2016

Transformational Leadership in the Public Sector

Glenda Bumgarner
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Glenda K. Bumgarner

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Stephanie Hoon, Committee Chairperson, Management Faculty
Dr. David Bouvin, Committee Member, Management Faculty
Dr. Salvatore Sinatra, University Reviewer, Management Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2016

Abstract

Transformational Leadership in the Public Sector

by

Glenda K. Bumgarner

MPA, DeVry Keller University

BA, Capital University

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Management

Walden University

May 2016

Abstract

Senior leaders in state government public sector agencies must manage employee performance to ensure quality services to the citizens they serve. Limited academic research exists to study the barriers that these leaders acknowledge as deterrents to managing employee performance. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the reasons that public sector leaders at the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) were challenged to manage employee performance and explore the role of transformational leadership. The ODOT was selected for this research because two prior worker surveys conducted by the agency revealed that employee performance accountability was an issue of concern. Following the conceptual framework of transformational and full range leadership, the research question for this study examined the barriers that these leaders cited as deterrents to managing employee performance. Twelve leaders were interviewed using a 5-item, open-ended questionnaire. Data were analyzed using inductive coding techniques and examined against the full range leadership continuum. The results of the study revealed nine barriers that leaders cited as deterrents to managing employee performance. The most frequently occurring included subordinates' self-preservation interests, market pay disparity, employee low motivation levels, and ineffective leadership training. The study concluded the role of transformational leadership was minimal, as leaders identified mostly with transactional characteristics. These findings may assist public leaders to improve performance management outcomes and possibly increase the quality of services to citizens.

Transformational Leadership in the Public Sector

by

Glenda K. Bumgarner

MPA, DeVry Keller University

BA, Capital University

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Management

Walden University

May 2016

Acknowledgments

To my amazing family: Your support encouraged me during this surprisingly difficult journey. On those days when I was ready to toss in the towel, you reminded me that God does not give us unachievable dreams. Rather, He offers a path to knowledge that better prepares us to serve and equip others with life-changing information. Your love and support bless me, and I could not have completed this journey without you. While I appreciate the newest title of doctor, the most important titles to me will always be mother, wife, daughter, sister, and Gigi!

To my exceptional dissertation committee: Dr. Stephanie Hoon, Dr. David Bouvin, and Dr. Salvatore Sinatra - thank you for sharing your knowledge with me, time and time again. Dr. Hoon, you were indeed my champion Chair, and I will always appreciate your commitment to doctoral standards.

Finally, to the Ohio Department of Transportation's senior leadership team: My esteemed colleagues, you lead by example every single day and work tirelessly to demonstrate that positive and long-lasting change is possible. You are fearless in your efforts to improve the services to the citizens of the Great State of Ohio. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences so that I could explore the phenomenon of public service leadership.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

As public sector government agencies strive to provide services to citizens, senior leaders responsible for achieving and improving performance must successfully manage complex bureaucracies. Although these leaders attempt to implement change in these risk-averse public environments, they often struggle to deploy the most effective leadership strategies. Leaders spent time and energy focusing on practices that did not lead to the intended outcomes, adversely impacting the citizens to whom they are accountable to provide services (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011; Green & Roberts, 2012; Kim, 2015). There has been limited credible leadership research conducted in the public sector. The absence of this information reduces opportunities for individuals to develop and expand their knowledge. One of the greatest challenges to understanding public sector leadership is limited access to empirical data where employees provide their feedback through well-designed surveys. The absence of follower information adversely impacts managers' abilities to lead these complex organizations.

Public sector leaders lean toward transactional versus transformational leadership strategies. However, researchers proposed that transformational leadership will significantly improve outcomes for the citizens (Caillier, 2014; Jlungholm, 2014; Trottier, Van Wart, & Wang, 2008). When leaders successfully connect with followers and develop relational strategies to improve outcomes, performance improves. The result is increased worker satisfaction. In this study, I examined public sector leadership through the experiences of senior management at a large state agency. Chapter 1 of this study consists of background information on public sector leadership, evidence of the problem, the purpose of this research, and research question. Finally, I present the examination in the theoretical and conceptual dynamics of transformational leadership in government.

Background

In the United States, the expansion and span of control of public sector government agencies are growing. Whether the service is a new national health care program or immigrant processing center, the public expects these services to be timely and accurate. In the 1990s, the federal government was perceived to be burdened with bureaucracy (Hood, 1995). A transformational movement to release authority and decision making to the state and local levels occurred (Persson & Goldkuhl, 2010).

As state governments received greater authority, they were tasked with more responsibility. To deliver the necessary services without additional resources or dollars, they empowered their workers and expanded the span of control for decision making (Fabian, 2010). In reaction to these changes, a new public management paradigm emerged that moved public administrators and workers to the central location of policy development and service delivery. In contrast to a top-down flow of decisions, public sector leaders released their authority to employees, and consequently the shift to transformational leadership began to appear in the public forum (VanWert, 2003). Increased decentralized decision making placed the empowered workers at the core of activity and further removed the public sector manager from daily decisions and influence (Fabian, 2010; Hoffman, Bynum, Piccolo, & Sutton, 2011; Persson & Goldkuhl, 2010).

As public sector leaders and agencies began to empower subordinate workers in the organization hierarchy, transformational leadership strategies started to appear in the government sector. However, a new and unexpected problem emerged. Leaders began to retreat from decision making, opting instead to minimize their personal risk and relinquish authority (Van Wart, 1998). This change resulted in decreased employee performance as leaders avoided intervening and holding their followers accountable.

Problem Statement

The size and role of government is growing. According to the United States Government's Office of Management and Budget (2014), the number of people in the United States receiving public services is increasing in both costs and volume. The most significant increases are occurring in the human service offerings of education, training, and social security administration. Americans in the United States are more dependent on the government than at any time in history (Muhlhausen & Tynnell, 2014). As a result of this growth in demand, public sector leaders are more challenged to meet the service needs of dependent citizens.

While responding to this increased demand, public sector managers must operate in high risk-averse work environments where mistakes can inflict unintended harm on the most vulnerable populations, which can result in career-ending outcomes. To help manage organizational and personal risks, these executives often release their span of control and empower their subordinates to make decisions (Van Wart, 2003). While this leadership strategy could be considered transformational in nature, an unintended consequence is a noticeable loss of managerial accountability. There is prior research that suggests some public sector managers purposely deploy distributed decision making. Their decisions may be due to fear of failure, accountability, or job loss (McCracken, Brown, & O'Kane, 2012; Srithongrung, 2011). In two large-scale worker surveys, this problem was confirmed by the Ohio Department of Transportation. In 2012 and 2013, employees were asked if they believed managers held workers accountable for performance. On both surveys, employees ranked this question among the lowest of all scores provided in the 32 question survey, again demonstrating that public sector leaders are challenged to implement performance management strategies. No researcher has explored the barriers that public sector leaders acknowledge as deterrents to managing employee performance and the role of transformational leadership. This study addressed the gaps in the existing literature to understand the challenges of public sector leadership.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this interview-driven, qualitative research was to understand the reasons why public sector leaders were challenged to manage employee performance and to explore the role of transformational leadership. I attempted to determine the barriers that resulted in these avoidance behaviors and the influence that transformational leadership strategies imparted to this group. I used the full range leadership continuum developed Avolio and Bass (2004A) to facilitate this analysis. Chapter 2 of this study provides additional information regarding this leadership scale.

No researcher has identified the barriers that private sector managers experience against the backdrop of transformational leadership and employee satisfaction. In this study, I identified the obstacles presented by the leadership team within the transactional and transformational context of the full range leadership model (Avolio & Bass, 2004a). The identification of these barriers can be used to address the gap in the existing research and offer information to mitigate management avoidance behaviors. This study provided clarity on the challenges that public sector leaders experience when attempting to implement performance accountability measures.

Research Question

One question guided this research study: What are the barriers public sector leaders at the Ohio Department of Transportation cited as deterrents to effectively managing employee performance and accountability? A qualitative, case study research structure was used to make an inquiry with senior leaders in the public sector arena. The new information will assist leaders to better understand the challenges they may encounter while performing their managerial responsibilities and increase their awareness of transformational strategies that could help improve employee performance and accountability.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Transformational and full range leadership theories are relationship-based management approaches that incorporate motivational and inspirational practices to influence follower performance. Leaders who convey individualized consideration for their followers will achieve improved performance outcomes (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Den Hartog, Van Muijen, & Koopman, 1997). Avolio and Bass (2004a) expanded the examination of transformational leadership and further defined the behaviors on a continuum of leadership. This continuum ranged from laissez-faire leadership strategies, where leaders exert minimal effort and avoid decision making, to transformational leadership and higher levels of performance (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). In this study, I found a single theory insufficient to support the examination of transformational and full range leadership. Researchers have combined theories to synthesize and examination information, so my approach was not unusual (Caruthers, 2011; Guilleux, 2011).

In a review of the literature, I found a relevant study using Bass's full range leadership theory in a federal government environment (Trottier et al., 2008). Authors Trottier et al. examined the results of an extensive government employee survey using this method and recommended further research in the discipline. According to the empirical evidence presented by 284,000 workers, transformational and transactional leadership could be measured and defined in the public sector. I used the same full range leadership model for this study. This study is related to transformational leadership method by the alignment of the obstacles cited by leaders to the guideposts of full range leadership. Chapter 5, Table 6 in this study provides an explanation and evidence of this relationship.

The conceptual framework or phenomenon of the study was the state government work environment. I selected the public sector arena because few government agencies have the courage to conduct this level of organization analysis in risk-averse environments (Trottier et al., 2008). There have been few studies conducted with employee-based surveys in the public sector. The reason this information has historically been difficult to obtain is because of the nature of the transparent work environment. For example, public records laws could permit information to be obtained from outside sources and used for ulterior purposes. In political environments, this information could be used out of the context and could be misrepresented. This possibility causes anxiety for public sector leaders and serves as the primary reason information of this nature is limited in the research (Trottier et al., 2008). This type of information and feedback obtained from senior leadership is a rare opportunity that contributes to the public sector breadth of knowledge.

Nature of the Study

In this interview-driven case study, I used data from a 5-question interview guide that I developed to explore the perceptions of senior leaders serving in a state public sector agency (the Ohio Department of Transportation). The purposeful sampling included 20 executives, which represented 95% of the 21 total members. I interviewed participants until a saturation point was achieved, which resulted in 12 discussions. I used a qualitative rather than a quantitative or mixed-methods approach to the study. Maxwell (2013) defined qualitative research as a means to understand a human social problem by examining individuals or groups. At the heart of this study, senior leaders' perceptions and experiences regarding the barriers to managing employee performance was central to understanding several cases bound by a shared environment. The depth of experiences is best understood with an interview-driven approach. This method afforded me the opportunity to view leadership from the deputy directors' perspective (Bansal & Corley, 2011, 2012; Zhang & Shaw, 2012)

The methodology for this research was a qualitative case study. The population target was the senior management team at the Ohio Department of Transportation. Researchers offer differing opinions on the appropriate time to define the research method. Options are to determine and adopt the method early in the study or to determine the best method interactively and throughout the study to lend maximum flexibility. In contrast to defining a design that discerns static data or information at one point in time, another option is to broaden the research method and promote fluidity of the dialog between the researcher and participants. The qualitative method best supports the flexibility required to understand participants' perceptions (Maxwell, 2013; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Turner, 2010).

In the quantitative method, the researcher focuses on clear and measurable variables and demonstrates the relationship between variables. Maxwell (2013) noted that researchers measure data and instruments using statistical procedures in this methodology. As the research questions for this study were open-ended to gain the maximum feedback, the quantitative method was not selected. Elimination of the quantitative method also excluded the mixed-methods approach. Because this study was based primarily on personal and professional perspectives of individuals rather than a large data set, these options were excluded.

The case study research approach was selected to permit an investigative process that offered an understanding of a group, situation, or individual (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2006; Merriam, 2009). By using a case study design that incorporated interviews with senior leaders, I gathered, analyzed, and clarified participants' insights regarding employee performance. This newly acquired information served as the foundation to offer managerial recommendations to help improve employee accountability and performance.

Definitions

Deputy director: The participants of this study and individuals serving as senior leaders in the state agency.

Employees: The individuals who work in the studied state public agency.

Laissez-faire leader: A leader who provides limited guidance and mostly is absent from the organization (Bass, 1985).

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: Instrument used to measure attitudes, behaviors, and leadership styles (Trottier, et al., 2008).

Public sector: State government workers paid by taxes and fees collected from private citizens and corporations.

The Quality of Work Life Survey: The annual employee survey conducted by the Ohio Department of Transportation (Ohio Department of Transportation, 2012 and 2013)

Senior leaders: For the purpose of this study, senior leaders are persons with a title of deputy director, assistant director, chief of staff, or director.

State government: The Ohio Department of Transportation.

Transformational leader: A leader who motivates employees in a way that transcends self-interests for the greater good of the organization (Bass, 1985).

Transactional leader: A leader who assigns activities and tasks to followers and motivates individuals by punishment and reward. There is a noticeable chain of command and mostly downward communication (Burns, 1978).

Assumptions

I assumed the human resources department appropriately distributed the 2012 and 2013 Qualify of Work Life Surveys to all employees in the agency. Employees who met the criteria were invited to participate in the survey. Further, I assumed human resources employees accurately calculated the mean and standard deviation scores. Finally, I assumed that employees in the organization who responded to the survey did so to improve the performance of the agency and provided honest answers.

I assumed the knowledge learned from this study could apply to other leaders in various segments of government. In the realm of transformational leadership, there are few leaders in this environment who understand the difference between transactional and transformational activities. An increase in awareness and knowledge of leadership skills will ultimately improve the services provided to citizens because public workers are more productive and creative.

These assumptions are relevant to this study because I anchored the problem of this research to the Quality of Work Life Survey results. If the findings were inaccurate, this research could lack purpose, making the findings unhelpful for the public sector leaders whom I interviewed. However, based on information in the current literature, the findings would still apply to a broader public sector audience.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study dates back to research first conducted in 1943 and moving forward to the present time. I used the following key search terms to explore the research: *Transformational leadership, laissez-faire leadership*, *transactional leadership, full range leadership, employee performance, employee accountability, public sector management*, and *various leadership theories.* Additionally, the results of two agency-wide Quality of Work Life Surveys conducted at the Ohio Department of Transportation were included. Data were collected from one specific question and corresponding employee responses. In 2012, the response rate to the initial employee survey was 2,266 individuals or 44% of the total employee population. In 2013, the response rate for the second survey conducted was 2,486 individuals or 50% of the total employee population. The question analyzed in both years pertained to employees' perception of managerial performance. Employees determined in two separate surveys conducted in 2012 and 2013, below average results at 2.8 and 3.2, respectively. The maximum score was 5.0. To understand why managers were not holding employees accountable, I developed a 5-question interview guide for this research to determine the obstacles that leaders experienced when managing accountability. Regarding possible transferability, the results of this study would be replicated and applicable to other public sector agencies where resistance to change and risk-averse climates are evident.

Limitations

The limitations of this study included six areas of consideration. The study's interview-driven qualitative research design may present researcher bias. Although I strived to conduct structured and well-directed interviews, my experience is limited in facilitation with personal and sensitive information. This issue presented me with challenges to capture the information without imposing my impressions or feelings regarding the subject. Maxwell (2013) noted that bias in qualitative research is a significant threat to validity.

The interview settings varied with each discussion, and I had limited control over the background noise and vicinity of others located nearby. Also, the participants did not receive the questions in advance of the meeting, so they were not prepared and needed to work from memory or experiences. I observed the discussion setting to play a role as well. Discussions held in social settings such as restaurants adversely impacted respondents' length of feedback due to interruptions. The environment required me to repeat the question to obtain the answer. Discussions hosted in more formal locations such as conference rooms appeared to retrieve respondent information without researcher prompting.

Other limitations included sample size and makeup of the leadership members. For example, this study included interviews with a higher minority ratio than represented on the full leadership team. Additionally, I noticed gender differences between female and male participants. The females spoke more often and in longer durations. I needed to repeat the question more often to male participants to keep the interview moving forward and achieve the same volume of perspective.

Finally, the 5-question interview guide may have prevented participants from responding thoroughly and completely. Respondents would have provided more information if the process did not require me to use predetermined interview questions. Unfortunately, the time constraints for this research reduced the opportunity to understand more clearly the challenges of these public sector leaders. Additionally, the interview was conducted at the participants' place of employment. Fear of retaliation or loss of credibility, while not evident to me, was a factor. My current role as a management employee of the public state agency could have influenced the study and introduced bias, although no participant noted this concern to me. The measures that I took to mitigate these issues included the distribution of the informed consent documents. Participants received reassurance that results would permanently remain confidential and available only to my dissertation committee. Finally, I provided open-ended questions in the interview and refrained from sharing my opinions. I used the interview techniques offered by Patton (2014) and Maxwell (2013).

Significance of the Study

As public sector government agencies strive to provide services to citizens, senior leaders responsible for achieving and improving performance must successfully manage complex bureaucracies (Kim, 2015). Although these leaders attempt to implement change in risk-averse public environments, they often struggle to deploy the most effective leadership strategies (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996). Likewise, transformational strategies in vast state public organizations must be championed and supported by these senior leaders to achieve the highest possible performance (Rainey & Watson, 1996). These findings contribute to leadership practice by increasing the understanding and knowledge of managers responsible to lead other individuals. The significance of these findings in leadership practice is a better understanding of the barriers experienced when managing employee performance. Ultimately, public sector leaders who recognize and deploy the appropriate management strategies increase the likelihood that improved employee performance will lead to improved quality of services to citizens. This factor is the social change that will occur as a result of this new knowledge.

Summary

In Chapter 1, I presented the background of the problem that I investigated, which reinforced the issue that public sector leaders are challenged to manage employee performance. In this chapter, I confirmed that there are few research studies on transformational leadership characteristics in the state agency public sector. In these risk-averse work environments, change is often challenging, and senior leaders struggle to make transformational changes. Leaders may reduce their personal risk by avoiding their duties and delegating authority to others.

