

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

Effects of Transformational Leadership Style on Employee Stress

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Public Administration,
Public Sector Management and Leadership

By
Benjamin Cantre

August 2020

Copyright by Benjamin Cantre 2020

The graduate project of Benjamin Cantre is approved:

Dr. Paul D Krivonos

Date

Dr. Elizabeth A Trebow

Date

Dr. Henrik Palasani-Minassians, Chair

Date

Table of Contents

Copyright Page	ii
Signature Page	iii
Abstract	v
Section 1: Introduction	1
Section 2: Literature Review	3
Transformational Leadership	3
Stress	9
Section 3: Methodology	14
Sample Population	14
Measuring Leadership Style	17
Measuring Stress	18
Data Analysis	19
Section 4: Discussion	21
Internal Validity	21
External Validity	22
Red Tape	22
Section 5: Conclusion	23
References	24
Appendix A: Sample Survey	33

Abstract

Effects of Transformational Leadership Style on Stress Among Employees

By

Benjamin Cantre

Master of Public Administration,

Public Sector Management and Leadership

This graduate project seeks to find a relationship between the Transformational Leadership style has on stress among employees. This project aims to study the perceived stress experienced by Social Workers from the In-Home Supportive Service district offices in Los Angeles County from the leadership style of their immediate supervisor. A quantitative non-experimental method using a self-reporting survey is proposed to gather data from respondents – this survey contains 10 prompts that use a 1 to 4 scale. A literature review section is also included to discuss the literary framework that the project is designed around. A discussion section is also included to provide a self-critique of the project submitted.

Section 1: Introduction

The problem issue being investigated concerns employee stress in the workplace. More specifically, employee stress as a result of the leadership style implemented by the immediate supervisor.

Concerns of this issue include the mitigation of a possibly controllable and avoidable source of stress. Past studies have shown that the average employee, for any given organization, was subjected to stress from multiple areas and that too much stress have lead to a number of negative side effects which included employee burnout, lower production rates, and an inability to focus (Page et al., 2014; Pasca & Wagner, 2012; Maulik, 2017; Jeon & Kim, 2018; Hatch et al., 2018). It may be beneficial for employees as well as employers to reduce stress to avoid these side effects. Examining a likely source of stress, like management style, may hopefully be a first step to help resolve a fixable issue.

This study will focus on the stress experienced by Social Workers. Travis et al. (2016) and Hamman et al. (2014) noted that the stress experienced by Social Workers they studied were unique in that they were tasked to interact with members of the public that were undergoing extraordinary amounts of stress compared to the general population as they were often subjected to verbal abuse, physical abuse, and psychological abuse from the public they “served”. Furthermore, other studies have also shown that Social Workers were also bound to work around “red tape” that must be considered for every action or inaction done (Rose et al., 2018; Quratulain & Khan., 2015). In short, Social Workers are tasked to confront and be exposed to highly stressful situations and be limited and constrained to the actions that they can take.

Jensen (2018) and Moynihan et al. (2012) pointed out that “red tape” rendered the sources of stress experienced by individuals who work for public agencies, like Social Workers, unavoidable. Furthermore, some studies have shown that Social Workers often experienced

stress due to interactions with two groups of people: their direct supervisor and the public that they serviced (Rabe et al., 2012; Schmidt et al., 2014). Various sources of stress may be unavoidable for a Social Worker and some sources, like red tape, cannot be controlled. This study aims to focus on the interaction between the Social Worker and their supervisor as an aspect that can be adjusted to hopefully reduce stress. More specifically, this study aims to shed light into the leadership style that is implemented by the supervisor as a target for change.

The leadership style used by a Social Worker's supervisor may be one rectifiable aspect that can be adjusted to not be a source of stress or even reduce stress. This study aims to use the Transformative/Transactional frameworks to assess leadership style and compare Social Workers perceived levels of stress.

This study will first aim to determine if a Transformational Leadership style is being implemented by a Social Worker's supervisor. The study will also try to measure the stress being experienced by a Social Worker. A quantitative correlational model will be used to help establish a relationship between Transformational Leadership style and subordinate stress; the goal is to establish a relationship between the Transformational Leadership style and the stress being experienced by an individual.

This study aims to measure the influence of supervisor leadership style on level of their employees' stress. The overall goal of this study is to help Social Workers experience less stress and hopefully reduce burn out and concurrently increase production and promote good mental health by seeing how stress can be lowered. In short, if there is a negative relationship between stress being experienced and Transformational Leadership, it may prompt public agencies to promote this leadership style for the benefit of their employees and agency as a whole.

Section 2: Literature Review

Topics covered in this section will include an analysis of the Transformational Leadership framework and effects of stress on employees. The first objective of this literature review is to establish an understanding of the Transformational Leadership framework. The second objective is to see why the Transformational Leadership style is used to analyze leadership in a public agency. Third, this review aims to address some factors of the framework and confounding evidence that present sources of scrutiny.

Stress will also be examined in this literature review. First, this literature review will aim to understand the dangers of stress and how helping to control it can serve to be beneficial for both employees and employers. This literature review will also attempt to establish a link between leadership style and stress. As a whole, this literature review aims to explicate the aspects of the Transformational Leadership style in how it serves to possibly have any measurable effects on stress experienced by followers.

Transformational Leadership

The Framework

Prior to delving into the Transformational Leadership style, one must first understand the framework in which it operates. Studies have shown that this framework encompassed two dichotomous styles of leadership: Transformational and Transactional (Jensen et al.,2016; Nielsen et al., 2019; Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). Transformational Leadership was mostly associated with a leader who empowered and motivated followers to take action and responsibility of their work while Transactional Leadership looked to external rewards and incentives to drive employee motivation (Jensen et al.,2016; Nielsen et al., 2019; Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013; Wang et al., 2019).

Regarding the Transformational and Transactional framework, one has to consider the way data is reviewed. Per Jensen et al. (2016) and Van Knippenberg & Sitkin (2013), the two leadership styles in this framework were often measured by the effects and not on the process that was implemented; data collected on the followers was used to determine if the leadership style being used reflected the Transactional style or the Transformational style. In regard to this study, it can be inferred that data from Social Workers are reflective of the leadership style that their immediate supervisor may be implementing.

