Abstract

The demands of high-stakes testing, tenure reform, and teacher accountability have dominated the landscape of education for almost two decades. The expectations placed on public schools require leadership that supports and motivates teachers to perform at extremely high levels. Public schools therefore must fill their institutions with principals who possess a leadership style that can inspire and empower teachers to tackle these demands and set a clear vision for the future of their schools. Transformational leadership is a model of leadership that has been shown to elevate and motivate followers to perform beyond organizational expectations. The purpose of this study is to examine the common transformational leadership behaviors and methods of application utilized by public school principals. This study uses quantitative and qualitative methods of research separated into two stages. In the first stage, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire-Self (MLQ) was used to survey 66 public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The results of the survey were analyzed and used to develop a cohort of 10 principals to participate in the qualitative stage of the study. In this second stage, the cohort of 10 principals participated in face-to-face semi-structured interviews in order for the researcher to further examine their behaviors and methods of application. The data from the MLQ and the interviews revealed that transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The results from this study identified specific behaviors and methods of application that align with the four domains of transformational leadership.

This study contributes to the existing research on transformational leadership and also provides current public school principals with information regarding behaviors that can be implemented to enhance their practices. Further research that builds upon the application of transformational leadership and its effect on variables such as school climate, teacher turnover, and student
achievement would reveal the influence that transformational leadership has on other aspects of school leadership.
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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Out of the varying motives of persons, out of the combat and competition between groups and between persons, out of the making of countless choices and the sharpening and steeling of purpose, arise the elevating forces of leadership and the achievement of intended change. (Burns, 1978, p. 432)

During the second term of President Obama’s Administration, the U.S. Department of Education, under the leadership of Secretary Arne Duncan, developed several federal initiatives focused primarily on the training and development of leadership behaviors of school principals (Superville, 2014). Federal programs such as the School Leadership Program and the Principal Ambassador Fellowship came forward as a result of more recent educational policy changes in many states throughout the country that were focused on teacher and principal accountability. These initiatives coincide with current research that emphasizes the importance of the principal’s role in school reform, restructuring, change, and student achievement (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013). As the demands and mandates become increasingly more rigorous for educators, it is imperative that our educational institutions have leaders who possess the ability to motivate, inspire, and support their teachers to achieve results that go beyond the expectation of the organization. Such leadership characteristics reflect the attributes and behavioral actions described in transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1990).

Transformational leadership was initially labeled by James Downton (1973) but later developed by James MacGregor Burns (1978) to describe the leadership styles and characteristics of political figures, famous wartime generals, and heads of major business organizations. The research of Bernard Bass (1985) more clearly defined the specific behavioral elements and actions of transformational leaders. Bass’s (1990) definition focused primarily on the leader’s ability through motivational and inspirational actions to advance followers’ interest
and awareness of the organization’s goals and vision. Bass’s body of research is reflected in the work of recent prominent authors such as Pink (2012) and Wiseman (2010) whose books emphasize the importance of motivation and inspiration in relation to organizational success.

Recent research has supported positive direct effects of transformational leadership practices on school climate, staff morale, teacher efficacy, and student achievement. Studies also suggest (e.g., Moolenaar, Daly, & Sleegers, 2010) that a direct and positive relationship exists between transformational leadership and an innovative school climate. Transformational leadership skills help school principals acknowledge their attitudes and behaviors in order to move their school forward (Balyer, 2012). The theory was based on a number of leadership behaviors that have been shown to increase organizational commitment in both non-school and school contexts.

Since the accountability demands placed on teachers and students continue to be increasingly more rigorous, it is necessary to provide school principals with a leadership framework to use in motivating the school community to perform at high levels. Transformational leadership provides leaders with a framework for motivating staff to perform beyond expectations by: involving staff members in solving organizational problems; considering staff members’ individual strengths and needs; and modeling ethical and moral behavior. Therefore, further investigation into the specific behaviors utilized by school principals who are considered to be transformational leaders is justified.

Statement of the Problem

After a review of relevant research, journal articles, and other publications surrounding transformational leadership, it is apparent that a deeper examination of this leadership theory and its relationship to schools is needed. Although many studies have explored the influence of this
leadership style on factors such as school climate (Moolenaar et al., 2010), job satisfaction, and student achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005), few have described the specific transformational leadership behavioral actions that are applied and exhibited by principals. Transformational leaders are perceived to be charismatic, considerate of their followers’ needs, and committed to setting a clear vision for organizational members (Braun et al., 2013). Therefore, identifying the specific behaviors and methods of application that account for these perceptions of transformational school leaders is required.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine if transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey and to identify any common methods of application and behavioral characteristics that exist among the leaders in these settings. This study may add to the body of research regarding specific methods of application for transformational leadership by school administrators. The researcher used the MLQ to survey public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The results of this quantitative survey were analyzed and used to determine the extent to which transformational leadership exists in these schools, the specific methods of application that exist, and the common behavioral actions exhibited by these school leaders. The survey results were used to identify a cohort of 10 principals to participate in a qualitative research study using face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

**Research Guiding Questions**

Three research questions guided the examination of transformational leadership in public school principals:


**Question 1** – To what extent does transformational leadership exist in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey?

**Question 2** – What are the specific methods of application and implementation used by public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey who have scored high on the MLQ?

**Question 3** – What are the common behavioral characteristics of transformational leadership among public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey who have scored high on the MLQ?

**Significance of the Study**

In this climate of ever-increasing educational change, it is imperative that school systems fill their institutions with leaders who can transform and intrinsically motivate individuals in order to advance the process of teaching and learning. Principal leadership styles are instrumental in this endeavor. The significance of this study resides in the possibility for it to provide a deeper understanding of transformational leadership practices in public school settings.

Superior leadership performance – in the form of transformational leadership – occurs when leaders broaden or elevate the interests of their employees (Bass, 1990). This study may add to the base of research by examining commonalities between specific principal behaviors and the methods of application that can be associated with transformational leadership.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

This study examines transformational leadership practices in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey; it was limited to public school principals within this region of New Jersey. Different results may have been obtained if the respondents were leaders of schools in, for example, the other counties throughout the state. This study did not include charter schools or
other schools controlled by service commissions within the county, which may further limit the
generalizability of the results.

Survey data from the MLQ were used to identify the specific transformational behavioral
actions of the participants. This study was limited to the participants’ ability to accurately self-
evaluate in an honest and unbiased manner. The study does not measure the effectiveness or
success of these actions on school variables such as climate, student achievement, or staff
member job satisfaction.

**Definitions**

**Application:** The action of putting something into operation.

**Charisma:** A compelling attractiveness or charm that can inspire devotion in others.

**Elementary School:** A school that houses a student population that ranges from grades
1-5 and often includes Kindergarten or Pre-kindergarten.

**Extra Effort:** A vigorous or determined attempt that exceeds expectation.

**High School:** A school that houses a student population that ranges from grades 9-12.

**K-8 School:** A school that houses a student population that ranges from grades
Kindergarten-8.

**Leader:** An individual who leads, manages, or commands a group or organization.

**Middle School:** A school that houses a student population that ranges from grades 6-8
and can include grade 5.

**Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire-Self (MLQ):** This 45-question tool is an
established instrument used to measure the level of transformational and transactional leadership
behaviors. It allows participants to measure how they perceive themselves with regard to
specific transformational leadership behaviors.
**Principal:** The person of highest administrative authority within a specific school.

**Public School:** A school that is supported and operated by public funds.

**Teacher Capacity:** The ability of teachers to execute, experience, or understand something related to their position as an educator.

**Transformational Leader:** Transformational leaders deepen the interests of their followers or employees by generating awareness and enthusiasm about the goals and vision of the organization. In doing so, subordinates and followers look beyond their own self-interest and focus on what is best for the group as a whole (Bass, 1990).

**Transformational Leadership:** According to Roberts (1985), transformational leadership facilitates a redefinition of people’s mission and vision, a renewal of their commitment, and the restructuring of their systems for goal accomplishment. It is a form of leadership that allows employees to transcend their self-interests in order to achieve the goals and mission of the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

**Organization of the Study**

Chapter I presented an introduction for the purpose of the study, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, research questions, limitations of the study, definitions of important terms, and herein an overview of the organization of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant research which consists of an introduction, a review of the conceptualization of transformational leadership, the Four I’s of transformational leadership, transformational leadership in schools, and the role of the principal. In Chapter 3, a description of the methodology of the study is provided. This includes: an introduction, rationale for the study, the subjects, a design overview, data sampling methods, data collections methods, data analysis methods, and a summary. Chapter 4 provides detailed analysis of data and findings. It begins
with a review of the descriptive data followed by quantitative data analysis, qualitative patterns, and it concludes with a summary. Chapter 5 presents the research summary, conclusions of the study, recommendations for further research, and implications that can inform practice.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine transformational leadership practices among principals in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Transformational leadership motivates followers to attempt improvements in their practices (Leithwood, 1992). This chapter begins by presenting an overview of the relevant literature. The chapter identifies, defines, and clarifies the origin of transformational leadership theory as well as the four elements of transformational leadership, also referred to as the Four I’s of Transformational Leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). In addition, the literature review addresses the relevant research regarding the application of transformational leadership practices specific to the field of education. Lastly, the chapter reviews the function of a principal’s leadership role as it pertains to a school’s culture, climate, and community.

Conceptualization of Transformational Leadership

Although Downton (1973) is recognized as the first to coin the term transformational leadership, the concept was clearly defined in Burns’s research on leaders and was referred to as transforming leadership. In his work, Burns (1978) explained that transformational leadership occurs when one or more individuals interact in a manner that allows leaders and subordinates to elevate one another to the highest levels of motivation and ethical behavior. The transforming leader is admired for his or her efforts and contributions towards the greater good of a team, organization, or community. Burns’s (1978) model also placed emphasis on the use of charismatic methods to attract people to a belief system and a higher set of moral values.

Bass (1985) later continued the work of Burns and utilized the term transformational as opposed to transforming. Bass’s collaborative research and work described transformational
leaders as those who encourage their followers to achieve extraordinary results while simultaneously developing their leadership practices (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Bass’s (1990) expansion of the theory identified four distinct factors that underlie transformational leadership as well as an instrument that measures those factors, the MLQ. The questionnaire measures attributes associated with transactional leadership, a leadership style based on supervision and contingent rewards (Howell & Avolio, 1993). The factors associated with transformational leadership are referred to as the Four I’s of Transformational Leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

The Four I’s of Transformational Leadership

Idealized Influence

This element of transformational leadership identifies the leader as an ethical and moral role model for followers. The leader’s actions and behaviors allow followers to identify with the leader, which results in the followers wanting to emulate their leader (Bass & Avolio, 1994). By modeling moral and ethical behavior, the leader instills a sense of pride and respect within their subordinates and the followers transform their behaviors to be more like their leader. In the earlier phases of Bass’s work, this factor, in concert with some elements of Inspirational Motivation, focused more on the charismatic traits of transformational leaders. Bass emphasized the importance of charisma as a means to influence and excite an employee with the belief that with extra effort, the employee can accomplish great things (Bass, 1990). Bass (1990) identified charisma as form of personal power or influence the leader possesses. Transformational leaders rely on their charismatic and enthusiastic attributes in order to motivate their followers to perform beyond assumptions (Gregory, Russell, & Patterson, 2004).

Inspirational Motivation
The second transformational leadership behavior, Inspirational Motivation, refers to leaders with a strong vision for the future based on a set of values and ideals (Judge & Bono, 2004). Leaders in this factor motivate and inspire their subordinates. These motivational strategies enable each follower to more clearly associate with the vision and goals of the organization. It is during this behavioral element that both the leader and follower display optimism and enthusiasm. The leader identifies a set of clear expectations, and the follower wants to meet and exceed these expectations in order to work toward a shared goal and vision. The work of Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) identifies the development of a shared vision as another important characteristic of transformational leadership as it relates to educational leadership.

**Intellectual Stimulation**

The third factor within the transformational leadership framework, Intellectual Stimulation, developed by Bass (1990), values the creativity and ingenuity of followers. Intellectual stimulation occurs when the leader encourages followers to develop new and innovative methods to solving problems. The leader validates new ways of tackling a situation and empowers followers to collaboratively develop ways to address these situations. The leader accomplishes this by refraining from judgment or criticism when mistakes are made. The leader develops a non-threatening environment and looks at mistakes or divergent thinking as an opportunity to learn and improve. According to Bass and Avolio (1994), by stimulating employees’ intellect and creativity, they become continually motivated to go above and beyond the expectations of their assignments for the good of the organization. When employees are intellectually stimulated, the leader ensures that they are more aware of the problems that exist. This type of leadership element demands that employees constantly examine problems and seek new ways to
continually improve their practices to address them. This type of behavior is referenced in Bolman and Deal’s (2008) research on the Human Resource Frame. They (Bolman & Deal, 2008) conclude that leaders and organizations that empower their employees to be active participants in the problem-solving process encourage employee autonomy, creativity, and innovation.