Once I clarified the problem, I defined the research question to be answered and defined the study's background, purpose, and theoretical framework used for the study. Also included were operational definitions, assumptions, and significance of the research. These topics offered a glimpse into the social change opportunities provided by this research.

Chapter 2 contains a review of the existing scholarly literature and studies related to public sector leadership. Examined is the theoretical model of full range leadership, developed by Avolio and Bass (2004a), and transformational leadership developed by Bass (1985).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As public sector government agencies strive to provide services to citizens, senior leadership team members responsible for improving performance are challenged to manage complex bureaucracies (Kim, 2015). Although the leaders attempt to implement change in these risk-averse public environments, they often struggle to deploy the most effective leadership strategies (Green & Roberts, 2012). These executives spend time and energy focusing on practices that do not lead to improved outcomes. The result is a decrease in citizens' level and quality of services (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011). In their examination of the nature and significance of leadership in government, Trottier et al. (2008) identified the need for additional research in transformational and transactional leadership and suggested a broad-scale review of the public sector would offer new insights on leadership strategies.

The purpose of this interview-driven, qualitative case study was to understand the reasons why public sector leaders were challenged to manage employee performance and to explore the role of transformational leadership. I attempted to identify the obstacles that resulted in these avoidance behaviors and to determine the level of influencing that transformational leadership strategies imparted to this group. I used the full range leadership continuum developed Avolio and Bass (2004A) to facilitate this analysis. The outcomes of this research will inform leaders of the critical challenges they face and provide opportunities for future training opportunities. Advanced knowledge of public sector management requirements will assist state governments to hire appropriately skilled leaders. The contribution this transformational leadership research provides to support positive social change is increased levels of understanding regarding the barriers to managing employee performance and how transformational leadership strategies can improve outcomes.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the literature search strategies, focusing primarily on the tentacles of transformational and transactional leadership strategies, along with employee performance and accountability. A review of Avolio and Bass's full range leadership theory (2004a) is included in the search. Finally, I examine the public sector to identify potential gaps and expand the research. A summary of the major themes advances the knowledge in the discipline of leadership strategies.

Literature Search Strategy

I examined the historical research and modern peer-reviewed literature to determine how transformational leadership pertains to the state public sector governmental environment. Despite a significant volume of information on transformational leadership, there is limited information regarding transformational strategies for public sector leaders. In this chapter, I offered an overview of the literature found in this arena and delved into the significance of the study's contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field of leadership. A broad approach to the literature search was used to confirm the problem in the current public sector leadership arena. Next, general theories of leadership development, both public and private, were searched to provide a history and closer glimpse of the problem. The final examination included the nature and significance of transformational and transactional leadership in government.

In the literature search, I first focused on the historical development of transformational leadership theory, presented by seminal theorists to establish the theoretical foundation for the study. Secondarily, I focused on peer-reviewed articles that contributed to the conceptual framework and identification of current phenomena and concepts. The sources of information included dissertations, theoretical books, and management websites. The databases searched included PsychInfo, Academic Search Premier, SocIndex, ProQuest Central, Business Complete Source, ERIC, and Education Research Complete. The scope of the searched articles dated from 1943 to the present time. I used the following key search terms to explore the databases: *transformational leadership, laissez-faire leadership, transactional leadership, full range leadership, employee performance, employee accountability, public sector management,* and *various leadership theories.* The searches using different terms offered 245 articles with 103 articles producing content relevant to the study. I did not limit the research to only these key search terms.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical grounding for this literature research was transformational leadership, defined as a relationship theory where leaders incorporate motivational and inspirational practices to influence follower performance (Bass, 1985). Leaders who convey individualized consideration for their followers will demonstrate appropriate behaviors. These behaviors include role modeling, acknowledging follower successes, and promoting a consistent vision and mission for the organization. They will achieve higher performance results (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Den Hartog et al., 1997).

The origin and source of transformational leadership were first identified by Burns (1978) who described the theory as a leader’s ability to ensure his or her followers commit to favorably motivating and improving morale to adequately complete work. Burns proposed that a transformational leader is capable of moving beyond self-interests, implementing strategies that support the overarching values of the organization. Burns identified five aspects of transformational leadership:

1. Idealized influence: Leaders motivate and encourage employees to reach new levels of development and productivity through inspirational strategies. By incorporating idealized influence, greater levels of autonomy and independent thinking occur, which improves outcomes. Burns proposed that employee empowerment increased commitment to the organization as well.
2. Inspirational motivation: Leaders can explain the organization’s mission in clear and simple ways that improve employee understanding and acceptance.
3. Intellectual stimulation: Leaders assist employees to think about problems in different and new ways and encourage followers to develop innovational solutions. Leaders encourage employees to challenge the status quo to reach performance goals, and employees perform effectively when the leader is absent.
4. Individualized consideration: Leaders treat each follower as an individual and demonstrate care and concern for their well-being.

5. Cascading effective: Also known as the “falling domino effect.” Burns (1978) proposed that when employees are empowered to act, their energy and focus are contagious. This impact can be felt throughout the organization and favorably impacts the performance of others around them (Yang, Zhang, & Tsui, 2010).

Subsequently, Avolio and Bass (2004b) expanded the examination of transformational leadership and identified strategies to define the continuum of leadership. This continuum ranges from laissez-faire leadership strategies to transformational leadership, which means to change, and shift as situations and different leadership characteristics are required (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

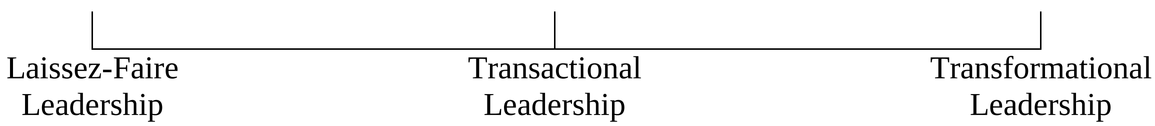


Figure 1. Leadership continuum.
From *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (3rd ed.), by B. Avolio and B. Bass, 2004. Redwood City, CA: Mind Garden.

The continuum starts with laissez-faire, which is a French description that means hands off. This type of leader is the least successful and avoids decisions, offers employees limited support in problem solving, and is mostly absent in the organization. The negative impact of this leadership style includes role conflict, increased stress, and low job dissatisfaction. Further, a laissez-faire leader would not directly respond to a follower’s mistakes, adversely impacting leadership and performance results. Researchers found a close correlation between follower consideration and transformational leadership outcomes, which were the highest predictors of workers satisfaction (Avolio & Bass, 2004b; Piccolo et al., 2012).

In the middle of the continuum is the transactional leader. This term was first developed by Burns (1978) after analyzing political leadership teams. This leader assigns goals and tasks for employees to complete. Further, the chain of communication operates on a downward slope in the management chain. This style focuses more on management than leadership, and leaders using this style mostly approach their followers only when problems occur or the work is not completed to satisfaction. Employees anticipate a reward for a job well done and are motivated by rewards. The strength of the transactional leader is that they establish clear goals and structured work environments (Bass, 1985).

The problem with transactional leadership is success is based on task accomplishment. As a result, employees reporting to a transactional leader are less capable of designing innovative solutions and are less adequate to solve problems. Transactional leadership is a prescription for lower performance, and implementation of changes is difficult. The leader engaged in only this type of approach will experience failure when he or she cannot deliver anticipated rewards such as promotion, pay increases, or other recognition that is meaningful to followers. The self-interests of employees must be met for the transaction-based leader to be successful to meet even minimally acceptable outcomes (Avolio & Bass, 2004b; Bass, 1985; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992).

Researchers describe the transactional activity as focused on a task-related activity, whereas transformational strategies focus on individualized consideration, influence, and inspirational motivation (Lowe et al., 1996; Zaleznik, 2004). Through a meta-analysis research design on 75 independent studies using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass (1985), the empirically tested subordinate perceptions were found to be reliable. He noted the importance of managers to focus on implementation and span of control actions to achieve the desired outcomes. Transformational leadership activities are not less important.

Employees who initially demonstrate transformational strategies adopt their colleagues' transactional-type behaviors when surrounded by these individuals (Alford & Friedland, 1975). Self-managed teams naturally migrate to transformational type leadership strategies. These teams are most likely to implement progressive leadership qualities regardless of the size and makeup of the team (Garcia, Jimenez-Barrionuevo, & Guterrez-Gutierrez, 2012).

Expanding on Bass's original full range leadership theory (1994), Bass and Riggio (2006) placed the individual worker rather than the leader at the center of the decision making process. Bass and Riggio established the principles and environment for positive change. The research gathered from the federal employee survey served as the foundation for this study. Successful transformational leadership strategies incorporate well-developed visions of success and clear goals to expand the conversations between leader and follower (Rainey & Watson, 1996). Additionally, public entities that empower employees in the ranks will support a solution-oriented schema from the frontline worker to management. However, a transformational is the most difficult to modify (Semler, 1989). Finally, Semler (1989) focused on the development of middle managers in the public sector and found that public sector managers often view training or enhanced skills opportunities as a regulatory compliance rather than an opportunity for personal growth and development. This evidence may explain why public sector leaders resist change when perceived as a required compliance, reducing transformational opportunities (McGurk, 2010).

Delving further into the research of transactional management strategies, researchers observed that development and promotion of middle managers were somewhat haphazard rather than purposeful and deliberate. Transactional leaders are most likely to promote employees with the highest technical expertise versus leadership skill (Burns, 1978). Consequently, the less effective leaders are promoted. Transactional leaders were more challenged to retain workers, compared to their transformational counterparts (Green & Roberts, 2012; Hamstra, Van Yperen, Wisse, & Sassenberg, 2011). In contrast to the laissez-faire leadership style, the transactional leader will adequately execute the task-oriented components of the work at hand and ensure they provide employee oversight and direction.

Leaders reaching the far end of the continuum shift their beliefs and values to the employees. Employees then transcend their self-interests for the greater good of the organization (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006). Additionally, the transformational leader strives to advance exchanges between leaders and followers that force a shift from self to a concern for the group as a whole, especially during times of change and crisis. Another closely connected theory is transformative leadership. This leadership model incorporates ethical treatment of followers (Caldwell et al., 2012). Expanding on the original transformational work of Burns, modern researchers suggested four leadership areas:

idealized influence, inspirational motivation, stimulation, and individualized consideration. When leadership ratings were high on the transformational scale, leaders experienced higher rates of success than their transactional counterparts (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Nielsen & Munir, 2009; Rainey & Watson, 1996; Trottier et al., 2008).

In Table 1, transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership characteristics are compared. The variables and relationship to this study are addressed in Chapter 3.

Table 1

Comparisons of Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-Faire Theories

Transformational leader four I's	Transactional leader	Laissez-faire leader
Idealized influence	Contingent theory	Laissez-faire
Charisma	Constructive transactions	Nontransactional
Inspirational motivation	Management by exception Active and passive corrective	
Intellectual stimulation		
Individualized consideration		
Extra effort	Expected effort	
Increased satisfaction		
Performance beyond	Expected performance	Minimal performance

Note. Adapted from "Theories from Avolio & Bass," by B. J. Avolio and B. M. Bass, 2004b, *American Psychologist, 63*(7), doi:10.1037/003-066X.63.7.620

Bass (1985) expanded on transformational leadership in developing the full range leadership model. The major hypothesis of Bass's theory is based on the proposition that transformational and transactional leadership strategies are patterns all leaders use but in differing amounts. Three primary categories of leadership range from laissez-faire to transactional to transformational. Bass (1996) developed eight categorical descriptions of the behavior to define leadership.

Laissez-Faire Leadership (LF) Leaders avoid intervening or accepting responsibilities of follower actions.
+
Transactional Leadership Management by Exception (MBE-P or MBE-A): Passive and active—Monitors performance and intervenes when standards are not met Contingent Reward (CR): Clarifies the need and exchanges psychic and material rewards for services rendered
+
Transformational Leadership Individualized consideration (IC): Diagnoses and elevates the needs of each follower. Idealized influence (II) Becomes a source of admiration for followers, often functioning as a role model that enhances follower pride, loyalty, and confidence. Intellectual stimulation (IS): Stimulates followers to view the world from new perspectives and questions old assumptions, beliefs and paradigms. Inspirational motivation (IM): Articulates in simplest ways an appealing vision and provides meaning and a sense of purpose in what needs to be done.

Figure 2. Full range leadership model.
Adapted from "Bernard Bass's Full Range Model of Leadership," by T. Trottier, M. Van Wart, and X. Wang, 2008, *Public Administration Review,* 68, p. 319–333.

The rationale to select transformational leadership was based on the observation that state government public sector employees most often work in risk-averse environments. These environments most often value accurate transactional activities above transformational efforts (Kim, 2015; Trottier et al., 2008). Transformational leadership is similar to situational and participative leadership theories because each of these theories proposes that different leadership strategies may be required for different situations. Different variables are applied to achieve the highest possible performance. In state agency environments, organized groups such as labor unions and trades prefer to be included in decision making practices, which was a factor in the selection of this theory.

Likewise, transformational leadership is different from trait and behavioral theories. Individuals are born or made into great leaders, and there is limited emphasis on follower behavior or inclusion (Allport & Allport, 1921; Burns, 1978).

Most organizations use transformational and transactional leadership strategies, and successful leaders modify their strategies as the situation requires. Predominantly, leaders use transactional leadership strategies more widely than transformational leadership strategies (Bass, 1996). However, most leaders will deploy transformational strategies when they want to motivate employees. Additionally, employees are most comfortable with a transformational leader and fear a transactional leader who is more likely to issue discipline. Transactional leadership strategies offer less employee empowerment and are more likely to dictate to the employee a precise way to approach and complete a task. Work is more accurately completed when a transactional effort is required (Caillier, 2014; Garcia-Morales, Jimenez-Barrionuevo, & Gutierrez-Gutierrez, 2012; Nielsen & Munir, 2009).

Conceptual Framework

I grounded this study in the conceptual framework or phenomenon of the public sector work environment. Examined were the obstacles that leaders noted impede employee performance and accountability. I selected public sector leadership because few state governmental agencies have the courage to conduct this level of organization analysis (Trottier et al., 2008). Undoubtedly, public sector leaders experience a degree of risk through this exercise. Poor employee satisfaction feedback could be used as a determining factor in a future election cycle. The opportunity to determine leadership areas for improvement, notably in public sector and bureaucratic environments, is especially difficult in political environments (Burns, 1978). Therefore, information that highlights the relationship between public sector leadership strategies and employee performance and accountability plays an important role in ensuring services to citizens are delivered.

As public sector leaders attempt to improve employee performance, the skills required to be an effective leader are most often learned behaviors. However, leaders in public sector work environments receive varying degrees of training and coaching. These individuals need technology and management tools to accomplish today's requirements in this sector (Musgrave, 2014). When coupled with continual changes in staffing, funding deficits, and adverse election impacts, they are challenged to impact performance (Green & Roberts, 2012; Westbrook, 2012).

Leadership is an individual phenomenon that can be measured on a continuum scale, and public sector leaders are often challenged to operate with the advanced transformational strategies that are more inclusive of the workforce (Caillier, 2014; Musgrave, 2014). This observation is important because a storm of public sector retirements are on the horizon. Nearly 60% of government workers are eligible to exit the workforce (Green & Roberts, 2012).These employees will choose to stay and continue to work only in environments where they are satisfied.

Finally, leadership development in the public sector is most beneficial when emotional intelligence and trust factors are highlighted. Senior leaders equipped with soft skills training will produce higher performance (Buick, Blackman, O'Donnell, O'Flynn, West, 2015). For example, public sector group dynamics and leadership skills thrive when there is awareness by the leader that emotional intelligence factors vary among individuals. These resonant leaders are successful because they respect the team, the individuals that make up the team, and themselves. Further, Buick et al. (2015) suggested that organized change management is a challenge that is best accomplished when individuals are the center of decision making.

Researchers Tanser and Lee (2012) found that co-creation opportunities most quickly delivered real-time performance improvement for leaders, while also meeting the needs of followers for inclusion in the decision making process. They also found that interventions that occurred at various pulse points in an organization helped build stakeholder support for leadership directions. Last, they systematically widened the circle of inclusion in the leadership dialog to thread the communications through the organization. This action ultimately increased employee awareness, which in turn increased self-inclusion perspectives.

The examination of the public sector managerial efforts provides new insights into strategies that may improve performance. The literature suggested that integrative efforts that combine leadership skills, traits, behaviors, and situational dynamics must be considered to arrive at defendable conclusions (Fernandez & Pitts, 2011; Buick et al., 2015). Notable to the discussion is the increased awareness that various leadership styles in the public sector are similar to the characteristics for success in the private sector.

For example, leaders who demonstrated energy and determination, along with a vision that could be articulated and shared among the entire workforce, were found to be most valuable (Caillier, 2014). Additionally, charismatic leadership characteristics were equally influential in the public and private sectors. Government agencies are designed to be efficient, which can lead to bureaucracies that limit the human touch or interaction. The result is that public sector employees do not readily recognize the characteristics of a charismatic leader. This point is important because it established the baseline comparison between transformational and transactional leadership strategies in this study.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and Concepts

A description of the studies related to transformational leadership and employee accountability and performance provided insight into the various research methodologies used to examine the issues. As noted previously in this study, the original research in transformational leadership conducted by Burns (1978) was qualitative in design and sought to analyze the biographies of several political leaders. The qualitative design that Burns used permitted him to develop a new model to describe nonnumerical data in the form of written documents and text reviews. This approach permitted Burns to achieve a deep understanding of the phenomenon of transformational leadership by identifying commonalities and differences in the leaders examined. Transformational leadership was new and untested, so a qualitative examination best supported the testing of a new theory (Trochim, 2014).

Following Burns' (1978) original transformational leadership development, Bass (1985) expanded on the research and developed the MLQ, which supported the theory of full range leadership. In the initial development of the MLQ, Bass designed a quantitative study that provided a numerical representation of the variables examined. Subsequently, Bass was able to develop meaningful measures for eight questions that defined the level or degree a leader was considered transformational or transformational. The theorist viewed transformational and transactional leadership as complementary and sought to gauge where a leader fell in these contexts based on a numerical representation (Lowe et al., 2008).

