

Exploring the Relationship Between Transformational Leadership and the Effects on Employee
Job Satisfaction in the COVID-19 Pandemic era.

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A dissertation to fulfill the requirements for a
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP

at

NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY

2022

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the ways organizations function. Social distancing has altered the ways organizations traditionally operated and caused significant challenges for employees, leading to employee turnover. Employee turnover is important to address because high attrition can extensively affect companies, directly and indirectly, resulting in increased hiring, training cost, lost production, reduced profits, and overall lower employee morale. Grounded in Bass's model of transformation leadership, the purpose of this mixed-methods grounded theory study using an integration of quantitative and qualitative research was to explore the existence of an association between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic era in a local government organization in Washington state. There were six research questions that directed the study around the dimensions of transformational leadership. Through a purposeful sampling technique, 20 employees from a division in this government organization participated in this study. Data were collected through two surveys in Survey Monkey, which were transferred to SPSS, and through open-ended interviews, done through Zoom Video Communications Inc., transcribed, and transferred to NVivo software for data analysis and interpretation. Seven themes emerged from the analysis: support, communication, leadership, telework, empowerment, safety, and trust. The study was also triangulated, which demonstrated the study's validity between the quantitative and qualitative data. The general results of this study showed a statistically significant association between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction. While the literature review and data analysis present a convincing case for transformational leadership and employee satisfaction in general, elements of intellectual stimulation and idealized influence (behaviors) were not significant. This indicated that not all the dimensions of transformational leadership

correlated with improving employee job satisfaction which appears to be an anomaly of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: transformational leadership, COVID-19, pandemic, employee job satisfaction, organizations, government, mixed methods

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my one and only daughter, Sade, for her understanding, strength, and patience while I pursued this doctorate degree. I love you so much. Thank you for your sacrifice and commitment to assisting me with completing this degree. You are my biggest cheerleader and encourager. This is all for you. Her words throughout this program have been, “you can do it, mommy,” and yes, when I doubted myself, I constantly heard these five words from this little person who believed in me and knew that I could achieve this, and I am more than capable of achieving greatness. Where there is passion, there is determination, perseverance, and execution. As Kouzes and Posner (2017) postulated, leadership is indeed an affair of the heart.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I thank the Almighty Father for guiding me through this process. With him, anything is possible. I would like to sincerely thank my dissertation committee, who were exceptional. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to everyone who has supported me in completing this doctoral program. I would like to thank my Committee Chair, Dr. Thomas Alsbury, for your patience, guidance, encouragement, and advice throughout this process. Your dedication and devotion to me as my chair have been nothing short of amazing. You go above and beyond, and I cannot thank you enough for your support in my academic life and my growth as a leader. To Dean Rowlanda Cawthon, I appreciate you. Thank you so much for your mentorship, support, and commitment to my growth. You are such an inspiration to many, and you are indeed a force to be reckoned with. To Dr. Don Conant, I would like to thank you for your encouragement and guidance throughout my time at Northwest University. It would not have been possible to complete my dissertation without your continued support and expertise. I have learned so much from you all. To all my Northwest University professors, Dr. Pizelo, Dr. Mankins, Dr. Thomas, Dr. Walls, and Dr. Magruder, who were instrumental in my leadership development, your dedication and guidance are unmeasurable. To Dr. Creps, the director of the program, thanks for your encouragement and supportive nature.

I would also like to thank my family. To my mother, who has been pushing me throughout to achieve my dreams. To my father, who has moved on, thank you for your love and teaching me so many things. I miss you. To my brothers, I love you. I would like to thank My grandparents, godmother, aunty Cilma Dupigny, aunties, especially aunty Josian Rolle and the rest of my family for their love and support. To all my teachers, professors, and mentors along

the way who supported me throughout my academic journey, particularly Mrs. D. Harris, my fifth form high school teacher, Professor Maria Volpe, my undergrad professor, and Dr. Alix Vitale, my graduate Dean, thank you so much for believing in me. Lastly, thank you to my close friends, ILA sisters and Dissertation Warriors, Dr. Allard-Blaisdell, Dr. Maraglio-Lynn, Dr. Brown and Ms. Crew-Noble who were always there through the good times and not-so-good times. Thanks to all my classmates at Northwest University. To my close friends, Dr. Aubuchon, Tracey, Gabriella, Liz, and my work family, I love you all. Thank you. To my Gerald, who supported me and encouraged me when I felt I could not, thanks for your patience and love. To all the great leaders who have left this earth and who are present, who, through their leadership, gave me the drive to further investigate leadership in its entity, thank you. My gratitude to anyone whose name I have not listed here, whose support either directly or indirectly helped me complete my Doctoral Degree. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

Thanks to all for their enormous support and encouragement through this process, my work towards becoming a doctor, and my research to better understand leadership in government organizations, nonprofits, and any organization, especially on a global scale through disruptive change as the COVID-19 pandemic era. To those who told me that I could not do it, who doubted me, or criticized me, thank you. My motivation and determination are beyond anything normal. For all those willing and ready to start this journey, it is a long road ahead, but anything is possible with perseverance, persistence, grit, and wit. You can do it if you allow yourself to. Roll with the tide and get it done. Anything is possible regardless of adversities! This is just the beginning.

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CHAPTER 1-Introduction

Leadership is an essential subject of any organization. Nazim (2016) defined *leadership* as the ability to influence others, while Northouse (2003) considered leadership as the process in which a person exercises influence on a group of people to accomplish a general objective. Hence, the communicative nature of leadership provides a perspective not focused solely on the leader as the influencing agent but leadership as a relational communication process between the leader and the follower (Kelly & MacDonald, 2019).

Leadership plays a significant role in organizational success. Nazim (2016) posits that a leadership approach is defined by the general way a leader is influenced by managers and behaves towards his subordinates to help the organization accomplish its goals. Many organizations thrive on devoted employees trained to do the tasks delineated in their work plans while endeavoring to meet the mission and vision of the organization. Thus, the leadership approach is critical for organizations because of the effect on employee attitudes and actions as well as employee emotions and opinions (Yildiz & Simsek, 2016). The subject of leadership style is a significant aspect of organizations when external change drives companies to rationalize how their company's function (Mohr et al., 2020; Talbot, 2010).

Over the past decade, a growing body of research (Gottfredson & Aguinis, 2017; Horga & Nancu, 2017; Quintana et al., 2015) examined the relationship between leadership styles in relation to employee satisfaction. These studies suggest a significant correlation exists between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction. Studies comparing different leadership theories detect that leadership styles are more successful in the retention and satisfaction of

employees. Transformational Leadership theory variables are linked to employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment of employees (Malik et al., 2017). These variables include

leadership attributes of trust, credibility, shared leadership, and organizational performance correlated to workplace satisfaction (Breevaart & Bakker, 2018, 2014; Malik et al., 2017; Robert & You, 2018; Yoon & Poister).

As Locke (1969) noted, employee job satisfaction is the emotional state resulting from the appraisal of an individual's job experience as facilitating the achievement of one's job values. Because the degree of employee job satisfaction can produce a more self-motivated workforce, it is integral to understand the association between employee satisfaction and transformational leadership (Malik et al., 2017). Employee dissatisfaction can lead to employee turnover in the workplace and a lack of organizational commitment. It is critical to address employee turnover because high attrition can extensively affect companies, directly and indirectly, resulting in increased hiring and training costs, lost production, reduced profits, and overall lower employee morale (Hayward et al., 2016). Thus, a study that analyzes the conceptual elements of Transformational Leadership, specifically promoting workplace satisfaction, in a local government agency proves a valuable investigation. Therefore, this study focuses on Transformational Leadership theory in investigating its effectiveness on employee satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background

Transformational Leadership is currently a popular approach used by leaders in multiple organizations. However, limited research evaluates the association of Transformational Leadership with employee satisfaction in a government organization since the catastrophe of the global COVID-19 pandemic. As Bass and Avolio (2004) posit, continuous development in an organization is needed to develop the potential and skills of employees to gain a competitive

advantage in changing societies. Wang et al. (2014) and other empirical studies conclude that elements of transformational leadership can influence employees' creativity.

Much of the research demonstrates that applying this transformational leadership style produces positive results in employee performance and satisfaction (Avolio, 1994; Malik et al., 2017; Yukl, 2008). Bass and Avolio (1994) concluded that this leadership style influences employee performance and satisfaction by improving visionary and collaborative working capacity that develops and improves overall employee morale, particularly when developing organizational standards. Yukl (2008) looked at transformational leaders as charismatic individuals with whom employees identify emotionally. Moreover, Malik et al. (2017) concluded that this leadership style encouraged employees to be innovative and think beyond their limits, a valuable trait for organizations. Transformational leadership is designed to focus leaders on inspiration, motivation, and development of followers, to focus them on simultaneously improving employee self-satisfaction and accomplishing the organization's goals.

COVID-19 and Leadership

In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a public health emergency of international concern (World Health Organization, 2020). In a short period, this crisis became the most challenging and debated catastrophe affecting the health of individuals, businesses, and organizational functions. According to Urick (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic caused many businesses worldwide to move to online or virtual workplaces (Center for Disease Control (CDC), 2020). Moreover, social distancing and isolation or quarantine measures altered how organizations traditionally operated (Baldwin & Di Mauro, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic reached a global scale in 2020. Purnomo (2021) purported that, people were more worried about their personal lives and role as employees, due to the many victims and

the varied socio-economic impacts caused by the pandemic. Indeed, the pandemic shifted the way organizations function.

As a result, leaders sensed a need to make an urgent response, as is typical in times of unprecedented changes. Organizations and businesses quickly shifted the traditional work functions from traditional work offices to work-from-home to prevent the spread of the virus (Baldwin & Di Mauro, 2020). The impact of the pandemic was visible on multiple levels, including leaders adopting different organizational and operational structures to continue work functions effectively. As a result, businesses worldwide shifted to online work to prevent the spread of the virus (CDC, 2021). Employee management became increasingly challenging for many organizations, especially when employees shifted from working in traditional work offices to working virtually. Thus, the “onlineization” of work structures presents a revolutionary change and challenges for leaders when managing their followers. Studies confirmed that this crisis caused severe operational challenges for organizations, including a drop in employee job satisfaction which is one of the critical factors of organizational performance (Nyanga & Chindanya, 2020). Moreover, Nyanga and Chindanya argued, “It is essential, and exigent for organizations to ensure that the normal psycho-social wellbeing of their employees is maintained so that they continue to perform their tasks effectively and efficiently during the COVID 19 pandemic propelled economic recession” (p. 169). Studies indicate that employee performance and commitment were based on leadership effectiveness (Diaz et al., 2017). For this reason, leaders should be equipped with the skills and abilities to navigate change effectively.

With the onset of the pandemic, leaders were challenged to manage employees virtually and effectively while continuing to meet organizational outcomes. Therefore, there is a need to understand and focus research on how leaders can effectively utilize leadership styles that

promote employee satisfaction and organizational commitment in this changing world. Although much research has examined the benefits of transformational leadership style towards employee satisfaction, a gap exists in the literature regarding the relationship between this leadership style and employee satisfaction. Urick (2020) suggested that researchers need to determine what can be learned from this pandemic to provide some answers on how to face future catastrophic changes affecting organizational effectiveness. Moreover, as expansive change occurred worldwide because of the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals, teams, and organizations face a new reality (Urick, 2020). COVID continues to present unprecedented changes and challenges for people, organizations, and the world. Leaders need to navigate this unprecedented change to achieve desired outcomes for their businesses and organizations.

This chapter presents the introduction and background of the study. It then provides the problem statement, the purpose of the study, and the significance of the study. In addition, it presents the research methods and data analysis, along with the theoretical frameworks and research consisting of the overview of the dissertation subject area and a description of the scholarly and social context for the research. It then introduces the topic for the dissertation and a defensible rationale for the need to inquire into the topic. Moreover, a general outline of the project's method and structure plus format is presented.

Problem Statement

Research on the effectiveness of transformational leadership in promoting employee satisfaction during the height of COVID is limited (Ali et al., 2021; Ratana et al., 2020). Organizations need to consider how they function amidst enormous change. The COVID-19 crisis is indeed a revolutionary change presenting many challenges leaders must manage and navigate. Scheuerlem et al. (2020) postulated that the crisis did not only exercise a strong

influence on the entire organization but also employees. Past research focusing on Transformational Leadership and employee satisfaction suggested that this style of leadership was correlated to motivating employees to work towards organizational outcomes. However, with the onset of the pandemic, which brought on the urgency for organizations to maintain functionality and a shift to online work, additional research is needed to understand if transformational leadership can be effective in improving employee job satisfaction during an unprecedented change like COVID-19.

