

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP: AN INVESTIGATION OF  
PRESIDENTIAL STYLE AT FIFTY NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

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Leadership has been studied as an essential component for success in business, government, and military environments. However, the optimal style of leadership in university settings remains unclear. Transformational leadership style has been proposed as efficient for universities, however some experts have argued that transformational leadership is actually counterproductive at academic institutions.

Increasing public scrutiny of university leaders has also raised the question of presidential leadership style. One manifestation of this scrutiny is the U.S. News & World Report (USNWR) annual college ranking.

To resolve the uncertainty regarding effective leadership style the present study was designed to address the following research questions:

1. Is there any relationship between a top tier ranking in the USNWR and a particular leadership style?

2. Is there agreement among top administrators at the ranked institutions regarding the style of leadership exhibited by their university president?

The proposed study answers these questions through the analysis of data gathered utilizing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The

survey instrument was sent to three top administrators at the top 50 ranked national universities according to USNWR. A score was derived which provided a quantitative assessment of transformational, transactional or laissez-faire leadership styles. In addition, a satisfaction score was determined.

The key results of the study show: 1) transformational leadership was found in 56% to 74% of the rated presidents; 2) transformational leaders were found to induce the greatest satisfaction; 3) transactional leadership style was exhibited 24% of the time, and laissez-faire leadership was found among 8% of the presidents; 4) laissez-faire leadership was noted significantly more frequently among universities ranked from 40 – 50 according to the USNWR; and 5) there was no statistical agreement among the administrators surveyed.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that transformational leadership is the most satisfactory style of leadership among these national universities. The rating of transformational university presidents as highly satisfactory demonstrates the success of presidents with these leadership skills.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The importance of leadership style has long been a subject of much debate and contentious discussion. The word “leadership” has numerous definitions, depending on the perspective of the educator (Stogdill, 1974). In the past 20 years alone, a multitude of publications has been presented for study on the subject of leadership. Thousands of essays, research reports, and other works have provided a broad base of thought -provoking and often conflicting ideas about organizational leadership (Birnbaum, 1989). Traditionally, most studies of leadership have taken place in business organizations, the military, and government agencies with little attention given to higher education (Vroom, 1983).

One frequently discussed theory is that of transformational leadership, first introduced by Burns in 1978. Transformational leaders change their organization’s culture by inspiring a sense of mission and purpose about the importance of the group’s work and stimulating new ways of thinking and problem solving (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Transformational leaders inspire individuals within an organization to work harder and to strive for the highest

levels of performance (Bass, 1985). Bass (1985) contends that transformational leadership is the most successful form of leadership in academic settings.

In contrast, other research suggests that transformational leadership is not only inappropriate for a university president, but in fact renders that person less successful because of the distancing involved in becoming a true transformational leader (Birnbaum, 1989). According to Birnbaum, in today's world of greater participation, heeding the current call for charismatic presidents who can transform their institutions would more likely lead to campus disruption than to constructive change (1992). While Bass, Burns, & Avolio, support the applicability of transformational leadership theory to all forms of organizations including universities, other investigators find transformational leadership is not universally applicable (Inkson, Kerr, & Moss 1993). Data are available to either support or repudiate the importance of transformational leadership, or even the importance of quality institutional leadership in any form (Birnbaum, 1992). Walker (1979), found that organizational constraints make the idea of a powerful president an illusion. Supporting this concept, Birnbaum (1989), conducted a study that found that some important measures of institutional functioning remained unchanged even as presidents were replaced, implying that institutional excellence may not be directly related to institutional leadership.

### Statement of Problem

There are currently 228 national universities in the United States, one hundred forty seven that are public, and eighty-one that are private. National

universities, according to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, offer a full range of undergraduate majors, as well as master's and doctoral degrees.

Accountability has become a key issue for these universities over the past 25 years. University administrators have fallen under scrutiny regarding a wide spectrum of decision-making issues. Financial, curriculum, and administrative policy decisions are all frequently examined for effectiveness by a variety of university constituents. These include government agencies, legislative boards, and specialized associations, as well as a public increasingly concerned with the quality of education (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982).

One method of establishing accountability to the public is by publishing comparisons among universities. Research conducted by a number of investigators (Pascarella, Smart, Ethington & Nettles 1987), has demonstrated that institutional prestige, or standing has a positive effect on the success of an institution in a number of areas. The general public's perception of the educational reputation of an institution is a strong factor in recruitment of top high school students, as well as engendering a broader base for financial development.

Many different criteria have been employed in determining how these national universities compare with each other (Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991). These

criteria include institutional library holdings, endowment, faculty degrees, and even the “quality” of the university’s graduates (Astin, 1985).

Since 1985, the U.S. News and World Report has published a ranked listing of the national institutions. From 1985 to 1992 these rankings were determined and published biannually. Beginning in 1992 the rankings have been published each year. Universities are ranked in this publication based on data gathered regarding up to eight indicators of academic quality. In the 1999 rankings, these criteria consist of: 1) academic reputation; 2) student retention; 3) faculty resources; 4) student selectivity; 5) financial resources; 6) graduation rate; 7) performance; and 8) alumni giving rate (Graham, 1998). These criteria, particularly those that are quantifiable in nature have often been cited as representative of the value of education received at different institutions (Allen & Astor, 1996; Rubenstone & Dalby, 1997). While these criteria have been examined, and presented as measurable variables representing the value of educational institutions, they have not been studied in conjunction with the style of presidential leadership present at these ranked national institutions.

#### Purpose of the Study

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to utilize the rating strategy of the U.S. News and World Report to aid in determination of the relationship of different leadership styles to the rankings of the top 50 national universities. The overall approach will be to quantify the leadership style of each individual university president of the top 50 ranked institutions as perceived by other high-level

university administrators and then correlate these results with the institution's ranking.

### Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed in this study.

1. Is there any relationship between a top tier ranking in the U.S. News and World Report and a particular leadership style?

2. Is there agreement among top administrators at the ranked institutions regarding the style of leadership exhibited by their university president?

This study will attempt to answer these questions through the analysis of data gathered utilizing the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Rater Form 5x-short (Bass & Avolio, 1995).

### Theoretical Base of Study

Documentation indicates that the study of leadership theory has been of interest to educators, administrators, politicians, and historians since the time of Confucius in 5000 B.C. Common sense informs us that interest in this subject must actually date back to the earliest banding together of individuals into rudimentary societies. The importance of leadership roles in all group endeavors has led to the development, over time, of a large variety of theories pertaining to leadership.

Some of the earliest leadership theorists propounded the Great Man Theory of Leadership (Carlyle, 1841; Dowd, 1936; Galton, 1870; Wiggam, 1931; Woods, 1913). The pivotal construct of the theory is that leaders are genetically

endowed with superior qualities that differentiate them from followers. The search to define these qualities, or traits, led to the trait theories of leadership. Trait Theory adherents viewed leadership as consisting of traits which could be measured and designated as distinguishable from non-leaders (Gray & Smeltzer, 1989; Green, 1994). The eventual reduction of interest in trait theory studies was accelerated by Stogdill's (1948) negative findings after review of 124 "weak and inconclusive" studies grounded upon the Trait Theory.

Other early theorists proposed that the emergence of a great leader is a result of time, place, and circumstance. These investigators claimed that the way in which the leader interacted with the environment was the key aspect of leadership efficiency. This group of theorists became known as proponents of Environmental Theory (Bogardus, 1918; Hocking, 1924; Mumford, 1909; Murphy, 1941; Tead, 1935).

Personal-situational theorists agreed with the environmental theorists regarding the importance of the environment, but expanded upon this concept to include interaction between the leader and followers as well as interaction between the leader and the situation or environment (Case, 1933; Cattell, 1951; Gerth & Mills, 1952; Stogdill & Shartle, 1955; Westburgh, 1931). The "Situational Leadership" model (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977) is a more recent application of this theory.

A further expansion of the examination of leadership in conjunction with situation, and personal interactions is introduced by the Interaction-Expectation

Theories. The underlying concept of these models is that an increase in the frequency of interaction between leader and followers will result in an increase in leadership efficiency (Evans, 1970; Fiedler, 1967; Hemphill, 1954; Homans, 1950; House, 1970). Yet another set of researchers adhered to the concept of leadership effectiveness measured by interactions designed to develop more efficient organizations (Argyris, 1964; Likert, 1967; McGregor, 1960). An additional model developed to link leadership style to organizational efficiency is Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid, which has appealed to practitioners due to clear direction in perfecting leadership skills (1978). The underlying assumption of behavioral theories is that the leader's behavior will evoke a specific behavior in the follower (Astin & Scherrei, 1980; Davis & Luthans, 1979; Lewin, Lippit, & White, 1939).

Beginning in the 1970's, a majority of leadership research began to emphasize, first, transactional leadership theory, and later transformational leadership theory. Transactional theory (Burns, 1978), viewed leadership as a transaction or exchange between leaders and followers. Transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1985) expanded upon and augmented Burns' hypothesis to develop the measurable concept of transformational leadership. By developing a model consisting of six measurable variables, Bass has endeavored to measure the behaviors that contribute to a full range of leadership styles. Leaders, who inspire followers by going beyond day-to-day interactions and encourage them to perform beyond their expected abilities are

transformational leaders. Whether these leaders exist, and whether they contribute positively as presidents at institutions of higher education is the theoretical basis for this research.

### Significance of the Study

This project will yield new information regarding the importance of transformational leadership style to national institutions throughout the United States. For the highly ranked institutions of the U.S. News and World Report, this information would present the opportunity to consider how the style of current presidential leadership relates to defining factors selected by the U.S. News and World Report. The data will not show a direct cause and effect; rather, a correlation only. However, lower ranked institutions could consider this information when striving to improve standings. If the data gathered while conducting this research indicate a significant relationship between the leadership style exhibited and the ranking of the institution, further research could be conducted to determine the true meaning of the relationship.

Of equally important significance, this information could add to academic curricular decisions for students of higher education. Bass and Avolio (1992) have concluded that the importance of transformational leadership has been proved, and that leadership training of managers at all levels should become an integral component of organizational education. Other investigators (Inkson & Moss, 1993) maintain that a shift in educational focus to transformational



leadership should be delayed until more research can be conducted. This study will help to distinguish between these apparently divergent approaches.

Another application of these data is for use of the governing boards of institutions aspiring to guide their institutions to higher national rankings. In addition to the traditional functions of setting policy and selecting presidents, trustees of the governing board must also participate in shaping educational priorities for the future and actively involve themselves in the review of the quality of the institution (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1982). Research conducted to gather data regarding the quality of leadership at highly ranked institutions would be of importance for both the hiring of new academic leadership and the setting of educational priorities.

### Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study the following terms are defined:

Charisma - inspires unquestioning loyalty and devotion in the followers without regard to their own self-interest (Bass, 1985).

Laissez-faire leadership - followers are given complete freedom of action. The leader refrains from participating and does not make evaluative remarks (Stodgill, 1974).

Transactional Leadership - recognizes what the follower needs and clarifies for the follower how these needs will be fulfilled in exchange for the follower's satisfactory effort and performance (Bass, 1985).

Transformational Leadership - motivates followers to do more than they originally expected to do, by raising their level of awareness, by encouraging them to transcend their own self-interest, or by altering their need levels (Bass, 1985).

### Limitations

One area of concern in any quantitative study is the validity and reliability of the instrument specified for gathering data. The instrument designated for use in this study is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5x-short (Bass & Avolio, 1995). The validity and consistency of this instrument, which has been adequately tested, is discussed in Chapter 3.

One further possible limiting factor in the proposed study design might be the high return rate required when utilizing a small sample. The study requires the MLQ to be administered to 150 subjects located at the 50 top ranked national universities according to U.S. News and World Report. A low return rate could restrict the generalizability of the data to other national universities. The selected sample is considered an adequate representation of the small global population of 228 institutions. These top tier universities occupy positions of high regard and aspiration among the national institutions.

One further limitation, which exists in the design of this study, is the utilization of varying numbers of survey returns from different institutions. The study calls for securing completed instruments from three high-level university administrators from each school. Statistically comparing three completed

questionnaires from one institution with only one or two returned questionnaires from alternate universities presents a challenge in compiling the data collected. In order for the data from an institution to be usable, one respondent is required to address research question #1, and at least two of the three top administrators surveyed must respond to address research question #2. The statistical strategy for utilizing this data will be outlined in Chapter 3.

Finally, the length of time the rated president has been in office could affect the perspective of top administrators when completing the survey. This limitation will be addressed by examining the relationship between the length of time in office to the style of leadership assigned to that particular university president.

### Delimitations

The sample selected to participate in this study consists solely of national universities as designated by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Because of the selective nature of the research sample, the study results may not be applicable to all categories of educational institutions. National universities offer a full range of undergraduate majors as well as master's and doctoral degrees. Many place strong emphasis on research and receive federal funding for their research endeavors (Graham & Morse, 1998). Other categories of institutions of higher education such as liberal arts colleges, regional schools, and specialty schools are not included in this sample. These schools, because of different mission statements, size, and overall objectives, should not be considered in the same way as national universities.

The survey sample is also limited to only the top tier, or fifty most highly ranked national institutions according to the U.S. News and World Report. The possibility of other unknown factors, such as institutional financial resources, which may coincide with high ranking, have not been included in the design of this study.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Interest in leadership theories can be inferred from writings of early civilizations. Confucius (circa 500 B.C.) wrote one of the earliest comprehensive treatises on leadership (Ayman, 1990), and discussion of leadership can be found in the writings of Plato, Plutarch, and Caesar (Bass, 1981). “The Prince” by Machiavelli in the 16<sup>th</sup> century remains one of the key works in the annals of leadership theory (Machiavelli, 1940,1950).

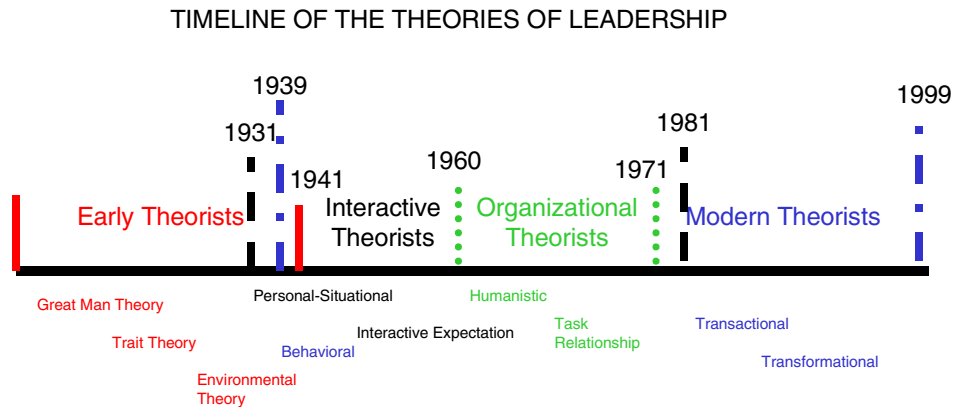
In more recent times, leadership has continued to be a topic of interest, as well as a subject of contention among many leadership theorists. Several different schools of thought regarding leadership have prevailed simultaneously since early observations in this area of interest began (Stogdill, 1974). Most early theorists presented their findings based on information gained through empirical observation as opposed to statistical research.

The following review of the theories of leadership begins in the middle 1800s, and continues, in an essentially sequential manner to the development of transformational leadership theory. The discussion is presented as chronologically as possible to demonstrate how the development of earlier

leadership theories would often present questions which would in turn lead to the development of a new group of theories. Frequently, these schools of thought would overlap, both in time, and in concept.

The leadership theories discussed in the following chapter are organized conceptually into groups. Each theory presented shares an underlying conceptual base with the other theories considered within the same group. Occasionally, there are theories presented within one conceptual group, which also share ideas with a different group of theories. The groups of theories presented are as follows: 1) The Early Theorists. These investigators viewed leadership as a product of a set of forces. They did not consider the interaction between leaders and situations as pertinent to the discussion of leadership. The theories presented in this section include Great Man theories, Trait theories, and Environmental theories. 2) The Interactive Theorists. From the early to middle 1900's new leadership theories began to examine interactive relationships while studying leadership, as opposed to viewing leadership traits as isolated characteristics of individuals. These theories include the Personal-Situational theories, and Interaction-Expectation Theories. 3) The Organizational Theorists. The third section presented below includes theories that investigate the relationship between leaders and organizations. These theories are the Humanistic theories, and Task-Relationship theories. 4) The Modern Theorists. More recently expounded theories describe leadership behavior in terms of the ways in which it influences behavior in followers. The discussion of these

Behavioral theories leads logically into an investigation of Transformational and Transactional leadership theories. The temporal relationship among these schools of thought are depicted in the following timeline:



## The Early Theorists

### Great Man Theories

The Great Man Theory of leadership attempted to explain leadership on the basis of heredity. The underlying concept of the theory is that the leader is genetically endowed with superior qualities that differentiate him from his followers (Carlyle, 1841), (Dowd, 1936). In the early years of the twentieth century, several leadership theorists were influenced by Galton's (1870) study of the hereditary background of great men. He proposed that great leaders inherit their ability to lead. Motivated by Galton's observations, Woods (1913) studied the history of 14 nations over periods of five to ten centuries to determine the effect of the governing ruler's leadership style upon his follower's standard of

living. His findings indicated that the conditions of each reign were directly related to the abilities of the rulers present. Thus, a strong leader would precipitate a prosperous era, while a weak leader would be cause for a less comfortable time period. Woods concluded that the leader makes the nation and shapes it in accordance with his abilities (1913).