Building on Bass's research and development of the MLQ, numerous researchers used this tool, including a separate meta-analysis that examined the results of 75 different research studies (Lowe et al., 2008). The sources of these original studies included journals, dissertations, books, conference papers, and technical reports. The authors summarized the findings of their quantitative empirical study that tested the validity and reliability of the MLQ. They found the operational variables to be a solid indicator of results. Finally, they found limited evidence to suggest that a mixed-method of research had been conducted and published (Lowe et al., 2008).

Researchers striving to understand better leadership and the principles of adequate management have approached the problem and its impact on employee performance by using qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. However, the vast majority of the research conducted on transformational leadership has used Bass's (1985) MLQ. The strengths of the MLQ and multiple quantitative studies offer validity that the questionnaire and interview guide is reliable and a trustworthy indicator of leadership measurements. However, a weakness in the study of the problem was the overarching assumption that leaders who are transactional are less successful than their transformational counterparts. Employees and situations are unique and require different leadership strategies. Therefore, leaders must be accomplished in both transactional and transformational leadership to cover the continuum (Caillier, 2014; Musgrave, 2014).

The justification for the selection of the variables and concepts in this research is supported by the clear link between leadership strategies and employee accountability and performance (Caillier, 2014; Musgrave, 2014). Further, in the context of the public sector, leaders understand that satisfied employees often produce higher performance results. A review and synthesis of the studies related to the key independent, dependent, and covariate is provided. Researchers applied the model of full range leadership in a federal government work environment in an empirical study that determined the leader–follower satisfaction relationship (Trottier et al., 2008). The results presented the workers’ perceptions of their leadership team. Studies have consistently cited employee satisfaction as a key contributor to improved performance results (Barnard, 1946; Braun et al., 2012). The methodology used by Trottier et al. (2008) examined federal government survey results, whereas this study investigated the data gathered from a state government agency.

Additionally, as the pace of change in the digital age forces leaders and followers to react rapidly to events, transformational leadership characteristics proved more motivational to followers and generated the most creative solutions to problems. For example, Howell and Avolio (1993) determined that transformational leadership strategies positively predicted improved unit or group performance compared to transactional leadership strategies. Their research determined that long-term performance goals were better achieved when transformational leaders created a culture of commitment and cohesive teams. These researchers reviewed the performance results of 78 managers and concluded at the one-year interval that transformational leadership measures resulted in improved performance, whereas transactional performance related negatively to performance.

Employee Accountability and Performance in the Public Sector

As public sector leaders strive to improve employee performance, the skills required to be a successful leader are most often learned behaviors. However, leaders in public sector work environments often receive varying degrees of training and coaching. These managers often attain leadership positions as a result of their technical expertise rather than their leadership experiences or knowledge (Caillier, 2014; Musgrave, 2014). When coupled with continual changes in staffing, funding deficits, and adverse election impacts, they are challenged to impact performance (Green & Roberts, 2012; Westbrook, 2012).

Leadership is an individual phenomenon that can be measured on a continuum scale, and public sector leaders are often challenged to operate with the advanced transformational strategies that are more inclusive of the workforce (Caillier, 2014; Musgrave, 2014). This observation is important because a storm of public sector retirements are on the horizon. Nearly 60% of government workers will be eligible to exit the workforce (Green & Roberts, 2012). These employees will stay and continue to work only in environments where they are satisfied.

Government public agencies are designed to be efficient, which can lead to bureaucracies that limit the human touch or interaction. The result is that public sector employees do not readily recognize the characteristics of a charismatic leader. This point is important because it establishes the baseline comparison between transformational and transactional leadership strategies later in this discussion. Likewise, researchers examined the nature and significance of transformational leadership at both the individual and group levels. They found that followers who connected with the leader experienced personal empowerment to achieve results. Additionally, group followers also identified with empowerment and motivational aspects (Wang & Howell, 2012).

For example, private sector employees possess higher commitment levels to results and the organization than their public sector counterparts (Kim, 2015; Wang et al., 2012). Although both groups demonstrated a high intrinsic factor as a primary anchor to their current employer, private sector employees also demonstrated a sense of increased satisfaction with extrinsic factors. Public sector employees experience with extrinsic rewards is limited because their pay is legislated and controlled by state policies. Therefore, managers have limited opportunity to reward followers with monetary increases (Caillier, 2014; Buick et al., 2015).

Further, public sector workers noted that when their organization retained low performing employees, the unintended consequences were the erosion of services to the public. The result for higher performing workers was a decreased intrinsic value for success (Buick et al., 2015). According to researcher Kim (2015), employees who believed their managers included them in the decision making process expressed higher levels of job satisfaction. This phenomenon was an important factor in this study of transactional and transformational leadership strategies.

Researchers have examined employee performance and satisfaction since the 1930s. There is a clear pattern that suggests managers play an integral role in worker satisfaction levels. Therefore, they can improve employees' environment (El-Kot & Kaynak, 2011). Consequently, managers in the public sector with limited abilities to provide pay increases can still inspire followers by deploying the most appropriate leadership strategies.

In contrast, Webb (2009) viewed employee performance and satisfaction differently from most other researchers, and suggested that replacing an employee who leaves the organization due to dissatisfaction is costly to an organization. Webb noted that when organizations must replace an experienced worker, they underestimate the associated costs and labor required to recruit, train, and bring another employee on board. As noted in this research, a significant volume of highly skilled and trained public sector workers who are eligible for retirement most often elect to stay with an organization if they are a satisfied employee.

Transformational Leadership and Employee Satisfaction in the Public Sector

Overall, researchers agree that transformational leadership strategies encourage higher levels of employee satisfaction, which leads to improved performance (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, and Fred, 2012). Several studies addressed transactional leadership strategies along with employee performance and satisfaction studies, but few studies focused on the state-agency government's public sector. This research void creates an opportunity for additional study in the discipline.

The strengths of this study's examination are increased awareness and application of Bass's full range leadership theory, which augments several researchers' prior work including Trottier et al. (2008). Although the research question is different than previous studies, the implication of leader effectiveness on employee performance and citizen service levels improves when full range strategies are observed (see Figure 3).

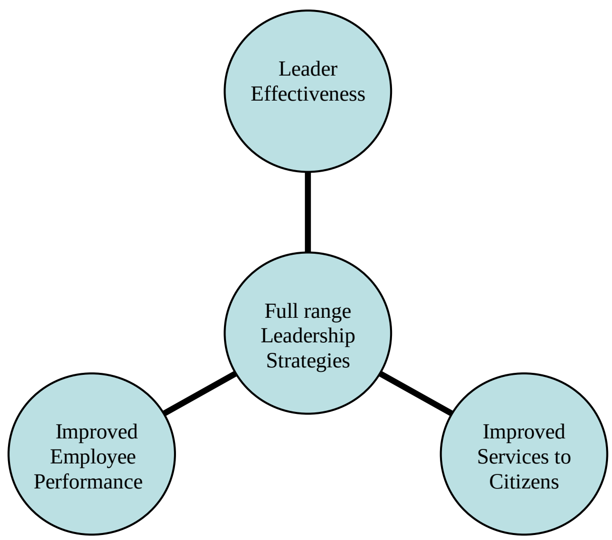


Figure 3. Leader effectiveness and full range theory implications

The weakness of the existing data is the many definitions of the term *transactional leadership*. Although originally coined by Burns (1978), and further refined by Bass (1985), the term has been widely used and required clarification for this research.

The justification for the variables selected for the literature search proved sound because no shortage of content exists on the topics selected. There was pertinent and current relative research available on transformational and transactional leadership. Also, employee performance and public sector leadership information was readily available.

However, there was a gap on employee surveys conducted by state agency transportation departments.

The literature and studies reviewed are related to the research question as they offer verification that Bass's full range leadership model was validated prior to my research. Therefore, I found the model a sound analysis tool to analyze the 2012 and 2013 Quality of Work Life Survey results. Studies reveal that transactional leadership strategies are necessary to support consistent decision making. However, transformational leadership will enable senior managers to provide strategic guidance and promote continuous improvement efforts to a higher level.

Therefore, validation is possible through this literature review, which established that a qualitative case study design that analyzes existing data is possible using transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). Second, the literature supports the quest to determine if public sector leaders' barriers to managing employee performance might be improved through increased awareness of trends and patterns in this area of research.

Summary and Conclusions

A summary of the major themes observed in the literature revealed a distinct difference between public and private sector leadership strategies. The problem is that citizens increasingly require the services of government. Public sector leaders must be capable and accountable to meet the demands. Another significant theme that appeared throughout the literature was the recognition and awareness that transactional and transformational leadership strategies differ. Public sector managers appear to utilize transformational strategies most often, therefore limiting strategic change opportunities that require a wide-range of employee support.

Finally, a theme that often appeared during the literature search was the constrained environments that public sector leaders must navigate, compared to their private sector counterparts. For example, public managers experience outside forces that often legislate their abilities to hire, promote, and provide salary increases. Further, this management group must obtain significantly more levels of buy-in from internal and external stakeholders before proceeding with a significant change. Otherwise, this risk-averse culture risks unintended harm to the citizens who rely on its services. Also, a higher personal level of job loss fear comes from perceptions of limited employment options.

The literature offered insight into several known outcomes, achieved through various studies on leadership. For example, transactional leadership strategies are of equal importance to transformational strategies, particularly for front-line and middle managers responsible for implementation and execution plans. The problem occurs when senior managers focus their time on transactional activities. This level of focus prevents them from using transformational strategies, despite senior leaders attaining their positions with intent to use transformational strategies. The overarching observation, however, is that organizations need both transactional and transformational efforts, and they ideally should work in harmony. Without this partnership, mission and visions could not be implemented, nor could organizations improve current practices or gain efficiencies.

The literature also offered insight into several unknown outcomes that provided a placeholder for deeper examination. For example, one of the unknown factors demonstrated was the true impact of poor employee performance to citizens. Additionally, an unknown area of research was the ability and willingness of public sector managers to terminate poor performers, notably in a risk-averse environment. The literature revealed the public sector has less employee turnover as a result of poor performance than the private sector. However, there was limited research about why public sector managers typically moved employees to another work unit rather than terminating them.

This study offers new research by providing insight into the obstacles that public sector leaders experience as deterrents that impede their ability to manage employee performance. This insight fills a gap known to be missing for state public sector managers, achieved through rarely available employee survey data. Due to the risk-averse nature of public sector environments, few senior leaders are willing to offer surveys to workers. Data results are readily accessible through public document access. By understanding the perceived challenges that senior leaders indicate as causation for poor employee performance, an increased level of awareness will offer the opportunity to address these issues.

The justification for this study is evidenced by the research gap in state government leadership teams, and notably their abilities and awareness to deploy transformational and transactional leadership strategies that improve employee performance. Given the important role of state government leadership teams to execute robust public policies and programs for the citizens they serve, successful management strategies are paramount for mutual success.

The analysis resulting from the current study will assist public sector managers to establish a baseline for future comparisons. Finally, this study will enhance leaders' awareness of leadership barriers that ultimately impact employee performance and accountability. The impact of this knowledge will reinforce the most appropriate strategies that result in the highest possible levels of performance.

In Chapter 3, I describe in detail the research methods deployed for this study. The rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, and issues of trustworthiness are examined.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter, I explained the techniques and methodology used to conduct this qualitative case study. The information is presented in five subsections: the purpose of the research, research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, and the methodology. As citizens' dependence on public sector services such as health care and public assistance evolves and grows, the management and delivery of services is undergoing unprecedented scrutiny. In a risk-averse work environment where mistakes can inflict unintended harm on citizens, public sector leaders have limited room for error. As a result, distributed and shared decision making is most often preferable. This approach minimizes an individual leader's personal risk, but also removes the leader from the center of daily practices and outcomes (Fabian, 2010; Hoffman et al., 2011; Persson & Goldkuhl, 2010).

The purpose of this interview-driven qualitative research was to understand the reasons why public sector leaders were challenged to manage employee performance and to explore the role of transformational leadership. I attempted to identify the obstacles that resulted in these avoidance behaviors and to determine the level of influencing that transformational leadership strategies imparted to this group. I used the full range leadership continuum developed Avolio and Bass (2004A) to facilitate this analysis. The focus area was leadership and employee performance improvement. I attempted to understand why leaders of public sector organization were challenged to hold employees accountable for performance, as identified through large-scale worker surveys conducted at the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Research Design and Rationale

This study was conducted using a case study interview-driven approach. This qualitative method is appropriate for studies where the researcher seeks to answer the why and how of human social interactions (Maxwell, 2013). A key component to gaining information through a research study is the collection of data from multiple sources such as interviews, documents, observations, and other items. This component was essential to the study because I invited 20 senior leaders to participate in a confidential interview with me. To obtain information, I used a 5-question interview guide. This approach permitted the leaders to provide insights without fear of repercussion or embarrassment. Qualitative research is rigorous enough to be used in peer-reviewed journals (Leitner & Hayes, 2011).

I selected the case study approach because this effort permits an investigative process that offers in-depth insight and understanding of a group and individuals (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The case study design and interview process provided an integrated analysis of data and offered a deeper clarification of the findings. The interview process permitted a deeper examination of the information and offered me the opportunity to describe, explain, and compare results through this approach (Turner, 2010). Purposeful sampling was affirmed by Leedy and Ormrod (2010) to be a frequently used method in qualitative research. The approach allows researchers to select participants who will provide the most valid and clear input for research evaluation. In this study, I selected only the senior leaders of the organization versus all management team members. According to Maxwell (2013), typical sampling of individuals represents the normalcy to people unfamiliar with the group as a whole.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher in this study was to better understand the challenges that public sector leaders encounter when striving to manage employee accountability and performance. I attempted to understand the role of transformational leadership. To achieve this understanding, I interviewed participants and asked the same five questions to obtain results in an objective manner. I was familiar with the leaders interviewed in this study as I am a colleague in the transportation industry and currently work in the same state agency. As a senior leader in the organization, I possessed a firsthand observation of the challenges these leaders faced when attempting to implement increased employee accountability to improve performance. This study was carried out with the approval of Walden University’s Institutional Review Board. I provided a disclaimer to participants, along with an informed consent form for current and future use of the data. The study was designed to be confidential for adults between the ages of 35 and 65. Each participant received a detailed description of the study, along with researcher qualifications, contact information, and a summary of the literature findings. Finally, the research methodology and significance of the study was provided (Appendix C).

Potential researcher biases were avoided by including only those managers in the analysis who are equivalent in level to me. Regarding ethical issues, the very nature of a qualitative research approach lends itself to risks. When participants are connected to an environment or program, it can be difficult to manage personal feelings and biased feedback. Also, confidentiality can be challenging (Lodico et al., 2006; Turner & Danks, 2014). I considered the ethics of conducting a research study at my place of employment and with my managerial peers. This issue was addressed by acknowledging and reinforcing the requirements and administration of confidential data collection, along with permission requirements that obtained from all participants. I offered no incentives to participate in the interview process.

For purposes of participant confidentiality, all participant discussions and feedback were aggregated and coded. Table 2 below reflects the details of the participant codes, interview type, and date of the discussion. I maintained strict confidentiality as each participant was interviewed separately, and information was never shared with other individuals. Also, at no time were participants in the vicinity to hear the interview questions and they agreed not to share the questions. All information gathered for this study has remained solely in my charge.

Table 2

Research Interview Details

Interview Codes	Interview Type	Interview Date
Participant 1	Face-to-Face	05/12/2015
Participant 2	Face-to-Face	05/13/2015
Participant 3	Face-to-Face	05/13/2015
Participant 4	Face-to-Face	05/15/2015
Participant 5	Face-to-Face	05/16/2015
Participant 6	Face-to-Face	05/18/2015
Participant 7	Face-to-Face	05/21/2015
Participant 8	Face-to-Face	05/25/2015
Participant 9	Face-to-Face	05/26/2015
Participant 10	Face-to-Face	05/28/2015
Participant 11	Face-to-Face	05/28/2015
Participant 12	Face-to-Face	05/30/2015

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The methodology used to conduct this research was a qualitative case study. The population target was the senior management team at the Ohio Department of Transportation. The purposeful sampling originally included 20 senior executives, which represents 95% sampling of the 21 total members. However, I reached the point of information saturation at the 12th interview. Eligibility to participation in the study was based on two criteria: (a) 2 years of work experience in the current state agency and (b) 5 years of organizational experience in a senior level position. All of the 12 participants met the above criteria. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) affirmed that purposeful sampling is a frequently used approach in qualitative research. This approach allows researchers to determine and select participants who will provide the most valid and clear input for research evaluation.

A case study research design was the most appropriate qualitative model for this examination because the approach supported a bounded system. Merriam (2009) revealed that a bounded system is a group to be studied: in this case, the senior management team of a public state agency. Through the examination of the leaders' perceived barriers to employee management and accountability, I gained invaluable knowledge into their perspectives and experiences through the interview process and a 5-question interview guide. Studying this bounded group of individuals offered insight into the common challenges they experience when attempting to manage employee performance.

Qualitative studies provide an understanding of complex psychosocial issues and answer why and how (Maxwell, 2013). I contacted the individuals identified for selection through telephone calls and in person. Originally, I had planned to contact candidates via work e-mail and meet with them during work hours. However, a change in my managerial reporting required me to modify the interview times. I hosted discussions on personal time, including lunch periods and other nonwork hours. This change in my research approach was approved by Walden's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix M). All participants received invitations to interview for a 60-minute session; respondents confirmed their interest and availability through a personal electronic mail, telephone, and in person. Agreement to participate in the interview was obtained by using the Informed Consent of Participants over the Age of 18 (see Appendix I&K). This document as required will be maintained for 3 years. To accommodate scheduling, I met with participants at mutually convenient locations throughout Ohio. The identity of the participants will remain confidential. Figure 4 illustrates the process that data were collected for this research.