It is to be noted that this study will focus more on the Transformational Style as the sample population of Social Workers operate and conduct business within a public organization. One has to consider the “red tape” and policies that limit the actions Social Workers and their supervisors are able to take. Jensen (2018) and Moynihan et al. (2012) pointed out that due to the restrictions on the business practices of public agencies, the Transactional Style was seldom used as public agencies often are not allowed to use pecuniary rewards or other incentives not approved by the agency to motivate employees. For this reason, this study will focus more on identifying leaders who exemplify attributes that are reflective of the Transformational Style: a style that may have elements that can function in a public agency setting despite the presence of “red tape”.

One aspect of Transformational Leadership includes the ability to inspire and motivate employees; Bass & Riggio (2016) identified motivation through inspiration and empowerment as key features of the Transformational Leadership model. Furthermore, Wang et al. (2011) added that leaders who exemplified the key attributes of the Transformational Leadership model often had staff that outperformed those who had a leader that possessed the traits of a Transactional leader. In short, one can look to Transformational Leadership attributes to identify staff that both

performs better and are more empowered in their daily tasks. This study will look to identify Transformational Leaders through the Social Workers that they supervise.

Transformational Leadership in a Public Agency

Empowerment is a key attribute of a Transformational Leader. One way the Transformational Leadership Model aims to empower followers is through “goal clarity”; studies have shown that goal clarity helped empower individuals understand the overall *mission* and *reason* behind why specific tasks in the work environment mattered (Bronkhorst et al., 2015; Moynihan et al., 2012; Wright & Pandey, 2010). Jung (2014) added that goal clarity provided a way to convey a reason as to why certain tasks were relevant and why the work an individual affected the overall mission of the agency of which they work for. By enabling the workers that are under their purview to understand why their specific job *matters*, Transformational Leaders in turn motivate their subordinates by shedding light into the importance and meaningfulness of their role in the agency. Jung (2014) and Harrison (1987) pointed out that this meaningfulness was key to why individuals were motivated to perform at a higher level as the workers perceived that their actions actually served a purpose. This study will use the perceived meaningfulness of one’s job as an indicator of being led by a Transformational Leader. As stated, Transformational Leaders often are identified through employees who exhibit meaningfulness in their job. In short, Social Workers who find meaning in their job may indicate a Transformational Leader who leads them.

Interestingly, research from Jensen (2018), Moynihan et al. (2012), Ponomariov et al. (2017), Ritz et al. (2014), Van der Voet (2016), and Wright (2010) suggested that leadership in the public sector and large organizations that had a bureaucratic structure were often too restricted to implement their transformational style due to “red tape” and existing agency policies. Due to the “red tape” in place, Jensen (2018) and Moynihan et al. (2012) also pointed

out that goal clarity is so effective because it is one of the only tools that left available for leaders in public agencies. Goal clarity is key for Social Workers as it is largely unaffected by the constrictive “red tape” that individuals in a public agency must abide by. In short, the Transformational Leadership style can be effective when used in public agency due to the effectiveness of goal clarity.

Furthermore, past research has shown that established goal clarity among employees was often identified as a primary indicator of a Transformational Leader (Bronkhorst et al., 2015; Moynihan et al., 2012; Wright & Pandey, 2010; Wright, Moynihan, et al., 2012; Van Wart, 2013). Jensen (2018) also alluded to goal clarity as the single most impactful and obvious way to identify a group of employees who were being led by a Transformational Leader. This study will look into goal clarity amongst Social Workers as a way to identify the leadership style of their supervisor.

Other than helping to guide and motivate their subordinates through goal clarity, Transitional Leadership were also noted to have charismatic tendencies; Transformational Leadership was often characterized by individuals who had high charisma, the ability to stimulate others intellectually, and an individual consideration for all people that were in their purview (Amjadi et al., 2014; Dussault & Frenette 2015; Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2006; Bronkhorst et al., 2015; Moynihan et al., 2012; Wright & Pandey, 2010; Wright, Moynihan, et al., 2012; Van Wart, 2013). Furthermore, having a charismatic personality was shown to help alleviate stress (Wright & Pandey, 2010; Wright, Moynihan, et al., 2012).

Nielsen (2019), Salem et al. (2015), Syrek (2013) and Mathumia et al. (2015) concluded that managers that embodied transformational leadership characteristics were more likely to have employees who experienced less stress and burnout. Kranabetter et al. (2017) and Syrek et al. (2013) pointed to the ability of Transformational Leaders to help moderate work-related

pressures in part due to the relatively positive relationships they forged with employees. Munir et al. (2012) and Choi et al. (2016) asserted that Transformational Leaders helped mitigate stress because of a shared understanding and mutual respect of the responsibilities of each person in the organization through goal clarity. Kim (2013) added that Transformational Leaders helped create a culture of ownership through empowerment which took away the focus from stress and refocused employees on how they can become better members of an agency. Jensen et al. (2016) and Van Knippenberg & Sitkin (2013) also pointed out that a charismatic and enthusiastic leader was also be notably be more successful in promoting empowerment and subverting the negative aspects stress by replacing it with more optimism, purpose, and a sense of enthusiasm for the overall goals of the agency.

Nevertheless, the emphasis and the importance of goal clarity is often key in trying to operationalize measurements for Transformational Leadership. Goal clarity is often key in identifying the three main descriptors of Transformational Leadership and has been used as a basis of measurement by prior research; these three descriptors included the ability to clarify the organization's overall vision, identify how each employee's work is used to support the organization's vision, and sustain a shared vision once it was established (Jensen et al., 2016; Van Knippenberg & Sitkin 2013; Locke & Latham, 2002; Wright, 2007). It is to be noted that this graduate project will use these three elements of Transformational Leadership as well as the ability to instill a sense of enthusiasm for the overall goals of the agency to establish and identify Social Workers who are led by supervisors that may operate in this framework.