In 1931, Wiggam proposed a method by which superior leaders could be maintained in ample quantity. He calculated that an adequate supply of leaders depended upon a high birth rate among the biologically superior aristocratic classes. Dowd (1936) claimed that leaders are always more intelligent, energetic, and superior than their followers. In 1960, Jennings published a comprehensive survey of the great man theory of leadership. He argued that if the leader is endowed with superior qualities then it should be possible to identify these qualities. This search for measurable qualities became the underlying concept of the trait theories of leadership.

### Trait Theories

The Trait Theory of leadership focused on different personality traits with which leaders might be endowed. Traits such as height, weight, appearance, intelligence, knowledge, dominance, and initiative were studied (Green, 1994). Researchers viewed leadership as a trait that could be measured and designated as distinguishable from non-leaders (Gray & Smeltzer, 1989). Stogdill (1948) reviewed 124 studies grounded upon the Trait Theory. Although he ultimately concluded that the Trait Theory studies were weak and inconclusive, he did



determine that leaders exceeded others in several traits. These are: 1) intelligence; 2) scholarship; 3) dependability; 4) social participation; and 5) social and economic status. While these determinations were thought provoking, and later applicable to other leadership studies, Stogdill concluded that leadership could not be adequately defined by the axioms of Trait Theory. Stogdill postulated that effective leadership is dependent upon situation as well as the leader's personal characteristics. His conclusion that "a person does not become a leader by virtue of the possession of some combination of traits"(p.66) led to the eventual reduction of trait leadership research. More recently, leadership theorists have still not found traits as an effective way in explaining leadership (Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992).

### Environmental Theories

Other early theorists proposed that the emergence of a great leader is a result of time, place, and circumstance (Mumford, 1909; Hocking, 1924). These Environmental theorists maintained that the setting, or environment, of the person's activity must be appropriate to encourage leadership to flourish (Tead, 1935). The leadership careers of Lenin, Lincoln, Gandhi, Roosevelt, and Washington are all difficult to dissociate from the circumstances of the time and place in which they functioned.

According to Tead (1935), every leader is as much a product of the setting of his life and times as of his own desire to wield power. Bogardus (1918) claimed that the type of leadership a group will develop or accept is determined by the

nature of the group and the problems it must solve. Supporting this statement, Murphy (1941), contended that leadership does not reside in a person but is a function of situation.

### The Interactive Theorists

#### Personal-Situational Theories

Personal-Situational theorists, therefore, examined the interactive effects of leadership style and situational factors. Westburgh (1931) suggested that the study of leadership must include the affective, intellectual, and action traits of the individual as well as the specific conditions under which the individual operates. Case (1933) viewed leadership as a function of three factors. These were: 1) the personality traits of the leader; 2) the nature of the group and its members; and 3) the event or problem confronting the group. These theorists demonstrated a noticeably higher level of sophistication in their research methodology than the early Great Man theorists did. During this time period, research findings began to be presented as quantifiable data, as opposed to qualitative observations.

As the twentieth century moved towards its middle years, leadership theory became yet more complex with the introduction of more extensive factors in studying leadership. These factors included the use of instruments to gather data, and the further development of controlled studies.

In 1952 Gerth and Mills expanded earlier descriptions of leadership theory to include four factors: 1) The traits and motives of the leader as a man: 2) The image that the public holds of the leader and the motives for following him: 3)

The role that he plays as a leader, and 4) The situational context in which he and his followers may be involved. This movement by leadership theorists towards more interactive viewpoints is also reflected in the work of Stogdill and Shartle (1955). They proposed that leadership must be studied in terms of the status, interactions, perceptions, and behavior of individual leaders in relation to other members of the relevant group structure. In the middle 1900s leadership began to be perceived as a relationship between people instead of a characteristic of the person in the leadership role. Cattell (1951) claimed that the two primary functions of leadership are helping a group decide upon a goal, and then helping the group to accomplish this goal. Thus leadership would represent the interaction between the goals of the leader and the goals and needs of the followers.

This approach to leadership was more recently extended by the “Situational Leadership” model (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). In research conducted at Ohio State University the investigators determined that many leadership behaviors could be defined as either “task” behaviors or “relationship” behaviors. Task behaviors involve clarifying specific aspects of the job of the followers, while relationship behaviors involve providing people with support and giving them positive feedback (Mosley et.al. 1989). The Hersey-Blanchard model suggests that there is a relationship between the maturity of the followers, and the most effective leadership behaviors. A higher level of maturity amongst the followers would lead to a more effective response to a democratic, or participatory form of

leadership. These theorists argued that different styles of leadership are more efficient in different managerial situations.

Hersey & Blanchard tested their model through the development and analysis of the Leadership Effectiveness and Adaptability Description (1981). Research results garnered through the administration of this instrument yielded contrasting results in a variety of studies (Blank, Weitzel, & Green, 1987; Jacobson, 1984; York & Hastings, 1986). Supportive data for this approach came from Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973) who also viewed leadership style as variable depending upon the existent management situation. The continuum of leadership behaviors suggested by both these theorists illustrates a relationship between the authority wielded by the leader and the freedom experienced by the followers. The greater the use of authority by the leader, the less freedom, or independence of action, will be allowed to the followers. Conversely, leaders who exert very little authority must have mature and capable followers to utilize their resulting freedom of choice effectively.

While the Hersey-Blanchard curvilinear model of leadership has been repudiated as having no theoretical or logical justification (Graeff, 1983), the intuitive appeal of the paradigm has generated interest among management practitioners. Situationalism is appealing to managers because it provides freedom from management principles and thus is more easily mastered than other, more complex leadership models (Blake & Mouton, 1982b).

### Interaction-Expectation Theories

The concept that leadership does not exist independently of environment and personal interaction led to the elaboration of the so-called Interaction-Expectation theories. In 1950 Homans proposed that successful leadership could be measured by three variables. These were: 1) action; 2) interaction; and 3) sentiments. The underlying concept is that an increase in the frequency of interaction between a leader and his followers will increase mutual respect and help clarify group culture.

Hemphill (1954) developed a theory that viewed successful leadership as the process by which followers exercised their option to participate in a leadership-precipitated action. According to Hemphill, when the agreed participation results in a solution to a previously identified problem, the expectation of leadership success increases. In 1959, Stogdill developed an expectancy-reinforcement theory of role attainment that placed emphasis on these group dynamics. He proposed that as group members interact and participate in a task, they reinforce the expectation that each will continue to perform in the same way. Therefore, each time a group member responds in an expected manner, the behavior reinforces the expectation of the same continuous action. The leadership potential for any group member is measured by the extent to which that individual continuously initiates an action, and then meets expectations regarding the performance of the action.

Another Interaction-expectation theory is the path-goal theory (Evans, 1970). In this leadership theory, the degree to which the leader exhibits consideration, or thoughtfulness towards his followers, determines the followers' perceptions of the abundance of rewards available. The continued expected interaction between the action of the leader, and the rewards granted the followers strengthens the leadership role. The leader also must determine the paths, or behaviors that the followers must emulate in order to achieve rewards. Once these paths are clearly established, the followers, or subordinates understand which actions will result in reward. Each time the expectant reward is delivered, the path for the followers is reinforced. House (1970) also proposed that it is the leader's job to promote understanding of which path or action will increase each follower's work-goal attainment. A good leader will clarify goals, indicate appropriate paths, and then meet expectations for rewards. The determination of the appropriate paths, which are established, must be based upon the situation in which the leader is forced to operate.

Fiedler (1967) proposed in his Contingency theory of leadership that the effectiveness of a given pattern of leadership is contingent upon the demands imposed by the situation. He viewed a successful leader as one who will display appropriate action in a variety of situations.

## Organizational Theorists

### Humanistic Theories

While the “Interaction-Expectation” theories were focused on the relationship, or interaction between the leader and followers, the Humanistic theorists were more concerned with the interaction, or effect of leadership upon the development of efficient organizations. This group proposed that it is the function of the leader to modify the organization in order to provide freedom for each individual to realize his or her potential while contributing towards the goals of the group.

Based on his consulting and research work in industry, McGregor (1960,1966) developed two different sets of assumptions that influence leadership style. These findings are represented by his Theory X and Theory Y. Theory X is based on the assumption that people are passive and resistant to organizational needs. Leaders, operating under Theory X mandates, would need to direct and motivate people to meet these needs. Theory Y leaders embrace the concept that people already possess self motivation and a successful leader needs only to organize the institutional environment to allow these individuals to fulfill their own needs while meeting the goals of the organization.

Another humanistic theorist, Argyris (1964), maintains there is a fundamental conflict between the organization and the individual. He claims the individual’s needs and the organization’s needs are often in contention. Argyris maintains that it is the leader’s function to assist each individual in meeting his own needs

for growth and self-expression, while making a contribution towards the organization (1964).

Likert (1967) views leadership as a process in which the leader must consider the expectations, values, and interpersonal skills of those with whom he is interacting. A good leader must involve followers in decision-making regarding their own welfare and work. Likert proposes that an effective leader extends group cohesiveness and motivation by providing freedom for decision-making and encouraging initiative.

#### Task-Relationship Theories

Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid shows that leadership style has two concerns: production and people (Mosley, Megginson & Pietri, 1989). These researchers proposed that leadership methods can best be viewed in terms of a grid on which concern for production is plotted on the horizontal axis and concern for people is plotted on the vertical axis.

Blake and Mouton (1964) identified, through the grid, five basic leadership styles. The first of these was the authority-obedience style, which represents the leader who is highly concerned with production but has a low interest in people. At the other end of the leadership spectrum would be the country club leader, who demonstrates a primary concern for people, but a very low concern for production. The "middle-of-the-road" management style represents the leader who shows some interest in both people and production. The leader who represents the "impoverished" management style is the poorest of all styles on



the grid, (low people and low production), and has essentially abdicated the leadership role entirely. Finally, the leader who is represented by the “team management” style, representing a high interest in both people and production is the most effective (Blake & Mouton, 1985).

Studies supporting this paradigm have determined that leaders trained in the “team management” style increased profitability of their companies by 400 percent (Blake & Mouton, 1978). The interest generated by the Managerial Grid was another indication of business leaders’ desires to obtain clear, easily understood direction in perfecting management skills. Another model developed during this time frame served the same purpose in business. This was Fiedler’s Contingency Model.

In 1967, Fiedler developed the Contingency Model of situational leadership. The model was designed to incorporate situational parameters into the leadership equation. Fiedler developed a scale of “situational control” based on three features determined to be present in any situation. These were: 1) leader-member relations, or the degree of trust and support which exists between followers and leaders; 2) task structure, which is the extent to which the goals and procedures for accomplishing the group’s task are defined; and 3) position power, the degree to which the leader has authority to reward and punish followers.

Utilizing the Least Preferred Co-worker (LPC) instrument to gather data, leaders were asked, utilizing a list of 16-24 items, to describe a coworker who

would be most difficult to work with. A low LPC leader who assigned primarily negative attributes to the coworker was viewed as task-motivated, while a high LPC leader was seen as relationship motivated (Fiedler, 1971). Unfortunately, while the model was found to be well researched (Rice, 1978), some ambiguity remained regarding the meaning of the results. Fiedler (1971) interpreted LPC scores to be predictive of leadership style, but other researchers reported results in direct contrast to his findings (Nealey & Blood, 1968; Stinson, 1977).

While the Task- Relations theories were gaining popularity among management practitioners, another interpretation of leadership theory was also generating interest among educators in the leadership field.

### Modern Theorists

#### Behavioral Theories

The underlying assumption of the behavioral theories is that the leader's behavior will evoke a specific behavior in the follower. The follower's resulting behavior, or action, will cause the leader to interpret his original action and either reinforce or extinguish subsequent similar behavior (Davis & Luthans, 1979). This behavior approach to leadership explained that what leaders did on the job related to their effectiveness as leaders.

Lewin, Lippit, & White (1939) conducted the seminal work done in this area. These researchers organized a number of elementary school children into clubs led by graduate students trained to behave as autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire leaders. Different results and follower behaviors resulted from the different

leadership behaviors. The graduate students trained to behave in autocratic methods consistently directed the actions and interactions of the group members at all time. The democratic leaders encouraged the group members to determine their own policies and awarded them freedom to initiate their own tasks and interactions. The laissez faire leader was characterized by giving group members complete freedom and refraining from participating in activities. Observers recorded a greater frequency of order giving, commands, praise and approval, and criticism by authoritarian leaders. Democratic leaders gave more suggestions, and induced independence among group members. Laissez faire leaders gave only information, and then, only when directly queried. Greater degrees of hostility, discontent, and submissiveness were shown in the authoritarian led groups. Democratic groups displayed greater friendliness, spontaneity, and cohesiveness, and the laissez faire led groups were less efficient and less satisfying to group members (Stogdill, 1974).

Since 1938 numerous research studies have been conducted to investigate which of the three different styles of leadership was more efficient (Foa, 1957; Gibb, 1951; Shaw, 1955; Torrance, 1953; Vroom and Mann, 1960; Ziller, 1957). The results of these studies indicate that neither democratic nor autocratic leadership style can be advocated as a method for increasing productivity, but group member satisfaction was found to be higher under democratic leaders (Stogdill, 1974).

In a more recent study utilizing data regarding university presidents (Astin & Scherrei, 1980), four additional styles of leadership were defined. These four styles were designated as the bureaucrat, the intellectual, the egalitarian, and the counselor. The bureaucrat, who prefers to communicate through staff or other intermediaries rather than direct interaction with faculty, is seen as remote and ineffective by faculty (Astin & Scherrei, 1980). This person was most likely to be found as president of large or nondenominational institutions. The intellectual style of leader is characterized by frequent communication with faculty. This president is more likely to be situated at selective institutions, and at institutions located in the East. The egalitarian president is found to communicate more often with not just the faculty, but with students, registrars, financial aid officers, donors, potential students, and visitors. This individual's accessibility to almost any individual or group lends to the labeling of such leaders as nonauthoritarian. These presidents were most frequently found in the Midwest. The counselor's administrative style emphasizes a preference for interacting with others by means of personal conversations and informal meetings. These presidents are more likely to be older and to have been in office longer than the other three presidential leadership styles. Counselor type presidents were not found to have a high correlation with any particular type of institution.

### Research Quantification

Based on a need to quantify leadership style as well as establishing reproducible research, most leadership research switched to the use of

questionnaires in the 1950s. One of the most comprehensive leadership studies during this time period was done at Ohio State University. This ten-year program began in 1945 with the goal of gathering information leading to a basic understanding of leadership. As part of this program, studies of leadership effectiveness in industrial, military, and educational institutions were conducted (Campbell, 1956; Scott, 1956; Stogdill and Shartle, 1955). Statistical analysis was applied to over 1500 behavior descriptors that resulted in eight leader behavior dimensions (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974; Stogdill & Coons, 1957). Two factors were kept as significant in describing leadership. The first factor was consideration, which dealt with people-oriented behaviors, such as establishing an understanding between leaders and followers based on mutual trust, and respect. The second factor was initiating structure, which refers to leader behaviors directed to devising and structuring subordinates' work and encouraging goal attainment (Campbell, 1956). Leaders were found to exhibit a high or low orientation to either or both leadership dimensions. The study resulted in the development of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire which "dominated survey research on leadership behavior for the next two decades,"(Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992, p.155).

Stogdill (1965) utilized this instrument to study 27 organizations of seven types. It was found that leadership consideration was related to personal employee satisfaction, and supervisory structuring was related to employee satisfaction with the company. Neither consideration nor structure was

consistently related to group productivity. In summary of the results of 29 studies conducted by as many different researchers utilizing this instrument (Stogdill, 1974), group productivity was found to be more closely related to structure than to consideration. Alternatively, member or follower satisfaction was more highly related to leadership consideration.

The above theories represent only a fraction of the diverse approach to leadership in the past century. The diversity of leadership theories throughout the twentieth century has engendered much debate, but little resolution, among educational and management theorists. In 1974, Stogdill, after his review of over 3000 leadership studies, noted that little gain in understanding had been accomplished in the previous forty years of leadership research. More recently however, some investigators perceive a shift in leadership studies to a more convergent theme (Posner & Kouzes, 1990; Sashkin & Burke, 1990; Yukl, 1989). Yukl, (1989) proposed that the study of leadership is analogous to the swinging of a pendulum. He contended that utilizing new methods of investigation has led researchers to a more balanced outlook. Two theories, which generated much research with the recent swing of Yukl's pendulum, are transactional and transformational leadership theories.

Avolio and Bass (1991) proposed that transformational leadership would prove to be the leadership methodology most highly correlated with effectiveness. This model would be followed in effectiveness by transactional and then nontransactional, or laissez-faire, styles of leadership.

## Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Beginning in the 1970's, a majority of leadership research began to emphasize transactional leadership theory. During the 1980's this framework was expanded to also include the transformational theory of leadership (House, Woycke, and Fodor, 1988). Burns first described the concepts of transactional and transformational leadership in his study of political leaders (1978). Bass (1985) in Leadership and Performance beyond Expectations expanded upon and augmented Burns' hypotheses of transactional and transformational leadership. Currently, these leadership theories are widely researched (Avolio and Bass, 1988; Bass, 1990; Bass and Avolio, 1990; Hater and Bass, 1988; Kuhnert and Lewis, 1987; Yammarino and Bass, 1990; and Keller, 1992).

Transactional leadership theory is based on the premise that a transaction takes place between the leader and followers that benefits both parties. While describing transactional leadership, Burns (1978), theorized that leaders derive their power by identifying and satisfying the motives and needs of their followers. The motives and needs of the leader must also be identified and fulfilled in order for a transactional relationship to develop. This exchange of needs fulfillment was described by Hollander (1978) as a social exchange in which the leader and followers give and receive benefits. Hollander clarified this definition of exchange as leaders giving followers a sense of direction, values, and recognition, and followers providing leaders with esteem and responsiveness in return. The

definition of transactional leadership as a social exchange was also supported by Bass (1990), Bass, Avolio, and Goodheim (1987), and Simon (1978).

Downton, Jr. (1973) described several underlying assumptions which are pertinent to the transactional theory of leadership. First, individuals engage in actions to obtain personal goals. Second, individuals pursue goals with the least amount of input possible for the greatest return. Third, behaviors that were successful in obtaining goals are continued, while unrewarded behavior was usually terminated. Finally, social exchanges create debts that have to be repaid at some time, and so reciprocity between individuals becomes an important aspect of their relationship.

Burns felt that the majority of leaders and followers develop this kind of transactional association, but leadership of this nature does not provide motivation, inspiration, and intellectual stimulation for the leader or the follower (Burns, 1978). Bass (1985b) suggested that transactional leadership would ultimately fail because these leaders lacked the reputation of delivering appropriate rewards, and were therefore viewed as ineffective. Thus, a transactional leader is one who is involved in an exchange process of rewards for work with followers (Burns, 1978).

In contrast, a transformational leader motivates or “transforms” followers to do more than they originally expected to do utilizing one or all of the following methods (Bass & Avolio, 1994): 1) stimulates interest among followers to view their work from new perspectives; 2) generates awareness of mission or vision of



the organization; 3) develops followers to higher levels of ability and potential; and 4) motivates followers to work for the group benefit as well as their own.

Transformational leadership according to Burns:

“...occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality.... Their purposes, which might have started out as separate but related, as in the case of transactional leadership, become fused. However transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both.” (Burns, 1978, p.20).

Transformational leaders will go beyond the simple transactional relationship of action-reward to satisfy the higher needs of the follower. This results in a relationship of mutual stimulation (Burns, 1978).

The theoretical basis for transformational leadership is dependent upon Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, developed in 1954, which later became one of the most frequently acknowledged motivation theories among managers (Mosley, Megginson, & Pietri, 1989). One underlying principle of Maslow's theory is that people's needs may be arranged in a hierarchy, ranked from basic or physiological needs at the lower level to self-fulfillment or actualization needs at the highest level. Consistent with Maslow's hierarchy, the transforming leader is able to raise his followers' needs from concerns for

physiological satisfaction, security, and affiliation to interest in achievement, recognition, and self actualization (Burns, 1978).

Burns determined that the utilization of transformational leadership skills satisfied the higher level needs of subordinates while transactional leadership satisfied the lower order needs. The primary difference between transactional and transformational leadership is that transactional leadership involves an exchange of meeting lower level needs, such as work for compensation, and that transformational leadership engages people (Burns, 1978). Burns perceived leaders as being either transactional or transformational, but Bass (1985) proposed that transformational leadership augments the effects of transactional leadership on the efforts, satisfaction, and effectiveness of followers.

Transformational leadership occurs more conspicuously in situations of organizational crisis and change, while transactional leadership style represents a method by which to accomplish daily routine management issues (Yukl, 1989b). The typical environment in which transformational leadership occurs is when four variables are present. These variables are: 1) a crisis situation; 2) emotional distress among organization members; 3) a clearly defined leader and; 4) an inspirational message (Willner, 1984). Individuals involved in a crisis event are prepared to make changes (Beaven, 1989), and the emotional distress experienced by these individuals encourages them to look towards a leader to resolve the situation. The transformational leader will appear in times of crisis, and create success (Weber, 1952).

One important aspect of these leadership models is that they depend on specific factors that can be quantified and measured. In 1985, when Bass originally presented his conceptualization of the transactional and transformational leadership model, it included the following measurable leadership factors: 1) charisma; 2) inspirational leadership; 3) intellectual stimulation; 4) individualized consideration; 5) contingent reward; 6) management-by exception; and 7) laissez-faire. Of these factors, transformational leaders were defined by charisma, inspirational leadership, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985).

### Charisma

Past theorists have defined charismatic leaders in a variety of ways. Weber (1924/1947), saw charismatic leaders as being highly esteemed persons, who are gifted with exemplary qualities. These qualities include confidence, dominance, a sense of purpose, and the ability to articulate goals and ideas. Lawler (1982) viewed charismatic leaders as those with vision and concerned more with “doing the right things than with doing things right”. Bass (1990) characterizes the charismatic in a number of ways. He notes that charisma is dependent upon the follower as well as the leader. The follower must accept the charismatic’s vision in order for charisma to be realized. Under times of stress within an organization, charismatic leaders are much more likely to appear. Once an individual is identified as a charismatic, that definition is likely to persist. The charismatic leader is often domineering, self-confident, and has a strong

need for power. His ability to articulate a vision and engage his followers in his viewpoint makes him a transforming leader.

The charismatic leader is also able to communicate to followers' ideological goals that are readily accepted by them. To achieve this the leader must have a deep understanding of the needs of the subordinates. Once these goals are communicated, the charismatic leader demonstrates great confidence in the followers' ability to reach the goals. This increases the likelihood of the followers internalizing the goals and ultimately realizing them. However, leaders who are personally charismatic, yet retain their own goals as separate from their followers are not considered true transformational leaders. These charismatic leaders will resist empowering and developing their followers (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

### Inspirational Leadership

Inspirational leadership is defined by Bass as a sub factor of charisma (1985). If followers are drawn to the goals and purposes of a leader, but not to the personality of the leader, then that leader is inspirational but not charismatic (Downton, 1973). Charismatic leaders evoke in their followers a strong personal commitment with uncritical and unquestioning obedience, sometimes even attributing supernatural powers to the leader. Alternatively, inspirational leaders are seen to be knowledgeable, enlightened, and sensitive to occurring problems, but not necessarily imbued with any exceptional personal powers. Inspirational leaders help followers feel more powerful by setting desirable goals and demonstrating the method to achieve them (McClelland, 1975). While theoretical

distinctions can be made between charismatic and inspirational leaders, they may be difficult to establish. Charismatic leaders tend to be highly inspirational, but inspirational leaders may not always be charismatic (Bass, 1990). Both these types of leaders, however, portray the necessary attention to the personal development of subordinates to define them as transformational leaders.

#### Individualized Consideration

Bass (1985) described the leader portraying individualized consideration as one who: supports subordinates' development; delegates; promotes familiarity and contact; uses informal means of communication; fulfills the subordinates' desire for information; recognizes differences among subordinates; and provides individual counseling. Many past theorists involved in behavioral leadership theory identified employee-centered behaviors as being important in follower motivation and performance (Stogdill, 1974). Bass (1985) found consideration to be an important factor in rating the transformational leader, although this characteristic was also found to be significant for the transactional leader (Seltzer & Bass, 1987).

#### Intellectual Stimulation

The fourth characteristic of the transformational leader is the ability to intellectually stimulate subordinates. Although intellectual stimulation is inspiring to subordinates, and is often associated with charismatic leadership, there are some important distinctions between the two. Intellectual stimulation contributes to the independence of followers as opposed to the unquestioning trust

frequently directed from followers towards charismatic leaders (Graham, 1987). Intellectual stimulation can also be used to move subordinates out of their habitual conceptual patterns to new viewpoints when problem solving needs a new outlook (Bailey, 1983).

### Contingent Reward/Management-by-Exception

Two other leadership factors, which were included in the initial model of transactional and transformational leadership were contingent reward and management-by-exception (Bass, 1990). These two factors are used to measure the transactional leader in Bass' paradigm. Successful transactional leadership ultimately depends upon the establishment of a psychological contract between the leader and followers (Hollander, 1987). The transactional leader and subordinate mutually agree upon the tasks that must be accomplished. When a task is successfully completed, the follower expects to receive either an extrinsic reward from the leader, such as pay, benefits, and promotion, or an intrinsic reward such as praise and recognition. The timely and appropriate reward to the follower is the cornerstone of the leader/follower relationship. The successful completion of the transaction of rewards for task accomplishment reinforces this relationship (Bass, 1985).

Peters & Waterman (1982) found that contingent rewards among top rated companies were frequently used to provide reinforcement for task completion. As well, subordinates were found to be most satisfied when expected rewards were consistently delivered upon meeting a task goal (Klomoski & Hayes, 1980).

Further research indicates that higher levels of performance and effectiveness occur when the subordinate can directly associate rewards with the leader (Hunt & Schuler, 1976; Oldham, 1976).

Management by exception occurs when leaders will take corrective action and intervene with subordinates only when failures occur within the organization. The leader will exert authority only when the subordinate's performance is considered substandard. Often, the intervention is coupled with negative reinforcement or punishment. The punishment may fall in a range from mild disapproval, to suspension or discharge. In most studies, management-by-exception was not found to be a positively contributing factor towards leader effectiveness, or satisfaction with leaders (Bass, 1985; Fulk & Wendler, 1982). The management-by-exception leadership factor is separated into two components. Active management-by-exception is described as representing the leader who arranges to monitor errors, while passive management-by-exception exemplifies the leader who waits to be informed about errors before taking action (Hater & Bass, 1988).

#### Laissez Faire Leadership

Bass (1990), described his leadership theory as covering a full range of leadership styles and behavior. Thus, he endeavored to define and measure not just the factors contributing to transformational and transactional leaders, but those imbuing the laissez-faire leader as well. When portraying leadership style as falling along a continuum scale, Bass displayed transformational leadership as the highest level of leadership skill, and laissez-faire leadership at the lower end

of the continuum. Laissez-faire, or passive leaders, are found to take little or no responsibility for decision making in their organizations and are neither directive nor consultative (Bass & Avolio, 1989). Early investigations into laissez-faire leadership concluded that this leadership style resulted in poor concentration, and sub par work efficiency among subordinates (Lippitt & White, 1943; White & Lippitt, 1960). Subsequent studies have also found that the level of satisfaction of followers under laissez-faire leaders is lower than both transactional and transformational leadership styles (Avolio & Bass, 1991). Bass (1985), found that while laissez-faire leadership is not the exact opposite of active, or transformational leadership, it is found to negatively correlate with descriptions of transformational leaders when examining the variables listed in the previous section.

#### Transformational Leadership Paradigm Update

Transformational and transactional leadership theory was first introduced by Burns (1978), and expanded upon by Bass in 1985. Utilizing the original version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), many studies have confirmed that transformational leadership style has a greater impact on subordinates' motivation and performance than transactional leadership, or laissez-faire leadership style (Avolio & Bass, 1995; Bass & Avolio, 1993). Yet, Bass and associates have remained interested in measuring the "full range" of leadership styles which are considered an integral part of the leadership continuum (Bass & Avolio, 1994). To this end, the original 6-factor model proposed by Bass has



been revised since 1985 to better clarify and reflect findings of the numerous studies conducted between 1985 and 1995. Prior concerns of researchers utilizing the MLQ included the criticism that it lacked discriminant validity among the various factors comprising the survey (Hunt, 1991; Yukl, 1994). Bass and Avolio (1993), concluded, after reviewing prior studies completed which utilized the MLQ that while the original factor structure presented by Bass in 1985 was theoretically sound, that in order to validate the measurement of a broader or “fuller range” of leadership styles, that a new version of the survey instrument must be produced.

The latest version of the MLQ has been used in nearly 200 research programs, doctoral dissertations and masters’ theses throughout the world (Bass & Avolio, 1995). These studies were conducted utilizing a variety of different sample groups. Some of the groups tested with the new version of the MLQ are: 1) 162 evening undergraduate students rating their supervisors; 2) 66 U.S. Government research employees rating their supervisors; 3) 500 employees rating their managers; and 4) 200 troops rating their superior officers.

The instrument, created in response to the above criticism, tests leadership style based on nine factors, or variables, as opposed to the original six. The additional variables are: 1) attributions regarding the leader’s transformational style, which distinguishes between charismatic behaviors and attributions; 2) Management-by-Exception – Active; and 3) Management-by-Exception – Passive. The latter two variables represent a division of the original

Management-by-Exception factor tested in Bass's original instrument (1985). An additional alteration from the original instrument is the change of terms from "charisma" to "idealized influence". By augmenting the above-described changes to the MLQ, Bass and Avolio have developed an instrument which measures a broader range of leadership factors, thus representing more consistently the full range of leadership styles. This enhanced ability to quantify leadership style has significantly refined leadership research and has led to a number of important observations regarding academic leadership in particular.

#### Academic Leadership Research

Transformational leadership in higher education has been discussed as being either the ultimate savior of academic institutions or alternatively as entirely irrelevant, and even detrimental. Bolman and Deal (1992) state that although leadership was not a magic cure, it played a key role in effecting "significant organizational change and improvement in teaching, curriculum, and the relationship between schools and their communities". Maeroff (1980) also viewed academic leadership in terms descriptive of transformational leaders, indicating that college and university leadership was tied to the ability to make hard decisions. Bennis, who was once president of the University of Cincinnati, described the university president as a leader with vision who affected the destiny of the institution through passion, energy, and focus (1989). Other researchers also described academic leaders in terms of transformational variables. For example, Oppelt (1984) stated the chief academic officer should

have vision, creativity, and courage, while Fisher, Tack, & Wheeler produced research findings defining college presidents as having vision (1988). Since the introduction of Bass's transformational leadership paradigm in 1985, much research, which has been conducted in academic environments, supports the concept of the transformational leader as a successful university president (Fisher, Tack, & Wheeler, 1988; Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989; Tucker, Bass, & Danier, 1992).

Alternatively, other investigators have postulated that transformational leadership is an anomaly in higher education (Birnbaum, 1992). According to Birnbaum:

“Because the goals and enduring purposes of an academic institution are likely to be shaped by its history, its culture, and the socialization and training of its participants, rather than by an omnipotent leader, attempts at transformational leadership are more likely to lead to disruption and conflict than to desirable outcomes.” (p. 29)

Birnbaum bases his comments upon data collected by the Institutional Leadership Project (ILP), a five-year longitudinal study of how college and university presidents interact and communicate, assess their own and others' effectiveness, establish goals, learn, and transmit values (1992). The ILP gathered data through on-site, semi-structured interviews with the presidents of thirty-two colleges and universities. Utilizing a two-hour interview protocol, presidents of the thirty institutions were asked to describe themselves as

academic leaders. This information was then analyzed along with data gathered from observations, annual reports, presidential resumes, institutional bulletins, and federal Higher Education General Information Survey responses (Birnbaum, 1992). Based on their self-descriptions, 53 percent of the subjects were categorized as bureaucratic, 53 percent as collegial, 47 percent as political, and 66 percent as symbolic. The final numbers add up to over 100 percent because of overlapping between types of leadership behaviors displayed (Benisom, 1990).

Birnbaum views the passing of the historic giants, the great educational leaders of the past as a natural evolution towards the more complex challenges of today's college presidency (1988). Based on ILP data, discussions of transformational leadership in the higher education environment turned out to have no "real meaning" or applicability (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989).

### Summary

The history of leadership theory has been long and varied. The ongoing interest among researchers to define and test variables, which contribute to the definition of effective leadership, is indicative of the importance which society has traditionally placed on these investigations. Despite the import implied by the copious amount of research performed, there has been very little agreement on the actual definition of what characterizes an effective leader. Beginning with Confucius, Plato, and Caesar, continuing through Galton, Tead, McGregor, and

Stogdill, and most recently encompassing Bass and Birnbaum, leadership study has been imbued with conflicting results, and lively discussion.

The impact of this research upon the college presidency has caused educators to reexamine the role of the university president. Transformational leadership has been acclaimed as the leadership model most likely to result in effective management, as well as incorporating the vision and charismatic methodology to aid educational institutions during the current environment of societal change and government involvement. Alternatively, this same leadership style has been criticized as bringing disruption to college campuses.