Purpose of the Study

The impact of the pandemic on employees caused significant challenges that led employees to feel dissatisfied, which can lead to employee turnover in government organizations. Employee turnover is important because high attrition can extensively affect companies, directly and indirectly, resulting in increased hiring and training costs, lost production, reduced profits, and overall lower employee morale (Hayward et al., 2016). To date, studies of Transformational Leadership were conducted in a more normalized climate, and few directly measure the association between the theory and employee satisfaction.

The main purpose of this mixed-method, grounded theory research study was to explore an association between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction during revolutionary change such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The study is a mixed-method using an integration of quantitative and qualitative research and data in a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

A study conducted among 13 males and 7 females by Nyanga and Chindanya (2020) focused on the shift in employee job satisfaction among employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings indicated that employees were living in fear of losing their jobs, which

led to low employee job satisfaction. Moreover, the study revealed that the pandemic significantly affected workers' salaries, wages and benefits, and other conditions of employment, as well as limiting promotional job opportunities (Nyanga & Chindanya, 2020). The same research found the value and importance of workers in promoting organizational success and survival, making employee satisfaction a key component for any organization (Nyanga & Chindanya, 2020). The COVID-19 crisis demanded that leaders respond with quick decisions to navigate revolutionary change, especially with the shift from traditional work offices to work from home spaces.

The shift to work-from-home diminished leaders' ability to maintain employee job satisfaction (Almohtaseb et al., 2021; Miller, 2020). Some barriers include communication challenges that impede effective operations (Bhatti et al., 2021). Other barriers include employee fears around job security (Nyanda & Chindanya, 2020) and employee uncertainty and role ambiguity (Almohtaseb et al., 2021). The purpose of this study is to add to the research literature focused on how leadership style in crisis may influence employees' employee job satisfaction.

Research Methodology and Data Analysis Methods

This study used a mixed-method, grounded research strategy using survey data instruments to collect quantitative data and interviews to add qualitative data.

Quantitative Methods

The quantitative portion of the study employs the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), which is an instrument used to assess leadership, and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), which is a validated instrument used to assess employee satisfaction. The MLQ measurement tool of the transformational leadership development program measures the constructs of transformational, transactional, and non-leadership and was designed to be used at

all levels of leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Bessai, 1995; Kirnan, 1995). As Batista- Foguet et al. (2021) suggest, the MLQ examines leadership theory in the context of organizational behavior and captures leadership styles in a single measurement instrument. For this study, the MLQ examines the leadership theory of transformational leadership in the context of four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. This leadership instrument identifies leaders who recognize their followers and reward their efforts. The MLQ has been confirmed in meta-analysis as a valid and effective tool (Batista- Foguet et al., 2021).

This study employed a correlational design for the quantitative component of the study. Creswell (2012) endorsed this approach in studies measuring the association or relationship between two or more variables. In this study, the level of Transformational leadership traits exhibited by the organizational leader served as the independent variable, and the level of employee job satisfaction was the dependent variable. The study employed the Somers' delta (Somers' *d*) nonparametric measure to measure the direction of association that exists between the ordinal dependent variable and ordinal independent variable (Somers, 1962).

Qualitative Methods

As part of the qualitative portion of this study, a grounded theory approach was employed. Grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, an action or an interaction shaped by the views of many participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Grounded theory moves beyond description to generate or discover a theory for a process or an action (Corbin & Strauss 2007). The grounded theory method can provide a “unified theoretical explanation” (Corbin & Strauss, 2007, p. 107). For this study, Corbin, and Strauss (1990) definition of grounded theory was employed.

There are several practical applications of grounded theory. It is employed in many research studies and starts from data and sets out to discover or construct a theory from data. Moreover, it allows researchers to be scientific and creative, emphasizes theory development, and is used in emergent coding. Furthermore, it is applied to various research methods, including case studies, ethnography, and interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). The purpose of the qualitative research phase for this study was to collect data regarding the dependent variable of employee satisfaction. For the qualitative portion of the study, open-ended interviews focused on employee satisfaction and leadership traits were conducted to enrich quantitative data collected using the MLQ and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) surveys. Interview responses were used to triangulate and confirm quantitative data collected in the surveys and allowed for emerging themes to evolve that were not measured in the survey tools.

Grounded theory is also used in decision science. There are several computer-assisted qualitative data analysis programs built on grounded theory for this study; NVivo software is used and helps analyze and manage qualitative data such as interviews and open-ended survey responses (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Grounded theory is both an art and a social science tool used in studies to manage crime, government activities, medical studies, and organizations.

The study used in-depth interviews to collect qualitative data from the 20 employees sampled from a local government agency in Washington State. As recommended by Creswell and Poth (2018), this study “returned to the participants and asked more detailed questions that “help shape the axial coding phase.” They noted, “The point is to gather enough information to fully develop (or saturate) the model” (p. 87). Participants were selected from a local Washington State City government agency to be interviewed for the collection of qualitative

data. The Transformational Leadership model used in this study was developed by Avolio and Bass (2004).

Due to the nature of this study, an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach was used. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) note, this approach is used when quantitative data results are explained further utilizing qualitative data. This mixed-methods approach involved collecting, integrating, and analyzing qualitative data to explain the statistically significant relationships more fully discovered in quantitative survey data between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction in a COVID-19 pandemic era.

Research Questions

The nature of this mixed-methods study was to examine the relationship between transformational leadership (independent variable) and employee job satisfaction dependent variable) since the COVID-19 pandemic. Quantitative survey data from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Avolio and Bass (2004) was used. The respondents were employees of a local government agency in Washington State in the United States.

Research questions for the study are listed below.

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of transformational leadership used and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of idealized influence (attributes) and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

RQ3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of idealized influence (behaviors) and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

RQ4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's use of inspirational motivation and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

RQ5: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's use of intellectual stimulation and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

RQ6: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's use of individualized consideration and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

Theoretical Framework

Transformational Leadership was the theoretical framework used for this study. According to the MLQ manual, transformational leadership is described as “a process of influencing in which leaders change their associates' awareness of what is important and move them to see themselves and the opportunities and challenges of their environment in a new way” (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 103). Transformational Leadership style is a widely used and researched approach among leadership theories. Transformational Leadership is a style of leadership where leaders encourage subordinates to achieve the organization's desired outcomes through motivation, healthy perceptions, and shared beliefs and morals through effectual collaboration (Burns, 1978). The process involved in transformational leadership goes beyond empowering subordinates and develops their capabilities to determine the most effective course of action, evolving them to assume leadership responsibilities.

According to Northouse (2018), Transformational Leadership began with the work of Burns (1978), who developed the theory. The leadership approach encourages leaders to recognize and articulate a clear vision through change. Bass (1985) later expanded transformational leadership, adding a third type of leadership, Laissez-Faire, or hands-off leadership. Burns (1978), in his seminal work, focused on two types of leader-follower

relationships, namely transactional and transformational leadership. The transactional leader influences followers through the “exchange of valued things” (Burns, 1978). On the other hand, a transformational leader encourages the engagement between leaders and followers bound by a common purpose where leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978). Thus, transformational leadership focuses on organizational formations, systems, and cultures (Kinghorn et al., 2007).

In this study, Transformational leadership theory was measured using the MLQ questionnaire to determine leadership behavior focused on influencing employee motivation and satisfaction. This study used transformational leadership as described by Bass (1985) for the foundational theory. Bass (1985) described four components of transformational leadership: (a) idealized influence, which is related to the charismatic role-modeling behavior of transformational leaders who serve as role models; (b) inspirational motivation, which means that transformational leaders provide meaning to followers' work by articulating a clear vision for the team or organization in fulfilling goals; (c) intellectual stimulation where leaders encourage followers to challenge existing assumptions or the status quo to reframe problems and to approach old situations in new ways by being creative; and (d) individualized consideration which relates to coaching and mentoring behavior where transformational leaders foster supportive relationships (Bass & Riggio, 2008).

Transformational leadership theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for this research based on previous research that found that employees led by transformational leaders demonstrated higher satisfaction than groups led by other leaders (Almohtaseb et al., 2021). Transformational leadership theory has been applied to employee job satisfaction however, there

is very limited research about transformational leadership theory's relationship to employee job satisfaction since the pandemic of COVID-19 (Ali et al., 2021; Ratana et al., 2020).

One of the empirical studies conducted on transformational leadership in a crisis in China was conducted by Zhang et al. (2012). The researcher focused on transformational leaders' effectiveness during a crisis. The study found that although a crisis is an event that threatens organization viability, transformational leaders can modify followers' values so that followers are encouraged to accept group goals and work together toward a common objective and shared vision. In addition, transformational leaders who demonstrated a super capacity for emotional control facilitated the members' value congruence toward their leaders. The link between transformation leadership and employee satisfaction was also explored in previous studies (Kouzes & Posner., 2017; Malik et al., 2017; Robert & You, 2018; Yoon & Poister, 2018). More recent research identified a positive relationship between transformational leadership and improved employee attitudes and behaviors.

Much of the research found that transformational leadership was an effective theory for employee job satisfaction. Mujik et al. (2014) conducted a study to examine whether transformational leadership, in comparison to other contemporary leadership styles, contributes to higher employee satisfaction. The study included a sample of 399 respondents in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Germany. A nonparametric Mann-Whitney test was used and found a statistically significant difference in employee satisfaction under transformational leadership as opposed to the transactional and charismatic styles. As a result, researchers found that transformational leadership, with regards to the satisfaction of employees, was supported as a leadership approach.

Nazim (2016) conducted a study on the relationship between leadership styles of principals and employee job satisfaction of college teachers. The survey study included 43 colleges across the United States. One questionnaire was used by the researchers for teachers to rate the leadership styles of their heads. The second questionnaire (MSQ) was used to outline the employee job satisfaction of teachers. The findings of the study show a significant relationship between leadership style and employee job satisfaction. In addition, the relationship between transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style, and employee job satisfaction existed. However, a more significant relationship between transformational leadership style and employee job satisfaction was found.

Alqatawenh (2018) considers the transformational leadership style and its relationship to change management in Jordanian Insurance companies. In considering the constancy of change within organizations and insurance companies, this study demonstrates the relevance of Jordanians utilizing transformational leadership styles. An essential contribution of this study was the presentation of the four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and empowerment, which positively correlated to change management. Moreover, adopting transformational leadership in the Jordanian insurance company increased workers' perceptions of change management.

Fowler (2012) conducted a study to investigate the correlation between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction among government employees during reorganization. The study included 136 participants consisting of military and government employees. The study utilized two self-reporting instrument surveys, a leadership, and practice inventory questionnaire (LPI), a Job in General questionnaire (JIG), and a demographic questionnaire. A bivariate analysis using the Pearson Product Moment correlations was used. The results of the study

showed a significant correlation between employee job satisfaction and leadership practice individually. Transformational leaders were positively correlated to improved government employee job satisfaction and recruiting and retaining employees.

Yildiz and Simsek (2016) conducted a study on transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction investigating the mediating roles of trust and self-efficacy. The study was conducted with a sample group of 252 participants from academia from a nonprofit higher education institution in Turkey, 151 males, and 100 females. The data used structural equation modeling for this study. Results of the study demonstrated that the relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction is fully mediated by trust and efficacy.

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method approach. Mixed methods consist of the combination of qualitative and quantitative research and data in a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This mixed-method approach methodology is best suited for this study as it provides no predetermined open-ended responses, while the quantitative data provides the researcher with closed-ended responses through survey data questionnaires. This research study was conducted in two parts. In Phase I of the study, two surveys were completed by participants. The first survey was the MLQ, taken by 20 participants sampled from a local government agency in Washington State. The MLQ survey measures a leader's use of transformational leadership, focusing on four of Bass's (1985) components, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In addition to the MLQ, participants were administered the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) survey, which measured employee satisfaction (Dawis et al., 1968). Both surveys took 15 minutes to complete and were administered to the participants by online survey.

Phase II of the study used a qualitative approach by interviewing participants and exploring perceived transformational leadership traits of the employee's primary supervisor and their own employee job satisfaction since the COVID-19 pandemic. The in-depth interview data were coded on the level of employee satisfaction. Transcription data were analyzed using a modified grounded theory approach to determine the importance of four transformational leadership variables: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration. The perceived use of transformational leadership traits by their supervisor were rated categorically along with their level of employee satisfaction. In addition, emerging themes not addressed in the quantitative survey tools or included in Bass's leader traits were collected. A mixed-method was selected because it was a means to describe the experiences of individuals moving beyond the capacity of traditional quantitative survey methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interview questions allowed for understanding participant experiences and identifying steps in shaping the axial coding phase in developing categories for open coding in the NVIVO transcript analysis. The process of collecting data by means of axial coding involves what is central to the process (core phenomenon), what influenced the process (causal conditions), the strategies employed (strategies), and the effect (consequences) (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data Collections Procedures

As an explanatory sequential mixed-methods study, data collection was conducted in two phases with a "rigorous quantitative sampling in the first phase and purposeful sampling in the second qualitative phase" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 222). This study used the two-phase process of collecting quantitative data using the MLQ and MSQ survey instruments and qualitative data using interviews. Surveys used for this study were self-administered

questionnaires electronically delivered through Survey Monkey. In Phase II of the study, data were collected by conducting in-depth interviews of the same respondents who completed both surveys in Phase I of the study.