**Individual Consideration**

Transformational leaders exhibit Individualized Consideration when they provide their employees with opportunities and tasks to contribute to the highest levels of organizational performance. Bass (1985) discussed that individualized attention and consideration occurs when a leader gives careful thought to the differences among followers and what motivates them to perform at higher levels. Rafferty & Griffin (2006) elaborated on the work of Bass by explaining that individualized attention allows leaders to become familiar with followers, enhances communication, and improves information exchange. The leader acts as a coach and mentor to the followers and gives individualized feedback on their progress and development. The leader in this instance creates new learning opportunities and a supportive climate that is differentiated based on the needs, capabilities, and strengths of the followers. This element relies heavily on a leader’s ability to identify each follower’s individual capacity and potential, as well as willingness and ability to adapt to change. Individual differences and capabilities among followers are recognized in order to provide appropriate and challenging work. This work is then monitored and assessed, in a non-threatening and supportive fashion, to determine if additional support or coaching is needed. Under this construct, followers take responsibility for and ownership of their own professional development. If followers have developed to their
fullest potential, they can participate at high levels both from an individual and team-level perspective.

**Transformational Leadership in Schools**

The majority of research on transformational leadership behaviors in settings other than schools was a primary focus of Bass (1985). However, Kenneth Leithwood and colleagues developed a conceptualization framework of this leadership model that is geared specifically to its application and relationship to schools. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) developed a school specific model of transformational leadership that identified three broad categories and nine specific dimensions of actual practices and behaviors. The categories include Setting Directions, Developing People, and Redesigning the Organization.

**Setting Directions** refers to the process of establishing a school vision, identifying goals and priorities, and communicating an expectation of high performance. **Developing People** is the dimension that refers to Intellectual Stimulation, individualized support, and the modeling of ethical and desirable practices. Lastly, the category of Redesigning the Organization includes the dimensions of developing a collaborative school culture, fostering participation in school decisions, and creating productive community relationships. Within each dimension, specific practices and behaviors are dependent on the responses of the leader within a particular context (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). The dimensions, categories, and specific behaviors correlate to many of the educational leadership evaluation tools used to measure the performance of principals and vice principals.

The scope of Leithwood’s work (e.g., Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006; Leithwood, 2006) regards the relationship between transformational leadership and several school and teacher variables. Leithwood (2006) examined the effects of transformational school leadership on
students, teachers, and classroom practices. Using the data from a 4-year evaluation of England’s National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the study (Leithwood, 2006) found that transformational leadership had strong and direct effects on teacher motivation and work setting, and a less but significant impact on teacher capacities. The study also revealed that transformational leadership had a moderate and significant impact on the teachers’ instructional practices.

Griffith (2004) used survey data from a suburban school district in a large metropolitan area to examine the relationship of principal transformational leadership practices to staff job satisfaction, staff turnover, and school performance. The results of the study (Griffith, 2004) provided additional evidence that transformational leadership is an effective model of leadership as it pertains to the public school setting. The study (Griffith, 2004) concluded that schools in which principals were perceived as transformational leaders had high levels of staff job satisfaction, less staff turnover, and greater achievement progress.

Further studies on the application of transformational leadership practices by school leaders have focused on other characteristics of schools such as climate, capacity for needed change and restructuring, and student achievement. Sagnak (2010) utilized the Principal Leadership Style Inventory, developed by Leithwood and Jantzi in 1991, to test the relationship between transformational school leadership and ethical climate. Results of the study (Sagnak, 2010) concluded that transformational leadership styles of principals align well with attributes that comprise an ethical school climate.

Vernona (2001) focused on the outcome effects, rather than the application, of transformational leadership styles in their study of principals and High School Proficiency Test Results in New Jersey. The results of the Verona (2001) study concluded that transformational
leadership had a strong, direct relationship to the passing rates of students in the tested areas of reading, mathematics, writing, and in all sections combined in both vocational and comprehensive high schools.

Thoonen (2011) examined the relative impact that transformational leadership practices have on teacher engagement, learning, and motivation. Thoonen (2011) reported that, on average, school leader transformational leadership behaviors stimulated teacher engagement in professional learning communities and promoted higher levels of teacher self-efficacy. The findings suggest that two of the dimensions of transformational leadership—establishing a clear vision and Individualized Consideration—have a significant impact on professional learning and motivation of teachers.

Balyer (2012) studied the level of transformational leadership behaviors demonstrated by school principals on a daily basis. The findings reported on specific behaviors could be attributed to the Four I’s of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The study indicated that when principals communicate a clear vision for academic success, are attentive to teacher-related needs, and provide opportunities to solve school-related problems, the teachers’ opinions concerning their principals and their schools are positive (Balyer, 2012).

Despite much of the research supporting the positive impact that transformational leadership has on organizations and employees, there are scholars who are critical of its attributes. Tourish (2013) argued that there is a dark side to transformational leadership theory. The author (Tourish, 2013) criticized the charismatic behavior attributed to the transformational leader, claiming that charismatic personality traits promote cult-like responses by followers. Tourish (2013) wrote that charisma is not a positive attribute, but rather one that fosters frenzy and deception, and which eliminates organizational conflict by blinding employees to the
realities of their jobs. Yukl (1999) asserted that the conceptualization of transformational leadership theory overemphasizes the dyadic process. He (Yukl, 199) further contended that many of the transformational leadership behaviors are ambiguous, particularly as they relate to the factor of Intellectual Stimulation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Yukl (1999) called for more empirical evidence regarding the influence of transformational leadership on individual employees as opposed to the organization as a whole.

A review of literature and research suggests that school leadership behaviors influence environmental conditions through the attainment of common organizational goals and the application of practices that foster shared decision-making and collaboration (Leithwood & Sun, 2006). Principal leadership style is an important factor in motivating teachers (Eyal & Roth, 2011). Therefore it is important that school leaders, particularly principals, are cognizant of how their actions influence the behaviors and practices of the teachers they supervise.

**The Role of the Principal**

It is widely believed that a good principal is the key to a successful school (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2013). Any true picture of a principal’s normal workday includes managerial, operational, and leadership tasks. The principal is the one person who creates organizational conditions that allow teachers to work at their highest level. However, in order to truly move and motivate staff to achieve results beyond expectations, a principal’s focus must be on setting goals, developing the school culture, and motivating staff to advance the teaching and learning process. Marzano and colleagues (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005) identified 21 responsibilities of the school leader that have significant impact on student achievement. Among these are intellectual stimulation, motivation, monitoring, and culture, each of which can be associated with characteristics of transformational leadership. Leithwood et al. (2004) agreed
with these ideas and stated: “Leadership was second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (p. 6).

Fullan (2014) described the role of the principal as instrumental to school change that results in high student achievement. He identified three ways (Fullan, 2014) in which principals’ behaviors can lead the learning process and can promote high levels of learning. The influence of the principals’ behaviors has a powerful effect on their relationships with staff members. These relationships are vital to building trust and enacting change in schools (Fullan, 2014).

Sergiovanni (1990) wrote that principals can play key roles in channeling climate energies of staff to promote healthy school cultures. Sergiovanni (1990) attributed the principal’s leadership style to many factors associated with a healthy school climate and culture. The role is pivotal in developing staff capacity and talents that assist in supporting the moral mission and values of the school and community.

According to Walker and Slear (2011), “Strong principals contribute to the success of their schools, in large part through their instructional expertise, their management skills, and their interpersonal skills” (p. 46). Their ability to instill feelings of efficiency, confidence, and capability in their teaching staff assists in maximizing their faculty’s self-efficacy as well as teacher impact on student achievement (Walker & Slear, 2011).

The role of the principal in the 21st century has become increasingly more important. Principals must effectively demonstrate knowledge of assessments, data analysis, pedagogical practices, curriculum, staff development, and program implementation (Piltch & Quinn, 2011). The preferred leadership style of the principal must lend itself to accomplishing these tasks to advance student achievement, staff morale, motivation, and intellectual stimulation.
Conclusion

Transformational leadership is a valid theory that, when used well, allows the leader to model ethical and moral behavior. The transformational leader differentiates tasks to empower and motivate employees. Increasing the individual responsibilities of employees promotes their desire to achieve results for their positions that go beyond the expectations of the organization. The transformational leader uses charisma to form personal relationships with employees. The use of charisma greatly assists in the development of the other factors that comprise this leadership model.

The application of transformational leadership by principals has merit, particularly if it involves school restructuring, change, or elevating teacher job satisfaction and morale. The transformational leadership characteristics associated with the school-specific model developed by Leithwood (2006) can contribute to a positive school culture and climate.

Principals arguably are the most important players affecting the character and consequence of teachers and school climate (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006). The design of this study explores the application of transformational leadership practices by public school principals. The examination of transformational leadership practices from select districts provides further research in support of this leadership style’s purpose in the field of education.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods used in this study. This study examined the application of transformational leadership behaviors by public school principals. Included in this section is information regarding the research setting, the participants, the instruments, and the method of data collection.

Research Design

This study used mixed methods of research to measure the application of transformational leadership by public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey and was divided into two separate stages. In the first stage, the MLQ was administered to public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The company Mind Garden administered the survey using their own online survey platform, the Transform Hosting System. Permission to use the MLQ was granted by the company through purchasing the survey and paying the administrative hosting fees. Permission to contact the principals regarding this survey as well as, potentially, a follow-up face-to-face interview was obtained through written communication to each district’s superintendent. Signed authorization signified the district’s willingness to participate in the study and consent to contact the principals in their respective districts. The results of the survey were used to identify a group of 10 principals who engaged in face-to-face interviews. This cohort of 10 principals chosen to participate in the interview phase of the survey were those who ranked the highest as transformational leaders on the MLQ.

Once identified, the researcher conducted semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the group of 10 principals in order to further understand their application of transformational leadership. The interviews allowed the researcher to gather more detailed information regarding
the principals’ application of transformational leadership dimensions as well as the principals’ behavioral characteristics that are associated with transformational leaders.

**Sampling**

For this study, public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey were contacted. Monmouth County, New Jersey has more than 50 school districts that vary in demographic and socioeconomic status. The sampling from this county and these schools provided a range of leadership approaches and behavioral actions of school principals. The researcher obtained a list of all public school principals from the New Jersey Department of Education, alphabetized first by township and then by school. A letter requesting approval for the administration and participation in the survey was given to each Monmouth County superintendent prior to requesting participation from each principal. Upon superintendent approval, the researcher contacted each principal in writing, requesting his or her participation in this survey. Included in this correspondence was information regarding the researcher’s current occupation, dissertation topic and purpose, procedure to be used in the research, statement of confidentiality, link to the survey, directions for participation, and informed consent form.

**Instrumentation**

The MLQ is a valid and reliable instrument for measuring self-perceived behaviors of transformational leadership. This survey instrument was developed through the extensive research of Avolio and Bass (2004) and has undergone several revisions to increase the level of reliability. The 45 item survey utilizes a Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (frequently, if not always). The subcategories of the instrument are grouped as follows: IA – Idealized Influence/Attributes, IB – Idealized Influence/Behaviors, IM – Inspirational Motivation, IS – Intellectual Stimulation, and IC – Individual Consideration. These characteristics have been
emphasized and described extensively in the research of Bass and Avolio (1994) and Leithwood and Jantzi (2006).

Research in the area of transformational and school leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1990, 2006, 2008; Burns, 1978; Fullan, 2014) was used to develop the interview questions. The questions were designed using the characteristics of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass & Riggio, 2006). A pilot study was conducted to field test the interview questions. Revisions to the interview questions were based on the results of the pilot study as well as feedback and input from the participants.

**Data Collection**

Data for this study were collected through surveys returned by public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Follow-up emails and phone calls requesting participation in the study and completion of the survey took place. Further correspondence via email occurred for those principals who did not complete the survey within a 2-week time period. The company Mind Garden administered the survey using their own online survey platform, the Transform Hosting System. The survey asked principals to be identified by name and email address in order to conduct interviews with the select group of 10 later. The survey also identified the gender of each principal who agreed to participate in the study.

In the second stage of the study, the researcher sent emails and followed up with phone calls to the principals who were selected to be interviewed. Face-to-face interviews were conducted at a time that was convenient for the participants. The interview questions were designed to be open-ended and crafted to provide further insight into how each principal applies transformational leadership. A set of scripted questions were asked to each principal; however, as these interviews were semi-structured by design, follow-up questions were asked in order to
ascertain more information or to clarify a response. The responses to the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The transcripts were reviewed and revised upon completion of the transcription to ensure accuracy within the interview data.