The study proposed here will extend previous research in the field of academic leadership by providing new data relating leadership style to the ranking of the “top 50” academic institutions in the United States, as defined by U.S. News and World Report.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Procedures for Collection of Data

The data to be utilized in this study of university leadership style was collected through the usage of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5x-short (Bass & Avolio, 1995). This questionnaire, which has been updated and expanded from a 1985 instrument, is designed to test a full range of leadership styles and behavior (Avolio & Bass, 1991). This full range includes leadership styles that are highly transformational at one end, to those that are highly avoidant at the other end. The validity of five transformational, four transactional and one non-leadership factor were examined with positive results in terms of validity and reliability (Avolio, Bass & Jung, 1995).

The validity testing was based on over 2,000 subjects from nine separate samples ranging in size from 66 to 475. In support of the validity and reliability testing of this instrument, the version of the MLQ utilized in this study previously was used in nearly 200 research programs, doctoral dissertations and master's theses worldwide between 1991 and 1995. A copy of this survey instrument can be found in Appendix A.

Data was collected from the 50 top ranked national educational institutions as indicated by U.S. News and World Report. This sample of institutions is

representative of the 228 national universities that exist throughout the United States. A power analysis was conducted to determine the specific number of respondents necessary to statistically analyze the data gathered from the questionnaires. If this designated number of responses had not been secured, then the MLQ would have subsequently been administered to every third institution rated by the U.S. News and World Report in order to obtain a usable data set.

The MLQ was administered to the chief financial officer, chief student affairs officer, and the chief academic officer at each university in the sample in order to: a) quantify leadership style; and b) determine whether the existence of transformational leadership is universally perceived by the followers of such a leader. The MLQ Form 5x-Short results were quantified to determine whether the rated university presidents exhibit transformational, transactional or laissez-faire leadership as a primary leadership style.

Each chief financial administrator, chief student affairs administrator, and chief academic administrator received a copy of the MLQ in the mail along with a cover letter entreating him or her to participate in the study (Appendix B). After a four-week period non-respondents received a follow-up letter with another copy of the instrument. This was followed in 2 weeks with an e-mailed message asking the subject to return the completed survey instrument.

### The Population

There are 228 national universities currently in existence in the United States. These institutions, which are culled from over 1,400 four-year accredited colleges and universities, are classified at a “national” level by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. National universities are those which offer a full range of undergraduate majors as well as masters and doctoral degrees. Many of these institutions place an emphasis on faculty research, and federal funding is frequently received for these endeavors.

### The Selection of the Sample

The sample selected for the purpose of this study was determined by the 1999 U.S. News and World Report annual college guide. The top fifty national universities, or the top tier as indicated by the Report, were selected as representative of the best national educational institutions according to this well publicized ranking system. The sample consists of 31 private universities and 19 public universities.

At each of these chosen universities three highly placed administrators were selected as the most knowledgeable potential respondents in rating the leadership style of the university president.

### Research Design

The design of this study was based on the utilization of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 45 descriptive items which require a response on a 0-4 rating scale. On this testing scale, zero



represents “not at all; one indicates “once in a while”, two is “sometimes”, three means “fairly often, and four signifies “frequently if not always”. The 45 items represent the testing of nine leadership variables, and include three additional outcome variables that quantify the ultimate performance of the leader (Bass & Avolio, 1995). The nine leadership variables represent a full range of leadership styles from transformational leadership through laissez-faire leadership. The five variables which represent transformational leadership are: 1) Idealized Influence (Attributed); 2) Idealized Influence (Behavior); 3) Inspirational Motivation; 4) Intellectual Stimulation; and 5) Individual Consideration.

The variable that most clearly serves as an indicator for the existence of transactional leadership is the contingent reward variable. Two other variables that indicate a transactional style of leadership while negatively relating to transformational leadership skills are; 1) Management-by-Exception (Active); and 2) Management-by-Exception (Passive). Finally, laissez-faire leadership style is tested as a single variable on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Each of these 9 variables has 4 items dedicated to it on the questionnaire.

Three additional variables tested on this instrument are outcome measures. These represent the respondent’s perceptions of the success of the leadership style exhibited by the university president. These three outcome measures included in the MLQ are 1) extra effort; 2) effectiveness; and 3) satisfaction with leader. All three of these measures have been found to correlate most highly with transformational leadership, less so with transactional leadership, and the

lowest correlation between these items was found with laissez-faire leadership style (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam 1995).

#### Procedure for Analysis of Data

The data was organized utilizing an IBM compatible personal computer software program (ABSTAT<sub>TM</sub>, Anderson-Bell, Denver, Colorado, Version 1.94), which served both as a spreadsheet for data entry and manipulation, as well as statistical analysis. Each of the 45 items included in the MLQ were entered as a numeric variable. Item numbers were also entered in the program to create an independent score for each of the nine separate leadership variables representing the three different leadership styles tested by the MLQ. Each outcome variable was also entered into a data set in ABSTAT to facilitate data analysis.

The collection of data resulted in data sets which are ordinal in character. University presidents who were rated as displaying level 3 or higher on 3 or more transformational leadership variables were found to be transformational leaders. Those presidents who did not meet the criteria for transformational leaders as described above, and who were rated 3 or above on the contingent reward variable with supporting ratings (2 or above) on management by exception, both active and passive, were found to exhibit primarily transactional leadership qualities. Those leaders who were rated at the lower end of the scale for both transformational variables, and the contingent reward variable, but received high

ratings on management by exception as well as the laissez-faire variable were judged to engage in laissez-faire leadership.

A second method of data analysis determined leadership style by obtaining an average of all five transformational leadership variables. If the averaged score was 3.0 or higher, than that president was considered primarily transformational in leadership style. These findings were also examined in relation to the three outcome measures: 1) extra effort; 2) effectiveness; and 3) satisfaction, in order to determine the satisfaction of the raters regarding the leadership style exhibited.

University ranking, and the administrative position held by the respondent were included in the demographic data to allow demographic description of the data set.

### Testing of Research Questions

The data for the study was collected and analyzed in response to the research questions outlined in chapter I of this paper.

1. *Is there any relationship between a top tier ranking in the U.S. News and World Report and a particular leadership style?*

This question was answered in three specific ways. First of all, scores were obtained from the data collected for each of the nine components tested on the MLQ. Since each of the nine variables have four items dedicated to them on the questionnaire, summing up the items, and dividing by four derived the score. A frequency report was generated which displayed the cumulative frequency,

percentile, Z score, and accompanying histogram for each question representing the different leadership styles and provided a comprehensive description of the scoring of all the university presidents.

A numerical response of 3 or higher on at least three of the five variables representing transformational leadership indicated the presence of a transformational leader at that institution.

Secondly, specific criteria as described above were also used to characterize each president into discrete leadership categories. The institutions responding to the survey were divided into quintiles and a statistical comparison was conducted comparing the highest ranked quintile, consisting of institutions ranked one through ten, and the lowest ranked quintile comprised of institutions numbered 41 through 50. The percentage of institutions with presidents characterized as transformational was then compared between the highest and lowest ranked quintiles using chi-square contingency table analysis, and Fisher's exact test. A two-tailed test was employed with the alpha significance level set at  $p < 0.05$ . The data was also divided into two subsets representing the top 25 institutions versus the lower 25. Findings on these two statistical analyses show whether an increasing presence of transformational leadership exists among the most highly ranked institutions.

In addition, continuous scores were assigned to each president representing their transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire characteristics based on answers to the grouped variables described above. A one-way, repeated

measures ANOVA was used to determine whether a difference among the leadership styles exists. If an f statistic  $< 0.05$  was identified, then Newman-Keuls post-hoc test for multiple comparisons was used to determine the source of the difference.

Thirdly, data was presented with US News and World Report ranking as the independent variable, and a continuous leadership score derived from all nine variables with higher numbers representing greater degrees of transformational leadership as the dependent variable. Linear regression was performed to determine the strength (Pearson's product moment, or r value) and magnitude (slope) for the relationship, and correlational analysis was used to determine statistical significance.

Institutions with one, two, or three respondents were included in the statistical analysis described above. When there were two or three survey instruments obtained from a participating university, results were averaged to identify a single score regarding the existence of leadership style. Those institutions with only one respondent were still utilized in answering research question 1. The advantage of receiving multiple responses is the reduction of statistical "noise" in the data set.

*2. Is there agreement among top administrators at the ranked institutions regarding the style of leadership exhibited by their university president?*

Scores for each leadership style derived from each of the three reporting administrators were compared using one-way, non-repeated measures ANOVA,

to determine whether a significant difference existed among them. If a significant difference was found, then an analysis of variance was conducted. In cases where there were only two respondents from an institution the data was still analyzed utilizing an ANOVA. For institutions with only one respondent, this research question remained unanswered. In addition, linear regression with calculation of the coefficient of variation was used to compare each administrator with each other.

### Expected Results

The analysis of the data gathered through the administration of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was expected to address the posed research questions in the following ways:

*1. Is there any correlation between a top tier ranking in the U.S. News and World Report and a particular leadership style?*

It was anticipated that data analysis would show a preponderance of transformational leadership qualities exhibited by the presidents of the top ranked 50 national universities. It was expected that most leaders would demonstrate some combination of different leadership styles, with transformational qualities rating most highly.

The analysis of data resulting from the administration of the MLQ was expected to indicate a correlation between top tier ranking in the U.S. News and World Report and transformational leadership style. By separating the top 50 institutions into quintiles and comparing them against each other, it was expected

that the top quintile would have a statistically significantly greater percentage of transformational leaders compared to the bottom quintile.

*2. Is there agreement among top administrators at the ranked institutions regarding the style of leadership exhibited by their university president?*

Agreement among the three top administrators responding to the instrument was expected as consistency in leadership style exhibited is assumed. The concurrence of the outcome variables tested was also anticipated.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Survey Response

The process of gathering the data required for analysis for this research was a four-step plan designed to maximize the response rate. These four steps were: 1) an initial mailing to all 150 targeted administrators; 2) a follow-up mailing to those administrators who did not respond to the initial mailing; 3) an e-mail reminder sent to the survey group members who had not responded to the mailings; and 4) a phone call to the final outstanding administrators. The results of each of these steps are described in detail below.

#### Initial Mailing

The names and addresses of the chief financial officer, chief academic officer, and chief student affairs officer at each of the 50 designated national universities was obtained from the 1999 Higher Education Directory. Each administrator was mailed a letter detailing the purpose of the study (see Appendix B), a coded copy of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (see Appendix A), and a stamped return addressed envelope. This mailing took place on June 29, 1999. Within six weeks of the mailing date, 39 usable questionnaires had been returned as well as 11 letters from administrators who declined to participate in the study.



### Follow-up Mailing

The second mailing took place on August 20, 1999. This mailing consisted of a follow-up letter (see Appendix B), and an additional coded copy of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. This mailing yielded 15 usable returned questionnaires, and 7 more letters declining participation.

### E-mail Contact

On September 21, 1999 the remaining administrators were contacted by e-mail. The message (see Appendix B) included an offer to mail another questionnaire as well as answer any questions or concerns, which might have been preventing the administrators from participating in the study. This contact resulted in 6 additional usable survey instruments, as well as 10 additional negative responses.

### Telephone Contact

Finally, the remaining members of the targeted survey group were contacted by telephone to extend a plea for participation. In most cases telephone secretaries and administrative assistants handled calls. Still, 3 more completed survey instruments were obtained by this process.

### Reasons for Non-participation

The reasons stated for non-participation throughout the four attempts to obtain completed surveys were varied. Out of the 34 administrators who declined to participate, 20 individuals, or 60 percent declined to respond due to lack of

time. In two cases, recent changes in presidential leadership at their institution made responding impossible. There were also five administrators from different institutions who stated that the U.S. News and World Report college rating system already received more attention than was warranted. One individual claimed it was against his principles to comment on his president's performance to anyone. Finally, one administrator wrote that his president forbade administrators to respond to surveys of this kind. Interestingly, a different administrator from the same institution did respond with a usable survey instrument.

As the study progressed, it became apparent that some of the non-responders could be attributed to misinformation. In four cases the individual listed in the 1999 Higher Education Directory was no longer at that institution, and the new person did not feel comfortable or acclimated enough to respond. Interim administrators who also declined to respond were filling some of the positions. There were three instances where other personnel at the institution being contacted reported administrators on sabbatical or sick leave. Finally, one university administrator responded that their last president was forced to leave by the faculty, and so was not a good subject for research.

### Final Survey Results

The final results of the data gathered from the four step process discussed above is: 1) 63 usable survey instruments returned from 38 out of 50 institutions; 2) 34 administrators who declined to participate due to reasons outlined above;

3) 53 total non-respondents.

### Distribution of Responses

The response rate to the multifactor leadership questionnaire was evenly distributed between institutions numbered 1 through 50, as shown in figure 1.

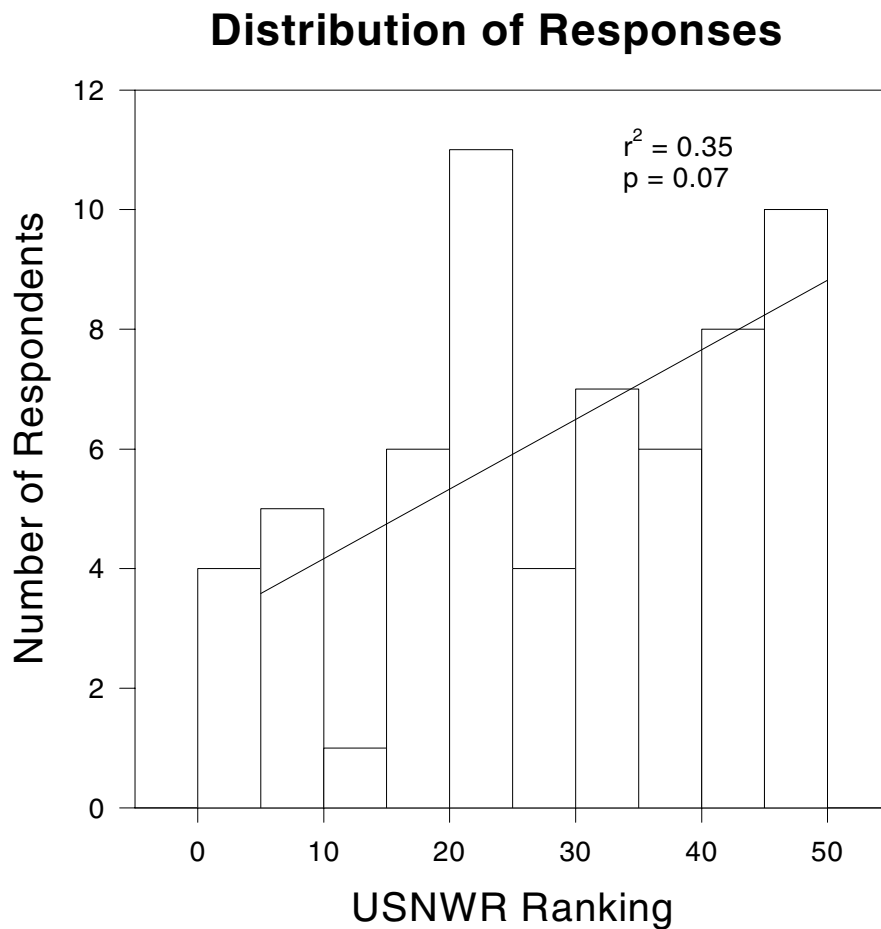


Figure 1. This histogram represents the distribution of responses according to the US News and World Report (USNWR) ranking. The relationship between the rank and number of responses was determined by linear regression, with

Pearson's correlation coefficient.

The histogram in Figure 1 demonstrates the distribution of responses to this study. Although the histogram shows a trend towards greater response rates at the lower ranked institutions this trend is not statistically significant with an  $r^2$  value of 0.35, and a  $p = 0.07$ .

The response rate among the universities breaks down as follows:

Universities ranked 1 - 10.

<u>No Response</u>	<u>One Response</u>	<u>Two Responses</u>	<u>Three Responses</u>
5	7	1	0

Universities ranked 11- 20.

<u>No Response</u>	<u>One Response</u>	<u>Two Responses</u>	<u>Three Responses</u>
2	5	1	0

Universities ranked 21 - 30.

<u>No Response</u>	<u>One Response</u>	<u>Two Responses</u>	<u>Three Responses</u>
0	5	2	2

Universities ranked 31 - 40.

<u>No Response</u>	<u>One Response</u>	<u>Two Responses</u>	<u>Three Responses</u>
3	1	6	0

Universities ranked 41 - 50.

<u>No Response</u>	<u>One Response</u>	<u>Two Responses</u>	<u>Three Responses</u>
2	1	4	3

## Results

The following research questions were presented in Chapter 3 of this dissertation to be examined for veracity at the end of the study.

1. *Is there any relationship between a top tier ranking in the U.S. News and World Report and a particular leadership style?*
2. *Is there agreement among top administrators at the ranked institutions regarding the style of leadership exhibited by their university president?*

These two research questions will be examined and answered according to the data collected in the sections below.