For both phases of the study, the target population consisted of 20 government employees from a specific department and division in a local government organization in Washington State, United States. These participants were selected using convenience sampling. The first phase of this study utilized a Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) survey to measure the transformational leadership traits displayed by their immediate supervisor, and the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire measured their own employee satisfaction. The surveys were sent through Survey Monkey to participants who met the criteria and were selected through convenience sampling. Participants filled out the surveys, which consisted of the rater form of the MLQ questionnaire series, consisting of 45 questions, and the MSQ short form comprised of 20 questions. Upon completion of the two surveys, participants were asked to indicate if they were willing to participate in the second interview phase of the study.

In the second phase of the study, all 20 employees who completed the surveys in Phase I of the study were interviewed. Open-ended questions used in the interview were piloted prior to interviewing participants. Employees were interviewed using Zoom Video Communication computer technology. Interviews focused on determining the constructs of employee satisfaction and transformational leadership for triangulation purposes with the results of the MLQ and MSQ surveys and enriching the qualitative detail in these variables.

Interview meeting dates and times were scheduled with employees who completed the first phase of the interview using Zoom Video Communication. Interviews were scheduled for

half an hour for each participant, and questions were asked and recorded using the recorder through Zoom Video Communication and transcribed.

The first phase of the study consisted of an MLQ survey questionnaire collecting data, measuring four dimensions of transformational leadership, and the MSQ survey, designed to measure employee job satisfaction. Both surveys were administered to the 20 employees in a department at a local Washington State government agency. In the second phase of the study, data were collected through in-depth interviews of the same 20 participants who completed both surveys. A semi-structured open-ended interview was conducted, recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for emerging themes. Interview transcriptions were analyzed using a foundational theory approach by coding the four dimensions of transformational leadership as defined by Bass (1985) and assessed for emergent leadership themes. In addition, transcripts were coded through specific words that indicated the interviewees' level of employee satisfaction. The study used the categorical analysis of the MSQ dimensions, which measures employee satisfaction, and MLQ four dimensions of transformational leadership to quantify the level of employee satisfaction. The themes derived from the interview process were codified into a numeric value based on the interviewee's answers.

Analysis of the Data Summary

Data analyzed in the study included responses in the first phase from the MLQ 5 X rater questionnaire and MSQ short form through Survey Monkey. The MLQ manual (Appendix C) includes an overview of the concepts of the Full Range of Leadership Development model, the two questionnaire forms, previous and current investigations on leadership development, uses of the MLQ, and the feedback form. The concepts include transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive/avoidant leadership. There are two questionnaire forms: the Self Rating

Form, where supervisors rate themselves as leaders (ratees), and the Rater Form, where associates rate their leaders (raters). The associates can represent four different organizational levels: above their ratee, the same level as their ratee, below their ratee, or other relationships such as a customer. Findings from previous investigations on the development of the questionnaire and follow-up investigations on the examination of the relationship of the MLQ leadership factors with outcomes, such as individual and organizational productivity, effectiveness, satisfaction, stress, and motivation, are discussed. In addition, the manual described how the MLQ could be used for selection, training, and organizational development. For this study, the MLQ Short 5X Rater form, consisting of 45 questions, was used, which allows employees to rate their leader.

The MSQ manual (Appendix D) includes descriptions of the development and scoring of the MSQ, two long and one short form, and a test of reliability and validity data. The MSQ short form was used for this study and consisted of 20 questions about employee job satisfaction. The MSQ can be hand-scored by using the information in the MSQ manual. The MSQ utilizes a 5-point Likert scale from Very Satisfied to Very dissatisfied.

For the second phase of this study, the study utilized three open-ended questions to gather qualitative data on the employees' job satisfaction and their perception of their leaders' traits. Interview data were collected to determine the presence of qualitative evidence to triangulate and enrich the MLQ 5X questionnaire and MSQ. MLQ respondent data analysis was achieved by preloaded foundational theory approach in NVivo software. In addition, data were assessed for emergent themes and quantified into a Likert scale to indicate the level of employee satisfaction. In addition, the interview provided perceptual evidence around how the COVID-19 pandemic influenced their job satisfaction and their supervisor's leadership actions and traits. Interviews

were transcribed and applied to NVivo 12 software, where the data was coded, and themes were both preceded using the four transformational leadership variables and analyzed for emergent leadership themes. Moreover, qualitative data analysis assisted in answering the research questions by using data retrieved to look for and compare themes and word patterns describing the level of employee satisfaction.

Confidentiality

In this study, the government agency wished to maintain confidentiality and did not want to be identified. Furthermore, interviewees in the final phase of the study were ensured complete confidentiality. Confidentiality was discussed with the 20 participants of the study and guaranteed as a required part of this mixed-method research study. In place of real names, participants were assigned numerical numbers as an identifier. All participants signed a consent form providing confidentiality protections employed in this study.

Definition of Terms

Throughout this study, various terms were used to define words used within the context of the study. The definitions for these terms are outlined below to assist with understanding each term:

COVID-19: COVID-19 is a highly infectious disease or illness caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), originated in Wuhan city of China, has already taken on pandemic proportions, affecting all the continents (Remuzzi & Remuzzi, 2020).

Employee job satisfaction: An aspect of work that depends on the individual who can cultivate either positive or negative emotions towards his or her work (Schermerhorn et al., 1991).

Leadership: A process in which a person influences on a group of people to accomplish a general objective (Northouse, 2016).

Transformational leader: A charismatic leader with whom employees identify emotionally (Yukl, 2008).

Transformational leadership: A style of leadership where leaders encourage subordinates to get the desired outcomes of the organization through motivation, healthy perceptions, beliefs, and morals with effectual collaboration (Burns, 1978).

Virtual Work: Where individuals work in different locations without ever having to meet (Birkinshaw et al., 2021).

Significance of the Study

This study was significant by providing implications for scholars, employees, practitioners, leaders, organizations and society by looking at the significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction in a government agency. In addition, it may contribute to the field of study of public leadership and employee job satisfaction. With the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, a significant change in organizations occurred, and individuals, teams, and organizations in a post COVID world face a new reality (Szelwach et al., 2021). With the shift in work functions and the challenges associated with the pandemic by organizations, more research is needed to prove the effectiveness of the transformational leadership style and its benefit in promoting employee satisfaction. Furthermore, this research can identify the facets of employee job satisfaction that influence how employee job satisfaction is successfully managed in a government organization. Malik et al. (2017) describes this as leaders applying modern techniques to adopt behaviors according to employee appropriateness. Required leader techniques include clear vision, effective communication, and individual consideration for employees. These are core variables of transformational leadership and are associated with enhancing organizational commitment and employee satisfaction.

This study holds possible substantive significance to leadership research. Studies about transformational leadership relating to employee satisfaction since the pandemic of COVID-19 are limited. In a review of the literature, limited studies demonstrate specific attributes to measure workplace satisfaction during the height of COVID-19. Since the epidemic outbreak, understanding of the impact shifted to organizations' sustainability (Biddle, 2021). Exploring the effectiveness of this leadership style and identifying the specific leadership attributes in relation to employee job satisfaction is vital to the research literature. In addition, this study employs researchers with a foundational study for future research and adds to the existing research and knowledge on transformational leadership theory in a government organization. Moreover, this study provides meaningful information by employees to leaders because of employee anonymity. The study aims to narrow the research gap of COVID-19 in relation to the association between transformational leadership and improved employee satisfaction.

The result of this study is essential for leadership practice because transformational leadership can be used to amplify leaders with the skills and capabilities to respond to change. Moreover, it may help leaders elicit contextual data and acquire a better understanding of their followers' lived experiences in driving successful outcomes by responding to revolutionary change. This could provide leaders with a better understanding of leading successfully in a crisis and post-crisis. The results of this study could support the importance of leaders promoting trust. Elements of trust, credibility, and shared leadership styles are associated with improved employee satisfaction (Drescher, 2014; Fulmer & Ostroff, 2017; Mosumder, 2018; Robert & You, 2018). The practical implication of leaders using transformational leadership to better understand the needs of their employees could promote and increase employee satisfaction.

Limitations of the Study

This study measures the presence of a significant relationship between the level of a leader's use of transformational leadership with the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government organization since the crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. One limitation is that interviews with participants were conducted utilizing virtual reality techniques, a recent phenomenon used to continue work functions due to the current pandemic and work from home mandates by the organization. Virtual work is defined using Birkinshaw (2021) as individuals who work in different locations without ever having to meet. Hence, scheduling interviews via virtual reality techniques was depended on the participants' availability and connectivity to virtual reality technology. With the shift from traditional work and interview functions, this method could explore new limitations for other studies as interviews are predominantly conducted using virtual reality techniques.

Another limitation of this study is related to the current pandemic. COVID-19 is a new reality that is still current. As individuals are going through this current phenomenon, there may be a change in the information collected in the study because individuals are still learning ways to navigate this pandemic. Leaders are still grappling with new ways and methods to be effective while still learning about the crisis. Another limitation is using survey questionnaires where the researcher depends on the accuracy, honesty, and level of interest of self-reporting participants.

Organization of the Study

The chapters in this dissertation are arranged in a traditional manner. Chapter 2 presents a substantial review of the literature on the effectiveness of transformational leadership concerning employee satisfaction in organizations. This chapter outlines the literature gaps specific to this leadership style being effective since the COVID-19 pandemic. Chapter 3 delineates the research

design and research methodology of the study. The instrument used to gather the data, the procedures followed, and the determination of the sample selected for this study is described.

Chapter 4 presents an analysis of the data and a discussion of the findings. The summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study are presented in Chapter 5. Moreover, suggestions for future research are discussed. A bibliography and appendixes concluded the study.

Chapter 2-Literature Review

In any organization, change is inevitable. Organizational change is demanding, and most change efforts are not successful regardless of the organization (Kotter, 2008). Leadership effectiveness is a critical component of any organization's success. Past research focused on the leader as the influencing agent in guiding subordinates toward organizational success (Almohtaseb et al., 2021; Lai, 2020; Nazim, 2016). For example, Nazim (2016) describes leadership as managers guiding and influencing subordinates in helping them accomplish the objectives of their organization. Moreover, Almohtaseb (2021) emphasizes that leaders possess some abilities to bring about change and motivate their subordinates to attain organizational goals. Furthermore, Lai (2020) suggests that leaders influence their members' behavior as they are viewed as representative examples of the organization and possess the authority to evaluate members' performance or make decisions.

Transformational leadership is a widely studied leadership theory used to respond to change. According to Northouse (2018), "Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people" (p.163). This style of leadership is a practical leadership style that has been found to be effective and successful in organizations. Since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, leadership has been brought to the forefront in navigating through unprecedented change. Employees face numerous changes and challenges that leaders need to navigate successfully.

This chapter presents a review of the literature which considers past related research which will inform and guide the study. There are four major sections in this chapter. The first section will present and review the theoretical framework of transformational leadership theory.

This section looks at a review of past studies around transformational leadership in relation to employee satisfaction. The second section reviews the literature on change management and leadership as well as change management and employee satisfaction. The third section introduces the topic of COVID-19 in relation to the two variables, transformational leadership and employee satisfaction, and reviews what the literature presents as current literature regarding this new paradigm. Four subtopics are reviewed in this section to include: COVID-19 and leadership, transformational leadership, and impacts of covid, transformational leadership and employee satisfaction, and COVID-19 impacts and COVID-19 and employee satisfaction. The fourth section of chapter 2 presents a summary.

Transformational Leadership Theory

Most research around leadership focuses on the theoretical background of the phenomenon. De Jong and Hartog (2007) consider leadership as the process of shaping employees toward desired outcomes. Leadership has significant indispensable success when people are involved. Lok and Crawford (2004) argue that the success or failure of organizational success depends on leadership capacity. Leaders, therefore, are an essential asset to organizations as they drive organizational culture. Nazim (2016) proposes that leadership is considered an essential element of directing process, and it is the managers that influence the working behavior of their subordinates that assist in accomplishing the objectives of an organization. Thus, Nazim strengthens this claim by noting that the quality of leadership plays an integral part in the success or failure of an establishment.