**Confidentiality**

Participation in the study was strictly voluntary. Participants were invited to complete the survey through email notification that did not disclose recipients of the message. The researcher used the Mind Garden's Transform Survey Hosting System to administer, collect, and sort data. Mind Garden provided a login link that was sent in an email to each participant. Once the participant received the invitation and clicked on the link, the participant was instructed to create a User Login ID using the same email address used to preload the participants to the Transform administration campaign, and then create a Password (of personal choice). Responses were kept confidential. No names were included in any work product or transcripts.

The survey instrument collected identifiable information, names and emails, from the participants for the purposes of establishing a cohort of 10 principals to be interviewed. The data were stored electronically and password-protected on the researcher’s computer and on the Mind Garden Transform Hosting System (also password-protected). Interview transcriptions and audio recordings were stored under lock and key with the researcher.

Finally, to further protect the participants’ anonymity and confidentiality, the names of the school districts and the principals are not revealed in this study.

**Data Analysis**

Upon receipt of the survey data, the researcher analyzed the extent to which transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The survey data also identified the cohort of principals to be interviewed. The raw data from the
interviews were analyzed to determine if there were common themes or behavioral characteristics utilized among public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey.
Chapter 4: Analysis of Data

Introduction

As the demands placed on teachers and students become increasingly more rigorous, school districts need to fill their institutions with leaders who can stimulate intellectual curiosity, build relationships, and motivate teachers to be creative members of the school community. In doing so, leaders can inspire their staff to perform at high levels, beyond organizational expectations. Moolenaar and Sleegers (2015) wrote that transformational school leaders can be characterized by the ability to increase followers' commitment to the school’s mission and organizational goals. The purpose of this study was to examine the application of transformational leadership behaviors by public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey. There is an abundance of research attempting to connect school leadership to student achievement; however, there are limited studies on the specific methods and behaviors principals use or exhibit to influence their staff’s performance. In this study, the researcher addressed the issue by examining how principals apply transformational leadership dimensions in their respective schools. This examination attempts to provide data that may reveal common behaviors and methods of application associated with transformational leadership in public school principals.

Research Questions

The following research questions framed the focus of this study:

**Question 1** – To what extent does transformational leadership exist in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey?

**Question 2** – What are the specific methods of application and implementation used by
public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey who have scored high on the MLQ?

**Question 3** – What are the common behavioral characteristics of transformational leadership among public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey who have scored high on the MLQ?

**Quantitative Data Analysis**

In the first phase of this study, the MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1995) was used to study a sample of 66 public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The MLQ is the standard instrument for measuring a range of transformational leadership attributes (Bass & Avolio, 1995). This 45-question survey uses a 5-point Likert scale in which participants determined how frequently the statements fit their behavior as they perceived it. The scale included 0 (not at all), 1 (once in a while), 2 (sometimes), 3 (fairly often), and 4 (frequently, if not always). Data from the quantitative portion of the study (MLQ) was analyzed, reported, and used to establish a cohort of 10 principals to participate in face-to-face interviews for further qualitative analysis.

The researcher distributed 128 MLQ surveys to public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The sample represents all public elementary school, middle school, and high school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey whose district superintendents granted permission to the researcher to conduct this study. Upon completion of each survey, the researcher reviewed the information to ensure that each sample was completed in the manner specified by the questionnaire directions. The data were downloaded from the Transform Survey Host platform into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. Altogether, 66 out of 168 surveys were returned and completed correctly, a response rate of approximately 53% with a usability rate of 100% (66 out of 66 usable). Of the 66 responses, 50% were by males (33 out of 66) and 50%
were by females (33 out of 66). Figure 1 represents a graphic illustration of the types of schools in which the 66 principals served at the time of the survey. From the group of 66 principals, 37 were leaders of an elementary school, 16 were leaders of a middle school, 9 were leaders of a high school, and 4 were leaders of a K-8 school (elementary school and middle school grades).

![Figure 1](image)

Figure 1. Schools that participants lead.

Means were calculated from the scale responses to determine the level of transformational leadership of the 66 participating principals. The mean score for each question that measured transformational leadership ranged from 2.4 to 3.9. The average total transformational leadership scale score for all principals was 3.39. Specifically, 61 of the 66 (92.4%) principals had an average scale score of 3 or higher, indicating that the principals’ perceived use of transformational leadership was high (rating of 3 = fairly often). Figure 2 represents the average score for all 45 questions on the MLQ.
Figure 2. Average scored response for each question.

From the average scored response for each question, the item that yielded the highest self-rated score was, “I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions,” with an average scale score of 3.84. The item that received the lowest self-rated score was, “I avoid making decisions,” with an average score of .151.

The data were further analyzed to reveal the average scale scores of each component of transformational leadership. The components and their mean scores are listed in Figure 3.
The components of transformational leadership are often referred to as the 4I’s of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The category of Idealized Influence is broken down into two sub-categories, attributes and behaviors associated with the construct. Of the 4I’s of transformational leadership, the 66 principals self-rated the category of Inspirational Motivation as the highest, with an average scale score of 3.55. The category of Intellectual Stimulation received the lowest self-rated scale score, with an average scale score of 3.30. Figure 4 illustrates the percentage of each construct relative to the average scale score.
Further analysis of the data revealed that of the 66 principals who participated in the study, females had a higher average self-rated score, 3.50, than males, 3.29. Table 1 reveals the average scale scores for males and females for each measured component of transformational leadership.
In each of the categories of transformational leadership, females rated themselves higher than males.

The data revealed that elementary school principals had an average self-rated transformational leadership score of 3.41, middle school principals had an average self-rated score of 3.29, high school principals had an average self-rated transformational leadership score of 3.32, and K-8 principals had an average self-rated score of 3.58. Table 2 reports the average scale score for each category within transformational leadership by school group.
Table 2

*Scale Scores by Transformational Leadership Component by School Group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>K-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence (Attributes)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence (Behaviors)</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>3.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Consideration</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Quantitative Data Analysis**

The focus of this study was to determine the extent to which transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey as well as to examine the specific behaviors and methods of applications used by principals in this county. The data from the quantitative phase of this research revealed the extent to which transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey, which answers the first research question that framed the focus of the study:
**Question 1** - To what extent does transformational leadership exist in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey?

To recap, 61 of the 66 (92.4%) principals had an average scale score of 3 or higher, indicating that principals’ perceived use of transformational leadership was high (rating of 3 = fairly often). Additionally, the group of 66 principals’ average mean scores within each individual construct of transformational leadership were 3 or higher (rating of 3= fairly often). Therefore, transformational leadership does exist among public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

In the second phase of this study, the 10 principals who had the highest self-rated scores on the MLQ were selected for participation in face-to-face interviews. The data from these interviews were used to address the following research questions that framed the focus of this study:

**Question 2** – What are the specific methods of application and implementation used by public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey who have scored high on the MLQ?

**Question 3** – What are the common behavioral characteristics of transformational leadership among public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey who have scored high on the MLQ?

The cohort of 10 principals who scored the highest on the MLQ contained 4 males and 6 females and had a range of administrative experience as a school leader from 4 years to 17 years. Table 3 provides a graphic representation of participant background, gender, and school.
Table 3

Participants’ Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>K-8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N = 10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data from the interviews were organized and analyzed within the following themes: general questions, Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. The phrases that are italicized in the following qualitative analysis are direct quotes from the participants’ responses during the face-to-face interviews. The 14 interview questions that framed this research are located in Figure 5.
### Interview Questions

I. **General Questions** *(follow up questions will be used to elicit specific examples)*  
   A. Can you begin by describing your leadership style?  
   B. What characteristics of leadership are important to you and why?  
   C. Can you describe a typical faculty meeting that you conduct?  
   D. How would you describe your school culture?

II. **Questions Specific to the 4i’s of Transformational Leadership**
   
   A. **Idealized Influence** *(Idealized Behavior/Attributes)* -  
      1. In what ways do you think your leadership style influences the members of your school community? Can you provide examples? (IB)  
      2. How does your staff show that they trust and respect you? (IA)  

   B. **Inspirational Motivation** -  
      1. In what ways do you think your behavior and personality motivates staff to adopt or perhaps go beyond organizational goals?  
      2. Have you had challenges in motivating staff in your leadership role? If so, how do you overcome them?  
      3. In what ways do you develop awareness for the vision/mission of your school among the members of your school community?

   C. **Individualized Consideration** -  
      1. How do you support the strengths and talents of the members of your team?  
      2. Are there moments when you felt that your staff members are not operating to their fullest potential? If yes, how do you specifically help?  
      3. How do you help your staff grow through professional and personal challenges?

   D. **Intellectual Stimulation** -  
      1. Do you see your staff using their creative ability to solve problems that affect the school community? If so, what was an occasion/example?

*Figure 5. Face-to-face interview questions.*
Data Analysis by Interview Question Theme and Category

General Questions

Principals must understand how their behaviors and characteristics affect their staff members (Walker & Slear, 2011). Therefore, the researcher began with interview questions that immediately engaged the respondent in a self-reflective practice regarding their own leadership style, the characteristics of leadership, and school culture. When the participants were asked to describe their leadership style, 8 of the 10 participants described their leadership as collaborative. One principal described being collaborative in the following manner:

“I believe my leadership style is collaborative. I definitely need a good team to help to ensure that my vision is being portrayed.”

The principals also discussed how they involve members of their organization in the decision-making process and provided specific examples of how they involve staff in solving problems that affect their schools. The two principals who did not specifically use the word collaboration described their style as hands-on and further elaborated that they felt it is important to portray an image of learning alongside their teaching staff. One principal used the term eclectic to describe his or her leadership style. This principal went on to describe seeking input from all members of the team in order establish buy-in from all stakeholders. The transformational leader provides followers with opportunities and support to solve problems and work toward a common mission (Judge & Bono, 2004).

The theme of visibility also emerged when the cohort of 10 principals were asked to describe their leadership styles. Principals referenced visibility in the following manner:

“I make it a point to visit all classrooms each and every day in order to make connections with teachers and students.”
“Part of my leadership style is visibility and transparency. By making myself available, accessible, and visible, I believe that I am sending a positive message to staff that I value the work that they do.”

Seven of the 10 principals described how being visible and accessible to staff assists in building relationships with teachers. The principals talked specifically about visiting classrooms and engaging in dialogue with teachers about their lessons, their students, and even their personal lives. The following quotation is how one principal described this process:

“I want to show people that I enjoy what I do and that I want them to enjoy what they do.”

One of the principals described that by being visible, he or she leads by example and shows the staff members how they should interact with members of the school community.

Of all the participants, only one principal (middle school) utilized the word transformational in describing leadership style. The principal described the difference between transactional and transformational leadership, and discussed how he or she uses elements of both models for any given situation that arises.

The second question under this category asked the participants to list the characteristics of leadership that are important to them and why. Table 4 lists the characteristics described and the number of principals who referenced that characteristic in their response. Table 5 lists the characteristics described by the principals and categorizes them by the four domains of transformational leadership.
Table 4

List of Characteristics and Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Number of Principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-Minded</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedicated</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personable/Approachable (Sense of humor)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Classification of Characteristics by Domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Domain of Transformational Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honesty, Integrity, Fairness, Dedicated</td>
<td>Idealized Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic, Personable, Approachable, Clarity</td>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening, Supportive</td>
<td>Individualized Consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-Minded</td>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nine of the 10 principals mentioned the word *fairness*. Six utilized the words *enthusiastic* and *dedicated* to describe their leadership styles. They elaborated on the importance of modeling enthusiasm as a means to motivate staff. Dedication was described in terms of commitment to the school community. One principal stated the following:

“You need to be dedicated, and dedicated in the sense that no matter what is thrown at you, you are dedicated to your vision.”

A theme that emerged from the question regarding leadership characteristics was being able to listen. One principal described the importance of being a good listener:

“I think you have to be a great listener. I think you have to be a relationship builder and in order to do that you need to listen.”

“By really listening to staff, you develop a sense of how they need you.”

The principals described *listening* as a vital part of their jobs as it enabled them to provide feedback to their staff, make decisions that benefit the majority of stakeholders, and demonstrate empathy, caring, and trust toward their teachers. Additionally, listening is an important component in developing relationships with the staff. Several of the principals described *building meaningful relationships* as an integral part of highly effective leadership.

Three principals utilized the phrase *open-minded* when describing leadership characteristics that are important to them. One of them described it as follows:

“I think being open minded is a key characteristic. I work with a lot of talented people who are smart and creative. If they know that their ideas are going to be listened to and actually acted upon, then great things happen.”

Through the constructs of Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration, the transformational leader provides followers with the autonomy to solve problems or lead
initiatives within the organization (Bass, 1985). Valuing the staff members’ abilities and placing them in responsible situations illustrates the construct of Individualized Consideration.

*Clarity* and *focus* were words used to describe leadership characteristics that were important to this cohort of 10 principals. Two principals referenced clarity and focus:

“It is so important to provide clarity to your teachers so that they understand what’s important to you and what you value. You need to model this each and every day.”

