, and has no visions to share with subordinates is an example of a laissez-faire leader. In Sadeghi and Pihie's (2012) study, department heads focused on leadership effectiveness and laissez-faire leaders.

Sadeghi and Pihie (2012) had similar conclusions but also noted that the effects differed from the arguments suggested by Northouse (2013). The dissimilar results revealed that department heads utilized transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles simultaneously creating two inferences from the conclusion. First, a leader has to determine the appropriate leadership style to implement for employees to achieve organizational goals. Secondly, despite the criticisms of laissez-faire leadership, there is a place for the laissez-faire leader in today's workplace to positively influence job satisfaction. Furtner et al. (2012) disagreed with the perspective, advocating that while most scholars agreed that transformational and transactional leadership worked together at times, to produce positive job satisfaction results, laissez-faire is a lack of active leadership.

Despite any criticisms, some researchers (Chaudhry & Husnain, 2012; Kim et al., 2010) concluded that laissez-faire leaders positively influence job satisfaction and are similar to findings with transactional leadership styles. In fact, Chaudhry and Husnain (2012) highlighted several studies that revealed a positive relationship with laissez-faire

leadership and job satisfaction. The researchers found that the laissez-faire method showed a positive relationship with extrinsic motivating factors. In support of that concept, other scholars advocated that all three leadership styles, used in combination, positively affect job satisfaction (Chaudhry & Husnain, 2012; Kim et al., 2010).

### **Laissez-Faire Approach and Job Satisfaction**

Several studies revealed findings that laissez-faire leadership style had no significant relationship with job satisfaction (Bass, 2009; Chaudhry & Husnain, 2012; Ghorbanian, et al., 2012; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Job satisfaction incorporates an employee's feelings or state of mind regarding the nature of the work (Mudor & Tookson, 2011). Furtner et al. (2012) conducted a study to determine if laissez-faire leaders held a positive relationship with self-leadership, resulting in job satisfaction. The study was important since according to Furtner et al., self-leadership is the process of influencing one's thoughts and behaviors through cognitive, affective, and motivational-volitional process.

The study included more than 400 professionals from eight industries. Based on data collection analysis, there was a negative relationship between laissez-faire leaders and self-leadership. The inference from the results suggested that one must be in control of one's self before leading others. As previously noted, employees involved with high emotional labor do not prefer transactional leadership (Liu et al., 2011). Laissez-faire leaders may be appropriate for the type of work environment where workers receive minimal feedback to achieve job satisfaction. In fact, Sadeghi and Pihie confirmed from a quantitative study (2012) that a positive relationship with laissez-faire leadership and job

satisfaction involving academic deans because the workers desired to operate with autonomy.

### **Studies on Job Satisfaction**

Since 1959, researchers have studied job satisfaction. Herzberg et al. (1959) developed the theory that motivators and hygiene factors lead to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Malik, Nawab, Naeem, & Danish, 2010). For purposes of the current phenomenological exploration, job satisfaction relates to the attitudes of employees toward the job and pertains to employee's overall evaluation of the entire job (Ahmad, 2009; Robbins et al., 2010).

Mancheno-Smoak et al. (2009) confirmed that an employee's direct leader has the highest effect on whether an employee views the job as satisfying. According to Rossiter (2009), job satisfaction dictates a choice for a specific job. Based on Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, Rossiter argued that once workers meet the basic survival needs, interesting and challenging work and personal fulfillment becomes important. Conversely, a lack of recognition and job security contributes to the feelings of dissatisfaction and negatively influences motivation.

### **Motivation and Job Satisfaction**

Motivation is as an internal state that compels an individual to act (Furnham et al., 2009; Kaur, 2013). Leaders are in a position to apply skills to fulfill Maslow's (1970) structure of needs and Herzberg's et al. (1959) theory of motivation. Utilizing the stated theories, managers must help employees to achieve job satisfaction through recognition, accomplishment, and responsibility. For example, first level supervisors contribute to job

satisfaction when fully implementing and supporting programs designed to recognize employees' accomplishments.

The recognition programs support Maslow's (1970) theory, which contributes to increasing the level of esteem. For instance, when managers contemplate the responsibilities of workers, managers must look for ways to improve working conditions that relate to hygiene factors. Additionally, managers who diversify employees' work and recognize successful efforts practice motivational leadership, which affects employees' job attitudes and job performance (Fisher, 2009; Kian, Yusoff, & Rajah, 2013)

Furnham et al. (2009) explored whether personality contributed to motivation and job satisfaction. The sample consisted of full time employees in the retail, manufacturing, and healthcare industries. The findings indicated that employees in lower job statuses were more concerned with the job's hygiene factors. Conversely, achieving more power and status motivates employees who are in higher job statuses. The results aligned with Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs that suggests that once employees achieve physiological needs and security, the focus shifts to the higher order needs.

In a 2010 study, Farah and Halawi's confirmed similar conclusions to Furnham et al. (2009). Farah and Halawi's (2010) approach included a single healthcare industry for the inquiry. Both scholars were interested in factors that pertained to job satisfaction. The conceptual framework for Farah and Halawi's (2010) study was Herzberg's et al. (1959) two-factor theory and Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs. The researchers focused on an alignment of job satisfaction for health care professionals, physicians, with Maslow's

(1970) hierarchy of needs. Since the physicians achieved the lower orders of needs, there was a greater desire for more power, recognition, and self-actualization.

The inference from the studies on job satisfaction supports Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, intrinsic and extrinsic factors of the job, and the concept that job satisfaction affects subordinate and management employees differently. The participants in the majority of the studies on leadership and job satisfaction functioned at various levels of managers within different industries. The initiative for the current phenomenological study was to understand the leadership style that best meets job satisfaction hourly wageworkers.

### **Employee Job Performance and Job Satisfaction**

The intense focus on job performance and job satisfaction remains essential for organizational sustainability and Ng, Sorensen, and Kim (2009) posited two reasons for the emphasis. Firstly, job satisfaction implies an employee's attitude towards work. Secondly, the employee's job performance has a direct effect on organizational effectiveness. Gioia and Catalano (2011) agreed with Ng et al. (2009) and further shared that employees who feel unappreciated performed suboptimally and had lower job satisfaction, which resulted in a resignation.

Voon et al. (2011) shared similar beliefs with Gioia and Catalano (2011) and added that high job satisfaction enriches performance. Similarly, Riaz and Haider (2010) argued that transformational leaders encouraged individuals to exceed expected performance. The inference from the concept is that employee job performance and job satisfaction have a direct relationship.

In comparison, transactional leaders utilized the contingent reward dimension to drive greater performance (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). In a 2011 study, Long and Thean and Bennett (2009) had similar conclusions and found that the reward component of the transactional leadership style is in both studies. Transactional leadership predicted extra effort and effectiveness, but not satisfaction (Bennett, 2009; Long & Thean, 2011).

Bennett (2009) contributed an additional conclusion that laissez-faire leadership had the opposite effect of transformational leadership. The results indicate that the more a leader practiced laissez-faire leadership style; fewer employees were willing to give the extra effort to accomplish the job, viewing the leader as incompetent. Workers who provided minimal performance and held negative viewpoints of a leader quit based on a dislike for the job (dissatisfaction). Employee turnover caused by low job satisfaction resulted in high cost and negatively affected the bottom line.

### **Employee Turnover and Job Satisfaction**

Low job satisfaction is an antecedent of employee turnover and leaders should focus on ways to retain employees (Yang, et al., 2011). Managers must focus on the relationship between job satisfaction and turnover because the satisfaction of employees increases the tendency to stay with the company and contribute to overall performance (Ahmad, 2009; Delobelle et al., 2011). According to Ahmad (2009), the effect of job satisfaction on turnover depends on an employee's perspective of the level of progress through the hierarchy of needs. When employees find a comparison between the job and self-identity, the relationship becomes associated with self-actualization. Furnham et al. (2009) supported Ahmad's (2009) findings and posited that when individuals have a

greater focus on self-actualization, job satisfaction increases, leading to enhanced employee retention.

Several researchers agreed that organizations must focus on retaining valuable employees (Amah, 2009; Laureani & Antony, 2010; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Yang et al., 2011). In addition, Samuel and Chipunza (2009) explained that there must be a focus on retention for management to retain employees, especially those who are critical to a company's operation. The scholars agreed that when underperformers leave and good performers stay, organizational performance increase.

Amah (2009) argued that organizations benefit when low-performing employees resign. However, other researchers disagreed with that view and suggested that high turnover is a detriment to an organization's productivity (Laureani & Antony, 2010; Yang et al., 2011). High turnover rates affect staff morale and lead to the loss of productive workers, thus reducing the overall efficiency (Yang et al., 2011). Yang et al. (2011) agreed with Laureani and Antony's conclusion on high cost of turnover.

Yang et al. approached the investigation differently. The mixed-method study included a sample from the hotel industry. Yang et al. designed the study to understand reasons behind the employees' resignations, aiming to identify ways that managers attempted to control high employee turnover. The qualitative approach involved one-hour interviews with leaders that described the motivation for leaving their jobs. In addition, leaders shared the measures adopted by the hotel to reduce turnover and the reasons behind the turnover remaining strong despite these retention efforts.



Yang et al. (2011) studied 29 participants who worked for international tourist hotels. Participants consisted of 15 managers, 12 supervisors, and two employees who left the hotel before completion of the investigation. The results concluded that the leader's management style was one of the contributing factors towards employee turnover. Specifically, unfair management, lack of independence, an overly militarized control, and negative feedback, along with unconstructive criticism, were the primary sources of frustration for employees.

In addition, Yang et al. (2011) found that the leadership practices caused workers to be inefficient, resulting in decreased motivation, thus increasing staff turnover. Yang et al.'s inquiry also revealed that the atmosphere created by the managers was an unhealthy work environment, directly affecting staff turnover. According to Maslow's theory (1970), the need for a manager's approval relates to feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capability, and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world.

The results indicated that the treatment of hotel employees decreased worker's motivation to achieve maximum performance, which contributed to staff turnover, and affected self-esteem, which is the fourth level of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs (Duncan & Blugis, 2011). Maslow proposed two levels of esteem, derived from self and others. For example, hotel employees in Yang's et al. (2011) study may have assumed that, if they performed well, a reward would inevitably follow high performance, promoting high self-esteem. Maslow suggested that people have a desire for rating by others and look to other people for acceptance. The hotel employees apparently looked to the immediate managers for approval and recognition of performance.

Samuel and Chipunza (2009) shared similar concepts with Yang et al. (2011) and explained that for organizations to retain the best employees, especially as competition continues, showing self-esteem needs becomes necessary. Additionally, the investigation results provided strong evidence supporting a link between job security and employee retention. Retention policies sometimes required human resources to educate company leaders on effective leadership styles, producing safety for workers. To some individuals, receiving a weekly paycheck interprets as comfort and safety, affecting employee retention.

To further explore opportunities for employee retention, Wenson (2010) conducted an investigation on the effects of coaching supervisors on effective leadership. Wenson designed a study to understand the experiences of 20 direct reports after the managers received coaching. The themes that emerged were safety, motivation, and self-reflection. Dissimilar to previous findings that safety referred only to a weekly paycheck, in Wenson's investigation, safety is an employee's ability to discuss problems openly. Wenson's investigation is important to the current phenomenological study because Maslow's (1970) motivation theory, Bass's (2009) theory of leadership, and Herzberg and colleagues' (1959) hierarchy of needs are all contributors to the study.

### **Influence of Leadership Styles on Job Satisfaction**

The literature review revealed an exhaustive amount of research on leadership styles and job satisfaction (Andrews, Richard, Robinson, & Celano, 2011; Bhatti et al., 2012; Bodla & Nawaz, 2010; Braun et al., 2013; Mohamad, 2012; Voon et al., 2011). A common theme that emerged from the numerous studies revealed that leadership styles

have a negative or positive influence on job satisfaction. Many mediating factors determined a positive or negative influence. For example, Liu et al. (2011) concluded that high or emotional labor influences team innovativeness and leads to job satisfaction. Pieterse et al. (2010) decided that psychological empowerment moderates the influence of transformational and transactional leadership styles. Kompas and Sridevi (2010) argued that employee engagement have a relationship with job satisfaction. The various conclusive findings posed an opportunity for supervisors and other managers to remain agile in efforts to guide workers to achieve high performance.

Today's managers experience challenges when fulfilling job responsibilities in the midst of cultural diversity, virtual teams, shareholder wealth, local community involvement, and resource policies. Front line supervisors are in a position to influence the performance of employees, job satisfaction, and ultimately the financial performance of the organization. Although there is an established positive relationship between leadership styles and job satisfaction (Chi & Gursoy, 2009), not all leadership styles affect job satisfaction positively. In fact, Maertz, Boyar, and Pearson (2012) postulated that most leadership models indicate that a lack of job satisfaction or organizational commitment is the main initiator of voluntary turnover.

In a 2011 study, Voon et al. proposed that when leaders choose the appropriate leadership style, positive job satisfaction occurs, reducing turnover. Organizational success depends on effective leadership and employee job satisfaction. Northouse (2013) agreed with the argument and noted that transformational leadership provides job satisfaction by fostering followers' commitment to the organizational goals and inspiring

followers to exceed performance expectations. Voon et al. argued that even though transformational leaders are the ideal change agent, transactional leaders must satisfy job satisfaction through rewards, praises, and promises to meet employees' immediate needs.

The transformational leadership style increases self-esteem, so that as individuals move up in the company's hierarchy and fulfill self-esteem needs, other needs no longer become salient and taken for granted (Furnham et al., 2009). Instead, the prospects of more power and status act as the primary motivators. The concept aligns with Maslow's (1970) seminal theory of motivation, which ascertained that once individuals achieve lower-level needs (e.g., physiological needs and security), there is a shift that focuses toward higher-level needs, culminating in self-actualization (Furnham et al., 2009). The focus on meeting the immediate needs of employees contributes to organizational success.

Several scholars advocated that employees are the most valuable assets in an organization, which compels human resources to hire capable leaders to guide and motivate employees to achieve organizational goals (Hannah et al., 2012; Voon et al., 2011). Employees provide importance to organizations; however, the majority of leadership and job satisfaction researcher focused on data collection from managers and professionals. The current study addresses this gap.

The results of previous studies (Hannah et al., 2012; Voon et al., 2011) suggest that employees that are hourly wage earners provide importance because the workers actually perform functional work in today's diverse and fast changing work environments. In addition, organizational leaders need to focus on developing effective

leaders because of unprecedented challenges faced in accelerating internal and external work environments. Previous discussions indicate that focusing on training leaders to positively influence employee job satisfaction provide importance because too often individuals view leadership simultaneously as management. Finally, today's employees do not typically respond positively to the leadership based on command and control (Northouse, 2013).

### **Leadership versus Management**

Leadership and management are both important to an organization. There is an apparent difference between the two concepts (Northouse, 2013). Thus, in order to achieve maximum employee job satisfaction, executive leaders must ensure that the leadership team understands the difference between leading and managing. The concept of management emerged in the early 20th century, with the goal of reducing chaos in organizations (Northouse, 2013). In addition, the study of management dates as far back as the early 1900s, when Frederick Taylor received the recognition of the "Father of Scientific Management" (Simha & Lemak, 2010, p. 233). Taylor (1911) created the term "ordinary management" (p. 235) viewed as an effort to hamper efficiency. The intention was merely to motivate workers to increase productivity.

Taylor (1911) argued that organizations must pay workers rather than positions, when encouraging workers to produce at the highest potential and earn the highest wages. Because some employees were more knowledgeable than managers, Taylor believed that knowledge rather than position, determines authority. Organizational environments have

changed tremendously since Taylor first introduced the management perspective (Simha & Lemak, 2010).

Today, managers recognize the experience of workers, respect, and encourage the freedom of employees when aligning self-actualization needs with the interest of the organization (Alvesson & Willmott, 2012). According to Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, attaining self-actualization compels individuals to focus more on defining needs and aspirations, allowing self-actualization. Current leaders face an increased challenge to fulfill management responsibilities in the midst of cultural diversity, virtual teams, shareholder wealth, local community involvement, and human resources policies. Managers, therefore, benefit by gaining insight from organizational employees' perspectives, on the concept of leadership styles, and the relationship to employee's job satisfaction.

Leadership and management are both important aspects that support organizational performance. Northouse (2013) posited that leadership produces change and movement, whereas management results in order and consistency. Managers are more involved in planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, controlling, and problem-solving. Conversely, leadership places a greater emphasis on establishing direction, aligning people, motivating, and inspiring.

Northouse's (2013) viewpoint was that leadership is similar to management and that both involve influencing, working with people, and accomplishing goals. Kotter (2013) disagreed with Northouse's (2013) concept of leadership and argued that leadership and management are not similar. Kotter (2013) believed that the overriding

purpose of management is to generate order and create consistency while leadership effect changes and transformation (see Table 3). In summary, the table depicts that management is more focused on tasks that produce order. Leaders instead provide guidance with a goal to influence change and movement. The current phenomenological study focused on leadership because of the influential nature of the skill and the relationship with job satisfaction.

According to Bennett (2009), leaders must get involved with more than just managing the day-to-day operations by providing guidance to employees. In addition, leaders must encourage workers to accept greater ownership of problems and become involved in the problem-solving process. In turn, encouraging innovative and critical thinking that motivates all employees to go beyond individual needs and strive for the good of the team. Furthermore, Bennett (2009) stated that leadership is very critical to an organization because leadership determines whether an organization becomes successful or experience failure.

### **Motivational Leadership**

For the current study, motivation is an internal force that drives humans to behave in a certain manner (Javed & Javed, 2013). Previous investigations established that job performance and motivation are strongly connected and that first level supervisors have the responsibility of continuously motivating employees to increase production (Fisher, 2009; Furnham et al., 2009). Front line supervisors promote productivity among employees, which requires motivation.

Table 3

*Functions of Management and Leadership*

Management Produces Order and Consistency	Leadership Produces Change and Movement
Planning and Budgeting Establish agendas Set timetables Allocate resources	Establishing Director Create a vision Clarify big picture Set strategies
Organizing and Staffing - Provide structure - Make job placements - Establish rules and procedures	Aligning People - Communicate goals - Seek commitment - Build teams and coalitions
Controlling and Problem Solving - Develop incentives - Generate creative solutions - Take corrective action	Motivating and Inspiring - Inspire and energize - Empower subordinates - Satisfy unmet needs

Note: Adapted from "A force for change: How leadership differs from management" by J. P. Kotter, New York: Free Press, 2008, p. 6.

If leaders are to complete the task successfully, leaders must first understand factors that motivate team members. For example, based on Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, workers find motivation in the opportunities to bond with co-workers when achieving goals as a team. Fisher (2009) incorporated Maslow's (1970) theory as a foundation for an investigation on motivation.

Fisher (2009) offered the concept that motivating employees is a continuous effort. The principle is that employees become motivated and develop motivation for satisfying particular needs. When the individual achieves the desire, the need no longer serves as motivation. Fisher (2009) concluded that managers are more effective when



functioning from a theoretical base that provides guidance and direction for leading employees to a state of continuous motivation.

Furnham et al.'s (2009) conclusive findings also aligned with Herzberg's et al. (1959) motivational theory. Furnham et al. conducted an investigation that included 202 full-time workers, who completed three questionnaires designed to measure personality, work motivation, and satisfaction. The findings disclosed a link between extrinsic factors of personality and demographic factors with job satisfaction and motivation, supporting Herzberg et al.'s two-factor theory. Additionally, Furnham et al. found that organizational leaders must conduct further inquiry on the factors that contribute to work attitudes, with the goal of increasing job satisfaction and performance. There is a benefit for including motivation as one of the factors for influencing job satisfaction in any future research.

