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# Employee Perceptions of Leadership Styles That Influence Workplace Performance

Carla Wren  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Carla Wren

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2017

Abstract

Employee Perceptions of Leadership Styles That Influence Workplace Performance

by

Carla Wren

MPA, University of Michigan, 2005

BA, University of Michigan, 2004

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Public Policy and Administration

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December 2017

## Abstract

The leadership style found in government is usually diverse in nature, with the chain of command being top-down and focused on bureaucracy. There are some leadership styles that can adversely impact or vastly improve workplace performance. This descriptive phenomenological study was used to understand employee perceptions of leadership styles that affect their workplace performance. Bass's transformational leadership theory guided this study to explore how a supervisor's leadership style impacts an employee's workplace performance. The primary research question focused on positive and negative perceptions employees held related to supervisors' leadership behaviors and characteristics. The data collection was derived from in-depth interviews with 10 mid-level management employees aged 27 to 55 years of age, who are currently or were previously employed with a local government agency. Using Moustakas's method of data analysis, four primary themes were disclosed: (a) perceptions of three leadership styles, (b) insights on workplace performance, (c) observations of leader behaviors and characteristics, and (d) work ethics, indicating that a supervisor's leadership behaviors and characteristics do impact employees' workplace performance. The 4 primary themes indicated that participants preferred leader characteristics and behaviors associated with transformational leaders than they did with transactional or laissez-faire leaders. An organization's culture is influenced by leadership style, and consequently, leadership style affects an employee's workplace performance. The social change implications, as related to the findings, enable a leader to evaluate the perceptions of an employee's view of appropriate leadership styles that increases their workplace performance.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is lovingly dedicated to my mother, Myrtle Lynette Brown. Her constant love, support, and encouragement have sustained me throughout my life. Thank you for always pushing me to do my best. I miss and think about you every day. Rest in Heaven!

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

The aim of this study was to examine employee perceptions of the leadership styles that influence workplace performance. Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, and Guzman (2010) pointed out that the shift in leadership perception has created a new view of employee performance from simple individuals to important human capital needed for achieving progress within the organization. This shift has placed a greater emphasis on the importance of people, the need to develop people for achieving maximum productivity, the relationship between people's issues and organizational cultures, and the function of effective management of employees. Moreover, the shift has also necessitated the adoption of new leadership styles as a strategic response to the effective management of human capital.

Slavin and Morrison (2013) argued that the leadership style displayed within the work environment can theoretically affect every employee's attitudes and behaviors when coupled with poor leadership approaches from others at different management levels. The relationship between leadership style and the ability to leverage effective employee performance may be significant in addressing organizational challenges that arise from poor leadership styles in both public and private organizations. Rehman, Shareef, Mahmood, and Ishaque's (2012) study supported the argument that the relationship between leader and employee has a major influence within the workplace.

In the public sector, leadership is not about managing routines; it is about comprehending power and applying political skills while performing other leadership



functions, including building coalitions (Izard-Carrol, 2016). Leadership in public organizations has been impacted by the changing dynamics of modern society, much like other fields, and public administration has been influenced by new challenges. Sakiru, D'Silva, Othman, DaudSilong, and Busayo (2013) argued that leadership positions within the public sector need to be occupied by leaders who can determine preferences and work to gain support for any decisions made at the policy level.

Leaders in local government make decisions based on input from the community on financial considerations, as well as factors such as legislative powers (Van der Voet, 2014). Given these critical functions, understanding how leadership style influences employee efforts within this setting is particularly vital. Contemporary studies of leadership styles have identified three major styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. Transformational leadership style motivates followers by appealing to higher ideals and moral values, which can inspire employees to perform beyond expectations and transform both individuals and organizations (Bass, 1985). Transactional leadership style is based on bureaucratic authority and legitimacy within the organization. Burns (1978), theorized that this approach emphasizes work standards, assignments, and task-oriented goals. This theory focuses on task completion and employee compliance, and relies on organizational rewards and punishments to influence employee performance. Finally, laissez-faire leadership style is characterized by a total or general failure to take responsibilities for managing (Bass, 1999).

The literature that exists regarding employees' perceptions of the leadership styles within publicly run institutions has been limited within the United States, but has been

found in locations such as Africa, Malaysia, and China (Newman, Thanacoody, & Hui, 2011; Voon, Lo, Ngui, & Ayob, 2011). Van Wart (2014) argued that the concept of leadership was viewed in the context of effective approaches for managing employees and the organization. According to Van Wart's argument, the changes in the modern public and business environments has led to a shift in which the traditional concept of personnel administration has gradually been replaced by the concept of human resources management. In the public arena, leaders are challenged with concentrating on both the business and social dynamics of their leadership. Social exchange dynamics and identification processes may interact to reinforce the impact of leadership styles and associated actions.

Leadership within public organizations is considered an area that is widely misunderstood (Shih & Susanto, 2010). Moreover, given the important functions of such leaders, there exists a need to examine the role of leaders within public sector organizations to understand the employees' perceptions of how a leader's style influences workplace performance. In order to expand the literature related to public sector leadership, there must be an examination of employee perceptions based on the three leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) in the context of employees who work for public organizations to understand the influences that these styles have on workplace performance.

### **Background**

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed Executive Order 10925, ordering that federally funded projects "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed,

and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin” (Exec. Order No. 10925, 3 C.F.R., 1961). The changes mandated by the executive order were needed to give federal contracting agencies the authority to institute procedures against federal contractors who violated their Equal Employment Opportunity obligations to their employees. President Kennedy ushered in legal protections to employees for both public and private industries. This new set of protections for employees gave them opportunities to voice concerns regarding their leaders and the behaviors they display in the workplace.

The three leadership styles under investigation included transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Burns, 1978). Each of these leadership styles and subsequent theories provided foundational support for this study and the areas described in this dissertation. Additionally, these leadership styles and theories included components or themes of organizational effectiveness and follower perceptions in the research. Furthermore, while there are many types of leadership styles, three types dominate the literature and provide the theoretical foundation for this study.

Belasen and Frank (2010) revealed that it is essential for leaders to have the foundational skills and tools necessary to implement and manage change effectively. These tools are vital to enable effective leaders to guide an organization through a seamless transition. There are certain conditions and factors required within an organization in order to achieve a positive cultural and strategic transformation, both of which are dependent on leadership (Gordon, 2013). Gordon’s (2013) argument suggested

that effective strategic change should help bring about synergy within an organization, which may create a need for leadership that goes beyond transactional roles to leverage the diverse factors that impact culture and employee workplace performance.

Caillier (2014) described a differentiation in leadership styles, such that political leadership is an approach where employees are encouraged to perform more effectively based on the values and motivations of both the leaders and the employees. Fernandez, Cho, and Perry (2010) asserted that public sector leadership is often subjected to more criticism from political parties and the media, despite having a different audience perspective from the private sector. The researchers' argument identified that not all forms of leadership are necessarily successful at accomplishing organizational effectiveness (Fernandez et al., 2010).

In examining the form of leadership that is needed to achieve effective and successful transformations, Wright and Pandey (2010) analyzed organizational structures in relationship to the transformational leadership practices of various leaders. They studied data gathered from senior leaders and managers working within a local government setting. They suggested that there are some possible explanations for why public sector organizations might display higher levels of transformational leadership when compared to the levels traditionally expected by scholars. For instance, such organizations may operate in a less bureaucratic manner than expected. These findings seem to present a significant challenge to the existing paradigms found within most studies of transformational leadership (Van Wart & Dicke, 2016). Furthermore,

performance measures, as an instrumental part of existing organizational processes, tend to support higher levels of transformational behaviors (Antonakis & House, 2013).

The findings in this study may help further build an argument for the need to develop various leadership styles when working in public organizations (Izard-Carrol, 2016).

Therefore, an increased understanding of how leadership styles influence employees may assist leaders in improving workplace performance beyond expected levels. Although numerous researchers have been able to establish a link between leadership styles and employee job satisfaction, only a few theorists have focused on leadership style as a determining factor of workplace performance for employees in public organizations (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Choi, 2009).

### **Problem Statement**

In this qualitative phenomenological study, I explored the employee perceptions of leadership styles that influence workplace performance in public organizations. The general problem was that there is the lack of satisfaction employees have with the leadership style they are exposed to, and that those styles are affecting organizations and employee turnover (Delobelle et al., 2011). In 2012, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management reported that more than 226,000 of public employees surveyed, or one-third of the sample, reported that they were dissatisfied with their jobs and the leadership in their organization. The specific problem is that leaders have a limited knowledge of the influence of a leader's style, the employees' perceptions of those styles, and how they influence workplace performance (O'Reilly, Caldwell, Chatman, Lapiz, & Self, 2010; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2012).

Employee turnover increases unwanted costs for organizations (O'Reilly et al., 2010). The loss of skilled employees may result in a decline in efficiency, increased replacement and training costs, and reduction of employee morale (O'Reilly et al., 2010). The major cause of employee turnover is job dissatisfaction due to a misalignment between the way a leader perceives his or her leadership style and way that his or her employees perceive it (Olasupo, 2011). However, there remains an important gap in the literature that has not been adequately researched—the employee's perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance in public organizations.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to contribute additional knowledge to the field of Public Administration and Leadership by providing a study that would address the employee's perception of leadership styles as demonstrated via patterns of leader behaviors that influence workplace performance. I investigated the effectiveness of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles within public organizations, specifically local government settings, by analyzing patterns of leader behaviors perceived to be beneficial or problematic by employees. This study contributed to social change by providing a better understanding of how an employee's perception of leadership styles can influence workplace performance in public organizations.

### **Research Question**

The central research question that guided this study was, “What are employee perceptions of the behaviors and perceived characteristics of the supervisors who work in local government?”

The sub-question for this research study was, “How do those perceived behaviors and characteristics influence workplace performance?”

### **Theoretical Foundation of the Study**

This study encompassed the theoretical foundation of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles developed by Bass (1985) to explore how employees perceive a leader’s styles, and how those styles influence workplace performance in public organizations. Interest in leadership is found in both scientific and management studies with various perspectives addressing the subject, including psychology and neuroscience, which have been applied to better the understanding of leadership styles (Malik, Aziz, & Hassan, 2014).

### **Nature of the Study**

The research method that was used in this study was qualitative with a phenomenological approach. Moustakas (1994) theorized that phenomenological studies examine the feelings, thoughts, perceptions, observations, and reflections of people experiencing the phenomenon and yield a composite description of the essence of the collective experience. The use of qualitative research allows the researcher to study the participants in the current environment to obtain a better understanding of the factors contributing to the participants’ situation, with direct insight into the behaviors and

experiences of the participants and the effect that these experiences have on the phenomenon being researched (Eide & Showalter, 2012). This approach allowed me to determine what an employee's perceptions of leadership behaviors are and how they influence workplace performance in a public organization (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

### **Definition of Terms**

*Laissez-faire leadership:* A style of leadership where the leader does not act; the leader abdicates authority to whomever is willing to use it and does not provide guidance to employees or perform any leadership functions (Rukmani, Ramesh, & Jayakrishnan, 2010).

*Leadership:* The ability of an individual to impact the motivation or competence of others in a group; to influence followers to achieve visions or goals (Humphrey, 2012).

*Leadership style:* A balance between managerial behaviors and attitudes (Dubrin, 2009).

*Public organizations:* For the purposes of this study, a public organization is broadly defined to include governmental, nonprofit, and nongovernmental organizations, and their impacts on human life and society, as well as their influence in shaping human civilization (Iacovino, Barsanti, & Cinquini, 2015).

*Transactional leader:* A leader who uses rewards to achieve compliance and monitors for mistakes; someone who is unable to move employees to a higher level of commitment (McCleskey, 2014).



*Transformational leader:* A leader who inspires, motivates, acts with integrity, and encourages others to higher levels of commitment (Onorato, 2013).

*Workplace/Job performance:* The work-related activities expected of an employee and how well those activities are executed. In the workplace, psychological forces that determine an employee's level of effort and persistence in the face of obstacles (Society for Human Resource Management, 2010).

### **Assumptions**

The primary assumption within the study was that the participants would complete the qualitative interview questions as accurately and as honestly as possible. Another assumption was that government employees would be willing and interested in improving their efforts. The final assumption was that the interview protocol would provide a sufficient structure for participants' expression of their experiences and views regarding organizational leadership as it affected their effort and organizational culture (Hassan, Wright, & Yukl, 2014).

### **Scope and Delimitations**

In the study, I focused precisely on the phenomena of the effects of leadership behavior on perceived employee effort, engagement, and commitment. Additional delimitations were constituted by the bounding of the phenomenon of the study to include employees with work experience in local government organizations at the middle management level and below. Participant interviews was limited to a sample of 10 members. According to Simon and Goes (2011), a phenomenological study should consider sample sizes of five to 25 participants for an in-depth analysis and

understanding of the lived experiences of the subjects. Beyond experiencing the phenomena described above, additional delimitations for participant inclusion were imposed due to the data collection methods used in this study. Participants were interviewed via the telephone; therefore, participation was limited to those individuals who could be accessed through this method.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations existed for this study. For example, values and work ethics varied across governmental organizations and regions, meaning that there were factors related to organizational culture that limited the transferability of study findings. Local government units that are larger or smaller in size yielded different results. Finally, Ryan (2013) proposed in his book that since interview questions in the study were used for all participants, there may be inconsistencies with responses associated with answering and confirming; therefore, the use of member checking validated some responses. Findings from the current study are inapplicable for other levels of government or to nongovernmental public organizations; however, such findings can be at least partially representative of the transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership styles since public organizations generally have the same central policies and functions.

### **Significance**

The study findings can benefit leaders of public organizations who wish to improve workplace performance. Leadership in public organizations is considered an area that is not very well understood (Shih & Susanto, 2010). However, given the important functions of leaders, there exists a need to examine the role of leadership

within local governments. This can be achieved by adopting new leadership approaches, which enable leaders to meet service delivery goals in ways that effectively leverage change.

The social impact of the study was to showcase how leaders in local governments can improve workplace performance and ultimately improve culture dimensions, gains made in productivity, and public service. The research is also intended to be used by future researchers, students, and academics since it contributes to the body of knowledge addressing this issue. Effectively analyzing how aspects of an employee's perceptions of leadership styles influence workplace performance can help contribute to the greater good of the organization.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 1 of this study, the background, problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, framework, nature of the study, definitions, assumptions, scope, delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study were outlined as they related to an employee's perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. The method that was used in this qualitative study was phenomenological. I concluded the chapter with a section on the implications of social change and impact.

Chapter 2 includes an extensive review of the literature related to the three leadership styles: transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire. A detailed discussion on the methodology and data collection process associated with this study is included in Chapter 3. The findings of the research are included in Chapter 4, along with information on the setting, such as demographics, data collection process, data analysis, and evidence

of trustworthiness. Chapter 5 includes a detailed discussion and interpretation of the findings and the limitations of the current research, followed by recommendations for future studies, implications of the present findings for positive social change, and the conclusions.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

Literature pertaining to leadership within organizations has generally addressed the for-profit sector regarding employees and their relationships with their leaders. However, while understanding leadership styles has been largely explored in the context of nongovernmental organizations, a critical need exists to examine how leadership styles affect workplace performance, especially given their strategic function of service delivery. This research study assisted in establishing a foundation for exploring leadership styles within public organizations, specifically within local governments, and identified which leadership styles best promote employee workplace performance. However, there are problems and challenges related to leadership styles that can have a positive or negative effect on an employee's perception of their leader, and that may influence workplace performance (Malik et al., 2014). Despite the increased focus on spending within public and governmental organizations, understanding employees' perceptions and their influence on work performance has not encouraged ample research within the field of study.