“Being focused is a pretty important characteristic I think. It’s easy to let the day to day issues knock you off track, but by making an effort to focus on what matters to teachers, students, and parents, you can keep your school moving forward.”

The transformational leader provides a clear vision and sets an agenda for all members. Being focused and providing clarity reflects the characteristics of transformational leadership within the construct of Inspirational Motivation. In this category, the leader talks about the future and establishes a clear vision for the organization. Leithwood and Jantzi (2006) refer to this in their leadership model as Setting Directions. The idea of clearly setting goals and a mission for the organization can also be found within the Structural Frame of Bolman and Deal’s (2008) work.

The last theme that emerged from the question that asked the participants to describe important leadership characteristics was the leader’s ability to be *approachable*. Six of the principals talked about having a *good sense of humor* and being *personable* as important leadership traits. One principal discussed the importance of a sensor of humor by stating:

“I pride myself on having a pretty good sense of humor which I think is an important quality. It shows that you are genuine and approachable.”
These six principals connected the idea that being personable allows a leader to establish deeper relationships with staff. Three of the principals provided examples of past leaders who they served under as possessing a good sense of humor and being approachable. One of them described a previous leader as being charismatic, which can be found in earlier forms of transformational leadership models (Bass, 1990).

The third question in this category asked the principals to describe a typical faculty meeting. All of the principals stated that their faculty meetings focus on the professional development of their teachers. Seven of the 10 principals indicated that they try to take a thematic approach to building the faculty meeting schedule in order to connect ideas from month to month. The focus of this professional development varied among participants but all of the principals stated that their meetings were based on district or school initiatives. Additionally, all of the principals in this study stated that they do not utilize faculty meeting time to go over procedural items or process-oriented tasks, saying:

“"I’m not big on the information download meeting where it’s just you sit and listen to these 10 topics."

"I will not waste my teachers’ time with something that can be placed in a memo. If it is not interactive, if it is not about learning, if it is not aligned with our goals, then we don’t discuss it in a faculty meeting."

"Have you ever sat through a faculty meeting as a teacher where the principal literally stood up in front of the whole staff and listed activities that were taking place that month? I could have read it on a calendar or in a memo. It is a waste of time."

Five of the 10 principals discussed the importance of teacher recognition during faculty meeting time. One principal stated he or she begins every meeting with a strategy share
(explained by the participant as the act of a teacher sharing something that worked really well in the classroom over a certain period of time or unit of study), while another principal referenced formally recognizing staff accomplishments as means to set a positive tone for the meeting. Six of the 10 principals stated that they involve staff in the planning of faculty meetings. The principals explained that meeting topics could be created based on building-level need, personal interest of study, or as result of information that came from school improvement teams. The principals described the importance of involving staff in the planning process as a way to bond around a common vision or goal:

“By inviting them to assist in setting the agenda for our meetings, I am hoping to send a message that our focus is about learning together.”

“I don’t want them to feel like it’s happening to them, but rather, happening with them.”

The idea of involving staff in the development and planning of faculty meetings aligns with the participants’ earlier responses regarding their collaborative leadership style. Further, a transformational leader provides Intellectual Stimulation by allowing followers to become involved with the ideas, problems, and issues that affect their work environment.

The last interview question in this section asked the participants to describe their school’s culture. Multiple studies have shown that a positive school culture can lead to school improvement, shared decision making among teachers and principals, and staff member and student learning (Deal & Peterson, 2016). Each of the 10 principals who participated in the face-to-face interviews described how their school culture provides for collaboration and shared roles in the decision-making process. Six of the principals used the words family or familial to describe their school’s culture. The remaining four principals who did not refer to the word
family utilized the word *community* or *community of learners*. One principal expressed the following:

“This is a building-based familial setting. They tend to take care of each other and nobody wants to see anybody fail.”

The principals provided examples of how their staff members share resources, support their colleagues’ work and efforts, and meet on their own time as a grade level to plan and develop assessments. One elementary school principal explained that he or she encourages *parents to play a role* in developing a *family type of feel* to the school culture. The principal encourages parents to participate in any way they can and often allows them to bring their younger siblings to school if it allows the parents to become more actively involved in their children’s education. Four of the principals within this group used the word *ownership* to describe how their teachers feel about the culture of their schools.

Three of the principals described their culture as *positive and thriving*. These principals provided examples of how their schools’ character education programs and school-wide positive behavior models *bolster positive interactions between students*. One principal identified that the culture of the school was student-centered and the beliefs and norms of the school are a reflection of the community’s *common understanding of the morals and values that we want kids to possess*. The principals who utilized these terms also stated that their teachers and students demonstrated *teamwork or working together* as an integral part of their schools’ culture. These principals described how they were emotionally and academically engaged in learning, and one specifically stated the following:
“School culture is so important. In this era of education where accountability and test scores are unfortunately the primary topic of conversation, it's important to make sure that my school is a place that kids love coming to.”

Transformational leadership indirectly emphasizes the importance of organizational culture by focusing on the elements of motivation, purpose, and norms through the behavior of the leader. The principals who participated in face-to-face interviews focused on these themes by using the following terms: values, morals, community, and ownership.

The principals’ responses from the general questions posed by the researcher supported behaviors aligned with transformational leadership. When asked to describe their leadership styles and important characteristics of leadership, the themes of collaboration and shared decision-making emerged. Being visible and listening actively were behaviors that were important to this cohort of 10 principals, demonstrating a willingness to meaningfully engage with staff. They applied these transformational leadership behaviors in their daily practices by making staff a part of the decision-making process, visiting classrooms and asking them about their work and personal lives, and modeling behavior they expect from their staff. Building relationships and being positive about the future is aligned with the constructs of Inspirational Motivation and Idealized Influence within the framework of transformational leadership. The principals also referenced transformational leadership principles when they described their faculty meetings and school culture. By focusing their meetings on the professional development of staff, allowing staff members to set the agenda and work on issues that affect their schools, and providing a supportive climate that creates a positive school culture, these principals are applying the elements of Individualized Consideration and Intellectual Stimulation.
The information shared in this section provides evidence that supports the second and third research questions that framed this study. The next section of this chapter continues to explore these questions and reveals how the participants responded to questions that pertain specifically to the first domain of transformational leadership, Idealized Influence.

**Idealized Influence Questions**

The face-to-face interview question responses within this section of data analysis pertain to the first dimension of transformational leadership, Idealized Influence. “Idealized influence is the charismatic element of transformational leadership in which leaders become role models who are admired, respected, and emulated by followers” (Stone et al., 2004, p. 350). The first question posed by the researcher asked participants to self-evaluate how their leadership styles and behaviors influence the members of their school community. Eight of the 10 principals used the phrase *I lead by example* in their response to this question. The two principals who did not use this phrase claimed that they *practice what they preach*. Two principals elaborated on how they apply the idea of leading by example:

“I try to model the behavior that I expect from all members of our school. I think it is important that I set the example.”

“The most important thing I try to be conscious of is how my actions are perceived. I make it a point to align my behavior with the values and morals of our school.”

Three principals provided examples of how they model ethical behavior. One of them explained that, regardless of the situation or decision that needs to be made, they always try to be fair and consistent. One principal used the word *integrity* in their explanation. Four principals cited *being dependable* as an important way to influence members of the school community.
Six of the principals described the importance of talking optimistically about the school vision, yearly initiatives, or philosophy toward teaching and learning. They stated that they do this in order to inform their stakeholders of the great things that are happening in their schools. These six principals further described that, through their interactions and conversations with members of their communities, they stress values and beliefs they believe to be important.

Another theme that emerged from the responses to this question was that the principals wanted to demonstrate passion and commitment to student learning and growth through their own actions. According to Bass (1997), leaders exhibit Idealized Influence when they act with conviction, take a stand on issues of morality, and emphasize the importance of ethics in decision-making. Nine of the 10 principals stated their decisions and behaviors always have student learning in mind, and two mentioned it accordingly:

“My staff knows that if it is not good for kids then I am not interested. They understand that every decision that I make has the best interest of students in mind and that I expect the same from them.”

“I try to live by this mantra... students first! No exceptions. The teachers and parents understand this philosophy.”

Through their moral and ethical actions, transformational leaders become admired by their followers.

The second question in this section asked the participants to identify how their staff demonstrates trust and respect towards them. In this instance, 8 of the 10 principals communicated that their teachers demonstrate respect by confiding in them and asking for advice and guidance on problems that affect them both professionally and personally. A theme that emerged from this group’s responses was that they have established and are
shown trust by their staff because they give it in return. Two principals were quoted as stating:

“\textit{You have to let them know that you trust them first, in order to be trusted.}”

“\textit{Earning trust requires giving trust. It is a two way street. I firmly believe that my staff trusts my decisions because I trust theirs.}”

These 8 of 10 principals further elaborated that they gain trust by being fair and consistent with their staff members. Additionally, all 10 principals in response to this question used the word \textit{consistency}.

The data also revealed that this cohort of 10 principals believed that their staff members demonstrate trust and respect by their willingness to support, participate, or volunteer beyond the expectations of their job assignments. Most of the principals, 7 out of 10, referenced this in relationship to the contractual language of their teachers’ union contract. One principal stated:

“\textit{I know they respect me through their actions. For example, if I have a need such as being short-handed for dismissal duty. I will ask for anyone who may have a couple of extra minutes outside of their contractual obligations to stay and help supervise students, as it would be greatly appreciated. I will have three times as many people as I would normally need. I think that demonstrates respect and commitment to me as leader.}”

Other principals provided similar examples of staff assisting or leading initiatives at the request of the principal as evidence of trust or respect.

The researcher found this question to be the most difficult for the principals to answer and provide specific illustrations. Besides assisting with tasks outside their job
descriptions and asking for guidance on personal or professional matters, this question yielded the least amount of examples of how their behaviors and methods of application influence their followers.

Idealized Influence establishes the transformational leader as a role model. In this domain of transformational leadership, the leader models moral and ethical behavior, creates trust and confidence in employees, and articulates a clear vision of the future of the organization. The data in this section revealed that this cohort of 10 principals model behaviors that they expect from their staff. Additionally, they place great importance on being positive and enthusiastic about their visions for their respective schools in order to keep all stakeholders informed. The participants’ responses also revealed that they engage with their staff in order to earn their respect and trust. Engagement in this instance comes in the form of face-to-face discussions of both a personal and professional nature between the principals and their staff members. They provided examples of how staff demonstrates their trust. According to this cohort of 10, the staff members’ willingness to go above and beyond the expectations of their positions provided an example of how their staff respects them. The data in this section continues to provide evidence for the second and third research questions that framed this study. The next section of this chapter provides data on the next domain of transformational leadership, Inspirational Motivation.

**Inspirational Motivation Questions**

Transformational leaders strive to motivate their followers to achieve organizational goals. The face-to-face interview questions in this section of data analysis pertain to the transformational leadership domain of Inspirational Motivation. The first
question in this domain asked the principals to think about ways in which their behavior or personality traits motivate their staff to perform at the highest levels and beyond expectations. The principals stated that they motivate their staff through speeches and conversations. The data revealed that 8 of the 10 principals believed that outlook and attitude play key roles in framing positive thoughts in their teachers. Six of the principals used the words positive attitude or positive while the remaining four used the word upbeat to describe how their personality assists in motivating staff. Portraying enthusiasm was also a theme that emerged from the principals’ responses. Two principals described this by stating:

“I am constantly trying to frame their thoughts by always looking at the positive or speaking about the great things that will happen.”

“You need to be upbeat in the delivery of your message. I try to portray an enthusiastic tone. I think it helps them persevere when things become difficult.”

Four of the principals utilized the words optimism or optimistic when describing how their personality motivates their staff to perform at higher levels. Three of the four provided specific methods of application for being optimistic, as stated below:

“I try to tell optimistic stories of success whenever I can. Whether it’s a personal achievement of one of my staff members or students, recognition for our school, or something I noticed throughout the week. I want to make sure that I am constantly showing optimism especially when it relates to an initiative or goal we have for that year.”

“I find that sharing the positive helps motivate them to stay optimistic about the work that needs to be done.”
“I think that I highlight positive outcomes whenever I get a chance. I think it is a good motivator and keeps people positive and enthusiastic.”

Another theme that emerged from the data in response to the question on motivating staff was the idea of teamwork. Five of the 10 principals stated that they feel that teamwork or collaboration provided motivation to solve problems that affect the school. Of these five, three of them specifically used the word teamwork while two of these five used the word collaborate. One principal illustrated how they utilized teamwork to motivate staff in the following manner:

“I think having staff work in teams and getting them to collaborate on issues within our school is another way that I attempt to motivate them. As a teacher, they are often working in isolation. Working as part of a team I think gets them excited about the work.”

These five principals talked specifically about how they empower their staff members to work on committees that address curriculum needs, school climate, technology initiatives, and other projects that are aligned with their schools’ visions or objectives for that particular year.