Scrutiny

It is important to note that measuring the effects of Transformational Leadership also may reduce internal validation. To start, other research also points to other factors that transformational leaders possess that may contribute to a greater positive influence on

employees. Yun et al. (2019) and Meghna et al. (2017) pointed to gender as a contributing factor to leadership performance as both studies concluded that females that showed Transformational characteristics often had better performing staff than their male counterparts. Concurrently, Ponomariov et al. (2017) suggested that transformational leaders with a master level degree in Public Administration often were more likely to have a greater positive impact on their subordinates. In short, a transformational leadership style may be a key factor in a positive employee influence but not all other factors that may not have been identified.

As with all types of frameworks, one has to note that there are both flaws and studies that show contradictory results. Mostafa (2016) argued that an employee's "job fit" is the most influential factor in their ability to produce and to be motivated. Dur & Zoutenbier (2014) also added that an individual's inherent altruistic traits were a driving factor in their ability to produce and be motivated in the work environment. Walumbwa et al. (2019) argued that motivation at work was primarily driven by a perceived meaningfulness to the agency that employs them. Some studies even suggested that factors that were outside of the work environment altogether had the most influence over an employee's motivation, production, and perceived level of stress (Belle, 2013; Pedersen, 2015; Spicker, 2012). Though the Transformational Leadership framework offers a way to conceptualize and study leadership and its effects, one also has to take note of its weaknesses and other studies that draw different conclusions.

As mentioned before, though the Transformational Leadership style has often yielded wholly positive effects on employees, one has to also mind the weaknesses of the framework as well as the results that present different conclusions. Lastly, there also has to be a consideration of the studies that show wholly contradictory results. Nielsen et al. (2019) inferred that transformational leadership only had a positive effect if there was an absence of transactional incentives. Kindarto et al. (2020), Ricard et al. (2017), Jacobsen (2017), and Sun et al. (2017) all

suggested that Transformational leadership had little to no effect on employees. Furthermore, Jacobsen (2017) and Ricard (2017) both pointed out that leaders that had Transformational characteristics in public sector management only had a minimal effect on their employees' production, stress, and job satisfaction.

The use of the Transformational and Transactional Framework to analyze and conceptualize leadership styles may provide a robust number of studies that tout its effectiveness and use, but one has to also consider the studies that show contradictory results or point out some aspects of the framework that are lacking and that may have been overlooked. Nevertheless, the framework has presented an interesting way to examine leadership and a measurable way to determine the effects on followers. In short, the framework offers a way to determine the leadership style used by the immediate supervisor of Social Workers through an examination of the effects of the style from said Social Workers.

Stress

Dangers of Stress

Stress has been identified as a psychological experience caused by emotional strain and tension (Yang, 2019; Liu et al., 2015). Per Im (2009) and Prang et al. (2016), this emotional strain and tension could have stemmed from any emotional or physical experience as long as a psychological strain was created. In short, the effects of stress was seen to be experienced psychologically and that the experience of too much stress could also have physiological ramifications such as increased blood pressure, heart rates, and inability to focus (Leake et al., 2017; Walters et al., 2018; Walumba et al., 2019).

Perhaps the most poignant danger of stress is burnout. Burnout was noted as a state in which an individual was overwhelmed mentally, emotionally, and physiologically by stress (Leake et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2015; Walters et al., 2018; Walumba et al., 2019; Yang, 2019).

Furthermore, a state of burnout was observed to make one wholly unable to perform any duties or mind any responsibilities in an effective manner (Lin et al., 2020).

Prior to experiencing a burnout, stress was often attributed to multiple negative behaviors. The amount of stress experienced by an individual was shown to lower their production, quality of work, and ability to adapt to new situations in a professional setting (Giaque, 2012; Yang, 2019; Liu et al., 2015).

In short, stress was often associated with the negative effects on an individual's physiology, psychology, and performance in the workplace. Furthermore, this study aims to link the stress experienced by an employee to the leadership style they are subjected to. By showing a negative relationship between Transformative Leadership and stress, this study aims to better the lives of employees; identifying a leadership style that results in less stress can help promote a leadership style that also hinders *the negative effects* of stress from being experienced.

Stress in the Workplace

Be it stress from the work itself, stress brought in from outside the job, or stress from their direct supervisor, employees are often subjected to stress from multiple fronts.

Lin et al. (2020) suggested that though there are multiple sources of stress for employees in the workplace, the primary source of stress was observed to be linked to the number of tasks an individual is charged with; more responsibilities often reflected a higher level of stress being experienced.

A cause of stress in the workplace can also stem from the workplace culture. Tafvelin (2020) gave an example of a work culture that stemmed from a predominantly female employee population may have resulted in more intragroup conflicts which was reported as the primary source of stress for most employees that were studied. Mavhungu et al. (2017) inferred that government agencies were more likely to keep leaders that have values that align with the

mission of the agency which implied that leadership style may not be relevant, but a culture created by an agency may be the cause for various employee stressors. Furthermore, stress was shown to be derived from a work culture created by managers who perceived themselves to be more important to their employees (Aarons et al., 2017). Tummers (2018) suggested that stress is experienced as a cause of workers who felt like they were unable to advance any further in their careers. Bukach et al. (2017) also showed how a higher stress levels may be due to a perception of stagnant career advancement opportunities and added that this stress may be the cause of a high turnover rate.

Stress an employee experiences in the workplace was shown that it did not necessarily originate or be caused by factors from the workplace. Low et al. (2018) concluded that employee stress was more closely tied to employee physical health more than anything else as healthier people tended to have experienced and be less affected by stress. An inherent compassion and willingness for self-sacrifice was also driving factors for some employee's ability to adapt to change; Wright et al. (2013) pointed out that employees who were more willing to inflict stress on themselves through self-sacrifice were the most adaptive to change.

Green et al. (2014) also showed that age was the only predictable factor in employee burnout. Leake et al. (2017), Walters et al. (2018), and Walumba et al. (2019) concluded that the primary stressors and eventual cause of burnout stemmed from job dissatisfaction and employee's perceived meaninglessness of their job. On the other hand, remaining with an agency despite a lack of job satisfaction was shown to be a self-inflicting stressor due to one's compassion for the type of work that was being done as well as compassion felt for fellow coworkers (Bright 2008). It is also interesting to note that some employees were primarily motivated to work because of this inherent feeling of compassion (Prysmakova, 2019).