### Research Question #1

The data collected were examined for indications of transformational leadership by utilizing two different methods of analysis. In the first method, the existence of transformational leadership was considered demonstrated when the rated leader was found to display three out of five transformational leadership characteristics at least "fairly often", as determined by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The questionnaire utilizes the following rating scale. Zero represents "not at all"; one indicates "once in a while", two is "sometimes", three means "fairly often", and four signifies "frequently if not always". The five variables tested which represent transformational characteristics are: 1) Idealized Influence (Attributed); 2) Idealized Influence (Behavior); 3) Inspirational Motivation; 4) Intellectual Stimulation; and 5) Individual Consideration. Using this method of analysis, 46 out of 63 completed survey instruments rated presidents as primarily

demonstrating transformational leadership characteristics. Therefore, 74% of the administrators surveyed from 38 of all institutions responding rated their presidents as primarily transformational. The pie chart in Figure 2 demonstrates the relationship between transformational and non-transformational leadership characteristics utilizing the analysis method described above.

### Transformational Leadership Among USNWR "Top 50"

(Method 1)

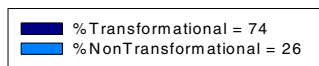
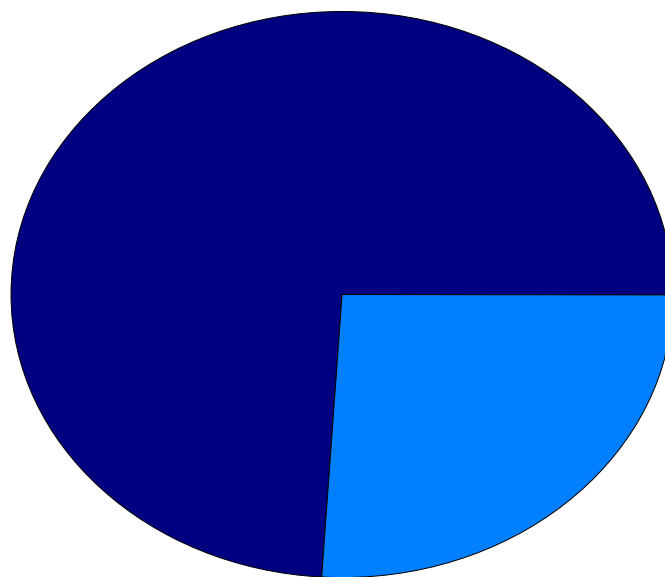


Figure 2. Demonstrates the relationship between the percentage of transformational leaders, and other styles of leadership among the presidents rated.

### Transformational Leadership Among USNWR "Top 50" (Method 2)

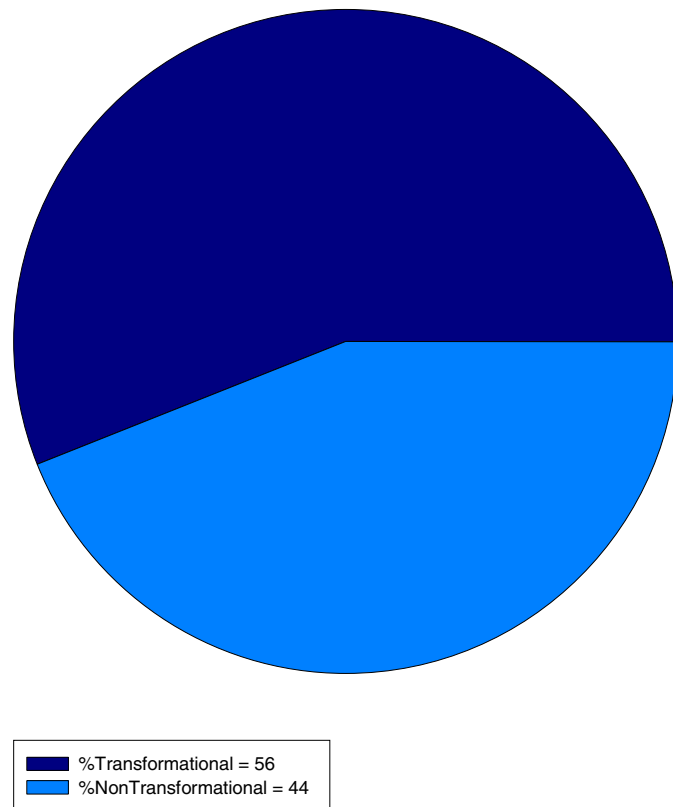


Figure 3. The pie chart illustrates the relationship between transformational and non-transformational leadership using method 2 data analysis.

The second method of data analysis consists of obtaining an average of the five transformational variables: Idealized Influence (Attributed); Idealized Influence (Behavior); Inspirational Motivation; Intellectual Stimulation; Individual Consideration / 5 yields a final transformational score. If the score is 3.0 or

higher, that president is considered transformational (Bass & Avolio, 1997).

Utilizing this method, 36 of the completed surveys, or 56% of the leaders rated, were found to be transformational. Figure 3 illustrates this finding.

Thus, regardless of the method used for data analysis, the majority of the presidents at the top ranked national institutions according to U.S. News & World

### Transactional and Laissez-Faire Leaders

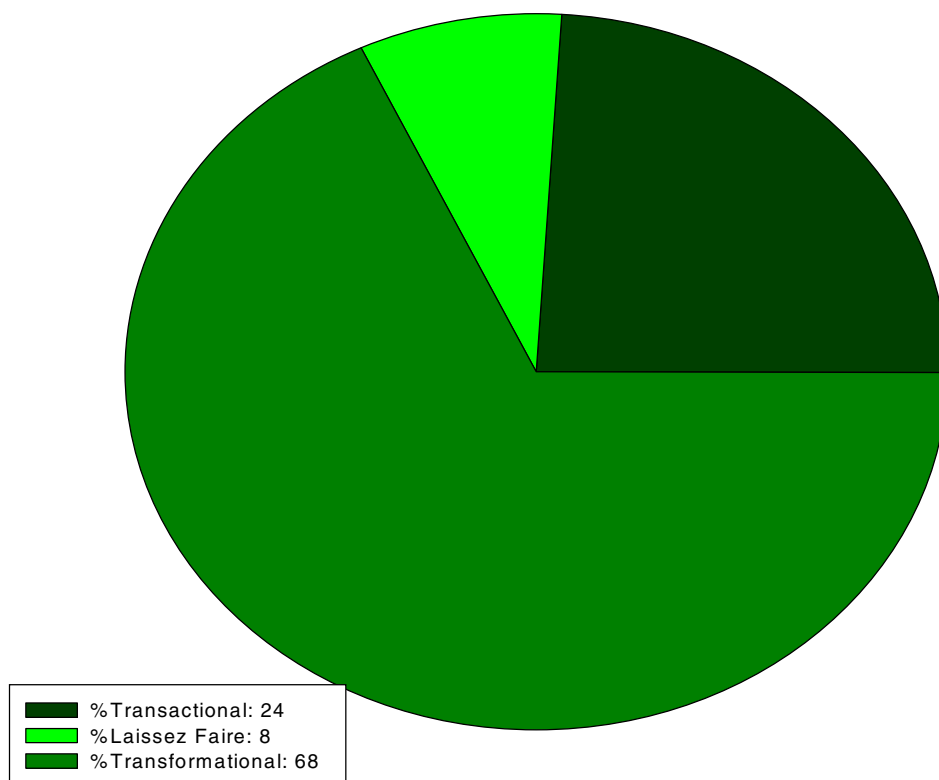


Figure 4. Percent of other leadership styles: Transactional or Laissez- Faire.



Report exhibit qualities typical of transformational leaders.

Utilizing other criteria presented in the Manual for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, transactional leadership characteristics are determined by a score of 2.0 or higher on the contingent reward variable coupled with greater than 2.0 rating on the Management-By-Exception (Active) variable, and a greater than 1.0 rating on Management-By-Exception (Passive). Laissez-Faire, or inactive leadership is considered present when a rating of greater than 1.0 is assigned on the laissez-faire variable (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Figure 4 displays the percentage of the respondents who rated their presidents as exhibiting significant transactional and laissez-faire characteristics.

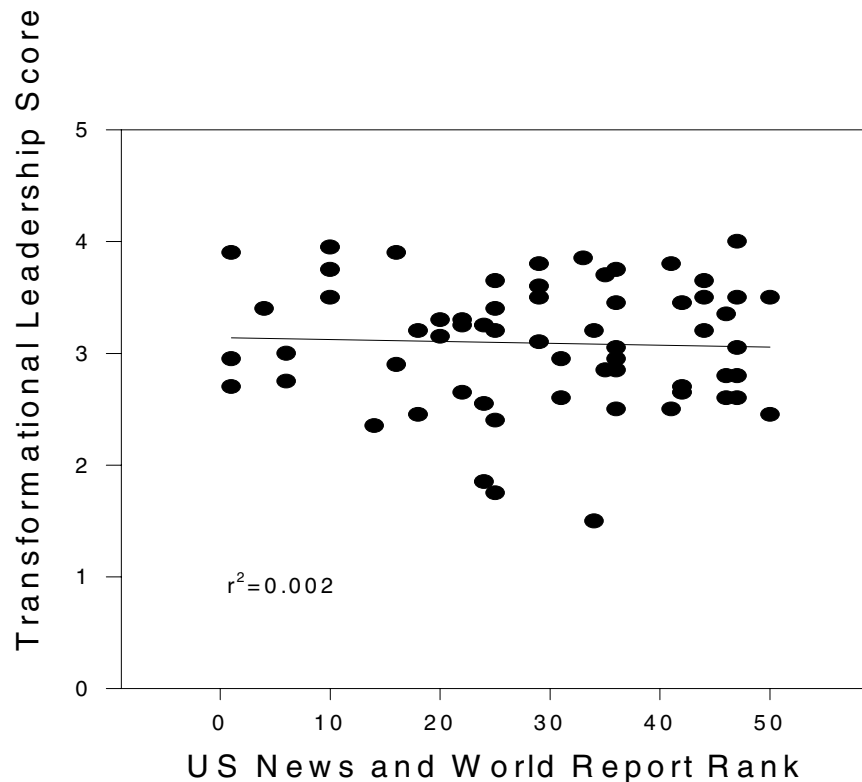


Figure 5. Relationship between USNWR rank and transformational score.

### Distribution of Leadership Styles

Although the data generated from this study clearly indicates a preponderance of transformational leadership characteristics among the presidents of these top rated institutions, there was no relationship between the rank number assigned by the U.S. News & World Report and the level of transformational leadership found. See figure 5.

This figure demonstrates the distribution of transformational leaders throughout the ranked 50 institutions of higher education. Since  $r^2 = 0.002$ , there

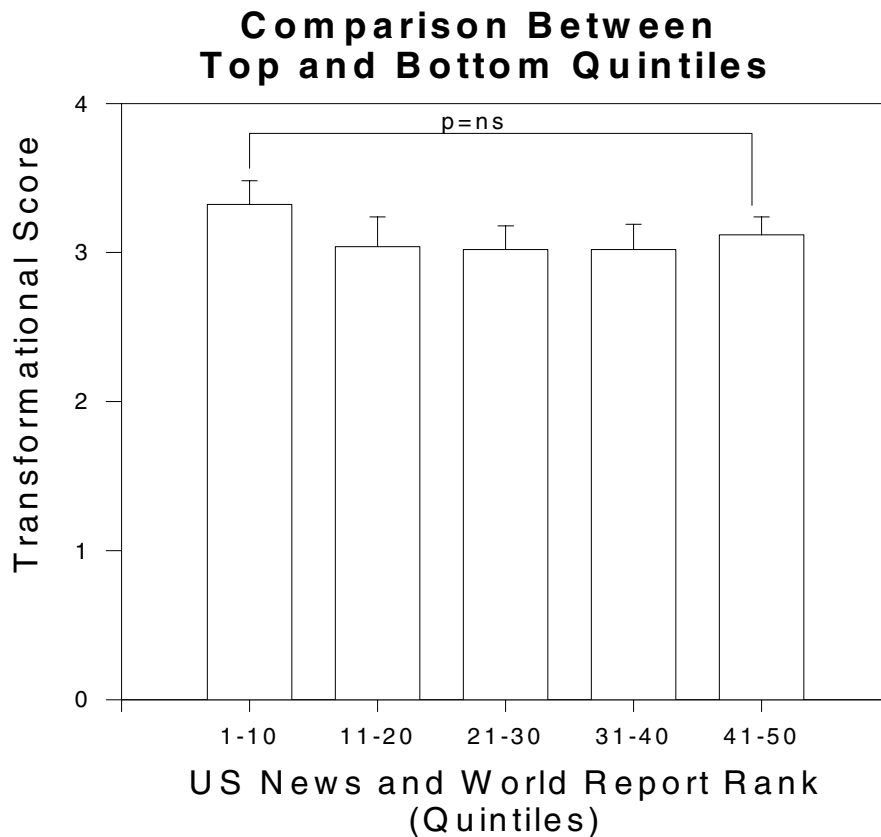


Figure 6. The distribution of Transformational scores according to quintiles.

is no statistically significant or sociologically meaningful relationship between the rank number and the style of leadership exhibited.

The distribution of leaders rated as transformational was also examined by comparing the five quintiles of the surveyed institutions for trends in placement of these leaders. Figure 6, presented above, demonstrates that there is no difference in the distribution of transformational presidents between the top 10 ranked universities, and the bottom 10.

### Transactional Leadership

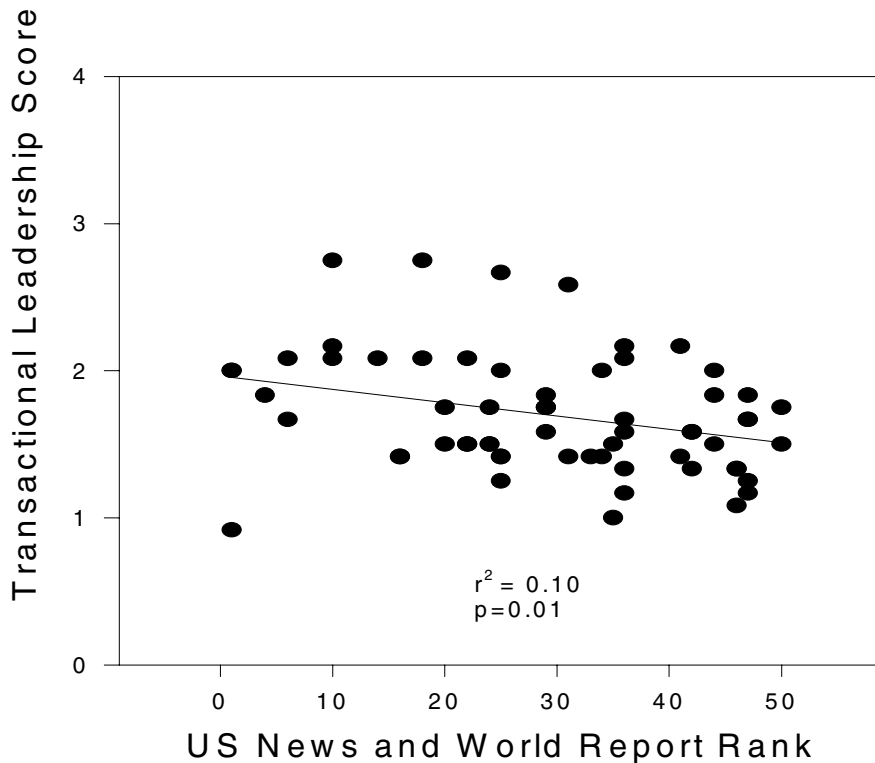


Figure 7. Relationship between USNWR rank and transactional score.

Transactional leadership characteristics among the 63 completed questionnaires were also randomly distributed. The relationship in figure 7 demonstrates the absence of a statistical relationship between the presence of transactional leadership style, and ranking by the U.S. News & World Report.

### Laissez Faire Leadership

The regression shown in figure 8 indicates the lack of a statistical relationship between laissez faire leadership, and ranking within the context of this study.