While there are many leadership styles in literature, including laissez-faire, autocratic, charismatic, situational, bureaucratic, transactional, participative, democratic, and transformational leadership (Mosadeghard, 2003), transformational leadership is one of the most

popular, vital fundamental styles used in leadership theories (Bass, 1985; Bass, 1999; Burns, 1978; Mujik et al., 2014; Wahab, 2014;). Burns (1978) was the first to introduce this leadership where he characterized the findings of transformational leaders as encouraging subordinates to achieve the organization's desired outcomes through motivation, healthy perceptions, beliefs, and morals with productive collaboration. The fundamentals of Burns' leadership were later improved by Bass and Avolio (1995), offering components of transformational leadership known as the Four I's. For example, intellectual stimulation is leaders encouraging followers to challenge existing assumptions, reframe problems, and approach old situations in new ways; idealized influence (charisma) is related to the charismatic role-modeling behavior of transformational leaders. In addition, individualized consideration looks at the coaching and mentoring behaviors of transformational leaders and inspirational motivation, which means that transformational leaders provide meaning to followers' work by articulating an appealing or evocative vision for the team or organization (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008).

Transformational leaders motivate others to move beyond their self-interest and work toward the team's aims (Bass, 1999). Through motivation and inspiration, the leader fosters their follower's personal development. Past studies describe transformational leaders as inspiring change and empowering their followers to achieve greater heights and improve themselves while improving their processes (Wahab, 2014). In addition, transformational leadership has attracted academic interest more than 40 years ago and has been investigated (Crede et al., 2019; Dinh et al., 2014; Kammerhoff et al., 2019; Northouse, 2016).

Leaders use past research on transformational leadership style to inspire, motivate, and develop followers in accomplishing their goals and that of the organization (Drescher, 2014; Miller, 2020; Robert & You, 2018; Ruggieri, 2009; Kinghorn et al., 2007). Such elements of this

leadership style can drive employees to want to work towards common goals as leaders can motivate employees towards the organization's vision. Bhatti et al. (2020) consider integrity, compatibility, compassion, teamwork, and other attributes as some of the main features that help leaders achieve objectives and tasks. Ruggieri (2009) considers this leadership style used to increase followers' level of interest, respect the group's obligations and mission, demonstrate qualities that induce respect and pride, become role models, and examine new prospects for solving problems and reaching goals by encouraging followers to find new solutions and propose new ideas.

The leader aims to get followers to be more creative and innovative by moving beyond self-interest. Past research on transformational leadership suggests this leadership style is practical and thriving in response to organizational change and drives results by assisting employees to meet and exceed performance (Miller, 2021; Paulsen et al., 2013). Hence, transformational leaders yield fundamental changes in the attitudes and beliefs of organizations. In addition, such elements of this leadership style can drive employees to want to work towards common goals as leaders can motivate employees towards the organization's vision.

Studies link transformational leadership with leadership effectiveness. Employee satisfaction is a standard indicator of organizational leadership effectiveness (Schermerhorn, 1991; Yang, 2009; Yukl, 2006). Schermerhorn (1991) avers employee job satisfaction as an aspect of work that depends on the person who can cultivate positive or negative emotions towards his or her work. Yukl (2008) described transformational leaders as charismatic individuals with whom employees identify emotionally. Yang (2009) postulates that the transformational leader is logically associated with employee satisfaction as he motivates employees to perform beyond their general expectations and organizational change. Consistent

with transformational leadership already cited, this leadership style can enhance employee satisfaction by activating employees to lead in the commitment to change. The goal of the transformational leader is to motivate, inspire, and empower their followers through change. Hence, transformational leaders usually enjoy dedicated and satisfied followers. Bush (2011) argues that the transformational leader achieves a significant positive effect on satisfaction after a study revealed that this leadership style raises employee job satisfaction by 42%. Transformational leaders can mobilize employees by being credible and trustworthy and driving them to struggle for shared aspirations. In that way, employees feel that they are there for a purpose or common goal.

Transformational Leadership and Employee Satisfaction

Past research seeks to contribute to the literature on specific leadership styles that employees see in leaders who have worked to achieve employee satisfaction, which enhances job performance and aids in reducing turnover (Hayward, 2016). Transformational leadership theory is considered an effective style of leadership to enhance employee satisfaction (Yang, 2009; Yıldız & Şimşek, 2016; Zhang et al., 2012). Researchers studied the effects of transformational leadership on employee satisfaction. Yıldız and Şimşek (2016) postulate, "most of the evaluative and descriptive approaches to satisfaction include the general emotional state of employees toward their jobs and features the job as a whole" (p.61). As Nazim (2016) suggests, employee job satisfaction is concerned with the attitude of employees towards their job and the organization. In addition, studies have shown that transformational leadership positively correlates with the effectiveness of employee job satisfaction (Noureen et al., 2020). The organizational success of transformational leaders relies on promoting their vision among employees and consists of integrity.

Malik et al. (2017), in their study on the influence of transformational leadership components on employee job satisfaction and organizational commitment, look at employee job satisfaction as consisting of five dimensions: promotion, coworkers, supervision, pay, and work. Moreover, research shows that employee job satisfaction is affected by personal characteristics like age, experience, gender, and education (Okpara, 2004). Therefore, transformational leadership has a positive influence on employee satisfaction. On the other hand, Gill et al. (2010) study considered that employee job satisfaction or the employee directly influenced by transformational leadership would further impact employee retention.

In a study led by Yang (2009), with a sample of a group of sales of managers and employees of four large life insurance firms that included 234 female and 135 male sales employees and 42 female and 135 male managers, transformational leadership exercised a notable influence on behavior interactions and employee satisfaction. Transformational leaders can help their subordinates see themselves within the change as they are equipped with the skills and abilities to change and transform people. Mujik et al. (2014) suggest that by appealing to the ideals and values of their followers, leaders who apply this style of leadership inspire their employees to create new paths of behavior through the process of problem-solving. This type of leadership helps promote personal and organizational changes and drive results by assisting employees to meet and exceed performance. Transformational leadership is a productive leadership style, and there has been a positive association found between this style of leadership and employee satisfaction.

Research indicates that transformational leadership responds to change through a crisis (Szelwach & Matthews, 2021; Zhang et al., 2012). Zhang et al. (2012) examine the effectiveness of transformational leadership through the crisis in the context of the 5.12 earthquake that struck

China in 2008, noting that emotional control and the quality of leader-member exchange are two crucial factors that play the moderating role in the relationship between transformational leadership and value congruence between leaders and members. Thus, crisis and leadership are closely intertwined. Transformational leaders actively seek to change the personal values of their followers so that they can reach beyond their self-interest to act for the good of the larger entity (Jung et al., 2009). Moreover, leaders' active involvement can modify followers' values so that followers are encouraged to accept group goals and work together toward a shared vision (Podsakoff et al., 1990). As leaders are the keystones in the organization, they are highly scrutinized to successfully direct employees through crises.

Change Management and Leadership

Much of the research demonstrated the effectiveness of transformational leadership style through change (Bilal, 2004; Northouse, 2018; Paolucci et al., 2018; Wahab et al., 2014). One of the most challenging responsibilities of leadership is the management of change. In his study, Kotter's (2012) research considers eight stages of change leading methods for successful organizational transformation. Some elements included vision and empowering employees. Thus, such attributes are elements of transformational leadership theory, which is a tool to motivate and inspire followers through change. Studies proclaim that effective change is achievable and requires detailed planning and projection by leaders (Ratana et al., 2020). As change is always present in organizations, leaders need to manage their organizations effectively. Nonetheless, the management of change is one of the most challenging responsibilities of leadership. Studies have linked transformational leadership and change, which is crucial to the continuously changing nature of business organizations (Alqatawenh, 2018). Bilal (2004) considers change management as using the most effective change in stages to

achieve organizational objectives identified by the responsibility defined by intended change. Moreover, Wahab et al. (2014) affirm that the process of inspiring change and empowering followers to achieve greater heights, improve themselves, and improve organizational processes, is what this style of leadership, through change, sets out to do. Although leaders are essential in shaping followers to achieve the organization's desired outcomes, revolutionary change can be a significant challenge for organizations in ensuring successful outcomes.

The general problem is if transformational leaders can still be influential through revolutionary change that has never occurred before, as this shift presents new challenges for organizations (Bass, 1985; Coban et al., 2019; Paulsen et al., 2013). Moreover, with revolutionary change comes innovation and challenges for an organization in learning how to strategize plans to respond effectively to such challenges and change. Although Bass (1985) proposes that such transformational leaders display creative behaviors, serving as role models for innovation, Paulsen et al. (2012) assert that research in this area highlights the need for further examination.

Research has demonstrated a positive relationship on a high level between strategic leadership and organizational change management (Coban et al., 2019). Coban et al. strengthen this claim by asserting that organizations that manage change adapt to the changing society and become more durable. Change management is an essential subject as the challenges faced by management leadership require planning and resources to cope with internal and external solutions. Thus, the management of change is one of the most challenging responsibilities of leadership. However, studies on the effectiveness of transformational leadership through change consider this leadership style unclear about how leaders shape group and organizational processes. There is little attention to task-orientated behavior processes, such as how leaders

clarify their expectations, set goals, and monitor the performance of their staff (Yukl, 2009; see also Burke et al., 2006).

Change is a transformative process that requires the most appropriate skills to achieve successful outcomes (Alqatawenh, 2018; Cadwell & Gould, 1992; Coban et al., 2019; Demirtaş et al., 2020; Vlados, 2019). A study carried out by Coban et al. (2019) established a strong relationship between management style and the capacity of employees by sharing the vision, giving priority to administrating change together, and considering the psychological aspects of employees that are constructive directorate. Alqatawenh argues that the link between transformational leadership to change is crucial due to the continuously changing nature of business organizations. To ensure success, organizations need to consider how they function amidst change.

Research has considered implications for how to implement organizational changes. For example, Amis and Janz's (2020) study first considers people to include employees, customers, and the community at the heart of change programs. Secondly, they believe that changing how people cope with this pandemic will require collaboration. Hence, the researchers consider a people-centered approach to dealing effectively with change through the crisis by collaborating with the government, communities, suppliers, customers, and competitors in unprecedented ways.

Change Management and Employee Satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is a significant subject where change is involved (Kouni et al., 2018; Malik et al., 2017; Robert & You, 2018). Malik et al. (2017) argues that leadership with transformational reforms encourages employees to be innovative and creative in such a way to think beyond their limits and innovative new ideas, which are valuable for organizations.

Moreover, studies have shown that change and the overall modification process stimulate, generate, and reproduce resistance and conflict (Vlados, 2019). Therefore, as organizations change the nature of employees' work dynamics, it is necessary to examine proper change management techniques (Burnes, 2004).

Thus, the role of leaders through change management in determining organizational outcomes impacts employees, especially in the crucible of revolutionary change. Research has shown that employees' efficiency, performance, and self-motivation have also affected organizational commitment (Tella et al., 2007). Likewise, a study conducted by Herold et al. (2008) found a positive relationship between change and change management practices noting that the commitment to change depends on good change management practices as transformational leaders; change leadership and commitment of followers is a function of the impact of personal changes. In addition, Kotter (2012) considers eight stages of change as leading methods for successful organizational transformation. Such methods include creating a sense of urgency, building a guiding coalition for a strategic vision and initiatives, enlisting a volunteer army, enabling action by removing barriers, generating short-term wins, sustaining acceleration, and instituting change. The author notes that such steps are essential to achieve desired results and manage resistance during organizational change.

Ratana et al. (2020) conceptualize a change framework in presenting a critical review of the development of change management. As change keeps changing, so does its management methodology, and so effective change is achievable by identifying managerial aspects of change. This non-experiential study relied on a rigorous review of historical, emergent, and recent change management literature. The authors highlight the aspects of change that can construct a joint base in dealing with change. To manage change, change type, process, and elements must

work together as they are symbolically related. A significant contribution of this study is the conclusion that the various theories validate each other. Nonetheless, each theory alone does not constitute a valid framework for change management. These change management hypotheses, approaches, and theories of planned procedural and contemporary views of change management formed a thorough review of the evolution of change management. Hence, as change is ever-present, it is essential to examine change components as it impacts employees where organizational outcomes are concerned. Furthermore, organizations need to consider how they function amidst change to ensure success. Thus, recognizing leadership styles, organizational culture, and an appropriate successful implementation model are essential first steps to ensure sustainable intervention and responding to change successfully (Obrien et al., 2021).

COVID-19

In 2020, the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic challenged leadership worldwide (Brammer et al., 2020; CDC, 2021; Crayne & Medeiros, 2021; WHO, 2020). Studies show that the pandemic has affected the entire world, with more than 120.3 million confirmed cases and 2.6 million casualties by April 22, 2021 (CDC, 2021; WHO, 2021). Moreover, research has demonstrated that the crisis has left many fearing for their jobs, struggling with rampant unemployment, and losing faith in business and political leaders (Gershman, 2020; Horsley, 2020). Hence, the COVID pandemic came with unprecedented change that impacted the world significantly.