In this section, the historical development of leadership theories was addressed. Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire theories were discussed in detail. Organizational culture was discussed as the environmental context within which leadership is implemented and experienced. The last section of the chapter addresses the recent literature on transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles as well as the contemporary nature and challenges in public organizations.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

In the literature search, I aimed to identify, assimilate, summarize, and synthesize all studies that report on the association between transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership theories. The following databases were used: Google Scholar, ProQuest, Walden Scholarworks, Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), and Sage Premier. Only full articles I reviewed were included in the literature review. An extended database search was conducted based on author, title, and keywords using criteria as listed. The criteria used for this literature review included: (a) empirical studies conducted since 2011; (b) empirical studies involving the following populations: public organizations, leadership, and employees within public organizations; and (c) empirical studies published in highly respected peer reviewed journals.

### **Theoretical Framework of Leadership Theories**

Theoretical frameworks of leadership date back to the mid-19th century. Contemporary theories of leadership and their applications to business and workplace performance have been researched extensively for more than 30 years (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978; Freeborough & Patterson, 2015). Burns (1978) and Bass (1985) developed and further studied the leadership styles used within this research. Burns theorized that transformational leaders “attempt and succeed in raising colleagues, subordinates, followers, clients, or constituents to a greater awareness about the issues of consequence” (p. 17). Bass further theorized that transactional leaders are those who use bargaining and interchangeable tactics to influence workplace situations that exist between both the leader and the subordinate. Laissez-faire, or management-by-exception, refers to the

absence or avoidance of the leader to act on critical issues or concerns (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). These theories outlined the characterizations of leadership approaches and played a significant role in organizational workplace performance.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership has become increasingly popular as a subject for systematic empirical inquiry within most fields. Transformational leaders are proposed to be able to inspire trust from followers and serve as role models for employees (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Transformational leaders are defined as visionary, proactive, and innovative. This form of leadership is based on the personal values of the leader (Steinwart & Ziegler, 2014) and is expressed through their interactions with others. Followers are motivated to go beyond the achievement of short-term goals, based on self-interest, to higher personal and organizational goals. The transformational leader also promotes an organizational culture where employees are encouraged to be creative (Moriano, Molero, Topa, & Mangin, 2014). This leadership approach fosters capacity development, increased commitment, and motivation. Increased commitment, in turn, results in extra effort and enhanced productivity (Hooper & Potter, 2011).

There are four characteristics associated with transformational leadership: charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Onorato, 2013). According to Antonakis and House (2013), charisma refers to vision and the ability to gain trust and respect from employees while instilling pride among them. This behavior also involves a strong sense of mission. Charismatic behavior

induces followers to strive for the good of the team while reassuring them that goals can be achieved and obstacles can be overcome.

Inspirational motivation is the process by which a leader establishes higher standards and becomes a reference for those standards (Antonakis & House, 2013). The researchers theorized that the employees consider the leader a role model, and therefore, inspirational (Antonakis & House, 2013). In addition, there are high expectations of communication, and the leader is always optimistic about the future through realistic, clear objectives and sound strategies, and employees are encouraged to put in their best effort.

Intellectual stimulation allows followers to generate new ideas and think creatively (Henker, Sonnentag, & Unger, 2015). The researchers argued that this type of leader promotes rationality, intelligence, and problem solving (Henker et al., 2015). This type of leader employs various perspectives to solve problems and is highly respected. The nature of intellectual stimulation is to increase innovative thinking and capabilities amongst followers. Transformational leaders can enhance organizational creativity through the provision of an environment, which encourages different approaches to problem-solving.

Individual consideration is concerned with the professional and personal development of the followers (McCleskey, 2014). McCleskey's (2014) argument is that this behavior can include employee development through mentoring and coaching. At the same time, individual differences are respected. Transformational leadership goes well beyond the transactional or laissez-faire dynamics in public organizations.



Transformational leaders have more confidence and thus instill confidence in their followers. Effective communication is an important characteristic of transformational leadership. Therefore, the leaders have to be able to explain complicated issues and abstract ideas in ways that the employees can understand (Orazi, Turrini, & Valotti, 2013).

### **Transactional Leadership**

Transactional leadership represents a more active leadership approach, along with the incorporation of a managerial focus. This type of leadership occurs when a leader interacts with employees for the purpose of exchange, as it involves no mutual pursuit of higher purposes. This contrasts with transformational leadership where people engage with each other in ways that allow both leaders and followers to aim for higher levels of motivation and morality. Transactional leadership largely depends on the leader's ability to provide rewards such as status and money (McCleskey, 2014). The followers, in return, give acceptance to the transactional leader.

Birasnav (2014) claimed that transactional leadership style does not generate creativity; rather, it ensures that employees understand their tasks while removing barriers to the desired goals. Transactional leadership uses contingent reinforcement; positive contingent rewards are used to achieve desired behavior, while negative action or sanctions are used where the desired behavior is not present. Transactional leadership is more of a managerial approach to leadership within the public organization. In leadership, leaders adopt transformational attitudes only when there are failures, deviations, and breakdowns (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Bass and Avolio's (1997) argument

was that the strength of this approach to leadership is that the environment is structured with clear goals. The main weakness to the approach is the difficulty in implementing change (Boonstra, 2012). Improving workplace performance is essential when overcoming resistance and usually involves a team effort, not the force of a single leader, which characterizes the transactional model (Malik et al., 2014).

### **Laissez-Faire Leadership**

Laissez-faire leadership is characterized by a reduced emphasis on leadership involvement. The leader typically allows employees to find their own way, maintains a low profile, and does just enough to allow the company to survive without expending too much energy (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). The utilization of this leadership style avoids communication, where the leader does not play an active role in encouraging or motivating the employees and is not attached to development (Wong & Giessner, 2016). While this theory has elements that are transactional and transformational, it neither yields the overall desired output in terms of employee effectiveness and effort (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014), nor does it place an emphasis on employee workplace performance.

In summary, Antonakis and House (2013) mentioned that leaders can advance the sense of duty of followers by being charismatic; however, individual attention from such leaders promotes ultimate performance from employees. Although leading through charisma and individualized attention may have been an objective of the laissez-faire style of leadership, the lack of order, routine, and clear procedures are so great that they

do not allow for a truly charismatic and vibrant leader to emerge (Skogstad, Hetland, Glasø, & Einarsen, 2014).

## **Review of the Literature**

### **Leadership**

Leadership is an important concept in the evaluation of an employee's perception, as it connects the individual employee to the organization and guides a team toward a common goal (Andersen, 2010). It was previously described that leadership affects the way managers relate to the organization and their ability to use their leadership capabilities to collaborate effectively with their employees. Organizational performance is measured and evaluated on the team's ability to achieve set objectives; it is an indication of the productivity level of those within the organization (Obiwuru, Okwu, & Akpa, 2011). Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of an employee's perception of leadership styles and how they influence workplace performance is needed.

Du, Swaen, Lindgreen, and Sen (2013) explained that modern leadership has become more difficult because of emerging environmental and technological challenges. Increased availability of information, technologies, diversity in talent pools, and changing political constructs are affecting the way leadership operates in public organizations (Izard-Carrol, 2016). The leadership in public organizations has been traditionally bureaucratic and transactional in nature. Leaders who use the transactional leadership style focus on performance through measurement, administration, and control (McCleskey, 2014). However, there is a need for public organization leaders to redefine

their strategies to respond to contemporary changes in the organization that will motivate employees to put forth their best efforts.

Deva and Yazdanifard (2013) argued that leadership styles determine the amount of social support and direction that leaders provide to their subordinates. The researchers further argued that a leader's ability to lead is dependent upon numerous factors such as preferred style, the leader's capabilities, and the behavior of workers, who also depend heavily on factors that form the basis of the view of leadership as an intimate approach to management (McCleskey, 2014). Leadership style is essential for a leader to integrate the aspirations of organization employees, while at the same time creating opportunities that will keep employees engaged within any type of organizational culture. Moreover, understanding effective leadership styles may create and foster an environment that is organized with leaders aimed at succeeding.

### **Organizational Culture**

In contemporary literature, organizational culture is defined as encompassing what is valued, such as the dominant leadership style, procedures and routines, and language and symbols that determine an operational definition of success by an organization (Cameron & Quinn, 2011). This definition may represent the values, expectations, collective memories, underlying assumptions, and definitions within the organization. In addition, culture defines the strengths of the organization and past successes. An organization develops established norms over time, and those norms guide expected behavior patterns (Miller, 2014).

Organizational culture is strongly related to organizational change and the ability to effectively manage organizational culture (Campbell, 2017). Doh and Quigley (2014) proposed that effective management within the organizational culture will support workplace performance. The researchers disclosed that this view of organizational culture is not something that can be cultivated, but the relationship between the leader and the employee can be (Doh & Quigley, 2014). Organizational culture is therefore strongly related to the leadership styles and the management of workplace performance and constitutes a very important leadership function. Miller (2014) supported the notion that culture conveys a sense of identity in organizations through the practices, norms, and values that determine the way things are done.

Fullan (2014) summarized that organizational culture is driven by forces that constrain the groups' behavior, and that these forces manifest as shared norms. Caillier (2014) agreed that this is important because the leader guides the employees towards the goals of the public organization. Moreover, understanding the importance with respect to culture in successful leadership arguably creates and promotes employee effort and performance, essentially integrating the desires of organization employees, while at the same time creating opportunities that will keep employees engaged during any type of organizational or leadership change (Chiles, 2015).

Private organizational culture and public organizational culture are not necessarily mirror images of each other. The culture in public management differs somewhat from that of the corporate world because of the ideology found within the public service sector. Andrews and Van de Walle (2013) proposed the dimensions of culture as conformity,

responsibility, standards, rewards, organizational clarity, leadership, warmth, and support. Leadership refers to the willingness of employees to accept direction and guidance from qualified leaders. Therefore, employees are expected to conform to the organizational culture without being told to do so (Hill, Seo, Kang, & Taylor, 2012).

A leader must learn to manage the organizational culture if he or she expects to be successful. The creation of a climate for change is imperative, since culture is effective when applied to issues and areas that need change (Sethuraman & Suresh, 2014). Culture is also effective when connected to specific issues in the organization. Leaders must be champions of culture management; they should promote the understanding of organizational culture. Culture can be promoted and reinforced when leaders reward sub-culture sets that embody the values, beliefs, and underlying assumptions of the organization (Deva & Yazdanifard, 2013).

Employee empowerment and engagement are necessary to assure effective management of culture (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2013). Also, empowerment promotes employee alignment with the overall culture of the organization. Team orientation is necessary for dealing with existing barriers, and promoting and disseminating new cultural values and traits (Fullan, 2014). Tracking cultural change allows the assessment of cultural alignment to make sure that subgroup practices and issues do not undermine the cultural ethos and underlying assumptions of the organization (Popli & Rizvi, 2015). In addition, training and rewards are important to boost employee morale.

There are organizations that train their employees for culture awareness. In other organizations, employees learn about organizational norms and culture from the leaders

(Şahin, 2012). Regardless of how employees learn the culture, they must adapt to it in order to be successful. The relationship between leadership and cultural environment is not necessarily predictable. Yıldırım and Birinci (2013) implemented a study on organizational leadership and situational strength. The study attempted to describe how leadership behavior and culture could be explained. While the results of the study did not provide a complete correlation between the various types of leadership and situational strength, it seemed to infer that non-transformational leaders prefer to create environments, or cultures, where there is strong situational strength for employees, and vice-versa for transformational leaders.

The study findings suggested that transformational leadership can influence the extent to which employees' work, as well as the extent to which they are given the freedom to work. Such leaders try to create cultures where employees have the discretion to make their own decisions, thereby increasing their confidence, morale, and the ability to implement change. The study also suggested that the clique culture is associated with weak situations and thus promotes innovation and teamwork. The study was conducted in the public sector, so findings are not generalizable. However, it presents important evidence for the repetition of such studies in the private sector.

### **Workplace Performance**

Fusch and Gillespie (2012) noted that organizational leaders are striving to improve workplace performance. However, the researchers argued that not all performance issues can be improved through training. Graves, Sarkis, and Zhu (2013) summarized that motivation is acknowledged in literature as being crucial for high

employee performance; it affects the level of effort that employees expend towards achieving job objectives. Therefore, it is important to understand how leaders can motivate employees to improve their performance. Within the context of this dissertation, the concept is particularly important, since transformational leadership is known to be associated with higher levels of motivation for employees (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Eccles & Wigfeild, 2002).

Theoretically, motivational factors are either intangible or tangible.

Organizational culture and effective leadership are key factors identified for employee motivation (Chiles, 2015). Leadership behaviors, such as mentoring and guidance, can provide stimuli for hard work and increased employee effort. Policies and regulations guide performance, and affect both employee conduct and performance (Andersen, 2010). Therefore, the motivational strategies adopted by an organization can help them attract top candidates, and influence current employees to work more diligently (Fullan, 2014). Effective motivational strategies depend on the context in which they are deployed, making it important to understand key theories that relate to motivation and work behavior (Yildirim & Birinci, 2013).

Motivation has received a lot of research attention, which has generated several theories of motivation. One such theory, Herzberg's theory of motivation, was developed in 1959 and is extensively cited in business literature (Gawel, 1997). Two-dimensional factors that influence work attitudes are described in the theory: hygiene factors and motivators. Motivational factors are inherent to work and create satisfaction. They include factors like a sense of achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities



for growth (Gawel, 1997). Motivators correlate with high performance, while hygiene factors lead to short-term changes in performance (Gawel, 1997). The limitations of this theory included that it does not account for situational variables, and there is also an assumption that employee satisfaction correlates with productivity, even when productivity is ignored in the context of the whole picture.

### **Synthesis of the Research Findings**

Leadership bridges the gap between the employee and the organization. The concepts of leadership styles, organizational culture, and workplace performance were explored through the lens of employee's perceptions and examined in the context of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. Public organization leadership involves producing and delivering a service for the public (Caulfield & Larsen, 2013). Public organizations often represent a system where change may be difficult to implement because of entrenched bureaucracy and hierarchies (Van der Voet, 2014). Wong and Giessner (2016) found that transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles were ineffective in delivering and managing change, and suggested that some leaders seem to just occupy space.

Therefore, Deva and Yazdanifard (2013) criticized the laissez-faire leadership style since it plays a very small role in the decision-making process. Employees that experience this level of leadership are given the opportunity to make their independent decisions; however, this style usually works best when those within the company know their jobs well, are committed to the company, and are hard-working (Ulrich, Zenger, &

Smallwood, 2013). Therefore, this style of leadership does not work well when employees are not committed to the goals of the organization.