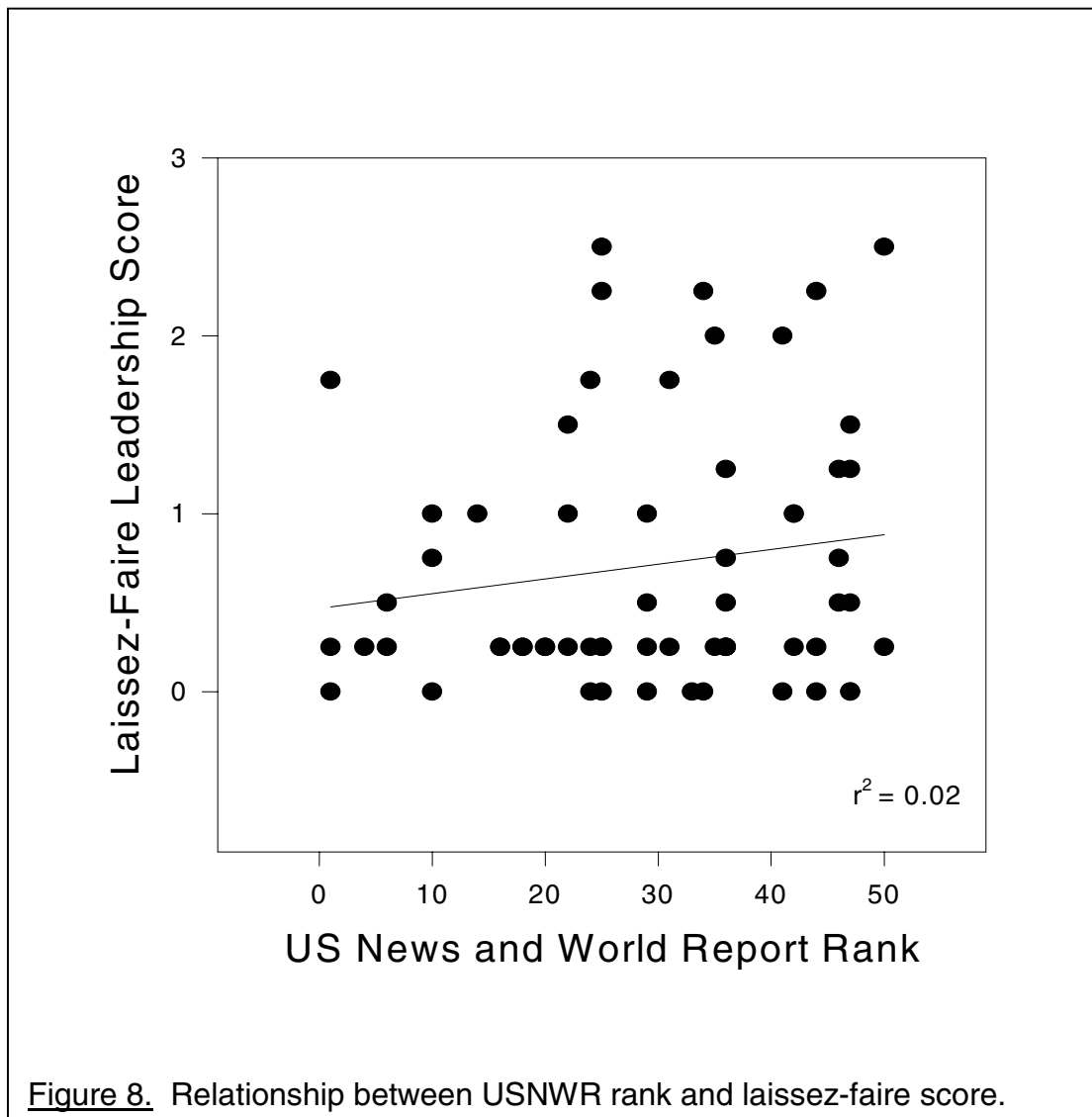


Figure 8. Relationship between USNWR rank and laissez-faire score.

However the majority of universities with presidents who exhibit some laissez-faire characteristics (i.e., laissez-faire score >1,0) are located in the lower half of the USNWR ranking. When the bottom quintile is compared with the top quintile of rankings, the bottom quintile had a statistically significantly larger percentage of presidents rated as showing some laissez-faire characteristics (two-tailed Fisher's exact test,  $p=0.03$ )

In summary, there was no relationship found, among the top tier institutions surveyed in this study, between ranking by U.S. News & World Report, and the reported style of presidential leadership. However, a significant correlation was found between the lower ranked institutions among the 50 included in this study, and the degree of laissez-faire characteristics observed among these presidents.

#### Other Influencing Factors

Two other factors were studied as possible contributing variables to the perception of transformational leadership characteristics. The first factor about which data was collected was the length of time the president had been in office at the time of the survey. The second factor considered was the private or public nature of the institution being queried.

#### Presidential Length

The length of time the president had been in office at the time of the completion of the questionnaire was also entered into the analysis of the data gathered in the course of this study. A correlation matrix was created investigating the relationship between presidential length, transformational

leadership score, transactional leadership score, laissez-faire score, and the outcome variable. According to this matrix, presidential length had no statistical relationship to any of the other variables. This finding is demonstrated below:

**CORRELATION MATRIX**

Pres.Length	1.00000	0.11699	-0.05430	0.05212	0.10104
Probability		0.3652	0.6751	0.6875	0.4345
N		63	63	63	63
	Pres.length	TRANSF.	TRANSACT.	L.F.	OUTCOME

Figure 9. The correlation matrix displays the relationship between presidential length with transformational score, transactional score, laissez-faire score, and outcome score. There is no significant relationship found.

Therefore, according to this study, there is no relationship between the time a president has spent in office and the type of leadership he or she is perceived as exhibiting. There is also no statistically significant relationship between length in office and the satisfaction with the leadership style exhibited.

Public versus Private

The other factor, which was examined as possibly affecting the study's outcome, was the private or public character of the universities studied. Figure 10 demonstrates the lack of relationship between private versus public, and presidential leadership style perceived. The graph below indicates that there is an even distribution of different leadership styles throughout the public and

private universities, which were included in the study. No significant statistical relationship was found.

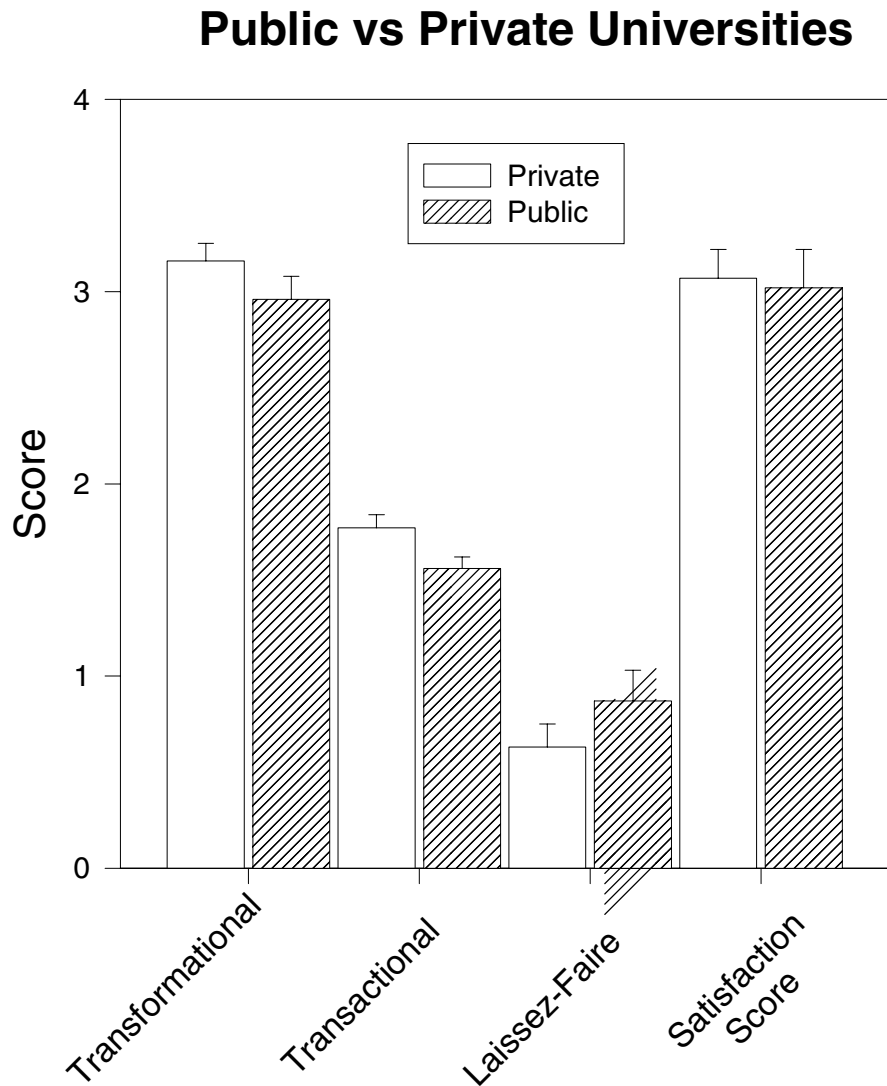


Figure 10. There is an even distribution of leadership styles among the private and public universities included in the study.

## Satisfaction and Presidential Leadership

The strongest statistical relationship discovered in this study was the correlation between transformational leadership and the outcome variable. The outcome variable is composed of three different variables, each of which has four questions assigned in the multifactor leadership questionnaire. These three variables are: 1) extra effort; 2) effectiveness; and 3) satisfaction with leader. In past studies utilizing the MLQ all three of these measures have been found to correlate most highly with transformational leadership, less so with transactional leadership, and the lowest correlation between these items was found with laissez-faire leadership style. This same relationship was found in this study.

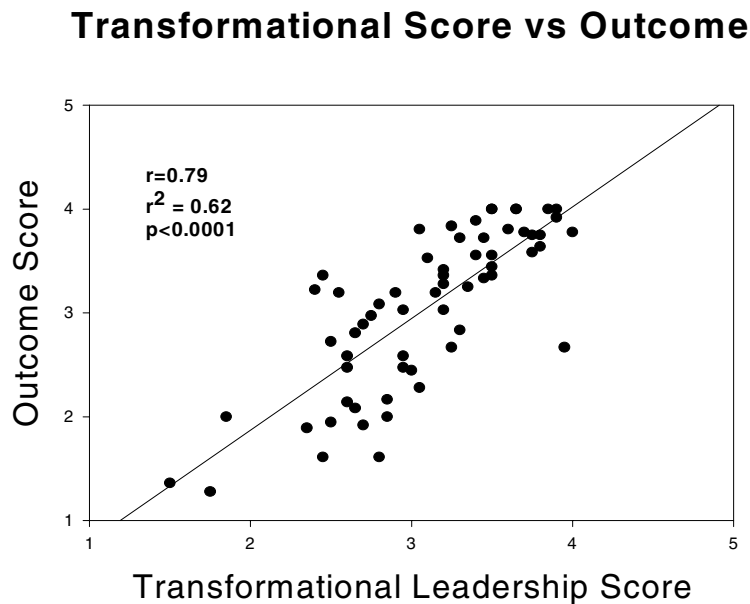


Figure 11. Relates the transformational leadership score to the composite outcome variable.



A negative relationship was found between the outcome variable and laissez-faire characteristics. The correlation was weak, but statistically significant with an  $r^2 = 0.137$  and a  $p = .0018$ . This corresponds with previous studies utilizing the MLQ that indication of laissez-faire characteristics leads to dissatisfaction with the leader.

In summary, the findings of this study indicate that at national universities, such as those surveyed for this study, transformational leadership is found to be the most effective, show the strongest indication of extra effort, and induce the greatest satisfaction with presidential leadership.

#### Research Question #2

*Is there agreement among top administrators at the ranked institutions regarding the style of leadership exhibited by their university president?*

A variety of methods were applied in an effort to obtain multiple questionnaire returns from the 50 universities included in this study. An outline of the methods used for contacting and obtaining completed surveys from 3 administrators at each queried institution is outlined earlier in this chapter. Out of the fifty universities contacted, 19 returned one questionnaire, 14 returned two questionnaires, and 5 institutions had a representation of three completed questionnaires. The data obtained from the 19 national universities with two or three returned questionnaires was used for analysis to answer research question #2.

At each university, the three administrators who received the survey

instrument were the chief academic officer, the chief financial officer, and the chief student affairs officer. Each questionnaire was marked with a code number prior to mailing to identify the respondent. Therefore, the three administrative jobs will be described as position A representing the chief academic officer, position B representing the chief financial officer, and position C as the chief student affairs officer. Through utilization of a 1-way analysis of variance with replications, the various agreements and disagreements between the different administrators were examined to determine whether there was a significant relationship between their responses regarding the presidential leadership at their institutions. Figure 12 illustrates the lack of relationship found.

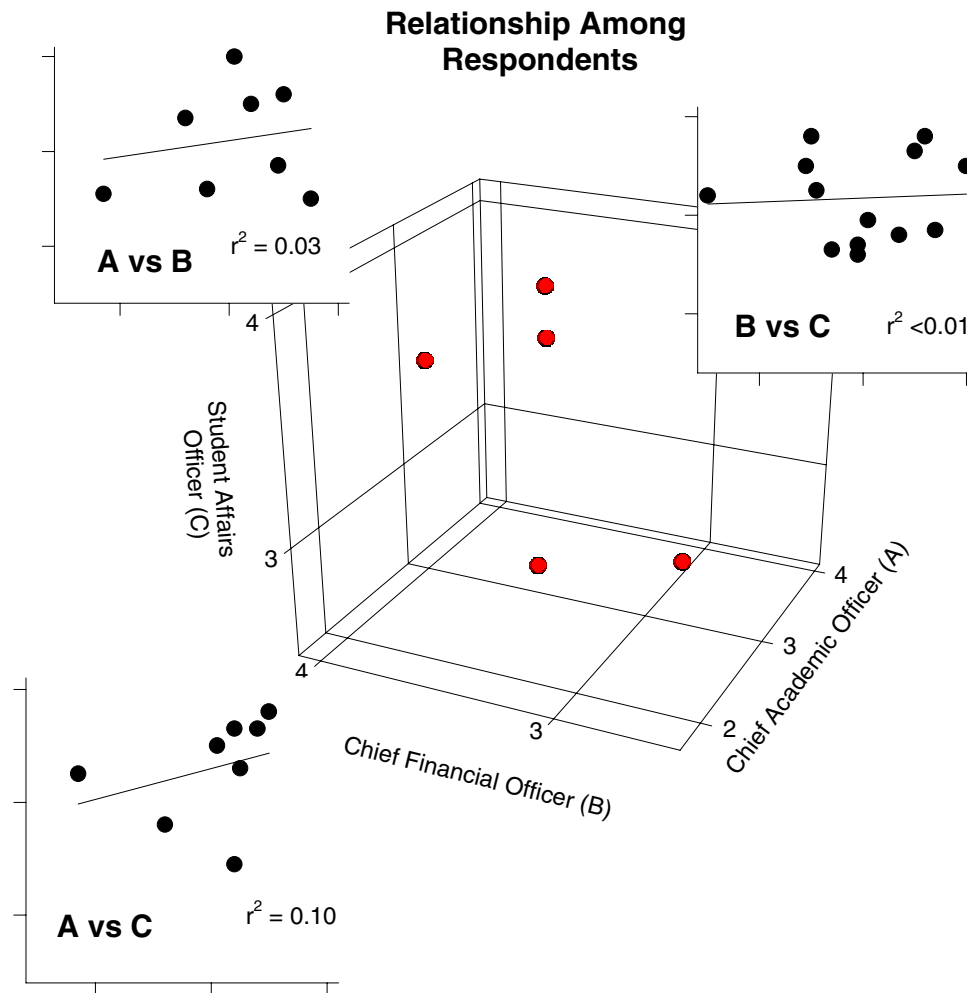


Figure 12. The 3-dimensional figure shows the transformational scores for the 5 universities from which all 3 administrators responded to the questionnaire. The 2-dimensional figures represent all the data from which 2 of 3 administrators queried responded.

Figure 12 demonstrates that there is no significant relationship among the three different groups of administrators who served as the survey group for this study. The relationship between individual groups was also analyzed and no significant relationship between responses was found.

The transformational scores were analyzed using both criteria for transformational leadership. First, the scores were compared using the criteria of three out of five fairly often responses on the transformational variables. Next, the scores were studied using the criteria of transformational leadership style being determined by a total variable score of 3.0 or greater on a continuous scale. While considering both these two methods of analysis, the relationship of the responses from the three groups of administrators was examined. The findings showed no agreement between: 1) group A and Group B; 2) group B and Group C; 3) group A and Group C. This lack of agreement was found when considering responses regarding transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire characteristics of the presidents being rated. In all cases, no statistical relationship was found between the three groups of administrators and their interpretation of the leadership characteristics of their university presidents.

At the 5 universities from which all three officers returned the questionnaire, group A rated the transformational leadership characteristics significantly lower than group C. Utilizing a Newman-Keuls test for groups with significant differences, the p score was  $<.05$  for these two groups. However, group A and group B were not significantly different, and groups B and C were not significantly different either.

Therefore, after examining the data obtained from universities with multiple survey instrument returns, no significant relationship was found between the observations of different administrators regarding the leadership style of their

presidents.

### Summary of Findings

The findings of this study after in-depth analysis of the survey responses are as follows:

1. Transformational leadership is the most frequently found leadership style among presidents of the top fifty national universities as ranked by the U.S. News & World Report.
2. Transformational leaders were found to induce the greatest satisfaction among the top administrators surveyed.
3. Transactional leadership style was exhibited less frequently than transformational leadership, and laissez-faire variables of leadership were noted as the least commonly occurring leadership style.
4. Although laissez-faire leadership was found to be the least observed leadership characteristic among the 50-targeted presidents, it was noted significantly more frequently among the universities ranked from 40 – 50 according to the USNWR.
5. There is no statistical agreement among top administrators when rating presidents regarding perception of leadership style.
6. There was no correlation between length of time in office and perception of a president's leadership style.