The incursion of COVID-19 disease reached a global scale and presented several implications for how businesses function. Evidence shows that social distancing and isolation measures have altered how organizations traditionally operate (Baldwin & Di Mauro, 2020; Nyanga & Chindanya, 2020). The evidence shows that employees had to change their work

practices and embrace new applications such as virtual meetings. For instance, many businesses worldwide have shifted to online or virtual work environments to prevent the spread of the disease (CDC, 2021).

Organizations must ensure the welfare of their employees so that they can maintain work functions. A study by Chirombe et al. (2020) considers this pandemic as changing or modifying workers' jobs, tasks, supervision systems, psychological contracts, and other work-related activities. As a result, leaders have had to grapple with this unprecedented change and navigate ways to continue work functions successfully. Recognizing leadership styles, organizational culture, and an appropriate successful implementation model are essential first steps to ensure sustainable intervention and responding to change successfully (Obrien et al., 2021).

COVID-19 demanded an urgent response as the world has never experienced unprecedented change and change management like this before (Udin, 2020; Demirtaş et al., 2020; Ratana et al., 2020). With the pandemic at play, change is an essential subject as organizations face the challenges facing management leadership which require planning and resources to coping strategies in finding solutions. According to Gopinath (2020), the crisis has caused hundreds of thousands of fatalities, tested the limits of health systems, and has put the world in a great lockdown where the global economy is experiencing the worst recession since the great depression. For instance, many businesses worldwide have shifted to online or virtual work environments to prevent the spread of the disease (CDC, 2021). The pandemic has altered how organizations have operated. Studies have shown that managing employees within virtual work contexts remains a crucial challenge for many organizations (Miller, 2021).

COVID-19 and Leadership

COVID-19 is a global crisis and economic threat with unexpected challenges for leadership (Brammer et al., 2020; Dirani et al., 2020). Studies have shown that the magnitude and speed of this crisis are unlike anything experienced in a lifetime (Gopinath, 2020). This pandemic has presented several challenges for leadership. A study carried out by Dirani et al. (2020) looked at some of the challenges leaders face during this global crisis: losing good employees, crisis communication, positive reinforcement, appreciation for work, and leadership competencies. Dirani et al. (2020) argue that organizations will flourish under a leader who a) provides vital roles and purpose; b) shares leadership; c) communicates; d) ensures employee's access to technology; e) prioritizes employee emotional stability; f) maintains organizational financial health, and g) promotes organizational resilience. Leaders will need to rise to the challenge and navigate responses that focus on employees in crisis. Udin (2020) argues that "leaders who empower followers to achieve firm and enthusiastically change are greatly appreciated by organizations" (p. 28).

Research shows that in crisis, leadership demands the integration of skills, abilities, and traits that allow a leader to plan for, respond to, and learn from crisis events while under public scrutiny (Wooten & James 2008). The pandemic presents a crisis where leaders require skills and abilities to make rapid appropriate decisions for organizational success. Drabek and McEntire (2003) argue that detailed pre-planning by organizations and their leaders cannot mitigate every potential crisis element. Shufutinsky et al. (2020) posit that leadership development is critical for crisis preparedness, and there are numerous avenues to develop leaders with the tools and methods for effective leadership development, especially considering leaders in different

organizations or with different needs. The pandemic is a prime example of revolutionary change for leaders to navigate and acquire the skills needed to effectively respond to the global crisis.

COVID-19 and Employee Satisfaction

Limited studies demonstrate what attributes can measure employee satisfaction during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (Ali et al., 2021; Ratana et al., 2020; Urick, 2020).

Nevertheless, research has shown that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe negative implications on the supply of the labor force and its conditions of service across the globe. For example, a study by Adams-Prassl et al. (2020) reveals the effects of COVID-19 on employee job satisfaction factors, noting that compensation, job security, social stability, employment, and promotion opportunities were all factors of employee job satisfaction components affected by the pandemic. Moreover, research around the subject area presented the value and importance of workers in promoting the success and survival of organizations, making employee satisfaction a critical success factor for any organization (Nyanga & Chindanya, 2020).

As the study of the effects of the pandemic on employee satisfaction presents a new paradigm for researchers, more research is needed to detail attributes that measure employee satisfaction at the height of the pandemic. One case study conducted to obtain feedback from accounting students who experienced Work from Home (WFH) internship due to pandemic COVID-19 presented preliminary results due to a limited number of respondents (Ahmad, 2020). Thus, studies looking into employee job satisfaction are limited and more research is needed to fill such gaps in the literature. Much research shows that future researchers may initiate a robust further investigation in these areas with more excellent sampling and different research techniques (Ali et al., 2021).

As organizations change the nature of employees' work dynamics, it is necessary to examine proper change management techniques (Burnes, 2004). Employees have gone through several different challenges since this crisis. Research has detailed the epidemic as changing or modifying workers' job tasks and systems of supervision, psychological contracts, and other work-related activities (Chirombe et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it is unclear if the pandemic has affected employee job satisfaction (Nyanga & Chindanya, 2020). Thus, the role of leaders through the change in determining organizational outcomes impacts employees, especially in the crucible of a pandemic.

Transformational Leadership and Impacts of COVID

The urgency of COVID-19 dictated a transformational response for the organization's continued success (Noureen et al., 2020; Nyanga & Chindanya, 2020; Purnomo et al., 2021). Research shows that responding to the pandemic was necessary and urgent (Purnomo et al., 2021). The crisis has reshaped the ways organizations and leaders examine and respond to ensuring sustainability and survival. Studies indicate that organizations were unprepared and caught off-guard as they did not plan for an event of this caliber leading to disastrous consequences (Biddle 2020). Research conducted on the subject matter notes that the pandemic has affected the economic and social facets of almost all businesses throughout the world and has caused employees to change their work practices and embrace newly adopted work practices such as holding virtual meetings, flexible work arrangements, and others (Nyanga & Chindanya, 2020). As a result, this crisis has forced the daily operations of businesses to change the way they conduct business and has caused loss of employment opportunities and promotion as urgent and critical responses were pertinent to business sustainability.

Harris and Jones (2020) posit that quick decisions and effective solutions are required to prioritize the welfare of leaders, teachers, students, families, and stakeholders in the face of turmoil. Research on transformational leadership proclaims that this leadership style is attributed to innovating new ideas, encouraging teamwork, sharing opinions, and tackling crises effectively (Almohtaseb et al., 2021). Transformational leaders navigate through change and use the dimensions of motivation, inspiration, and influence to move employees to attain successful outcomes for the organization. Nasim (2016) argues that transformational leadership brings fundamental changes in the attitudes and beliefs of the organization. Being strategic, transformational leaders facilitate employees on every level by helping them cope with potential barriers to coping with challenges (Karaca et al., 2012). Nevertheless, as COVID is a new phenomenon presenting unprecedented challenges for the world on a large scale, more research is needed to mitigate strategies for continued sustainability for organizations and leadership.

The Impacts of COVID on Transformational Leadership and Employee Job Satisfaction

COVID has impacted the world extensively, and it is unknown if transformational leadership can still be a beneficial style of leadership used in the employee job satisfaction of employees through revolutionary change (Almohtaseb et al., 2021; Bhatti et al., 2021; Nyanga & Chindanya, 2020; Roberts, 2020). It is no secret that COVID-19 has severely disrupted the world. As research has shown, organizational plans have had to take on a different trajectory (Almohtaseb et al., 2021; Bhatti et al., 2021). As a result, there has been a shift in how leaders manage employees through such change. Hence, the pandemic is indeed a new landmark for organizations and their leadership.

The importance of employee job satisfaction on employee performance is imperative to establish whether the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted it or not. The findings are

significant as research has shown that the correlation between the two is relevant and goes hand in hand in achieving such satisfaction. (Kelly & MacDonald, 2019). Other elements may lead to employee satisfaction, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic at government agencies that we seek to answer in the study. More so than before, it is essential to explore what drives such satisfaction in the workplace as more people are becoming aware of such leadership styles that are effective when managing employees regardless of what changes and challenges present. In short words, transformational leadership suggests that leaders need to encourage subordinates to get the organization's desired outcome through motivation, healthy perceptions, beliefs, and morals with productive collaboration (Burns, 1978).

Social scientists have found substantial evidence supporting transformational leadership's effectiveness in enhancing employee satisfaction (Kouni et al., 2018; Malik, 2017; Quintana et al., 2015; Robert & You, 2018; Yang, 2009; Yildiz & Simsek, 2016). A study done on 320 teachers in Ethiopia showed that the transformational principal appeared to have a strong correlation with the employee job satisfaction experienced by teachers, noting that because of the transformational principal's charismatic behavior, they became a role model to teachers, earned their admiration and trust and maintained two-way communication and a commitment culture to the shared goals of the school (Tesfaw, 2014).

The dimension of transformational leadership plays a significant role in ensuring employee job satisfaction. More research around transformational leadership and employee satisfaction presented data showing that this style of leadership has a positive impact on schooling conditions, as well as on teachers' internal states and behaviors, also contributing to their employee job satisfaction (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Leithwood & Jantzi 1999a; Leithwood et al., 1999b; Leithwood & Sun 2012; Meng & Chin, 2007). Mujik et al. (2014)

postulate that transformational leadership is based on genuine trust, commendation, acknowledgment, and encouragement on all the levels of influence which is evident in the trust the leader has in the capabilities of his followers. Transformational leaders have a significant influence on their employees.

Transformational leadership has been a widely influential style of leadership used to enhance employee satisfaction. Past research on transformational leadership suggests this leadership style is practical and thriving in response to organizational change and drives results by assisting employees in meeting and exceeding performance (Paulsen et al., 2013). As COVID has presented a catastrophic change globally, there is a gap in the literature on the effectiveness of transformational leadership style since COVID in ensuring employee satisfaction (Almohtaseb, 2021; Bhatti et al., 2021; Noreen et al., 2020; Urick, 2020). Urick (2020) asserts that "solid guidance, visibility, and support from managers were crucial during COVID and other periods of transition" (p. 388).

Expansive change has occurred worldwide, and organizations in a post COVID world face a new reality. Leadership needs to be at the heart of organizations when leading people; hence this research is necessary for leadership research and practice. Bhatti et al. (2021) conducted a study examining the role of transformational leadership on public sector employee job satisfaction during COVID-19, recommending that more studies be done on leadership during emergencies like the pandemic to highlight the role of transformational leadership. Moreover, Almohtaseb et al. (2021) solidify this claim by stating that more studies are needed to bring clarity and recommendations about leadership studies during this extremity of the pandemic in highlighting the role of transformational leadership style.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the way of life, it can have severe implications on how leaders can continue influencing their organizations to achieve desired outcomes. As the current challenges and changes continue to evolve, there is a need to focus on how leaders can utilize transformational leadership style and enhance this style of leadership to improve employee satisfaction since the COVID pandemic. Past research indicates that although transformational leadership theory focuses on the significant role of leaders in promoting both personal and organizational change, and the role of leaders in assisting employees in meeting and exceeding expectations about performance (Avolio, 2005), the theory does not consider the role of followers (or team members) in shaping 'leaders' transformational behaviors (Dvir & Shamir, 2003). Therefore, more studies on transformational leadership are needed since this crisis. Furthermore, research has shown that even in the modern era, this leadership style is not implemented on a real-time basis; instead, most leaders concentrate on just coping with business targets or reducing the cost to show greater profitability to reporting management (Malik et al., 2017).

Researchers need to establish new norms to rationalize leadership styles effective in responding to revolutionary change such as the COVID pandemic (Ahmad & Ahmad, 2019; Almohtaseb et al., 2021; Lai et al., 2020; O'Brien, 2021; Urlick, 2020). As the crisis has shown, establishing new norms to rationalize styles of leadership that are effective in responding to significant change need to be considered, especially when advancing leadership theory and practice. Biddle (2020) posits, "the COVID-19 pandemic has genuinely reshaped the way that organizations and their leaders must examine and respond to future outbreaks to ensure their survival. Researchers suggest that further studies can illustrate the role of leadership in strategically following administrative procedures during major social and health crises

(Almohtaseb et al., 2021). The crisis has presented new norms to include shifting to virtual work and managing employees through a crisis by ensuring work functions are conducted to meet the organization's vision.

Almohtaseb et al. (2021) proclaim that studies on transformational leadership are attributed to innovating new ideas, encouraging teamwork, sharing an opinion, and tackling crises effectively. However, although this leadership style positively affects crisis management concerning employee satisfaction, the pandemic has introduced unprecedented challenges for leadership; transformational leadership ensures employee satisfaction. The challenges brought on by the pandemic emphasize the need to equip leaders with the skills to respond to such high levels of change. Studies have shown that behavioral leadership is essential in determining an organization's performance (Teo et al., 2017). In addition, transformational leadership is an effective leadership style in response to such challenges, as it is rooted in change (Miller, 2021). Thus, transformational leadership can be used with this shift in work structure, moving to virtual work environments as it models the way for individuals through its elements of idealized influence, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation (Hay, 2006).