Further, in response to the question on staff motivation, principals stated that they motivate their staff through speeches and conversations. Providing feedback and support to challenge their staff members’ thinking was another underlying theme that developed from the participants’ responses. One principal summarized this idea in the following manner:

“I wouldn’t say that I am constantly giving pats on the back in order to motivate. I believe that my actions go much deeper than that. I listen, challenge, and
provide feedback in order to stretch their thinking. I think this serves as a great form of motivation.”

The transformational leader motivates staff by creating enthusiasm around difficult challenges that affect the organization (Bass & Riggio, 2006). By talking optimistically about the future, these principals express confidence that goals will be accomplished. One principal stated that he or she uses quotes, motivational videos, or other media that are aligned to their school’s mission or goals to motivate the staff. Two principals stated that they use media to influence their staff in a positive manner.

The next interview question under the domain of Inspirational Motivation asked the principals to describe challenges they may have had in motivating staff. All of the principals were able to provide examples of challenges they have encountered in motivating their staff members as well as the methods they used to help staff move forward. First, all of the principals cited setting meaningful goals as a way to assist staff toward overcoming motivational obstacles. Three principals used the words buy-in to explain how they motivate staff to align with the school’s vision. Seven of the 10 said they use a collaborative approach to assist with reluctant or less motivated staff members. Two principals elaborated by stating:

“I try to buddy them up with someone who is really motivated. When they are with a team or person who is motivated, it’s a lot harder for them to not be on board.”

“When I sense that certain staff members are disinterested or less motivated, for whatever reason, I make sure that I place them on a team of my best, most motivated teachers. This way, they are witness to a group of teachers who are
excited about what they do and want to emulate this enthusiasm toward their own work.”

Five of the 10 principals interviewed talked about the importance of clearly communicating expectations to staff to avoid confusion and lack of motivation towards the work that needs to be done. Eight of the 10 principals stated they try to remove the obstacles that may lead to a lack of teacher motivation. Two of the principals were quoted as saying the following:

“If they are having challenges at work and it is something that I can take off their plate so they can begin focusing on what’s important, then that’s what I need to do as a leader.”

“The climate in education can be defeating at times. I continue to be positive, project costiveness, and try and remove those distractors that are affecting my teachers.”

Six of the 10 principals stated that they believe that the challenges they faced in motivating staff have to do with teacher resistance to change. The data revealed that when these six are confronted with disengaged staff, they clearly define their teachers’ roles in the school, on a team, or as part of a larger project or initiative. One principal stated the following:

“Sometimes they are resistant to change simply because they don’t know what is expected. It is that fear of the unknown. In this case, I make it clear what we expect, how we are going to accomplish it together, and that it is going to be great when we reach the finish line.”
Another principal described how they respond to conflicts with staff members who are reluctant to change by stating:

“Relentless and non-judgmental optimism is how I approach staff that are less motivated to adopt change in their teaching philosophy. I want to help shift their mindset so that they become comfortable with trying new things and new ideas. I also don’t want to penalize them for failure. This way, I remove their excuses for wanting to change.”

These principals also reinforced the idea of enthusiasm as a means to motivate staff members who appear to be reluctant to move forward. Additionally, the data revealed that when these principals encounter challenges in motivating staff, they revisit and reflect on what it was once like to be a teacher. The theme of empathy and understanding emerged from the responses of this cohort of 10 principals. One principal explained it accordingly:

“I remind them that I too was a teacher and let them know that I understand how difficult their job is at times.”

The final interview question under the domain of Inspirational Motivation asked the participants how they develop awareness of their vision or mission for their schools among the members of their communities. All of the principals cited procedural methods such as newsletters, tweets, and website content. Seven of the 10 principals referenced their annual Back to School Night presentations as a way to communicate their goals or initiatives for the upcoming school year. Of the seven, five of them used the word enthusiastic or enthusiasm to describe how they behave while they are presenting mission or vision to the community. Four of the principals stressed the importance of being
concise and succinct in their vision so that it provides clarity to teachers, students, and parents. Further, all of the principals stated that their meetings (e.g., individual, team, department, school, faculty) focus or address that year’s goal or goals for their respective schools. Five of the 10 principals within this cohort spoke about the importance of always revisiting their schools’ mission statements. One of principals stated the following:

“Often, I refer to the mission statement of our school. It talks about life-long learning, student achievement, and community. I constantly remind our staff and parents about this. I think it makes a difference.”

Inspirational Motivation is the domain of transformational leadership that strives to elevate followers from lower to higher levels of achievement. Transformational leaders counter their followers’ resistance to change by talking optimistically about the future, setting a clear agenda for their organizations, and demonstrating a commitment to high expectations (Balyer, 2012). The participants’ responses to the questions in this domain aligned with the framework for transformational leadership and provided data for the second and third research questions of this study. The 10 principals in this cohort spoke enthusiastically about their schools’ accomplishments and future. Additionally, they utilize teamwork as a means to motivate staff to set meaningful goals for their schools. They overcome challenges to disengaged and less motivated staff by being optimistic, providing feedback and clearly establishing the teachers’ role in the process of goal attainment. Lastly, they communicate a clear and concise vision often and through various methods, both written and verbal.
The next section of this chapter addresses the data pertaining to the next domain of transformational leadership, Individualized Consideration.

**Individualized Consideration Questions**

The transformational leader supports the development of followers through coaching and mentoring. The face-to-face interview questions in this section of data analysis address the next element of the transformational leadership model, Individualized Consideration, which establishes the leader’s awareness or recognition that each individual who contributes to the organization has a unique set of needs and skills.

The first question in this section asked the principals to describe how they support the strengths and talents of the members of their schools. Five of the 10 principals within this cohort responded by saying they *listen* or used the word *listening* when identifying the needs of the individuals. These five expressed that by actively listening, they are able to determine the unique set of skills that each individual possesses and find how they can help individuals achieve greater success toward their goals or school-based projects. Eight of the 10 principals described how both formal and informal *observations* of teachers assist them in identifying the strengths and areas of growth for each teacher within their school. They stressed the importance of listening during pre-conferences and post-conferences and providing quality *feedback and recommendations*, both written and verbal, as a means to provide support. The principals explained that by listening, they are able to more clearly recognize the individual needs of their teachers. Six of the 10 principals advocated for the use of collegial observations as a method of supporting the strengths and talents of staff members. One principal cited this process by stating:
“I look for the talents and strengths of each of my staff members. They are all unique and have a different set of skills. If I observe that a teacher may need support in a certain method of teaching, I ask them if they would like to go and observe one of their colleagues delivering such a lesson. For me, this establishes a great professional culture of learning and growing and at the same time provides individual teachers with personalized professional development. Additionally, it acknowledges the great talents of specific teachers.”

Further, the 10 principals in this group emphasized the importance of individual strong teachers in making their school a better place for learning and growing. Six of the 10 principals in this cohort spoke about how they strategically utilize the strengths of individual staff members in order to move forward an initiative, provide professional development to other staff members, and encourage teachers to take risks in their teaching. Two principals utilized professional sporting analogies to describe this process:

“I think a lot about professional sports and coaches when it comes to player, or in this case, teacher development. Many successful coaches take the talent that is placed in front of them and figure what system will work in order to win. I think it is the same in education.”

“You are not going to put your best defensive player as the quarterback of your team, are you? No, instead, you are going to use that defensive player where they are best suited, on defense, coaching and mentoring the other members of that squad so they learn, grow, and become the best they can be.”

According to Givens (2008), “Transformational leadership theory has repeatedly stressed followers’ progress in the direction of independence and empowerment over
robotically following a leader” (p. 11). The principals in this cohort stated they support the strengths and talents of their individual teachers by having them learn or research independently. Nine of the 10 principals said that they provide literature to staff members in order to support their growth. Six of the 10 principals mentioned that they allocate funds and support their staff members’ attendance at workshops, conferences, or other trainings.

According to Bass and Avolio (1994), leaders that apply Individualized Consideration delegate responsibilities and tasks as a method for facilitating professional growth. As such, followers do not feel as if they are being checked on or monitored constantly. The qualitative data in response to the question revealed that many of the tasks and application methods were delegated by each of the principals. Delegated tasks (attendance at workshops, collegial observations, research, etc.) were monitored by each of the principals in order to identify if further support was needed.

The next question asked the participants how they respond when they feel that their staff members are not operating to their fullest potential. The intent of this question was to reveal further methods of support and coaching they may not have been touched upon in the previous question. Several of the principals stressed the importance of praise and encouragement as means to support their teachers when they are struggling or not performing to best of their perceived ability. Six of the principals referenced that they use personal notes, emails, or social media, specifically Twitter, to provide praise for accomplishments or to encourage their staff members to keep up the good work, as one principal was quoted as saying. The majority of the principals, 7 out of 10, also identified the need to show genuine compassion or used the word genuine in their
response of how they encourage staff to perform to their fullest potential. Additionally, three of the principals referenced that their ability to make meaningful and lasting interpersonal relationships with their teachers is a method that allows them to have crucial and heartfelt conversations about their staff member’s performance. One principal referenced this by stating:

“I think it all goes back to relationships with people. If you have genuine and meaningful relationships with your teachers, then they will be more open to feedback, criticism, and straight talk. This helps me support them and it helps them get better.”

Although it was not the intent of this question, many of the principals spoke about the need to sometimes provide a verbal or written reprimand and, in severe cases, dismiss staff when they feel that they are not operating to the fullest potential. Four of the principals referenced the need to perform such actions after they have exhausted all methods of support, coaching, and mentoring and the teacher has been unsuccessful in his or her response.

The third question within the category of Individualized Consideration asked the participants to explain how they help their staff grow through professional and personal challenges. Two themes emerged from the data associated with this question. The first was the idea of being empathetic to the issues that are going on in the lives of their teachers. Five of the principals utilized the word empathy or empathetic in their response to this question. Six of the principals identified that they have provided either moral or emotional support when their teachers are facing challenges. All 10 principals provided examples of when they have either provided counsel or simply listened to a staff member.
during a time of need. Most of these conversations included issues that dealt with an illness in a staff member’s family. These descriptions provide an understanding of how well these principals know their staff members, both professionally and personally.

The second theme that emerged from the final question within this category was honest communication. Six of the 10 principals described how speaking honestly with their teachers allows them to more easily support their teachers’ needs and overcome challenges they may be facing. The principals in this cohort also stated that honest and open communication allows them to more easily analyze the needs of their teachers and reveals the specific things that motivate teachers to perform. One principal explained it in the following manner:

“I’m always listening and using information from my staff to better serve them and our school. When they are struggling, I try to think about what will motivate them to persevere through this challenge. I use this in order to boost their confidence and help them grow.”

Avolio and Bass (1995) stated that a “leader displays more frequent individualized consideration by showing general support for the efforts of followers” (p. 202). The responses to the face-to-face interview questions in the category of Individualized Consideration provided evidence that this cohort of 10 principals exhibits behaviors and applies strategies to coach, mentor, and support the personal and professional growth of their teachers. The responses provide further data that supported the second and third research questions that framed the focus of this study. The next chapter continues to explore the behaviors and methods of application of transformational leadership by this select group of principals by examining their responses to the interview
questions associated with the final domain of transformational leadership, Intellectual Stimulation.

**Intellectual Stimulation Questions**

According to Pink (2011), people have a natural desire to be autonomous in their work and lives in order to pursue and achieve professional and personal goals. The data from the set of questions pertaining to the final domain of transformational leadership, Intellectual Stimulation, addresses this cohort’s ability to foster creativity and innovation in solving problems that affect their respective schools. The researcher utilized two questions to prompt a discussion on how Intellectual Stimulation is applied by the participants. Intellectual Stimulation is the element of transformational leadership that encourages empowerment, leadership, and innovative disruption among the members of an organization in order to challenge assumptions. The first question in this category asked the cohort of 10 principals if they observe their staff members using their creative ability to solve problems that affect their school communities. Nine of the 10 principals in this group stated that they employ the *use of a team or a group of teachers* to assist in solving problems or creating new and innovative programs for teachers and students. All of the principals in this group communicated the idea that they pose the problem or *challenge* to the group of teachers and ask for new or creative ways to solve it. One principal described the process accordingly:

“For example, we created a new team to look at our grammar and vocabulary programs. I said to them, ‘I need your help. Let's put our heads together and come up with some new ideas.’ I don’t want them to be afraid to provide any
ideas. Everything must be considered, listed, reviewed, prioritized, and then decided upon. That’s how it needs to be in order to move forward.”

Of the nine principals who stated they use a team approach to foster creativity, five stressed the importance of refraining from judgment or criticism of initial ideas, even if they personally disagreed with the approach. Four of the principals specifically utilized the words non-judgmental in their responses to this answer. One principal described the importance of being non-judgmental as follows:

“The sure way to stifle creativity is to shoot down the ideas of your teachers. If you want to embrace change and be a real change agent, then you need to be open and more importantly, champion your teachers’ creative ability. The more the teachers feel that you support their thinking, the more they will be invested and engaged in the task.”