Chapter 5 will interpret and discuss the meaning of these various findings.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Study Summary

Debate regarding the most effective leadership style has long been conducted in business, government, and educational environments. Throughout the past centuries, many different leadership theories have been proposed and examined. From the Great Man theory of leadership, which was based on the assumption that great leaders are genetically endowed with superior qualities, to Personal-Situational theorists who advocated frequent interaction between leaders and followers to improve leadership efficiency, a variety of leadership theories have been first embraced and later criticized during the past 150 years. Some of these groups of theorists include: 1) the Early theorists, who viewed leadership as a product of a single set of forces; 2) the Interactive theorists, who began to examine interactive relationships while studying leadership; 3) the Organizational theorists, who investigated the relationship between leaders and organizations; and 4) the Modern theorists, who frequently described leadership behavior in terms of the way in which it influences behavior of followers.

This variety of leadership theories has engendered much discussion, and frequently argument, but very little resolution among educational and management theorists. In the 1970s a majority of leadership research began to

emphasize transactional leadership theory, and in the 1980s the underlying basis of this theory was expanded to include transformational leadership theory as well.

Transactional leadership theory is based on the premise that a transaction takes place between the leader and followers that benefits both parties. In addition to this leadership method, transformational leaders motivate followers to do more than they originally expected to do by utilizing one or all of the following methods: 1) stimulate interest among followers to view their work from new perspectives; 2) generate awareness of mission or vision of the organization; 3) develop followers to higher levels of ability and potential; and 4) motivate followers to work for the group benefit as well as their own.

Traditionally, leadership research has been centered primarily on business and military environments. However, in the past 25 years, more attention has been focused on academic leadership skills. Universities have been scrutinized and held increasingly accountable for the outcome and usefulness of the degrees earned under their auspices. This increased scrutiny has enveloped all aspects of the university environment, including university administration.

Transformational leadership in higher education has been discussed as being either the ultimate savior of academic institutions, or alternatively as being entirely irrelevant, or even detrimental. Robert Birnbaum has stated that transformational leadership in the higher education environment has no applicability. He bases his position on a five-year longitudinal study of how

university presidents interact and communicate with colleagues on their campuses, as well as the methods in which they assess their own and others' effectiveness. Alternatively, Bernard Bass and Bruce Avolio have determined through their own research, that transformational leadership is the most effective form of leadership in any setting, including institutions of higher education.

Due to the continuing disagreement among educators regarding the most effective leadership style for university settings, this study was designed to acquire new information regarding the importance of leadership style at national universities. The novel information gathered sheds light on the way in which the style of current presidential leadership relates to the defining factors selected by the U.S. News & World Report in their annual ranking of the top national universities. Additionally, the information may be useful in determining academic curricular decisions for students preparing for careers in higher education administration.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the leadership style of presidents at the top tier ranked national universities, according to U.S. News & World Report. Data were gathered regarding: 1) the style of leadership demonstrated by the university presidents of the institutions targeted; 2) the satisfaction obtained by top administrators who were confronted by different leadership styles; and 3) whether top administrators at these highly ranked universities displayed agreement regarding the leadership style of their university presidents.



This information was obtained through administration of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire to three top administrators at each of the 50 highest ranked institutions according to U.S. News & World Report. The designated recipients at each university were the chief academic officer, the chief financial officer, and the chief student affairs officer. Through multiple attempts to obtain completed surveys, as described in chapter 4, 63 out of 150 completed survey instruments were returned from 38 out of 50 targeted national universities.

The principal new findings of the present study include the following: 1) transformational leadership is the most frequently found leadership style among presidents of the top fifty national universities as ranked by the U.S. News & World Report; 2) transformational leaders were found to induce the greatest satisfaction among the top administrators surveyed; 3) transactional leadership style was exhibited less frequently than transformational leadership, and laissez-faire variables of leadership were noted as the least commonly occurring leadership style; 4) although laissez-faire leadership was found to be the least observed leadership characteristic among the 50 targeted presidents, it was noted significantly more frequently among the universities ranked from 40 – 50 according to the USNWR; 5) there is no statistical agreement among top administrators when rating presidents regarding perception of leadership style; and 6) there was no correlation between length of time in office and perception of a president's leadership style.

## Transformational Leadership in Higher Education

The value of transformational leadership in higher education has been in contention since the introduction of this leadership theory by Burns in 1978. Many leadership theorists, (Bass & Avolio, 1993; Burns, 1978), have stated that transformational leadership is the most successful form of leadership in academic settings. Other theorists, (Birnbaum, 1989; Inkson, Kerr, & Moss, 1993) have determined that transformational leadership is inappropriate for university presidents. According to Birnbaum, transformational presidents are more likely to lead their institutions to disruption rather than to constructive change (1992).

In 1979 Walker found that organizational constraints make the idea of a powerful president an illusion. Supporting this concept, Birnbaum (1989), conducted a study that found that some important measures of institutional functioning remained unchanged even as presidents were replaced, implying that institutional excellence may not be related to institutional leadership.

The study presented here was designed to examine the relationship between a top tier ranking by U.S. News & World Report, which is a frequently accepted by the general public as a measure of institutional excellence, and the presidential leadership style. The results provide evidence against Birnbaum's assertions that transformational leadership cannot add to the excellence of a national institution. These findings demonstrate that significant numbers of transformational leaders exist among the top ranked national universities. Even

more importantly, it is transformational leadership style that secures the greatest satisfaction with the university president among other institutional leaders.

Research question #1 of this study addresses the issue of leadership style among fifty national universities: 1) Is there any relationship between a top tier ranking in the U.S. News and World Report and a particular leadership style?

The data gathered indicates that a majority of presidents at these educational institutions demonstrate transformational leadership skills. Two different methods were used to examine the data gathered in this study. Using the first method of analysis, 46 out of 63 completed survey instruments rated presidents as demonstrating primarily transformational leadership characteristics. Therefore, 74% of the administrators surveyed from the 38 responding institutions rated their presidents as primarily transformational. Utilizing a second, more rigorous analysis method, which required obtaining an average score for the five transformational variables, 36 of the completed surveys, or 56% of the administrators rated their leader as transformational.

Thus, even when utilizing the most stringent method of data analysis, the majority of the presidents at the top ranked national institutions according to U.S. News & World Report exhibit qualities typical of transformational leaders. These findings support the contentions of Bass & Avolio that claim transformational leadership is the most effective form of leadership in any setting. If it is accepted that a high rating on the U.S. News & World Report annual ranking is a measure of perceived institutional excellence, then the presence of a majority of

transformational presidents among these highly ranked universities suggests a meaningful relationship between transformational leadership and perceived institutional excellence.

### Transformational leadership and Satisfaction

The overwhelming satisfaction indicated by administrators who had presidents exhibiting transformational leadership skills was one of the most significant findings of this study. In past studies utilizing the MLQ in non-educational settings such as business and military environments, all three of the outcome variables; effectiveness, extra effort, and satisfaction, were found to correlate most highly with transformational leadership, less so with transactional leadership, and had the lowest correlation, or in the case of the present study, a negative correlation, with laissez-faire leadership style. A similar correlation between variables was found in this study; lending validity to the appropriateness of the use of the MLQ in educational environments. This finding supports the validity of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire while reinforcing the positive benefits of transformational leadership style in educational settings.

This information suggests that transformational leadership is in fact a highly suitable leadership style in educational settings having been judged the most efficient and satisfactory by top administrators at the universities included in this study. These findings clearly support the argument put forth by Bass in refutation against Birnbaum regarding the appropriateness of transformational leadership at institutions of higher education. Additionally, the satisfaction indicated in rating

these transformational leaders argues for a general presidential satisfaction that could well affect the overall perception of the university's excellence.

#### Laissez-faire variables and ranking by the USNWR

The data gathered from this study demonstrates that the variables related to laissez-faire leadership style were the least represented among the presidents rated. However, those presidents who were found to exhibit these laissez-faire characteristics were statistically more prominent among the lower ranked quintile as compared with the highest ranked quintile of universities. Thus, the lower the rating assigned to these top tier institutions, the greater the perception of laissez-faire characteristics. This unexpected finding raises many questions regarding the effect of a president exhibiting laissez-faire characteristics upon the perceived excellence of an educational institution. If this trend was continued throughout those universities, which were ranked at a lower tier, according to USNWR, then a relationship regarding the existence of laissez-faire style presidents, and a lower level of perceived institutional excellence might be established. The information gathered from this study suggests a tendency towards inclusion of laissez-faire characteristics at institutions ranked in the lower end of the U.S. News & World Report's top tier of national universities.

#### Lack of Agreement Among Administrators

One further unique piece of information gathered from this study is related to research question #2: Is there agreement among top administrators at the ranked institutions regarding the style of leadership exhibited by their

university president? It was hypothesized that there would be agreement among the top administrators queried regarding the leadership style exhibited by their presidents. In contrast though, there was no statistically significant correlation found among the administrators. The three groups of educational administrators queried were: 1) chief academic officers; 2) chief financial officers; and 3) chief student affairs officers. The lack of agreement among these groups could be ascribed to several different possible reasons. The first possibility is that transformational leadership is perceived as existing when satisfaction with the leader exists. Therefore, for those administrators who are satisfied with the leadership skills demonstrated by their presidents, the transformational leadership variables on the MLQ seem to most closely describe the attributes of their president. Alternatively, those presidents who are not well liked, or perceived as being unsatisfactory leaders are more likely to be rated lower on the transformational variables.

Another possible explanation for the lack of agreement among administrators is that leadership is judged as perceived by the follower. In other words, each individual administrator's personal relationship with the president will affect that individual's perception of the president's leadership qualities. Thus, by attaining a close working relationship with the leader being rated, the top administrators queried may have allowed this relationship to impact upon the perception of presidential leadership qualities. This impact could be in either a negative or a positive direction depending on the nature of the personal relationship involved.

An additional possible explanation for the lack of agreement among responses by the various administrators is that each administrator must interact with the president on a different management level. For example, the three different administrators contacted could be respectively involved in fiscal issues, faculty issues, or student concerns. The management level of the primary interaction may affect the type of decisions sought from the president and thus form a specific interface regarding his or her leadership style.

Therefore, the most probable explanation for the findings related to research question #2 is some combination of the possible explanations discussed above. A combination of each vice president's satisfaction, agreement, and level of interaction accounts for the perception of the president's leadership style more so than the abstract set of behaviors used to define transformational, transactional, and laissez faire leadership styles.

In summary, in answering research question #2, there was no significant agreement between the top administrators surveyed for this study.

#### Length of Time in Office

An additional variable that was studied for this dissertation was the length of time the president being rated had been in office. This variable was included to determine the impact of length in office upon the perception of leadership style. Analysis of the data indicates that there is no significant correlation between the time in office and the rated leadership style. This information may be interpreted in several ways: 1) presidential leadership style is not determined by years of

service; 2) transformational leaders do not spend any more, or less, time in a presidential position than their non-transformational colleagues; and 3) presidents may become more or less transformational as the time in office increases. Thus, although it may seem intuitively correct to say that the longer a president is in office, the more transformational his or her skills will be, and the greater the satisfaction acknowledged, this study provides evidence to the contrary. Analysis of the data demonstrates that the length of time in office has no relationship to presidential leadership style, or the satisfaction perceived by administrators of that style.

#### Public Versus Private Universities

Among the 38 national universities that responded to this study, 20 were public, and 18 were private educational institutions. The correlation matrix developed by comparing public and private universities with the presidential leadership style yielded no significant relationship among those variables. There was an even distribution of diverse leadership styles among both the private and public universities that returned completed survey instruments. Therefore, the differences between public and private higher education appeared to have no effect upon the style of presidential leadership present at those institutions. This suggests several possibilities: 1) University board members, whether public or private, utilize similar criteria in selecting successful university presidents; 2) transformational leadership style is equally effective at both public and private universities as is demonstrated by the high level of satisfaction associated with



this leadership style at both public and private institutions; and 3) the variety of demands, especially the state control which accompanies public run universities, is most efficiently, effectively, and satisfactorily met by transformational presidents.

### Methodological Issues

The following three methodological issues must be discussed to present a true understanding of the findings of this study. These three issues are: 1) respondent bias; 2) generalizability of the findings; and 3) limitations of the study.

### Respondent Bias

Out of 150 surveys distributed for this study, 63 completed survey instruments were returned. This is a response rate of 43%. There was an even distribution of responses across several different variables: 1) ranked number by U.S. News & World Report; 2) public versus private universities; 3) length of time the president had been in office; and 4) position held by responding administrator, whether the rater was the chief academic officer, chief financial officer, or the chief student affairs officer. While the surveys returned were evenly distributed throughout these several categories, the possibility of respondent bias still must be examined. This bias could manifest in several diverse ways: 1) completed surveys could be returned primarily by those administrators who were satisfied with their president's style of leadership; 2) completed surveys could be returned by those who were primarily dissatisfied with the presidential leadership and wished to air their concerns in an anonymous manner. This seems highly unlikely

as the level of satisfaction with the rated presidents was generally high; 3) administrators who were newer to their positions might have been more likely to respond or not respond to such a questionnaire. These top administrators who had not held their high level positions for a long period of time might have felt responding to this survey was an opportunity to contribute to the general fund of knowledge in the field of education, as well as encouraging educational research. Alternatively, these individuals could choose not to respond to the MLQ simply because the relatively short period of time they had been in office would predispose them to caution in voicing their subjective opinions; 4) administrators who had held their positions for a longer period of time might have been more likely to respond, or more likely to not respond to such a questionnaire. Those administrators who were more experienced may have been more likely to respond to this survey because of the opportunity it provided to share their knowledgeable viewpoints. Alternatively, these same individuals may have been less likely to respond due to an overwhelming barrage of survey instruments received over many years. One targeted administrator who declined to participate in this study claimed to receive up to 100 survey instruments a week, and he had resolved to refrain from responding to any of them; and 5) administrators with a sympathy for graduate students might have been more likely to respond.

While these various respondent bias possibilities must be considered, the even distribution of the responses that were received suggests that the impact of

respondent bias, if present, was relatively limited. Some of the above variables may have affected individual administrators, but the completed surveys received demonstrate an even response rate across these several categories.

### Generalizability of Findings

The study was designed to examine only the top 50 rated national universities according to USNWR. The question arises regarding the ability to apply the study's unique findings to other institutions of higher education. There are 228 national universities operating in the United States at this time. There are considerable differences among these institutions. Some of these differences are: 1) academic resources; 2) academic reputation; 3) financial resources; 4) student selectivity; 5) student retention; 6) alumni giving rate; 7) geographical location; 8) size of student population; 9) variety of undergraduate programs available; 10) variety of graduate programs available; 11) average age of student population and; 12) public versus private. This list is not all-inclusive regarding the multitude of variables that contribute to the uniqueness of an educational institution. While these dissimilarities do exist, it seems doubtful that they represent a significant difference that would render the findings reported here as inapplicable to national universities in general. This reasoning is based on the fact that similar variations exist among the universities included in this study as well.

However, these national universities are perceived as exhibiting different levels of overall institutional excellence, according to the criteria utilized by U.S.

News & World Report. It is possible that there is in fact a difference in the type of leadership that would most frequently be found at the universities listed in tiers two through four in the ranking system. Possibly, even though the findings among the 50 universities of this study indicate an even distribution of transformational leaders, this finding might not apply to universities with different levels of perceived excellence. The findings of the current study also indicated a trend towards an increased presence of laissez-faire leadership characteristics among the bottom quintile of the top 50 ranked institutions. It is possible that this trend would be further pronounced among the institutions of the other ranked tiers. These top tier universities occupy positions of high regard and aspiration among the national institutions. Thus, institutions occupying lower tiers in this ranking system should examine the presidential leadership style among the top tier institutions with interest.

While the findings of this study are of concern to all 228 national universities, it is difficult to determine the applicability of the findings without expanding the study to encompass other segments of this group of institutions. For national universities in the lower tiers of this ranking system, the findings regarding the presidential leadership style of this top tier group would encourage further exploration into the style of leadership and satisfaction perceived at their own institutions.

The 228 national universities discussed here, are only a small percentage of institutions of higher education throughout the United States. There are also 162

national liberal arts colleges, 504 regional universities, and 429 regional liberal arts colleges. The designation of these 1,400 plus four year accredited colleges and universities is determined by criteria developed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The differences, which exist among this large group of educational institutions, suggest that the findings of this study should be extrapolated to these other colleges and universities with caution.

#### Limitations of the Study

One possible limitation in any study utilizing a survey instrument to gather data is the validity and reliability of the instrument. The multifactor leadership questionnaire has been tested and used in leadership research in a variety of settings, and has been found to be both reliable and valid. Chapter 3 of this paper addresses the issue of the instrumentation of this study in detail.

One further instrument which was crucial in the design and implementation of this study was the annual college ranking published by The U.S. News & World Report. This ranking system, which has been published since 1985, is the most well-known and subscribed to methodology for determining the excellence of a university by the general public. While this system may have inherent flaws, which lend doubt to the credibility of the published list of institutions, it is the best-suited and most well acknowledged system available. While top university administrators sometimes claim that the system is inaccurate, it was the best tool available for the design of this study. One administrator contacted declined to participate in the study due to his dislike of the USNWR rating system. He

claimed that he would not participate in any endeavor that would add further credibility to the published rankings. However, the majority of administrators contacted did not indicate any reluctance to the use of the USNWR ranking system for the purpose of this dissertation.