When leadership and organizational culture are applied to a leadership style, McCleskey (2014) argued that transactional leadership does not require relationship building between leaders and employees. There are clear boundaries between function, roles, and domain influence. However, transformational leadership style is best at promoting employee motivation and enhancing workplace performance.

Transformational leaders tend to be strong visionaries whose leadership approach is ethical, aligned with organizational objectives, and forward-looking (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). The transactional style of leadership is preferred by management, and is thought to be the most common style of leadership in public organizations.

A transformational leader, however, can encourage employees to pursue leadership roles while cultivating and fostering a sense of ownership in the creation of the organizational processes among the employees. This maturation of the employee's skills allows for a greater sense of belonging, and the demonstration of a willingness to accept change and a willingness to work toward achieving vital goals (Hassan & Hatmaker, 2015; Hassan et al., 2014). Moreover, the principal focus of a transformational leader is to motivate employees to strive towards organizational goals even during change (García-Morales, Jiménez-Barrionuevo, & Gutiérrez-Gutiérrez, 2012). Newman (2012) and García-Morales et al. (2012) agreed that the transformational leadership style has been shown to be more effective than the other two styles at improving employee satisfaction, effort, and morale in the workplace, thus improving workplace performance.

## Summary

The three contemporary leadership styles that were analyzed are those of transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire. Public organizations are affected by new challenges that necessitate the adoption of leadership styles that can promote employee performance and their full engagement in problem solving. Public organizations are traditionally bureaucratic, and within systems such as these, it can be very challenging to implement change. Transactional and laissez-faire leadership did not generate the appropriate level of employee motivation needed to improve efforts and manage change effectively. The theoretical aim of the study was to contribute to the development of the theories upon which the most efficient type of leadership is based. The theoretical framework for the interaction between transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles are used to understand the critical role that leadership plays in workplace performance.

In conclusion, the quality of leadership determines the level of effort expended by employees, which ultimately determines how well organizational goals are met. Therefore, good leadership should be able to motivate and inspire employees to work more efficiently. A primary search was implemented using Google Scholar. There was a strict inclusion criterion utilized to locate relevant articles that pertained to the research study. The terms used for the literature search strategy included *leadership styles*, *leadership*, *employee effort*, *public organization*, *leadership styles*, *organizational change*, *workplace performance*, and *social change*. The qualitative methodology was discussed further in Chapter 3.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

In Chapter 3, I discuss the qualitative methodology with a phenomenological design that I used to understand an employee's perception of leadership styles and how they influence workplace performance. Phenomenological research determines the meanings individuals ascribe to real world lived experiences (Rocha Pereira, 2012). Phenomenological analysis addresses the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, observations, and reflections of all participants experiencing the study phenomenon and arrives at a blended composite description reflecting the essence of the collective experience (Moustakas, 1994; Reiter, Stewart, & Bruce, 2011). The objective was to describe common themes and patterns drawn from employees' perceptions of leadership styles and how they influence workplace performance.

Qualitative research is a structured process with a particular outcome that expands knowledge and discovery through the collection of interviews and allows participants to share their lived experiences (Swanson & Holton, 2005). In this chapter, I discuss that a phenomenological design was appropriate to use when the intent of the study was to provide an understanding of a phenomenon through the lived experiences of the study participants (see Moustakas, 1994). In the sections of Chapter 3, I highlight the research methodology and procedures used in the study, which consist of the following sections: introduction, research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, importance of ethical procedures, protecting the participants' privacy in the study, and a summary.

## **Research Design and Rationale**

### **Research Design**

The design selected for this research topic was a qualitative methodology with a phenomenological design. Qualitative research data collection involves focus groups, individual in-depth interviews, phenomenological studies, ethnography, action research, and observation (Klenke, 2016). Qualitative data analysis evaluates the content of written or recorded material from participants, behavioral observations, information gathered from observers, and the study of the physical environment (Maxwell, 2012; Yin, 2015). Therefore, the qualitative research design is focused on themes, words, and images rather than on statistical data. The primary foundations for a qualitative design are goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods, and validity.

### **Rationale**

A research topic should be imperative and have enough literature to facilitate easy understanding and detailed analysis (Yin, 2015). The choice to use transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership styles and their impact on an employee's perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance efforts was based on current challenges that leaders in public organizations are enduring, particularly the changing roles that leaders experience. To analyze the data that was retrieved during the interview of the employees that work in local government, the use of the phenomenological approach was chosen. The phenomenological approach was appropriate for this study because it was conducted to capture the lived experiences of an employee's perception of the leadership styles of leaders who work in local government.

Most importantly, it is believed that this is an area where an active evolution is occurring, especially given the changing nature of modern organizations.

### **Research Question**

The central research question that guided this study was, “What are employee perceptions of the behaviors and perceived characteristics of the supervisors who work in local government?”

The sub-question for this research study was, “How do those perceived behaviors and characteristics influence workplace performance?”

### **Role of the Researcher**

While engaging in research, it is imperative to report all data and separate personal morals, beliefs, and perceptions (Ben-Ari & Enosh, 2011; Tufford & Newman, 2012). Having a defined role is one of the factors that enabled me to set boundaries for what constitutes proper and principled behavior. This, in turn, dictated a clear definition of roles for participants and eliminated any confusion concerning roles. I had no personal or professional relationships with the local government employees included in the participant pool. I served as both interviewer and observer for the study. I possess 10 years of experience in public administration and interviewing. However, this experience did not interfere with the integrity of the study or the trustworthiness of the results through the application of bracketing techniques (see Ahern, 1999).

### **Methodology**

A qualitative research approach was used for this research study to facilitate analysis and examination of the relationship between leadership styles and employee

efforts within the selected local government. This study was an examination of the changing aspects that exist between leaders and employees, with a focus on the leadership styles that are being used within the organization. I analyzed how employees' perceptions varied in response to various leadership styles, and the information and data were gathered using the interview questions.

### **Participant Selection Logic**

Sampling involves drawing a specified number of elements from a sampling pool that intends to represent any possible elements found within the population (Joo & Jo, 2017). The ability to generalize from the sample drawn depends on the representativeness of the sample, for example, the extent to which the sample has the same characteristics as the population. A purposeful sampling procedure was adopted for selecting participants for this study. The selected employees were chosen on the basis of being a previous or current employee in the local government of a public organization. This design allowed me to implement a qualitative approach to obtain data about the various leadership styles and approaches. Prospective participants were sent a recruitment letter via email to elicit their participation in the study (see Appendix A).

I used a qualitative phenomenological approach to conduct interviews with 10 adult employees, aged 18 to 55 years. The rationale for the selection of a small participant pool, including the age bracket, was based on the research phenomenological study recommended for the consideration of a sampling size between five and 25 participants (Joo & Jo, 2017; Simon & Goes, 2011).

The composition of the sample was determined by those employees who were willing to participate in the study. Factors such as a participant's gender, ethnicity, race, and years of service was not incorporated in the inclusion criteria. However, demographic data collection included such information so that some descriptive analysis can be applied to include understanding any differential patterns in the emergent themes.

### **Instrumentation**

Data collection is a very critical process. It is important to apply a well-developed, consistent, and efficient data collection strategy (Klenke, 2016). The data collection strategy for the research took into consideration the design process to be used, the tools for data collection, and data stratification issues. The interview protocol consisted of an introduction to the project and included disclosing the reasons for inviting the participants to join the study.

Detailed information on the investigation included confidentiality information, request for permission to audiotape the interview, and an opportunity for member checking to review the written transcriptions for accuracy. Participants were informed that names would not be included in any findings or published reports, and responses would contribute to learning more about the discussed topic. All data were stored in a locked filing cabinet and was unavailable to anyone else. Seven years after the dissertation approval, all data, written notes, and the USB drive will be destroyed.

A semi-structured qualitative interview guide was used to gather data from the participants. The instrument was modified and field-tested by terminally degreed persons to ensure the logic, clarity, and structure of the instrument. Yin (2015) theorized that an



interview guide has been proven more effective in retaining control over the line of questioning. The guide used for this study allowed participants the opportunity to articulate their in-depth views on the topic and allowed me to introduce limits and maintain control of the interview. In phenomenological research, interviewing serves as the main data collection method (Maxwell, 2012; Yin, 2015). Furthermore, it allowed me the ability to realize the criticality of an efficient and effective interview guide to support the data collection process. In addition, I created an instrument for the study.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

The participants were recruited from the American Society of Public Administrators (ASPA), The PhD Women's Network, and The PhD Men's Network that included members employed within local government organizations. Semi-structured and telephone interviews were conducted with participants. Semi-structured interviews are modifiable and exploratory; however, they are a technique that enabled me to maintain control through structured questioning (see Yin, 2015). The telephone interviews of the selected participants were digitally recorded and lasted 1 hour or less. The interview questions were open-ended.

The utilization of a semi-structured interview (Yin, 2015) helped me to maintain organization and consistency. This approach helped to provide opportunities to obtain a deeper understanding of the participant experiences. The standardized open-ended interview questions were carefully crafted, with little variation in wording to make sure each of the participants were asked the same questions (Maxwell, 2012). The steps for data collection were as follows:

1. Recruited employees who were currently or previously employed in a local government public organization to participate in the study,
2. Obtained signed informed consent forms from the participants,
3. Scheduled the interviews,
4. Conducted the interviews,
5. Transcribed interviews verbatim,
6. Organized and analyzed the data, and
7. Prepared and presented findings and recommendations.

Data collection included written and verbal consents. The consent form included how the data were collected and used. Subjects who were willing to participate in the study were required to send back the completed consent form (see Appendix B). The form specifically stated that their participation in the study was voluntary and they could withdraw at any time and for any reason. In addition, the participants' information was kept confidential, and no names were written on the interview tools.

In the case where a potential participant had not responded within 10 business days, I sent a reminder to the subject by email. If there was still no response, additional participants were added to the list. In the event that the pool of willing participants obtained from this sampling process had not been not large enough, the interview information and consent request were sent to every person on the list. The objective was to achieve a level of results that were significant since a very small pool of participants could limit the number of results. I obtained approval from all Walden University committee members and the Institutional Review Board (IRB).

## **Data Analysis Plan**

Data analysis is a vital and imperative part of qualitative research. In qualitative research, the interviews are transcribed, and the information is organized in order to conduct the correct data analysis. The information was divided into themes via a process known as coding, and the final information was captured in figures, tables, and interviews (Smith, 2015). In addition, the process of methodological triangulation was implemented in this study. Methodological triangulation included various qualitative methods to study the phenomenon, such as interviews, field notes taken during the interview, and any additional stories that were shared by the participants. While this method is popular, it generally requires additional resources. There are several advantages to implementing triangulation in a study, which increases confidence in research data, creates new ways to understand a phenomenon, aids in revealing unique findings, challenges or integrates theories, and gives a clearer understanding to the problem (Thurmond, 2001).

There were four strategies that assisted me to remain neutral in my study, especially where I had knowledge of the subject. The first strategy was being mentally prepared to put aside my knowledge and adopt attitudes throughout the study so that I could learn from others (see Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013). Second was deciding on the scope of the literature review. This assisted me in gaining a better understanding of the questions for the study (Chan et al., 2013). Third was having a strategy for planned data collection. It was important to have questions as a guide but leave room to probe with other questions (Chan et al., 2013). The fourth strategy was planned data analysis. The important part was to ensure that the information was accurate (Chan et al., 2013). This

was accomplished by having each participant read over their interviews upon completion to ensure accuracy.

Each participant was assigned a unique code identifier. I organized data by using the field notes and interviews. Any key terms, themes, phrases, or ideas was notated in the margins in order to effectively document the communication and the experience of the participants. NVivo 11 software was used to organize the data. This software helped to organize, analyze, and collect information from the interviews. In addition, this tool allowed me to discover trends that were present in the interviews (Beekhyuzen, von Hellens, & Nielsen, 2010; Walsh, 2003). The utilization of this tool enabled me to develop a list of repeated terms and significant statements derived from the interviews.

I began the data analysis by organizing and preparing the data that were collected and transcribed from the interviews with the participants. Several transcripts were read to gain an initial sense of the data, identifying sentences and phrases that illuminated meaningful units of analysis for coding in the text. The data was analyzed in order to organize the coded data into thematic categories aligned to the theoretically defined characteristics of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Coded data that did not align to the *a priori* theoretical themes was reexamined to explore for additional emergent themes. A brief outline of each participant's interview was created to understand the key experiential events, influences, and decisions from each interview. These outlines helped to identify factors which contributed to an employee's perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance.

The primary goal was to write textual descriptions of the employee's perception of leadership styles by using examples from the interviews and the data that were extracted from 10 interviews. This was accomplished following the coding and analysis process described above. The software tool monitored the occurrences of data. Furthermore, the software tool assisted with making links between the data and ideas, enabling me to trace the origin of a particular idea and justify the interpretation of the ideas (Beekhyuzen et al., 2010). The themes and ideas link to the theory and give a description of an employee's perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance.

I transcribed data using a two-step coding process, open and axial coding, to breakdown, examine, and categorize the data communicated by the participants (Ostlund, Kidd, Wengstrom, & Rowa-Dewar, 2011; Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). Coding refers to the part of the analysis where labeling and categorizing of concepts as indicated by the data is conducted (Bergin, 2011). The codes are essential in order to provide meaning to the vivid information compiled during the study. The advantage of coding in this research is that it created the ability to identify each subject as described by participants and to illuminate their perspectives on each topic (Desu, 2012).

The first step in the coding process was open coding. Open coding is assigning a code or label to the words or phrases of the collected data (Wagner, Lukassen, & Mahlendorf, 2010). The second step was axial coding. Axial coding is identifying concepts, categories, or themes that are apparent in the data and making connections and relationships between the derived concepts, categories, or themes in the inductive

analysis (Wagner et al., 2010). A third-party transcription service signed a confidentiality agreement in order to transcribe the audio recordings from the interviews.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

The current research followed the constructivist perspective in addressing the overall trustworthiness of the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This approach explored meeting challenges to credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity, with special emphasis placed on credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The main focus of the interview protocol was to ensure that participants understood the bounding of the specific phenomenological experiences related to the study, and that anonymity was guarded and maintained throughout the study. There was an emphasis placed on making sure each participant felt as though trust was established during the data collection and analysis processes. Martin, Guillaume, Thomas and Epitropaki (2016) identified that building trust establishes a genuine exchange. I reviewed each consent form in order to clarify any questions regarding participation in the study and remained mindful of the interviewing protocol, presented consent forms, and followed up to confirm scheduled interviews to maintain a professional and respectful relationship with the participants to cultivate their engagement toward providing rich descriptions of their experiences.

### **Credibility**

Bracketing is an important part of analysis to ensure credibility by attempting to control researcher bias influencing the collection or analyses of the participants' descriptions of their experiences. Bracketing required me to put aside my own belief

being studied and what I already knew about the subject prior to and throughout the study. Using bracketing and reflexivity, I consistently strived to put aside my own personal knowledge, beliefs, values, and experiences in order to give an accurate description of the participants' life experiences (Chan et al., 2013).