The purpose of this mixed-method grounded theory study is to determine an association between transformational leadership in relation to employee satisfaction through the revolutionary change of the COVID-19 pandemic at a city government agency in Washington State. This study aims to utilize a transformational leadership style to promote employee satisfaction through change brought on by the pandemic. As Amis and Janz (2020) state, COVID-19 has been described as an existential threat to our way of life. With the change and challenges employees face, leaders must learn alternative ways to successfully lead their staff

through the COVID-19 pandemic, which can benefit the organization and employees in return. Studies have shown that employee performance and commitment are based on leadership effectiveness (Díaz et al., 2017).

Summary

The global and unprecedented influence of the COVID-19 pandemic will have a lasting impact on organizations, society, the community, and the world due to economic loss, disruptions in services, and work functions (Kim & Mason, 2020). Furthermore, the crisis has transformed people's lives in unexpected ways through managing their jobs virtually and balancing work/life dynamics. As the crisis has shown, establishing new norms to rationalize styles of leadership that are effective in responding to significant change need to be considered, especially when advancing leadership theory and practice. The challenges brought on by the pandemic emphasize the need to equip leaders with the skills to respond to such high levels of change. Therefore, leadership attributes need to be considered as it is essential to redefine normalcy, promote employee satisfaction and organizational commitment in a global pandemic, and envision the organization's future. This chapter restated the purpose statement, the research questions, and the hypotheses. It reviewed the research design and variables used in the study. In addition, the population sample, data collection, and data analysis were reviewed, including the instrument used in the study. Chapter 3 describes the research methodologies and procedures proposed for use in this study.

CHAPTER 3-Research Methodology and Procedures

Although revolutionary change occurred in the past, the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented, and leadership styles need to be evaluated regarding their effectiveness in managing this new paradigm of change in a government organization. The crisis transformed people's lives in unexpected ways through managing their jobs virtually and balancing work/life dynamics. Bass's (1985) foundational transformational leadership theory is used for this study. Transformational leadership focuses on four dimensions, including idealized influence, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation. Bass (1985) developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) to measure the four constructs of transformational leadership. Several studies supported a link between transformational leadership concerning employee satisfaction (Mujkic, 2014; Yıldız & Şimşek, 2016) and data demonstrated the relationship between the two variables, finding a relationship between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the goal of the study is to explore the statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction in a local government organization since the COVID-19 pandemic era.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this mixed-methods grounded theory study was to investigate a statistically significant association between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction at a local government agency in Washington State since the COVID-19 pandemic era. The first phase of the study will consist of an MLQ and MSQ survey questionnaires to collect data. The MLQ measures transformational leadership's four dimensions of leadership, while the MSQ measures employee satisfaction. The surveys were given to the 20 employees in

a department at a local Washington State government agency who met the study's criteria. The most current version of the MLQ, form 5X (MLQ 5X), was used for this study with permission from the publisher, Mind Garden, Inc. For the MSQ, the short form was used. The second phase of the study consisted of in-depth interviews of participants to collect data on employee job satisfaction and their perception of the leadership traits of their immediate supervisor. This data was used in a categorical analysis where the narrative was highlighted based on pre-coded transformational leadership traits derived from Bass's interpretation of transformational leadership. Moreover, the open-ended questions in the interview process determined whether the satisfaction of employees was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The nature of this mixed-methods study was to examine the relationship between transformational leadership (independent variable) and employee job satisfaction dependent variable) in the COVID-19 pandemic era. This study is designed in two parts. Phase I is a quantitative research design, and Phase II employs an in-depth interview in the qualitative research design. For Phase I, six research questions directed the study, as well as a null hypothesis and an alternative hypothesis for each research question. Assessing the null hypothesis formulates a response to the research questions.

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of transformational leadership used and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

H_{01} : A statistically significant relationship does not exist between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction.

H_{A1} : A statistically significant relationship does exist between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction.

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of idealized influence (attributes) and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

H₀₂: A statistically significant relationship does not exist between idealized influence (attributes) and employee job satisfaction.

H₁₂: A statistically significant relationship does exist between idealized influence (attributes) and employee job satisfaction.

RQ3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of idealized influence (behaviors) and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

H₀₃: A statistically significant relationship does not exist between idealized influence (behavior) and employee job satisfaction.

H₁₃: A statistically significant relationship does exist between idealized influence (behavior) and employee job satisfaction.

RQ4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's use of inspirational motivation and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

H₀₄: A statistically significant relationship does not exist between inspirational motivation and employee job satisfaction.

H₁₄: A statistically significant relationship does exist between inspirational motivation and employee job satisfaction.

RQ5: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's use of intellectual stimulation and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

H₀₅: A statistically significant relationship does not exist between intellectual stimulation and employee job satisfaction.

*H*₁₅: A statistically significant relationship does exist between intellectual stimulation and employee job satisfaction.

RQ6: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's use of individualized consideration and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

*H*₀₆: A statistically significant relationship does not exist between individualized consideration and employee job satisfaction.

*H*₁₆: A statistically significant relationship does exist between individualized consideration and employee job satisfaction.

A relationship or association analysis was used to demonstrate the presence of any effect between variables. The following list provides a summary linking each research question in this study to components assessed by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ):

- Transformational leadership (RQ1).
- Idealized influence (attributes; RQ2).
- Idealized influence (behaviors; RQ3).
- Inspirational motivation (RQ4).
- Intellectual stimulation (RQ5).
- Individualized consideration (RQ6)

Transformational leadership was chosen for this research study because this leadership style is perceived to transform organizations (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The MLQ was used by responders to identify the behaviors that reflect the leadership styles of their leaders.

For Phase II of this study, the research questions were examined through interviews using three open-ended and probing questions. Responses were analyzed with pre-coded transformational leadership traits and through an emergent theme approach. In addition, the

open-ended qualitative questions provided enrichment and additional information that may not be captured within the quantitative portion of the study. Thus, Phase II responses of the study were pre-coded with transformational leadership traits and used to support Phase I of the leadership approach used.

Research Methods and Design

Research can be defined as a scientific inquiry by means of using instruments to obtain evidence. Babbie (2016) refers to research design as focusing on perspectives for the purposes of a study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) define research design as types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches which provide the specific direction for the procedures utilized in that study. Expressed differently, research design is defined as the process of conducting a research study. Because the study's purpose of engaging in a complex evaluation between two variables of transformational leadership and employee satisfaction and using instruments to analyze the and seek the lived experiences of participants through in-depth interviews, this research is conducted using a mixed-methods approach. Many different terms are used for this approach, such as synthesis, integrating, qualitative and quantitative methods, and mixed research, but recent writings on the technique use the term *mixed-methods* (Bryman, 2006; Creswell, 2015; Tashkkori & Teddlie, 2010).

The use of a mixed-methods approach would benefit this study in many ways. Creswell and Creswell (2018) describe the mixed methods approach involving collecting the quantitative and qualitative data and integrating them into a research study. The research presents a two-phase study using a mixed-methods approach, specifically an explanatory sequential mixed-methods strategy. Hence, this study calls for a pragmatic worldview where quantitative and qualitative data are sequentially designed to provide the most relevant results. According to

Creswell and Creswell (2018), collecting diverse data types provide a more appropriate understanding of the research problem than quantitative or qualitative data separately. According to Christ (2013), pragmatism considers the development of a theory from practice where the theory is captured from actions and applied back to the practice in an iterative process. Thus, this mixed-methods approach generalizes and maintains its results from a population through survey data for the first phase, which is the quantitative aspect and utilizes in-depth interviews to achieve participants' experiences for the qualitative design in the second phase. As Christ (2013) pointed out, this paradigm assumes a unified, foundational set of philosophical and methodological premises aimed to guide the practice of the discipline.

Babbie (2016) states, "Qualitative data analysis is the non-numerical assessment of observation made through participant observation, content analysis, in-depth interviews, and other qualitative research techniques (p. 381), while quantitative research involves complex experiments by examining the relationship between variables which are measured using instruments to analyze data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A mixed-method approach is an ideal method for this study as it involves collecting, integrating, and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. Mixed methods involve collecting both quantitative (closed-ended) in response to research hypotheses and qualitative data (open-ended).

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), this approach allows the researcher to first conduct quantitative research, which is further explained in more detail with qualitative data. The explanatory sequential mixed methods approach is where the quantitative data results are first conducted, analyzed, and builds on results to explain them in more detail with qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As Creswell and Creswell (2018) further explain, because the quantitative data results are followed by the qualitative, it is considered explanatory, and

because the initial quantitative phase is followed by the qualitative, which is the sequential aspect of this design process. Thus, Phase I of the study employs a descriptive correlational design, and Phase II uses a pre-coded and emergent theme grounded theory design.

This research design allows a test of how and why something occurs as and considers quantifiable results that rely on statistical analysis. The objective of this research design was to collect data through quantitative surveys to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions being investigated. The study used the same sample of respondents for both quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. Qualitative assessment of the research topic by interviewing respondents provides data to understand how people make sense of their experiences. According to Bazeley (2013), “Researchers engaging in a qualitative study focuses on observing, describing, interpreting, and analyzing the way that people experience, act on, or think about themselves and the world around them” (p. 4).

Transformational leadership theory is used as the foundational theory of this study. Questions and hypotheses were developed and then tested to support the claim. The variables of the study included transformational leadership traits, which constitute the dependent variable, and employee satisfaction as the independent variable. Transformational leadership is defined using Bass’s interpretation and consists of (a) idealized influence, (b) individual consideration, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. The dependent variable of employee satisfaction is influenced by the employee’s relationship with their supervisor, communication, and organizational culture. For this study, data for measuring transformational leadership were collected utilizing MLQ and MSQ surveys, and employee satisfaction data were collected through open-ended interviews.

The qualitative method for this study used the grounded theory design to analyze responses to the open-ended explanatory questions. Grounded theory is a qualitative research design in which the inquirer generates a general explanation (a theory) of a process, an action, or an interaction shaped by the views of many participants (Creswell, 2018). Hence, using the grounded theory approach, “the researcher chooses participants who can contribute to the development of the theory” (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 157). In this study, the grounded theory allows for natural means of gathering, coding, processing, and analyzing data without pre-conceived thoughts. Moreover, Gibbs et al. (2007) indicate that theories developed slowly as data yielded evolving themes and patterns.

As noted, Phase II of this study will employ Corbin and Strauss’s (1990) grounded theory. Corbin and Strauss (1990) grounded theory consider methodology for developing a theory grounded on systematically gathered and analyzed data and seeks to develop a theory of process or action in the end. Through research, a theory evolves with the continuous interplay between analysis and data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Hence, a theory is constructed as an outcome of the interpretation of participant stories and explains the process, action, or interaction of a topic. Grounded theory is a very detailed outline of data analysis emphasizing ongoing validation and a combination of induction and deduction, which is used to uncover social relationships and behaviors of groups. According to Aldiabat and Navenec (2011), there are four stages of grounded theory. These include open coding for concepts and categories, development of concepts, grouping concepts into categories, and forming a theory. Corbin and Strauss (1990) grounded theory is one of the most popular approaches to grounded theory with new contributions and practical applications to research, which can be used in decision science and used in analysis when doing research.

When applying Corbin and Strauss (1990) grounded theory, 20-30 interviews are conducted to saturate the categories in a back-and-forth process of collecting and analyzing data. Next, the data is analyzed through constant comparison; open coding comes after, where the researcher identifies any existing phenomena in the data, such as identifying patterns, opinions, or behaviors (Tie et al., 2019). Next, axial coding emerges, and one category is identified to focus on, the core phenomenon. In this study, 20 interviews were conducted with participants from a local government agency in Washington state. The study used three open-ended questions with probing questions to acquire data for the variable of employee satisfaction. For this qualitative phase, the categorical analysis of the MLQ four dimensions of transformational leadership was used. The study used a Likert scale that measures the satisfaction of employees from dissatisfied to very satisfied. Based on the interviewee's answers, the themes derived from this interview process were color codified into a numerical value using NVivo software. Interview data were coded to one of the four transformational leadership variables found by previous research to be linked to effective leadership using a causal condition. The study analyzed the presence of multiple categorizations or types of relations between codes through selective coding by means of saturating the data acquired. A conditional or consequential matrix determined variables' frequency and if new emerging themes were present in the responses.

This qualitative methodology for this study is relevant as it acquires the capacity for “theory building, involving conceptualization, linking, and explanation based on careful analysis and interpretation of data” (Bazeley, 2013, p. 4) and “understanding the complexities of human experiences” (Bazeley, 2013, p. 4). In addition, qualitative research empowers individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and address a problem or issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data collected through open-ended interviews were used to look for specific words or patterns in

categorizing themes and color codifying them to measure the level of employee satisfaction which is the dependent variable of my study. Hence, investigating the impact of the COVID pandemic on transformational leadership effectiveness to employee satisfaction requires intrinsic viewpoints from local government employees. The process involved conversational interviews with local government employees at a city government agency and included notetaking during interviews for data collection. Moreover, by using this process, continual analysis of data aided in developing and producing a theory of the emerging phenomenon.