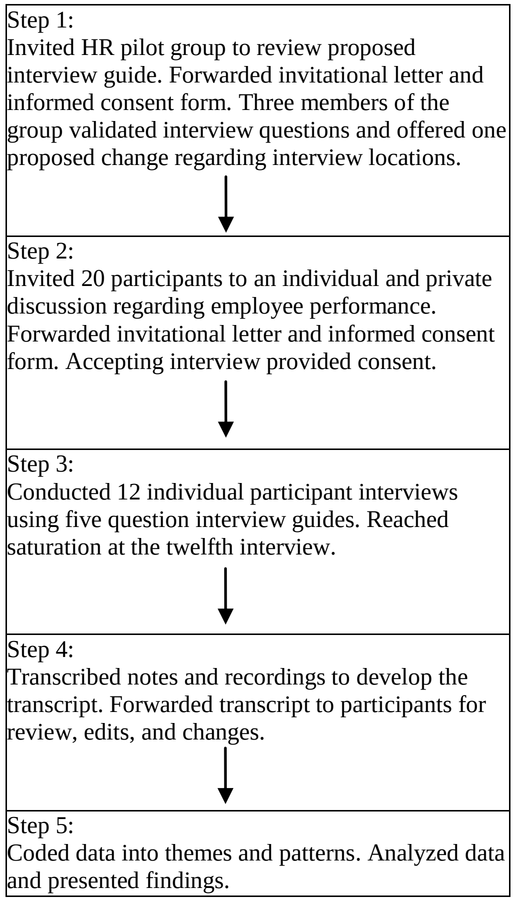


Figure 4. Data collection process flow chart

Instrumentation

Throughout the interview process, participants verbally shared responses in their words. As noted earlier, participants received a consent form that stipulated they were offering their agreement by accepting and completing the interview with me (Appendix K). To maintain the confidentiality of the participants, I assigned each a number from 1 to 12, which is when the point of saturation was reached. Participants were notified via telephone and e-mail regarding the date and time that was mutually agreeable. A demographics of the 12 candidates interviewed included years of leadership experience in the public sector. This information was clarified during the interview as Question 1 (Appendix C). The participant age group ranged from approximately 35 to 55. Participants were encouraged to respond honestly and share their perceptions and experiences. Researchers are advised to avoid making assumptions when interviewing participants, so I avoided generalizations and sought expansion of responses when the information was unclear to me (Patton, 2014). This approach assisted me to achieve validity and reliability when obtaining the information. To accomplish this outcome, I first presented the five predesigned questions to a small pilot group of human resource training team members for review. These individuals made no recommended changes to the interview questions as proposed by me. However, they did recommend the location of the interviews be changed to promote participant flexibility. Information about the pilot study is found in Chapter 4 of this research.

Data Collection Technique

Prior to launching the full study, I convened a small pilot group of human resource training professionals to review the proposed interview questionnaire. Data for the pilot study were collected only after receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University on April 1, 2015; the confirmation number awarded to this study was 04-01-15-00849089 (Appendix J). Prior to commencing with the group discussion, I provided a copy of the pilot consent form that indicated the participant’s consent was provided by accepting and attending the discussion. During the meeting, I provided the interview guide to participants and requested their feedback. Although this pilot group proposed no changes to the actual questions, they recommended the location of the interviews be changed to promote participant flexibility. I made this modification and obtained approval from the IRB to implement the change (Appendix K).

Data for the actual research study were collected after obtaining approval and permission from the IRB at Walden University. This authorization was provided on May 12, 2015; the confirmation number awarded to this study was 04-01-15-0084089 (Appendix M). Once approved, I invited participants using the invitational letter (Appendix L). The average interview length was approximately 50 minutes. The interviews were hosted between the period of May 12, 2015 and May 30, 2015. Figure 4 offers an overview of the data collection technique used for this study.

At the beginning of each interview, I reviewed the informed consent letter with each participant to reiterate the purpose and protocols of the study (Appendix M). Additionally, I reminded participants of the confidential requirements of the study and my intent to preserve their personal responses. Participants were advised that information would be collected and coded and that results would be aggregated, further protecting their identity. They were also advised the interview and content provided was completely voluntary, and they could stop the interview or request their input be omitted up and until the point of dissertation approval. Prior to commencing the interview, I advised that data received during the discussion would be retained and destroyed 5 years after the study had been completed. Participants were also advised they could contact Walden's Research Advocate if they wanted to learn more about the research or me, and I provided the e-mail and telephone number for the research advocate. At this point in the discussion, no participant expressed concerns to me regarding their engagement or participation.

I then presented each participant with a paper copy of the five questions to be discussed during the 60-minute session. A list of the interview questions may be found in Appendix C, and detailed responses are included later in this chapter. Each interview was recorded, and information was stored on the same media device. Additionally, I captured information by taking hand-written notes and using a separate interview guide for each participant that I kept in a portfolio binder and never released from my possession. The information recorded on the media device was encrypted with a password that only I retained. Once the interview was completed, I listened to the media recording and augmented any missing information that I captured in hand-written notes.

The names of the participants were omitted from the research interview guide and questionnaire. Instead, I assigned each participant a number from one through 12. This step further assured participant confidentiality. I conducted all 12 of the interviews in various public locations that were mutually agreeable to both the participant and the researcher. The varying locations were a change from the original research approach where I planned to host the interviews at the Ohio Department of Transportation’s Strategy Room in Columbus, Ohio. As required, I obtained approval from Walden’s Institutional Review Board (see Appendix E) to make the location change to offer additional flexibility to the participants. To verify and validate the information received, I asked questions when necessary to obtain clarification. I also offered participants the opportunity to review and amend the information they provided to me to ensure accuracy.

According to Richards (2014), this feedback and verification technique minimizes the researcher's biases and ensures accuracy during the qualitative research approach. During the interviews, I engaged with the participants in a friendly and non-threatening approach as I verbally asked the five interview questions. On several occasions, I needed to guide the participants back to the question of focus until I observed a response had been provided.

Following each interview, I transcribed verbatim all information offered by the participants. This information is filed in a secure location, and I will maintain the original data for no less than five years as required by Walden University. The information was organized, coded and reviewed for themes and patterns. Besides the manual manipulation, I utilized NVivo version 10 software for assistance. All data for this study is secure in a password-protected computer and storage backup device. I am the only individual with the passwords.

The data analysis for this study occurred in a five-step process (see Figure 5 below). The process commenced with an inquiry, which led to examination, organization, and finished with interpretation.

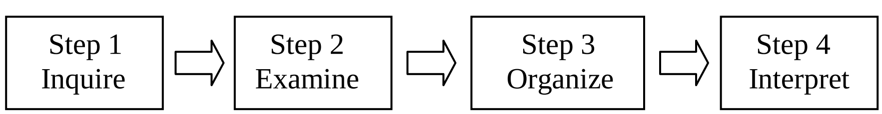


Figure 5. The data analysis process.

To determine and code common themes and patterns, I used NVivo 10 software. The software supported the coding of the interview guide and response content. NVivo

10 software is a tool that offered analysis of the data and provided trends that may not normally have been observed. I used the automatic coding feature to determine common themes found in the responses.

Although Patton (2014) suggested as few as two and as many as 10 participants are acceptable case study response rates, I interviewed 12 individuals and stopped at the point of saturation. Although saturation may be ensured through member checking of synthesized information, I utilized participant transcript review as the approach. This option permitted me to maintain confidentiality in an environment where their colleagues' feedback could influence participants. At the time of this study, the executive management team consisted of 20 deputy directors, minus me the researcher. Consequently, conducting 12 interviews allowed me to reach a 60% sampling outcome. This pattern follows the suggestion of Patton (2014) who indicated there are no rules for relevant sample size. The interviews were scheduled on a first-response basis and individuals who responded with interest were scheduled at mutually agreeable locations and during non-work hours. The interview questions appear below and in Appendix C.

To determine the barriers public sector leaders at the Ohio Department of Transportation noted as deterrents to effectively managing employee performance and accountability, participants were asked to answer the following questions during the interview:

1. How long have you been a public sector manager?
2. How many hours of management training have you received in the past 36 months?

3. In your current position have you experienced obstacles when attempting to manage employee performance?
    a. If yes, what are those barriers?
    b. If no, do you observe your colleagues experiencing barriers?
5. How do you rate your personal ability to obtain the desired performance outcomes from your employees, ranging on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest)?
6. What other information should be considered in this discussion?

Data-Analysis Plan

The interview data were analyzed for meaningful themes, characteristics, and descriptions (Maxwell, 2013). To accomplish this analysis, I used NVivo (version 10) software that guided me to break down pieces of data into meaningful themes and trends. This process is the core component of developing research outcomes that otherwise would have been impossible. I listened to the recorded notes and compared them with the written notes taken during the interviews. The NVivo software proved to be a helpful tool as suggested by Bazeley and Jackson (2013). The coding used in the software was consistent with qualitative shaping and modeling. Besides identifying common themes and patterns, I compared the outcomes developed by the software coding with the categories of the full range leadership (Bass, 1985). An attempt to categorize the level of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership characteristics from the interview results of the senior leaders was conducted. According to Trottier et al. (2008), employee and leader interview results can be effectively compared against the tentacles of the full range leadership model and serve to validate results. For example, a respondent who indicated they experienced no obstacles while managing employee performance may be operating within the laissez-faire leadership paradigm, which is limited or no engagement (Bass, 1985). A pattern or trend in this direction by a majority of the respondents would indicate an unengaged management team who may be avoiding their duties to manage employees. This comparison is highlighted in Chapter 4, Table 6 in this study. This information offers an answer to the problem identified in this study, which are the barriers that public sector leaders at the Ohio Department of Transportation cited as deterrents to managing employee performance and accountability.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Disclosure is not to be used in the context of personal persuasion or bias (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). While completing the interviews for this research study with my work colleagues, I reinforced confidentiality and reassured the participants the information would be safeguarded and protected. I also assured the participants the information gathered would be examined for themes and patterns, further protecting them from potential confidentiality breaches. Fortunately, no participant expressed fear or concern to share their insights regarding obstacles to managing employee performance. I did observe three candidates to be somewhat anxious early in the discussion. However, they appeared to relax after the first couple of questions and learning they would have the chance to review their comments and revise where necessary. To accomplish this task and ensure accuracy and saturation, each candidate received a transcript of their comments for review and potential edits. Four of the 12 participants provided minor changes, which I accepted prior to commencing with coding and analysis.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the role of leadership in the public sector as crucial to the delivery of services to citizens. I outlined the research methodology and rationale of the study, along with the research approach, questions, and data-gathering and procedures used to obtain the information. Additionally, evidence was provided to confirm the research approach was approved by Walden University's Institute Review Board was acceptable. Finally, I presented the reasons for selecting the methodology and design. Moving forward, Chapter 4 of this study provides the data analysis and key findings.

Chapter 4: Results of the Study

Introduction

In Chapter 4, I present the findings of my interviews with 12 top leaders at the Ohio Department of Transportation. The purpose of this interview-driven research approach was to understand the reasons why public sector leaders were challenged to manage employee performance and to explore the role of transformational leadership. Two separate surveys conducted in 2012 and 2013 provided rich and rare information to confirm the problem. I attempted to determine the barriers these leaders experienced when managing employee performance and to explore the role of transformational leadership. I used the full range leadership continuum developed by Avolio and Bass (2004a) to determine how the obstacles aligned to transformational leadership characteristics, initially defined by Bass (1985).

Pilot Study

Prior to launching the full study with the state agency's leaders, I conducted a pilot study with members of the human resources department's training section. This group handled the prior employee surveys carried out by the agency in 2012 and 2013. I obtained approval from the human resources director to interview the training section employees (Appendix H). The participants received an e-mail with an invitational letter to participate in the discussion (Appendix I). I also provided the pilot study consent at that time, which indicated acceptance of the meeting is confirmation of consent (Appendix J). At the time of the meeting, the members of the human resources training team were reminded of the key components of the consent form, along with a confidentiality commitment. I presented the five proposed questions for this study and requested they review and share suggested changes to strengthen the interview guide. The meeting lasted 45 minutes, although 60 minutes had been scheduled. I also provided an opportunity for the team members to provide additional feedback to me within the next 7 days. The group reviewed the interview guide and proposed no changes to the actual questions. However, they did suggest a different approach to the interview location. As opposed to hosting all the interviews in Columbus, Ohio as originally planned, the group recommended that I host the meetings around the state for participant convenience. After obtaining approval to modify my research approach with the institutional review board (Appendix K), I made this change. This modification proved helpful with leaders located in other areas of the state. The decreased travel time permitted increased scheduling flexibility and reduced delays. As a result of the location change, I completed the necessary interviews in a 2-week period. Finally, I hosted the meetings during nonworking hours to include lunch breaks, vacation and flex hours, and weekends.

Research Setting

The organizational and personal conditions that may have influenced the participants of this study included interview locations, budget, and personnel hiring constraints. These factors are important because leaders have fewer resources to manage their teams than prior years. At the time of this study, an examination of full-time equivalent workers revealed a 16% reduction in staffing between the period of 2003 and 2013. The agency had reduced the number of full-time equivalent employees during the

10-year period from 5,900 to 4,984. The reasons for this reduction were a result of public sector retirements, efficiencies gained from new technology implementations, and a slightly higher turnover rate of 5 versus 2%. The impact of these reductions on leader performance management likely resulted in increased transformational leadership strategies to maintain the same level of performance.

Another factor that influenced the research setting was a shift in leadership philosophy by the newly appointed agency director and assistant directors. In the past 4 years since their leadership commenced, these individuals have consistently expressed the importance of employee accountability. This influence and support may have decreased the fear experienced by some public sector leaders when they needed to take action steps to correct employee performance. Study participants were made aware that their barriers to performance manage was the research focus. However, I did not reference the lower than average scores provided by employees in the agency surveys (Appendix A). This widely shared and available information was never mentioned by the participants, but may have influenced their responses.

Regarding budget constraints, the public sector transportation industry is undergoing unprecedented national and state fiscal challenges. At the federal level, members of Congress have passed only temporary bills each year (United States Congress, 2015). This lack of financial certainty adversely impacts the agency’s ability to make strategic and long-term commitments. Additionally, fuel efficient cars that require less gasoline continue to reduce the revenues earned from gas tax dollars (Ohio

Department of Transportation, 2015). These constraints impact public sector leaders' access to resources and opportunities to modify existing practices.

Demographics

I initially invited 20 participants in the job classification of deputy director to join this research study. This number reflects 100% of the total number of agency deputy directors, minus me as the researcher. Among the 20 potential participants, 16 individuals were male and four were female employees. The proportion of male to female employees consisted of a 4:1 ratio. Among the 12 participants whom I interviewed, 10 were male, and two were female. This 5:1 ratio is similar to the demographic makeup of the full leadership team and appropriate representation.

A second demographic trend relevant to the study is the number of minority members of the senior leadership team. Among the 20 potential participants, only two individuals are considered non-White, which is a ratio of 10:1. Among the actual study participants, 10 individuals are considered White and two considered non-White, which is a ratio of 5:1. Consequently, the study included a higher proportion of minority participants than is characteristic of the full leadership team. During the interviews, a minority member noted that non-White leaders may struggle more than their White colleagues when managing employee performance. Researchers examined 31 teams and found that diverse workforce organizations who implemented transformational leadership strategies produced more innovative outcomes than their nondiverse counterparts (Wang, Rode, Shi, Luo, & Chen, 2013). Additional information regarding this finding is detailed further in this chapter.

Two other relevant demographic characteristics included the number of years served as a public sector leader and the number of formal training hours received in the past 36 months. Participants' average leadership experience was 17 years. On average, participants received 49.8 hours in the prior 36 months or 16.4 hours annually. Data collected from the face-to-face interviews were coded, organized, and managed with manual and NVivo (version 10) software. Table 3 shows the participant demographic characteristics.

Table 3

Leaders' Demographics

Participant #	Leadership Experience	Gender	Race	Training Hours – Past 36 Months
Deputy Director 1	19	Male	White	40
Deputy Director 2	4	Female	White	32
Deputy Director 3	12	Male	White	52
Deputy Director 4	24	Male	White	80
Deputy Director 5	22	Male	Non-White	40
Deputy Director 6	4	Male	White	24
Deputy Director 7	25	Male	White	40
Deputy Director 8	20	Male	White	50
Deputy Director 9	14	Female	Non-White	60
Deputy Director10	20	Male	White	40
Deputy Director11	25	Male	White	80
Deputy Director12	18	Male	White	60
Averages & Ratios	17 Years Average	6:1 Ratio Male: Female	6:1 Ratio White: Non-White	49.8 Hours Average / 16.4 Hours Year

Note: In the above table, deputy director is a job classification that represents a senior level of leadership in the agency.

Data Collection

Data were collected from 12 leaders working at the Ohio Department of Transportation in the deputy director job classification. I met with each participant for a maximum of 60 minutes. The discussions occurred during a 2-week period. On May 12, 2015, the first interview was hosted. The final discussion occurred on May 30, 2015. The location of the meetings occurred in different areas throughout Ohio and were hosted at publicly accessible places. The only individuals involved in the confidential discussion were the participant and me. I was careful not to host the interview at a location where others could hear the discussion or observe me interviewing one of their colleagues.

During the interview, data were recorded and transcribed. I captured the information directly onto the 5-question document. Additionally, I recorded the interviews via an IPhone 6, which I transcribed to capture any missed details offered by participants. This process helped to the ensure accuracy and gave participants time to modify their answers. The information gathered from the discussions is filed in a secure location, and I will maintain the content for no less than 5 years as required by Walden University. The information was organized, coded, and reviewed for themes and patterns. Besides manual manipulation, I used NVivo (version 10) software for assistance. All data for this study are secure in a password-protected computer and storage backup device. I am the only individual with the passwords. Participants received the opportunity to review the written transcript and provide feedback. Three of the 12 individuals made edit changes to the transcript.