In short, the studies mentioned have pointed to several stressors as the primary source of stress for employees in the workplace. Nevertheless, they all agree on one aspect of the workplace: it is filled with stressors and employees are subjected to stress from multiple areas.

Stress and Leadership

Some studies also show a connection between stress and leadership. Tummings (2018) postulated that employees who were better able to communicate with their managers were less likely to experience stress. Eldor (2019) suggested that managers that were perceived to be more compassionate had less employees that experienced a stress and eventual burn out. Noblet & Rodwell (2009) also pointed out the importance of leadership's influence on stress; it was concluded that employees feeling stressed shared a positive correlation with how "fair" they felt when they were being interacting by their superiors.

Transformational Leadership style was also noted to put an importance on a leader's ability to understand and be mindful of how each individual employee in their purview functioned in the work environment (Jensen et al.,2016; Nielsen et al., 2019; Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). It is important to note that the Transformational style emphasized a leader's ability in getting to know each employee on an individually may also require effective communication between a manager and employee. In turn, one can see links between better communication, the implementation of the Transformational Leadership style, and experience of less stress.

Stress is a prevalent factor in the workplace that can negatively have an effect on an employee's physiological and psychological level. Stress can negatively impact agencies as a whole as employees who experience stress are more likely to reduce their rates of production, quality of work, and even make them unable to work when they experience burnout. By promoting and implementing the Transformational Leadership style as a method to manage

employees, organizations can in turn help reduce the amount of stress experienced by employees as well as the repercussions associated with the stress being experienced.

Section 3: Methodology

The aim of this graduate project is to design a study that would shed light on the possible effects of leadership style on employee stress. It has been shown that stress was a major factor on the decline of employee's ability to function effectively and was shown as a factor which may lead to "burnout" (Page et al., 2014; Pasca & Wagner, 2012; Maulik, 2017; Jeon & Kim, 2018; Hatch et al., 2018). It was also noted that an employer's immediate supervisor may be a primary source of stress in the workplace (Tummers, 2018; Eldor 2019; Nolet & Rodwell, 2009). Furthermore, studies have specifically pointed to the Transformational Leadership style as a way to possibly reduce stress experienced in the workplace (Bronkhorst et al., 2015; Moynihan et al., 2012; Wright & Pandey, 2010; Wright, Moynihan, et al., 2012; Van Wart, 2013; Jensen, 2018).

This study will consider a non-experimental qualitative method in which the leadership style will be considered the independent variable and stress as the dependent variable.

A survey (Appendix A) will be given to the sample population of Social Workers. The survey will be comprised of two parts. The first part will prompt the Social Workers respond to questions about their immediate supervisor and will aim to provide a "Transformational Leadership score". The second part of the survey will provide a stress test that aims to provide a "stress score" which intends to assess the perceived amount of stress being experienced by the Social Worker.

Sample Population

The sample population for this study will consist of Social Workers from In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). Social Workers were chosen due to their wide-ranging responsibilities which include more mundane and less technical "line staff" data entry to conducting and scoring client assessments on their individual discretions (Government Jobs, 2020). Furthermore, some

studies have also noted that the number of responsibilities the job required as well as the heavy interaction with clients, management, and other job stressors made for an inherently difficult job in which burnouts are a relative common occurrence (Calitz et al., 2014; Travis et al., 2016; Hussein, 2018).

In short, this study aims to see if a Social Worker’s supervisor’s management style has any bearing on stress despite the all the stressors that Social Workers are burdened with. Jensen et al. (2016) and Van Knippenberg & Sitkin (2013) pointed out that the *effects* of the Transformational Leadership style was often usually studied and that Transformational Leadership was often measured through both the subordinates’ attestations and performance level.

IHSS in the Los Angeles County DPSS has 8 field office districts (Department of Public Social Services, 2020). A roster for 6 of the 8 field offices was obtained and a total of 678 active IHSS Social Workers were counted. Furthermore, each Social Worker was assigned a number in order of appearance from each district office. The roster also shows how each Social Worker was assigned a number. Ratio of Social Workers of each field office to total number of Social Workers used to determine sample population. Table 1 depicts the number of Social Workers per office, sample number per office, as well as the numbers chosen by the random number generator – a random number generator (Random.org, 2020) was used to generate a random number sequence for each office. The initial numbers generated for each set was used to determine which corresponding Social Worker was chosen to test for this study.

Table 1

Field Office Name	Total Number of Social Workers Housed	Number of Social Workers Sampled	Social Workers Chosen by Random Number Generator
-------------------	---------------------------------------	----------------------------------	--

Chatsworth	154	23	20, 68, 147, 74, 107, 16, 61, 126, 33, 138, 21, 148, 80, 48, 131, 13, 42, 136, 65, 102, 63, 142, 104
Pomona	45	7	17, 11, 14, 42, 21, 6, 34
Lancaster	No Data	N/A	N/A
“Metro” (Downtown Los Angeles)	128	19	65, 42, 11, 29, 18, 14, 91, 55, 120, 17, 54, 48, 62, 12, 72, 22
Burbank	No Data	N/A	N/A
El Monte	108	16	12, 79, 105, 38, 28, 15, 78, 89, 45, 42, 50, 103, 77, 60, 33, 11
Rancho Dominguez	121	18	115, 78, 116, 16, 100, 77, 46, 75, 10, 99, 37, 51, 29, 109, 82, 101, 42, 54
Hawthorne	122	18	34, 23, 40, 122, 90, 105, 54, 119, 3, 25, 24, 17, 76, 21, 31, 110, 120, 83
Totals	678	101	

It is to be noted that the roster showed that there are IHSS Social Workers also housed in a “call center” district. These Social Workers are mostly tasked with answering phone calls from the general public and the IHSS service population. Though these Social Workers are listed on the district roster, they will not be used as part of the population being studied as their tasks and responsibilities are not reflective of those from the other Social Workers in IHSS.