### **Studies on Vroom's Expectancy Theory**

In 1964, Vroom developed the expectancy theory as a means for determining personal motivation (Lunenburg, 2011). The theory, based on four assumptions, is a foundational construct for conceptual frameworks on motivation. The first assumption was when workers accept employment with an organization with expectations of individual needs, motivation, and using previous experiences. The second assumption was that individuals made conscious choices of behavior. The third assumption aligns with Herzberg's (1970) theory of motivation. There were different expectations among employees of the company, based on motivating factors such as advancement, good pay,

and job security. The fourth assumption was that individuals made decisions for maximizing performance (Lunenborg, 2011).

Samuel and Chipunza (2009) supported Lunenborg's (2011) study and extended the research to include turnover intentions based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. Samuel and Chipunza's (2009) quantitative research design included 145 respondents from a population of 1800 employees from two public and two private sector organizations in South Africa. A questionnaire form required responses based on a five-point Likert Scale.

Samuel and Chipunza (2009) designed the investigation to determine the extent to which intrinsic and extrinsic motivational variables influenced retention and reduction of turnover of employees in public and private companies. Results revealed factors such as achievement, recognition, the work, responsibility, advancement, and growth, deemed intrinsic values, which Herzberg et al. (1959) labeled as motivators. Conversely, dissatisfiers or extrinsic variables were company policies, co-worker relationships, and supervisory styles.

The findings from Samuel and Chipunza's (2009) study identified intrinsic motivational variables that influenced retention among employees that included training and development, a sense of belonging to the organization, job security, interesting work, and freedom to use creative thinking. Based on Vroom's expectancy theory (1964), leaders should focus on intrinsic values when motivating employees. The results indicate that leaders who focus on an employee's intrinsic values increased employee job satisfaction. The intrinsic value of belonging to the organization is analogous to the third

tier of Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs such as affection and belongingness, achieving goals, and achieving physiological and safety needs (Rossiter, 2009).

The third dimension of Maslow's (1970) needs occurs when humans long for affectionate relations with people, not to be confused with sex. As Rossiter (2009) explained, an affectionate relation is the encompassing need for affiliation, as well as being accepted. Affection and belongingness occurred among coworkers and created a sense of group identity, which is particularly valuable in accomplishing team goals. The arguments indicate that leaders must focus attention on developing an affectionate relationship with followers when increasing motivation.

### **Followership and Leadership**

Avolio et al. (2009) acknowledged that followership has an effect on leadership and the topic has not received sufficient focus in extant research. The researchers further postulated that previous scholars have conducted studies as if follower attributes are outcomes of the leadership process, instead of input. In fact, Popper (2011) agreed with Avolio et al. (2009) and completed an analysis of leadership from an evolutionary perspective.

Popper (2011) concluded that leadership must not exclude followership but instead, must include the psychology of followers. Researchers found that the means of influence on followership was not solely based on one level of administration. Popper argued that leaders at all organizational levels influence employees' performance and job satisfaction. The arguments indicate that studying followers and leadership together provides greater benefit to organizations. Similarly to Popper's (2011) belief, Riaz and

Haider (2010) posited that a leader must provide attention to followers' needs both inside and outside the organization, helping team members to move ahead consistently.

Followers adopt characteristics that are leader-like, which makes the current research even more significant because followers usually emulate the leadership style practiced by the leader. For example, when leaders choose transformational behaviors, followers' motivation increases, yielding improved employee performance (Baker et al., 2011). The previous arguments indicate that once followers understand the factors that positively affect job satisfaction, follows are able to transform into effective leaders and are able to take advantage of the career paths that provide the opportunities. Human resource managers have a role in employee's job satisfaction because of the responsibility for hiring competent leaders (Pereira & Gomes, 2012). The next section includes a discussion on human resources and leadership.

### **Human Resources and Leadership**

The human resource system affects employees' perceptions and creates organizational climate and culture. Gond, Igalens, Swaen, and El Akremi (2011) posited that management practices excluded the employee's contribution to responsible leadership. In fact, Pereira and Gomes (2012) recommended that human resources must design practices that link organizational goals with those of the employees. In addition, leaders must serve as a conduit to influence employee behaviors and attitudes, as well as motivate employee achievement beyond expectations. Human resource leaders must help when striving for a more aligned balance between managers and employees by giving employees speaking opportunities (Gond et al., 2011).

In a 2012 study, Pereira and Gomes agreed with Gond et al. (2011) and focused on measuring the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance. Following that quantitative inquiry, the authors concluded that future studies in the field must extend the focus beyond business practices and human resource systems. In fact, Pereira and Gomes (2012) suggested that including a future investigation that considers aligning business practices with employees' goals provides benefit. As a result, employees are able to relate to organizational climate and the hiring practices of human resources.

Managers will benefit from better alignment with human resource practices, as that alignment helps when creating shared perceptions among employee and is an essential characteristic of transformational leadership (Pereira & Gomes, 2012). The results provide benefits for managers when trying to increase an understanding of the leadership styles that meet employee's job satisfaction expectations. The results become instrumental when creating a one-to-one mentor program for continued learning and understanding employees' expectations (Gond et al., 2011). Utilizing the program helps managers when increasing job satisfaction and retaining valued employees.

Research implications suggest that human resource executives must better understand employees' expectations and attend to employees' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Yang et al., 2011). The results indicate that human resource leaders seeking greater understanding of employee motivations are able to increase job satisfaction while simultaneously strengthening employee commitment to the organization, resulting in reduced turnover. In fact, the results of Dincer and Dincer's (2013) study detailed the

dissatisfaction of graduates who accepted human resource management positions.

Twenty-three percent left the company after one year.

The enhanced understanding of leadership and job satisfaction could assist managers in efforts to increase the knowledge of the leadership style that best meet an employee's expectations of job satisfaction. The results benefit through creating a one-to-one mentor program to increase continued learning and understanding employee expectations. The results ensure that companies are able to be equipped with the tools that increase job satisfaction and retention of valued employees.

### **Previous Research on Leadership and Job Satisfaction**

Previous studies on leadership and job satisfaction include similar constructs to the current phenomenological study. The studies include a wide focus based on individual versus team performance; conditions that affect job satisfaction, motivational factors, and job performance. The majority of extant studies on transformational leadership include a focus on an individual level (Bennett, 2009; Furtner et al., 2012; Tebian, 2012). In a 2009 study, Braun et al. posited that team-level relationships are just as important to organizational performance as individual relationships and conducted a study on team performance.

Braun et al.'s (2013) investigation on leadership included Herzberg's et al. (1959) motivation factors as the conceptual framework. The population consisted of 39 teams comprised of 360 university employees and direct supervisors who were professors. Braun et al.'s (2013) longitudinal study occurred within a six-week interval, designed to reduce bias. The research findings disclosed positive relationships of team perceptions

when supervisors were transformational leaders aiming to increase job satisfaction. Braun et al. (2013) concluded that teams supervised by transformational leaders achieved higher levels of performance, which is consistent with the two-factor theory of Herzberg (1970).

Furthermore, Braun et al. (2013) argued that leaders must attend training to learn the dimensions of a transformational leader. The scholars recommended that organizations must introduce training approaches, which will adopt transformational leadership behaviors at both the individual and team levels. In doing so, leaders develop skills designed to empower, function as role models, create visions, serve as change agents, as well as social architects. Riaz and Haider (2010) offered a different viewpoint and argued that foresight is a primary quality of a leader and an innate quality. The researchers argued that human resource managers must look for the foresight ability when hiring for leadership positions.

Schaubroeck, Lam, and Peng (2011) agreed with Braun et al. (2009). The researchers concluded that perceptions of transformational leaders related to team performance included trust as the foundation. Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs primarily focused on individuals; but Schaubroeck et al. argued that promoting belongingness among teams function as a motivator leads to higher levels of performance.

Furtner et al. (2012) investigated the relationship between Bass's (1990) leadership model and self-leadership based on the concept that leading a person's own self associates with actually leading others. Leading a person's self involves goal setting, generation of intrinsic motivation, and visualizing successful performance. The skill

relates to the fifth level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, self-actualization, and Herzberg's motivation theory. Furtner et al. further argued that laissez-faire leadership negatively associates with self-leadership.

Furtner et al. (2012) conducted two studies investigating self-leadership and Bass's (1990) leadership model. Participants consisted of professionals from health, education, finance, services, industry, and gastronomy in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. The first investigation involved 447 professionals with leadership experience, while the second study consisted of 35 leaders and 151 followers. Furtner et al. (2012) designed the study to further examine self-leadership from both leaders' and followers' perspectives.

Both studies revealed that self-leadership positively associates with transformational leadership while negatively relating to laissez-faire leadership style. Some employees preferred the laissez-faire leadership approach, viewed as a non-active leadership style. Dependent on skill sets, some followers preferred to operate in a self-management mode, and welcomed a leader's guidance only when needed (Furtner et al., 2012). The researchers did not determine whether some employees only preferred the leader to utilize the laissez-faire approach. Instead, participants preferred some form of combination with transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership.

There were numerous studies on transformational leadership and job satisfaction. When transformational leaders establish high standards and goals, workers followed with enthusiasm, and inspiration (Bass, 1990; Harms & Crede, 2010). Inspiring leaders



empowered employees to move up the hierarchy of needs to achieve self-actualization and increase intrinsic motivation, thus leading to job satisfaction. Transformational and transactional leadership styles were the common factors for investigations conducted by Yueh et al. (2010) and Riaz and Haider (2010).

Yueh et al. (2010) focused on the effects of leadership styles for knowledge-based customer relationships, whereas Riaz and Haider's (2010) examined the role of transformational and transactional leadership in job and career satisfaction. Both studies provide relevance to the current investigation. In addition, Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory identified career satisfaction as one of the intrinsic motivations with a positive effect on job performance and employee satisfaction (Wells & Peachey, 2011). Findings from Wells and Peachey's (2011) study revealed that intrinsic motivators, career growth, and employee recognition positively affect job performance and employee satisfaction.

Riaz and Hadler's (2010) study focused on two leadership styles: transactional and transformational. The purpose of the investigation was to understand the effects of transformational and transactional leadership styles on job satisfaction. Riaz and Haider argued that leaders must ensure that followers have tools and information to remain productive. If leaders fail in providing followers with the necessary information and guidance, the results include distrust and de-motivation. The results indicate the importance of leaders remaining focused on followers' needs for promoting continued production.

Riaz and Haider (2010) concluded that both transformational and transactional leadership styles provide benefits in the workplace and based on the work environment,

leaders must decide on the appropriate approach. For example, a transformational supervisor must utilize contingent factors (transactional) for producing job satisfaction. Conversely, transactional managers must also apply transformational style approaches when promoting job satisfaction. Riaz and Haider revealed that participants who worked for private organizations and applied the results universally often experienced cultural challenges.

In a 2010 phenomenological investigation, Wenson focused on the effect of direct reports after coaching resulting in themes related to the conceptual framework of the present investigation. The themes from the present investigation were self-reflection (Maslow, 1970), motivation (Herzberg et al., 1959), and leadership (Bass, 2009). The current phenomenological method builds on Wenson's work, which failed to identify whether the direct reports resulted from management or hourly wageworkers.

Additionally, the themes from Wenson's study supported the foundational theories included in the current research. Wenson collected data through 20 in-depth interviews and subsequently analyzed data using Atlas TI software. The weakness in the inquiry centered on the inclusion of coaches and managers, while failing to investigate workers' direct reports' experiences.

The focus of most existing phenomenological studies are in the nursing field (Gazza, 2009; Linton & Farrell, 2009; McDermott-Levy, 2011). There are some studies related to human resources and leadership that exists (Alston, Dastoor, & Sosa-Fey, 2010; Gioia & Catalano, 2011; Gond et al., 2011; Islam & Muhammad, 2011; Kalshoven & Boon, 2012; Linton & Farrell, 2009). A review of the existing literature related to

human resources and leadership determined that weaknesses exist in the investigations. For example, Gioia and Catalano (2011) conducted a phenomenological investigation on employee turnover, concluding that managers needed additional training on tasks involving employees.

The weakness in Gioia and Catalano's (2011) inquiry stemmed from the study design. Specifically, observations were only from employees leaving the company, provided during exit interviews, suggesting that workers' responses are exposed to separation biases. Gioia and Catalano concluded that managers must understand the activities that motivate current employees. Activities include discussions with employees concerning roles, the organization, and other factors that influence tenure, and the decision to remain with the organization.

Linton and Farrell (2009) conducted a phenomenological study using semi-structured interviews to discuss leadership. One of the weaknesses in the approach was the lack of gender balance, which the authors acknowledged, and recommended replication of research with a larger, and more gender-balanced sample. Gond et al. (2011) used a qualitative exploratory method to determine how human resources contributed to responsible leadership. The weakness of the exploration relates to the restriction of feedback only from managers and not from employees, which is similar to the weakness of Wenson's (2010) study. Thus, the authors recommended replicating the investigation by considering employees' viewpoints. The aim of the current phenomenological study was to address the gap in existing literature and focus on the lack of employees' perspectives on leadership and job satisfaction.

I reviewed several quantitative studies to provide an understanding of the leadership style that produced the highest level of job satisfaction (Handsome, 2009). While quantitative studies contributed to the understanding of job satisfaction and leadership styles, the quantitative methodology did not provide underlying reasons for the results. A majority of researchers in the existing literature observed participants and organizations from the academic, hotel, or medical fields. Moreover, several of the studies from existing studies occurred outside the United States, which poses a cultural gap. Results of existing studies on populations that are outside the U.S. do not have the same organizational cultural implications. The findings provide challenges for U.S. managers of organizations when implementing research findings in U.S. based organizations.

While there is a consensus that transformational and transactional leadership styles have a place in managing employees, no agreement exists on interchangeable leadership styles (Riaz & Haider, 2010). Bennett (2009) proposed that transactional leadership was an extension of transformational leadership style. Others believed that leaders would achieve the highest performance when supervisors utilize both leadership styles simultaneously (Bass, 1990).

Additionally, the literature review identified several studies that included discussions on followership and leadership, especially from the perspective that leadership studies must include the psychological perspectives of followers (Popper, 2011). Understanding the psychology of an employee's perspective on leadership styles is an appropriate research topic for qualitative studies. I reached this decision after

reviewing over 150 articles and numerous dissertations related to leadership styles and job satisfaction. I identified the gap in the existing literature that no existing studies captured the perspectives of hourly waged workers on leadership style and job satisfaction, while working in the human resources field. The lack of studies utilizing the stated concepts required that I design a phenomenological investigation for closing the existing literature gap.

### **Gaps in the Literature**

The following gaps have been filled, or partially filled, by this study:

*Gap 1: A lack of qualitative studies on leadership styles and job satisfaction*

The problem addressed in this phenomenological study was to determine which leadership style best meets job satisfaction for nonmanagement employees. The findings can assist supervisors in encouraging and motivating staff members. Several quantitative studies provided details on leadership behaviors and employee satisfaction (Chung-Kai & Chia-Hung, 2009; Elci, et al., 2012; Larson & Vinberg, 2010; Pradeep & Prabhu, 2011; Yuk, 2012; Yurtkoru & Ekmekci, 2011). The current phenomenological study addresses the lack of qualitative studies on leadership styles in conjunction with job satisfaction of employees. This qualitative study extends the existing literature with research results on the leadership style that best satisfies job satisfaction based on the perceptions and lived experiences of hourly waged workers.

The literature review disclosed an enormous amount of research conducted on transformational, transactional, and laissez faire leadership styles (Avolio et al., 2009; Bass, 2009; Bodla & Nawazm 2010; Braun et al., 2013; Chaudhry & Husnain, 2012;

Hamstra et al., 2011; Jung, Yammarino, & Lee, 2009; Li & Hung, 2009; Mancheno-Smoak et al., 2009; Northouse, 2013; Pieterse, van Knippenberg, 2010; Pradeep & Prabhu, 2011; Rothfelder, et al., 2013; Schippers, & Stam, 2010; Wang & Rode, 2010; Yuki, 2012). Some studies were conducted internationally posing a cultural challenge for generalizing the findings. The majority of these studies used the quantitative approach with participants such as managers, college students, faculty members, and professors, excluding the perceptions of hourly waged workers. The current study addresses this gap with the inclusion of the perceptions of employees on how all three leadership styles influence their job satisfaction. The next section includes a discussion on the findings for Gap 1 supported by references from the Chapter 2 literature review.

*Findings for Gap 1: A lack of qualitative studies on leadership styles and job satisfaction*

Findings from the current qualitative study extends the literature showing that, from the 25 in-depth interviews conducted, 100% of the participants perceive that transformational leaders positively influence job satisfaction; 64% of participants feel that the rewards and feedback dimensions of transactional leaders positively influence job satisfaction; and 32% view the hands-off approach of a laissez-faire leader as positive influence on job satisfaction. Findings from the current study support Chaudhry and Husnain (2012) who argued that transactional leaders significantly motivate employees, based on job responsibilities. The current study extends this research with findings showing a transactional leader that provides rewards and corrective feedback positively influences job satisfaction. This finding addresses Gap 1 and help leaders to understand

which specific characteristic of a transactional leader yields a positive influence on job satisfaction.

Rehman et al. (2012), Chaudhry and Husnain (2012), and Voon et al. (2011) presented research findings, which suggested that leadership styles influence job satisfaction. Rehman et al. conducted a quantitative study and contended that only the contingent reward dimension of transactional leadership has an important relationship with two elements of job satisfaction: working condition and work assignment. The current findings revealed an additional dimension of a transactional leader that results in a positive influence on job satisfaction: corrective feedback.

Voon et al.'s (2011) conducted the quantitative research in Malaysia collecting data through questionnaires. The findings from Voon et al.'s research depicted that transformational leaders positively influence job satisfaction, whereas transactional leaders negatively affect job satisfaction. The recent phenomenological research addresses Gap 1 and extends the literature with enhanced knowledge to supervisors on which leader behaviors of each leadership style influences job satisfaction.

*Gap 2: Limited research focused on which leadership style best meets job satisfaction for nonmanagement employees*

A review of existing literature (Basic, et al., 2010; Lee, et al., 2011; McDermott, 2010; Northouse, 2013; Rehman et al., 2012; Rosseau, 2011; Van den Berg, & Wilderom, 2011; Voon et al., 2011; Zhu, et al., 2012) demonstrates that leadership styles contribute to job satisfaction and that leaders must be skilled to effectively motivate employees. An enormous amount of research exists (Baker, et al., 2011; Davidson, et al., 2010; Farah &

Halawi, 2010; Francis, et al., 2010; Furnham et al., 2009; Riaz & Hadler, 2010; Rothfelder, et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2011) on leadership styles and job satisfaction of health professionals, hotel executives, and middle and top-level managers. There has been little research focused on which leadership style best meets job satisfaction for hourly subordinate employees. This study addressed this gap by examining the experiences of hourly wage employees as it relates to which leadership style maximizes job satisfaction.

*Findings for Gap 2: Limited research focused on which leadership style best meets job satisfaction for nonmanagement employees*

Findings from the recent study showed that transformational leaders best meet employees' job satisfaction. Additional findings reveal that the reward dimension of transformational and transactional leadership styles could combine to positively influence job satisfaction. Even though Bennett (2009) examined leadership styles, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire, preferred by subordinates, the 150 participants consisted of Information technology professionals. As with the current study, Bennett's findings also indicated that subordinates prefer transformational leaders.