The principals in this cohort stated that they believe their teachers admire and are motivated by the autonomy provided by their leadership in relation to fostering creativity. Two of the principals provided examples of how their teachers responded to team meetings that provided autonomy in developing lessons and providing professional development on technology-based programs:

“I recall receiving an email from a staff member about a meeting that I coordinated that said something like, thanks for doing a great job of keeping us focused, providing feedback, and letting us experiment with our own ideas. They said they appreciated the fact that I allowed them to explore the issue at their own pace. That was a great takeaway for me. They just wanted the opportunity to develop their own thoughts.”
“We had a building-based training the other day about a new technology program that we are implementing. A teacher came down to my office after the training and thanked me for allowing them to work with their colleagues and experience the program at their own pace. I realized that they enjoyed the freedom and the environment that I provided for them. It wasn’t controlled and they were able to think critically about their work.”

Four of the principals in this cohort stated that they actively solicit ideas from their teachers. They explained that they are constantly seeking input in order to address issues and problems that affect their schools. They further described that they believe their teachers enjoy having input into the schools’ goals and initiatives because it establishes a sense of ownership and buy-in.

The second and final interview question in this category asked the principals in this cohort to explain how they encourage their staff to take on leadership roles. Eight of the 10 principals utilized the term empower or empowerment when describing teacher leadership. Of this eight, three of the principals who utilized the term empowerment also expressed that they see empowerment as a healthy method of challenging or even disagreeing with the ideas of a group or even the leader. Two principals described empowerment as follows:

“I don’t need teachers agreeing with every single idea or suggestion that I have. I need those that disagree with me to tell me that they do and why they do. That provides them with ownership in decision making.”

“I think my teachers appreciate the fact that I am okay with being questioned or challenged when they don’t agree with me, a colleague, or an issue that has arisen. I think they appreciate that type of empowering environment.”
The principals in this group also stated that they want their teachers to think on their own and act independently at their own discretion. One principal utilized the term *self-management* when describing this idea, while four principals utilized the word *independent* or *independently* to reference how they want their teachers to behave.

The 10 principals in this group stated that they encourage their *staff members to take on leadership roles* by strategically placing them on committees or asking them to lead school- or district-based initiatives that are of interest to them. The acknowledgement of staff accomplishments was a method that these principals used to facilitate active leadership participation. One principal stated:

> “I acknowledge the great work that is going on. My focus is on trying to help people problem solve for something they want to get done.”

Encouraging teachers to take risks in leadership was also a theme that emerged from the principals’ responses. This encouragement took the form of verbal praise, often during informal meetings and interactions. Some principals described that they simply use words such as, “*Well, why don’t you try that?*” or, “*If you think it will help, then you should be doing it.*” These phrases and words of encouragement implied that the principals have trust in their teachers’ abilities to solve problems.

Another theme that developed through the discussion with these principals on the topic of teacher leadership was their comfort level with relinquishing power in decision-making. Through their responses, this group of 10 principals provided evidence that they often empower staff to move forward with their ideas. Additionally, many indicated that they provide an open forum for sharing that they believe further promotes the idea of teacher leadership and empowerment. Two principals described how they provide this forum for their teachers:
“We celebrate success all the time, especially when it is the result of a new and innovative idea that was developed by the teacher. When they take the reigns on a project, it is important to share that success with everyone so that they know it’s okay to think outside the box and lead change.”

“I commend their efforts publicly. I think that encourages them to try new things but I also think it sends a message that in our school, it is an expectation that you need to lead change.”

Daft (2014) argued that followers admire leaders who awaken their curiosity and encourage ideas and creativity. Through Intellectual Stimulation, transformational leaders promote an environment and create a culture that challenges their followers to think and learn. The data collected from this domain of transformational leadership supports the second and third research questions that framed the focus of this study. The principals in this cohort exhibit behaviors and utilize strategies that align with the application of Intellectual Stimulation. The next section of this chapter summarizes the qualitative data from this study.

**Summary of Qualitative Data Analysis**

According to Bass and Avolio (2006), transformational leaders behave in a manner that achieves superior results. They do this by employing any or all of the four components of transformational leadership. The focus of this study was to determine the extent to which transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey as well as to examine the specific behaviors and methods of application used by select principals in this county. The data from the qualitative phase of this research revealed the transformational leadership behaviors and methods of application used by a select cohort of 10 public school
principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The data from the qualitative phase answers the second and third research questions that framed the focus of the study:

**Question 2** – What are the specific methods of application and implementation used by public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey who have scored high on the MLQ?

**Question 3** – What are the common behavioral characteristics of transformational leadership among public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey who have scored high on the MLQ?

The data from the face-to-face interview questions revealed that this cohort of 10 principals who scored high on the MLQ exhibited common methods of application for transformational leadership. The principals in this cohort demonstrated that they establish collaborative teams of teachers to solve problems and lead initiatives that affect their schools. The principals in this group stated that they motivate their staff members by frequently and optimistically talking about the future and how to achieve goals. They described how they openly celebrate the successes of the teachers and students in order to continue to promote an environment of optimism and enthusiasm. Further, they explained that they strive to establish clarity in their expectations. By creating clear goals, their teachers are more apt to buy in to the vision or mission of the school. The principals in this group also demonstrated that they are active listeners and respond to the needs of their teachers in order to validate the teachers’ ideas, support their thinking, and help them improve professionally and personally. This cohort of 10 principals believes that it is important to model appropriate behavior for the members of their school community. The idea of leading by example emerged from the data as an important factor in applying transformational leadership. Additionally, they explained the importance of modeling ethical behavior as a means of creating trust. Principals in this cohort also stated that
being consistent in their own behavior contributed to the development of trust between themselves and their teachers.

As reported throughout this research, the principals who were selected for face-to-face interviews within this study demonstrated common methods of applying transformational leadership. The data provided evidence that supported the second research question that framed this study. The figure below clearly lists the common methods of application of transformational leadership used by the principals in this study, as well as their association to the four domains of transformational leadership. The information in Figure 6 categorizes the data gleaned from the interview transcriptions and serves to answer the second research question listed in this study. Although some of the methods of application appeared within multiple domains of transformational leadership, the researcher categorized the data from the participants’ responses to the element of transformational leadership with which it is most commonly associated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transformational Leadership Domain</th>
<th>Method of Application</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence</td>
<td>- Models expected behavior</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Acts consistently with integrity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Listens actively</td>
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<td>- Demonstrates passion and commitment through words and actions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>- Talks optimistically/positive about the future</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Celebrates the success of the teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Establishes teams to collaboratively on problems or district initiatives</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Communicates a clear vision for the school</td>
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</tbody>
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| Individualized Consideration | - Listens and provides feedback during conferences, meetings, and discussion  
|                              | - Delegates responsibility based on the strengths and talents of the teachers  
|                              | - Encourages collegial observations to improve teacher practice  
|                              | - Actively provides structures to coach and support their teachers using the strengths of the whole staff  
| Intellectual Stimulation     | - Encourages teachers to think creatively to solve problems  
|                              | - Fosters a culture of innovation by challenging teachers to investigate new pedagogy  
|                              | - Creates a non-judgmental environment where all ideas accepted  

*Figure 6: Methods of application within the domains of transformational leadership.*

The third research question that framed this study sought to explore how this cohort of 10 principals who scored high on the MLQ exhibited common behavioral characteristics of transformational leadership. The data revealed that these principals display personal traits that represent each of the domains of transformational leadership. Figure 7 provides a representation of common themes and characteristics of behavior obtained from the data and categorizes them into their corresponding domains of transformational leadership.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain of Transformational Leadership</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Idealized Influence</td>
<td>- Ethical</td>
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<td>- Honest</td>
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<td>- Approachable</td>
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<td>- Dedicated</td>
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<td>- Passionate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>- Personable</td>
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<td>- Enthusiastic</td>
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<td>- Positive</td>
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<td>- Optimistic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Articulate (goal setting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individualized Consideration</td>
<td>- Empathetic</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Supportive</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Responsive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>- Genuine</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Compassionate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Challenging</td>
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<td>- Empowering</td>
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*Figure 7: Common behavioral characteristics.*

**Conclusion**

This chapter provided analysis from the data collected from both the quantitative and qualitative components of this research study. The purpose of this study was to examine transformational leadership practices among principals in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The quantitative data provided evidence to the extent that transformational leadership exists in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The data also established a cohort of 10 principals who were invited to participate in the qualitative phase. The interview questions from the qualitative phase of this research were analyzed and provided evidence that identified
common behavioral characteristics and methods of applications used by this select group of principals from Monmouth County, New Jersey.

The next chapter in this study presents further analysis and synthesis of the data. Chapter 5 includes the following sections: Summary of the Study, Findings Related to the Literature, Conclusions and Implications, and Future Research.
Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine if transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey and to identify any common methods of application and behavioral characteristics that exist among leaders in these settings. In this climate of ever-increasing educational change that focuses on standards-based reform and teacher accountability, school principals must adopt and apply a leadership style that enhances staff and student growth while providing opportunities for teachers to be creative in their approach to teaching and learning. Through their behaviors and interactions with their staff, principals can inspire their teachers to become actively involved in solving problems that impact their schools. Qualitative research conducted by Bayler (2012) revealed that transformational school leaders are open to new ideas and, therefore, their teachers are highly motivated to become involved in solving organizational problems. The demands and challenges faced by school principals are growing exponentially and are revealed throughout this study. Focusing on the transformational leadership domains of Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Individualized Consideration, and Intellectual Stimulation can provide principals with the skills and tools necessary to achieve results that go beyond organizational expectations.

The connection between principal leadership and variables such as school climate, teacher efficacy, and student achievement is well documented. A study on principal leadership conducted in 2010 by Wahlstrom, Leithwood, and Anderson stated that throughout their investigations, the researchers did not find a single case of a school improving its student achievement record in the absence of talented leadership. Further research has revealed that transformational leadership behaviors have been shown to positively impact organizational
outcomes. A study conducted by Braun et al. (2013) revealed that transformational leadership was positively related to both individual- and team-level job satisfaction. Additional research conducted by Hamstra et al. (2014) demonstrated that leader application of the tenets of transformational leadership predicted followers’ mastery of organizational goals. Principals who apply the domain practices of transformational leadership have the potential to influence their followers through motivation, coaching, empowerment, and passion. The intent of this study was to examine and analyze common behaviors and practices demonstrated by public school principals who self-identified as transformational leaders. Analyzing how public school principals behave and utilize the characteristics associated with transformational leadership may add to the body of research on transformational school leadership and identifies specific methods for its application.

This study utilized mixed methods, quantitative and qualitative, to collect data. The following research questions were used to frame the focus of this study:

**Question 1** – To what extent does transformational leadership exist in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey?

**Question 2** – What are the specific methods of application and implementation used by public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey who have scored high on the MLQ?

**Question 3** – What are the common behavioral characteristics of transformational leadership among public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey who have scored high on the MLQ?
Findings Related to the Literature

Qualitative Data

In the first stage of the study, the quantitative data analyzed from the results of the MLQ found that 61 out of 66 principals surveyed perceived themselves to be transformational leaders. The mean score for each question that measured transformational leadership ranged from 2.4 to 3.9. The average total transformational leadership scale score for all principals was 3.39. The findings in this study clearly indicate that transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey, thus affirmatively answering the first research question that framed this study. Griffith (2004) explored the relationship between a principal’s application of transformational leadership and overall personnel job performance, teacher efficacy, and school turnover. The findings in that study (Griffith, 2004) revealed that teachers reported higher levels of job satisfaction for those schools where principal transformational leadership existed.

Qualitative Data

Idealized Influence. The qualitative data from the 10 face-to-face interviews were consistent with the research on transformational leadership. The transformational leader gains the trust and respect of their supporters by modeling ethical and moral behaviors, sharing risks, and emphasizing moral values (Eyal & Roth, 2011). The idea of modeling ethical and moral behavior was emphasized by the majority of principals in this study and is the main characteristic of the Idealized Influence construct within transformational leadership. Leading by example and being consistent in their behavior were themes that emerged from each of the 10 principals. Further, the principals cited honesty, integrity, and fairness as important leadership characteristics, all of which are referenced in the construct of Idealized Influence. The
transformational leader applies Idealized Influence in order to gain trust and respect as well as establish relationships with followers (Givens, 2008). Although all principals who participated in the interviews in this study believed that their staff members trusted and respected them, many principals had difficulty illustrating and providing examples of how they exhibit trust and respect. The interview question pertaining to trust and respect yielded the least amount of data of all qualitative responses. Despite the lack of data this particular question yielded, the researcher discovered evidence of trust and respect in the data from responses to other questions. For example, the majority of principals cited the ideas of teamwork and collaboration as having a positive effect on staff commitment to organizational goals. Further, nine of the 10 principals stressed that their decisions are based on how they will impact student learning. These data are consistent with ideas of sharing risks and emphasizing moral values, which are examples of methods that transformational leaders use to establish trust.