Furthermore, the Social Workers in the study will include individuals with the title of “Social Worker Trainee” – per Aida Karapetyan, District Director of the Hawthorne IHSS district, this is an internal agency title which denotes individuals who have been Social Workers for less than 2 years (A. Karapetyan, personal communication, May 30, 2020). Furthermore, when looking at the district roster in, one can notice that Social Workers are generally labelled as “Intake” or “Approved” which reflected the caseload that each specific Social Worker was responsible for; intake Social Workers mostly saw to the completion of new applications while approved Social Workers were tasked with maintaining and recertifying cases that have already been approved (A. Karapetyan, personal communication, May 30, 2020).

Measuring Leadership Style

This study aims to identify Social Workers who are led by Transformational Leaders. This project will aim to identify Social Worker supervisors who exhibit Transformational Leadership based on the perception of the Social Workers in their purview. Social Worker Supervisors will be scored based on the questionnaires used by Jensen et al. (2016) and Van Knippenberg & Sitkin (2013) as illustrated on Table 2. More specifically, the prompts on the right-hand side will be used as the sample population of Social Workers will be completing the surveys to evaluate the leadership style of their immediate supervisors.

Table 2

Item No.	Item wording: A. Leader version	Item wording: B. Employee version
	As a leader I . . .	My leader . . .
1.	Concretize a clear vision for the organization's future	Concretizes a clear vision for the organization's future
2.	Communicate my vision of the organization's future	Communicates a clear vision of the organization's future
3.	Make a continuous effort to generate enthusiasm for the organization's vision	Makes a continuous effort to generate enthusiasm for the organization's vision
4.	Have a clear sense of where I believe our organization should be in 5 years	Has a clear sense of where he or she believes our organization should be in 5 years
5.	Seek to make employees accept common goals for the organization	Seeks to make employees accept common goals for the organization
6.	Strive to get the organization to work together in the direction of the vision	Strives to get the organization to work together in the direction of the vision
7.	Strive to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieve the organization's goals	Strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieve the organization's goals

Note. In the questionnaire, organization is replaced by the specific sector organization, for example, "school" for the school sector. Likert-type format: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *somewhat disagree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *somewhat agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*.

It is to be noted that the scoring scale on Table 2 will be adapted for the use of this study by removing the "3 = neither agree nor disagree" option to remove a neutral midpoint in order to effectively correlate variables. For the purposes of this study, the subjects are directed to rate

each prompt on a 4-point scale from “1 – Strongly Disagree” to “4 – Strongly Agree”. The responses from these 7 prompts will have a maximum score of 28 and a minimum score of 7 in which the higher score would infer a leader with higher transformative characteristics.

These prompts will help illustrate how Transformative Leadership is operationalized. As stated prior, measure of Transformational Leadership will be based on a leader’s ability to clarify the organization’s overall vision, identify how each individual’s work is used to support the overall vision, sustain the shared vision, and instill a sense of enthusiasm. Jensen et al. (2016) and Van Knippenberg & Sitkin (2013) noted that prompts 1, 2, and 4 reflect the effectiveness of how a leader clarifies the goals of the organization and makes it clear as to how the goals will be reached. Prompts 5, 6, 7 attempted to ascertain how leadership identified how each individual’s work was being used to help complete the mission of the organization. Prompt 3 helped to operationalize a leader’s efforts to sustain the shared vision and to instill the vision through enthusiasm.

Measuring Stress

In short, stress will be measured through the self-attestation of the perceived effects. It is to be noted that stress does have immediate physiological and psychological effects (Page et al., 2014; Pasca & Wagner, 2012). This study will focus on the known effects of stress on employees. Prior studies have shown that these known effects included experience of burnout and losing the ability to focus (Page et al., 2014; Pasca & Wagner, 2012; Maulik, 2017; Jeon & Kim, 2018; Hatch et al., 2018). Furthermore, the survey will simply prompt the sample population to self-attest to the stress they perceive they are under in the work environment. Prior studies have noted that self-attestation was a direct testimony of a perceived amount of stress and may probably result in the most accurate measurement of it (Tummers, 2018; Eldor, 2019; Noblet & Rodwell, 2009).

The following prompts will be used to measure stress in the workplace:

- 1) I have experienced a “burnout” due to stress from the workplace.
- 2) I have trouble focusing on tasks in the workplace.
- 3) I often feel stressed in the workplace.

Subjects are directed to rate each prompt on a 4-point scale from “1 – Strongly Disagree” to “4– Strongly Agree”. The scores from the responses from these prompts will be added together to ascertain a “stress” score. The stress score will have a minimum score of 3 and a maximum score of 12. Higher scores would imply higher stress experienced in the workplace and lower scores a lower stress experienced in the workplace. It is to be noted that, like the scale used determine a Transformational Leadership score, no neutral response will be available as this study aims to correlate two distinct variables.

Data Analysis

Once all surveys are completed, the data will be compared to see if the Transformational Leadership scores have a correlational relationship with stress scores. Scores from each survey prompt will also be compared to see if there are any discernable relationships as well.

A graph will be created with points plotted to represent the degree of Transformational Leadership and stress scores. The x-axis will reflect the Transformational Leadership scores and will have a range from 7 to 35. The y-axis will reflect the Stress Scores and will have a range from 3 to 15.

In short, data which shows a positive and upward trending slope will show a positive correlation between stress and Transformational Leadership. Conversely, a negative slope would imply a strong negative correlation between leadership and stress. In short, this study hopes to find a negative slope to illustrate less stress being experienced as more Transformative qualities are found.

Nevertheless, other interesting data results may also be found. Results that show a zero slope (horizontal line) may indicate that Transformational Leadership may not have an influence on the stress being experienced amongst Social Workers. A straight vertical line may indicate that the survey population all experience leadership at the same Transformative degree and that the perceived stress has no bearing on the Leadership Style. Furthermore, results that cluster to one area of the map may infer that leadership styles in the public agency being surveyed, Los Angeles County IHSS, tend to be similar in style and amount of stress perceived may also be shared amongst the sample population. Lastly, a data plot with no discernable pattern may illustrate no correlation at all between Transactional Leadership and stress.