Braun et al.'s (2013) longitudinal study on motivational factors and leadership styles showed that University employees and professors prefer a transformational leader to increase job satisfaction. Riaz and Haider (2010) conducted a quantitative study on the role of transformational and transactional leadership on career satisfaction with lower and middle level managers as participants. The current qualitative study addresses Gap 2



through 25 in-depth interviews of hourly wagedworkers with findings that a transformational leader best meets job satisfaction.

*Gap 3: Lack of research on effective leadership styles for hourly wagedworkers*

Arguably, managers must consider whether hourly wagedworkers experience job satisfaction above achieving maximum profits. Several scholars (Farah & Halwai, 2010; Tebian, 2012; Wells & Peachey, 2011; Wu, 2009) conducted studies providing valuable conclusions on the concepts; however, a decision on an effective leadership style for leaders who manage hourly wagedworkers remains elusive. With the prediction of a 7% increase in managerial positions over the next ten years (Lockard & Wolf, 2012), the number of staff members will also increase, creating a greater need to focus on how leadership approaches could affect job satisfaction for hourly wagedworkers (Bodla & Nawaz, 2010; Davis, 2014; Rehman et al., 2012; Rosseau, 2011; Yip & Rowlinson, 2009). Research on ways leaders can attain company profits is plentiful (Farah & Halwai, 2010; Tebian, 2012; Wells & Peachey, 2011; Wu, 2009) but not on how to achieve job satisfaction of subordinate employees.

The literature review presented in the chapter revealed that leadership styles evolved from the times when leaders relied on command and control (Bennett, 2009; Long & Thean, 2011; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). While some studies (Harms & Crede, 2010; Northouse, 2013; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012; Wang & Rode, 2010) provided managerial insights on productive leadership styles, previous research has not adequately addressed whether nonmanagement employees agree with the findings. This represents a gap in the literature addressed by the current phenomenological research. For example,

Braun et al. (2013) studied leadership styles except the study was aimed at supervisors who were university professors. In addition, Furtner et al. (2012) studied leadership and job satisfaction, but this study was aimed at industry professionals instead of subordinate employees.

*Findings for Gap 3: Lack of research on effective leadership styles for hourly wageworkers*

Findings revealed 100% of hourly wageworkers' felt that the transformational leader positively influenced job satisfaction, transactional leaders – 64%, and laissez-faire leaders – 34%. Previous studies on effective leadership styles used supervisors, industry professionals, low and middle level managers (Braun et al., 2013; Furtner et al., 2012).

There is a consensus among scholars (Andrews et al., 2011; Bennett, 2009; Burns, 1978; Furtner et al., 2012; Ghorbanian, et al., 2012; Long & Thean, 2011; Mahmood et al., 2012; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012) that transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles are the most commonly practiced leadership styles in today's organizations. Little research addresses the influence of these leadership styles on job satisfaction for staff members. The current study extends the literature and addresses the gap by identifying effective leadership styles for nonmanagement team members.

In addition, some scholars concluded that laissez-faire leaders did not offer any positive influence on job satisfaction (Bennett, 2009; Furtner et al., 2012; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). The current study refutes this viewpoint with 34% of participants responding that laissez-faire leaders positively influence job satisfaction. Dependent on skill sets, some followers preferred to operate in a self-management mode, and welcomed

a leader's guidance only when needed (Furtner et al., 2012). The current study extends the literature on effective leadership styles disclosing that employees perceive that specific aspects of a laissez-faire leader positively influence job satisfaction.

*Gap 4: Limited research on the effects of leadership styles on stress reduction*

The literature review that focused on benefits in the workplace revealed that stress affects job satisfaction (Rousseau, 2011; Yip & Rowlinson, 2009). Researchers (Elci, et al., 2012; McDermott, 2010; Rosseau, 2010) concluded that work-related stress could result in high turnover, which included executives and managers as participants. McDermott (2010) proposed that transformational leadership is a tool for leaders to reduce work related stress, increasing employee motivation. The quantitative study used participants identified as hourly wageworkers to middle-level managers. Weaknesses of this study included the cross-sectional approach limiting interpretation and understanding of the data related to employees. The current phenomenological study extends the literature and included hourly wageworkers to understand the influence of leadership styles on their job satisfaction, reducing stress in the workplace.

*Findings for Gap 4: Limited research on the effects of leadership styles on stress reduction*

The findings of the current study showed that the participants preferred a leader who values my opinions, (b) encourages creativity, (c) maintains positive relationship, (d) encourages motivation, (e) serves as a mentor/coach, (f) practices multiple communication methods, (g) encourages decisions making, (h) gives performance feedback, and (i) provides recognition and rewards. Each of these leader behaviors is

characteristic of a transformational leader. McDermott (2010) proposed, from a quantitative study, that transformational leadership is a tool for leaders to reduce work related stress, increasing employee motivation. Even though participants consisted of hourly wageworkers to middle-level managers, McDermott's quantitative approach did not allow the researchers to gather data on specific leader behaviors that reduced stress in the workplace. Yip and Rowlinson (2009) postulated that leaders who demonstrated a priority for high production without regard to the job satisfaction of the employee contributed to high levels of stress in the workplace. The current phenomenological study addressed Gap 4 providing specific leader characteristics that helped to reduce stress for staff members.

*Gap 5: A lack of qualitative studies on job dissatisfaction and turnover involving nonmanagement employees*

There is an extensive body of research on leadership styles, motivation, and job satisfaction (Ahmad, 2009; Furnham et al., 2009; Handsome, 2009; Kaur, 2013; Malik, et al., 2010; Mancheno-Smoak et al., 2009; Robbins et al., 2010). There is also a wealth of research on job dissatisfaction in the workplace associated with a link to turnover (Caldwell, et al., 2010; Davidson, et al, 2010; Delobelle at al., 2011; Kim et al., 2010; Rehman, et al., 2012; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Yang et al., 2011). While the inference from the studies support Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs, the researchers focused on job satisfaction of managers and supervisors, excluding perceptions of staff members. The current phenomenological study addresses this gap. I examined the perceptions of

subordinate employees identifying specific leader characteristics that contribute to dissatisfaction and turnover.

*Findings for Gap 5: A lack of qualitative studies on job dissatisfaction and turnover involving nonmanagement employees*

The current qualitative study addressed Gap 5 providing specific leader characteristics that contribute to discontentment leading to turnover: fear of reprisal in decision-making, shows resistance to change, gives minimal encouragement and guidance, and publicly reprimands for poor performance. The research results extend the literature on job dissatisfaction and turnover for employees. A review of the literature showed the existence of a link between job dissatisfaction and turnover (Kim et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2011). Samuel and Chipunza (2009) argued that supervisors are responsible for leading discontented and disconnected employees but scholars and prior research did not reveal specific leader behaviors that contribute to dissatisfaction.

*Gap 6: A lack of qualitative studies on leadership versus management with nonmanagement employees*

Several scholars conducted research on leadership versus management (Bennett, 2009; Kotter, 2013; Northouse, 2013; Simha & Lemak, 2010;). The findings from Kotter's study revealed how leadership differs from management. The results do not indicate the inclusion of employees. The current study extends this literature through the findings based on the perceptions of subordinate employees' viewpoints on the influence of job satisfaction based on supervisors who lead and those who are more interested in managing.

*Findings for Gap 6: A lack of qualitative studies on leadership versus management with nonmanagement employees*

The current study addresses Gap 6 with research results on how staff members view leaders versus managers. Findings revealed that (a) transformational leaders best meet job satisfaction through motivating, encouraging, and inspiring; (b) the common characteristics of a transformational and transactional leader preferred by employees are rewards and feedback; and (c) the least preferred characteristic of a transactional leader is more aligned with managing employees: control, take corrective action, and resistance to change.

Northouse (2013) posited that leadership produces change and movement, whereas management results in order and consistency. Managers focus more on problem solving while leaders align, motivate, and inspire people. Alvesson and Willmott (2012) advocated that managers should recognize the experience of workers, and respect and encourage the freedom of employees when aligning self-actualization needs with the interest of the organization. Scholars conducted research on leadership versus management (Bennett, 2009; Simha & Lemak, 2010) without the perspectives of hourly wageworkers. The recent qualitative study addresses this gap and includes details on specific leader behaviors related to management and leadership.

*Gap 7: A lack of qualitative studies on motivation and job satisfaction for hourly wageworkers*

A review of the literature showed studies on Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which relates to personal motivation (Lunenburg, 2011; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Vroom's

Expectancy Theory was important to the current study to understand how employees are motivated. Samuel and Chipunza's (2009) study extended their research to include turnover intentions based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors but was conducted in public and private organizations in South Africa using 145 respondents, presenting challenges with cultural differences. The researchers did not include subordinate employees in the study. The current study addresses this gap through the perceptions of hourly wagers on the influence of the three leadership styles on employee motivation.

*Findings for Gap 7: A lack of qualitative studies on motivation and job satisfaction for hourly wagers.*

The findings of the current research addresses Gap 7 and extends the literature depicting specific leader behaviors that influences motivation: encourages creativity, maintains positive relationship with employee, encourages motivation, provides rewards and recognition, encourages decision-making, values my opinions, serves as mentor/coach, and practices multiple communication methods. The literature review shows previous studies on motivation and job satisfaction (Lunenburg, 2011; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). Findings from the prior studies reveal that intrinsic motivational variables influence retention and job satisfaction. Furnham et al. (2009) concluded, from the quantitative research, that organizational leaders must conduct further inquiry on the factors that contribute to motivation and work attitudes, with the goal of increasing job satisfaction and performance. The current study extends the literature on motivation, job satisfaction, and leadership styles.

*Gap 8: A lack of qualitative studies on human resources employees  
(nonmanagement) and leadership styles*

Human resource leaders have a responsibility to hire skilled professionals and to provide training that incorporates flexibility and agility when adjusting leadership styles according to the needs of individual employees (Gond et al., 2011; Pereira & Gomes; 2012; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Yang et al., 2011). Samuel and Chipunza (2009) agreed with Yang et al. (2011) that human resources practices should promote self-esteem of employees. Due to the omission of hourly wageworkers in these studies, considerable work remains for understanding the needs and expectations of employees. The current phenomenological study addresses the gap in the literature of determining the leadership style that best meets job satisfaction of hourly wageworkers employed in the human resources area, reflecting their perceptions of leadership quality of human resources leaders.

*Findings for Gap 8: A lack of qualitative studies on human resources employees  
(nonmanagement) and leadership styles*

The current research addresses Gap 8 and extends the literature on human resources and leadership styles. The findings show that, based on 25 in-depth interviews, subordinate employees prefer a transformational leader. The hourly wageworkers also shared that the rewards and feedback dimensions of a transactional leader as well as the hands-off approach of a laissez-faire leader positively influence job satisfaction. Human resources leaders could use this enhanced knowledge to develop training and mentor



programs for supervisors to improve job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and positively influence the organizational climate and culture.

According to Gond, et al. (2011), human resources practices create organizational climate and culture. In a 2012 study, Pereira and Gomes agreed with Gond et al. (2011) and focused on measuring the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance. Following that quantitative inquiry, the authors concluded that future studies in the field must extend the focus and consider aligning employees' goals with business practices, creating shared perceptions. The current study extended this literature with a focus on how transformational leaders promote shared perceptions. From Yang et al.'s, (2011) study, the results indicate that human resources leaders who seek a greater understanding of employee motivations are able to increase job satisfaction while simultaneously strengthening employee commitment to the organization, resulting in reduced turnover.

### **Summary and Transition**

Many managers fail to realize the impact of leadership styles on job satisfaction of employees (Kim et al, 2010). The lack of understanding contributes to low job satisfaction, leading to high employee turnover, decreased employee productivity, and company failure (Yang, Wan, & Fu, 2011). The current study encompassed theories on transformational leadership, transactional leadership, laissez-faire leadership, Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, and Herzberg's (1959) dual factor of motivation. Additionally, the literature review exposed other leadership styles viewed as substitutes for leadership (Northouse, 2013).

During a review of the literature, I explored the constructs important to the current phenomenological study, helping to identify the lack of available research on leadership style and job satisfaction for hourly wage employees. The gap in the literature demonstrated a need for conducting research to better understand the expectations of the preferred leadership styles that meet the expectations of job satisfaction for hourly wage level of employees. Bennett (2009) suggested that transformational and transactional leadership styles are interchangeable. Additionally, a belief exists that laissez-faire leadership, which is mostly passive and inactive, still has a purpose in the workplace (Robbins, Decenzo, & Coulter, 2010).

The current phenomenological study extends the research on job satisfaction and leadership styles. Conclusive findings revealed that transformational leadership styles best meets job satisfaction expectations of employees. The existing literature did not adequately address subordinates' perspectives on job satisfaction and leadership styles. Based on this gap, this current study focused on employee feedback and the possible impacts the participants believe leadership style on job satisfaction levels.

In Chapter 3, I outline the design of the study, including the advantages of utilizing the phenomenological method, the basis for research questions, target population and sampling procedures. Additionally, there are discussions on the informed consent process, instrumentation and materials utilized in the study, the data collection and data analysis process, reliability and validity, and the role I served in as the researcher. Finally, there are discussions on issues of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and a summary and transition section.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

In Chapter 3, I present discussion on the qualitative methodology with a phenomenological design for understanding the perceptions of employees on job satisfaction and leadership styles. The purpose of the investigation was to explore 25 workers' responses to interview questions related to three common leadership styles and the influence on job satisfaction. For the current study, I utilized a homogenous purposive sampling method to select the employees who participated in semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. I used the telephone to interview two employees, due to continuous conflict with participants' schedules preventing face-to-face interviews. Participants in the study were from four educational institutions in the state of North Carolina, but all participants remained unidentified due to anonymity requirements.

Conducting the inquiry, I utilized the transcendental phenomenological methodology for understanding the perceptions of hourly wageworkers' feelings about leaders' behaviors, and job satisfaction. To allow the emergence of rich data captured from real life work experiences with leadership styles and job satisfaction, I used an in-depth interview approach. In addition, to gain an understanding from varying perspectives, employee selection criteria included different years of work experiences with first level supervisors, various age levels, and various numbers of performance review discussions with supervisors.

The first section of the chapter includes an overview of the research design, target population, and sampling procedures, discussion on the informed consent procedure, sample size, confidentiality, geographic location, instrumentation, and materials. The latter section of the chapter includes discussion on data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity procedures, the role I play as the researcher, discussions on issues of trustworthiness, ethical considerations, ending with a summary and transition to Chapter 4.

### **Research Design**

A qualitative approach, transcendental phenomenological research method, provided an understanding of participants' experiences of the phenomenon. I selected a method that resulted in the emergence of common themes. The transcendental phenomenological method isolates the experiences of participants when studying the nature of the experience. Creswell (2009) proposed that the transcendental phenomenological method provides benefits when exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups related to a social or human phenomenon. The arguments indicate that the phenomenological method provides consistency with the needs of the current exploration.

Several data analyses methods were available for evaluating participants' responses. A modified version of Van Kaam phenomenological data (Moustakas, 1994) analysis approach provided the guidance for developing themes and subthemes of observations from current study. The data analysis method provided benefits for outlining

steps that structured and balanced the objective and subjective approaches to knowledge (Moustakas, 1994; Phillips-Rula, Strunk, & Pickler, 2011).

Moustakas (1994) recommended that the first step for researchers was to select a topic in order to establish questions related to the phenomenon. The next step was conducting a comprehensive literature review. The review was beneficial for establishing criteria to locate appropriate co-researchers, for providing details on the scope of the study, developing questions, and conducting the interviews (Phillips-Rula et al., 2011). Once I received approval for the selected topic, I commenced the literature review.

Moustakas (1994) believed that a researcher using the modified version of the Van Kaam method is an approach that allows respondents to return to experiences. In addition, the method creates a comprehensive description, necessary for accurately portraying the essence of the experience. Avoiding assumptions occurred by accurately describing the phenomenon as seen through the eyes of participants.

Using the stated data analysis method, I accomplished the accurate description of the phenomenon by listening to the participants' experiences, probing further for or additional insight, and accurately capturing employees' responses. For the current inquiry, the data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews that involved a series of open-ended questions and lasted an average of 45 minutes to an hour (see Appendix A). Additional documentation consisted of field notes and a journal I created as part of the data collection process. The study questions helped when exploring participants' lived experiences with job satisfaction, as related to three common leadership styles.

### **Justification for Research Design**

The value of a qualitative investigation is: (a) the opportunity to ask open-ended questions, (b) ability to collect data through observations, and (c) the ability to include documents with information relevant to the study. Creswell (2013) recommended that a qualitative approach fit research questions as related to a person's experience or the meaning people assigned to the occurrences. Conducting the investigation allowed exploring the views of the staff that actually experienced the subordinate and supervisor relationships.

The phenomenological approach was the best-suited methodology for the investigation because the approach entailed the study of several participants. The approach I utilized was similar to the one Creswell (2009) proposed. The approach allowed an examination of psychological concepts that isolated experiences in such a manner that was best suited for understanding the nature of experiences.

Quantitative methods test theoretical generalizations through experimentation. According to Creswell (2013), the quantitative methods involved complex experiments with many variables and treatments. Quantitative designs also include elaborate structural equation methods that incorporate causal paths and multiple variables. Utilizing the quantitative method was not useful for clarifying and understanding individual experiences with leadership and job satisfaction. In conclusion, the qualitative method supports exploring while quantitative research tests. The nature of the current study was to focus on capturing underlying reasons for selecting a particular leadership style; therefore, the qualitative approach was more appropriate to capture the data for the study.

### **Research Questions**

I designed the questions to capture participant's perspectives relative to job satisfaction, and for exploring participant's meaningful interactions with first line supervisors during workplace experiences. To encourage honest responses, I established anonymity by conducting the interview in a private entrance to an environment away from the workplace or a site selected by the participant.

The following questions guided this inquiry:

1. How do the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles of first level managers influence job satisfaction for nonmanagement employees?

*Sub-question:* What are some leader characteristics that positively influence job satisfaction?

2. How do employees perceive the difference in job satisfaction based on in transformational, laissez-faire, and transactional leadership styles?

*Sub-question:* How do supervisor actions influence employee job appreciation?

### **Target Population and Sampling Procedures**

The target population of the study included 25 hourly wage employees from educational institutions who worked in the human resources area in the state of North Carolina. Saturation occurred once I completed 25 interviews that included employees from four educational institutions.

According to Connelly (2010), in a phenomenological study, the sample size is smaller than would be required for a quantitative investigation. One phenomenological study included as few as seven participants that assisted researchers with exploring a phenomenon of interest (Joromahum & Fowler, 2010). Moustakas (1994) agreed that the use of a small sample size allow researchers to conduct more in-depth interviews.

A purposive sampling method and phenomenological study are the most appropriate means of selecting and interviewing participants for the current inquiry (Creswell, 2013). In fact, purposive sampling helps researchers when selecting participants with real life experiences of a phenomenon, allowing participants to share direct experiences when responding to research questions. The sampling method allowed maximum variation through supervisor-employee experiences, achieved by including participants with varying degrees of age by groups, job tenure, and number of performance reviews (Creswell, 2013). In addition, I selected the homogenous purposive sampling method because including participants who had experiences relating to the phenomenon in the current investigation provided benefits.

I utilized 25 participants in the study that ensured sufficient data collection. The strategy allowed the ability to: (a) establish themes, (b) allow data collection from multiple sources, and (c) incorporate feedback from participants. Participants had different demographics, distinct tenure with the organization, a diverse number of performance discussions, and various perceptions. Conducting follow up interviews was not necessary because I repeated responses to ensure better understanding during the interviews.