**Inspirational Motivation.** Each principal shared examples of applying leadership behaviors consistent with the domain of Inspirational Motivation. Principals stated that they speak optimistically about the future of their schools and are cognizant of ensuring that their approach is positive and enthusiastic when discussing the achievement of goals. This practice is consistent with literature written by Bass and Avolio (1994) and Densten (2002). Six of the 10 principals also shared that having a good sense of humor and being personable were important attributes for motivating staff. Early versions of transformational leadership reference the leader’s ability to be charismatic as a means to inspire and motivate followers to support organizational goals (Bass, 1990). These principals explained that possessing a good sense of humor and being personable and approachable allowed them to develop meaningful relationships with staff. Although a charismatic presence can take on many forms, the principals in this study
identified charisma as a personality trait that is more closely related to being charming or personable.

Data in this study also revealed that five of the 10 principals utilize teams and collaboration methods in order to motivate staff to tackle problems or district-based initiatives. Seven of the 10 principals utilized collaboration or a collaborative approach in addressing staff members who appeared to be less motivated or disengaged. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (1990, 2000), collaboration is vital to establishing a positive and professional school culture. Additionally, when these principals encountered staff members who are reluctant to change or presented signs of being unmotivated, they begin to more clearly establish their teachers’ roles in the change process. All of the principals emphasized the importance of establishing clear and meaningful goals as a method to dealing with resistant staff members. Eight of the 10 principals cited that they attempt to remove obstacles that can contribute to a lack of teacher motivation. According to Bass and Riggio (2006), the transformational leader applies Inspirational Motivation by setting a clear vision for the future. The idea of setting a clear agenda is also prominent in the transformational leadership framework construct of Setting Directions as established by Leithwood and Jantzi (2006). All of the principals in this study utilize procedural methods such as newsletters, social media, and whole school presentations to communicate vision and mission to their entire school communities.

**Individualized Consideration.** The principals in this study clearly identified the need to develop their staff by coaching and mentoring. Individualized Consideration requires the leader to be caring and nurturing as well as supportive of each of the followers’ personal development (Bass & Avolio, 1994). In order to determine the areas for personal and professional development, eight of the 10 principals stated that they identify areas of strength and areas for
growth in their staff through formal and informal observations. Further, these eight principals identified listening as a key attribute that enables them to more clearly identify the type of support each individual requires. Listening during both pre- and post-observation conferences was cited as a method that allowed principals to more clearly recognize the individual needs of teachers. All 10 of the principals also cited the importance of individual teacher strengths as integral to improving their school culture.

Transformational leaders apply Individualized Consideration by allowing their followers to develop professionally, personally, and independently (Givens, 2008). Nine of the 10 principals provided examples of literature or articles for independent review and many of the tasks used to coach and support were delegated by the principals to other members of their schools. Bass and Avolio (1994) supported the delegation of responsibilities under the construct of Individualized Consideration. Further, all of the principals interviewed in this study supported the practice of developing their staff members’ talents and content knowledge by making the focus of faculty meetings about professional growth and teacher pedagogy as opposed to reviewing and discussing procedure and policy.

**Intellectual Stimulation.** The principals in this study provided evidence that they utilize and apply transformational leadership to create an environment that encourages creativity and innovation to solve problems that affect their schools. Daniel Pink (2011) contended that control will only lead to compliance and conformity, while autonomy provides for engagement. Nine of the 10 principals in this study utilize a team or group approach when faced with challenges. Additionally, in order to foster creativity within their schools, the principals identified being non-judgmental as a vital leader characteristic. The principals in this group stated that providing an environment that is non-judgmental encourages their teachers to take risks. Since teachers are
getting feedback on their work as opposed to being evaluated, the principals believe they are more apt to share their innovations.

Providing opportunities for the development of teacher leadership is also important to this group of principals. Principals described this practice as teacher empowerment. Terry (1999) and Stacy (2013) discussed teacher empowerment as a vital part of a thriving school culture. Additionally, when asked to describe their school culture and climate, many of the principals stressed the importance of teachers taking on leadership roles as a means to promote professional growth and build collegiality. The 10 principals in this group also stated that they encourage teacher leadership by acknowledging accomplishments publicly and by strategically placing teachers in situations that allow them to demonstrate their leadership capacity. Leaders that apply the construct of Intellectual Stimulation seek out and encourage their followers to challenge assumptions to arrive at new and innovative ways of addressing issues (Dong et al., 2016). Transformational leaders share decision-making responsibilities within this construct and openly encourage divergent thinking (Johnson et al., 2012).

This section of the chapter discussed the data findings as they relate to the literature. The next section of this chapter discusses conclusions and implications for practice.

**Conclusions and Implications**

Fullan (2014) asserted that the principal’s main role is to lead the school’s teachers toward a group of shared goals. This study echoes this idea and provides information that pertains to the qualities, behaviors, and implementation methods of transformational principal leadership. The data from the MLQ and 10 face-to-face interviews clearly reveals that transformational leadership exists and is applied by public school principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey. The face-to-face interviews provide a detailed amount of information that
reveals common behavioral characteristics of these 10 transformational school leaders as well as their specific methods of applying the four domains of transformational leadership.

Bass and Riggio (2006) stated that transformational leaders help followers grow and develop by responding to their followers’ individual needs and interests, and by empowering them to participate in solving problems that affect their organization. Schools of education in both colleges and universities need to incorporate the application of transformational leadership into their leadership certification programs. Future school leaders who understand the principles and framework of transformational leadership will have a better understanding of how to elevate their staff to perform at high levels through motivation, ethical behavior, coaching and creativity.

Further, coursework and classes that focus on school law and ethics should include discussions and activities that are based on the domain of Idealized Influence within transformational leadership in order to provide examples of how teachers react when the school leader behaves in a moral or virtuous manner.

The MLQ is the instrument used to measure transformational leadership in this study. A further investigation and comparison between those principals who self-ranked high as opposed to low on the MLQ can reveal differences in how these leaders apply the domains of transformational leadership. Studying the differences between the self-rankings in the four domains of transformational leadership measured by the MLQ may also reveal important data that identifies the domain concepts that principals apply more frequently.

The transformational leader inspires followers to perform beyond established expectations (Hartog, Muijen, & Koopman, 1997). The data from this study supports the need for professional development on principal transformational leadership. Trainings for school principals on the constructs of transformational leadership may provide them with a skill set that
will better prepare them to foster meaningful relationships, set clear goals, and talk enthusiastically about their vision in an era of high-stakes testing and increased teacher accountability. Superintendents of schools should dedicate time for professional learning with their principals during administrative meetings in order to review, learn, and apply the constructs of transformational leadership. Additionally, national associations for school principal leadership should include workshops and breakout sessions that highlight the behaviors and application of transformational leadership.

The data from this research study provides skills, behaviors, and implementation methods that can assist current practicing principals in their roles as school leaders. The principals who participated in the face-to-face interviews of this study demonstrated that they had common, practical methods of applying transformational leadership. Behaving in an honest and ethical manner as well as speaking optimistically and enthusiastically about achieving goals are themes that are evident within this research and should be replicated by practicing school principals in an effort to become transformational leaders. The behaviors, characteristics, and methods of application of transformational leadership that are uncovered in this study may support a school principal’s journey in becoming a transformational leader. The principals in this study believe that they perceive a higher level of engagement, buy-in, and trust from their staff when they display behaviors or applied practices consistent with the elements of transformational leadership. The interview questions in the qualitative phase of this study would make excellent questions for school districts and superintendents to utilize as they screen potential principal candidates. The questions clearly identify those individuals who are transformational leaders.
Recommendations for Future Research

Leadership has very significant effects on the quality of school organization and on pupil learning (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). Therefore, this study should be replicated in other counties throughout the state of New Jersey in order to provide further data pertaining to principals’ behaviors and implementation methods of transformational leadership concepts. This study can also be replicated in other states in order to draw comparisons between transformational leadership approaches and add to the application methods listed by the principals in this study.

This study can be replicated or adapted to examine the application of transformational leadership in charter, private, and parochial schools in the state of New Jersey and throughout the nation. The data can then be analyzed to determine similarities and differences in transformational leadership behaviors and application methods between the public, private, charter, and parochial schools’ principals.

This study relied upon the principals’ ability to accurately self-evaluate their leadership approaches. Further studies can analyze the perceptions of teachers, support staff, students and parents to examine the extent to which they perceive transformational leadership exists and is applied by their schools’ principals. Examining transformational leaders who are recognized by their followers as such may yield further data that can enhance the focus of future research.

This study targeted principals from one county in New Jersey. The study can be adapted to target or compare principals’ application of transformational leadership concepts from schools across counties with differing socioeconomic profiles, enrollment numbers, or achievement data. Further, future research can be conducted statewide in New Jersey or in other states to enhance the practical applications revealed in this study. A similar study could be used to target the
difference between how male and female principals apply transformational leadership concepts. A further investigation into how transformational leadership skills are applied based on the experience levels of various principals can also add to the implementation methods derived from this study.

Additional research can be conducted to reveal relationships between the principals’ application of transformational leadership concepts and staff turnover, teacher evaluations, student and staff attendance rates, teacher efficacy and job satisfaction, and teacher leadership models. Studies such as these can provide a deeper understanding of the influence that the application of transformational leadership concepts have in schools.
References


Appendix A

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Self)

For use by Edward Aldarelli only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on December 8, 2016

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Leader Form

My Name: ___________________________ Date: _____________

Organization ID #: __________________ Leader ID #: __________________

This questionnaire is to describe your leadership style as you perceive it. Please answer all items on this answer sheet. If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure or do not know the answer, leave the answer blank.

Forty-five descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how frequently each statement fits you. The word “others” may mean your peers, clients, direct reports, supervisors, and/or all of these individuals.

Use the following rating scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>Once in a while</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Fairly often</th>
<th>Frequently, if not always</th>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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1. I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts ................................................. 0 1 2 3 4
2. I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate ........................................ 0 1 2 3 4
3. I fail to interfere until problems become serious ........................................................................... 0 1 2 3 4
4. I focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards .................. 0 1 2 3 4
5. I avoid getting involved when important issues arise ........................................................................ 0 1 2 3 4
6. I talk about my most important values and beliefs ........................................................................... 0 1 2 3 4
7. I am absent when needed ...................................................................................................................... 0 1 2 3 4
8. I seek differing perspectives when solving problems ........................................................................ 0 1 2 3 4
9. I talk optimistically about the future .................................................................................................. 0 1 2 3 4
10. I instill pride in others for being associated with me ....................................................................... 0 1 2 3 4
11. I discuss in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets ......................... 0 1 2 3 4
12. I wait for things to go wrong before taking action ........................................................................... 0 1 2 3 4
13. I talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished ............................................................ 0 1 2 3 4
14. I specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose .......................................................... 0 1 2 3 4
15. I spend time teaching and coaching .................................................................................................. 0 1 2 3 4

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<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>16. I make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved</td>
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<td>17. I show that I am a firm believer in “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”</td>
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<td>18. I go beyond self-interest for the good of the group</td>
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<td>19. I treat others as individuals rather than just as a member of a group</td>
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<td>20. I demonstrate that problems must become chronic before I take action</td>
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<td>21. I act in ways that build others’ respect for me</td>
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<td>22. I concentrate my full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures</td>
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<td>23. I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions</td>
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<td>24. I keep track of all mistakes</td>
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<td>25. I display a sense of power and confidence</td>
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<td>26. I articulate a compelling vision of the future</td>
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<td>27. I direct my attention toward failures to meet standards</td>
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<td>28. I avoid making decisions</td>
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<td>29. I consider an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others</td>
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<td>30. I get others to look at problems from many different angles</td>
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<td>31. I help others to develop their strengths</td>
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<td>32. I suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments</td>
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<td>33. I delay responding to urgent questions</td>
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<td>34. I emphasized the importance of having a collective sense of mission</td>
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<td>35. I express satisfaction when others meet expectations</td>
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<td>36. I express confidence that goals will be achieved</td>
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<td>37. I am effective in meeting others’ job-related needs</td>
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<td>38. I use methods of leadership that are satisfying</td>
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<td>39. I get others to do more than they expected to do</td>
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<td>40. I am effective in representing others to higher authority</td>
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<td>41. I work with others in a satisfactory way</td>
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<td>42. I heighten others’ desire to succeed</td>
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<td>43. I am effective in meeting organizational requirements</td>
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<td>44. I increase others’ willingness to try harder</td>
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<td>45. I lead a group that is effective</td>
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Appendix B
Permission Letter to Utilize the MLQ (Self)

For use by Edward Aldarelli only. Received from Mind Garden, Inc. on January 25, 2017
Permission for Edward Aldarelli to reproduce 1 copy within one year of January 25, 2017

mind garden
www.mindgarden.com

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to grant permission for the above named person to use the following copyright material for his/her research:

Instrument: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
Authors: Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass
Copyright: 1995 by Bruce Avolio and Bernard Bass

Five sample items from this instrument may be reproduced for inclusion in a proposal, thesis, or dissertation.
The entire instrument may not be included or reproduced at any time in any published material.