There was a variation in the data collection plan presented in the original proposal and approved by the IRB. The location of the interviews for the study participants was modified. The original data collection required the participants to meet with me in the strategy room at the Ohio Department of Transportation’s Headquarters, located in Columbus, Ohio. However, feedback from the pilot study group suggested that I should be more flexible regarding the location venue to improve candidate access and response time. This change was reviewed and approved by the IRB (Appendix C). Subsequently, I implemented this modification, and the change proved helpful in the data collection process. After receiving my invitation, candidates responded quickly with potential dates and locations for the interview. The only unusual circumstance that I encountered in the data collection process was the level of anxiety that I noted by a couple of participants. I did my best to reassure them of the confidentiality of the discussion and their ability to review the transcript and make edits where necessary. This approach seemed to work as they continued with the interview.

Data Analysis

The process that I used to move from coded units to representations of categories and themes included the use of NVivo (version 10) software. I assigned each participant a number, which ultimately ranged from one to 12 and ended at saturation. As participants shared their comments regarding the barriers to managing employee performance, which was the central research question of this study, I coded each response at the end of the interview. As the discussions progressed, I used the same system for information previously provided and established new codes as required. For example, during the first meeting, Participant 1 offered a barrier to managing employee performance occurred as a result of workers receiving inaccurate performance reviews from prior supervisors. I developed a barrier code and identified this first response as B1 to represent Barrier 1. Table 4 provides a summary of the codes and barriers identified by participants.

Table 4

Research Barrier Codes, Categories, and Themes

Barrier Code	Description of Barrier – Category and Theme	Reason Barrier Reduced Performance
B1	Inaccurate performance reviews	Participants inherited employees who had not received honest and forthcoming feedback regarding performance. The lack of honest feedback resulted in a barrier to managers and slowed their progress to reach goals. Employees often did not understand expectations.
B2	Unqualified political hires	Participants noted these individuals, although fewer in number than prior years, were difficult to terminate, and managers sometimes feared retribution. As a result, these individuals were often kept in positions even when they could not perform the duties. Leaders cited this barrier to managing and achieving outcomes.
B3	Reduction in employee staffing levels	Increased retirements and non-replacement of FTEs has resulted in significant staffing reductions. The barrier is fewer employees to get the work done.
B4	Below market pay	Leaders noted the lack of pay raised the past several years resulted in pay stagnation. This deficit was a barrier to retain and recruit the most qualified and highest-performing talent. Also, participants noted their employees often earned more than themselves, reducing credibility.
B5	Senior leadership turnover	At the ODOT, gubernatorial and political part changes typically result in a 100% staffing turnover at the deputy director level. The leaders noted the disruption in staffing as a barrier. Specifically, the lack of knowledge transfer and continuity of programs adversely impacted them. The impact was that leaders did not fully understand the issues or the effects of the change. Therefore, reducing their ability to influence the agency's practices.
B6	Employee motivation	Leaders noted that centralized decision making reduced creativity. Perceived gatekeeping discouraged employees from making improvement recommendations. Additionally, long-tenured staffs in classified or unionized positions do not fear termination of employment because it rarely occurs. Finally, since all employees receive the same pay for a particular job, there is no incentive to take on more challenges. Leaders noted these factors reduced employee motivation to take on more responsibility, creating a barrier when attempting to find resources.

B7	Inability to terminate poor performers	Leaders noted they are reluctant to terminate an employee because Human Resources and Legal Departments often advised the action was not justified. Consequently, poor performing employees continue in the position, posing a barrier to leaders striving to manage performance.
B8	Employee self-preservation interests	Leaders noted that a significant percentage of workers have a long tenure at the agency, and attempt to reach retirement without a disruption in employment. Also, the continual leadership changes that occur when political parties rotate adversely impacts workers. Employees must form new relationships with senior leaders and often change entire scopes of work and programs. According to the leaders, these causes contribute to a fear-based culture. They cited this barrier most often.
B9	Lack of Executive Leadership Skills and Training	Participants noted a lack of the right leadership skills for themselves and colleagues. In a technical organization with numerous engineers, participants indicated high technical skills do not equate to effective leadership skills. This barrier prevented members to solve issues and move their teams forward.

I wanted to understand how participants rated their personal abilities to produce the desired performance results from their employees. This information was provided by each participant during the interview and was noted as Question 4 on the guide. I coded this self-assessment question as DD and assigned each leader a number, which ranged on a scale of 1 to 4. Among the 12 leaders, none self-assessed their ability as low to achieve the desired performance results. Two individuals assessed their ability to achieve desired performance results as moderate. Nine individuals assessed their ability as average, followed by one person who self-identified with a high ability to produce the desired performance results. The purpose of this analysis was to understand how leaders perceived their skills and to verify if an opportunity for transformational leadership strategies was possible. Figure 6 provides an overview of this information.

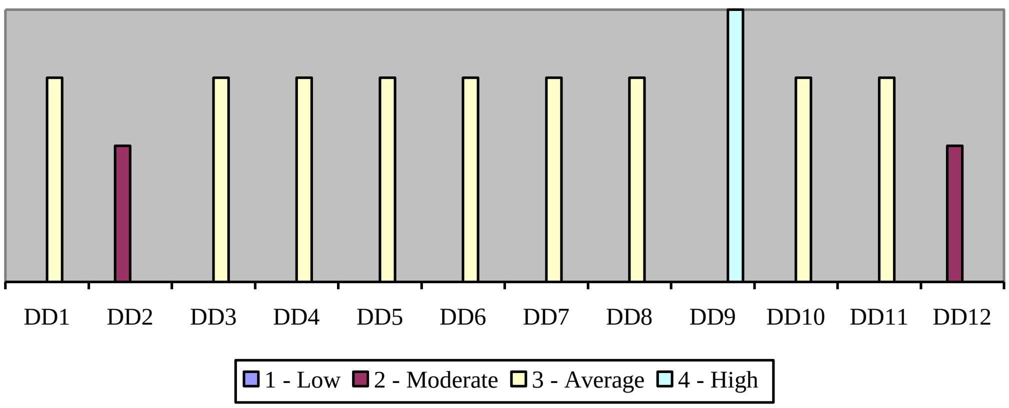


Figure 6. Leaders' self-assessment ranking of their ability to achieve the desired performance results

Finally, I examined the leaders' self-assessment ranking against the full range leadership continuum. In Figure 7 below, I plotted the leaders' perception of their abilities on the chart. This information demonstrated that most deputy directors in the agency consider themselves more of a transactional versus transformational leader. Below is the performance levels located on the leadership continuum.

1-Lowest Performance	2 & 3 Average Performance	4 - Highest Performance
0 Leader	10 Leaders	1 Leader
Laissez-Faire Leadership	Transactional Leadership	Transformational Leadership

Figure 7. Participants' ranking on leadership continuum.
From *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (3rd ed.), by B. Avolio and B. Bass, 2004. Redwood City, CA: Mind Garden.

Besides the common themes and categories noted above, there were a few discrepant cases. For example, there was genuine concern regarding the current talent pipeline at the agency. Among the non-White participants, which included two individuals, one cited a lack of focus to attract and recruit minority employment candidates. No other member interviewed noted this concern or awareness of this issue. The absence of this issue in the discussions surprised me. Later in this study, I offer recommendations to examine further this issue.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), researchers need to refrain from using disclosure as personal persuasion or bias. The credibility strategies that I used to conduct this study included confirmation that individual participation and information shared would remain confidential. This issue was important because I am a work colleague of the participants. I also assured the leaders that information gathered would be examined for themes and coded, further protecting them from potential confidentiality breaches. Fortunately, no deputy director expressed fear or concern to share his or her insights regarding obstacles to managing employee performance. I observed three candidates to be somewhat anxious early in the discussion. However, they appeared to relax after the first couple of questions and after learning they would have the chance to review their comments and revise where necessary. To accomplish this task and ensure accuracy and saturation, each candidate received a transcript of his or her remarks for an examination and potential edits. Three of the 12 participants provided minor changes, which I accepted prior to commencing with coding and analysis.

Regarding transferability, I utilized a 5-question interview guide, and I transferred the results into a coded approach using NVivo (version 10) software. The themes identified can be easily transferred, replicated, and confirmed by other researchers.

Study Results

The purpose of this interview-driven qualitative research was to understand the reasons why public sector leaders were challenged to manage employee performance and explore the role of transformational leadership. I strived to determine the obstacles these avoidance behaviors created. This recognition permitted me to recognize the level of influence that transformational leadership strategies imparted to this group. I utilized the full range leadership continuum developed Avolio and Bass (2004A) to facilitate this analysis. The focus area was leadership and employee performance improvement. I attempted to understand why leaders of a public sector organization appeared challenged to hold employees accountable for performance, as identified through large-scale worker surveys conducted at the Ohio Department of Transportation.

One research question guided this study: What are the barriers public sector leaders at the Ohio Department of Transportation cited as deterrents to managing employee performance and accountability? A qualitative case study research structure was used to make an inquiry with leaders in the public sector arena. A total of 12 deputy directors at the agency completed a 5-question interview to provide feedback for this research study. Besides providing information about their leadership experiences, individuals were asked to provide the number of training hours they received in the past 36 months. Participants also provided information in the form of a self-assessment by identifying their personal abilities to achieve the desired performance outcomes (see Figure 6). During the in-person interviews the following questions were presented:

1. How long have you been a public sector manager?

   a. The average number of years serving in a leadership role in the public sector was approximately 17 years.

2. How many hours of management training have you received in the past 36 months?

   a. Senior leaders completed an average of 50 hours of training in the prior 36 months. This amount averages to 16 hours a year. Participants noted that more personalized and strategic senior leadership educational training would be most helpful.

3. In your current position have you experienced barriers when attempting to manage employee performance?

   a. If yes, what are those barriers? See Table 5 for an overview of the obstacles experienced by each participant. Information is provided later in this chapter regarding the themes and commonalities cited by these leaders.

   b. If no, do you observe your colleagues experiencing obstacles?

4. How do you rate your personal ability to obtain the desired performance outcomes from your employees, ranging on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest)?

   a. The majority of participants self-assessed their ability as average. Figure 7 provides participants' responses.

5. What other information should be considered in this discussion?

   a. Leaders revealed they observed most employees to be proud of their work

> at the ODOT, and were committed to favorable outcomes. However, they observed fear of change and personal implications to adversely impact performance results.

I imported the raw data from the interviews into the NVivo (version 10) software intended to support qualitative analysis. The results of the data collection revealed an emergence of four themes where 60% of the participants noted the issue. Table 5 demonstrates each participant's responses. This information is marked with a "+" sign to show affirmation the leader acknowledged the issue as a barrier to managing performance.

Table 5

Leaders' Individual Responses Aligned to Coded Themes

	Leaders												
Themes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
B1 Inaccurate performance reviews	+	+	_	+	+	_	_	+	_	_	_	_	5
B2 Unqualified political hires	+	_	_	_	_	_	+	_	_	_	_	_	2
B3 Reduction in staffing	+	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	+	2
B4 Below market pay	_	+	+	+	+	_	+	+	_	+	+	+	9
B5 Senior leadership turnover	_	_	+	+	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	_	2
B6 Employee low motivation	_	+	+	_	+	+	+	+	+	_	+	+	9
B7 Lack of support	_	_	_	+	+	+	+	_	+	_	_	_	5
B8 Employee self-preservation	+	+	+	_	+	+	+	+	+	_	+	+	10
B9 Ineffective leadership training	_	_	_	+	+	_	_	+	+	+	+	+	7

Provided with each theme are participants' direct quotes, and the barriers to managing performance. The four most common issues were identified by 60% of participants. The integrity of the feedback is preserved by the following quotes that contain the exact language provided by participants.

Theme 1: Employee self-preservations interests

Leaders cited this barrier most frequently when striving to manage employee performance. Ten of the 12 leaders noted this issue, which resulted in an 85 percent saturation point. The participants noted employees' self-preservation interests often over-ruled their ability to accept and implement change or take risks when driving change. This barrier repeatedly occurred during the interviews, so I attempted to drill deeper to understand this issue. I noticed several of the participants avoided personal reference and instead used the term *managers* to describe who was affected by the barrier. I frequently had to clarify they were speaking for themselves. Below are excerpts from the participants' exact responses.

> Participant 1: Leaders have struggled to address employee performance issues because this places both the manager and employee at personal risk. The turnover rate due to performance issues is extremely low in the agency, which proves that we are not addressing performance issues, or when we do so, nothing happens. When employees are asked to recommend changes, they often are challenged to do so because of personal risk. In my opinion, employees are fearful they will not find other employment if they lose the current position. This fear-driving factor causes them to recede into their cubicles and hunker-down as opposed to stepping forward.

Participant 2: The agency has long-tenured staff with low turnover rates. Sometimes, employees try to preserve their jobs and minimize personal risk by keeping a low profile, and avoiding both good and bad attention. This action makes implementing changes difficult because employees try to avoid vulnerable to increased scrutiny. They are fearful of losing their jobs and do not know where they would go if they left state government.

Participant 5: It took me awhile to recognize just how often employees feared change. When they have tried to participate in the decisions, there are too many examples where employees got shut down. As a result, they stopped offering new ideas or taking a risk. They try to avoid win-lose situations, so they do not put themselves in jeopardy.

Participant 6: Because the employees have worked together for decades, they are challenged to make suggestions that might impact others or create tension in their working relationships. They prefer knowing the outcomes and sticking with what works. They often tell me, “We have already tried that two or three times, and it did not work. But we will do it again if you think it will work this time.”

Theme 2: Employee low motivation

During the participant interviews, nine of 12 leaders identified employees’ low motivation as a barrier to managing employee performance. This issue occurred in 75% of the interviews with only participants one, four and ten omitting this barrier. Based on the comments received and highlighted below, I observed this barrier to be the result of a restricted decision making work environment that squelched creative ideas and risk-taking. For example, no participant noted an observation of employees neglecting their duties or disengaged in their work. Instead, they indicated employees genuinely cared about the agency, and usually attempted to complete their jobs in a satisfactory manner. Participant quotes are noted below and provide clarity on this barrier:

> Participant 12: Most often when I attempt to implement a new idea or strategy, my employees tell me they have already tried the idea. For example, while trying to start a new council, my employees advised me this was the fourth rendition of the concept. They then advised me they would wait until it ran its course. In other words, I did not achieve their buy-in and without their support this initiative cannot be successful, presenting a real performance barrier for the department and me. Additionally, employees perceive themselves to be a protected class with fallback rights if their current position does not work out for them. This surety of employment causes employees to exit when the discomfort level is too intense. This option makes the employees apathetic and sometimes not very motivated to achieve favorable outcomes. There is a limited sense of urgency. No doubt about it.
>
> Participant 6: In the public sector the employment process required to terminate a non-performing employee is complicated, and employees are aware of this fact. As a result, my barrier on this front is that I have very limited means to affect their livelihood, and it takes months if not years to move them out of the organization. This lack of agility for managers creates a mindset with employees they do not have to be overly motivated or care too much about performance.

They will just wait us out since the deputy directors always change with the replacement of the governor.

Participant 5: Apathy is a barrier for me. Employees get settled into a position for a long time, and they do not like to get out of their comfort zone. When I arrived four years ago, I was excited and welcomed the leadership opportunity. It did not take long for me to learn that I could only move the organization as fast as it was willing to move, which presented me with a barrier to managing performance.

Theme 3: Below market pay

Participants identified the inability to offer competitive salaries to both attract and retain the most qualified of candidates as a barrier to managing employee performance. Their failure to compete for highly-skilled talent or keep the right talent was a barrier that was noted by nine of the 12 participants, resulting in a 75% saturation point. Participants shared the retention of talent more often than the attraction of new workers as a barrier. Their concern is confirmed by the decline in staffing numbers at the agency, with a 21% reduction in the number of employees in the past four years. While a significant number of the reductions are due to employee retirements, only two of the 12 participants cited staffing cuts as a barrier to managing performance. Technology and process improvements have offset some of the challenges. However, participants perceived the loss of their high-quality talent to be a barrier to achieving performance, mostly because these individuals are change-agents who favorably influenced others. Below are participant excerpts:

Participant 7: The ability to incentivize and reward higher-performing employees is not possible in the boundaries of the public sector pay schedule. An employee can perform minimally at a D level but still earn the same pay as an exceptional A worker. Since I cannot offer a pay for performance incentive or other monetary rewards, the best and brightest workers often seek external advancement opportunities. The barrier for me is that I must frequently train new staff, which causes significant delays. The candidate pool is smaller than I can remember. The good ones have lots of other opportunities, and the younger employees are not captivated by the benefits package. It's a real problem.

Participant 8: A barrier to managing employee performance is talent loss due to lack of pay. Many professionals in the organization have not had a pay raise in four or more years, and the challenge is to keep these individuals motivated. They can move to another public sector agency and obtain an increase so why should they stay and limit their earning potential? Additionally, the impact of losing employees is that I have not been able to backfill the same number of positions, so managing employee performance and still achieving the same outcomes with fewer workers is tough.

Participant 10: Employee retention due to pay disparity has caused significant a turnover. The constant change requires continual training of new staff, making succession planning difficult. Just as soon as we get a new employee fully trained, they seem to leave for another agency or department. I have lost workers to the federal government, other state government agencies, and my younger workers often to the private sector. I have no ability to offer monetary incentives or rewards. I understand why employees seek new opportunities.

Theme 4: Ineffective leadership training

Finally, the last issue that I observed among the participants was the absence of leadership skills and proper training. Among the 12 participants, seven individuals cited this topic as a barrier to managing employee performance. Deputy Directors indicated that executive training was preferable, especially if personalized to meet their particular development needs. Quotes are provided below:

Participant 4: A barrier for me has been the lack of the right training. While I appreciate the efforts to provide us with new information, I believe there is a difference between leadership and managerial training. The decision that all deputy directors should have the same training missed the mark. For example, I could use leadership training to help me understand how to motivate employees when I cannot give them a pay raise, an extra day off, or other incentives. My 'atta boy' only works so many times.