### **Ethical Procedures**

Ethical principles are the basis of every type of research. To act unethically would negate research goals, and cause harm to the researcher and study participants. Ethical behavior on the part of the researcher is a must, which essentially means that no harm should be done to anyone, physically or emotionally. Ethical behavior while conducting the research helps build confidence among the participants, which helps enhance responsiveness. My National Institute of Health Certificate of Completion card (see Appendix C) was available for participants to view indicating that I had successfully completed the Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants." This was done to ensure that they were comfortable during the interview process, and was a prerequisite for Walden IRB approval.

The proposed study obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board of Walden University. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Every effort was made to prevent and avoid any unethical activities, such as the violation of nondisclosure agreements and betraying confidentialities. I was cognizant of any ethical dilemmas, and revised the research design, protocols, and procedures during development processes to facilitate ethical procedures. The defined roles in the proposed research also established limitations for proper and ethical behaviors. Therefore, roles were explained

using the informed consent tool. The informed consent tool contained a description of the study, risks, benefits to participants, their roles and rights, and a researcher affidavit. This information was clearly and succinctly presented to allow the participants to make informed decisions about their participation in the study.

I was open and honest at all times in order to maintain integrity in the study. No personal intentions were expressed at any time or in any form. Complete and accurate notes were kept to clearly document research activities. Furthermore, all notes contained my initials and the date of recording. Also, printed materials were labeled to show the time and place of acquisition. Access to such documents were provided to appropriate persons under the context of full disclosure as a policy in the proposed research. This process safeguarded me against any misconduct, while representing a sound scientific practice that allows the research results to be replicated.

There was a password protected electronic media storage device that safely stored transcriptions of the interviewees' audio recordings of the phone interviews. A distinct password protected electronic media storage device stored the names and email addresses of the research study participants. The retention of the original data, electronic and paper, will be kept for seven years in a locked file cabinet with disposal occurring after the seven years using a shredding process. After seven years from publication, I will shred all written documents related to the study and destroy the USB drive that contains electronic records and recordings of the study.



The documents that are saved on the computer will be maintained in a password protected file and will be completely removed from the computer hard drive utilizing a software called WipeDrive to securely erase both hardware and software.

### **Summary**

The purpose of the proposed study was to examine employee perceptions of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. The methodological aim of the study was to examine the leadership styles at various public sector organizations and to analyze their success or failure in influencing workplace performance. This chapter explained the various methods and techniques that was adopted for the dissertation, such as research design, sampling, data collection methods, instruments, data analysis, and any other procedures. A descriptive qualitative phenomenological research design was selected for this research study in order to facilitate analysis of the relationship between the selected leadership styles and how they influence an employee's workplace performance.

The proposed sampling procedure to be adopted for selecting participants for this study was purposeful sampling. The employees were selected on the basis of being current or former employees in the public sector. Primary data for the study was collected through interviews. The proposed study was approved by Walden University's IRB. In addition, informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to conducting interviews. The findings and the results of this research study was presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to explore and analyze an employee's perception of the leadership styles that influence their workplace performance. In particular, through data analysis, I attempted to identify the emerging themes and categories that identify employee perceptions. Conducting the study required using the themes and their perspective attributes that were substantiated by comments and observations from the study's participants for analyzing phenomenological data. The participants' statements are given in this chapter to illustrate their perceptions related to the leadership styles that influenced their workplace performance. Moustakas (1994) theorized that qualitative research materializes through the interpretation of data, using a bracketing method to develop statements about a participant's experience.

Chapter 4 provides a description of the participants, recruitment, research setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, data management, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and summary. There was one major research question and sub-question designed to understand how an employee's perception on how leadership styles influenced workplace performance. The central question was, "What are employee perceptions of the behaviors and perceived characteristics of the supervisors who work in local government?" The sub-question was, "How do they feel these styles influence their workplace performance?"

## **Setting**

The ASPA was the primary source for recruiting participants after permission was received from Karen Garrett, the chief of marketing and communication (see Appendix D). ASPA is the largest and most prominent professional association for public administration. ASPA is dedicated to advancing the art, science, teaching, and practice of public and nonprofit administration. In 2017, ASPA outlined on its website their four core values as accountability and performance, professionalism, ethics, and social equity. ASPA lives out these values through a variety of resources available exclusively to their members. Access to the membership of this professional organization facilitated locating participants whose lived experience aligned to the phenomenological bounds of the study.

In addition, permission was sought and received from Dr. Wanda Gwyn, Administrator of the PhD Women's and PhD Men's Network, a support group that is open to women and men who are in the process of completing their doctorate degree or who have finished the process and are moving toward new projects after the doctorate, many of whom are employed in the public sector (see Appendix D). This is a web-based social support group whose members are global.

## **Demographics**

There were 10 participants who voluntarily participated in the study. In order to conceal the participants' identities and maintain confidentiality, I assigned each participant with an alpha numeric code: L (for leadership) and a number (1–10) to correspond with the participant numerical sequence in which the interviews occurred. Table 1 provides a synopsis of the participants' demographics and a narrative description.

The participants ranged from 27 to 55 years of age and encompassed 144 years of professional experience working within public sector organizations all over the nation. Each participant was educated at various levels and brought varied perspectives to the interview regarding public sector organizations. There were two, or 20%, at the PhD level, five, or 50%, at the Masters level, and three, or 30%, at Bachelors level (see Table 1).

Table 1

*Synopsis of Participants Demographics*

Participant number	Gender	Age	Years of service	Degree	State
L1	Male	53	25	Master	Michigan
L2	Female	39	20	PhD	Illinois
L3	Female	53	15	PhD	Washington, DC
L4	Male	44	6	Bachelor	Virginia
L5	Female	39	16	Master	South Carolina
L6	Female	42	19	Master	Texas
L7	Male	27	5	Master	Alabama
L8	Male	32	3	Bachelor	Alabama
L9	Male	55	30	Bachelor	Michigan
L10	Male	31	5	Bachelor	Alabama

## **Data Collection**

### **Conduction of Interviews**

Qualitative research data collection encompasses approaches such as interviews, observations, and written documents (Petty et al., 2012). Flood (2010) stated that the best way to collect data in a qualitative study was to use a semi-structured interview process. Therefore, I concluded that semi-structured interviews permitted flexibility and control in the data collection process.

A semi-structured interview guide was implemented for data collection (see Appendix E). The interviews were completed by phone with each participant and lasted 30 to 45 minutes. I interviewed the research participants who contacted me from the flyers (see Appendix F) that I posted on the ASPA, PhD Women's, and PhD Men's Network social media sites. The primary setting in which the data were collected was by telephone in my private office. I was available to the participants who were willing to be interviewed. If required, I followed up with a 5- to 10-minute interview for clarification of responses to ensure accurate transcription and support triangulation of the interview data received from each participant. The interview sessions were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim for accuracy.

### **Protection of Interview Data**

The participants received information on the confidentiality that was involved in this research study. Each participant was provided with a consent form to participate that detailed and outlined the purpose of the research study and questions. The participants in the research study were informed that all their information would be kept confidential

and only I would have access to the data upon completion. I identified each participant with an alpha-numeric code to increase anonymity and conceal their identity.

Furthermore, each participant was informed that he or she had the opportunity to ask any questions for clarification prior to the interview.

### **Interview Process**

I obtained permission from each participant prior to recording the interview. Each participant was provided with a secure access code when dialing in, and the calls were digitally recorded. In addition, I stated that if required, a printed or electronic version of the transcript would be obtainable for review in order to ensure that responses had been recorded accurately. Prior to beginning the interview, I thanked each participant for taking time to participate in the research study and provided a succinct introduction of the research topic. The participants provided and shared examples of their lived experience throughout the interview. Throughout each phone interview that was conducted, I established rapport with each participant and verbally thanked them again for taking the time to participate in the research study. Next, I provided clarification of the research study being conducted as mentioned in the consent form, my role, the specific events for the all-inclusive interview process, and the proposed use of the data collected.

Prior to the actual start of the interview, I asked each participant if he or she had any questions or if there were any additional clarification required to address any concerns before we began the interview. There were no concerns or issues that had to be addressed by the participants before beginning the research study. The interviews began

at a time that was agreeable for both parties, started with introductions, and followed by an explanation of the intent of the study, as suggested by Carenza (2011).

Moustakas (1994) noted that in phenomenological research, it might be necessary to conduct a follow-up interview to ensure the researcher has a comprehensive understanding of the study participants' lived experience. No follow-up interviews were necessary. The process needed for participants to be a part of the study consisted of meeting the inclusionary criteria, signing the informed consent (see Appendix B), which they received prior to the start of the interview, and providing responses to the interview questions (see Appendix E) asked during the phone, semi-structured interviews.

Moustakas (1994) summarized that when conducting a phenomenological study, the researcher should compose a set of questions to use as a guide throughout the interview process. The set of questions were open-ended and allowed the participants the opportunity to provide a complete description of the meaning of the lived experience as it related to the research (Borrego, Douglas, & Amelink, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas explained that the utilization of an interview to collect data in a phenomenological study is appropriate for obtaining descriptions regarding the lived experience of the participants in the study.

Borrego et al. (2011) noted that the use of open-ended questions increases the probability of obtaining enough data to answer the research questions. Marshall and Rossman (2011) described member checking as a method to establish rigor in the research. In order to ensure member checking was completed, during the interview, I

asked each participant if my understanding of their responses to the questions was accurate and captured correctly.

Responses to the audio recorded interview questions provided the data necessary to determine the number of similar perspectives in each of the concepts measured (Bergin, 2011). The interview question responses were transcribed and were then categorized and organized with the use of NVivo 11 software (Bergin, 2011). NVivo 11 was a tool used for the organization and categorization of data that permitted analysis and coding by the researcher (Miles et al., 2014). Coding refers to the part of analysis that derives themes, categories, and concepts from the data (Suresh & Chandrashekhara, 2012).

NVivo 11 software was used to aid in the coding, and analysis provided a different means for data interpretation (Bergin, 2011). The audio recordings, name, phone number, and email addresses were kept in a password protected file on a computer owned by me. All data collected and other information, such as printed and electronic material, will be locked secured and maintained for 7 years and then destroyed in accordance with Walden University and federal policies on data collection.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Coding Process**

The interviewing of 10 participants produced a vast amount of data that were received from digital recordings, and manual notes that were taken during the interview process. The transcriptions of the 10 interview files were imported into NVivo 11 qualitative software. Each line was read and coded to nine parent nodes and 22



subcategory nodes. Additional subcategory nodes were created as coding was refined, resulting in nine parent nodes and 100 subcategories.

The coding process for qualitative research is logical and intuitive as I utilized inductive and deductive reasoning within three cyclical phases of coding. Inductive reasoning (Latin: *a posteriori*) starts with observation of parts of the whole or units and ends with generalizations (bottom up). Deductive reasoning (Latin: *a priori*) starts with generalizations and ends with parts of the whole or units (top down). Terminology is unique within qualitative methodologies for each phase of coding. Coding refers to the part of the analysis where labeling and categorizing of concepts as indicated by the data is conducted (Bergin, 2011).

### **Coding Strategy**

NVivo 11 is a qualitative data analysis software used for organizing data to assist in coding thematic categories and extracting themes that may be used to answer a research question(s) (Trotter, 2012). To conduct the analysis process NVivo 11 codes the text or other elements of the data, manipulates the data, and displays the codes (Bergin, 2011). The participants in this study provided rich and relevant details to answer the research question.

The first or initial phase of the coding strategy for this research study is defined as “open coding” or “first pass” line-by-line coding of the data to develop descriptive patterns and themes. This phase included “in vivo” coding or selection of specific words and phrases from the content for titling purposes of the various leadership styles. The second phase is defined as “axial coding” for exploration of patterns and emerging

patterns and themes as it related to leadership characteristics and behaviors discussed in this research study. In this phase, I began merging, clustering, retitling, and eliminating categories. The third phase is defined as “selective (or substantive) coding” which is the deepest level of analysis (see Table 2).

Table 2

*General Leadership Styles (7 Subcategories)*

Node	Recoded
Autocratic—authoritative	Transactional
Democratic	Transformational
Laissez-faire	Laissez-faire
Lead by example	Transformational
Ranked 8 or 9 out of 10	Undifferentiated
Transactional	Transactional
Transformational	Transformational

I interpreted and synthesized meaning of the data in order to establish an employee’s perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. The coded content was compared, new categories were created, and additional merging, clustering, and elimination of categories may have been necessary. The three phases were cyclical and repetitive throughout the data analysis until redundancy occurred. The coding in this study is a mixture of all the above.

The codes are indicators for describing meaning to the descriptive information compiled during the study (Wagner et al., 2010). This coding process is used to assist in the interpreting, consolidating of findings, and drawing of conclusions. Reading,

comparing, analyzing, and interpreting the reports are the final integral steps in this process. The benefit of coding in this research is that it allowed the capability to categorize each theme as described by participants and to illuminate their viewpoints on each topic (Miles et al., 2014).

For movement of data inductively from coded units to larger representation of categories and themes, the first phase in the coding process was open coding. The open coding assigned a code or label to the words or phrases of the collected data (Wagner et al., 2010). The second phase was axial coding. Axial coding identified concepts, categories, or themes that were obvious in the data and making links and associations between the derived concepts, categories, or themes in the inductive analysis (Wagner et al., 2010). The third phase was defined as “selective (or substantive) coding” which is the deepest level of analysis. This vital phase enabled me to deduce and synthesize meaning of the data. The complete node listing is shown below in Tables 3–9.

Node Listing for Coded Reports Total: 9 coding reports with 100 subcategories.