Section 4: Discussion

Internal Validity

Perhaps one key part depends on the number of Social Workers surveyed. Surveying each office based off of Social Worker ratios and using a random number generator will help ensure that the population will be well represented in the data. Furthermore, internal validity would also be strengthened depending on the sample size that is surveyed.

Questions on the survey may pose to be detrimental to internal validity. A short survey may constrain the results as more variables may be unaccounted for. Furthermore, there are already established tests to determine Transformational Leaders as well as employee stress. This study presents an abbreviated version of these established surveys and may in turn pose a threat to internal validity.

The brief nature of the study may also lend problems to internal validity as implementing this study may result in skewed results due to when it was administered. The Department of Public Social Services often experiences hiring freezes and periods of infrastructural strain brought on by the political and economic climates. In short, the time that this study is administered is prone to errors in data collection due to external factors that should be considered.

Lastly, one has to consider the nature of the self-reporting survey. Internal validity is threatened by how the questions are asked – the prompts may be leading and the order of the prompts may also have an effect on data collection. It can be argued that placing the prompts based on the employees' supervisor prior to the prompts about their stress may have an influence on how the stress prompts are answered. As an example, a negative relationship with a supervisor may have subconscious effects on picking negative prompts about themselves.

Furthermore, there is also the risk of having questions that are not understood by the survey population. Prompts may be misinterpreted and mis scored as a result.

External Validity

As stated before, Social Workers perform a specific job that have specific stressors that may not translate to other jobs. Furthermore, this study aims to use IHSS Workers, a subcategory of Social Workers that have job responsibilities that are unique to their own domain. In short, this population may pose a threat to this study's external validity due to the specific scope of Social Workers that were used.

Red Tape

Perhaps one of the more prominent aspects of studying the transformational and transactional leadership styles within the public administration context is the issue with “red tape”. The nature of management in public administration has often been shown to be deeply entwined by the web of red tape that limited the actions individuals in leadership positions can take (Jensen, 2018; Moynihan et al., 2012; Wright, 2010; Ritz et al., 2014; Van der Voet, 2016; Ponomariov et al., 2017). The constraints of existing policy may in turn nullify and render leadership styles that deviate too far from policy to be inconclusive as it cannot be fully implemented to render any effect.

Section 5: Conclusion

The goal of this graduate project was to see any possible relationships between a manager's leadership style and stress experienced by their subordinates. Prior studies have been mixed – some allude to and confirm good stress and a positive relationship with a Transformational Leadership style and some show no correlation at all. Ultimately, one is encouraged to look at the human factor as well as each employee is an individual that is not only affected by stressors from their responsibilities that their job requires but from stressors that may directly be influenced by those who are charged to be their superiors.

\

References

- Aarons, G. A., Ehrhart, M.G., Farahnak, L. R., Sklar, M., & Horowitz, J. (2017). Discrepancies in leader and follower ratings of transformational leadership: relationship with organizational culture in mental health. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 44*(4), 480-491.
- Amjadi, L., Nazem, F., & Karimzadeh, S. (2014). Validation scale for measuring the transformational leadership style in education Ministry. *International Conference on Management, Leadership & Governance, 18*(1), 110-127.
- Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York: Free Press.
- Bass, B., & Riggio, R. (2006). *Transformational leadership* (2nd ed., [Echo management package]). Mahwah, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Bellé, N. (2013). Experimental evidence on the relationship between public service motivation and job performance. *Public Administration Review, 73*, 143-153.
- Bronkhorst, B., Steijn, B., & Vermeeren, B. (2015). Transformational leadership, goal setting, and work motivation. *Review of Public Personnel Administration, 35*(2), 124-145.
- Bright, L. (2008). Does public service motivation really make a difference on the job satisfaction and turnover intentions of public employees? *The American Review of Public Administration, 38*(2), 149-166.
- Bukach, A. M., Ejaz, F. K., Dawson, N., & Gitter, R. J. (2017). Turnover among community mental health workers in Ohio. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research, 44*(1), 115-122.
- Calitz, Taetske, Roux, Adrie, & Strydom, Herman Strydom. (2014). Factors that affect

- social workers' job satisfaction, stress and burnout. *Social Work*, 50(2).
- Choi, S.L., Goh, C. F., Adam, M., & Tan, O. K. (2016). Transformational leadership, empowerment, and job satisfaction: The mediating role of employee empowerment. *Human Resources for Health*, 14(1), 73.
- Department of Public Social Services. (2020). *About us*. <https://dpss.lacounty.gov/en/about.html>
- Dur, R., & Zoutenbier, R. (2014). Working for a good cause. *Public Administration Review*, 74(2), 144-155.
- Dussault, M., & Frenette, É. (2015). Supervisors' transformational leadership and bullying in the workplace. *Psychological Reports*, 117(3), 724-733.
- Eldor, L. (2019). Public service sector: The compassionate workplace—The effect of compassion and stress on employee engagement, burnout, and performance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 28(1), 662.
- Giauque, D., Anderfuhren-Biget, S., & Varone, F.. (2012). Stress perception in public organisations. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 33(1), 58-83.
- Government Jobs. (2020). *Social Worker*. <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/lacounty/classspecs/1064447>
- Green, A. E., Albanese, B. J., Shapiro, N. M., & Aarons, G. A. (2014). The roles of individual and organizational factors in burnout among community-based mental health service providers. *Psychological Services*, 11(1), 41-49.
- Hamann, D.J., & Foster, N. T. (2014). an exploration of job demands, job control, stress, and attitudes in public, nonprofit, and for-profit employees. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 34(4), 332-355.
- Hatch, P.H., Winefield, H.R., Christie, B.A., & Lievaart, J.J. (2011). Workplace stress, mental