Data saturation in qualitative studies occurs when participants stop revealing new data that changes the outcome of the study (Pereira, 2012). I reached data saturation with 25 participants because no new data emerged after completing 25 interviews (Pereira, 2012). I found Pereira's (2012) argument true that interviewing more than 25 participants impedes a researcher's ability to comprehend the study phenomenon.

### **Informed Consent**

Yang et al. (2011) obtained consent from participants for studying employee turnover and intention strategies. Elzahiri (2010) obtained consent letters for conducting an investigation on the impact of principal's leadership style on teacher motivation. The results indicate that providing informed consent provides importance when working with live participants. Participants for the current investigation received consent letters to ensure an understanding of the confidential nature of the current exploration and for ensuring the anonymity of the responses (see Appendix D). Each participant agreed to participate in the study and following is a review of the terms of confidentiality.

Participants were fully aware that only I would know the identity of each respondent with an assurance of privacy of names. Applying an identification number to each participant's record further enforced anonymity. For example, I assigned P1 to the first participant and up to P25 for subsequent participants. I ensured that each participant remained aware of the option to withdraw from participation at any stage of the study, by merely indicating the desire. Discussions on data storage, the disposal process, and the shredding of data after five years, promote trust in researchers (Creswell, 2013).

### **Instrumentation and Materials**

In preparation for the structured interview, the respondents or I chose a setting that ensured minimal distraction and comfort. Participants received information on the purpose of the study and the format of the semi-structured interview, including the expected length of interviews. In addition, respondents received contact information along with permission to ask any clarifying questions about the structured interview and the recording process. I expressed appreciation for respondent participation and ensured respondents of the confidentiality of information. In addition, respondents agreed to the request to audiotape the interview with an opportunity to review the interviewers' notes.

Participants understood that no names or other identifying information are in the study results and were informed of the manner responses contributed to learning more about the topic. The interview questions incorporated the characteristics of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles, based on inquiries used in other phenomenological studies. When taking notes, I remembered to balance the eye contact with participants while recording information (Creswell, 2013).

The central questions and sub-questions represented the core of the interview protocol, designed to encourage participants to discuss responses to the questions openly and honestly. I transcribed all recordings and used the member checking process to verify that the transcripts conveyed the information provided by respondents, thus ensuring clarity and accuracy (Creswell, 2013).

### **Data Collection**

Different methods for data collection of qualitative data include interviews, observations, and focus groups. Furthermore, Anderson (2010) provided guidance and argued that researchers must render considerable focus on the objective of the study before selecting a data collection method. For example, the researcher must determine if the qualitative research method is appropriate for studying a particular phenomenon in depth. Rowley (2012) agreed with Anderson's (2010) perspective on the methods for utilizing qualitative data collection. Semi-structured interviews allowed discussions with participants on attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, or experiences (Rowley, 2012).

Semi-structured and face-to-face interviews served as the data collection instrument for the current research. Eligibility for participants was a nonmanagement employee working in the human resources area, reporting to a first level supervisor that is at least 18 years of age, and participated in at least one annual performance review. I used the Epoché process designed for creating an atmosphere and rapport for conducting the interviews (Moustakas, 1994). The process encouraged everyone to suspend all judgments, suppositions, and preconceived knowledge relative to the phenomenon.

Five days before the scheduled interviews, participants received confirmation to ensure participation. I informed each participant of the opportunity to receive study findings after results were approved; however, no one requested the data. All interviews took place at a location that provided privacy and anonymity for the team members. I recommended and agreed upon by each participant or a site selected by the participant.

After each set of interviews, I produced the transcriptions. I made a comparison of final transcriptions with the audio version of the interviews. Backup recorders were available in case of failure of primary recording devices. I transcribed each response to each interview question to maintain anonymity. The NVivo version 10 software assisted with organizing and categorizing the data along with coding the data. Coding describes a component of the data analysis process to develop themes, categories, nodes, and concepts from the data (Schönfelder, 2011).

A laptop containing the transcriptions and the data is password protected and I am the only person who knows the password. The strategy is to protect identity of study participants. I labeled documents and tapes, kept in a confidential storage unit with a key. Since qualitative data is voluminous, the use of folders helped when organizing data in a useful manner for easy management.

### **Data Analysis**

In a 1994 study, Moustakas explained how the phenomenological methods provide usefulness when revisiting experiences designed to obtain comprehensive descriptions. Moustakas found that the descriptions emerged through open-ended questions and dialogue. The participants in the present study received inquiries, thus allowing the sharing of stories and experiences. Once all interviews were completed, general meanings emerged. The process of coding individual interview transcripts ensured that common themes emerged. I utilized two processes for data analysis, hand coding and automated coding to identify themes and subthemes.

The use of codes assists researchers with the assignment of units of meaning to the descriptive or inferred (Schönfelder, 2011). The creation of codes represents the words, phrases, or sentences, allowing the focus on the participants' intended messages. Codes occurred at different levels of analysis, alternating from descriptive to inferential codes (Schönfelder, 2011). Hand coding provides importance because an initial data collection phase resulted in a high volume of information gathered from the interviews, recordings, notes, and documents. I did not use any pre-coded themes but instead, allowed themes to emerge naturally.

When conducting data analysis, I used a modification of the Van Kaam method of analysis of phenomenological data (Moustakas, 1994). The seven-step process requires using the complete transcription of each participant for:

1. Listing and preliminary grouping.
2. Reduction and elimination.
3. Clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents.
4. Final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application of validation.
5. Using the relevant validated invariant constituents and themes to construct an individual textural description of the experience, including verbatim examples from the transcribed interview.
6. Constructing an individual structural description of the experience based on the individual textural description and imaginative variation.

7. Constructing for each participant, a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience incorporating the invariant constituents and themes.

Ballaro and O'Neil (2013) used similar data analysis methods in a phenomenological study focused on transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. The use of the method indicates that appropriateness for use in the current study that is similar to Ballaro and O'Neil's research.

Throughout the process described above, I remained aware of potential bias when interpreting the message that the participants held about the phenomenon. For example, the opportunity for bias existed if the interviewer's perception influenced the hand coding (Beverland et al., 2010). I reduced bias by utilizing questions as the coding guide and by allowing participants, if requested, to review the notes. Flexibility in coding provides importance when ensuring that the coding actually reflected the views of participants. In addition, flexibility allows for the emergence of additional codes that materialized during the analysis.

Once I completed the data sorting and diagramming of categories, the NVivo 10 software helped when automating data analysis. The automated process was instrumental in displaying an accurate picture of the interview responses. The software tool supported every stage of the current study, inclusive of the earliest idea to the formulation of conclusions, themes, trends, and recommendations.

The NVivo 10 software organized data by internal, external, and memo sources, which provided the ability to code sources by topic through utilizing nodes. Finally,

themes and subthemes emerged; however, I initially focused on individual themes. The NVivo 10 software assisted with counting multiple responses within a theme. The software was not capable of addressing reliability because of the fluid manner themes emerged. To ensure the integrity of the results and the confidentiality of the participants, I transcribed all interviews and recordings personally.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Reliability is the consistency of a response across multiple assessments (Lubans et al., 2011). The process required being aware of any potential bias incorporated into the research findings, thus promoting trustworthiness. Member checking assisted the ability to minimize bias. In addition, I allowed each participant to review the captured responses from interviews, if requested, and to ensure that I accurately interpreted the data. Because I was consistent in repeating responses back to the participants, some participants did not request to review the responses. Reliability guided the process in presenting findings in an honest and accurate manner in chapter 4.

Colleagues' review involved the use of other researchers for purposes of outside professional help and was appropriate when the aim is to challenge any theories that emerged from data (Creswell, 2013). Three peer researchers reviewed the findings of the present study, which was helpful, and allowed the ability to gain valuable input on the research results. As Buchbinder (2010) noted, "the most coherent validity and reliability model is that of Lincoln and Guba (1985), who claimed that qualitative research must develop its unique language, suited to its epistemology" (p. 107).

Researchers must utilize four criteria when establishing validity, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Beverland et al. (2010) utilized the four paradigms in a study on conflict management and found that validity has two main goals. First, the aim is to confirm the authenticity of the analysis and that researchers accurately captured participants' experiences, and perspectives. Validity also helps to remain conscious of biases and distortions. Second, validity assists with balancing power in the relationship between researchers and the participants.

Credibility relates to the extent data results appear to be acceptable presentations of participants' views (Beverland et al., 2010). I achieved credibility through member checking and engaging colleagues for reviewing findings. Transferability describes the degree results in a certain context applies to other context (Beverland et al., 2010). Transferability occurred through variation in participant selection. I completed the selection of a population with variability of demographic characteristics through the review of each employee's acceptance to participate.

Dependability occurs through triangulation (Beverland et al., 2010). The current exploration included multiple interviews and field notes that ensured data triangulation occurred. Confirmability is the extent the interpretations of interviews accurately reflected the participants' intended messages as opposed to researcher bias (Beverland et al., 2010). Confirmability happened by allowing participants to review notes and captured responses that ensured that I accurately captured the opinions of subjects. Once I completed interview transcriptions, participants had a choice of receiving either



transcription of the interview or a two to three-page summary. None of the participants asked for a transcription or the summary.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Data collection and management techniques play significant roles in qualitative research plans. Adopting a protocol such as an instrument for collecting data assists with avoiding any introduction of bias. The first role of researchers involves the ability to make sure that respondents were comfortable with the interview process and anonymity (Creswell, 2013). I assisted respondents with readiness of the Epoché approach. Once the respondent demonstrated willingness for the interview to begin, I asked the first question. A second role is for researchers to focus on the ability to ask probing questions for capturing in-depth information. The third role for researchers entailed organizational skills necessary to manage the volume of data, including field notes, and articles (Creswell, 2013). I used folders, sticky notes, highlighters, and laptop files to organize and analyze the transcribed data.

Themes derived from the data sources emerged when establishing comprehensive themes. The phenomenological approach is inductive by nature, allowing findings to emerge throughout the data collection process. As participants described experiences of the phenomenon, I observed and captured developing trends. Participants and I engaged personal backgrounds, histories, and contexts to the process, requiring a refrain from making any assumptions and interpretations based on any one person's background. The respondents were aware of the right to review any notes and ask any questions for clarity.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

One focus of the interview protocol was ensuring that participants understood the anonymity of any involvement in the study including the protection of identities. I made every effort possible to make the participant feel that I am trustworthy during the data collection process. I reviewed the consent forms with a focus on confidentiality and inquired about clarity for questions on the form with participants. According to Deluga (2011), building trust creates effective leader-member exchange. The use of the interview protocol, providing consent forms, follow-up emails, and phone calls when confirming scheduled interviews contributed to trustworthiness.

A couple of participants appeared hesitant when providing detailed in-depth information because some topics were of a sensitive nature. Instead of pressing for more information, I asked the next question. The decision demonstrated sensitivity to any power imbalance created due to researcher's presence (Creswell, 2013). The decision to focus on reliability and validity, the role of the researcher, trustworthiness and ethical considerations, helped to address any potential legal issues or issues that have potential for violating the requirements of the Institutional Review Board (IRB # approval #10-29-13-0159574).

### **Ethical Considerations**

To address any potential ethical concerns before conducting any research activities, including data collection, a researcher must avoid ethical situations by developing an outline that shares the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2013). The outline includes reminders for (a) the participant to sign an authorization form, (b) ensure

anonymity of the responses, and (c) provide the opportunity for the participant to express any concerns about the study and the intended use (Creswell, 2009). Before completing the interviews with participants, I attended to legal issues, by ensuring that participants signed the documents providing authorization when capturing data as a part of the protocol.

Interviewing is an important skill that requires an awareness of potential ethical issues with plans to manage issues when applicable. The interview protocol consisted of an introduction to the project and included stating the reasons for inviting the participant to join the study. Detailed information on the investigation included confidentiality information, request for permission to audiotape, and the opportunity for the interviewee to review the notes. Participants understood that names are not included in any findings or published reports and responses contribute to learning more about the topic. Data were stored in a locked storage unit and not available to anyone else. Five years after the dissertation approval, destruction of data occurs.

### **Summary and Transition**

The transcendental phenomenological approach discussed in the current chapter provides an appropriate method for data collection. The method becomes necessary when obtaining qualitative data required for answering research questions and thus meets the study objectives. Asking questions encouraged participants to share real life experiences about the phenomenon of leadership styles and job satisfaction. Twenty-five participants from four schools or universities contributed to the investigation. Hand coding was helpful when identifying emerging themes from the participants' responses, in addition to

utilizing automated NVivo 10 software designed to organize data. An interview protocol served as a checklist for addressing any ethical or trustworthiness issues.

The findings of the investigation are presented in Chapter 4 and include information on the setting, demographics, data collection process, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness. Chapter 5 includes a discussion and interpretation of the findings and the limitations of the current research, followed by recommendations for future studies. In addition, the chapter consists of a discussion on the implications of the present findings that contributes to positive social change, along with the study conclusions.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of the current phenomenological study was to explore whether transformational, transactional, or laissez-faire leadership styles met employees' expectations of job satisfaction. Conducting the phenomenological study required utilizing a modification of the Van Kaam method for analyzing phenomenological data (Moustakas, 1994). According to Moustakas (1994), qualitative research occurs through interpretation of data by utilizing bracketing for developing descriptive statements about participant's experience. There are two major research questions and two sub-questions designed to understand employees' perceived differences of job satisfaction based on the leadership style of front line supervisors.

The research findings represent a compilation of perceptions from 25 subordinate employees that experienced working relationships with front line supervisors. The exploration of the relationships resulted in an information-rich description of leadership styles and job satisfaction. The chapter includes the data analysis with discussions on data collection, results, and findings. The study results reveal that transformational leadership best meets the expectations of job satisfaction of employees.

### **Observation Setting**

The in-depth face-to-face interviews occurred at a location that provided privacy and anonymity for the team members. Two interviews were conducted on the telephone, due to scheduling conflicts of two participants. The calls were recorded and accessed through a private code. Through each method of data collection, I established rapport with each respondent and verbally thanked the participants for valuable time spent in the

study. Next, I provided an explanation of the researcher's role, the specific activities for the entire interview process, and the intended use of the data collected. Before the actual start of the interview, I asked participants for questions or if there was clarity needed to address and minimize any conditions or situations that influenced participants' responses. Other than reviewing the information on the consent form, participants had no concerns.

### **Data Collection**

The 25 semi-structured and interactive interviews (23 face-to-face and 2 phone) involved a series of open-ended questions intended to evoke a comprehensive exploration of leadership styles and any influence on job satisfaction (see Appendix A). The length of interviews averaged from 45 to 60 minutes among participants. All participants were at least 18 years of age, worked as full-time non-staff members in the human resources area of educational institutions, reported to a first level supervisor, and completed at least one annual performance review. A tape recorder captured all interviews. I placed the raw data in a locked storage not accessible to anyone else. Two telephone interviews occurred online and accessed through a four-digit code. The telephone interviews transpired because of scheduling conflicts with two of the participants.

The data collection process began when school administrators sent the invitations to potential participants (see Appendix B). To maintain confidentiality, the targeted participants made contact to communicate privately. Once I determined that the criteria for inclusion in the study had been satisfied, I sent the consent forms to participants for signature (see Appendix C). Once I received the signed forms, the interviews were scheduled and held at a privately agreed upon location.

I sent invitations to participate in the study to presidents of educational institutions within the state of North Carolina (see Appendix D). Initially, a few of presidents declined participation. There were several reasons given for non-participation. Reasons included team members did not include subordinate employees, time constraints of employees during work hours, conflicts with graduation events, vacation schedules resulting in limited staff, and understaffed human resources departments. I placed calls and scheduled meetings with the presidents or designees to clarify that no interviews would occur during work hours. I stressed that the study would not include any identification of the employees or the institution.

### **Participants**

The homogeneous purposeful sampling technique aided the selection of study participants of respondents meeting the predetermined criteria. Specifically, I selected the homogeneous sampling approach that only included staff members. The aim of the study was to explore the perceptions of hourly wageworkers to gain an understanding of the influence of leadership styles on job satisfaction. The selected geographic location was in North Carolina, where I work, which provided greater access to research participants for the study. Table 4 provides demographic data for the 25 participants.

The results show that 44% of respondents were between 31 and 40 years of age and 28% were between 41 and 50 years old. In addition, 20% were between 51 and 60

years of age and 8% were over 60 years of age. More than 75% of participants were female and 40% worked more than 10 years for an institution or in the current positions. Approximately, 8% completed at least one annual performance review and 60% completed two annual reviews.

### **Research Questions**

The two research questions that guided the study were:

1. How do the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles of first level managers influence job satisfaction for nonmanagement employees?

*Sub-question:* What are some leader characteristics that positively influence job satisfaction?

2. How do employees perceive the differences in job satisfaction based on transformational, laissez-faire, or transactional leadership styles?

*Sub-question:* How do supervisor actions influence job satisfaction?

Table 4

*Participants' Demographic Data*



<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Years Working</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Number of Reviews</b>
P1	Female	20	41-50	10
P2	Female	30	51-60	2
P3	Female	26	31-40	2
P4	Female	26	41-50	1
P5	Female	25	51-60	9
P6	Female	20	31-40	6
P7	Male	22	31-40	2
P8	Female	23	41-50	2
P9	Female	40	51-60	5
P10	Female	18	31-40	3
P11	Female	17	31-40	10
P12	Female	17	31-40	5
P13	Male	10	31-40	9
P14	Female	17	31-40	10
P15	Female	15	31-40	2
P16	Female	30	41-50	3
P17	Female	25	41-50	9
P18	Female	35	60+	15
P19	Female	20	51-60	1
P20	Female	15	41-50	15
P21	Male	10	41-50	2
P22	Female	12	31-40	12
P23	Female	30	60+	10
P24	Female	15	31-40	2
P25	Male	37	51-60	10

## Data Analysis

After the completion of each interview, I completed the transcription to become familiar with the data for analysis. Creswell (2013) recommended that researchers read the transcripts more than once to become familiar and engaged with the data. The first review of the transcribed information resulted in highlighting initial themes and phrases. I placed the initial hand coded phrases into NVivo 10 software. Data analysis consisted of the Van Kaam's seven-step analysis process, also utilized for other studies using the phenomenological method (Ballaro & O'Neil, 2013; Walker, 2013).

The first step is listing and preliminary grouping that occurred during the review of data process. The process involved listing every experience, expression, and phrase shared by participants, which culminated in hundreds of words and phrases (see Table 5). Moustakas (1994) defined the process as horizontalization, which consists of reading and rereading each transcript to gather insight from participants as a whole.

Because hundreds of words and phrases emerged, the results shown were limited to the frequency of relevant words appearing 70 or more times. Moustakas (1994) stated that data clustering and thematizing involves the grouping of participant data into core themes. Initial phrases with a minimum of 8% response rate are in Table 6. The horizontalization process of Van Kaam's (Moustakas, 1994) analysis method helped when I collected the information.

Once the horizontalization process was completed, I moved to the second step of the analysis method. During that stage, I reduced and eliminated expressions and phrases by determining whether the responses contained an experience related to the phenomenon

with understanding and clarity. The second step produced invariant constituents of themes and phrases that represented the major focus of the current study. In addition, the process assisted with eliminating themes that are not explicit or related to the experience.

The third step entailed clustering and thematizing the invariant constituents. The process helped when grouping related invariant constituents into thematic labels. No themes were pre-coded before data analysis. Instead, I used the clustering and labeling processes for phrases and words, which produced the core themes of the phenomenon.