Participant 9: Due to the technical nature of the agency, there are a lot of engineers. Most often these individuals have been promoted to leadership positions because they were a good engineer. Unfortunately, successful managers must possess good communicate skills. The lack of effective interactions is a barrier for me because I have managers on my team who are not a great fit for the job. They are highly technical and detailed but could achieve higher performance if they adopted a strategic view of the organization and shared that vision with

> direct reports. The lack of managerial skills for individuals already serving in leadership roles is difficult to change and creates a barrier for me because I often need to provide more oversight than I believe should be necessary. This action takes time and causes friction. Most often, I am viewed as an overbearing micro-manager.
>
> Participant 10: The agency leadership needs the training to implement performance metrics that cascade throughout the organization. Currently, there are too many priorities, and they change on a dime. The shifts are a barrier for me because I frequently must change their direction. I believe there is a difference between tactical managerial training and strategic leadership training. We have received limited training, and the content was not a good fit for the deputy directors. What we need is executive leadership training and assessments by external consultants. Then, training tailored to fit our particular needs would be ideal. That level of new information is probably not going to occur in a group managerial training of 20 people.

During the interviews, I identified two non-conforming but relevant pieces of information. Notably, one participant referenced the challenges as a female managing others in a mostly white older male organization. She was considered difficult, even though the manager did not request more work than her male colleagues. Additionally, a participant noted the disparity of females to males throughout the agency, but particularly at the agency deputy director level. A total of 21 deputy directors worked at the agency during the time of this study. Among those individuals, five were female, and 16 were male.

Finally, employee turnover at the deputy director leadership level was not a common concern. Although a few participants noted the issue, the majority of leaders did not mention the matter. There is nearly a 100% turnover at this staffing level when a new governor or political party is elected. Just two participants even referenced the issue. This learning curve at the deputy director level is significant, and consequently there is likely a productivity decline following the transition period. For example, following the last election, the newly appointed leaders of the agency changed the programmed projects in the funding pipeline. This adjustment completely changed the planned scope of work for the entire organization, which required deputy directors to amend the course of action for hundreds of workers. The shift in the political environment did not seem to come forward as a barrier when managing employee performance, even though enormous energy was spent to modify the project schedule.

Summary

In this chapter, I included the qualitative case study analysis necessary to answer the research question: What are the barriers public sector leaders cited as deterrents to effectively managing employee performance and accountability? During interviews with 12 deputy directors at the agency, they identified four dominant themes that adversely impacted their ability to manage employee performance. The issues included employee self-preservation interests, low employee motivation, below market pay, and lack of executive leadership training and skills. I captured and analyzed the data by coding, organizing and summarizing the results. The qualitative research software NVivo (version 10) was used to help manage the information.

The open-ended interview process that I used allowed for an abundance of information to be collected and interpreted (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010; Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2014). Consequently, I grouped the dominant themes into nine sections and compared the information against the full range leadership model that includes transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership descriptors. This analysis allowed me to determine the type of leadership skills possessed by the 12 participants. I found the following answers to the research question:

- Public sector leaders identified employees' self-preservation interests or tactics including job security to be a dominant barrier when attempting to manage employee performance.
- Leaders recognized employees' low motivational levels as deterrents to achieving organizational outcomes
- The inability to financial reward higher-performing employees at market levels resulted in talent loss and proved a barrier to successfully achieving the desired performance results
- The absence of executive leadership training was a barrier for leaders and noted that personalized and senior leadership strategies would be helpful
- The types of barriers cited by participants reveal they are mostly managing at the transactional versus transformational leadership level

In Chapter 5, I will provide an interpretation of the findings, include recommendations and implications for social change, and offer opportunities for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This final chapter provides an overview of why I conducted this research study. In this section, I present the question that guided the study and principal findings. The limitations of the research are described, along with recommendations for further investigation. Most importantly, I describe the potential impact of positive social change this information may offer.

The purpose of this interview-driven qualitative research was to understand the reasons why public sector leaders were challenged to manage employee performance and to explore the role of transformational leadership. I attempted to identify the barriers that resulted in these avoidance behaviors and to determine the level of influencing that transformational leadership strategies imparted to this group. I used the full range leadership continuum developed Avolio and Bass (2004A) to facilitate this analysis.

As a public sector leader working in a government state agency, I was aware that employees on two prior annual surveys ranked performance accountability by their managers among the lowest scores. In the 2012 and 2013 Quality of Work Life Surveys conducted at the Ohio Department of Transportation (Appendix A), participants revealed this information, which presented confirmation of the issue. The public sector rarely conducts an employee survey. In risk-avoidance organizations where perceived negative information can be manipulated to influence public opinion and election outcomes (Persson & Gold; 2010), leaders must assure citizens that services are safe and reliable. This rare and rich data source offered an insight into employees' perception of performance accountability. However, I wanted to understand why leaders hesitated to perform their duties. To achieve this knowledge, I invited the agency’s deputy director leaders to share their experiences regarding the barriers they encountered when managing employee performance.

The nature of the study was a qualitative case study approach. I interviewed 12 top leaders at the Ohio Department of Transportation until reaching the point of information saturation. During the interviews, managers shared their personal experiences regarding employee performance management and the barriers they either encountered or observed. I categorized the findings and common themes against the full range leadership theory (Avolio & Bass, 2004) to determine the level of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership characteristics demonstrated by the research participants.

The four key findings of the study were as follows:

- Public sector leaders identified employees’ self-interests including job preservation to be the dominant barrier when attempting to manage employee performance
- Executives identified employees low motivation as deterrents to achieving organizational outcomes
- The inability to financial reward higher performing employees at market pay levels resulted in talent loss and proved a barrier for senior managers to achieve the desired outcomes

- Executives noted that personalized leadership training would increase their knowledge and result in improved employee performance management

Interpretation of Research Findings

I conducted this interview-driven case study to understand the influence that transformational leadership may have on employee performance management in the public sector. While completing the peer-reviewed literature search in Chapter 2, I found a gap in state agency public sector employee performance and transformational leadership. The findings of this study extend the knowledge in this discipline by offering a deeper examination of barriers that public sector managers experience when managing employee performance. By increasing the knowledge of the discipline, leaders in risk-averse environments will better understand the differences between managing at the transformational or transactional level. For example, the existing literature contains many definitions of transformational leadership and mostly in context with private sector work environments. Improved public sector leader awareness regarding transformational and transactional management strategies will lead to improved employee performance (Effelsberg, Solga, & Gurt, 2014; Westbrook, 2012). Ultimately, higher performing public sector workers will provide better services to citizens.

An examination of the barriers identified by managers during their interviews with me revealed an organizational culture with dominant leaning toward transactional versus transformational awareness. For example, 10 of the 12 leaders indicated that employees' self-preservation tactics presented a barrier to managing performance. In the context of the study's theoretical foundation of full range leadership model, individuals deploying self-preservation tactics typically avoid taking action or accepting responsibility. Consequently, self-preservation tactics were a laissez-faire behavior that produced minimal performance results and reduced creativity. Researchers found a favorable relationship between transformational leadership strategies and improved follower creativity and proposed that improvements are contingent on leader support (Cheung & Wong, 2011). Later in this chapter, I provide suggested strategies for managers to consider when managing this group of employees.

The second barrier identified was low employee motivation. Nine of 12 leaders noted this issue as a deterrent to achieving performance outcomes. When examined against the full range leadership model, a lack of motivation is a transactional effort that may be passive and uses the expected effort to achieve the expected performance (Avolio and Bass, 2004). Rarely does the energy exerted exceed the performance expectations. The link between transformational leadership and improved team performance proposes this theory applies to all types of organizations (Gundersen, Hellesoy, & Raeder, 2012). There are benefits for even risk-averse environments such as the public sector. This approach may be most helpful in organizations where public service motivators are prevalent, along with mission valence. In a nationwide survey provided to federal, state, and local government workers, participants suggested a positive relationship between transformational leadership and employee performance (Caillier, 2014). Transformational leadership strategies encourage employees to believe themselves capable of successfully executing their job duties, contributing to followers' meaning in life and overall well-being (Krishnan, 2012). Finally, in a study completed in a municipality using employee data, there was relationship between transformational managers and levels of work motivation. Leaders who incorporate these leadership strategies establish more challenging and clear goals for their followers. Additionally, transformational leaders successfully reduce the perceived procedural and bureaucratic constraints for their employees (Bronkhorst, Steijn, & Vermeeren, 2015).

The third barrier identified pertained to the level of pay. Managers noted their inability to pay higher performing employees more money, which often resulted in staffing turnovers. Additionally, leaders were concerned that minimally performing employees earned equally as much as higher performing employees. Participants noted that there was no incentive for employees to put forth increased efforts, often impacting their ability to develop succession plans. Employees often decline promotions or leave for higher paying positions at other agencies or in private sector. Researchers proposed that pay for individual performance rewards provide motivational and intrinsic value when presented by leaders in appropriate ways (Fang & Gerhart, 2012; Gerhart & Fang, 2014). Additionally, researchers found that although transformational leadership was positively related to team and employee performance outcomes, continent reward demonstrated a higher impact on outcomes (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011).

The fourth and final widespread barrier shared by leaders pertained to professional development. Seven of 12 participants identified the need for executive level training and personalized development to improve their ability to manage employee performance. This interview results gleaned in this study support this finding. In Question 2, participants revealed an average of just 49.8 hours of completed training within the past 36 months (Table 3). On average, this amount equals just 16.6 hours or 2 1/2 days a year. This final barrier was the only finding to correlate with transformational leadership. Although leaders could not articulate the exact training they needed to improve their management abilities, they recognized the need for advanced and prescriptive leadership training. This perspective aligns with both intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration in the transformational leadership approach. Researchers proposed that leadership development investment (RODI) is most likely to be successful when assumptions such as length of intervention and level of management are defined, and proposed that transformational leadership training leads to improved outcomes (Avolio, Avey, & Quisenberry, 2010; Orazi, Turrini, & Valotti, 2013). Also, researchers stressed the importance of creating an appropriate return on investment when identifying and offering training to executives (Peters, Baum, & Stephen, 2011). Public sector leaders are more likely to use a command system to motivate employees versus an alternative or incentive approach. Unfortunately, this controlling versus supportive leadership style is perceived negatively by followers (Vandenabeele, Andersen, & Leisink, 2014). Managers in the agency will produce higher results if professional development is not exclusive for senior team members. When all levels of leaders and employees achieve increased awareness, they are more likely to be a healthy follower. Training programs must be vigorously evaluated to ensure the need and knowledge provided connects (Atwood & Mora, 2010; Cohen, 2011; Goulet, Jefferson, & Szwed, 2012). Recommendations to address this issue are offered later in this chapter.

Table 6 provides an alignment of public sector leaders most common barriers to the full range leadership theory. As defined in the table, executives who identified the need for additional executive level training were perceived to align with transformational characteristics. Completion of advanced training would require intellectual stimulation, extra effort, performance beyond the minimum, and individualized consideration. An asterisk highlights these items. Leaders who identified employee low motivation factors and below market pay as barriers to managing employee performance demonstrated transactional characteristics. Table 6 below shows this level of leader perception to align with constructive transactions and management exceptions. Therefore, both active and passive corrections will be most helpful. Finally, executives who noted employees' self-preservation tactics as a barrier were viewed as laissez-faire or nontransactional. Transformational leaders establish clear follower goals that produce inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation. In other words, transformational leaders would determine employees' self-preservation tactics as a barrier they could not influence to achieve the desired outcomes.

Table 6

Leaders' Most Common Barriers Aligned to Full range Leadership Theory

Need for Executive-Level Leadership Training (Cited by 7 of 12 Leaders)	Employee Low Motivation Below Market Level of Pay (Cited by 9 of 12 Leaders)	Employee Self-Preservation Tactics (Cited by 10 of 12 Leaders)
Transformational	Transactional	Laissez-faire
Idealized influence Charisma	Contingent theory Constructive transactions*	Laissez-faire Nontransactional*
Inspirational motivation	Management by exception* Active and passive corrective	
Intellectual stimulation*		
Individualized consideration*		
Extra effort*	Expected effort*	
Increased satisfaction		
Performance beyond*	Expected performance*	Minimal performance*

Note. Partially adapted from “Theories from Avolio & Bass,” by B. J. Avolio and B. M. Bass, 2004b, *American Psychologist, 63*(7), doi:10.1037/003-066X.63.7.620. Barriers noted represent this study’s findings. The asterisk (*) demonstrates alignment to leadership awareness/style.

This study was grounded in the conceptual framework of the public sector work environment. There have been few employee studies conducted at the state government level. The risk avoidance nature of government and ongoing election cycles are key contributors to preventing improvements (Burns, 1978). Leadership in the public sector is an individual phenomenon that can be measured on a continuum scale and most often there are external influences that force change, regardless of a leader’s performance (Westbrook, 2012). This issue instills fear in long-tenured workers who may not perceive they have other employment options because there are less government and public sector jobs than available in the private sector. I found the most commonly identified barrier to managing employee performance to be employee self-preservation tactics, with 10 out of 12 participants noting the issue.

Limitations of the Study

I used a 5-question interview guide for understanding the barriers that executives noted impacted their employee performance management abilities. The only limitation I observed was some individuals were not as forthcoming with information as possible. Although I reinforced the confidentiality of the study, I perceived some individuals wanted to offer more information but declined to do so. A second constraint of the study is that I am a peer and colleague of the individuals interviewed. There may have been hesitation to share personal details or struggles with me, although I did not perceive sensitive topics or out of bounds issues.

Recommendations for Further Research

The participants for this study came from one state governmental agency, the Ohio Department of Transportation. Consequently, the information may not represent the views and experiences of all state workers or other public sector managers. The barriers referenced by leaders may be different in federal agencies or local government as compared to this study’s environment. Additionally, although I tried to avoid bias during the research interviews and data analysis, this qualitative study may not represent the exact perspectives of people interviewed. Therefore, a quantitative study combined with a blind survey could offer a clearer representation of the leadership barriers and challenges experienced by my colleagues in the public sector environment.

Additionally, employees' self-preservation tactics were the result of fear-based behaviors and most likely produced from prior experiences. Researchers noted that follower behaviors in this sector are learned over time and through peer observations (Kim, 2015; Nielsen, 2014). A deeper analysis of the experiences of the employees that identifies the core reasons for this fear-based behavior would be helpful. Leaders cannot manage through this problem without first understanding the causation.

There is a lack of research in the state government public sector leadership arena, notably retrieved from employee surveys. Perhaps due to the revolving door of reappointments or political fears, I found limited research with follower-based results available to guide and provide feedback to support senior level executives. Additionally, unlike the private sector workforce, the public sector worker changes jobs less frequently. Therefore, employees must preserve relationships to minimize the risk of unemployment following organizational changes. This issue may cause employees to value relationships above performance results and may reduce the quality of services provided to citizens. There is a significant opportunity to understand this phenomenon.

Implications for Positive Social Change

The potential impact of positive social change this study provides extends to both the personal leadership level and state policy level. At the personal leadership level, transformational managers provide guidance and support at individualized, idealized, intellectual, and inspirational levels. These leaders stimulate followers on multiple fronts and accept responsibility for outcomes. However, this approach is nontypical in state government. The leaders interviewed identified four common barriers that impacted their ability to manage employee performance. The transactional nature of the obstacles suggests an opportunity for executive level professional development. A focus on transformational leadership strategies would be beneficial.

New leadership training for managers will provide valuable new insights if tailored toward transformational leadership anchors. However, an important consideration regarding leader progression is they first must do no harm to the citizens they serve. The required balance of implementing change strategies while protecting citizens is a delicate feat, especially in an organization where self-preservation is the most common barrier. Positive social change that results in improved services for citizens is possible if public sector managers use the same fortitude to survive complex cultures as they do to manage employee performance (Guerci & Vinante, 2011). Executives who learn and implement transformational strategies will provide greater benefit to the citizens whom they serve. Citizens likely will receive improved services when senior managers learn and deploy the transformational strategies capable of shifting structured and risk-averse environments. Transformational leadership influences favorably impact organizational learning and increase innovation, moving followers beyond only their self-interests (Garcia-Morales et al., 2012; Grant, 2012). I stopped reviewing here. Please go through the rest of your chapter and look for the patterns I pointed out to you. I will now look at your references.

At the state policy level, the opportunity for positive social change exists to improve services to citizens when leadership employment turnover rates decline. In the State of Ohio and notably at the Ohio Department of Transportation, there is nearly a

100% turnover rate at the deputy director level when there is a gubernatorial change. This results in the displacement of approximately 20 top deputy directors in a highly skilled and technical organization. The loss of knowledge transfer and programmatic stability in a $2.3 billion annual enterprise impacts thousands of workers, contractors, and most importantly the citizens of the state. By stabilizing the organization's leadership through gubernatorial changes, positive social change would result. The challenge for leadership in the public sector is hierarchical organization designs are still dominant but present limited cross-sectoral information exchange. This structure may no longer be optimal to handle many contemporary issues (Howlett and Ramesh, 2014).

The methodology utilized for this research was a qualitative case study that targeted the deputy directors of the Ohio Department of Transportation. The purposeful sampling of 20 individuals reached the point of saturation during the twelfth interview. This method ensured the participants targeted to meet with me, met minimum standard criteria. This approach is most effective with smaller groups (Suri, 2011). Participants were required to have two years of experience at the state agency. They were also required to possess five years of organizational experience at a senior level.

The recommendations for practice in the public sector leadership environment include:

- Provide personalized and executive-level transformational leadership training. This action would offer the skills necessary to mitigate employees' self-preservation tactics, low motivational levels, and establish a work environment where pay differential is minimized.
- Establish an accepted level and standard for senior leadership training each year, ideally within the context of transformational strategies
- Investigate the opportunity to modify state employment policies at top levels to reduce the employment turnover rates following gubernatorial changes

Conclusion

This interview-driven qualitative study attempted to understand the reasons public sector managers are challenged to manage employee performance. The research explored the role that transformational and full range leadership theories offer to improve outcomes. The study found that public sector executives most often operate at the transactional versus the transformational level of leadership, which contributes to earlier research findings. These results recognize that public sector leaders must work in high risk-averse environments, most often with a reduced budget and shrinking resources. The results of this study will be presented to the leadership team at the Ohio Department of Transportation.