Sincerely,

Robert Most
Mind Garden, Inc.
www.mindgarden.com

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Appendix C

Interview Questions

I. General Questions (follow up questions will be used to elicit specific examples)
   A. Can you begin by describing your leadership style?
   B. What characteristics of leadership are important to you and why?
   C. Can you describe a typical faculty meeting that you conduct?
   D. How would you describe your school culture?
   E. How many years experience do you have as a school administrator?

II. Questions Specific to the 4i’s of Transformational Leadership

   A. Idealized Influence (Idealized Behavior/Attributes) -
      1. In what ways do you think your leadership style influences the members of your school community? Can you provide examples? (IB)
      2. How does your staff show that they trust and respect you? (IA)

   B. Inspirational Motivation -
      1. In what ways do you think your behavior and personality motivates staff to adopt or perhaps go beyond organizational goals?
      2. Have you had challenges in motivating staff in your leadership role? If so, how do you overcome them?
      3. In what ways do you develop awareness for the vision/mission of your school among the members of your school community?

   C. Individualized Consideration -
      1. How do you support the strengths and talents of the members of your team?
      2. Are there moments when you felt that your staff members are not operating to their fullest potential? If yes, how do you specifically help?
      3. How do you help your staff grow through professional and personal challenges?

   D. Intellectual Stimulation -
      1. Do you see your staff using their creative ability to solve problems that affect the school community? If so, what was an occasion/example?
      2. How do you encourage staff to take on leadership roles?
Appendix D

Letter Requesting Participation (Superintendent)

Dear Superintendent,

I hope that this letter finds you well and enjoying a positive and productive 2016-2017 school year. My name is Edward Aldarelli and I am the principal of the West Freehold School and a student with the doctoral program at Saint Peter’s University. I have completed my coursework and I am working through the writing phases for my dissertation.

The topic of my dissertation is based on a conceptualized leadership theory known as transformational leadership. As you may be aware, transformational leadership is a style of leadership where a leader works with their staff in order to identify needed change, create a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and execute the change in tandem with committed members of their group. As a proven method of leadership, I am curious to know to what extent transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Specifically, I am researching the common behavioral characteristics exhibited by principals who identify themselves as transformative leaders.

In order to do so, I am utilizing a well-known Likert scale survey known as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Self). The survey asks the respondent to self evaluate their leadership behaviors, as they perceive it. From the survey results, I will identify 10 principals who ranked themselves the highest and conduct face-to-face semi-structured interviews in order to identify trends and themes in their leadership behaviors. I would like to contact the principals in your district and ask them to complete the survey and then interview the select group for my study. Both the survey and potential to be interviewed is strictly voluntary.

If this proposal is acceptable to you, please return the attached letter, signed by you indicating your approval.

If you have any questions pertaining to the construct of the study, or require additional information, please feel free to contact me by email at ealdarelli@freeholdtwp.k12.nj.us or at 732-822-7858 (cell phone).

I sincerely appreciate your time and assistance.

Best regards,

Edward Aldarelli
Dear Mr. Aldarelli,

I have received your request to contact principals within my district for the purpose of conducting research for your dissertation with Saint Peter’s University. I understand that you will ask them to complete an electronic survey regarding their self-perceptions of Transformational Leadership practices and that they may be asked to participate in a face-to-face semi-structured interview based on their self-rating scores. Participation in the survey and the potential to be interviewed is strictly voluntary.

With that understanding, and by the return of this signed letter, I grant permission for you to proceed with your study.

Regards,

________________________________________________________

Signature

________________________________________________________

Name Printed

________________________________________________________

Date
Appendix E

Letter Requesting Participation (Principal)

Dear Principal,

I hope that this letter finds you well and enjoying a positive and productive 2016-2017 school year. My name is Edward Aldarelli and I am the principal of the West Freehold School and a student with the doctoral program at Saint Peter’s University. I have completed my course work and I am working through the writing phases for my dissertation.

The topic of my dissertation is based on a conceptualized leadership theory known as Transformational Leadership. As a proven method of leadership, I am curious to know to what extent transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Specifically, I am researching how public school principals apply the common behavioral characteristics associated with transformational leadership.

In order to do so, I am utilizing a well-established Likert scale survey known as the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Self). The survey asks the respondent to self evaluate their leadership behaviors, as they perceive it. The survey findings will provide information about the style of leadership that you exhibit. The company, Mind Garden, through their secure hosting platform entitled Transform, will administer the survey.

From the survey results, I will identify a group of 10 principals who will be selected to participate in face-to-face semi-structured interviews. The interviews will provide for a more detailed look as to how you apply transformational leadership within your school. If you are identified to continue with the study, I will reach out via email and then by telephone to coordinate a time that is convenient to complete this process. The interview will take approximately forty-five minutes to complete.

The data that analyzed within my dissertation will not reference any school or any principal. No names or identifying factors will be used in any part of this published dissertation. Please know that your responses will be kept confidential.

Please complete the MLQ survey using the link:

If you have any questions pertaining to the construct of the study, or require additional information, please feel free to contact me by email at ealdarelli@freeholdtwp.k12.nj.us or at 732-822-7858 (cell phone).

I sincerely appreciate your time and willingness to participate in this study.

Best regards
Edward Aldarelli
Appendix F

Online Survey Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study titled “An Examination of Transformational Leadership Practices by Public School Principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey”.

This study is being conducted by Mr. Edward Aldarelli, Principal at the West Freehold Elementary School, Freehold Township School District, and Doctoral student at St. Peter’s University.

The purpose of this research is to examine to what extent transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Furthermore, this study will examine any common methods of application and behavioral characteristics that exist among the leadership in these settings.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary at all times. You can choose not to participate at all or to leave the study at any point. If you decide not to participate, or to leave the study, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled, or any effect on your relationship with the researcher, or any other negative consequences.

You are being asked to take part in this study because you are the principal of a public school in Monmouth County, NJ.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey that will ask you to evaluate and rate your own leadership style. The survey will take approximately fifteen to thirty minutes to complete. The results of the survey will be used to develop a smaller cohort of principals who will then participate in semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. By completing this survey, you are indicating consent to participate in this research study.

The survey will be administered electronically through a secure site known as Mind Garden’s Transform Hosting Platform and information will be collected between January 2017 and the end of February 2017.

All of your responses and information within this survey will remain confidential. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time.

Survey data will be kept in digital format in a protected account with Mind Garden. Access to the digital data will be protected by password and accessible only to Mr. Edward Aldarelli, the primary investigator.
There are no risks associated with this study. While you will not experience any direct benefits from participation, information gathered in this research may inform future leadership practices in the field of education.

If you have any questions regarding the survey or this research project in general, please contact the principal investigator, Mr. Edward Aldarelli, at ealdarelli@freeholdtwp.k12.nj.us or his faculty mentor, Dr. Ross Kasun, at rkasun@freeholdtwp.k12.nj.us.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Saint Peter’s University IRB at (201) 761-6137 or pcvek@saintpeters.edu.

By completing and submitting this survey, you are indicating your consent to participate in this study.

By clicking the link below, I confirm that I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time. My consent also indicates that I am at least 18 years of age. [Please feel free to print a copy of this consent form.]

_____ I agree to participate (link to survey)  _____ I decline (link to close webpage)
Appendix G

Informed Consent Form

**PROJECT TITLE:** An Examination of Transformational Leadership Practices by Public School Principals in Monmouth County, New Jersey

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** Edward Aldarelli

**MENTOR:** Dr. Ross Kasun

**SPU SPONSOR:** N/A

**INTRODUCTION**
You are invited to consider participating in this research project. Please take as much time as you need to make your decision. Feel free to discuss your decision with whomever you wish, but remember that the decision to participate, or not to participate, is yours. If you decide to participate, please sign and date where indicated at the end of this form.

**PURPOSE**
The purpose of this research is to examine to what extent transformational leadership exists in public schools in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Furthermore, this study will examine any common methods of application and behavioral characteristics that exist among the leadership in these settings.

**PROJECT PLAN**
You are being asked to take part in this research because you are a public school principal in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Approximately 170 subjects will take part in this research.

The research is a mixed methodology that contains both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study will be separated into two phases. If you decide to participate in this research, you will be asked to complete a survey that asks you to reflect and rate your own leadership style. This web-based survey instrument is entitled the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Self). The survey will take approximately 15-30 minutes to complete.

The results of the survey will be used to identify a group of principals who will participate in semi-structured face-to-face interviews. This second phase will provide further examination of how transformational leadership is applied. This second phase will take approximately 45 minutes to complete and will be conducted at a place and time that is convenient for the participants. Interviews will be audiotaped in order to provide the researcher with an accurate transcription of the responses.
Risks
There are no risks associated with participating in this research.

Benefits
If you agree to take part in this research, there will be no direct benefit to you. However, information gathered in this research may inform future leadership practices in the field of education.

Confidentiality
No mention of any subject’s name or the name of their school or district will be included in the researcher’s dissertation. Only the researcher will have access to the participant’s information in the interview.

In order to keep information about you safe, the data results from the surveys will be kept electronically in a password-protected account controlled by the researcher. The data will be linked to a person’s name for the purposes of identifying the select group to participate in face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

Data results from the face-to-face interviews will be kept electronically in a password-protected account that is controlled by the researcher. Additionally, audiotaped interview sessions will be kept under lock and key. Only the researcher will have access to this data.

Your Rights as a Research Participant
Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to participate at all, or to withdraw at any point. If you decide not to participate, or to withdraw, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled, or any effect on your relationship with the researcher, or any other negative consequences.

If you decide that you no longer want to take part in this research, you are encouraged to inform the researcher of your decision. The information already obtained through your participation will not be included in the data analysis and final report for this research.

Questions or Concerns
If you have questions about this research project, you may contact Edward Aldarelli at 732-822-7858 or at the following email address: ealdarelli@freeholdtwp.k12.nj.us/ealdarelli@verizon.net. You may also contact his faculty mentor Dr. Ross Kasun at rkasun@freeholdtwp.k12.nj.us.

Please contact the Saint Peter’s University IRB at 201 761-6137 or pcvek@saintpeters.edu if you have any questions about your rights as a research participant.

Please be informed that a digital voice recorder will be used to capture all comments, opinions, and ideas from the interviews and may be vital to the study. Participants have the right to review all or any portion of the taped sessions and request that it be destroyed. Participants will be identified by a coded number on the tapes. After the interviews, the researcher will have the sessions transcribed in order to further analyze the data. The participants will have the
opportunity to review to ensure accuracy. The data will be destroyed one year after the completion of the dissertation.

I understand that I will be audio recorded as a part of this research.

Please indicate whether you agree to be audio recorded as a part of this research.

**YES**

**NO**

*(If you change your mind about this at any point, please let the researcher know)*

**STATEMENT OF PERSON OBTAINING INFORMED CONSENT**

I have fully explained this research to the participant. I have discussed the purpose and procedures, the possible risks and benefits, and that participation in this research is completely voluntary. I have invited the participant to ask questions and I have given complete answers to all of the participant’s questions.

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent ____________________________

Date ____________________________

**STATEMENT OF CONSENT**

I understand all of the information in this Consent Form. I have gotten complete answers for all of my questions. I freely and voluntarily agree to participate in this research project. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and that I have received a copy of this consent form.

Participant Signature ____________________________

Date ____________________________

Printed Name of Participant ____________________________

**Once you sign this form, you will receive a copy of it to keep and the researcher will keep another copy.**

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Appendix H

Oral Script for Face-to-Face Interviews

Researcher: "Good afternoon. It is a pleasure to meet you and I truly appreciate your time and input. As discussed on the phone, this is a semi-structured interview that will take approximately forty-five minutes. To ensure consistency of information, I will be asking all participants the same questions. Depending on each participant's response, I may ask for clarification or a follow-up question to better understand the response. Also, please do not hesitate to ask me for clarification if you are unsure what the question is asking. Please be aware that the conversation is being recorded via a digital voice recorder. To ensure confidentiality, each participant will be assigned a number that corresponds to a specific interview. I will take notes, and the recording will be transcribed using the assigned number as an identification. Participants will be offered the opportunity to listen to the recordings or read the transcripts. If you are ready, I would like to begin with the first question." (Proceed with questions).

After the questions are completed: "Thank you for participating in this interview. I truly appreciate your time. Have a great day."
Appendix I

NIH Certificate of Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Edward Aldarelli successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 10/26/2016.

Certification Number: 2194310.