Another limitation inherent in the study design is the lack of a control group for data analysis and interpretation. This study was intended to gather and interpret data from the top tier group of national universities. The information gathered is of interest both to that top group, and lower ranked institutions as well. While the data provides an area for further investigation among those educational institutions that aspire to a higher perceived level of excellence, there is no control group available with which to compare the findings of this top tier group. Further research which incorporates a study of leadership style at both top tier and bottom tier institutions would resolve this lack of a control group. It is possible that a similar proportion of presidents from bottom tier institutions would be rated as transformational. If so, then the conclusions from this study would be more tenuous. However, if the proportion of transformational leaders was significantly less, then the importance of a transformational president would be confirmed.

Many different methods and various attempts were utilized to gather a high percentage of returns in this study. Because of the relatively small survey group, a high return rate was desired to achieve an equal distribution of responses among the 50 institutions. The final return rate of this study was 43% or 63

responses out of 150 administrators contacted. While this is a relatively small data set to study, the responses were evenly distributed throughout the institutions targeted. This even distribution applies to: 1) rank; 2) public versus private institutions; 3) length of time the president had been in office; and 4) position held by the administrator responding. Thus, while a low response rate is always a limitation in a survey such as this, the even distributions of the responses returned, as well as the 43% response rate renders the data gathered both interesting and significant.

Another limitation fundamental to this type of study is the perception bias of the respondents. As discussed in the section on respondent bias, the perception of the individual completing the survey instrument is not a factual or quantifiable response. Perception is, by nature, an individualistic and subjective method of judgment. While the statistical analysis of the responses yields quantifiable data, it is necessary to remember that the original information that generated the data was qualified by individual perception and bias. The fact that the information gathered was by perception does not invalidate the findings, but the information must be interpreted with caution.

A final limitation inherent in a study of this design is the cross sectional nature of the findings. This study was intended to observe the presidential style of leadership present at the targeted institutions at one particular point in time. It is unknown how this information would differ if gathered at the same institutions over a period of time. A survey designed to gather similar data as a longitudinal

study would provide the opportunity to observe how presidential leadership style might change in time. Variables to be studied as part of a longitudinal study could include: 1) perceived excellence of the university and its affect upon the perceived leadership style of the president; 2) changes in perceived excellence of the university as presidential appointment changes; 3) changes in presidential leadership style as the university board of trustees changes; and 4) changes in perception of presidential leadership style as new top administrators are awarded positions. While the data generated in this study allow a unique view of presidential leadership, these data are determined in a relatively static field created within a constantly changing environment.

The limitations discussed here represent inherent characteristics of one-time studies utilizing survey instruments to gather data. These limitations do not render the data gathered inaccurate or uninteresting. Mainly, the limitations determine the need for further research designed to broaden the applicability of the study findings.

### Implications

The unique findings of this study on presidential leadership style have specific implications for practitioners of higher education administration. As stated earlier, the principle findings include the following: 1) transformational leadership is the most frequently found leadership style among presidents of the top fifty national universities as ranked by the U.S. News & World Report; 2) transformational leaders were found to induce the greatest satisfaction among



the top administrators surveyed; 3) transactional leadership style was exhibited less frequently than transformational leadership, and laissez-faire variables of leadership were noted as the least commonly occurring leadership style; 4) although laissez-faire leadership was found to be the least observed leadership characteristic among the 50 targeted presidents, it was noted significantly more frequently among the universities ranked from 40 – 50 according to the USNWR; and 5) there was no correlation between length of time in office and perception of a president's leadership style.

This information clearly indicates that the most satisfying, efficient, and effective method of university presidential leadership is transformational leadership. At the 38 national universities that were represented in this survey group, 28 were found to have presidents who were primarily transformational in character. The implication of this finding is that transformational leadership style is the most satisfactory leadership style for university presidents, and that presidents who exhibit these leadership characteristics should be sought at institutions desiring such satisfaction. While no statistical relationship was discovered between the institutional rank designated by the USNWR and the style of presidential leadership perceived by top administrators at the institutions, the satisfaction associated with this style of leadership recommends it to all institutions of higher education.

The appeal of transformational leadership style indicates that governing boards at both public and private national universities should be considering the

leadership characteristics of presidential candidates when conducting a job search for a new top administrator. Consideration of leadership style should occur at all institutions regardless of the perceived existing level of excellence as rated by the U.S. News & World Report. Since transformational leadership was the primary form of leadership among the published top 50 ranked institutions, universities ranked in lower tiers should consider the implication of the relationship between this form of leadership, and a top tier ranking.

The findings of this study also indicate that students of higher education administration should be offered the opportunity to become familiar with the variables that define transformational leadership so as to better prepare them for effective futures in higher education.

Therefore, the study results indicate the need for further training in transformational leadership style for students of higher education, as well as providing a new perspective for educational boards when considering new leadership in national universities. Furthermore, the information presented here will be useful to other national universities interested in increasing the perception of excellence associated with their institutions.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

The unique and thought provoking findings of this dissertation will be useful to students and practitioners of higher education administration. The data gathered however could be expanded to provide further information through additional research into the area of presidential leadership style. The findings suggest

several different areas of further research that would add the general fund of knowledge.

One of the limitations of the present study is the narrow focus of the designated study participants. The current study was designed to examine presidential leadership style at only the top tier of national universities indicated by USNWR. By expanding the survey group further information could be gathered to strengthen the findings of this study. The survey group could be expanded in a number of ways: 1) the survey group could include both the top and the bottom tiers of national universities as ranked by USNWR to provide a comparison between perceived presidential leadership styles. A disparity of findings between these two groups would support the findings of the present study regarding the relationship between perceived excellence, and presidential style; 2) an expanded group could include a sample of every third national institution of the 228 national universities currently in the United States. Such a study would enable the researcher to examine the trends of various leadership styles throughout the full range of ranked institutions; 3) the study could be further enlarged to include all of the 228 educational institutions, thus surveying the entire population of national universities. A study designed to include all the institutions in the global population would provide the greatest amount of applicable information for the entire population; and 4) additional information could be obtained by administering the multifactor leadership questionnaire to a

greater number of administrators at each surveyed institution. This would help ensure a more representative response from all the targeted institutions.

Additional research suggested by the current study would include an extension of data gathering at the same institutions over a longer period of time. The same group of 50 top ranked institutions could be surveyed once a year for five years to create a longitudinal database. Data gathered in such a study would enable the researcher to examine several further relationships. Some findings possible through a longitudinal study include: 1) the relationship between USNWR rank and perceived presidential leadership at the same institution through time. This would enable study of perceived changes in leadership style in relationship to seeming changes in university excellence; 2) the study of how perceived leadership style changes over time for the same university president; and 3) whether the apparent excellence of an institution changes as changes are made among university presidential appointments of different leadership skills.

Finally, further research is indicated for studying efficacy of leadership style at other types of educational institutions. The inclusion of national liberal arts colleges, regional liberal arts colleges, and regional universities into the survey group would supply leadership information that would reach beyond the sphere of national universities.

Thus by expanding the scope of the present research, further useful information could be gathered regarding the importance of presidential leadership style.

## Conclusions

The importance of leadership style is evidenced by a long history of educational and managerial theorists who have promoted a variety of concepts to explain leadership expertise. Proponents of transformational leadership theory have claimed that transformational leadership is the most effective and efficient leadership style in any setting. The findings of this study indicate that it is certainly the most satisfactory style of leadership in the environment of excellently perceived national universities. The significant rating of transformational university presidents as satisfactory, effective, and efficient suggests the conclusion that presidents with such leadership skills should be sought after by educational institutions. Additionally, educators in higher education administration should include the teaching of this leadership theory as an important part of the graduate curriculum.

APPENDIX A  
MULTIFACTOR LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

# MLQ Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Rater Form (5x-Short)

Name of Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization ID #: \_\_\_\_\_ Leader ID #: \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire is to describe the leadership style of the above-mentioned individual 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.** Please answer this questionnaire anonymously.

IMPORTANT (necessary for processing): Which best describes you?

I am at a higher organizational level than the person I am rating.

The person I am rating is at my organizational level.

I am at a lower organizational level than the person I am rating.

I do not wish my organizational level to be known.

Forty-five descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how frequently each statement fits the person you are describing. Use the following rating scale:

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

*THE PERSON I AM RATING. . .*

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Provides me with assistance in exchange for my efforts.....                                 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. Re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate.....              | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Fails to interfere until problems become serious.....                                       | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Focuses attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Avoids getting involved when important issues arise.....                                    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. Talks about their most important values and beliefs.....                                    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. Is absent when needed.....  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 8. Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems.....                                     | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. Talks optimistically about the future.....  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. Instills pride in me for being associated with him/her.....                                | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. Discusses in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets.....      | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 12. Waits for things to go wrong before taking action.....                                     | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. Talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished.....                            | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. Specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose.....                          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. Spends time teaching and coaching.....   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

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Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
0	1	2	3	4

16.	Makes clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved .....	0	1	2	3	4
17.	Shows that he/she is a firm believer in "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." .....	0	1	2	3	4
18.	Goes beyond self-interest for the good of the group .....	0	1	2	3	4
19.	Treats me as an individual rather than just as a member of a group .....	0	1	2	3	4
20.	Demonstrates that problems must become chronic before taking action.....	0	1	2	3	4
21.	Acts in ways that builds my respect.....	0	1	2	3	4
22.	Concentrates his/her full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures .....	0	1	2	3	4
23.	Considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions.....	0	1	2	3	4
24.	Keeps track of all mistakes.....	0	1	2	3	4
25.	Displays a sense of power and confidence .....	0	1	2	3	4
26.	Articulates a compelling vision of the future .....	0	1	2	3	4
27.	Directs my attention toward failures to meet standards.....	0	1	2	3	4
28.	Avoids making decisions .....	0	1	2	3	4
29.	Considers me as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others.....	0	1	2	3	4
30.	Gets me to look at problems from many different angles.....	0	1	2	3	4
31.	Helps me to develop my strengths .....	0	1	2	3	4
32.	Suggests new ways of looking at how to complete assignments.....	0	1	2	3	4
33.	Delays responding to urgent questions .....	0	1	2	3	4
34.	Emphasizes the importance of having a collective sense of mission.....	0	1	2	3	4
35.	Expresses satisfaction when I meet expectations.....	0	1	2	3	4
36.	Expresses confidence that goals will be achieved .....	0	1	2	3	4
37.	Is effective in meeting my job-related needs .....	0	1	2	3	4
38.	Uses methods of leadership that are satisfying.....	0	1	2	3	4
39.	Gets me to do more than I expected to do.....	0	1	2	3	4
40.	Is effective in representing me to higher authority.....	0	1	2	3	4
41.	Works with me in a satisfactory way.....	0	1	2	3	4
42.	Heightens my desire to succeed .....	0	1	2	3	4
43.	Is effective in meeting organizational requirements .....	0	1	2	3	4
44.	Increases my willingness to try harder.....	0	1	2	3	4
45.	Leads a group that is effective.....	0	1	2	3	4



APPENDIX B  
COVER LETTER  
FOLLOW-UP LETTER  
EMAIL CONTACT

April 26, 1999

John P. Smith, Ph.D.  
Dean of Students  
Southern Methodist University  
P.O. Box 100  
1 University Drive  
Dallas, TX 11111

Dear Dr. Smith,

There are currently 228 national universities in the United States. Since 1985, U.S. News and World Report has published an annual ranked listing of these institutions. This year your university has been numbered within the top 50. Universities are ranked in this publication based on sixteen measures of academic quality. One criterion which is not considered in this ranked order, but which may be critical to the success of a university is the quality of leadership provided by the institution's president.

As a doctoral candidate, I am conducting a study to determine the correlation between presidential leadership style, as perceived by senior administrators such as yourself, and the high ranking your institution has achieved in the U.S. News and World Report summary. At the completion of this project I hope that new information will be acquired regarding the importance of leadership style to national institutions throughout the United States. For highly ranked institutions, such as your own, this information could contribute one more criteria to consider while trying to maintain an excellent performance standard.

I have enclosed a short version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, a frequently used tool to quantify leadership style. I would greatly appreciate it if you would please spend the approximately 15 minutes of your time necessary to respond to this multiple choice questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed stamped return envelope. If there is any way you could find the time to do this within the next 2 to 4 weeks it would be of great benefit to me as I try to complete my dissertation. Your participation in this study may contribute important

information to academic curricular decisions for students of higher education, as well as developing critical input for the hiring of new academic leaders.

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this project. I look forward to sharing the results with you in the fall of 1999.

Sincerely,

Mindy Fivush Levine  
University of North Texas  
Doctoral Candidate

## FOLLOW-UP LETTER

August 20, 1999

Dr. Donald R. Lehman  
Vice President of Academic Affairs  
George Washington University  
Washington DC 20052-0002

Dear Dr. Lehman,

I hope your summer has been a good one, with some respite from persistent graduate students! As you may recall, at the end of June I mailed to you a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire as part of a study I am conducting for my doctoral dissertation. The study is designed to determine the relationship between presidential leadership style, as perceived by senior administrators such as yourself, and the high ranking your institution has achieved in the U.S. News and World Report annual educational summary.

As of today, I have received responses from one third of the administrators to whom I originally mailed the survey. Although I am pleased with this response so far, frankly it is not yet sufficient for me to complete the project. In order to keep to the relatively strict timetable set for my dissertation, I was hoping that you might be able to complete your questionnaire by the end of this month or in early September if that is at all possible.

Could you please help in this effort by spending approximately 15 minutes of your time filling out and returning the enclosed questionnaire to me?

Thank you so much for your assistance with this project. I look forward to sharing the results with you by the end of this semester.

Sincerely,

Mindy Fivush Levine  
Doctoral Candidate  
University of North Texas

## EMAIL CONTACT

Dear Dr. Smith,

Please forgive my persistence in contacting you one last time. As you may recall, at the end of June I mailed to you a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire as part of a study I am conducting for my doctoral dissertation. I also sent a second mailing of this instrument just last Month. As a result of the more recent mailing, I was pleased to have received responses from another ten percent of the top administrators surveyed. I am now very close to being able to complete my dissertation and need only a few more survey responses. I hope that one of those responses will be yours!

I would be happy to mail you a new copy of the questionnaire if this would be of assistance. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to facilitate your participation in my study. If you have any specific concerns regarding the study design, confidentiality, or ultimate use of the data gathered, I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to address them, either by e-mail or telephone. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience. You have my sincere gratitude for your time and patience.

Sincerely,

Mindy Fivush Levine  
Doctoral Candidate, University of North Texas  
15115 Meandering Place  
Dallas, TX 75248  
(972) 458-7115

APPENDIX C  
BEST NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES  
U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT  
1999

## BEST NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, 1999

1. Harvard University (MA)
1. Princeton University (NJ)
1. Yale University (CT)
4. Massachusetts Inst. Of Technology (MA)
4. Stanford University (CA)
6. Cornell University (NY)
6. Duke University (NC)
6. University of Pennsylvania (PA)
9. California Institute of Technology (CA)
10. Brown University (RI)
10. Columbia University (NY)
10. Dartmouth College (NH)
10. Northwestern University (IL)
14. Johns Hopkins University (MD)
14. University of Chicago (IL)
16. Emory University (GA)
16. Washington University-St. Louis (MO)
18. Rice University (TX)
18. University of Notre Dame (IN)

20. Georgetown University (DC)
20. Vanderbilt University (TN)
22. University of California – Berkeley (CA)
22. University of Virginia (VA)
24. University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill (NC)
25. Carnegie Mellon University (PA)
25. Tufts University (MA)
25. University of California – Los Angeles (CA)
25. University of Michigan – Ann Arbor (MI)
29. University of Rochester (NY)
29. Wake Forest University (NC)
31. Brandeis University (MA)
32. University of California – San Diego (CA)
33. College of William and Mary (VA)
34. Case Western Reserve University (OH)
35. New York University (NY)
36. Boston College (MA)
36. Lehigh University (PA)
36. Tulane University (LA)
36. University of California – Irvine (CA)
36. University of Wisconsin – Madison (WI)
41. University of Southern California (CA)



- 42. University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign (IL)
- 42. Yeshiva University (NY)
- 44. Pennsylvania State University (PA)
- 44. University of California – Davis (CA)
- 46. Georgia Institute of Technology (GA)
- 47. Syracuse University (NY)
- 47. University of California – Santa Barbara (CA)
- 49. Rensselaer Polytechnic Inst. (NY)
- 50. George Washington University (DC)

APPENDIX D  
HUMAN SUBJECTS FORM



**University of North Texas**  
*Research Services*

June 22, 1999

Mindy Fivush Levine  
15115 Meandering Place  
Dallas, TX 75248

RE: IRB Application No. 99-124

Dear Ms. Levine:

Your proposal entitled "The Importance of Leadership: An Investigation of Presidential Style at Fifty National Universities," has been approved by the Institutional Review Board and is exempt from further review under 45CFR 46.101.

The UNT IRB must re-review this project prior to any modifications you make in the approved project. Please contact me if you wish to make such changes or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra L. Terrell".

Sandra L. Terrell, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

ST:sb

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