A quantitative research method only would not be appropriate for this study as it includes trends and explanations. Creswell (2003) posits that quantitative methods are most used for testing theories and hypotheses as well as providing explanations of variables. This method alone would not allow for an in-depth exploration of employees' perceptions and lived experiences about leadership effectiveness while working through a pandemic. It would also not allow for emerging themes to evolve. In addition, the interviews are also intended to gather the data variable of employee satisfaction. Creswell and Creswell (2018) indicate that quantitative research involves testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables and is measured on instruments to analyze numbered data using statistical procedures. A qualitative method only would also not be appropriate for this study. Due to exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem which involves emerging questions and procedures, data collected from participant settings, data analysis building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), this method alone only explores the views of participants.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) note that it involves data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of a research study by consolidating and explaining data within a larger framework. Mixed-method is chosen due to its strength in drawing on both quantitative and qualitative research and minimizing the limitations of the approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, research shows that this method allows for a more sophisticated approach and a more complete and useful understanding of research problems and questions. This method is the most appropriate for my study as there are two variables, an independent variable of transformational leadership and a dependent variable of employee satisfaction. By using this method for this study, an MLQ survey is used to measure the key leadership behaviors through four dimensions of transformational leadership using a 45-rater form questionnaire, and the second part of the interview involves open-ended interviews of the same participants. which is used to measure employee satisfaction by identifying themes which are categorized through a Likert scale from most satisfied to dissatisfied. Moreover, the data analysis determined the satisfaction of employees and if their satisfaction level was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Variables

Independent Variables

Bass's (1985) transformational leadership is the foundational theoretical framework used for this study to measure the four dimensions of this leadership style. Independent variables used in this study include the four dimensions (a) intellectual stimulation, (b) individualized consideration, (c) idealized influence, and (d) inspirational motivation. The independent variables are assessed using the MLQ questionnaire. The goal of the program is to measure the constructs of transformational leadership, which can be used at all levels of leadership.

Dependent Variable

For this study, there is one dependent variable which is employee satisfaction. The dependent variable data were collected using the qualitative grounded theory method by conducting in-depth interviews with 20 participants from a Washington State local government agency in a specific department. There were three open-ended questions used in the interview process. The categorical analysis of the MLQ questionnaire was used, and a Likert scale was developed to measure the level of employee satisfaction through patterns derived from the interview process. This method aims to acquire words that measure the level of employee satisfaction which were color codified and placed in the numerical value of the Likert scale developed specifically for this part of the study. Hence, the numerical values of the Likert scale were placed in NVivo software and analyzed.

Population and Sample

The study employed a purposeful sampling design. Purposeful sampling involves intentionally sampling a group of people that best informs the researcher on research problems and examination (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Creswell & Creswell (2018) note, “The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (p. 185). Hence, in purposeful sampling, participant sampling criteria are selected before conducting the research. For this study, participants were purposefully sampled from a local government department of a specific division in Washington State, which is a general representation of the bigger government organization and of the specific division regarding the demographics and ratio of female to male as it applies to this study.

The target population comprised full-time employees who make up the workforce at a local government agency in Washington State, United States including both male and female employees from all racial groups. The study drew a sample from the targeted population as it would be impossible to conduct this study from the entire local government agency, which comprises over 400 employees. The leaders being evaluated by employees consisted of directors, managers, and heads of the department within this government agency.

Sampling

The study uses purposeful and convenient sampling methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Several practical criteria were used to select the population sample for this study. Criterion sampling was used, which is a qualitative sampling strategy. “Criterion sampling involves selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance” (Patton, 2001, p. 238). Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest, “Criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon” (p. 157). Moreover, stratification will also be used before selecting the sample. Stratification means that specific characteristics of individuals (e.g., gender-females and males) are represented in the sample, and the sample reflects the true proportion of the population of individuals with certain characteristics (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As noted, the sample consisted of 20 participants, 17 females, and 3 males, which is a representative that reflects the ratio of gender within the division.

Participants were selected from a division in a government department through convenience and purposeful sampling, where respondents were chosen based on their convenience and availability. Having selected employees from this government division, the researcher conveniently assigned participants based on the following criteria:

1. Participants were employed for at least two years at this local government agency in a permanent position.
2. Participants work for a specific division of the department as this government agency.
3. Participants are not in a leadership role.
4. Participants are full-time employees.

Any person not meeting these criteria was excluded from the study. Moreover, to minimize data collection time and cost and ensure voluntary participation, the following two practical criteria were used

- Participants from the government division agreed to participate in the study during the Zoom meeting and signed a letter of consent.
- Once the participant met the stratification and criterion sampling, the participant was selected through convenience to the researcher.

The sample size consisted of 20 employees to obtain an adequate sample size. Approval was gained from management at a local government organization to conduct the study. One of the managers in that department served as the gatekeeper for this study. An email of acceptance was sent to participants who met the criteria sampling requirements with a consent form. Those respondents who accepted the invitation confirmed reading the document and accepted the informed consent form by clicking on the active survey link, which took them to the electronic survey questionnaire. Participants were also alerted of a meeting scheduled with the researcher for a virtual zoom interview. Those participants were assured of confidentiality and informed that they could contact the researcher at any time during or after the study to clarify any questions or concerns.

For this mixed-methods study, generalization was acknowledged as a quality standard for Phase I of the study. Generalization involves drawing broad inferences through reasoning from observations and is acknowledged in quantitative research but is more controversial in qualitative research (Polit & Beck, 2010). Similarly, this study aimed to make an inference of the research findings from a sample of the population to the population at large. Polit and Beck (2010) found that the quantitative phase of mixed methods research holds confidence in generalizability. Furthermore, Polit and Beck (2010) suggest that qualitative and quantitative studies do not have perfect success with generalization. Generalization only random sampling methods allows for sound generalization. This study employed purposeful sampling and used 20 participants of a sample population from a local government organization that represented similar male to female ratio composition and organizational demographics within similar government entities. The sample included 18 females and 2 males, which is representative of the employee population in the organization under investigation. In addition, findings were generalized to organizations with similar demographics, representing the larger population.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection for this study included two distinct phases. Phase I comprised rigorous quantitative sampling, and Phase II will consist of purposeful sampling for the qualitative phase.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

The first phase of the study engaged in the collection of survey data through the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5, which was used to measure transformational leadership traits for this study. The researcher notified employees who met the criteria of their intent to participate and sent the consent form to the participant in an email.

Participants sent an email notifying the researcher of their interest. Once the participant signed and dated the consent form, the participant emailed the consent form back to the researcher.

The consent form was stored on Google Forms. Google Forms is an online survey platform that provides the service of creating survey forms, receiving responses, and analysis of data free of cost (Mondal et al., 2018). The computer application allows users to create and edit surveys online while collaborating with other users in real-time. The participant then received a link directing them to the Survey Monkey platform where the MLQ Form 5 rater form with 45 items was kept.

In this study, a minimum of 20 respondents who meet the criteria for the study in the selection requirements were selected. Respondents of the study were from a division of a single government department. Respondents answered the 45-question rater form from the MLQ instruments in Survey Monkey, which alerted the researcher when the survey was complete.

The first phase of the study consisted of the MLQ 5x short survey questionnaire to collect data that measures the four dimensions of transformational leadership. The MLQ survey was administered to the 20 employees in a department at a local Washington State government agency. The most current version of the MLQ, form 5X (MLQ 5X), was used for this study with permission from the publisher, Mind Garden, Inc. Permission from Mind Garden, Inc. was acquired on September 28, 2021, to reproduce one copy of the MLQ third edition and sample set within three years of September 28, 2021. Once approval was granted from the Northwest University IRB, Mind Garden emailed the complete MLQ Form 5 survey rater form questionnaire to the researcher and the MLQ License. In addition, the researcher purchased the MLQ manual from the publisher to begin the process of acquiring the appropriate survey documents (Appendix B).

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

The second survey questionnaire in the collection of survey data for the first phase of the study comprised the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). The MSQ Short form, which consisted of 20 items (Appendix C), represents 20 scales of the long MSQ form, was used for part two of the data collection in phase I. Factor analysis of the 20 items resulted in Intrinsic and Extrinsic satisfaction. Scores from these two factors plus the general satisfaction score may be acquired. In addition, this instrument's normative data from the three scales covers six selected occupations.

The same 20 participants from a local government division in Washington state also completed the MSQ short form on Survey Monkey, which alerted the researcher when the survey was completed. The MSQ is a free questionnaire available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License. The MSQ license allows the instrument to be used for research or clinical work free of charge and without written consent if you acknowledge Vocational Psychology Research, the University of Minnesota, as the source of the material in your reproduced materials (Weiss et al., 1967). Once approval was granted from Northwest University IRB, the researcher retrieved the MSQ short form from the University of Minnesota Department of Psychology, Vocation Psychology Research (VPR) and uploaded it to Survey Monkey. (Appendix D). This completed the first phase of the data collection process for this study.

Open-Ended Interviews

The second phase of the study consisted of in-depth interviews of the 20 respondents who are employees in a local government division. As Gani et al. (2020) assert, qualitative interviews can be used to collect data and explore different perspectives from participants' experiences.

Interviews were used to collect and code the level of employee satisfaction and triangulate the results to confirm findings from the MLQ and MSQ surveys. These data were used to enrich and expand data collected from the two surveys data and further explain the survey data results. In addition, through the qualitative interviews, additional emergent themes were explored.

After completing the first phase, which included administrations of the MLQ survey and MSQ surveys, in-depth interviews were scheduled with the 20 participants who completed the first phase of the study. Interviews were scheduled through Zoom Video Communication technology. An email with the scheduling information was sent to the participant with the details around scheduling once the surveys were completed in Survey Monkey. There were structured open-ended questions formulated for the study, which measured the level of satisfaction of employees through words used to drive categories-based word patterns that were color-coded by means of a 5-point Likert scale from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. These word patterns were matched to four variables shown by previous transformational leadership research to be correlated to effective leadership practice. Next, those categories were transferred into a numerical value by using Nvivo, which indicated the level of employee satisfaction.

Three open-ended questions constituted the qualitative aspect of this study and nine probing questions (Appendix D). Interviews were conducted via virtual communication technology, specifically Zoom Video Communication. Zoom Video Communication Inc. is a communication technology company that provides video telephony and online chat services through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform. As Gray et al. (2020) aver, “Zoom Video Communications Inc. provides researchers with cost-effective and convenient alternative to in-person interviews” (p. 1292). Interviews were scheduled with the same 20 participants selected to participate in the qualitative part of the methodology process, which completed the MLQ and

the MSQ survey questionnaires. On the scheduled date, the researcher asked the listed questions to the participant. The interviews were recorded on Zoom Video Communication and transcribed and saved to the researcher's computer. It was then transferred to NVivo 12 software. NVivo software allows easy analysis and provides security by storing the database and files together in a single file (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interviews were conducted with employees who represent a division of the local government department. Areas of how employees view employee satisfaction through leadership styles were investigated since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Analysis Process and Procedures

As noted in Chapter 3, the study employed a two-phase method for this explanatory sequential mixed method grounded theory research. Data analysis was guided using the theoretical variables of transformational leadership and employee satisfaction and measuring any statistically significant association between the two variables. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) postulated, the quantitative and qualitative databases are analyzed separately. This combines the two databases through integration called connecting the quantitative results to the qualitative result data collection. Thus, the quantitative results were utilized to plan the qualitative follow-up (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Hence, the study collected quantitative data through the MLQ and MSQ survey questionnaires to test transformational leadership and employee satisfaction, respectively.

In conducting the open-ended interviews, data were collected to measure the dependent variable of employee satisfaction. In addition, this allowed the researcher to gather information on the change in turnover, employee attitudes, leadership effectiveness, and ways to navigate

change successfully. The data provide evidence of how the satisfaction of employees was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Somers' d

This study established associations between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction using Somers' *d* statistics. Somers' *d* or Somers' delta is a nonparametric measure used in the analysis of data for ordinal variables. Ordinal data is a statistical data type where the variables are ordered in natural categories, and the distance between the categories is unknown. As Hildebrand et al. (1977) note, ordinal data presents the conventional ordinal measures of association, as well as the way in which these measures relate to one another in a broad theoretical context. Hence, it measures the strength and direction of association between a predictor (X) and outcomes variable (Y). To use Somers' *d*, two assumptions need to be considered; the first assumption considers how the variables are measured, while the second assumption looks at how the data fits the Somers' *d* model (Somers, 1962). Somers' *d* value ranges between -1 and + 1, where the value of -1 reflects the strongest negative association and the value +1 reflects the strongest positive association between the variables. According to Agresti and Finlay (2009), the "0" value indicated independence and no association between the variables. According to Somers (1962), "A monotonic relationship exists when either: (a) the variables increase in value together; or (b) as one variable value increases, the other variable value decreases. It is typically not possible to check this assumption when running a Somers' *d* analysis" (p. 3).