- health, and burnout of veterinarians in Australia. *Australian Veterinary Journal*, 89(11), 460-468.
- Harrison, R. (1987). Harnessing personal energy: How companies can inspire employees. *Organizational Dynamics*, 16(1), 4-21.
- Hildenbrand, K., Sacramento C.A., & Binnewies C. (2018). Transformational leadership and burnout: The role of thriving and followers' openness to experience. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 23(1): 31-43. doi:10.1037/ocp0000051
- Hussein, S. (2018). Work Engagement, burnout and personal accomplishments among social workers: A comparison between those working in children and adults' services in England. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 45(6), 911-923.
- Im, T. (2009). An exploratory study of time stress and its causes among government employees. *Public Administration Review*, 69(1), 104-115.
- Jacobsen, D. I. (2017). Publicness as an antecedent of transformational leadership: The case of Norway. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 83(1), 23-42.
- Jensen, U. T. (2018). Does perceived societal impact moderate the effect of transformational leadership on value congruence? Evidence from a field experiment. *Public Administration Review*, 78(1), 48-57.
- Jensen, U. T., Andersen, L.B., Bro, L.L., Bøllingtoft, A., Eriksen, T.L., Holten, A., . . . Würtz, A. (2016). Conceptualizing and measuring transformational and transactional leadership. *Administration & Society*, 51(1), 3-33.
- Jeon, Sang Won, & Kim, Yong-Ku. (2018). Application of assessment tools to examine mental health in workplaces: Job stress and depression. *Psychiatry Investigation*, 15(6), 553-560.
- Jung, C.S. (2014). Why are goals important in the public sector? Exploring the benefits of goal

- clarity for reducing turnover intention. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 24(1), 209-234
- Kim, H. (2013). Transformational leadership, organizational clan culture, organizational affective commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior: A case of South Korea's public sector. *Public Organization Review*, 14(3), 397-417.
- Kindarto, A., Zhu, Y., & Gardner, D. G. (2020). Full range leadership styles and government it team performance: The critical roles of follower and team competence. *Public Performance & Management Review*, Ahead-of-print (Ahead-of-print), 1-29.
- Kranabetter, C. & Niessen, C. (2017). Managers as role models for health: Moderators of the relationship of transformational leadership with employee exhaustion and cynicism. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 22(4), 492-502.
- Locke, E. A., Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist*, 57, 705-717.
- Leake, R., Rienks, S., & Obermann, A. (2017). A deeper look at burnout in the child welfare workforce. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 41(5), 492–502.
- Lin, K., Wu, C, Chu, T., Huang, T., & Chen, Y. (2020). Employer or employee: Who is more likely to suffer from burnout? *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 62(4), E154-E159.
- Liu, Bangcheng, Yang, Kaifeng, & Yu, Wei. (2015). Work-related stressors and health-related outcomes in public service. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 45(6), 653-673.
- Low, A., & McCraty, R. (2018). Emerging dynamics of workplace stress of employees in a large organization in Hong Kong. *Public Administration and Policy*, 21(2), 134-151.

- Mavhungu, Dzivhuluwani, & Bussin, Mark H.R. (2017). The mediation role of motivation between leadership and public sector performance. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management, 1*(2), E1-E11.
- Mathumia, S., Lewa, P., & Ndwiga, M. (2015). Effects of transformational leadership on work stress among top managers in State Owned Enterprises (SOES) in Kenya. *European Journal of Business and Management, 7*(36), 185-194.
- Maulik, P. (2017). Workplace stress: A neglected aspect of mental health wellbeing. *Indian Journal of Medical Research, 146*(4), 441-444.
- Meghna S., Levine H., & D'Agostino, M.J. (2017). Gender differences in the leadership styles of MPA directors. *Journal of Public Affairs Education, 23*(3), 869-884.
- Mostafa, A. M. (2016). High-Performance HR Practices, Work Stress and Quit Intentions in the Public Health Sector: Does person-organization fit matter? *Public Management Review, 18*(8), 1218-1237.
- Moynihan, D. P., Wright, B. E., Pandey, S. K. (2012). Working within constraints: Can transformational leaders alter the experience of red tape? *International Public Management Journal, 15*, 315-336
- Munir, F., Nielsen, K., Garde, A.H., Albertsen, K., & Carneiro, I.G. (2012). Mediating the effects of work-life conflict between transformational leadership and health-care workers' job satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. *Journal of Nursing Management, 20*(4), 512-521.
- Nielsen, P.A., Boye, S., Holten, A.L., Jacobsen, C. B., & Andersen, L. B. (2019). Are transformational and transactional types of leadership compatible? A two-wave study of employee motivation. *Public Administration, 97*(2), 413-428.
- Noblet, A.J. & Rodwell, J.J. (2009). Integrating job stress and social exchange theories to predict

- employee strain in reformed public sector contexts. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART*, 19(3), 555-578.
- Page, K. M., Milner, A. J., Martin, A.T., Gavin, G.B., & LaMontagne, A. D. (2014). Workplace stress: What is the role of positive mental health? *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 56(8), 814-819.
- Pasca, Romana, & Wagner, Shannon L. (2012). Occupational stress, mental health and satisfaction in the Canadian multicultural workplace. *Social Indicators Research*, 109(3), 377-393.
- Pedersen, M. J. (2015). Activating the forces of public service motivation: Evidence from a low-intensity randomized survey experiment. *Public Administration Review*, 75, 734-746.
- Ponomariov, B., & McCabe, B. (2017). Professionalism vs. public service motivation: Can public administration education alleviate the tension? *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 39(2), 80-99.
- Prang, K., Bohensky, M., Smith, P., & Collie, A. (2016). Return to work outcomes for workers with mental health conditions: A retrospective cohort study. *Injury*, 47(1), 257-265.
- Prysmakova, P., Tantardini, M., & Potkański, T. (2019). The role of financial performance in motivating Polish municipal employees. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 39(1), 75-105.
- Quratulain, S., & Khan, A. K. (2015). Red tape, resigned satisfaction, public service motivation, and negative employee attitudes and behaviors. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 35(4), 307-332.
- Rabe, M., Giacomuzzi, S., & Nübling, M. (2012). Psychosocial workload and stress in the workers' representative. *BMC Public Health*, 12(1), 909.
- Random sequence generator*. (2020). Random.org. Retrieved July 12, 2020, from