Table 3

*Q2. You Admire (2 Subcategories)*

Node	Recoded
Q2. You admire	<p data-bbox="873 499 1230 533">Aspects you admire (Sub 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="915 588 1256 621">Approachable—open door</li> <li data-bbox="915 632 1089 665">Build rapport</li> <li data-bbox="915 676 1268 709">Communication—feedback</li> <li data-bbox="915 720 1081 753">Motivational</li> <li data-bbox="915 764 1317 798">Professional work environment</li> <li data-bbox="915 808 1187 842">Relaxed expectations</li> <li data-bbox="915 852 1268 886">Supportive—has your back</li> <li data-bbox="915 896 1040 930">Visionary</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="873 968 1382 1001">Influence your job performance (Sub 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="915 1060 1365 1094">Commitment to job or organization</li> <li data-bbox="915 1104 1187 1138">Motivation or morale</li> <li data-bbox="915 1148 1203 1182">Tasks and assignments</li> </ul>

Table 4

*Q3. Others Admire (2 Subcategories)*

Node	Recoded
Q3. Others admire	<p data-bbox="873 499 1260 533">Aspects others admire (Sub 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="915 583 1057 617">Accessible</li> <li data-bbox="915 625 1097 659">Approachable</li> <li data-bbox="915 667 1024 701">Attitude</li> <li data-bbox="915 709 1273 743">Communication—feedback</li> <li data-bbox="915 751 1114 785">Impartial—fair</li> <li data-bbox="915 793 1081 827">Motivational</li> <li data-bbox="915 835 1081 869">Separateness</li> <li data-bbox="915 877 1268 911">Supportive—has your back</li> <li data-bbox="915 919 1162 953">Tenure—longevity</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="873 1003 1382 1037">Influence their job performance (Sub 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="915 1087 1370 1121">Commitment to job or organization</li> <li data-bbox="915 1129 1192 1163">Motivation or morale</li> <li data-bbox="915 1171 1211 1205">Tasks and assignments</li> </ul>

Table 5

*Q4. Aspects You Dislike (2 Subcategories)*

Node	Recoded
Q4. Aspects you dislike	Apathetic (Sub 1)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disorganized</li> <li>Do not have any</li> <li>Unapproachable—distant</li> <li>Incompetent</li> <li>Indecisive</li> <li>Lack of guidance and direction</li> <li>Lack of vision</li> <li>Micromanagement</li> <li>Poor communication</li> </ul>
	Influence your job performance (Sub 2)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to job or organization</li> <li>Motivation or morale</li> <li>Tasks and assignments</li> <li>Unclear</li> </ul>

Table 6

*Q5. Others Dislike (2 Subcategories)*

Node	Recoded
Q5. Others dislike	<p data-bbox="789 499 1170 535">Aspects others dislike (Sub 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="833 583 971 615">Autocratic</li> <li data-bbox="833 625 1003 657">Disorganized</li> <li data-bbox="833 667 971 699">Distrustful</li> <li data-bbox="833 709 995 741">Incompetent</li> <li data-bbox="833 751 1011 783">Inconsistency</li> <li data-bbox="833 793 1263 825">Lack of law enforcement funding</li> <li data-bbox="833 835 1076 867">Micromanagement</li> <li data-bbox="833 877 1101 909">Poor communication</li> <li data-bbox="833 919 1141 951">Poor management skills</li> <li data-bbox="833 961 1369 993">Uncommitted employees did not like him</li> </ul> <p data-bbox="789 1045 1295 1081">Influence their job performance (Sub 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="833 1129 1287 1161">Commitment to job or organization</li> <li data-bbox="833 1171 1109 1203">Motivation or morale</li> <li data-bbox="833 1213 1125 1245">Tasks and assignments</li> </ul>

Table 7

*Q6. Improvements Job Satisfaction/Workplace Performance (2 Subcategories)*

Node	Recoded
Q6. Job Satisfaction/Workplace Performance	Should have done and why (Sub 1)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness—sensitivity</li> <li>Communication</li> <li>Consistency</li> <li>Given direction</li> <li>Listened</li> <li>Overtime expectations</li> </ul>
	Why it made a difference (Sub 2)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Committee to improve processes</li> <li>Corporate diversity committee</li> <li>Financial support</li> <li>Formal education</li> <li>Leads by example</li> <li>Open communication—feedback</li> <li>Professional development</li> <li>Recognition in front of peers</li> <li>Support—has my back</li> <li>Updated equipment</li> </ul>



Table 8

*Q7. Most Beneficial—Why (8 Subcategories)*

Node	Recoded
Q7. Most Beneficial—Why	Communication—feedback Exposure—networking Lead by example Patience People skills Professional development Support—have your back Training

Table 9

*Q8. Compare Local to Other Public Sector (8 Subcategories)*

Node	Recoded
Q8. Compare Local to Other Public Sectors	Collaboration Communication In general, multiple differences Law enforcement culture Performance expectations Structure Training Visibility

## Emergent Themes

As a result of this data analysis, the first research question yielded three categories of employee perspectives regarding leadership styles that were consistent among the participants. Additionally, three sub-categories were revealed in the sub research questions.

There were three leadership styles that surfaced from this question. They were transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire styles identified by the participants.

1. How would you describe your manager's leadership style in current or past positions in local government organization?

The responses to this question predominantly aligned to the commonly reported leadership styles of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire, leadership styles identified by the participants. However, there were a few exceptions of praise and factors of communication (see Table 10).

Table 10

### *Primary Themes 1: General Leadership Styles Reported in Participant's Responses*

Leadership Style	Positive Influence	<i>n</i>
Transformational	50%	5
Transactional	40%	4
Laissez-faire	10%	1

*Note.* *n*=Node

## General Leadership Styles

L2 stated (Laissez-Faire),

The one I have now is a lot more relaxed, laissez faire leadership style. He could care less, you know what I mean. Sometimes that's good, sometimes it's not because—I mean, it's good in the sense that—okay, you know, he's not going to bother me, he's not going to call me, he doesn't care. No matter if I am doing an interview today or where I have to go. But at the same time, we need him to step in as a supervisor, you know, put his foot down and back us up on things. That's where he lacks leadership. And that's what, you know, it frustrates you to a point as an employee when you don't feel you have that backup and you don't have that support.

L5 explained (Transformational),

Well, my current—well, I'll say a previous supervisor. I have a new supervisor. I would say that his leadership role was motivated to make effective change in different programs but lacked the knowledge to be able to support the type of change that was needed out of his managers.

L7 stated (Transactional),

My previous manager believed in motivating employees through a system of rewards and punishments. He wanted us to do what he wanted, and if we did, a reward would follow. However, on the other hand, if things did not go as he wanted or desired, we would be verbally reprimanded or write us up.

2. The second interview question was as follows: What aspects of the leadership styles of managers in those current or past positions do you admire? How, if at all, did each of these factors influence your job performance related to
- facilitating your tasks and assignments?
  - your motivation or morale?
  - your commitment to your job and/or the organization?

As a result of this data analysis, the second research question yielded two categories of employee perspectives that were consistent among the participants. Question 2 represents the thematic responses related to “you admire.” The responses were in alignment with the characteristics of a transformational leader. The participants reflected more on motivation and morale, indicating that this trait would influence workplace performance. Transformational leadership is a style of leadership where the leader works with employees to identify the needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of the group. None of the respondents defined a scenario that aligned with transactional or laissez-faire leadership styles. The following table presents the frequency of references received from the participants during the interview (see Table 11).

Table 11

*Q2. You Admire*

You admire	Referenced
Theme 1: Aspects you admire	2
○ Approachable - open door	2
○ Build rapport	3
○ Communication – feedback	3
○ Motivational	6
○ Professional work environment	9
○ Relaxed expectations	10
○ Supportive - has your back	11
○ Visionary	13
Theme 2: Influences your job performance	14
○ Commitment to job or organization	13
○ Motivation or morale	15
○ Tasks and assignments	20

**Aspects You Admire**

L5 explained (motivation and morale),

So, for me, my motivation is not about the vision and goal of the leader in this instance. It's more about what is more practical and what is best for the profession. In other words, what are the best practices? What has been proven effective for the agency? That is kind of how I move forward; not necessarily lead by a leader. I'm more lead by the profession.

L7 reported (communication),

I admire being able to go speak to him about anything if I have any questions. He has an open-door policy. I enjoy that very much. I would not want to feel like I can't go ask him a question if I get confused on something. Just being able to have that type of relationship where I can go to him on anything is what I admire. L10 concluded (supportive),

I think it's more—the aspects I admire is the way that, you know, how people are treated and the respect aspect of it. Because at the same time you have to respect people in order to get it. And a lot of times what people don't understand is as a leader you have to talk to people a certain way, and the more you respect people the more people are willing to do things for you and do their job the way they're supposed to do it.

L1 summarized (communication),

I most admired my last supervisor's leadership style because he was willing to sit down and listen to feedback. He was very open to feedback on how things could be changed on the job. Before making a final decision, he would take everything into consideration, and he always welcomed feedback from his employees before making any decision on major changes. I admired that because of his willingness to take input from his subordinates before making a decision.

### **Influence Your Performance**

L1 stated (task and assignments),

Really, it helped me to grow more, it helped me to have more patience on my job. It helped me work harder to achieve my task on my particular job. I would say

that out of all of the things, it influenced me to be better. It helped me to be a better employee. I have nothing negative to say about his work style, his leadership style.

L8 stated (motivation),

Well, being around my supervisors, I see how they conduct business at work. And they know how to keep it professional. And when I see them doing that, I do the same thing as well. When I come to work I know what to expect from my supervisors, from my peers because I know my peers do things with integrity. And when they do it with integrity, they expect me to do it with integrity. Integrity is probably one of the biggest things that I have learned from working with the department here. And at any times that I have had problems, I will come to my boss and say—hey, I got a question about this case. And they will always tell me—L8, don't put anything extra. Put exactly how it happened, you know. Honesty, integrity—just, the guys are older. I don't think I know of a better role model for me, honestly. So that's what I would have to say.

3. What aspects of the leadership styles of managers in those current or past positions do you think others in the organization admired? How, if at all, do you think each of these factors influenced their job performance related to:
- their tasks and assignments?
  - their motivation or morale?
  - their commitment to their job and/or the organization?

Question 3 represents the thematic responses related to “others admire.” The responses were in alignment with the characteristics of a transformational leader. The participants reflected more on motivation and morale, indicating that this trait would influence workplace performance. Also, the participants placed an emphasis on being provided with meaningful tasks and assignments as a trait that others admire to influence their workplace performance. None of the respondents defined a scenario that aligned with transactional or laissez-faire leadership styles. The following table presents the frequency of references received from the participants during the interview (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Q3. Others Admire*

Others admire	Referenced
Theme 3: Aspects others admire	2
○ Accessible	1
○ Approachable	3
○ Attitude	3
○ Communication—feedback	5
○ Impartial—fair	6
○ Motivational	6
○ Separateness	9
○ Supportive—has your back	10
○ Tenure—longevity	12
Theme 4: Influences their job performance	13
○ Commitment to job or organization	13
○ Motivation or morale	15
○ Tasks and assignments	19



**Aspects Others Admire**

L2 stated (supportive),

Speaking about my first supervisor, what people admired about him is what I just spoke about. His strong leadership and his strong sense of defending and sticking up for his personnel. If you were right and if you did things right, he would have your back no matter what. If he had to reprimand you if you did something wrong, he would do that as well. That is one of the qualities that I really appreciated from that supervisor. If he had to reprimand you or tell you that you did something wrong, but at the same time he was always there to back you up. So that was his strongest trait as a supervisor.

L7 concluded (motivation and morale),

I felt like it influenced them a great bit because when everybody was up and having fun and having a good time at the job and still getting the job done. You have that kind of environment that you are able to cling to.

L10 stated (supportive),

I think others probably admired the way that they are treated in general. A lot of times when it comes to management positions, you know, your staff they request things—they request off days, they request certain things that help them get through the job. And when you have a good manager that is there for you and they can assist you with problems that you have or anything that you need, I think that is well respected in the workplace. Because a lot of times when people request certain things, sometimes they get yes's and sometimes they get no's. But

I think a lot of times when people can respect the fact when they can come in and work hard and also get what they need as well.

### **Influences Their Job Performance**

L7 stated (motivation and morale),

I felt like it influenced them a great bit because when everybody was up and having fun and having a good time at the job and still getting the job done. You have that kind of environment that you are able to cling to. You know, you can play a little bit but you are also going to get your work done without being jumped on for playing a little bit. I feel like those characteristics provide a great team environment and great morale.

L9 explained (supportive),

Well, that manager was a great leader. It really made everyone want to participate and it made everyone feel like an equal player. Now I must say, though, that the manager did recognize people who went beyond what was required to do the job. And, of course, other people accepted that because, like I said, his idea was first to establish rapport. And when rapport is established with the whole group, then everyone takes ownership for what he or she is doing to either promote the group or just cause issues in the group.

L1 verified (motivation and morale),

Well, myself included, and from what I could see from the other employees, we would wake up each morning eager to come to work, happy to come to work because we enjoyed the job. We enjoyed working for this manager. So, his

managerial style motivated us to come to work because we enjoyed working for him.

4. What aspects of the leadership styles of managers in those current or past positions do you particularly dislike? How, if at all, did each of these factors influence your job performance related to:

- your tasks and assignments?
- your motivation or morale?
- your commitment to your job and/or the organization?

Question 4 represents the thematic responses related to “you dislike.” The responses were in alignment with the characteristics of a Laissez-faire leadership style with the exception of micromanagement. Laissez-faire leadership, also known as delegative leadership, is a type of leadership style in which leaders are hand-off and allow the group member to make the decisions. This characteristic (micromanagement) is typically not in alignment with a laissez-faire leadership style. The characteristic of micromanagement is typically in alignment with a transactional leadership style. Transactional leadership is ideal to carry out projects that need to be done in a systematic and structured manner. However, a laissez-faire leadership style does not provide guidance and direction to the employee.

The participants’ responses revealed that a laissez-faire has an adverse impact on workplace performance. Therefore, a laissez-faire leadership style can prevent or inhibit an employee from performing successfully in the workplace due to lack of involvement and guidance from the leader. On the contrary, one participant revealed that a

transactional leadership style would have been ideal, and what was required, to put them back on track instead of struggling through the assignment. Also, a transactional leadership style will hold the employee accountable for their workplace performance. None of the participants defined a scenario that aligned with a transformational leadership style. The following table presents the frequency of references received from the participants during the interview (see Table 13).

Table 13

*Q4. You Dislike*

You dislike	Referenced
Theme 5. You dislike	2
• Aspects you dislike	2
○ Apathetic	2
○ Disorganized	3
○ Do not have any	4
○ Unapproachable—distant	6
○ Incompetent	7
○ Indecisive	8
○ Lack of guidance and direction	9
○ Lack of vision	11
○ Micromanagement	11
○ Poor communication	12
○ Unsupportive	16
Theme 6: Influences your job performance	17
○ Commitment to job or organization	15
○ Motivation or morale	14
○ Tasks and assignments	22
Theme 7: Unclear	26

**Aspects You Dislike**

L8 stated (micromanaged),

They are older. I am young. I'm coming into it. I am hot and after it. You understand what I am saying? I like to go to work. I like to do my job. There are older guys, they have been there and done that. They were saying—hey, L8, you know, slow down on things. You want to make sure you go home at the end of the night. And it's not that it is wrong for them to say that, you know. I know that they are older guys and they have done that and have experienced it.

L1 explained (communication),

I didn't like complete autonomy. Sometimes he would let us go a little bit too far before he would give us the guidance, would let us make our own mistakes.

Sometimes it was time critical. I wish he would have stepped in and just kind of put us back on track instead of letting us fight through it. Although I did like the aspect of being able to make my own decisions, sometimes I would get stuck.

And instead of going to him or instead of him coming to me or the other employees and putting us back on track, he would wait a little bit too long and just let us continue to do our task and fight through it.

L5 stated (communication),

Definitely not being a motivator as far as they do not have a vision, they cannot communicate expectations and therefore you do not know if you are meeting the target or expectation say of their manager in their chain of command.

**Influences Your Job Performance**

L6 stated (poor management skills),

Well, when you would ask for advice he would tell you one thing, and then a day or two later or a couple of hours later he would change his mind and go in a totally different direction. So, we kind of had a joke around our office that you wait three days and at the end of three days he would change his mind, and usually by the third day he was back to what he originally told you to do. You could wait about three days before you actually generated the report or wrote up anything that really needed to go out. We stayed on task as far as doing our job, but we basically waited him out. We did not jump every single time he told us to change task or the way we were doing things. We just kind of went our own way and did it and waited the three days, and by the time we provided him with our report it was back to what he originally wanted anyway.

L1 stated (motivation and morale),

Really, it helped me to grow more, it helped me to have more patience on my job. It helped me work harder to achieve my task on my particular job. I would say that out of all of the things, it influenced me to be better. It helped me to be a better employee. I have nothing negative to say about his work style, his leadership style.