Table 5

*Frequencies of Relevant Words Appearing 70 or More Times*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Weighted Percentage</b>
Kind	7	77	.31
Decisions	9	78	.32
Communication	13	79	.32
Recognition	6	120	.35
Negative	8	81	.33
Relationship	12	81	.33
Career	6	88	.36
Team	4	99	.40
Leadership	10	132	.54
Good	4	161	.66
Motivate	5	130	.53
Satisfaction	12	176	.72
Positive	8	185	.75
Think	5	130	.53
Mentor	3	72	.28
Ask	3	85	.35
Performance	7	75	.30
Creative	9	84	.34
Manager	7	77	.31
Resources	6	86	.35
Rewards	4	106	.43
Time	6	75	.30
Question	8	113	.46
Thank	5	120	.49
Want	4	123	.50
Feedback	10	121	.48
Make	4	198	.81
Right	5	199	.81
Leader	6	197	.81
Well	4	117	.48
Yes	3	168	.68
Work	4	102	.41
Let	3	133	.54
Encourage	7	73	.29

Table 6

*Phrases Related to Leadership and Job Satisfaction*

<b>Invariant Constituents</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% of Participants</b>
No micromanaging	2	.08
Encourages teamwork	7	.28
Shares clear visions	4	.16
Inconsistent feedback	4	.16
Open door policy	4	.16
Rewards my performance	8	.32
Admired, Respected	5	.20
Ensures my job expectations are met	3	.12
Career counseling	5	.20
Monetary bonuses	5	.20
Positive and corrective feedback	8	.32
Appreciative	6	.24
Says thank you	6	.24
Encourage my development	6	.24
Creative environment	7	.28
Trust and confidence	7	.28
Provides resources	8	.32
Makes me feel valued	7	.28
Set high expectations for me	9	.36
Mentor/Coach	8	.32
Listens to employees	9	.36
Open communication	8	.32
Hands off approach	9	.36
Encourage me to make decisions	11	.44
Recognizes my performance	9	.36
Gives positive/corrective feedback	7	.28

The fourth step allowed the creation of the final identification of the invariant constituents and themes through the application of a validation process. I conducted a final check to determine if the phrases and themes explicitly expressed in the completed transcripts were relevant to the phenomenon experiences. I eliminated phrases and themes that did not meet stated criteria.

The fifth step involved a complete review of the relevant phrases and responses. Next, a validation of the phrases and responses created an individual textural description of the experiences with verbatim examples from the transcribed interviews. During the sixth step, I constructed individual structural description of the experiences of each participant. The seventh step included the development of an individual structural description with imaginative variation. Imaginative variation allowed researchers to vary the frames of participants' perspectives on leadership styles and job satisfaction to develop structural themes related to participant experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

During the final step of textural-structural description, invariant constituents contributed when creating themes, which reflected the meanings and essences of the phenomenon. Analyzing and interconnecting the primary research questions with the data generated four primary themes from participants' perceptions: (a) influence of the three leadership styles on job satisfaction, (b) positive influence on job satisfaction, (c) influence of leader behaviors, and (d) leadership agility.

I completed another step of horizontalization using the primary themes with the assistance of the NVivo 10 software. The software tool supported the researcher with viewing each response with equal value. The NVivo 10 software provided technology

support to import transcribed interviews, articles, recordings, and notes for exploring, analyzing, and thematizing data. In addition, the NVivo 10 software provided the capability of assigning codes to each word, phrase, or expression related to research questions developed for the study. The process helped to merge overlapping and repetitive phrases into one node, which is an important step. Through intersecting and repetitive statements, I combined multiple nodes that created eighteen subthemes from the two main research questions and the two sub-questions. The data analysis section includes detailed information on the primary themes and subthemes.

For research question 1, three subthemes emerged: (a) transformational leadership has a positive influence on job satisfaction, (b) transactional leadership has a positive or negative influence on job satisfaction, and (c) laissez-faire leadership has a positive or negative influence on job satisfaction. For the sub-question of research question 1, six subthemes emerged indicating that the positive influence of job satisfaction related to a leader who: (a) provides recognition and rewards, (b) encourages decision-making, (c) gives performance feedback, (d) uses the hands off approach, (e) practices multiple communication methods, (open door policy), and (f) serves as a mentor/coach.

For research question 2 asked, five subthemes indicated that participants' perceived differences related to a leader who (a) encourages motivation (transformational), (b) shares corrective feedback (transactional), (c) shows resistance to change (transactional), (d) allows followers to make decisions (laissez-faire), and (e) shares minimal encouragement and guidance (laissez-faire).

For the sub-question of research question 2, four associated subthemes reflected that a first line supervisor's actions could influence job satisfaction by one who (a) maintains positive relationship (positive), (b) encourages creativity (positive), (c) values my opinions (positive), and (d) publicly reprimands for poor performance (negative). During the final stage of the Van Kaam analysis method (Moustakas, 1994), I created text-rich descriptions combined with the participants' experiences and the emerged themes. Detailed discussions of each primary theme and associated subthemes are included in the data analysis section.

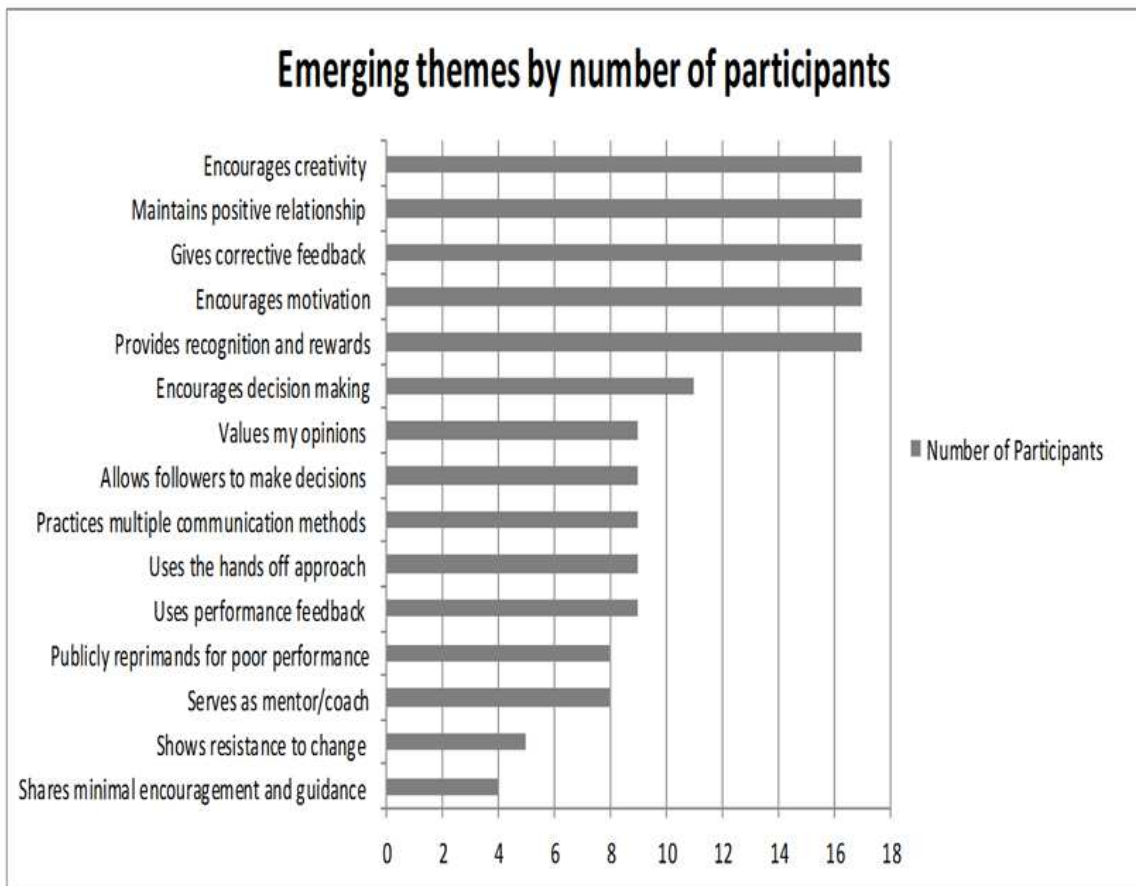
### **Results and Findings**

The following section details the results of utilizing Moustakas's (1994) modified Van Kaam method. The data depicts the foundation of the study, derived from participants' statements and phrases and transcribed from the 25 semi-structured interviews. The combined themes emerging from the specific codes, categories, and phrases resulted by moving inductively from coded units to larger representations of the transcribed interview results.

The emergent themes combined with the rich textural descriptions of the individual participants created the essence of the leadership and job satisfaction experiences for the workers. I matched employees' responses with the participants' numbers to maintain anonymity. The number of hourly wageworkers with responses that contributed to the emerging themes appears in Figure 3. The four primary themes, along with the eighteen subthemes, addressed each research question. Figure 4 reflects the relationship of these themes. The next section addresses the primary themes along with



the associated subthemes that emerged from the data analysis. The results generated by the study results enhance supervisors' understanding of how employees perceive the effect of the three leadership styles on job satisfaction. Additionally, leaders gain a better perspective on how employees perceive effective leaders, helping supervisors retain workers, and reduce turnover.



*Figure 3.* Frequencies of Emerging Themes Based on the Number of Study Participants.



Figure 4. Relationship of the Four Primary Themes to the Subthemes.

### **Primary Theme 1: Influences of the Three Leadership Styles on Job Satisfaction**

Research question 1 represents the main objective of the phenomenological study, which was to explore workers' expectations of leadership styles that best encouraged job satisfaction. The question asked: How do the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles of first level managers influence job satisfaction for nonmanagement employees? After reading through the transcripts several times, analyzing the characteristics of each leadership style, two perceptions emerged from the participants' responses for each leadership style: A positive or negative influence on job satisfaction.

Participant 1 verbalized how a leader positively influenced employee job satisfaction if a supervisor uses some aspect of each common leadership style:

Participant 1 stated, "I am sure I work for a transactional leader when you do well, you are recognized for it, when you're not doing or meeting expectations, you're called up on that. I don't have a problem with that because I like and enjoy working in an environment that holds me accountable. I have a positive relationship with my supervisor because she listens, allows creativity, but allows me to work on my own when I need to do that."

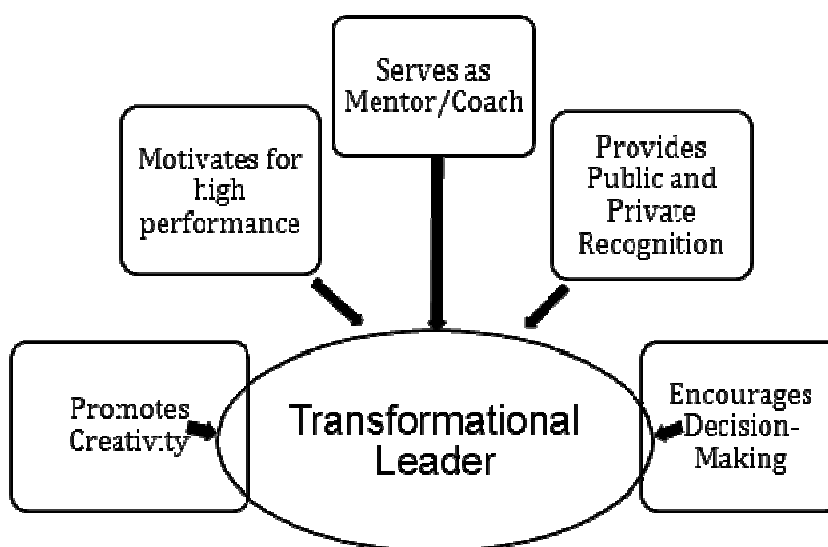
From primary theme 1, three related subthemes emerged: (a) transformational leadership positively affects job satisfaction, (b) transactional leadership positively or negatively influences job satisfaction, and (c) laissez-faire leadership styles positively or negatively influences job satisfaction (see Table 7). The next section includes discussions on these subthemes.

Table 7

*Primary Themes 1: Influences of the Three Leadership Styles on Job Satisfaction*

Leadership Style	Positive Influence	<i>n</i>	Negative Influence	<i>n</i>
Transformational	100%	25	0%	0
Transactional	64%	16	36%	9
Laissez-faire	36%	9	64%	16

**Subtheme 1: Transformational leadership has a positive influence on job satisfaction.** Based on the data analysis, all of the respondents believed that transformational leaders had a positive effect on job satisfaction. Specifically, participants shared that leaders positively influenced job satisfaction when they promoted creativity, encouraged the ability to think differently or unconventionally, offered motivation, served as a mentor or coach, provided public and private recognition, and encouraged decision-making (see Figure 5).



*Figure 5.* Transformational Leader Characteristics: Impact on Job Satisfaction.

Participant 1 noted, “I work in a climate of creativity and if I can offer a better way to handle an issue, this is allowed. There are policies and procedures that supersede my creativity. However, when those policies and procedures are met and there’s room for creativity, or if the policies and procedures are not effectively addressing the problem, then creativity is an option to use. However, policies and procedures can improve my creativity. Yes, when she brings tokens of sharing, maybe it could be food or be small, gift or token of appreciation, when she actually gives those things out, tangible tokens of appreciation and when she verbalizes and compliments us.”

Participant 2 stated, “Acknowledging my contribution to the team is a reward for my performance. Yes, I make decisions to ensure that employees have the human resources answers they need and what I do in my department has to be done on time and in a timely manner so that employees are not upset. Basically, after my part is complete, and then I can jump in and help whoever is not done.”

Participant 4 shared, “Creativity positively affects my job satisfaction because it gives me a chance to think more outside of the box and use some of the new things that I learned and take new classes. It allows me to research more so that I can get to the answer. . . . Yeah, he’ll recognize what I’m doing a good job in front of others and individually.”

Participant 6 stated, “I like it when my supervisor tells me that I did a great job or writes a note to that effect . . . well I feel a characteristic that would make a good

leader is first, be willing to, I guess, lead by example, being a good role model, not showing favoritism.”

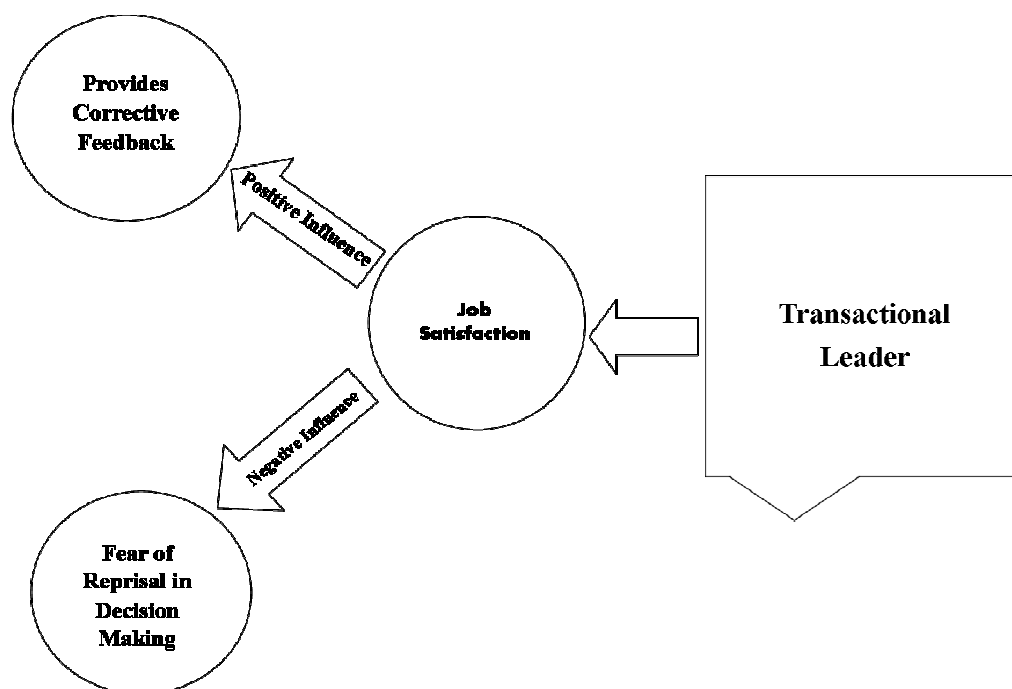
Participant 14 noted that, “When we are in meetings and I am asked my opinion, I feel that my supervisor is helping me to learn how to make good decisions.”

Participant 17 shared that, “I like a welcoming environment, motivation to pursue higher performance levels, and performance recognition, which does not always have to be monetary.”

Participant 23 stated, “I have more positive relationship with my supervisor because she is a role model for me.”

Participant 24 noted, “Any type of positivity is going is going to be a motivator for me, because I am one . . . I don’t want to say that I, um, thrive off of, um, you know, motivation or compliments from the supervisor, because I don’t, but that does propel me to do more.”

**Subtheme 2: Transactional leadership has a positive or negative influence on job satisfaction.** According to 64% of the participants, transactional leaders positively influence job satisfaction while 36% of respondents believed that leaders negatively influence job satisfaction. The positive influence relates to participants receiving corrective feedback, as well as accolades. Participants desire discussions for correcting performance issues to avoid an unexpected rating during the annual evaluation process. For some respondents, leaders negatively influence job satisfaction because of fear of reprisal in exercising decision-making skills (see Figure 6).



*Figure 6.* Transactional Leader Characteristics Influence on Job Satisfaction.

***Participant responses:***

Participant 1 said, “I don’t have a problem with that, because, again, I like and enjoy working in an environment that, if I’m not doing what I’m supposed to do and I am held accountable, then that helps me to either make a decision to improve or to have to maybe start looking for another job. Transactional can be both empowering and, at the same time, hold you accountable.”

Participant 2 stated, “When she is not accessible to team members, it definitely affects my job satisfaction because knowing that if you had a legitimate concern or issue or even something to be resolved it’s not going to get done and you’re the one that’s going to get reprimanded.”

Participant 4 noted that, “By letting me make decisions and giving me instant feedback as to whether or not he feels that I made a good decision, or that asks me if I thought about other scenarios in making my decision. We have those open discussions about performance feedback. I just had my midyear evaluation . . . I think the one-on-ones help because you’re not waiting for a long period to address issues.”

Participant 6 said, “They let you know where you stand in areas of both where you are and where you need improvement . . . I’m very comfortable getting feedback. If I didn’t understand my role or something, I made sure I was on the same path of what his expectations were. We generally sit down and talk about those at the beginning, and then we’ll go on from what I’m trying to do and how it all works together.”

Participant 7 noted, “Even if I missed something, feedback is given in a positive way.”

Participant 24 shared, “I have to discuss most major decisions with my supervisor because I do not want to feel her wrath if I make a wrong decision.”

**Subtheme 3: Laissez-faire leadership has positive or negative influence on job satisfaction.** Based on findings, laissez-faire leaders positively influenced job satisfaction for 36% of the participants, while 64% of the participants perceived a negative influence on job satisfaction levels. The positive perceptions of laissez-faire leaders reflected the need for a hands-off approach for independent thinking and problem



solving situations. However, the majority of the respondents felt that this leader was uninvolved with day-to-day decision-making, contributing to the negative perceptions.

Participant 2 noted, “My supervisor is more of a non-confrontational manager. If anyone in our group runs into an issue and they’re divided on something, he won’t make a direct decision at that point. He prefers to let us work our way through it. Even if we still can’t come to terms on it, he’ll still just let it resolve itself instead of just jumping in because he feels that he is teaching us to become better thinkers.”