References

Alford, R. R., & Friedland, R. (1975). Political participation and public policy. *Annual Review of Sociology, 1*, 429–479. doi:10.1146/annurev.so.01.080175.002241

Atwood, M. A., & Mora, J. W. (2010). Learning to lead: Evaluating leadership and organizational learning. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 31*, 576-595. doi:10.1108/01437731011079637

Avolio, B. J., Avey, J. B., & Quisenberry D. (2010). Estimating return on leadership development investment. *The Leadership Quarterly, 21*(leadership development evaluation), 663-644. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2010.06.006

Avolio, B. J., & Bass, B. M. 2004b). Theories from Avolio & Bass. *American Psychologist, 63*(7), 210-255. doi:10.1037/003-066X.63.7.620

Bansal, P., & Corley, K. (2011). From the editors – The coming of age for qualitative research: Embracing the diversity of qualitative methods. *Academy of Management Journal, 54,* 233-237. doi:10.5465/AMJ.2011.60262792

Bansal, P., & Corley, K. (2012). What's different about qualitative research? *Academy of Management Journal, 55,* 509-513. doi:10.5465/AMJ.2012.4003.

Barnard, C. I. (1946). Functions and pathology of status systems in formal organizations. In W. F. Whyte (Ed.), *Industry and Society* (pp. 46–83). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Bass, B. M. (1996). Is there universality in the full range model of leadership? *International Journal of Public Administration, 19,* 731–61.

Bazeley, P., & Jackson, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo. New York, NY*: Sage Publications Limited.

Braun, S., Peus, C., Weisweiler, S., & Frey, D. (2013). Transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and team performance: A multilevel mediation model of trust. *The Leadership Quarterly, 24(*1), 270-283. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.11.006

Bronkhorst, B., Steijn, B., & Vermeeren, B. (2015). Transformational leadership, goal setting, and work motivation: The case of a Dutch municipality. *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 35*(2), 124-145. doi: 10.1177/0734371X13515486

Buick, F., Blackman, D. A., O'Donnell, M. E., O'Flynn, J. L., & West D. (2015). Can enhanced performance management support public sector change? *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 28*(2), 271-289. doi:10.1108/JOCM-12-2013-0249

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership.* New York, NY: Harper.

Caillier, J.D. (2014). Toward a better understanding of the relationship between transformational leadership, public service motivation, mission valence, and employee performance: A preliminary study. *Public Personnel Management*, *43*, 227-245. doi: 10.1177/0091026014528478.

Caldwell, C., Dixon, R., Floyd, L., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics, 109*(2), 175-187. doi: 10.1007/s10551-011-1116-2

Caruthers, R. A. (2011). *Effective leadership in a 21st century federal agency (*Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database. (UMI No. 345690).

Cheung, M., Y., & Wong, C. (2011). Transformational leadership, leader support, and employee creativity. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal, 32*(7), 656-672. doi: 10.1108/01437731111169988

Cohen, S. (2011). The leader development value chain. *T+D, 65*(3), 54-57. doi: 2293973461.

Den Hartog, D. N., Van Muijen, J. J., & Koopman, P. L. (1997). Transactional versus transformational leadership: An analysis of the MLQ. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 70,* 19–34. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Effelsberg, D., Solga, M., & Gurt, J. (2014). Getting followers to transcend their self-interest for the benefit of their company: Testing a core assumption of transformational leadership theory. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 29*(1), 131-143. doi: 10.1007/s10869-013-9305-x

El-Kot, G. A., & Burke, R. J. (2011). Job stressors, supervisory support and work outcomes among Egyptian managers. *Review of Management, 1*(4), 10–24. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Fabian, A. (2010). New public management and what comes after. *Current Issues of Business and Law, 5*, 41–56. doi:10.2478/v10088-010-0004-y Fang, M., & Gerhart, B. (2012). Does pay for performance diminish intrinsic interest? *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 23*(6), 1176-1196. doi: 10.1080/09585192.2011.561227

Fernandez, S., & Pitts, D. (2011). Understanding employee motivation to innovate: Evidence from front line employees in Unites States Federal Agencies. *Australian Journal of Public Administration, 70(2)*, 202-222. doi:10.111/j.1467-8500.2011.00726x

Garcia-Morales, V. J., Jimenez-Barrionuevo, M. M., & Gutierrez-Gutierrez, L. (2012). Transformational leadership influence on organizational performance through organizational learning and innovation. *Journal of Business Research, 65*(7), 1040-1050. doi: 10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.03.005.

Gerhart, B., & Fang, M. (2014) Pay for (individual) performance: Issues, claims, evidence and role of sorting effects. *Human Resources Management Review, 24*, 41-52. Doi:10.1016/j.hrmr.2013.08.010

Goulet, L., Jefferson, J., & Szwed, P. (2012). Leadership is everybody's business. *T+D, 66*(8), 48-53. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Grant, A. M. (2012). Leading with meaning: Beneficiary contact, prosocial impact, and the performance effects of transformational leadership. *Academy of Management Journal, 55*(2), 458-476.

Green, D. D., & Roberts, G. E. (2012). Impact of postmodernism on public sector Leadership practices: Federal government human capital development implications. *Public Personnel Management, 41*, 79–96. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Guerci, M., & Vinante, M. (2011). Training evaluation: An analysis of the stakeholders' evaluation needs. *Journal of European Industrial Training, 35,* 385–410. doi:10.1108/03090591111128342

Guilleux, F. (2011). *A developmental perspective on leadership education of aspiring principals* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3471901)

Gundersen, G., Hellesoy, B. T., & Raeder, S. (2012). Leading International project teams: The effectiveness of transformational leadership in dynamic work environment. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 19*(1), 46-57. doi: 10.1177/1548051811429573

Hamstra, M. W., Van Yperen, N. W., Wisse, B., & Sassenberg, K. (2011). Transformational–transactional leadership styles and followers' regulatory focus: Fit reduces followers' turnover intentions. *Journal of Personnel Psychology, 10,* 182–186. doi:10.1027/1866-5888/a000043

Hargis, M. B., Watt, J. D., & Piotrowski, C. (2011). Developing leaders: Examining the role of transactional and transformational leadership across business contexts. *Organization Development Journal, 29*(3), 51–66. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Hoffman, B.J., Bynum, B. H., Piccolo, R. F., & Sutton, A. W. (2011). Person-organization value congruence: How transformational leaders influence work group effectiveness. *Academy of Management Journal*, *54*(4), 779-796. doi: 10.54665/AMJ.2011.64870139.

Howell, J. M., & Avolio, B. J. (1993). Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, locus of control, and support for innovation: Key predictors of consolidated-business-unit performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78,* 891–902. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.78.6.891

Howlett, M., & Ramesh, M. (2014). The two orders of governance failure: Design Mismatches and policy capacity issues in modern governance. *Policy and Society, 33,* 317-327. doi:10.1016/j.polsoc.2014.10.002

Kaifeng, Y., & Kassekert, A. (2010). Linking management reform with employee job satisfaction: Evidence from federal agencies. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 20,* 413–436. doi:10.1093/jopart/mup010

Kim, S. (2015). An innovation-driven culture in local government: Do senior manager's transformational leadership and the climate for creativity matter? *Public Personnel Management*, *44(2),* 147–168. doi: 10.1177/0091026014568896

Krishnan, V. R. (2012). Transformational leadership and personal outcomes: Empowerment as mediator. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal,* *33*(6), 550-563. doi: 10.1108/01437731211253019.

Leedy, P., & Ormrod, J. (2010). *Practical research: Planning and design* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.

Leitner, L. M., & Hayes, K. J. (2011). Rigorous qualitative research. *PsycCRITIQUES, 56*(3), 97-100. doi: 10.1037/a0024989

Ljungholm, D. P. (2014). Transformational leadership behavior in public sector organizations. *Contemporary Readings in Law & Social Justice, 6(1),* 76-81. Doi:

Lodico, M. G., Spaulding, D. T., & Voegtle, K. H. (2006). *Methods in educational research. From theory to practice.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Lowe, K. B., Kroeck, K., & Sivasubramaniam, N. (1996). Effectiveness correlates of transformation and transactional leadership: A meta-analytic review of the MLQ literature. *Leadership Quarterly, 7,* 385–425. doi:10.1016/S1048-9843(96)90027

Maxwell, J.A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach.* (Vol. 41). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McCracken, M., Brown. T. C., & O'Kane, P. (2012). Swimming against the current: Understanding how a positive organizational training climate can enhance training participation and transfer in the public sector. *International Journal of Public Sector Management, 25*(4), 301. doi: 10.1108/09513551211244124.

McGurk, P. (2010). Outcomes of management and leadership development. *Journal of Management Development, 29*(5), 457-570. Doi: 1108/02621711011039222

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Musgrave Jr., A. W. (2014). Management vs leadership in the public sector. *Public Manager, 43*(3), 56-59. Retrieved from http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/

Neider, L. L., & Schriesheim, C. A. (2011). The authentic leadership inventory (ali): Development and empirical tests. *The Leadership Quarterly, 22*(Leadership Quarterly Review), 1146-1164. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.09.008

Nielsen, K., & Munir, F. (2009). How transformational leaders influence followers' affective well-being: Exploring the mediating role of self-efficacy. *Work and Stress*, *22,* 313–329. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Nielsen, P. A. (2014). Performance management, managerial authority and public service performance. *Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory*, *24*(2), 431-458. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Newcomer, J. (2013). *The effectiveness of the United States Air Force developmental teams (*Doctoral dissertation. Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3602504)

Orazi, D. C., Turrini, A., & Valotti, G. (2013). Public Sector Leadership: new perspectives for research and practice. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, *79*(3), 486-504. Doi: 10.1177/0020852313489945

Osborne, D., & Gaebler, T. (1992). *Reinventing government*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Persson, A., & Goldkuhl, G. (2010). Government value paradigms—Bureaucracy, new public management, and e-government. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, *27*(4), 45–62. doi:10.1.1.186.6649

Peters, L., Baum, J., & Stephens, G. (2011). Creating ROI in leadership development. *Organizational Dynamics, 40*, 104-109. doi:10.1016/j.orgdyn.2011.01.004

Piccolo, R. F., & Colquitt, J. A. (2006). Transformational leader and job behaviors: The mediating role of core job characteristics. *Academy of Management Journal, 49,* 327–340. doi:10.5465/AMJ.2006.20786079.

Piccolo, R. F., Bono, J. E., Heinitz, K., Rowold, J., Duehr, E., & Judge, T. A. (2012). The relative impact of complementary leader behaviors: Which matters most?. *The Leadership Quarterly, 23*, 567-581. doi: 10.1016/j.leaqua.2011.12.008

Rainey, H. G., & Watson, S. A. (1996). Transformational leadership and middle management: Towards a role for mere mortals. *International Journal of Public Administration, 19,* 763–800. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Richards, L. (2014). *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ruggieri, S., & Abbate, C. (2013). Leadership style, self-sacrifice, and team identification. *Social Behavior and Personality, 41,* 1171–1178. doi:10.2224/sbp.2013.41.7.1171

Semler, R. (1989). Managing without managers. *Harvard Business Review, 67*(5), 76–84. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Srithongrung, A. (2011). The causal relationships among transformational leadership, organizational commitment, and employee effectiveness. *International Journal of Public Administration, 34,* 376–388. doi:10.1080/01900692.569917

Suri, H. (2011). Purposeful sampling in qualitative research synthesis. *Qualitative Research Journal, 11(2), 63-75. doi:3316/QRJ1101063*

Tanser, G., & Lee, P. (2012). Using change to stretch talent, achieve real time leadership development and change culture. *OD Practitioner, 44*(4), 43–48. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Thomas, E., & Magilvy, J. K. (2011). Qualitative rigor or research validity in qualitative research. *Journal for Specialists in Nursing, 16,* 151-155. doi:10.111/j.1744-6155.2011.00283.x

Trochim, W. M. (2014). Activities that engage students in research methods. 37th Annual National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology (NITOP), St. Pete Beach, Florida, January 3-6, 2015. Doi: 10.1037/e500772015-004

Trottier, T., Van Wart, M., & Wang, X. (2008). Examining the nature and significance of leadership in government organizations. *Public Administration Review, 68*, 319–333. doi:10.1111/j.1540-6210.2007.00865

Turner, D. W. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigation. *The Qualitative Report, (15)*3. 754-760. Retrieved from http://mediaclass.co.uk/x9508/X9508%20Questionnaire%20Design%20PP.pdf

Turner, J. R., & Danks, S. (2014). Case study research: a valuable learning tool for performance improvement professionals. *Performance Improvement, 53(*4), 24-31. doi: 10.1002/pfi.21406

U.S. Office of Management and Budget, Budget of the United State Government; Fiscal Year 2014; 2013; 2012. Retrieved from http://www.usa.gov

Vandenabeele, W., Anderson, L. B., & Lesink, P. (2014). Leadership in the public sector: a tale of general principles and particular features. *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 34*(2), 79-83. Doi: 10.1177/0734371X13511160

Van Wart, M. (2003). Public sector leadership theory: An assessment. *Public Administration Review, (63)*2, 214-228. Doi: 10.1111/1540-6210.00281

Wang, X., & Howell, J. M. (2012). A multilevel study of transformational leadership, identification, and follower outcomes. *The Leadership Quarterly, 23,* 775-790. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.001

Wang, G., Oh, I. S., Courtright, S. H., & Colbert, A. E. (2011). Transformational leadership and performance across criteria and levels: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of research. *Group & Organization Management, 36*(2), 223-270. doi: 10.1177/10596011114011017.

Wang, P., Rode, J. C., Shi, K., Luo, Z., & Chen, W. (2013). A workgroup climate perspective on the relationships among transformational leadership, workgroup diversity, and employee creativity. *Group & Organizational Management, 38*(3), 334-360. doi: 10.1177/1059601113488163

Wang, Y. D., Yang, C., & Wang, K. Y. (2012). Comparing public and private sector employees' job satisfaction and turnover. *Public Personnel Management, 41,* 557–573. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Webb, K. S. (2009). Creating satisfied employees in Christian higher education: Research on leadership competencies. *Christian Higher Education, 8,* 18–31. doi:10.1080 /15363750802171073

Westbrook, M. A. (2012). Building an architecture for leadership development. *Public Manager, 41*(3), 60–63. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

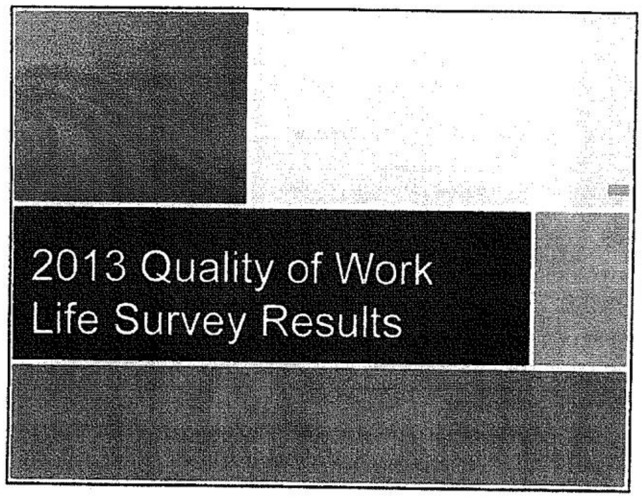
Yang, J., Zhang, Z., & Tsui, A. S. (2010). Middle manager leadership and frontline employee performance: Bypassing, cascading, and Moderating effects. *Journal of Management Studies, 47,* 654–678. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6486.2009.00902.x

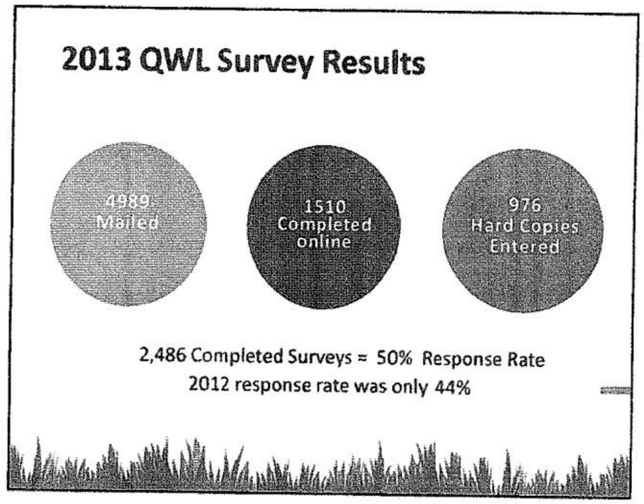
Zaleznik, A. (2004). Managers and leaders: Are they different? *Harvard Business Review, 82*(1), 74–81. Retrieved from EBSCOhost.

Zhang, Y., & Shaw, J. D. (2012). From the editors: Publishing in amj-part 5: Crafting the methods and results. *Academy of Management Journal, 55,* 8-12. doi:10.5465/amj.2012.4001

Appendix A: 2013 Quality of Work Life Survey Results

2/13/2014





Appendix A: 2013 Quality of Work Life Survey Results

2/13/2014

Improvements

	Question	Average Score	Standard Deviation
1	In the last year, communication with my supervisor has been...	3.31	1.06
2	In the last year, communication within ODOT has been...	3.26	0.98
3	In the last year, ODOT holding employees accountable for their performance has become...	3.20	1.00
4	In the last year, clear and consistent communication from leadership has been...	3.20	1.04
5	In the last year, information shared freely from level to level within ODOT has been...	3.19	1.06
6	My working environment has become...	3.16	0.99
7	In the last year, the treatment I have received from management in terms of fairness and consistency has been...	3.10	1.10
8	In the last year, ODOT's hiring of quality people has become...	3.08	1.33
9	In the last year, my supervisor's promoting of employees based on a fair process and on qualifications, not favoritism, has been...	2.91	1.52

According to responses, ODOT has remained 'About the Same' in all nine improvement areas since the last survey.