L4 stated (motivation and morale),

Well, it destroyed your morale and your motivation because there is no point in trying to think outside the box if those ideas were not going to be taken. Not only

did they not take the idea or listen to your thoughts on something, but they basically, you know, kind of shut you down and, you know, were very demoralizing.

5. What aspects of the leadership styles of managers in those current or past positions do you think others in the organization particularly disliked? How, if at all, do you think each of these factors influenced their job performance related to:

- their tasks and assignments?
- their motivation or morale?
- their commitment to your job and/or the organization?

Question 5 represents the thematic responses related to “others dislike.” The responses were in alignment with the characteristics of a Laissez-faire leadership style with the exception of micromanagement. This characteristic (micromanagement) is typically not in alignment with a laissez-faire leadership style and more transactional. A laissez-faire leadership style makes few decisions, in any, and allow their employee to select appropriate workplace solutions instead of providing guidance.

The responses were related to some degree to the a priori style of leadership; however, other additional themes emerged related to interpersonal behavior, professional competence, and basic work habits. What the participants disliked were clearly more generalized than the theoretically based a priori categorizations that more closely aligned to positive dimensions of leader behavior. Several of these emergent themes were more

closely aligned with other theoretical conceptualizations of leadership styles such as skill based or bureaucratic approaches (Amanchukwu, Stanley, & Ololube, 2015).

The participants' responses revealed that a laissez-faire leadership style has an adverse impact on workplace performance. A laissez-faire leadership style leads to the lowest productivity among employees. Therefore, a laissez-faire leadership style can prevent or inhibit an employee from performing successfully in the workplace. None of the participants defined a scenario that aligned with a transformational or transactional leadership styles. Table 14 presents the frequency of references received from the participants during the interview.

Table 14

*Q5. Others Dislike*

Others dislike	Referenced
Theme 8: Aspects others dislike	2
○ Autocratic	2
○ Disorganized	3
○ Distrustful	4
○ Incompetent	5
○ Inconsistency	6
○ Lack of law enforcement funding	7
○ Micromanagement	8
○ Poor communication	9
○ Poor management skills	10
○ Uncommitted employees did not like him	11
Theme 9: Influences their job performance	12
○ Commitment to job or organization	12
○ Motivation or morale	15
○ Tasks and assignments	20



**Aspects Others Dislike**

L4 said (poor management skills and communication),

Well, nobody really admired anything about the individual because he had such a totalitarian kind of style that it was his way or no way. Because of that, people would tend to be in fear of him, so there was not anything anybody really admired. Now, I think that the people above him thought he was doing a good job or they would have stopped his behavior a long time ago.

L6 stated (poor management skills and communication),

I can tell you that he was definitely not organized at all. Even with paper calendars and electronic calendars, even us reminding him of his appointments or the timing, he just definitely never stayed on task or never came to appointments on time, always 30 plus minutes late. Just kind of gave off the scattered-brain kind of leadership from him. If you were meeting with other local, state or federal employee agencies, it made you look really bad because he was never, never on time. And, basically, all those that knew us knew his behavior and would say—okay, well, we will just get started and we will catch him up when he gets here if he even shows up because sometimes he just would blow off the meeting and we never would even know he was not coming.

L7 stated (micromanaged),

I would say pretty much we would get together and we would talk about how things could be better and how we cannot be as micromanaged I would say. I

think just giving us the freedom and trusting in us to actually get the job done is something that management should have taken into consideration.

L9 stated (commitment to job),

The only people who disliked anything about his style were those people who were not committed to the level of performance that he required of us. The level was always very high standards. And, of course, you know, because some people were lazy and did not want to give themselves a hundred plus when necessary.

### **Influences Their Job Performance**

L5 stated (commitment to job or organization),

I definitely think because this particular leader had been with the agency for so long they relied mostly on their years of experience and not or had not been required to gain additional knowledge to keep up with the profession. And because of that this leader or supervisor was not effective in modern day practices on how to implement change within the agency.

L1 stated (motivation and morale),

I think not from the subordinates but from his peers, I would say they disliked his ability to get his employees to work for him, his people skills, and his ability to motivate his employees to get the best out of them.

L6 stated (motivation and morale),

I would say that it highly affected them. Especially the newer agents who had not been on for a long time and were not comfortable enough in their own abilities and were not seeking guidance or questions or even those of us who were older

agents who needed a definite answer, yes or no, for whatever the scenario is, and just him not being able to give you that answer or could not find him to get an answer. So, a lot of times the saying that we had in our office was sort of ask for forgiveness, not permission. But we could never find him to get permission. So, I would say it definitely affected everyone that worked underneath him.

6. What are some things your manager can or may have done to improve your job satisfaction or workplace performance?

- Why would have these changes made a difference in your experience

Question 6 represents the thematic responses related to “improve your job satisfaction or workplace performance.” The responses received are in alignment with the transformational leadership style that was researched in this study. The participants revealed the characteristics, attributes, and traits are distinguishing qualities that a leader should demonstrate within the workplace. However, these traits can significantly improve any leadership style that was being researched in this study as well. The participants reflected more on the abilities of their leader to “listen” and “give direction” and were themes that emerged from the research question. None of the participants defined a scenario that aligned with a transactional or laissez-faire leadership styles. The following table presents the frequency of references received from the participants during the interview (see Table 15).

Table 15

*Q6. Improve Your Job Satisfaction or Workplace Performance*

Others dislike	Referenced
Theme 10: Should have done and why	2
○ Awareness—sensitivity	2
○ Communication	3
○ Consistency	4
○ Given direction	5
○ Listened	6
○ Overtime expectations	7
Theme 11: Was done—why made difference	8
○ Committee to improve processes	8
○ Corporate diversity committee	9
○ Financial support	10
○ Formal education	11
○ Leads by example	12
○ Open communication—feedback	13
○ Professional development	14
○ Recognition in front of peers	15
○ Support—has my back	16
○ Updated equipment	17

**Should Have Done and Why**

L7 stated (communication), “Just listened more to our concerns or problems that we may have.”

**Was Done—Why It Made a Difference**

L3 stated (motivation and morale),

Encouraged me to grow. They were very specific about returning back to school.

Because when I first started, I was on the bottom rung and wanted to go further.

So, with their assistance I was able to grow, be promoted, become a manager, and in turn help other people come up the ladder as I did.

L6 stated (communication),

I would say being present when you are talking to him and not answering a phone call, or having someone else knock on the door and answering their question, and then totally forgetting what you were there for. Actually, sitting down and thinking about what they want you to do instead of giving a knee-jerk or off-the-cuff response and then changing their mind three or four different times.

L7 stated (motivation and morale),

It would have made a difference in my experience because I would have felt a whole lot better about coming to work. It would just have my spirits up better if I knew that a different type of style or leadership was in the workplace.

7. Given your experience working specifically within local government organizations, what do you feel would be the most beneficial approaches to managerial leadership style in these organizations?

- Why do you feel the approaches would be beneficial?

Question 7 represents the thematic responses related to “most beneficial approaches to managerial leadership style.” The responses were in alignment with the characteristics of a transformational leader. Transformational leadership is where a leader works with employees to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executing the change in tandem with committed members. The participants reflected more on interpersonal skills, support, professional development, and leading by example as traits that would be imperative in facilitating a positive workplace performance. It is imperative that a leader “walk the talk” that they are conveying to employees in the workplace.

Although, there was one participant that placed an emphasis on the leader’s ability to professionally develop as well. L3 stated,

Leaders at all levels should maintain current information within their profession and they should continue to grow as leaders. In other words, do leadership training, seminars, and not just rely upon the fact that they are in management and do not require any more training.

None of the participants defined a scenario that aligned with a transactional or laissez-faire leadership style. The following table presents the frequency of references received from the participants during the interview (see Table 16).

Table 16

*Q7. Most Beneficial Approaches to Managerial Leadership Style*

Most beneficial approaches to managerial leadership style	Referenced
Theme 12: Most beneficial—Why	2
○ Communication—feedback	2
○ Exposure—networking	4
○ Lead by example	5
○ Patience	6
○ People skills	7
○ Professional development	8
○ Support—have your back	10
○ Training	11

**Most Beneficial**

L2 stated (communication),

I think the most beneficial that will help employees, as well as the organization is one like we have been talking about for a little while now—like when you delegate another employee, when you listen, when you give employees the opportunity to give an opinion. There has been a time where we have been asked, well, what do you think about this? If we did not agree with it, he would ask why? And, if you had to valid reason for it he would actually take it into consideration. So, I think that giving good participation is a good approach because employees feel included in management decisions and I think that is good.

L3 stated (professional development),

Well, I definitely—I am not sure if I am answering your question correctly, but I can say that I believe that leaders at all levels should maintain current information within their profession and they should continue to grow as leaders. In other words, do leadership training, seminars, and not just rely upon the fact that they're in management and do not require any more training.

L9 stated (training),

Well, I think that if the managers could promote a new course of innovation with the people and give people more time—let me say it differently. There were often many rush situations, everyone does not think on his or her feet as quickly as others. Well, the people who could think quickly on their feet, they would always rise to the top. I think sometimes a manager needs to make some adjustments and give people a little more time to process their thoughts. Because some people can reach great conclusions, but they just need a little more time to process their thoughts. And, of course, he could recommend that people go to a training or some kind of—I do not know, just to help people hone and improve their skills, because no one is really trying not to be effective.

8. Again, given your experience working specifically within local government organizations, how do you feel optimal approaches to managerial leadership styles in these organizations differ from other public sector organizations?

Question 8 represents the thematic responses related to “how optimal approaches to managerial leadership styles in government organizations differ from other public



sector.” The participants revealed that one major difference in the leadership style from other public sector organizations was the lack of visibility of the leader in the workplace. The absence of the leader’s presence in the workplace created a negative perception for the employee. The support and guidance were unavailable to him when needed in an effort to perform his job duties. In addition, he felt as though the leader did not care enough to show up to work then why should he care about performing his job duties. Therefore, this creates a disinterest in the employee’s commitment and has an adverse impact on the organization goals and mission. The following table presents the frequency of references received from the participants during the interview (see Table 17).

Table 17

*Q8. How Optimal Approaches to Managerial Leadership Styles in Government Organizations Differ from Other Public-Sector Organizations?*

Collaboration	References
Theme 13: Collaboration	
● Communication	2
● In general, multiple differences	3
● Law enforcement culture	4
● Performance expectations	5
● Structure	7
● Training	9
● Visibility	11
	12

### **Compare Local to Other Public Sectors**

L4 stated (communication),

I have seen other individuals that had communication and was flat across instead of being stove-piped so that no matter what one person knew, every person knew and was able to participate in the decision-making process in the direction for the organization whatever it happened to be and that is in multiple places that I have seen.

L7 stated (performance expectations),

You say how are the two different? I guess I would say, you know, different organizations do different things and we can always learn from each other. So, I think if this organization can see how another organization is doing things, and vice versa, they can possibly take what they learn from each other and implement them for a better work environment.

L10 stated (motivation and morale),

I would say the difference is the chain of command. Because in my experience, you know, your leader is sort of to you at the top, but there are other people above the leader that is present also at times. But, in my current position, you hardly ever see the people that is over your actual manager or leader. You seldom see those individuals. So, it is kind of difficult when it comes to the chain of command unless you really request to see those individuals. And, then with that as well, the people that is over your manager, they have to be willing to help out as well because—to be honest with you, it starts from the top and goes to the

bottom. And so, if the leaders at the top are not very motivating, your manager might not be motivating. And if your manager is not motivating, you will not be that motivated. You see what I am saying?

### **Performance Expectations**

L1 stated (performance expectations),

I would say local government is less pressure than other organizations. You have a task at hand where you basically know your job functions, you know what you need to do. You are given more autonomy to do your job. And other organizations, there is a bottom line aspect to it. There is more pressure on the employees. Leaders are being pressured from their leaders to get more done; wherein, local government, I think is basically doing your job efficiently.

L6 stated (organizational cultural),

I would say that every—I have worked for the state and they have the same issues as federal and so does—from my understanding, local law enforcement. I just think that every manager needs to take a different approach to each person and know that we are not all the same. I do not have the same needs, issues, and concerns as another female or as another male. So, I think that the person really needs to look at the individual person and say, okay, what does this person need for me to be able to manage them? Is it they need the one-on-one time, is it they need extra help in a certain area? Is it they are good to go you do not need to bother with them and you just, you know, leave them alone? I think that every

manager needs to know their people and figure out the best way to have that employee perform for them.

L9 stated (organizational culture),

Well, government, it appears gives the managers an opportunity to be more creative and they are just not locked into a block style of management. I think it gives them a chance to look at each person he or she supervises and determine the best approach in order to manage that person. So, you go from, you know, sometimes like, say, you got a democratic style. Well, sometimes you have to change for a personality. Because all personalities—each person brings on a different personality. So, the manager who is able to shift his approach, shift his style or tweak it just a little bit just so that all people feel that they are of value to the organization.

L5 stated (organizational structure),

From my experience, I have looked at nonprofit and our community-based like treatment providers, they do more to support training in general and leadership within their staff. That is why I asked the question is it government or is it maybe nonprofit or community-based. The difference I have noticed in government, there is not a lot of focus on developing leaders or even requiring training outside of what is mandatory. But, I have noticed in our community-based partners, whether they are government or the private sector—not law enforcement; they do more to grow their staff through innovative trainings and leadership approaches.

## **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

### **Credibility**

Credibility includes confirming that the research findings are accurate from the responses received from the participants involved in the study (Ben-Ari & Enosh, 2011). This study established credibility by implementing a member checking process that enabled me to share the data, and the understanding of the data with the participants for the purpose of ensuring trustworthiness in the research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Credibility was achieved through triangulation of the data. The use of triangulation was implemented in the data analysis process. The data were triangulated using field notes, interview transcripts, and NVivo 11 coded results into emerging themes and trends for synthesis and interpretation. This was done to decrease the likelihood of the researcher's own beliefs from negatively affecting the study and to reduce the probability of what is already known about the subject from being interjected prior to and throughout the research study.

### **Transferability**

I specifically recruited from small government and this study was bounded to public sector employees. To increase transferability, the purposeful sampling approach of ASPA employee of varying levels of experience, gender, age, supports the transferability of the findings. Protocol definitions provided within this study were intended to facilitate the degree that other researchers may be able to research and conduct more studies to investigate and explore how public employees' perceptions of leadership styles influence workplace performance. In addition, data collected was detailed, full of rich descriptions,

and thick by utilizing an open-ended questions interview technique to capture and gain in-depth perspectives, viewpoints, and experiences from the adult participants of this study. The differences in the participants that were selected achieved transferability in this research study.

### **Dependability**

Dependability was developed by the utilization of triangulation and through establishing an audit trail of the research process. The research included numerous interviews that established data triangulation. Dependability was essential in order to ensure that I was cognizant of all changes affecting the research process and clearly documented the changes (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Throughout the research process, the use of a research guide helped to establish an audit trail by tracking the process from start to finish (Ben-Ari et al., 2011 & Borrego et al., 2011).