Participant 4 shared, “I like it when my manager just gives me what I am supposed to do and lets me go away and do it and I will ask questions if I need to. Motivation is letting me know that my performance is only based on certain criteria with no hidden ones, that’s a motivator. Being able to work independently without him having hands on, that’s a motivator, and they have bonuses too to motivate us.”

Participant 8 stated, “....And it’s, I think it’s just the lack of personal interaction on a daily basis from the supervisor level to the employee level. That would be the, the biggest thing. You know, there’s just not a daily interaction. And I guess on some level that shows a level of independence, you know, not needing handholding and that sort of thing. But its, it’s to me it’s kind of negative because, you know, I’d like to be able to interact, daily. And I’m not saying, you know, sit down and, you know, have lunch every day or anything like that, but just, just

some type of interaction, that makes it a little bit more personal on a regular basis.”

Participant 19 shared, “Positive characteristic is that he generally will give me the task, assignment, give me my due date. Then he lets me go off and work on it and go back to him if there are any obstacles that I can’t get past.”

### **Primary Theme 2: Positive Influences of Leader Characteristics on Job Satisfaction**

For research question 1, the sub-question asked was: What are some leader characteristics that positively influence job satisfaction? The sub-question allowed gathering of employees’ viewpoints of leader characteristics desired from a first level supervisor. The use of the invariant constituents helped when creating themes, which reflected the meanings and essence of leader’s characteristics related to influencing job satisfaction positively (see Table 8).

Table 8

#### *Primary Themes 2: Positive Influences of Leader Characteristics on Job Satisfaction*

Invariant constituents	<i>n</i>	%
Provides recognition and Rewards	17	.68
Encourages decision-making	11	.44
Gives performance feedback	9	.36
Uses the hands off approach	9	.36
Practices multiple communication methods	9	.36
Serves as mentor/coach	8	.32

Six subthemes emerged indicating that a leader who positively influences job satisfaction: (a) provides recognition and rewards, (b) encourages decision-making, (c)

gives performance feedback, (d) uses the hands off approach, (e) practices multiple communication methods (open door policy), and (f) serves as mentors and coaches.

Through each participant's discussion on work experiences with supervisors, a positive influence on job satisfaction was an important aspect of working relationships. Participant 13 captured the essence of participants' feelings on the leader's behavior that positively influence job satisfaction.

Participant 13 noted, "I think positive job satisfaction is someone that invested in you, building you as an individual. Someone that gives clear direction, but also allows room for growth, and they also allow you to come up with your own ideas, or maybe approach a solution using your own way, or opinion, or perspectives."

**Subtheme 4: Provides recognition and rewards.** There was a common consensus among the 25 participants that welcomed and appreciated recognition and rewards for performance. In fact, 68% believed recognition and rewards positively influenced job satisfaction. One participant emphasized that recognition did not necessarily mean huge sums of money or a recognition ceremony. Instead, she felt recognized and rewarded when a supervisor's actions were small, such as breakfast for the team, a small gift, or simply verbalizing a compliment.

Participant 2 stated, "Acknowledging my contribution to the team is a reward for my performance."

Participant 3 noted, "Rewards and recognition, that's something to motivate us to work harder. Customer satisfaction of the employees that we serve, that motivates us to work harder."

Participant 6 shared, “I like it when my supervisor tells me that I did a great job or writes a note to that effect.”

Participant 10 stated, “We have a star award recognition program and I have won one of those in which I was publicly recognized for my performance.”

Participant 19 said, “Recognition of my performance sometimes is sent through emails, my performance review, or she will send an email out to the entire team saying that this person or that person did a great job.”

**Subtheme 5: Encourages decision-making.** The research results revealed that 44% of participants preferred a leader who allowed employees with the freedom to contribute to the decision-making process because this leader promoted trust, self-esteem, and confidence in the team members’ decision-making skills. Several respondents acknowledged policies of the department limited some decisions; however, they understood this restriction. Employees still embraced the freedom to contribute to decision-making.

Participant 3 noted, “Making decision affects my job satisfaction in a positive way. Again, I understand my role and how my role contributes to the overall scheme of the companies that I’ve worked for. It’s a positive.”

Participant 4 said, “Sometimes when I had the freedom to make decisions, it gave me a feeling of accomplishment because I shared the correct policy information with the employee.”

Participant 5 stated, “I think because you know that you’re validated as a person and not just as an employee. You’re not a number. It makes you feel valued as a

person. You're really bringing something to it. It makes you feel like you're just not going to work every day being a robot. You're really having something positive and productive to say about what you're doing, and how it's being done."

Participant 8 said, "I feel appreciated when my opinion matters and I am allowed to make decisions."

Participant 9 stated, "I do have freedom to make decisions because we've worked together long enough for, you know, for quite a while, that they basically know me and the things which I stand for, which are right. And, you know, I know them from where they stand because they are the higher authority. They're expecting me to do the best job possible."

Participant 14 noted, "When we are in meetings and I am asked my opinion, I feel that my supervisor is helping me to learn how to make good decisions."

Participant 18 said, "I can make decisions as long as I do so with the policies and procedures."

**Subtheme 6: Gives performance feedback.** According to 36% of the participants, willingness to provide performance feedback was a preferred characteristic of a leader or supervisor. Several of these respondents expressed a need to be informed when performance was not meeting established performance expectations. Regular monthly meetings were important to this group of participants because the meetings provided more opportunity for frequent feedback.

Participant 4 said, "They let you know where you stand in areas of both where you are and where you need improvement."

Participant 9 shared, “He lets me know about my performance . . . he is interested in me getting rewarded as far as being compensated for the job that’s well done so he makes sure to tell me when I need to do better in an area.”

Participant 15 stated, “I have my monthly one-on-ones so there’s communication and time to hear how I am doing and what I need to do better.”

**Subtheme 7: Uses the hands-off approach.** The research findings revealed that 36% of participants preferred a leader with a hands-off approach, which encouraged employees to work independently. Several respondents acknowledged that once a leader shared the job expectations, the preference is to complete assignments without interruption and would consult with the leader if required.

Participant 2 stated, “My supervisor has to leave early some days and she has no problem with giving us a task to do and if we run into issues, we have to work it out. This helps us to learn how to make good decisions.”

Participant 4 noted, “I like it when my manager just gives me what I am supposed to do and lets me go away and do it and I will ask questions if I need to.”

Participant 6 said, “She knows that if I have a question, I will ask. Other than that, she lets me work on my own.”

Participant 9 stated, “Being able to work independently without him having hands on is important.”

Participant 15 shared, “It is rewarding when he lets me work on my own.”

**Subtheme 8: Practices multiple communication methods.** The data revealed that 36% of respondents selected leaders who operated with multiple communication

methods, which include: using open lines of communication, email, regular one-on-one discussions, and scheduled or unscheduled meetings. Several participants discussed an open door policy as a component of effective communication.

Participant 1 stated, “I would feel very comfortable in talking to my supervisor about my job because she has maintained an open door policy. That helps with the relationship to be able to approach her with issue resolution situations.”

Participant 3 shared, “Our communication is pretty open. We communicate through phone, through monthly reviews, through emails. We have instant communication messaging type thing at work. Our communication is pretty open.”

Participant 5 said, “I’ve had many of those hard conversations. Sometimes I’ll go to his door and say it. I need to talk to you about something. It’s not something I really want to be here talking about, but I need to talk about it. He’ll say, close the door. Come in.”

Participant 10 noted, “Communication is open and we can set a meeting if he is not available.”

Participant 19 said, “Well, I mean, I could talk to him when I want to talk to them, communicate, or email, call . . . we have that open line of communication.”

Participant 22 stated, “I am satisfied with my communication with her because we use phone, email, instant message, and our one-on-ones. If I need something and she is not available, I just leave a note and she will get back with me.”

**Subtheme 9: Serves as a mentor/coach.** For 32% of participants, a leader who functions as a mentor or coach while motivating others when accomplishing goals is preferred. Participants, who shared that preference for a leader's behavior, discussed the issue interchangeably with leaders who served as role models and lead by example.

***Participant responses:***

Participant 2 stated, "Positive characteristics of a good leader are one that's motivating, one that's participating, encouraging, a role model, and meaning they can lead by actions."

Participant 6 said, "A good leader is first willing to, I guess, lead by example, being a good role model, not showing favoritism."

Participant 19 noted, "I look to my supervisor to lead by example and make good decisions."

Participant 23 shared, "I have more positive relationship with my supervisor because she is a role model for me."

**Primary Theme 3: Leadership Agility**

Research question 2 asked: How do employees perceive the differences in job satisfaction based on transformational, transactional leadership or laissez-faire styles? The purpose for asking the question was to engage participants in extensive dialogue for determining if a particular characteristic of each leadership style, either positively or negatively influenced job satisfaction. The question resulted in five subthemes, which indicated that a leader (a) encourages motivation, (b) provides corrective feedback (c)



shows resistance to change, (d) allows followers to make decisions, and (e) provides minimal encouragement and guidance (see Table 9).

Table 9

*Perceived Differences in Job Satisfaction Based on Leadership Style Characteristics*

<b>Leadership Style</b>	<b>Characteristic with Positive Influence</b>	<b>Characteristic with Negative Influence</b>
Transformational	Encourages Motivation	None
Transactional	Provides Corrective Feedback	Shows Resistance to Change
Laissez-Faire	Allows Followers to make decisions	Provides Minimal Encouragement and Guidance

All participants within the current phenomenological study expressed a desire to work with a leader exhibiting a positive influence on job satisfaction. Furthermore, the employees acknowledge that leaders must possess the skills, knowledge, and ability to adjust leadership styles, dependent upon the desire and skills of the employee and the situation. Participants 2 and 4 summarized the concept.

Participant 2 said, “I think leadership style changes as you mature, or you get older. As I mentioned before, I’ve been working for a while. I’ve been working for over 20 years, so the leadership that I needed when I was a teenager or early 20s is different from what I need, early 30s. Back then; I needed someone who would be more of a mentor, someone who would be more engaged in terms of what I needed at work. Whereas, now I’m pretty aware of what’s needed at work, and I need somebody to provide more guidance in terms of career path, and

someone to be here when I needed issues to be resolved that I can't resolve on my own.”

Participant 4 stated, “My feeling is that there are many different styles of leadership. No one leadership style is the ultimate one to cover it all for any organization, and that's based on the individual or individuals that you're leading, you have to tailor your style to find the buttons that make that individual excel and give them gratification for the job that they're doing.”

Each leader characteristic and associated leadership style is discussed in the next section.

In Table 10, I provided a summary depicting each leader characteristic, associated leadership style, and percentages of employees' feedback.

Table 10

*Themes of Perceptions of Differences in Job Satisfaction*

<b>Leader Characteristic</b>	<b>Leadership Style</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>
Encourages Motivation	Transformational	17	68%
Provides Corrective Feedback	Transactional	17	68%
Shows Resistance to Change	Transactional	5	20%
Allows Followers to Make Decisions	Laissez-Faire	9	36%
Provides Minimal Encouragement and Guidance	Laissez-Faire	4	16%

**Leadership style: Transformational.** The majority of the respondents selected motivation as a leader characteristic that positively influences job satisfaction. Motivation is a characteristic of a transformational leader. None of the participants identified a transformational leadership style characteristic that negatively influences job satisfaction.

***Subtheme 10: Encourages motivation.*** Leaders who expressed a mere thank you motivated 52% of participants when participants felt that leaders were more interested in the employee as a person rather than a worker. For 68% of participants, leaders inspired when showing an appreciation for the workers' contributions to the success of the team. When supervisors encouraged teamwork instead of following team members to complete the majority of the tasks, 40% of employees were also motivated.

Participant 1 stated, "She encourages teamwork so that everyone contributes and it's successful. There's a certain amount of fulfillment when you can work with somebody who fosters that type of environment. When we're up against a deadline, she explains the situation and the deadline and the expectation and shows gratitude towards the team as well as myself as a member of the team. We, as a team, work hard to meet those expectations or those deadlines."

Participant 3 said, "Some of the things that motivated me are they reward you annually for a good performance. They understand if you have some ambition to advance into a different role so they put opportunities in my path to help me reach my career goals. They allowed me to take on projects that were not necessarily within my job description to help me to further my career goal. That helped me to advance. Rewards and recognition, that's something to motivate us to work harder. Customer satisfaction of the employees that we serve, that motivates us to work harder."

Participant 4 said, "He'll recognize that I'm doing a good job in front of others and individually."

Participant 5 stated, “But because he challenges me, then it makes me say, ok, if he thinks I can do this, I’m going to do this. I think his gentle pushing and nudging to stretch my talents, it builds my self-esteem because at the end of the day, when that’s over, he’s really proud that I did it, that I stepped out on it, and I was successful. I’m proud of myself, he’s proud of me, so the world is all well.

Participant 6: When he shows appreciation, it makes me feel like they care about me as a person, not just as a number on a book.”

Participant 9 shared, “Well, you know she sends a shout out from an email to thank me this person for doing a great job. Those are positive encouragements and make me feel appreciated and motivated.”

Participant 11 said, “He’s a very pleasant person, first of all, and he always says thank you.”

**Leadership style: Transactional.** For the transactional leader, a supervisor who shares corrective feedback positively influenced job satisfaction. However, a leader who showed resistance to change negatively influenced job satisfaction. The research results revealed a high percentage of those wageworkers that embraced corrective feedback.

***Subtheme 11: Provides corrective feedback.*** Performance feedback is a desired process but indicated that corrective feedback was just as important for 68% of participants. Employees expressed a desire to know as quickly as possible if there was any misunderstanding when completing tasks or if a work responsibility is not being fulfilled successfully. Respondent said that leaders who were able to share both positive and corrective feedback were interested in the success of the employees.

While employees appreciated the positive feedback, receiving corrective feedback was just as important if employees were not meeting performance expectations. None of the participants had a desire to hear about the deficits of individual performance during the annual review meeting. Instead, employees wanted the opportunity to correct the performance in question.

***Participant responses:***

Participant 1 stated, “I am sure that I work with a transactional leader. When you do well, you are recognized for it. When you’re not doing or meeting the expectations that are put before you, then you are definitely called out on that.

That’s the environment in which I work in . . . I don’t have a problem with that because, again, I like and enjoy working in an environment that, if I’m not doing what I’m supposed to do and I am held accountable, then that helps me to either make a decision to or to have to maybe start looking for another job.

Transactional can be both empowering and, at the same time, hold you accountable.

Participant 2 said, “If I misunderstood what she asked me to do, she will tell me but doesn’t make me feel bad about it.”

Participant 7 noted, “The supervisor will verbally tell you that you’ve done that, or if there is something that you still need to do.”

***Subtheme 12: Shows resistance to change.*** A leader who fails to operate with an open mind and flexibility to new ideas, negatively influences job satisfaction, which were the feelings of 22% of participants expressed. The respondents understood that the nature

of individual jobs involved policies and procedures that required adherence. Participants said that there were still opportunities for a leader to allow workers to think unconventionally but remained resistant to the prospect.

Participant 5 stated, “Sometimes managers have the idea of how something works best. However, when you’re the person that’s actually doing the job, you know other ways that are more time efficient but are not given the chance to share a better way to complete that assignment.”

Participant 8 shared, “He can dictate and is not willing to listen to the opinions of the team.”

Participant 17 shared, “Regardless of what is going on at work, my manager leaves at 5:00 and is no longer accessible to the team. She tells us to make adjustments in how to do our job but she does not do the same thing.”

**Leadership style: Laissez-faire.** For the laissez-faire leadership style, supervisors positively influenced job satisfaction by leading without micromanaging but allowing followers to make decisions. When leaders provided minimal encouragement, the action resulted in a negative influence on job satisfaction. The most commonly preferred aspect of a laissez-faire leader is the autonomy dimension.

***Subtheme 13: Allows followers to make decisions.*** The data disclosed that 36% of participants selected the leadership characteristic that allows followers to make decisions as one that positively influences job satisfaction. There were some conflicting responses to the characteristic among participants, as some were satisfied with making

decisions without supervisor input; however, others became frustrated because all could not agree.

Participant 9 stated, “I like it when we are allowed to talk with each other about a problem and then if we can’t solve it, we can ask our supervisor.”

Participant 11 shared, “He’s more of a non-confrontational manager. If anyone in our group runs into an issue and they’re divided on something, he won’t make a direct decision at that point. He’ll let us work our way through it. Even if we still can’t come to terms on it, he’ll still just let it resolve itself instead of just jumping in and saying, this is what we need. This is the way it should be, and let’s move on”

Participant 13 stated, “I feel like I know when my manager has more trust and more of an idea of how I will make decisions and what decisions I will make. In addition, based on the success of some of my decisions that I have made, he feels very comfortable with me making decisions on my own.”

***Subtheme 14: Gives minimal encouragement and guidance.*** Sixty-eight percent expressed dissatisfaction with leaders when providing minimal encouragement and guidance. Supervisors may expect employees to be self-motivating and self-starters. While participants admitted that knowing the requirements of the job remains important, a lack of guidance, involvement, and encouragement negatively affected job satisfaction.

Participant 1 stated, “She doesn’t work as a team player, she just collects a paycheck.”

Participant 4 said, “I am not sure why my supervisor procrastinates, waiting for issues to resolve themselves.”

Participant 22 shared, “I just wish that when the supervisor sees we cannot come to an agreement that she would help us decide.”

#### **Primary Theme 4: Influence of Leader Behaviors**

Sub-question 2 asked: How do supervisor actions influence job satisfaction?

The purpose for asking the question was to collect specific actions of leaders along with employees’ perceptions of how the actions influenced job satisfaction (see Table 11).

Participants discussed the actions without any restrictions to express whether a positive or negative influence occurred. The top four themes, ranked highest to lowest, related to leaders who: (a) maintains positive relationship, (b) encourages creativity, (c) values my opinions, and (d) publicly reprimands for poor performance. These subthemes are discussed in the next section.



Table 11

*Influencing Themes: Supervisor Actions*

<b>Supervisor Actions</b>	<b><i>n</i></b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Type of Influence</b>
Maintains Positive Relationship	17	68%	Positive
Encourages Creativity	17	60%	Positive
Values My Opinion	9	36%	Positive
Publicly Reprimands for Poor Performance	8	32%	Negative

**Subtheme 15: Maintains positive relationship.** The findings revealed that 68% of participants hold a positive view of leaders who maintained a positive team relationship with employees as a priority. Respondents viewed a positive relationship with leaders who set high standards, contributed to the employee’s self-esteem, and promoted company loyalty. The leaders held a sincere desire for team members to be successful and thrive.

Participant 1 stated, “I know that if my supervisor did not give me stretch goals, I may not try to do things outside my comfort zone. I have a positive relationship with my supervisor. My supervisor listens, and makes it very comfortable for me to present a question, engages me when I don’t understand, gives great feedback, creates an atmosphere that allows me to feel comfortable about work, and the work that I’m doing, creates a positive team environment upon my coworkers and myself. That I’m meeting the set goals of the job, the set needs of the job, and that I’m meeting those expectations or above and that I walk away with a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day, and that I have added or contributed to the

overall goal or expectations which I was hired for. She speaks highly of the employers that I work for. She sometimes rewards us with lunch. She comes to work and makes sure that she operates within and keeps the team focused to the company's overall mission statement and goals as the reason why we are all employed there. Management builds self-esteem by first giving consideration and recognizing the qualities and the contributions and the skill sets that an employee brings to the table.”