<https://www.random.org/sequences/>

- Ricard, L. M., Klijn, E.H., Lewis, J.M., & Ysa, T. (2017). Assessing public leadership styles for innovation: A comparison of Copenhagen, Rotterdam and Barcelona. *Public Management Review*, 19(2), 134-156.
- Ritz, A., Giauque, D., Varone, F., & Anderfuhren-Biget, S. (2014). From leadership to citizenship behavior in public organizations. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 34(2), 128-152.
- Rose, S., & Palattiyil, G. (2018). Surviving or thriving? Enhancing the emotional resilience of social workers in their organisational settings. *Journal of Social Work: JSW*, 20(1), 23-42.
- Salem, I. E.-B. (2015). Transformational leadership: Relationship to job stress and job burnout in five-star hotels. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 15(4), 240–253.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358415581445>
- Schmidt, B, Loerbroks, A, Herr, R.M, Wilson, M.G, Jarczok, M.N, Litaker, D, . . . Fischer, J.E. (2014). Associations between supportive leadership and employees self-rated health in an occupational sample. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 21(5), 750-756.
- Spicker, P. (2012). "Leadership": A perniciously vague concept. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 25(1), 34-47.
- Sun, R., & Henderson, A. C. (2017). Transformational leadership and organizational processes: Influencing public performance. *Public Administration Review*, 77(4), 554-565.
- Syrek, C. J., Apostel, E., & Antoni, C. H. (2013). Stress in highly demanding IT Jobs. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 18(3), 252-261.
- Tafvelin, S., Keisu, B.I., & Kvist, E. (2020). The prevalence and consequences of intragroup

- conflicts for employee well-being in women-dominated work. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 44(1), 47–62.
- Travis, D.J, Lizano, E. L., & Mor Barak, M. E. (2016). ‘I’m so stressed!’: A longitudinal model of stress, burnout and engagement among social workers in child welfare settings. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 46(4), 1076-1095.
- Tummers, L., Steijn, B., Nevicka, B., & Heerema, M. (2018). The effects of leadership and job autonomy on vitality: survey and experimental evidence. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 38(3), 355-377.
- Van der Voet, J. (2016). Change leadership and public sector organizational change. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 46(6), 660-682.
- Van Knippenberg, D., & Sitkin, S. B. (2013). A critical assessment of charismatic—Transformational leadership research: Back to the drawing board? *The Academy of Management Annals*, 7(1), 1-60.
- Van Wart, M. (2013). Administrative leadership theory: A reassessment after 10 years. *Public Administration*, 91, 521-543.
- Walters, J. E., Brown, A. R., & Jones, A. E. (2018). Use of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory with social workers: A confirmatory factor analysis. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 42(5), 437–456.
- Walumbwa, F.O., Hsu, I., Wu, C., Misati, E., Christensen-Salem, A. (2019). Employee service performance and collective turnover: Examining the influence of initiating structure leadership, service climate and meaningfulness. *Human Relations*, 72(7), 1131-1153.
- Wang, G., Oh, I. S., Courtright, S. H., Colbert, A. E. (2011). Transformational leadership and performance across criteria and levels: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of research. *Group & Organization Management*, 36, 223-270.

- Wright, B. E. (2007). Public service and motivation: Does mission matter? *Public Administration Review*, 67, 54-64.
- Wright B.E., Christensen, R.K., & Roussin-Isett, K. (2013). Motivated to adapt? The role of public service motivation as employees face organizational change. *Public Administration Review*, 73(5), 738-747.
- Wright, B. E., Pandey, S. K. (2010). Transformational leadership in the public sector: Does structure matter? *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 20, 75-89.
- Wright, B. E., Moynihan, D. P., Pandey, S. K. (2012). Pulling the levers: Transformational leadership, public service motivation, and mission valence. *Public Administration Review*, 72, 206-215.
- Yang, L. (2019). Public administration as a dynamic balance and integrative science across politics, management, and law: Rosenbloom's framework and Chinese Experiences. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 49(1), 79-97.
- Yun, J. A., Lee, Y., & Mastracci, S. (2019). The moderating effect of female managers on job stress and emotional labor for public employees in gendered organizations: evidence from Korea. *Public Personnel Management*, 48(4), 535-564.

Appendix A

Leadership Style and Stress Survey

The following items describe statements about your perceptions of your immediate supervisor and yourself. Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements by circling your response.

1) My immediate supervisor concretizes * a clear vision for the organization's future.			
1 (strongly disagree)	2 (somewhat disagree)	3 (somewhat agree)	4 (strongly agree)

*Concretize means to make (an idea or concept) real; give specific or definite form to.

2) My immediate supervisor communicates a clear vision for the organization's future.			
1 (strongly disagree)	2 (somewhat disagree)	3 (somewhat agree)	4 (strongly agree)

3) My immediate supervisor makes a continuous effort to generate enthusiasm for the organization's vision.			
1 (strongly disagree)	2 (somewhat disagree)	3 (somewhat agree)	4 (strongly agree)

4) My immediate supervisor has a clear sense of where he or she believes our organization should be in 5 years.			
1 (strongly disagree)	2 (somewhat disagree)	3 (somewhat agree)	4 (strongly agree)

5) My immediate supervisor seeks to make employees accept common goals for the organization.			
1 (strongly disagree)	2 (somewhat disagree)	3 (somewhat agree)	4 (strongly agree)

6) My immediate strives to get the organization to work together in the direction of the vision.			
1 (strongly disagree)	2 (somewhat disagree)	3 (somewhat agree)	4 (strongly agree)

7) My immediate supervisor strives to clarify for the employees how they can contribute to achieve the organization's goals.			
1 (strongly disagree)	2 (somewhat disagree)	3 (somewhat agree)	4 (strongly agree)

8) I have experienced a “burnout” due to stress from the workplace.			
1 (strongly disagree)	2 (somewhat disagree)	3 (somewhat agree)	4 (strongly agree)

9) I have trouble focusing on tasks in the workplace.			
1 (strongly disagree)	2 (somewhat disagree)	3 (somewhat agree)	4 (strongly agree)

10) I often feel stressed in the workplace.			
1 (strongly disagree)	2 (somewhat disagree)	3 (somewhat agree)	4 (strongly agree)