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is the point that clarifications of interviews are indicative and accurately replicate the participants' intended messages, as opposed to researcher preconceived notion (Seidman, 2013). The participants carefully reviewed their responses and my notes in order to ensure correctness of captured data to accomplish confirmability. Member checking occurred when participants in the study reviewed collected information during the interview process. During the course of the interview process, the intended meaning of participants' responses was continuously confirmed.

Klenke (2016) conveyed that researchers must collect data until a point of data saturation is accomplished. There are two principles that guide researchers when

analyzing data saturation. First, researchers must specify the initial analysis sample. The second principle is the discontinuing criterion, which reflects the number of additional interviews resulting in no additional shared themes or new ideas in the research study. Throughout the current study, data collection and analysis continued until the stopping criterion occurred.

The use of a constant comparative method developed by Strauss and Corbin in 1998 ensures data saturation (Brannen, 2017). A continuous comparative method consists of four stages: (a) open coding for each line in the transcript, (b) detect common themes and meanings, (c) document relationships between the existing transcript and amid other transcripts for emerging themes, and (d) document the results. Brannen (2017) explained that researchers must repeatedly add phrases to code data that results in either duplication or new themes.

I interviewed a minimum of 10 participants with a discontinuing target number of five additional interviews. After interviewing 10 participants, there was no new data that emerged and additional coding was necessary, providing the ability to replicate the study. Based on the discontinuing target number, I interviewed five additional participants resulting in no additional new themes and accomplished data saturation. Upon the completion of the interview transcriptions, participants had the opportunity to receive a copy of the transcripts that were obtained from their interview. There were several requests for copies of the interview transcripts and they were sent promptly to email addresses confirmed by the participant.

## **Results of the Study**

This section will review the results of the reviews, coding, clustering, and validating themes from the interview transcripts, the composite terminology of participants was used to create a textual synthesis of an employee's perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance in public organizations. In the process of analyzing the invariant constituents, and the individual textual descriptions, structural description, individual textural-structural descriptions, and composite descriptions were applied, as reflected in the analysis from each research question. In order to ensure validity, data triangulation involved the use of interview transcripts, field journal notes, and NVivo 11 reports. The NVivo 11 created reports that incorporated the key events, influences, and major decisions of each participant in the research study. These descriptions were the basis for the following composite.

### **Research Question**

The research question asked, "What are employee perceptions of the behaviors and perceived characteristics of the supervisors that work in local government?" Several participants provided similar views regarding communication, motivation and morale, and supportive. The data analysis yielded nine categories and 22 subcategories. The major themes were communication, motivation, and morale. These themes played a significant role in identifying the perceived characteristics of the supervisors and their leadership style (Chiles, 2015).

Communication played a vital role in an employee's ability to effectively perform in the workplace. Effective leadership requires knowing how to communicate with



employees within the organization. Leaders must be able to adapt to various individuals and situations based on the group that they are communicating with at the time. An important aspect of communication is the ability to listen and hear what is being said by the employee.

L1 explained (communication),

I most admired my last supervisor's leadership style because he was willing to sit down and listen to feedback. He was very open to feedback on how things could be changed on the job. Before making a final decision, he would take everything into consideration, and he always welcomed feedback from his employees before making any decision on major changes. I admired that because of his willingness to take input from his subordinates before making a decision.

Motivation and Morale was considered the second factor of the central research question. This factor was critical to the participants because employees wanted to feel motivated to come to work and to perform effectively on their job. The employees wanted to feel appreciated on the job in order to succeed in the workplace.

L3 summarized (motivation and morale),

My supervisors encouraged me to grow. They encouraged me to take classes. They encouraged me to re-enroll in school. They encouraged me to do tasks outside my required task, and they did it all with the willingness to help me along the way.

Support was the third factor of Research Question 1. This factor was essential to employees because they wanted to feel as though they were part of the team and that they are recognized as a critical part of the work that occurred every day within the workplace.

L9 explained,

Well, that manager was a great leader. It really made everyone want to participate and it made everyone feel like an equal player. Now I must say, though, that the manager did recognize people who went beyond what was required to do the job. And, of course, other people accepted that because, like I said, his idea was first to establish rapport. And when rapport is established with the whole group, then everyone takes ownership for what he or she is doing to either promote the group or just cause issues in the group.

Sub-question 1: How do those perceived behaviors and characteristics influence workplace performance?

The sub question of Research Question 1, the participants disclosed that a leader could implement various leadership styles that would have a positive or adverse effect on workplace performance. The perceived behaviors and characteristics that influence workplace performance was the ability to effectively communicate and motivate employees. Each participant voiced levels of experience and perceptions on how different leadership styles can affect their ability to effectively perform their job. Also, I learned that a few of the participants were able to act on their own without any guidance from their leader. However, they would have preferred if their leader had communicated with

them the guidance that was required for them to effectively perform the job in the workplace.

L5 stated,

I definitely think inconsistency and the messaging of what is expected especially in their vision. I think a lot of times leaders express a vision and sometimes their actions are contrary to that. That can be very frustrating and confusing to employees when a leader cannot express or communicate their expectations or their behavior is not consistent with what their expectations are.

### **Discrepant Cases**

Irrespective of the differences in the participants' age group, years in position, and educational background, there was a high level of similarity in description of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. Any discrepant cases that occurred, are included and explained in the data analysis section. The interview data from this research study was hand coded in order to establish triangulation and identify any discrepancies

### **Summary**

The aim of the central research was to explore employee perceptions of the behaviors and perceived characteristics of supervisors who work in local government and how it influences workplace performance. This leads to the conclusions in Chapter 5, as well as the final discussion, interpretations, findings, further recommendations, and conclusions of this research study. It encompasses the rationale behind the choice of

topic, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical principles. The section concludes with a summary of key points in the chapter.

The researcher explored the lived experiences of 10 public organization employees. The central research question and sub question that guided the research study was:

Central Question: What are employee perceptions of the behaviors and perceived characteristics of the supervisors that work in local government?

Sub-question 1: How do they feel these styles influence their workplace performance?

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to obtain an understanding on an employee's perceptions of leadership styles that influence workplace performance (O'Reilly et al., 2010; U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2012). NVivo 11 software was utilized in the analysis of the interview transcripts to identify themes derived from the participants' lived experiences. Chapter 5 includes a summary and discussion of results, limitations, and implications of the study, conclusions, recommendations for further research, and a chapter summary.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this research study was to explore and analyze how an employee's perception of leadership styles influences workplace performance by using a qualitative study with a phenomenological approach. The utilization of a descriptive and phenomenological approach enabled me to acquire in-depth, robust, and rich details specific to the phenomena of employees' perceptions of leadership styles and how they affect their ability to perform in the workplace. The review of literature and analysis of the data gathered from this research study provided essential information on leadership styles that may provide material to leaders in the workplace on how to increase workplace performance within public organizations.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The purpose of conducting this qualitative phenomenological research study was to understand an employee's perception of leadership styles and how it influences their workplace performance. The findings from this research study support and indicate that each of the leadership-related characteristics and behaviors significantly contribute to an employee's perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance in their own unique way. However, there was a significant difference between the perceptions of a transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles when participants were asked to describe their manager's leadership style in current or past positions in local government organization. Based on common theoretical orientation, I found that 50% of the participants described a transformational leader, while 40% described a transactional

leader, and 10% of participants that described a laissez-faire leader within their workplace.

However, when specific questions were asked of the participants regarding what they liked or disliked about their current manager's leadership style, transactional was not as apparent as transformational or laissez-faire. Therefore, a transactional leadership style was not as widespread or conducive within their work environment. In addition, my target audience was not in an environment where a transactional leadership style was apparent or even implemented because of the nature of the work. It would have been challenging for a leader to place a competitive edge on a public service role. Therefore, a transactional leadership style is unable to be implemented or even exist in this type of workplace environment.

For example, my target audience was federal employees who worked in a governmental environment, and the aspects were different than if I had interviewed participants who worked in a sales environment where they are rewarded or punished depending on how well they performed or produced in the workplace. Moreover, they are not in an environment that incentivizes them to work on commission to make the most sales or they will be reprimanded if not or rewarded if they do, making it transactional in nature.

The literature review for this study was comprised of current and past research conducted in the areas of describing leadership, leadership theory, leadership styles, and the link between leadership styles and workplace performance. There has been a

limited amount of research conducted on the employee's perceptions and how leadership styles influence their workplace performance. The research has been conducted on employee's perceptions of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. I concluded that leadership styles can have a positive or negative influence on the level of an employee's workplace performance. However, this study target audience was comprised of employees at a local government versus private organizations. The data from a majority of the participants revealed that communications, motivation, support, ability to provide clear directions, clarity in the goal of the organization are behaviors that would improve an employee's workplace performance (see Adanri, 2016).

Inappropriate behaviors within the workplace, such as a leader being unfocused and disorganized, will create or increase dissatisfaction for employees (Antonakis & House, 2013). Participant L6 articulated, from her perception, how the negative behavior had an influence of workplace performance:

I can tell you that he was definitely not organized at all. Even with paper calendars and electronic calendars, even us reminding him of his appointments or the timing, he just definitely never stayed on task or never came to appointments on time, always 30 plus minutes late. Just kind of gave off the scattered-brain kind of leadership from him. And if you were meeting with other local, state or federal employee agencies, it made you look really bad because he was never, never on time. And, basically, all those that knew us, knew his behavior and would say okay, well, we will just get started and catch him up when he gets here, if he even

shows up. Because sometimes, he just would blow off the meeting and we never would even know he was not coming.

Despite the emerging trend on leadership styles, public organizations are still designed to operate hierarchically (Hill et al., 2012) The employees of public organizations who are at the top of the hierarchy display more leadership than those who are at the bottom. At the same time, organizational culture is recognized as a critical dimension for the understanding of leadership and its practices (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Certain organizational structures lend themselves better to some leadership styles than to others, and this is imperative for leaders to implement which one is appropriate.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were limitations that existed within this research study. I implemented robust and in-depth discussions from a sample size of 10 participants, but this does not capture the perceptions of all public sector employees. In the current research study, I only addressed the perceptions of 10 participants and explored the perceptions of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. The minimum age to participate in the study was 18 years old. The participants in this research study were between the ages of 27 and 55 and worked as public sector employees. Therefore, I was limited by the inability to interview participants between the ages of 18 and 26. Although the results were limited to participants who were between the ages of 27 and 55, it did not affect the outcome or end results of this research study. Additional participants may have contributed to the greater likelihood of emergent themes. This research study is a small snapshot into an employee's perception on how leadership styles affects workplace



performance and does not capture all employees' perceptions and are not generalizable as a result.

### **Recommendations**

The results of this qualitative phenomenological study on how an employee's perception of leadership styles influence workplace performance suggests that opportunities exist for future research in order to gain an all-inclusive understanding of the connection between leadership styles, workplace performance, and commitment to the organization or organizational effectiveness. Future research is recommended to thoroughly investigate an employee's perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance through quantitative methods. Determining if an empirical link exists between a specific leadership styles may motivate or influence workplace performance in public organizations.

The review of the literature for this study revealed that limited research has been conducted on leadership styles and the influence it has on workplace performance as it pertains to an employee's perception. The research that has been conducted in this qualitative phenomenological research study addressed an employee's perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. Use of a quantitative research method in this type of study has the potential to result in comprehensive data that may determine the cause and effect relationship between specific leadership styles implemented by leaders and the level of an employee's workplace performance (Doh & Quigley, 2014).

Glynn (2012) pointed out that previous research conducted addressed what leaders did and how they performed within an organizational environment, and not on determining which specific leadership style would have an influence on an employee's workplace performance with his or her job. Additionally, the utilization of a quantitative research method in this type of study has the potential to result in wide-ranging data that may explain the cause and effect relationship between how various leadership styles can influence workplace performance (Campbell, 2017).

Another area for further study is determining if the leadership style that is implemented by the leader toward his or her employees is a direct reflection of the behaviors he or she experiences from his or her senior leader. The implementation of a mixed method research approach may prove to be the best method for understanding this type of phenomenon since a mixed method approach is a blend that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods that allows the researcher to subjectively and objectively interpret the data (Desu, 2012). The utilization of a mixed method approach will enable the researcher to obtain the lived experiences of the study participants and examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables through the use of numerical data and statistical analysis. Moreover, this will allow the researcher to comprehend whether a leader's behavior is directly modeled in the behaviors of their subordinates (Birasnav, 2014). Early research conducted on leadership behaviors resulted in the belief that there were two types of leader behaviors. One behavior type placed emphasis on how people accomplish tasks, and the other behavior type focused on the

treatment of individuals. However, neither of the two behavior types focused on whether or not behaviors are duplicated from one leader to another (Birasnav, 2014).

Additional research will significantly add to the limited scholarly knowledge and understanding of the importance of an employee's perception and how leadership styles influence workplace performance within an organization. The ability of a leader to gain an understanding of the importance that leadership styles have on employee's perceptions within an organization may aid in creating an organizational environment that enhances communication between leaders and employees, which will increase workplace performance (Newman et al., 2011). The ability to understand the effect leadership behaviors have on employees within an organization might encourage leaders to display behaviors that encourage productivity, inspire a shared vision, and empower others to perform in a manner that helps to accomplish organizational goals (Caillier, 2014).

### **Implications for Social Change**

The findings of this dissertation have three implications for social change in the fields of finance, education, and business. First, leaders will have the benefit of significantly improving the approach used when leading each team member. The research findings increase the knowledge base of leaders in a supervisory role, showing that job satisfaction and increased workplace performance occur through either the sole use of a transformational leadership style or through a combination of leadership styles (transactional or laissez-faire), depending on what is best for the work environment.

The study findings revealed that five out of 10 participants indicated preferences for leader characteristics and behavior associated with transformational. An additional

four of the 10 participants described preferences for characteristics and behaviors that are commonly aligned to transactional leadership, and only one of the 10 indicated preference for characteristics and behaviors of a laissez-faire leadership style. Although all three of the a priori theoretical leadership categorizations were mentioned within the context of the participant preferences, most participants preferred a combination of them. The majority of the descriptions reflected a combination of the characteristics and behaviors of transformational and transactional leadership styles.

Second, a leader equipped with this knowledge can prepare to have enhanced and meaningful conversations with each employee to properly assess the best methods and leadership style to incorporate in order to increase workplace performance. Supervisors must examine the skill sets of each employee and determine the suitable leadership style to understand what is required to enhance the employee's job satisfaction and workplace performance. Moreover, it is imperative that a leader comprehends an employee's perspective on the preference of leadership style preferred based on employees' requirements (Chiles, 2015).

Third, participants felt that a leadership style that is focused on workplace performance can improve the relationship between the leader and employee within the organization. The ability for a leader to evaluate the perceptions of an employee's view on leadership styles that increases workplace performance is critical. Achieving the enhanced relationship involves improving workplace performance, reducing job dissatisfaction, and diminishing turnover rates. The enriched relationship is

advantageous because it reduces cost to the organization, improves the retention rate, and fosters an environment that begins to change the organizational culture.