Participant 4 shared, “He promotes loyalty when he talks about the future direction of our department and the company, and then discusses career path, career opportunity, and where he sees strengths and weaknesses so that we can improve, and offers classes and gives us other learning tools that we can do on our own.”

Participant 5 said, “I can tell you one thing that promotes company loyalty. In a climate where everybody else is getting pink slips, and I had not had a raise in years and raises were frozen, he fought for me for the biggest raise I'd ever had in my life because he believed in my ability and my talents, that I needed to be compensated for it. He did . . . He's always encouraging me to grow and expand.”

Participant 15 stated, “I feel like a supervisor should care about how their employees feel about them and if they trust or admire them. This should be important to someone who is leading others for loyalty to the company.”

Participant 21 noted, “A supervisor builds self-esteem by first recognizing the qualities and the contributions and the skill sets that an employee brings to the

table. I think that's the single most important contribution that a supervisor can help edify a person's self-esteem, is by acknowledging the skill set and the talent and experience that their team member brings to the table and contributes to the overall function of the team and job responsibilities in which that supervisor has leadership over."

Participant 22 stated, "I think his gentle pushing and nudging to stretch my talents, it builds my self-esteem, makes me feel valued, because at the end of the day, when that's over, he's really proud that I did it, that I stepped out on it, and I was successful."

Participant 24 said, "When my supervisor gives me challenging things to do, I feel like if he thinks I can do it, then I have to try and it shows me he has confidence in me."

**Subtheme 16: Encourages creativity.** Research results reflected that a leader who supported a creative environment positively affected job satisfaction for 60% of the employees in the study. Hourly wageworkers felt that type of environment promoted personal growth, development, and opportunities for recognition. Respondents viewed a creative environment as one that offer suggestions, opinions, and make recommendations on how to improve a process, develop a better report, or respond to university employees more effectively. Employees viewed a creative environment as a contributing factor for maintaining a positive relationship with supervisors.

Participant 3 stated, “A creative environment affects my job satisfaction in a positive way because obviously the confidence level from my supervisor is high enough for her to be able to let me be creative in my role or the roles that I’ve had without a lot of micromanaging. When I am allowed to be creative, it makes me feel like she has confidence in my ability to manage my job and responsibilities, to help the employees in terms of my role that I play.”

Participant 4 said, “My manager encourages us to be creative as far as improving a process because we are actually the ones doing the job and so they are open to new ideas, which allows me to grow”

Participant 14 shared, “Creativity positively affects my job satisfaction because it gives me a chance to think more outside of the box and use some of the new things that I learned and take new classes. It allows me to research more so that I can get to the answer.”

Participant 22 stated, “We have incentives for when you do have a new idea, any type of new process that makes a change, increases productivity, or is just an innovative idea and you are recognized for it.”

**Subtheme 17: Values my opinions.** Findings indicate that 36% of study participants felt valued when individual behaviors or contributions helped to meet company goals. Additionally, some respondents felt respected when supervisors solicited thoughts or opinions on a particular task. Employees expressed gratitude for leaders because of feelings of value. When supervisors value the opinion of workers, the

behavior validated the employee as a person and not just an employee who is there to make the leader look good.

Participant 5 stated, “I think when he asks what I think . . . you know that you’re validated as a person and not just as an employee. You’re not a number. It makes you feel valued as a person.”

Participant 8 shared, “I would say part of my job satisfaction would be a buy-in from a supervisory level. Meaning that your values, your opinions, your ideas, those sorts of things are valued at a supervisory level, and yet they’re sought after.”

Participant 23 said, “I like that my supervisor is willing to listen and possibly take into account what other people have to say and she is approachable and not making one feel like, you know, this is the last thing in the world I want to go, go speak to my leader about certain things. She at least values hearing your ideas and opinions even if she doesn’t use them.”

**Subtheme 18: Publicly reprimands for poor performance.** The results revealed that 32% of respondents discussed how a leader negatively influenced job satisfaction when reprimanded publicly for missing an assignment or inadequately meeting the expectations of the supervisor. The participants’ body language reflected dissatisfaction while discussing the leader quality. Employees understood and shared the need for receiving the feedback but did not comprehend the public scrutiny.

Participant 12 stated, “This did not happen to me but one of the other team members was embarrassed because she ran the wrong report.”

Participant 19 said, “My supervisor is very direct and sometimes is not sensitive to who hears her feedback to other team members, which I feel, is a negative leader quality.”

Participant 25 shared, “There have been some situations that have occurred, not necessarily to myself but several people around where I would say I think the power is enjoyed and used as a tool to say anything she wants to people without caring who is listening to her feedback.”

### **Discrepant Cases**

Very few discrepant cases evolved within the study. Regardless of the variations of the participants’ age group, number of years employed, and number of performance discussions completed, there was a high level of similarity in leadership and job satisfaction experiences. Where discrepant cases occurred, discussions are included in the data analysis results.

### **Evidence of Quality**

I conducted a phenomenological study to produce high standards of qualitative research with a specific focus on established validity. To achieve quality and accurateness from the study findings, the design of the exploration helped to minimize as much bias as possible. I acknowledged personal interests in the exploration based on more than 20 years in the management field. The role I played as the researcher was to conduct the interviews with objectivity and remain neutral throughout the data collection

process and analysis of the findings. Pre-coded themes throughout the collection and analysis processes did not occur.

The coding process combined with Van Kaam's seven-step analysis technique contributed to the validity of the study. The steps guided the data analysis to allow key themes and findings to emerge from the data. Documentation of the analysis process, along with researcher's notes, positions the study for replication. I documented complete details used to allow others to evaluate the quality of the study and potentially conclude similar findings.

I continuously encouraged the participants to share honest and open responses and reassured participants of anonymity and confidentiality. When I attempted to probe beyond minimal feedback, some participants' showed a reluctance to disclose work experiences. The research participants were nonmanagement employees and concerns about job security and other matters possibly contributed to the feeling. Participants who do not divulge information influence the results and findings; but, to mitigate for the limitation, I utilized a large enough sample size when conducting the study.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Employees received information on the anonymity of the names and places of employment, before interviews commenced. Additionally, respondents received information that no one else would have access to any of the data, including the transcribed interviews. I used a participant number on the recording and in the transcribed information to increase anonymity; however, the hourly wageworkers received the Walden University's contact for use if experiencing any concerns with participation in

the study. In addition, respondents had the opportunity to ask any questions before the interview.

Once I gained permission to record the interviews, I also mentioned that a copy of the transcript would be available for review to check for accuracy. I initiated the study by thanking the employees for providing valuable time and sharing a brief introduction of the topic. In addition, the team members received a copy of the questions before starting the interview. Respondents were free to provide and share examples during the interview.

Credibility relates to the extent reported results are acceptable and represents data findings. Member checking and engaging colleagues in the review of the findings contributed to credibility. Transferability describes the degree results in a certain context applied to other contexts. Variation in participant selection achieved transferability, while triangulation of the data helped to achieve dependability. The investigation included multiple interviews that contributed to data triangulation.

Confirmability is the extent interpretations of interviews accurately reflect the participants' intended messages, as opposed to researcher bias (Beverland et al., 2010). Participants who reviewed notes and responses to ensure accuracy of captured data achieved confirmability. Member checking occurs when participants review collected information during the interview process. Throughout the interview process, I repeatedly confirmed the intended meaning of participants' responses.

Robson (2011) argued that researchers must collect data until a point of data saturation. According to Francis et al. (2010), two principles guide researchers when analyzing data saturation. First, researchers must indicate the initial analysis sample. The



second principle is the stopping criterion, which indicates the number of additional interviews resulting in no shared themes or new ideas. For the current study, data collection and analysis continued until the stopping criterion occurred.

According to Darvill, Skirton, and Farrand (2010), the use of a constant comparative method developed by Strauss and Corbin in 1998 ensures data saturation. A constant comparative method consists of four stages: (a) open coding for each line in the transcript, (b) identify common themes and meanings, (c) document relationships between the current transcript and between other transcripts for emerging themes, and (d) document the results. Darvill et al. (2010) argued that researchers must continually add phrases to coded data that results in either replication or new themes.

According to Pereira (2012), interviews must not exceed 25 participants. Interviewing more than 25 participants impedes a researcher's ability to comprehend the phenomenon. I planned to interview a minimum of 20 participants with a stopping criterion of five additional interviews. After interviewing 20 participants, no new data emerged and no further coding became necessary, providing the ability to replicate the study. Based on the stopping criterion, I interviewed five additional participants resulting in no new themes and achieved data saturation. Once I completed interview transcriptions, participants had a choice of receiving either a transcript, or a 2–3 page summary of the interview. There were no requests for copies of transcribed interviews.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I am a manager who worked in American corporations for more than 20 years, supervising both management and nonmanagement employees. I acquired experience in

leading, empowering, mentoring, coaching, interviewing, and training others that was the foundation for establishing a connection with participants. Given the background, I understood the importance to refrain from introducing personal bias into the data collection process, data analysis, and data findings. The interview guide utilized for collecting data helped to minimize bias. The interview guide aided, as I remained focused on the questions and the purpose of the study.

### **Summary of Findings**

The main goal of the current study was to explore the perceptions of nonmanagement team members on leadership and job satisfaction. In the current chapter, I presented the results of the study findings, which supported and challenged previous studies that only captured the perspectives of managers and supervisors on the effect of leadership styles on job satisfaction. For example, previous studies completely dismissed a laissez-faire leadership style as appropriate for leading employees (Bass, 2009; Furtner et al., 2012; Northouse, 2013; Schilling, 2009). The qualitative nature of the current study revealed otherwise. Participants embraced some aspects of the laissez-faire leadership style (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012; Yueh et al., 2010).

### **Research Question 1**

For research question 1, similar to findings of studies on job satisfaction and leader characteristics, the findings from the current study indicated that a transformational leadership style provides the most positive influence on nonmanagement employees' job satisfaction. In fact, data analysis from both major research questions revealed that all of the participants preferred a leader who practices transformational

leadership. The findings also revealed that 64% of participants indicate that the transactional leaders positively influenced job satisfaction through sharing corrective performance feedback. Even though only 36% of participants perceived that the laissez-faire leader met employee job satisfaction, the percentage could increase based on the nature of the job, especially in the technical fields that require little supervision.

### **Question 1: Sub-Question**

For the sub-question of research question 1, data results revealed that a leader who utilized certain components of all three leadership styles met the participants' expectations of job satisfaction. The combined characteristics included a leader who promoted intrinsic factors such as sharing recognition and rewards, encouraging decision making, providing praise, and corrective feedback. Additionally, utilizing the hands off approach, engaging in day-to-day interactions using multiple communication methods, and serving as a mentor or coach was important. Participants viewed extrinsic factors, such as pay and bonus, as important factors influencing job satisfaction. Workers did not select monetary recognition for performance as one of the most important factors influencing job satisfaction.

### **Research Question 2**

Research question 2 revealed some evidence that the leadership needs of nonmanagement employees' changes based on years of employment, familiarity with job responsibilities, and age group. Workers employed in jobs for an extended period do not have similar needs as employees with only one year of employment. The perspective

became evident in the findings that employees preferred some aspect of each of the three leadership styles, depending on work experiences.

The main challenge for first line supervisors is to embrace the concept that leadership style may require adjustment based upon the diverse needs of the employees. A second challenge is for leaders to maintain a high level of communication, through frequently established meetings with workers and to remain aware of the individual's personal and work related needs on a consistent basis.

### **Question 2: Sub-Question**

For the sub-question of research question 2, participants shared four common themes of how supervisor actions influence job satisfaction. Participants associated the themes with either a positive or a negative influence on job satisfaction. Three of the four actions are, maintaining positive relationship, encouraging creativity, and values my opinion, which was perceived as positive influences on job satisfaction. Participants viewed public reprimand for poor performance as a negative influence.

Chapter 4 included the research results, analyzed with previous literature, theories related to job satisfaction, and leadership styles. In Chapter 5, I provide detailed recommendations for action, implications for social change, and limitations of the investigation.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

The final chapter includes an evaluation of the findings associated with the work experiences of subordinate employees and the first level supervisors. Specifically, I focused on job satisfaction expectations of hourly wageworkers based on the leadership styles of the supervisors. In addition, the chapter incorporates research findings in comparison with the literature review discussed in Chapter 2.

### **Discussion**

The current phenomenological study, based on 25 semi-structured interviews with staff members, addressed the gap in the literature regarding employees' expectations of job satisfaction. The research findings help to increase the understanding of employees' expectations of job satisfaction and the leadership behaviors influencing the outcome. Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory of motivation was a relevant model for understanding certain factors in the workplace that result in job satisfaction.

The literature sources suggested a positive relationship between specific leadership styles and job satisfaction. There remains a paucity of studies that focused on capturing lived experiences of hourly wageworkers. A literature review indicated a lack of research focusing on the underlying reasons behind certain leadership styles on job satisfaction from the perspectives of employees.

Based on numerous studies, job satisfaction relates to performance, turnover intention, and leadership styles (Bhatti et al., 2012; Furnham et al., 2009; Long & Thean, 2011; Riaz & Haider, 2010). By exploring the factors that influence job satisfaction or dissatisfaction of hourly wageworkers, I revealed information that enhances the understanding of leaders with an intention to improve job satisfaction, reduce turnover, and improve employee retention. Employees are the most important assets of an organization, which makes hiring capable leaders important for leading and motivating employees to achieve organizational goals (Voon et al., 2011).

In Chapter 1, I reflected on the rationale for studying job satisfaction and leadership styles for hourly wageworkers. In the chapter, I presented the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose and nature of the study, and research questions. The interest for understanding the phenomenon focused on two central questions and two sub-questions:

1. How do the transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles of first level managers influence job satisfaction for nonmanagement employees?

*Sub-question:* What are some leader characteristics that positively influence job satisfaction?

2. How do employees perceive the differences in job satisfaction based on transformational, laissez-faire, or transactional leadership styles?

*Sub-question:* How do supervisor actions influence job satisfaction?

The chapter also included discussions on the conceptual framework, operational definitions, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations, and significance of the study. The chapter concluded with implications of social change followed by a summary and transition.

In addition, I focused on ways the current study advances the knowledge of business leaders in Chapter 1. One way includes the use of a communication tool for leaders to hear directly from hourly wageworkers. In addition, it is important to recognize the underlying causes of job satisfaction and to compare leaders' perceptions' with employees' perceptions on job satisfaction. Finally, to increase employees' identification with the goal of the organization advances the knowledge of business leaders.

The work experiences of 25 hourly wageworkers at educational institutions provided the foundation for the study. Based on hourly wageworkers' lived experiences, I believed that the current phenomenological study contributes to the scholarly literature. I focused on understanding the meanings of workers' lived experiences rather than a reliance on quantitative studies that consists of variables and mathematical models, testing statistical hypotheses.

In Chapter 2, I reviewed quantitative and qualitative studies on leadership and job satisfaction. The purpose of the literature review was to gain more knowledge on leadership styles and to establish a conceptual framework to contribute to the analysis of influence on job satisfaction. I focused on studies related to the development of transformational leadership and motivating employees.

I reviewed a combination of theories focused on trait, behavioral, and contingency approaches contributed to the development of transformational leadership (Northouse, 2013; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Characteristics of transformational leaders include encouraging followers to look beyond self-interest and instead strive to reach organizational goals, set clear goals, and reach for high expectations (Antonakis, 2012; Bushra, Usman, & Naveed, 2011; Money, 2011; Northouse, 2013). Studies on the benefits of leadership in the workplace documented how transformational leaders reduce employee stress (McDermott, 2010; Rousseau, 2011; Yip & Rowlinson, 2009). I cited several studies on leadership associated with human resources and followership (Avolio et al., 2009; Baker et al., 2011; Gond, et al., 2011; Popper, 2011).

I reviewed several studies that compared transformational and transactional leadership styles. In addition, an exhaustive review covered research that included all three leadership styles and the influence on job satisfaction. The literature search included a review of four leadership styles: charismatic, situational, servant, and authentic.

I read studies on leadership behavior with a particular focus on the practices that positively influence job satisfaction. The focus on leadership behavior revealed common groups of leadership behaviors of successful organizations. Among the behaviors cited were a strategic/visionary leader, communication and information, and authority and responsibility. In addition, a learning culture, worker conversations, plainness and simplicity, humanity and trust, walking around, and reflective personal leadership



positively influence job satisfaction. Two researchers identified 12 behavioral patterns to measure behavior styles (Yurtkoru & Ekmekçi, 2011).

The literature review disclosed a relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership. Specific research focused on emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness (George, 2012; Hur et al., 2011). In addition, several pages entailed discussions on job satisfaction related to the influence of leadership styles, motivation, employee job performance, and employee turnover (Andrews, et al., 2011; Bhatti et al., 2012; Bodla & Nawaz, 2010; Braun et al., 2013; Furnham et al, 2009; Liu et al., 2011; Mohamad, 2012; Voon et al., 2011).

In Chapter 3, I explained the selected research methodology. Participants worked in the state of North Carolina for educational institutions. Of the 25 selected respondents, 22 were female and three were male. The number of performance reviews completed ranged from 2 to 15. The transcendental method helped when isolating employees' work experiences and for understanding the relationships through complete descriptions. The modified version of the Van Kaam method aided by providing outlined steps for data analysis.

Chapter 4 included a presentation of the findings and discussions. Four primary themes emerged from the interviews: influence of the three leadership styles, positive influence on job satisfaction, leadership agility, and influence of leader behaviors. Eighteen subthemes materialized from the primary themes with in-depth discussions in Chapter 4. A review of the themes reflects characteristics that relate to a transformational leader (60%) a transactional leader (27%), and a laissez-faire leader (13%). The focus of

the next section is on the relationship between the findings of the current research and studies detailed in the literature review.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The key findings from the current qualitative study produced nine themes related to job satisfaction and transformational leadership styles. The themes include when a supervisor: (a) values my opinions, (b) encourages creativity, (c) maintains positive relationship, (d) encourages motivation, (e) serves as a mentor/coach, (f) practices multiple communication methods, (g) encourages decisions making, (h) gives performance feedback, and (i) provides recognition and rewards. In addition, the findings revealed three themes associated with job satisfaction and transactional leadership styles, when a leader: (a) reprimands for poor performance, (b) shows resistance to change, and (c) shares corrective feedback. Finally, three themes linked to job satisfaction and the laissez-faire leadership styles include: when leaders (a) share minimal guidance and feedback, (b) allow followers to make decisions, and (c) use the hands-off approach.

The purpose of conducting the study was to understand which of the three leadership styles best meets employee job satisfaction. The findings from the study support the belief that transformational leadership best meets employees' job satisfaction needs. Research results did not provide support to exclude the laissez-faire leadership style to lead employees (Furtner, et al., 2012; Robbins, et al., 2010). In fact, a few workers preferred the laissez-faire characteristic of the hands-off approach, providing autonomy to complete work assignments.

Aspects of the results revealed a preference by some participants to work for a leader who practice dimensions from each of the three leadership styles. In fact, several researchers advocated that the most effective leader is one who adjusts leadership styles to include some characteristic of the three common leadership styles. The styles are transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire (Pihie et al. 2011; Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). A leader who has the agility to adjust a leadership style must meet the needs of employees based on differing factors such as job tenure, age, skills, and aspiration for promotion (Kim, et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2011). In the next section, I provide a summary of the relationship between current and previous studies.