Appendix A: 2012 Qualify of Work Life Survey Results

2012 Quality of Work Life Survey Results

The Ohio Department of Transportation

STATE OF OHIO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

April 15, 2013

Authored by: ODOT Office of Lean

Appendix A: 2012 Quality of Work Life Results

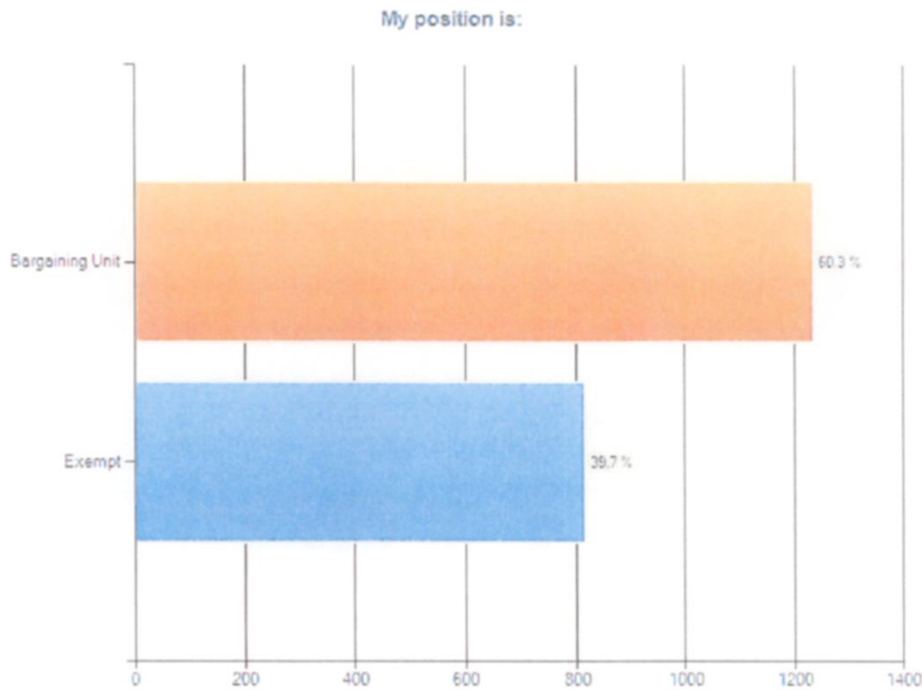
2/13/2014

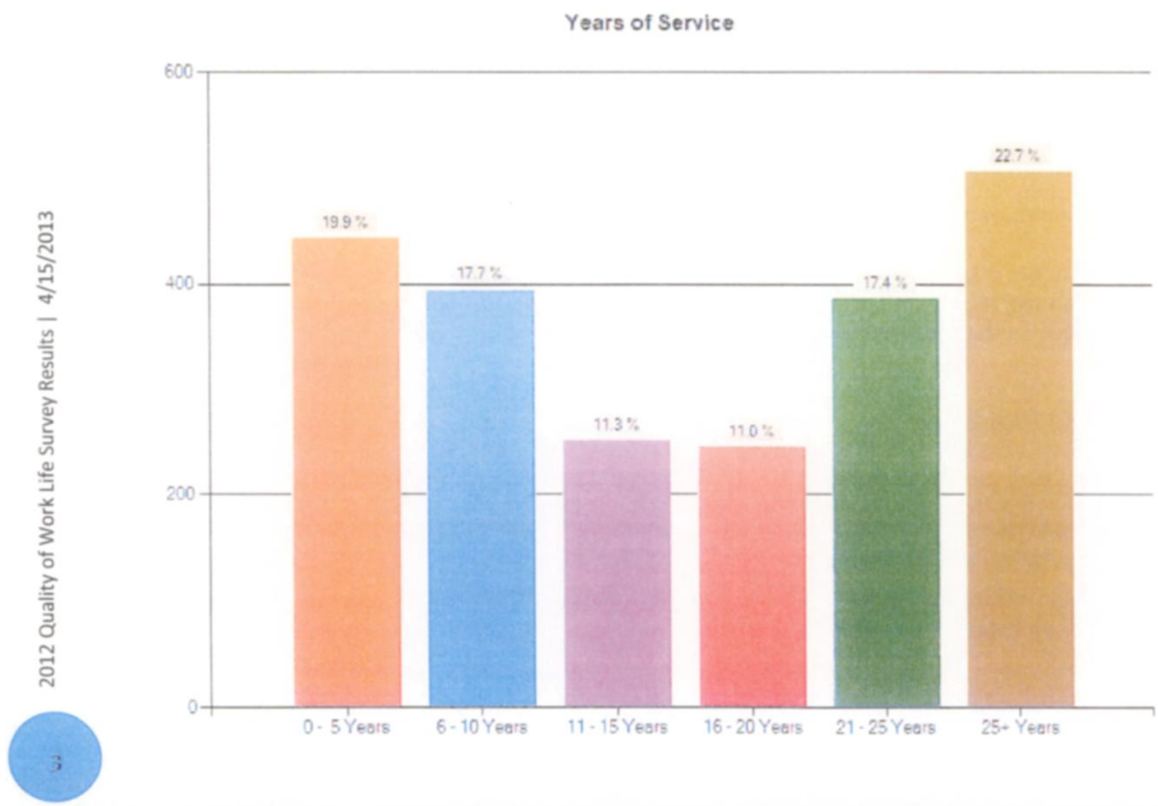
Improvements

	Question	Average Score	Standard Deviation
1	In the last year, communication with my supervisor has been...	3.31	1.06
2	In the last year, communication within ODOT has been...	3.26	0.98
3	In the last year, ODOT holding employees accountable for their performance has become...	3.20	1.00
4	In the last year, clear and consistent communication from leadership has been...	3.20	1.04
5	In the last year, information shared freely from level to level within ODOT has been...	3.19	1.06
6	My working environment has become...	3.16	0.99
7	In the last year, the treatment I have received from management in terms of fairness and consistency has been...	3.10	1.10
8	In the last year, ODOT's hiring of quality people has become...	3.08	1.33
9	In the last year, my supervisor's promoting of employees based on a fair process and on qualifications, not favoritism, has been...	2.91	1.52

According to responses, ODOT has remained 'About the Same' in all nine improvement areas since the last survey.

Appendix B: Quality of Work Life Demographics





Appendix C: IRB Approval to Conduct Research

Request for Change in Procedures - Approved

IRB <IRB@waldenu.edu> Fri, May 8, 2015 at 4:40 PM
To: Glenda Bumgarner <glenda.bumgarner@waldenu.edu>
Cc: Stephanie Hoon <stephanie.hoon@waldenu.edu>

Dear Ms. Bumgarner,

This e-mail serves to inform you that your request for a change in procedures, submitted on 4/27/15 has been approved. You may implement the requested changes effective immediately. The approval number for this study will remain the same.

Also attached to this e-mail is the updated IRB approved consent form. Please note, if this is already in an on-line format, you will need to update that consent document to include any changes.

Both students and faculty are invited to provide feedback on this IRB experience at the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qHBJzkJMUx43pZegKImdiQ_3d_3d

Sincerely,

Libby Munson

Research Ethics Support Specialist

Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

irb@waldenu.edu

Fax: 626-605-0472

Phone: 612-312-1283

Office address for Walden University:

100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900

Minneapolis, MN 55401

Information about the Walden University Institutional Review Board, including instructions for application, may be found at this link: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Appendix D: Research Study Interview Guide

Participants will be asked the following questions during the 60-minute interview time period:

3. How long have you been a public sector manager?
2. How many hours of management training have you received in the past 36 months?
3. In your current position have you experienced barriers when attempting to manage employee performance?
   a. If yes, what are those barriers?
   b. If no, do you observe your colleagues experiencing barriers?
4. How do you rate your personal ability to obtain the desired performance outcomes from your employees, ranging on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 4 (highest)?
5. What other information should be considered in this discussion?

Appendix E: NIH Certificate of Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Glenda Bumgarner** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 01/28/2015

Certification Number: 1671462

Appendix F: Letter of Cooperation Agreement between ODOT & Researcher

Letter of Cooperation
Between the Ohio Department of Transportation &
Glenda Bumgarner for Dissertation with Walden University

January 27, 2015

This letter provides confirmation of cooperation that the Ohio Department of Transportation's Human Resource Department will provide a list of leadership team members serving as Deputy Directors within the organization. The information will include each qualifying team member's work email and telephone number.

Leadership team members who meet the following criteria will be selected:

1) Two years of executive leadership in the public sector; and,

2) Completed employee performance reviews for subordinates while working the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Greg Murphy, Chief of Staff
Ohio Department of Transportation

Glenda Bumgarner, Student
Walden University

Appendix G: Data Use Agreement between ODOT and Researcher

Data Use Agreement
Between Ohio Department of Transportation &
Glenda Bumgarner for Dissertation with Walden University

January 27, 2015

This agreement provides authorization for Glenda Bumgarner to utilize the results from the 2014 Ohio Department of Transportation Employee Survey and which qualify as public records for the purpose of dissertation research and findings with Walden University. Authorization is granted for summary question results only and not individual employee responses.

Greg Murphy, Chief of Staff
Ohio Department of Transportation

Glenda Bumgarner, Student
Walden University

Appendix H: Authorization to Engage ODOT Training Employees

Human Resources Assistant Director David Coyle

Authorization to Engage ODOT Training Section Employees

This letter is confirmation that I am approving Glenda Bumgarner to invite and meet with members of the ODOT Training Section who will serve as a pilot interview group. The purpose of the discussion is to review and provide Glenda with feedback on the proposed interview questions supporting her dissertation research.

Further, I am authorizing Glenda to host the 60 minute discussion in the Central Office Strategy Room, located in Columbus, Ohio.

My understanding is that employee participation is completely voluntary and employees will be notified of this option by the researcher.

16 APR 2015

David Coyle, Assistant Director
Ohio Department of Transportation

Date

Appendix I: Pilot Study Invitational Letter

Pilot Study Invitational Letter

Dear [redacted] April 6, 2015

Currently, I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University and I am in the process of collecting data for my dissertation research and analysis. The focus of the research is transformational leadership, and specifically in the state government public-sector arena.

As a member of the Human Resources training section, your unique experiences and observations can provide valuable information that may assist other leaders striving to applying managerial skills in this sector. Toward that end, I invite you to join me for a 60 minute discussion where you will be presented with five questions. You will be requested to review the questions and make recommendations to accept or modify the content to support the intended goals of the research, which will also be shared with you at the beginning of the meeting. Following the discussion, you will be offered the opportunity to review your responses via a written transcript and modify for accuracy.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may remove yourself from the process at any time, up and to the point of final dissertation approval. To provide your consent to participate in the discussion, please review the attached consent form. You agreement to participate in the interview is considered your consent. Finally, you must agree to maintain the confidentiality of the questions and process until the study's completion.

If you agree to accept this invitation, please join me on April 13, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. for a small group discussion that will also include members of your current work unit. The meeting location will be the ODOT, Columbus, Ohio, Room 2C. If you do not wish to participate in this invitation, no further action on your part is necessary.

Appendix J: Pilot Study Consent Form

PILOT SAMPLE PARTICIPANT CONSENT

Transformational Leadership in the Public-Sector Research Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the common themes or trends that senior leaders at the Ohio Department of transportation cite as barriers to managing employee performance in the public-sector.

Your role as a pilot member of the study is to provide the researcher with feedback on 5 proposed interview questions. At the beginning of the group discussion, you will receive the 5 questions in written format. During the 60 minute period, the researcher will walk through each question and you will have the option to provide your feedback both verbally and in written format. The researcher will take both written notes and audio tape the discussion. The meeting location will be the Ohio Department of Transportation, Columbus, Ohio, Strategy Room.

Following the discussion, you will receive a transcript of your comments and you will be provided the opportunity to amend the information captured to insure your views are accurately captured as you intended. There are no foreseeable risks/discomforts to you as a pilot sample participant.

Although you will not benefit directly from participating in this discussion or receive compensation, you will make a significant contribution to the information known about public-sector leadership. In the future, others may benefit because public-sector managers will be better prepared to manage employee performance and ultimately improve the services offered to citizens.

You will participate in a group discussion with your Human Resource training section peers. You will also be requested to keep the questions of the study confidential to insure the integrity of the study. All documentation or other identifying information will remain in the possession of the researcher and secured in a locked file for a period of 5 years, at which time all documentation will be destroyed.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may decline or withdraw from the study at any time. To consent to participate in this study, please email to me the following confirmation, "I consent to participate in the study." Also, you should print and save a copy of this document.

Finally, the researcher currently serves as the Deputy Director of the Office of Jobs & Commerce within the ODOT organization. This role is completely separate from the research project and poses no conflict of interest to participants, agency, or the researcher. Additionally, declining to participate in the pilot discussion or withdrawing at any period during the study will not adversely impact the participant's relationship with the researcher.

Walden University's approval number for this study is 04-01-15-0084089 and it expires April 1, 2016. Should you have questions or require further clarification regarding this study, you may contact the researcher or the university's Research Participant Advocate as follows:

Researcher: Glenda Bumgarner, Email: Glenda.bumgarner@aol.com, Phone: (614) 302-2922

University Research Advocate: Email: irb@waldenu.edu, Phone: (612) 312-1210

This has been approved by the Institutional Review Board of WALDEN UNIVERSITY as acceptable documentation of the informed consent process and is valid for one year after the stamped date.

2015.04.0
2 17:54:56
-05'00'

Appendix K: IRB Approval to Change Research Procedures

Request for Change in Procedures - Approved

IRB <IRB@waldenu.edu> Fri, May 8, 2015 at 4:40 PM
To: Glenda Bumgarner <glenda.bumgarner@waldenu.edu>
Cc: Stephanie Hoon <stephanie.hoon@waldenu.edu>

Dear Ms. Bumgarner,

This e-mail serves to inform you that your request for a change in procedures, submitted on 4/27/15 has been approved. You may implement the requested changes effective immediately. The approval number for this study will remain the same.

Also attached to this e-mail is the updated IRB approved consent form. Please note, if this is already in an on-line format, you will need to update that consent document to include any changes.

Both students and faculty are invited to provide feedback on this IRB experience at the link below:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=qHBJzkJMUx43pZegKImdiQ_3d_3d

Sincerely,

Libby Munson

Research Ethics Support Specialist

Office of Research Ethics and Compliance

irb@waldenu.edu

Fax: 626-605-0472

Phone: 612-312-1283

Office address for Walden University:

100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 900

Minneapolis, MN 55401

Information about the Walden University Institutional Review Board, including instructions for application, may be found at this link: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Appendix L: Research Study Invitational Letter

Research Study Invitational Letter

Dear [redacted]: May 09, 2015

Currently, I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University and I am in the process of collecting data for my dissertation research and analysis. The focus of the research is transformational leadership, and specifically in the state government public sector arena.

As a senior leader in a public agency, your unique experiences and observations can provide valuable information that may assist other leaders striving to applying managerial skills in this sector. Toward that end, I invite you to join me for a 60 minute interview where you will be presented with five questions. Your identity and content of your responses will remain confidential, and you will be offered the opportunity to review your responses via a written transcript and modify for accuracy. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may remove yourself from the process at any time, up and to the point of final dissertation approval.

The meeting location will be a mutually-agreeable non-ODOT site or publicly accessible area in the lower level of the ODOT Central Office Headquarters. Finally, you will need to participate during non-work hours such as a lunch period, vacation or flex time off, or evenings or weekends. If you agree to accept this invitation, please provide dates and times when you are available for a person-to-person discussion to occur within the next 30 days. Additionally, please review the attached study participant consent form. By agreeing to the interview, you are authorizing your consent. If you do not wish to participate in this invitation, no further action on your part is necessary.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me with any questions that you may have about the process at Glenda.bumgarner@aol.com, [redacted]

Sincerely,

Glenda Bumgarner

Attachment

Appendix M: Research Study Consent

STUDY PARTICIPANT CONSENT

Transformational Leadership in the Public-Sector Research Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the common themes or trends that senior leaders at the Ohio Department of transportation cite as barriers to managing employee performance in the public-sector.

Your role in the individual discussion with the researcher is to review and provide feedback to 5 interview questions. At the beginning of the discussion, you will receive the 5 proposed interview questions in written format. During the 60 minute period, the researcher will walk through each question and you will have the option to provide your feedback both verbally and in written format. The researcher will take both written notes and audio tape the discussion. The meeting location will be a mutually agreeable non-ODOT site or publicly accessible area in the lower level of the ODOT Central Office Headquarters.

Following the discussion, you will receive a transcript of your comments and you will be provided the opportunity to amend the information captured to insure your views are accurately captured as you intended.

There are no foreseeable risks/discomforts to you as a study participant. All personal information provided by participants will remain confidential with the researcher, and study results will be protect the individual indentify of all participants.

Although you will not benefit directly from participating in this study or receive compensation, you will make a significant contribution to the information known about public-sector leadership. In the future, others may benefit because public-sector managers will be better prepared to manage employee performance and ultimately improve the services offered to citizens.

Your identity and individual comments will remain confidential and known only by the researcher. All documentation or other identifying information will remain in the possession of the researcher and secured in a locked file for a period of 5 years, at which time all documentation will be destroyed.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you may decline or withdraw from the study at any time. Your consent to participate in the study is provided by accepting the enclosed invitation to be interviewed by the researcher.

Finally, the researcher currently serves as the Deputy Director of the Office of Jobs & Commerce within the ODOT organization. This role is completely separate from the research project and poses no conflict of interest to participants, agency, or the researcher. Additionally, declining to participate in the study or withdrawing at any period during the study will not adversely impact the participant's relationship with the researcher.

Walden University's approval number for this study is 04-01-15-0084089 and it expires April 1, 2016. Should you have questions or require further clarification regarding this study, you may contact the researcher or the university's Research Participant Advocate as follows:

Researcher: Glenda Bumgarner, Email: Glenda.bumgarner@aol.com, Phone: (614) 302-2922

Appendix M: Research Study Consent

University Research Advocate: Email: irb@waldenu.edu, Phone: (612) 312-1210