### **Implications**

The primary cause of employee turnover is job dissatisfaction (Olasupo, 2011). The stated purpose in this research study was to explore how an employee's perception of leadership styles influence workplace performance within the public organization. The expectation from conducting this study was to gain an understanding of an employee's perception of leadership styles and how it influences their workplace performance. Leadership establishes the culture in any organization, and this can impact an employee's workplace performance in a positive or negative manner (Chen, Hwang, & Liu, 2012). If employees are dissatisfied with their jobs, they will seek employment elsewhere, which creates turnover issues for the organization (Lee & Jimenez, 2011). The ability to assist organizational leadership understand the significance that a particular leadership style has on an employee may lead to the development of organizational strategies that build and improve overall workplace performance for employees and reduce organizational turnover rates (Lee & Jimenez, 2011).

The ability of a leader to recognize the importance that certain styles and behaviors have on an employee within an organization may assist in enabling an environment that enhances effective communication between the employee and managers, which may improve workplace performance, increase job satisfaction, and decrease turnover rates. Additionally, comprehending the importance that leadership styles have on employees within the workplace might encourage leaders to demonstrate

behaviors that inspire a shared vision, promote efficiency, and enable others to increase workplace performance in order to achieve organizational goals.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to explore how an employee's perception of leadership styles influence workplace performance. In addition, I wanted to gain an understanding on how each of the three leadership styles (transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire) researched and discussed in the paper affected an employee's workplace performance. The data analysis revealed that leadership styles have a significant impact on an employee's workplace performance. The participants' responses confirmed theories discussed in Chapter 1 as the foundation of the current research. Specifically, the motivational, hierarchy of needs and leadership theories formed the conceptual framework of the research.

Participants' lively descriptions confirmed that: (a) transformational leaders best meet job satisfaction expectations; (b) employees prefer positive relationships with leaders; (c) leaders increase employees' workplace performance if, according to the work environment, supervisors practice a mixture of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles; and (d) leaders who encourage creativity, decision-making, and empower employees positively influence workplace performance.

The foundation has been established for other scholars to replicate the current research, explore ways to increase job satisfaction, and improve the effectiveness of leadership styles. The study included employees within various age groups, gender, years of work experience, and education. Additional researchers will have the ability to include

different aspects and parameters for determining if comparable conclusive findings are determined.

The current research study has fulfilled the purpose of addressing a gap in the literature with capturing an employee's perception of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. The data findings advance the literature on the topic of how an employee's perception of leadership styles affects workplace performance. The findings created an outline and opening for discussion among leaders on how to implement the appropriate leadership style in order to assist in improving an employee's workplace performance. The participants shared a common interest for a leader that demonstrated an interest in the employee's ability to succeed and contribute in the workplace. Also, to promote empowerment, encourage motivation, serves as or assign mentors, acknowledge the need for recognition, encourage decision-making ability, provide constructive feedback, recognize when a hands-off approach is required, and implements numerous communication methods.

The results of the current study suggest that leaders can benefit when managing employees based on the appropriate leadership style that promotes an environment that enables an employee to successfully perform in the workplace. Leaders have an opportunity to use the results from this research study to create leadership training and awareness programs. The training should focus on employee workplace performance with a link to the leadership styles and employee perceptions. As a result, an increased emphasis on the needs of helping to foster an environment that is conducive in enabling a leader to implement the appropriate leadership style in the right place and at the right

time. Therefore, ensuring that employees are able to successfully perform in the workplace.



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## Appendix A: Recruitment Letter for Study Participants

[Date]

Re: A Research Study on Employee Perceptions on Leadership Styles

Dear [Participant Name]:

My name is Carla Wren and I am currently a graduate student at Walden University pursuing a Doctoral Degree in Public Policy and Administration (PPA). I am conducting research on how leadership styles affect employee work performance titled, Employee Perceptions of Leadership Styles that Influence Workplace Performance.

I will be interviewing employees based on the following inclusionary criteria. The selected employees will be chosen on the basis of being a previous or current employee in the local government of a public organization. I believe employees who fit the criteria for this study could bring a unique perspective and understanding to this research.

During the course of this study, *I will meet* with participants *via telephone*. Individuals who meet the above criteria and are interested in participating in the study, please contact me at XXX@waldenu.edu or XXX. Participation in this study is voluntary. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carla Wren

## Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

### Informed Consent Form

Dear Participant:

Thank you for your interest in this study. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding on how an employee's perceptions of leadership styles influence workplace performance. My name is Carla Wren and I am currently a student at Walden University pursuing a Doctoral Degree in Public Policy and Public Administration (PPA), and the person conducting this research. The criteria for participation in this study are that selected employees will be chosen on the basis of being a previous or current employee in the local government of a public organization.

**If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:**

**Step 1: Introduction and Informed Consent (approx. 10-15 minutes)**

*I will meet with you via telephone to make sure you understand the study, address any questions you may have, and obtain an Informed Consent signature prior to beginning the interview process. In addition, I will present you with the interview questions that I will use to guide the interview process and a copy of your signed consent form.*

**Step 2: Participant Interview (approx. 30-45 minutes)**

*I will conduct an interview with you, using the previously presented interview questions. I will record the interview using a tape-recording device.*

**Step 3: Participant Feedback (approx. 15-30 minutes)** *Following an initial analysis of the interviews, I will clarify that all information recorded is correct.*

**Study Guidelines:**

The following information provides you with the guidelines for how I will conduct this study:

- Please note that participation in this study is voluntary. If you should choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there is no penalty. Moreover, I will not include any data collected from the interviews of anyone who withdraws from this study, in the final write-up of the study. (In the event that you, the participant, are known by me, the researcher, I ensure there will be no negative impact to the relationship between me and you, the participant, should you decline or discontinue participation in this study).

- Risks that could occur because of your participation may include the loss of up to 2 hours of your time with no direct benefit to you or the organization, other than the opportunity to be involved in the experience and anxiety when discussing questions that you may deem as difficult to address.
- Potential benefits include the opportunity for you to reflect upon your own perspectives about leadership behaviors and employee job satisfaction and the possibility of improving job satisfaction.
- Should you choose to participate, you will not be compensated in any manner or at any time during the study.
- For purposes of this study and the possibility of future publication, your name and identity will remain confidential with identification markers being used at all times. In addition, all data gathered in this study is kept in a locked file cabinet throughout the study and destroyed after seven years. I am the only person with access to this data.

### **Contact and Questions:**

Information regarding this research is filed with Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any concerns or questions about the conduct of this study, please contact the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by e-mail at [irb@waldenu.edu](mailto:irb@waldenu.edu) or phone at (621) 312-1210. IRB approval number to conduct the research is: 08-14-17-0366839.

### **Researcher's Contact Information:**

If you should need to contact me at any point during the research study, please do not hesitate to contact me via 248-320-0535 and/or [carla.wren@waldenu.edu](mailto:carla.wren@waldenu.edu).

I will provide you with a copy of this document to keep for your records

### **Statement of Consent to Participate:**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C: National Certificate of Completion



## Appendix D: Letters of Permission



1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Suite 500 • Washington, DC 20036  
Telephone: 202-393-7878 • Fax: 202-638-4952 • [www.aspanet.org](http://www.aspanet.org)

July 20, 2017

Re: Site permission letter

Dear Walden University IRB,

I have reviewed the proposed study, "*Employee Perceptions of Leadership Styles that Influence Workplace Performance*" presented by Carla Wren, a doctoral student at Walden University. I understand that the purpose of the study is to analyze the employee perceptions of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. I have granted permission for the following research activities to be conducted with members of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) via our social media networks.

Upon seeing Carla's study posted to social media channels (with @ASPANational tagged in appropriate messages), ASPA will be happy to retweet or share said messages with our audience. In so doing, Carla may then feel free to engage with any members that contact her in response to her survey.

Any research Carla performs and any engagement she has with our members will not be under the purview of ASPA as an organization and we cannot be held accountable for any of the particulars surrounding her engagement with our members.

I confirm that I have the authority to grant this permission on behalf of ASPA. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED].

Professionally,

Karen E. T. Garrett  
Chief of Marketing and Communications  
American Society for Public Administration



June 12, 2017

Re: Site permission letter

Dear Walden University IRB,

I have reviewed the proposed study, “*Employee Perceptions of Leadership Styles that Influence Workplace Performance*” presented by Carla Wren, a doctoral student at Walden University. I understand that the purpose of the study is to analyze the employee perceptions of leadership styles that influence workplace performance. I have granted permission for the following research activities to be conducted with the members of the PhD Women’s and Men’s Network.

The PhD Network is an organization that is open to both men and women independently who are in the process of completing their doctorate degree or who have finished the process and are moving toward new projects after the doctorate. “We engage in discussions about the doctoral process, methods for successfully completing doctoral programs, and support in future research projects.” This network is here to help alleviate stress during the doctoral process, provide an opportunity for networking, and providing continuous support to all of the women and men in our family of academia.

I hereby grant permission to do the following:

- Contact members of the PhD Women’s and Men’s Network to inform them about the research and asked for volunteers that fit the research criteria.
- Interview the approved sample population.
- Collect any additional supporting data that participants may be able to provide that will aid in the analysis of the data collected during the interviews.

I confirm that I have the authority to grant permission on behalf of the PhD Women’s and Men’s Network. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED].

Professionally,

Wanda P. Gwyn, PhD

CEO

## Appendix E: Qualitative Phenomenological Interview Protocol and Questions

I will post a flyer within the American Society for Public Administrators (ASPA), PhD Women's, and Men's Network to allow them to voluntarily contact me via email or phone in order to recruit research study participants in order to learn more about the study and determine if they would like to participate.

I will have a link to SurveyMonkey listed on the flyer that will take them to the screening questionnaire. After the screening questionnaire has been completed and it has been determined that they are eligible to participate, they will be able to provide me with their contact information. Once contacted, I will then review the purpose of the study and consent to participate which will be available online to submit electronically through survey monkey.

If they are eligible, SurveyMonkey will instantly inform the participant if they are, or are not eligible for the study based on the answers from the screening questionnaire. If they are eligible, they will be taken to another screen where they will be able to input their name, phone number, and email address for further participation. I will contact them within the next 24 hours to review consent to participate and to invite them to participate in the study. Once accepted and approved, I will schedule the interview or start immediately.

Consents will be obtained from participants via electronic signature. Each potential participant will be provided a link via email to electronically sign any IRB required consent forms. I will reach out to each research participant via phone, email, or text in order to arrange times convenient for them to conduct the interview.



I will utilize an audio recorder and a journal to document responses from the interview questions received from the research participants.

I will be open and honest at all times, maintaining integrity. No personal agenda will be expressed at any time or in any form. The interviews will be conducted in secured environments. Complete and accurate notes will be kept to clearly document research activities. Furthermore, all notes will contain the researcher's initials and the date of recording. Also, printed materials will be labeled to show the time and place of acquisition. Access to such documents will be provided to appropriate persons under the context of full disclosure as a policy in the proposed research. This process will safeguard the researcher against any misconduct, while representing a sound scientific practice that allows the research results to be replicated.

A password protected electronic media storage device will store transcriptions of the interviewees' audio recordings of interviews conducted via phone, skype, or FaceTime. A separate password protected electronic media storage device will store the names and email addresses of the research study participants. The retention of the original data, electronic and paper will be kept for seven years in a locked file cabinet with disposal occurring after the seven years using a shredding process. After seven years from publication, I will shred all written documents related to the study and destroy the USB drive that contains electronic records and recordings of the study.

The documents that are saved on my computer will be maintained in a password protected file and will be completely removed from the computer hard drive utilizing a software called Wipe Drive to securely erase both hardware and software.

The interview will last approximately 30 minutes. I will ask each participant throughout the interview if they are comfortable, need to take a break, and if they understand the questions being asked during the interview session.

I will thank each participant at the end of the interview and let them know that their time was greatly appreciated. Also, I will let them know that their responses will be kept confidential and destroyed after 7 years.

I will implement member checking as the process to help ensure the capture of accurate data from the study participants (Flood, 2010; Houghton et al., 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Moustakas, 1994). Also, member checking allowed me to ensure accuracy of the data by allowing the study participant to read the interpretation of the data from his or her interview to validate the accuracy of the transcript (Houghton et al., 2013).

## Interview Questions

**Interview start time:**

**Interview completion time:**

**Interviewee code number:**

First, I want to thank you again for taking the time from your busy schedule to participate in my study. I sincerely appreciate your cooperation and support for my research. As mentioned in the informed consent materials, this study seeks to understand how your experiences with the leadership styles of your present or past supervisors in local government organizations affected you and your work performance. I will be asking you to describe the specific characteristics and behaviors of these supervisors that you feel were characteristic of their style of leadership.

Also, I will ask you to describe how your experience with the characteristics and behaviors of these supervisors either facilitated or interfered with factors related to work performance, such as completing tasks, motivation, and commitment to your job and the organization. Please remember as we proceed that I would like you to focus just on your experiences with supervisors in local government organizations.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

OK, let's get started. Generally speaking, how would you describe your managers' leadership styles in your current or past positions in local government organizations?

What aspects of the leadership styles of managers in those current or past positions do you admire?

How, if at all, did each of these factors influence your job performance related to

- facilitating your tasks and assignments?
- your motivation or morale?
- your commitment to your job and/or the organization?

What aspects of the leadership styles of managers in those current or past positions do you think others in the organization admired?

How, if at all, do you think each of these factors influenced their job performance related to

- their tasks and assignments?
- their motivation or morale?
- their commitment to their job and/or the organization?

What aspects of the leadership styles of managers in those current or past positions do you particularly dislike?

How, if at all, did each of these factors influence your job performance related to

- your tasks and assignments?
- your motivation or morale?
- your commitment to your job and/or the organization?

What aspects of the leadership styles of managers in those current or past positions do you think others in the organization particularly disliked?

How, if at all, do you think each of these factors influenced their job performance related to

- their tasks and assignments?
- their motivation or morale?
- their commitment to your job and/or the organization?

What are some things your manager can or may have done to improve your job satisfaction or workplace performance?

- Why would have these changes made a difference in your experience?

Given your experience working specifically within local government organizations, what do you feel would be the most beneficial approaches to managerial leadership style in these organizations?

- Why do you feel the approaches would be beneficial?

Again, given your experience working specifically within local government organizations, how do you feel optimal approaches to managerial leadership style in these organizations differ from other public sector organizations?

Finally, is there any additional information you would like to add to this interview to address any important points we may have missed?

I would like to thank you for taking time to participate in this research study. In addition, I may reach out to you after the interview in order to ensure accuracy and clarify any additional questions that I may have regarding your responses.

## Appendix F: Invitational Flyer to Participate

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO CONDUCT  
DOCTORAL RESEARCH STUDY**



The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding on how an employee's perceptions of leadership styles influence workplace performance.

My name is Carla Wren and I am currently a student at Walden University pursuing a Doctoral Degree in Public Policy and Public Administration (PPA), and the person conducting this research. The criteria for participation in this study are that selected employees will be chosen on the basis of being a previous or current employee in the local government of a public organization.

If you are between the ages of 18-55 and have worked as a previous or current employee in the local government of a public organization, we are looking for you. The study will take place via phone for a total of 30 minutes or less.

\*\*\* Please note that participation in this study is voluntary.  
If you should choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there is no penalty.

\*\*\* Should you choose to participate, you will not be compensated in any manner or at any time during the study.

Please contact me, Carla Wren:  
[Redacted Contact Information]

With any questions regarding the study or to volunteer!