### **Relationship between Current and Previous Studies**

In a 2013 study, Braun et al. concluded that supervisors who aim to increase job satisfaction must practice transformational leadership styles. The scholars recommended that organizations must introduce training approaches, when adopting transformational leader behavior at both the individual and team levels. Transformational leaders empower employees, set high expectations to encourage followers to reach organizational goals, function as role models, create visions, and serve as change agents. Several respondents for the current study identified similar characteristics as factors that positively influence job satisfaction. The participants' comments reflected a preference for a supervisor who encourage decision-making, acts as a mentor/coach, and encourage creativity when fostering change.

Popper (2011) concluded that the study of leadership must not exclude followership; but instead, include the psychology of followers. Herzberg's (1959)

hierarchy of needs supports the importance of the psychology of employees. Employees who achieve self-actualization are motivated to achieve high work performance. In fact, as employees advance in the organization, the employer must provide opportunities to satisfy needs higher on Maslow's hierarchy. The participants' comments supported the concept. Specifically, the respondents shared a need for supervisors to invest in employees' careers, allowing room for growth.

Studies on benefits of leadership in the workplace documented how transformational leaders reduce employee stress. McDermott (2010) concluded that transformational leadership promotes employee engagement, is a tool for leaders to increase employee motivation, and reduce workplace stress (McDermott, 2010). The findings are consistent with the data findings of the current study. The participants in the current study did not specifically address workplace stress; however, they did express satisfaction with supervisors who motivated workers to excel in work performance.

Pereira and Gomes (2012) postulated that managers benefit from better alignment with human resource practices, helping to create shared perceptions among employees, a key characteristic of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders help employees to link individual goals with those of the organization. The current study participants felt that current supervisors focused more on individual goals rather than organizational goals, which is a transactional trait.

Riaz and Haider (2010) concluded that both transformational and transactional leadership styles are important in the workplace. According to the work environment, leaders must decide on the appropriate approach. For example, a transformational

supervisor must utilize contingent factors (transactional) to produce job satisfaction. Conversely, in promoting job satisfaction, transactional managers must also apply transformational style approaches.

Current study findings disclosed that all participants preferred a transformational leader; however, 64% embraced the corrective feedback dimension of transactional leadership styles. The study results also reflected the participants' desire to receive rewards when meeting performance expectations, which are contingent rewards. Gioia and Catalano (2011) concluded that employers must understand the activities that motivate current employees. Specifically, motivation occurs through discussion with employees concerning jobs, organizations, and other factors that influence tenure and decisions to remain with the organization.

Participants in the current study expressed a desire to openly share feedback and to work for a supervisor who uses multiple communication methods. The efforts produced the feeling of existence as a human being rather than just a number in the organization. A majority of the study respondents were excited to participate in the study and confidentially share the factors that influence job satisfaction. Employers must increase employee retention and encourage more feedback from hourly wageworkers, even if workers' opinions are anonymous.

Findings from Wells and Peachey's (2011) study revealed that intrinsic motivators, driven by internal rewards, career growth, and employee recognition positively affect job performance and employee satisfaction. Comments provided by several respondents in the current study support Wells and Peachey's findings. In fact,

the majority of participants (68%) felt that recognition and rewards positively influenced job satisfaction. Career growth was of minimal concern to participants in the study.

George (2012) and Hur et al. (2011) found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction. In fact, Hur et al. (2011) proposed that human resource leaders and department heads must hire supervisors who possess high levels of emotional intelligence that demonstrate emotional intelligence. Transformational leaders' focus on changing the attitudes and passions of employees involves understanding and managing emotions. Respondents did not express a need for supervisors to manage emotions other than the negative influence of a transactional leader who reprimands for poor performance.

Furnham et al. (2009) concluded that employees with low job status and nonmanagement employees were more concerned with the job's hygiene factors. Participant feedback aligned with the concept and identified the following hygiene factors that positively influence job satisfaction: recognition, achievement, growth, and responsibility. Herzberg's (1943) hygiene theory is closely related to Maslow's (1959) hierarchy of needs.

Respondents' comments demonstrated an appreciation for recognition and rewards for meeting expectations. Scholars concluded that high job satisfaction enriches performance (Gioia & Catalano, 2011; Voon et al., 2011). Similarly, Riaz and Haider (2010) established that transformational leaders encourage individuals to exceed expected performance. The findings are aligned with the comments from the study participants,

especially participants who preferred supervisors that encourage workers to set high expectations.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Utilizing in-depth discussions from a sample of 25 participants, this exploration does not represent nor capture the viewpoints of all nonmanagement employees. The current research does explore the perceptions of 25 participants and offers an insight into the factors and leadership characteristics that influence job satisfaction. The minimum age criteria encompassed 18 years of age for all participants. The respondents interviewed for the investigation were between the ages of 30 and 65 and worked in the human resources area. With the exclusion of participants between the ages of 18 through 29, I missed an opportunity to capture information from the younger age group, even though the age range met the criteria for inclusion in this research. The results were limited to those respondents 30 years of age or higher, but did not affect the outcome of the investigation.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The findings of this exploration have three implications for social change in the fields of business, finance, and education. First, leaders will benefit by improving the approach utilized when leading each team member. The research findings increase the knowledge of supervisors, showing that job satisfaction occurs through either the sole use of the transformational leadership style or through a combination of leadership styles. The study findings revealed that majority (100%) of participants indicated a preference

for a transformational leader; however, a combination of the three styles positively influences job satisfaction.

Second, a leader equipped with the knowledge is able to prepare to have more in-depth, enhanced, and meaningful monthly one-on-one discussions and annual review performance conversations. Supervisors must analyze the skill sets of each employee and determine the appropriate leadership style to realize maximum performance and the employees' job satisfaction. Additionally, the leader must understand employees' viewpoints on the preference of leadership style based on employees' needs.

Third, participants felt that a leader who focuses on job satisfaction could improve the relationship between the employee and the supervisor. Accomplishing the enhanced bonding involves improving job satisfaction, reducing job dissatisfaction, and minimizing turnover. The improved relationship also benefits by reducing costs to organizations, improving retention, yielding greater production, and beginning to change an organizational culture.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

The nature of the current study required intense confidentiality because nonmanagement employees were providing work-related information involving an immediate supervisor. The need for confidentiality also related to the aspect of human resources that manages personal and performance employee data. Because the participants of the current study consisted of hourly wage workers employed in human resources, a researcher can conduct further study to determine if current findings are relevant to similar workers in other work environments such as medical, production, and



customer service. A second recommendation for further investigation is to conduct similar qualitative research with nonmanagement employees and their supervisors to compare preferred leadership styles for followers and leaders. A third recommendation is to complete an investigation to determine whether the satisfaction of intrinsic motivators affect retention rates for hourly workers.

### **Conclusions**

I sought to explore whether employees achieved job satisfaction based on the supervisor's leadership style, and how differently the three common leadership styles affect job satisfaction expectations. Participants' responses validated theories discussed in Chapter 1 as the foundation of the current research. Specifically, the motivational, hierarchy of needs and leadership theories formed the conceptual framework of the research.

Participants' rich descriptions confirmed that: (a) transformational leaders best meet job satisfaction expectations; (b) supervisors who meet hygiene factor need positively impacts job satisfaction; (c) employees prefer positive relationships with leaders; (d) front-line managers increase employees job satisfaction if, according to the work situation, supervisors practice a combination of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles; and (e) bosses who promote creativity and encourage decision-making, positively influence job satisfaction.

Previous research focused on interviews conducted with managers who provided in-depth feedback on leadership styles. As baby boomers move more toward retirement, a change in employee demographics becomes inevitable in organizations. The followers of

today are the leaders of tomorrow, necessitating a need for followers to contribute to the understanding of how leadership styles influence job satisfaction. The outcome of this investigation provides a foundation for organizational executives to focus on the leadership styles of supervisors and managers that have an opportunity to convert followers into leaders.

Other scholars are able to replicate the current research, search for more ways to improve job satisfaction, and enhance the effectiveness of leadership styles. The exploration included hourly wage employees within different age groups, years of work experience, and the number of annual performance review discussions. Researchers are able to include different factors for determining if similar conclusive findings occur.

The current study has fulfilled the purpose of addressing a gap in the literature with capturing the perspectives of employees. The data findings advanced the literature on the topic of job satisfaction and leadership styles for supervisors and hourly wageworkers. The findings provided a blueprint and opportunity for discussion among leaders on how to maximize job satisfaction, minimize dissatisfaction, and improve employee retention. Participants shared a common desire for a supervisor who promotes creativity, encourages motivation, serves as mentors/coaches, shares recognition, encourages decision-making, gives positive and corrective feedback, utilizes a hands-off approach when appropriate, and uses multiple communication methods.

The results of the current study suggest that supervisors benefit when managing employees based on psychological needs rather than thinking that money is the answer. Leaders have an opportunity to use the results to create leadership training. Such

leadership training should address employee job satisfaction with a link to the leadership styles and behaviors. As a result, an increased emphasis on the needs of employee job satisfaction changes how employees view the company; in turn, inspiring hourly wageworkers to become future leaders within the organization.

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## Appendix A: Central Questions and Sub-questions

1. How do transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles of first level supervisors/managers impact job satisfaction differently for employees?

Sub-question: What are some leader characteristics that positively impact employee job satisfaction?

2. How do employees perceive the differences in employee job satisfaction based on in transformational, laissez-faire, and transactional leadership styles?

Sub-question: How do supervisor actions influence employee job appreciation?

### Demographic Data

Please share the following information:

1. I am female \_\_\_ male \_\_\_
2. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of years employed \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many annual performance appraisals have you completed with your current manager? \_\_\_\_\_

### General questions

1. What activities do employees indicate as motivating?
2. What are the positive or negative characteristics about your relationship with your supervisor?
3. Which characteristics are more prevalent in your relationship?
4. Does your leader encourage you to use your creativity to solve work related problems?
5. Do you have freedom to exercise your decisions without fear of reprisal?
6. Does your leader appear to enjoy the power held over the subordinates?
7. What are available communication methods between you and your supervisor?
8. Are you satisfied with the current level of communication between you and your supervisor?
9. Do you perform any tasks that empower you to make decisions?
10. Do you understand your work responsibilities?
11. How do you know when you have exceeded expectations of your supervisor?
12. What supervisor actions do not motivate you to work harder?
13. Are you aware of career opportunities available to you?
14. What kind of difficulties might influence your career advancements?
15. What supervisor actions promote employee loyalty to your company?
16. How do you approach a discussion on career advancement with your supervisor?
17. What are positive characteristics about a good leader?
18. What are some characteristics that do not make a leader effective?
19. What supervisor actions make you feel appreciated in your job?
20. How does your manager build your self-esteem?



## Appendix B: Letter of Invitation to Participate

Dear (College/University President)

My name is Ethel Chiles and I am currently a doctoral student at Walden University. Last year, I completed my course work and am currently enrolled in MGMT9000 doctoral dissertation for this quarter. My dissertation is entitled, "*Expectations of Job Satisfaction Based on Three Common Leadership Styles*" The purpose of this letter is to request your approval to include (name of school) in a study of community colleges/universities in my research.

The purpose of this research is to understand whether transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles meet employees' expectations of job satisfaction. My purpose is not to evaluate individual leaders: rather it is to identify the expectations of subordinate employees that contribute to job satisfaction and to gain a greater understanding of how certain leadership styles have a distinctive impact on job satisfaction.

The data process will involve collecting data from fifteen subordinate employees who work in the human resources area through the use of semi-structured interviews. The confidentiality of all institutional participants will be protected in my dissertation and individual colleges/universities will not be identified by name in or any other distinguishing factor in the dissertation. I will be the only person with access to this data, including transcription. It is my hope that the interviews will lead to data that can be used to develop training designed to increase employee empowerment and performance recognition, which leads to higher levels of job satisfaction.

Your assistance in helping me accomplish my goal is greatly appreciated. Should you agree to participate in this project, I can provide letters of invitation to forward to potential participants. I can also provide any additional information that may be needed. I look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached via email at: [ethel.chiles@waldenu.edu](mailto:ethel.chiles@waldenu.edu) or 336-587-6273.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Ethel Chiles

## Appendix C: Letter of Invitation to Potential Participant

Invitation to participate in a project titled:

*“Expectations of Job Satisfaction Based on Three Common Leadership Styles”*

***Dear Potential Participant:***

I am conducting interviews as part of a research study to increase our understanding of how leadership styles impact job satisfaction. As a nonmanagement employee, you are in an ideal position to give valuable and insightful information from your own perspective of which leadership practices and leader characteristics meet subordinate job satisfaction. For my study, I am seeking study participants who are nonmanagement employees and participated in at least one annual performance review in your current position. In addition, all participants must be 18 years or over.

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour with open-ended questions and will be conducted by telephone interview or in a private setting or at a location of your choice. My goal is to capture your thoughts and perspectives on leadership styles that meet your expectations of job satisfaction. All of your responses to the questions will be kept confidential. At no time during the data analysis or study findings will actual participant names be revealed. This study is totally voluntary and there is no compensation for participating in this study. The data will be kept in a confidential locked storage unit available only to the researcher. The laptop used for the study can only be accessed with a password available only to the researcher.

It should be noted that many of the existing studies on leadership and job satisfaction were conducted from managers' perspectives and hence there is a need for more research studies aimed at capturing feedback from nonmanagement employees. Therefore, your participation will be a valuable addition to the field of leadership and job satisfaction. The findings from the study could lead to greater understanding of how managers can practice those leadership styles that result in increased job satisfaction for their employees

If you would like to participate in this study, please contact me to suggest a day and time that works best for you. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be contacted at [ethel.chiles@waldenu.edu](mailto:ethel.chiles@waldenu.edu) or 336-587-6273.

**Thank you,**

***Ethel Chiles***

## Appendix D: Participant Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study that will play an important role in learning how leadership styles meet the expectations of job satisfaction of subordinate or nonmanagement employees. I am inviting nonmanagement employees who report to a supervisor to be in the study. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part. All participants will be selected from educational institutions.

A researcher named Ethel Chiles who is a doctoral student at Walden University is conducting this study.

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to understand leadership styles as they relate to job satisfaction.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in an in-depth interview using open-ended questions. The Interview will take 45 minutes to an hour.
- Verify that the responses you provided are true and accurate.

Here are some sample questions:

- Do you perform any tasks that empower you to make decisions?
- Do you understand your work responsibilities?
- How do you know when you have exceeded expectations of your supervisor?
- What actions motivate you in your job?

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at your institution will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time. Some participants will have the opportunity to participate in both the interviews and the focus group if they choose to do so.

### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

- There are no risks involved in this study. You will not be identified as an individual in any manner and your answers will be used solely for compiling a database for use in this study.
- You have an opportunity to be involved in a study that could positively impact the development of leaders in the future and increase job satisfaction for subordinate employees.

**Privacy:**

Any information you provide will be kept confidential. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by placing information in a storage unit with a key accessible only to the researcher and information stored on the laptop will require a password to access. Data will be kept for a period of at least five years, as required by the university.

**Contacts and Questions:**

You may ask any questions you have now. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-312-1210 (for US based participants). Walden University's approval number for this study is 10-29-13-0159574 and it expires on October 28, 2014.

I will give you a copy of this form to keep.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below or replying to this email with the words, "I consent", I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

**Researcher's Contact Information**

If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via 336-587-6273 and/or [ethel.chiles@waldenu.edu](mailto:ethel.chiles@waldenu.edu)

## Curriculum Vitae

Ethel Chiles-Neal

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**Professional  
Experience****2012-present Wells Fargo Bank, Winston Salem, NC Loan  
Administration Manager 3 – Super Pod Lead, Operational  
Excellence/Assistant Vice President**

- Responsible for directly and indirectly managing a team of 40-65 team members: Credit Analysts, Underwriters, Loan Operations and Real Estate Specialists who are originating Commercial loans. Directly manage six (6) Pod Leads who actively direct the work of the Pod and are accountable for the end-to-end customer experience.
- Collaborate with Site Leader for Underwriters and Underwriting Managers to ensure the movement of inventory through the Operations Excellence process
- Provide daily and consistent coaching to six (6) Pod Leads to influence behavior that drives for results.
  
- Manage and guide team members to successfully support the activities for loan processing, documentation, pre-closing/closing tasks. These team members are accountable for providing quality customer service to internal/external customers.
- Responsible for coaching, influencing, developing and managing team members including decisions relative to performance reviews, terminations, hires, discipline, salary actions, etc.
- Responsible for Influencing performance of a business unit or functional area by working as part of the decision-making management team and has responsibility for managing the budget of the team, department, or unit.
- Participate in strategic planning discussions for the business unit or functional area and provides recommendations regarding future direction. Participate in the formulation and implementation of new and revised systems, policies and guidelines that have significant impact on the unit, department or functional area.

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- Oversee implementation of practices to ensure compliance with Wells Fargo, legal, investor, regulatory and/or business policies.

**2009 – 2012 Wells Fargo Bank, Winston Salem, NC**

***Promotion:* Loan Administration Manager 3/Assistant Vice President**

- Managed a team of 30-35 booking analysts and supervisors who supported functions to include booking loans to AFS loan accounting system); Booking review and funding (quality assurance review, UCC disbursements or advances to customers); Collateral perfection (loan documentation review), UCC perfection, real estate mortgage recordation), and the State Tax Review process.
- Was responsible for decision-making relative to performance reviews, terminations, hires, discipline, and salary actions, managed staff salaries of more than \$1.3 million.
- Initiated process to improve response time in TCM resulting in savings of an annual total of six (6) FTEs across all four sites.
- Provided coaching and direction as a role model; defined strategies to achieve goals and motivate subordinates to excel in team and individual performance.
- Provided coordination and consultation to high performing teams who are continually focused on providing quality service and satisfaction for all customers of Business Banking Loan Services
- Worked with staff to identify and implement process improvements.
- Supported and encouraged a team environment that ensured the level of service provided was of optimum quality and provided challenges and opportunities for all team members, managed multiple teams with a variety of processes within the Booking/Day 2 functions.

**2002-2009 Wachovia Bank, N.A. Winston Salem, NC**

**Supervisor/Assistant Vice President, Commercial Loan Servicing**

- As a member of five-person supervisory team, supervised 60 staff members who were responsible for booking loans for the Corporate Line of Business, directly supervise 12.
- Was Responsible for relationship building with line partners

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- Prepared management reports, managed a budget for the unit's RC to maintain a 1% variance.
  - Worked with staff to identify and implement process improvements
  - Lead and participated on projects.
  - Performed all personnel related duties for the direct reports including career development, goal setting, and performance feedback.
  - Provided superior service to our customers by exceeding service and quality standards.

**Education**

**August 2008** Masters of Business Administration (MBA), Capella University, MN. GPA: 3.9

**1984-1998** North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro, NC, B.S., Business Administration (Marketing) Graduated Summa Cum Laude, GPA.: 4.0 (Attended part-time)

**Skills**

Effective interpersonal and communication skills, Strong organizational and time management skills in a multi-tasking environment, Strong leadership and motivational skills, Tactical Decision-Making, Interviewing and Selecting, Budget Management, Effective Customer Service Delivery, Effective Presentations, Building and Managing Relationships, Effective coaching and problem solving skills.

**Training**

Extraordinary Leader, Lean Thinking, Leadership Development Program, Introduction to Strengths, Situational Leadership, Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Culture, Managing to Learn (Four Courses), Working with Loan Operations for Business Banking Team, Team Building, Individual Performance Management, Managing Performance, Interviewing & Selecting, Selection and Assessment Policies and Processes, Successful Supervision, Goal Setting, Career Development, Customer Service, Consumer Lending School, Managing Change, Forging Breakthroughs, Partnering for Results.