Somers' *d* measures the strength and association between an ordinal dependent variable and an ordinal independent variable (Somers, 1962). According to Newson (2006), these asymmetric measures the association between two variables and plays a central role as a

parameter for nonparametric statistical methods. For this study, Somers' *d* was used to examine the relationship between the independent variable transformational leadership (idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, and inspirational motivation) and the dependent variable (employee satisfaction). Hence, transformational leadership is the independent ordinal variable for this study, and employee satisfaction is the dependent ordinal variable. The two variables are ordinal because the values are ordered categories, and the distance between the categories is not known (Somers, 1962). The ordinal analysis method was used to determine an association between pairs of the variables. A Likert scale was used for both surveys in the first phase of the study.

NVivo

For the second phase of this research, the qualitative grounded theory method of this study included conversations and in-depth interviews, which provided interpretations of the experiences of the participants. The information through conversations and interviews of the participants consists of data collection used for this study. The NVivo 12 software was used to code the data collection and derive themes from said interviews and conversations. Babbie (2016) notes, "The key process in the analysis of qualitative social research data is *coding*" (p. 387). NVivo allows the researcher to record their own notes in the context of other materials (Babbie, 2016). NVivo refers to codes as nodes. Moreover, recognizing a specific pattern emerging in the intersection of two themes, the researcher can note what is observed so the details wouldn't be lost" (Babbie, 2016, p. 398). Babbie (2016) provides a guide of examples of queries to include in NVivo software. These include materials coded at combinations of nodes, classified nodes with specific attribute values, content coded at multiple nodes, and the use of operators to refine queries and content that is not coded at specific nodes. (Babbie, 2016). For

this study, phase II of the interview process was used to categorize words from interviewees into themes or patterns that reflect a link to the four preidentified variables of transformational leadership. The data from the interviews were reviewed to create categories using causal conditions and types of relations between the codes.

Instruments and Measurement

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5 was used to measure transformational leadership traits for this study. As noted in Chapter 1, the MLQ is an instrument used to assess leadership that uses the constructs of transformational, transactional, and non-leadership. A review of the literature demonstrates that although there are several instruments designed to measure transformational leadership traits, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is the most effective and appropriate instrument used (Bessai 1995; Kirnan, 1995). This instrument was designed by Bass (1988) but has been revised over the years by scholars (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Bessai, 1995; Kirnan, 1995). This questionnaire has been used in numerous settings and on a range of sample populations, including higher education, military, marketing, organizations, and industry (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Erkutlu, 2008).

The MLQ Form 5X (revised) consists of 45 items that identify and measure key leadership and effectiveness behaviors, shown in prior research to be strongly linked to both individual and organizational success (Avolio & Bass 2004). There are 36 factors that represent the nine leadership factors. There are five factors for transformational leadership, three for transactional, and one for laissez-faire leadership. The factors consist of four items. For this research study, the researcher will use the sections of the MLQ which represent the five factors of transformational leadership traits to include (a) idealized influence behavior (IIB), (b)

inspirational motivation (IM), (c) intellectual stimulation (IS), (d) individualized consideration (IC), and (e) idealized influence attributes (IIA) (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

Avolio and Bass (2004) define four components of transformational leadership as follows:

1. **Idealized Influence:** Transformational leaders are role models for their followers. Such leaders are admired, respected, and trusted. Followers identify with these leaders and want to emulate them.
2. **Inspirational motivation:** Transformational leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning to their followers' work
3. **Intellectual stimulation:** Transformational leaders stimulate their followers' efforts to be innovative and creative, reframing problems and approaching old situations in new ways.
4. **Individual consideration:** This is where transformational leaders provide coaching and mentoring for followers to reach a higher level of success by paying attention to their achievements.

There are two MLQ questionnaire forms: the Self Rating Form, where supervisors rate themselves as leaders (ratees), and the Rater Form, where associates rate their leaders (raters) (Mind Garden, 2015). For this study, the MLQ (5X-Short) was used. This includes 45 items for an organizational survey. The associates can represent four different organizational levels: above their ratee, the same level as their ratee, below their ratee, or other relationships such as customers (Mind Garden, 2015). The study looked at transformational leadership and examined of MLQ leadership factors with outcomes, such as individual and organizational productivity, effectiveness, satisfaction, stress, and motivation.

The MLQ Form 5X has been widely used to measure initially four dimensions of transformational leadership. Presently, there are five dimensions measured because idealized influence is sub-divided into “idealized influence behavior” and “idealized influence attributes,” averted as the “Five I’s” of transformational leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Because there is a link between the leader and the follower, idealized influence can be perceived as behavior and an impact (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

The MLQ instrument uses a 5-point Likert-style scale ranging from 0 to 4, with the 0 representing the absence of the training and the 4 representing most frequency, if not always, which is used to rate the frequency of observed leader behaviors (Bessai 1995; Kirnan, 1995; Bass & Avolio, 2004). The foundation used to score the MLQ factors are listed as follows:

0=Not at all

1=Once in a while

2=Sometimes

3=Fairly often

4=Frequently, if not always

The Likert-type scale format used for the MLQ considers lower scores to measure the leaders’ behaviors to be inconsistent, while higher scores indicate an indomitable presence of behavior with leadership factors for transformational leadership. The researcher will receive permission to use of MLQ 5X short-form questionnaire from the publisher Mind Garden Inc. for this study.

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

This study also utilized the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), which measures employee satisfaction (Dawis et al., 1968). The MSQ was developed by Weiss et al.

(1967) and lists two versions which include the long form (100 items) and the short form (20 items) (Weiss et al., 1967; see Appendix D). The MSQ short form was used to achieve the level of satisfaction of employees in this government organization. This instrument was chosen because it focuses on why employees feel satisfied at their work. Moreover, it is valid and reliable and is a free tool for measuring research studies (Weiss et al., 1977).

For this study, a short form MSQ was used, which consisted of 20 items measured on a 5-point Likert scale. In addition, each item on the questionnaire refers to a reinforcer in the person's work environment (Weiss et al., 1977). The MSQ short form is derived from the long form from the 20 most representative items of the long survey. A higher score on the MSQ represents a higher level of job satisfaction. The MSQ is based upon Herzberg's Two-Factor theory (1959) and measures two constructs: intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction. Furthermore, the MSQ allows for a more individualized profile of job satisfaction and data about specific reasons why employees are satisfied and require 5-10 minutes to complete. Hence, the inquiry noted is how satisfied the employee is with the aspect of their job, and responses range from 0 (very dissatisfied) to 4 (very satisfied).

4=Very Satisfied

3=Satisfied

2=Neither

1=Dissatisfied

0=Very Dissatisfied

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was constructed in the 1960s as part of a Work Adjusted Program (Weiss et al., 1967).

Open-Ended Interviews

The second phase of the research focused on the qualitative aspect of the study. The interviews were guided by open-ended questions about job satisfaction experiences by 20 employees at a local government agency in Washington State. Moreover, Phase II of the study was used to see if there were additional emerging themes.

Pilot Test

The open-ended interview questions were piloted by two employees who met the requirements through criterion sampling prior to the survey being sent out to participants and the researcher interviewing the 20 participants for the second phase. According to Majid et al. (2017), pilot studies ensure the aptness of questions and provide suggestions on the research's viability. In addition, piloting the interview questions allowed for modifications and suggestions as well as the appropriateness of the questions prior to interviewing participants. Piloting for interviews is useful when conducting qualitative research since it highlights the improvement to the study and allows the researcher to practice interview techniques (Majid et al. (2017). As this study consisted of qualitative research for phase II of the data collection phase, it was appropriate to pilot the interview questions to yield the accuracy and functionality of the results. Once responses from the two employees were received, they were carefully analyzed for content accuracy and sent to IRB for approval. The pilot test improved the additional probing questions used to attain additional details from the three interview questions. It ensured that such probing was appropriate and relevant to acquire more detail from the intended interview questions.

Informed Consent

The researcher developed a consent form and requested from all 20 participants who are employees at a government agency in Washington State prior to beginning the data collection process. After approval was granted by the Northwest University Institutional Review Board, the researcher electronically mailed the consent form to the 20 participants who met the sampling criteria. The consent form was signed by participants and returned to the researcher prior to the next steps of the study. The informed consent indicated the purpose of the current study and other relevant details including the voluntary nature of the study, the two surveys: MLQ and MSQ, the open-ended interviews upon completion of the surveys, and the confidential treatment of participant responses. The consent form noted that participants could withdraw from the study at any time. Participants also completed demographic information, but their names and organization remained confidential. In addition, the informed consent form included the researcher's contact information, as well as the researcher's faculty advisor information, and Northwest IRB contact information as well. There was a thank you statement at the end of the consent form, thanking participants for participating in the study. In addition, the consent form also asked participants if they agreed to be recorded for the interviews on Zoom Video Conferencing. The data collection took place in the winter of 2022.

Confidentiality

All participants and the government organization were ensured full confidentiality. The government organization wished not to be identified; hence, the name of the government entity was kept confidential. Ensuring participant confidentiality is critical to the scientific process, which is a process upon inquiry without causing harm. The name of the government entity and the participant's identity remained confidential throughout the research study.

The participants completed the first phase of the study by completing the MLQ survey questionnaire and the MSQ survey questionnaire. Surveys for the first phase of the study were uploaded in Survey Monkey, and an email link was sent to the interviewees. There were no consequences if the participant chose not to complete the surveys. There were no identifiers, although these surveys were conducted electronically through Survey Monkey, where the MLQ and MSQ survey questionnaires were uploaded. Numerical numbers were used to distinguish between each participant for coding purposes as well as to ensure confidentiality. This allowed the surveys to be organized and prevented errors when collecting the data.

All electronic data were stored on a carefully password-protected laptop computer in a locked cabinet in a secured private office. The master list containing the key was stored separately from the data. The video, consent forms, interview transcriptions, and survey data will be stored until Spring 2023 and destroyed thereafter. The estimated time to complete all surveys and interviews is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

The Time Needed to Complete Surveys and Interview

Questionnaire	Description	Approximate time needed
Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)	Measures Transformational Leadership Behaviors	15 minutes
Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)	Measure employee satisfaction with his/her job	10 minutes
Open-Ended Interview	Quantify level of employee satisfaction. understand lived experiences of employees since COVID-19 and confirm findings from quantitative data.	20 minutes

The potential benefit of the study is to provide this government organization and other organizations with recommendations that can effectively improve employee job satisfaction in reaching their intended outcomes during an enormous change like the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, this study may address employee turnover, and other challenges organizations face. There is no deception involved in this study, and participants were not compensated for their participation which is noted in the consent form. A thank you email was sent to participants, and participants were also thanked for their participation and willingness to share their lived experiences at the end of the Zoom interview.

Validity and Reliability

For a research study to be reliable, it must be valid. Creswell and Creswell (2016) define reliability as items being internally consistent and stable, as in test administration and scoring. Albeit reliability determines if an instrument provides the same data for the same group of participants. Guion (2002) considers validity to be a systematic generalization that examines replications. Moreover, this entails the generalization of testing two hypotheses about the distribution of samples. Similarly, it refers to validity as the ability to measure what it is intended to measure.

The researcher maintained validity by using valid instruments. As Babbie (2016) postulated, field research provides a more valid measurement than survey research. Data validity and reliability are asserted by an electronic survey administration through Survey Monkey, which will ensure that respondents inserted their responses without manipulation. In addition, field research through open-ended interviewing provides additional validity through triangulation. For this study, the same sample of participants was utilized for both phases of the study, which will enhance validity.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

The MLQ is an investigative tool that has been studied, verified, and validated to measure leadership style. The MLQ 5X form developed by Avolio and Bass (1990) has demonstrated to be a reliable instrument that is self-explanatory and appropriate in evaluating studies associated with leadership styles and, more relevant to this study, transformational leadership traits of leaders. This form is a well-established instrument in the measure of Transformational Leadership and has been extensively researched and validated. Neuman (2002) notes that one main source of validity that measures how quantitative studies is how well the items measure the concept. Moreover, the MLQ test is recommended for corporations and organizations, and it is strongly recommended for research purposes (Bessair, 1995; Kirnan, 1995). Although this instrument has undergone several revisions, it has demonstrated reliability and validity and is the most widely used research instrument to measure transformational leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004). The observable scoring of this instrument allows for repeated fine-tuning of this instrument. In addition, this instrument was used numerous times to test reliability and validity and has shown to be consistent through test and re-test (Bass & Avolio, 1985). Moreover, the MLQ instrument has been used in numerous research programs, doctoral dissertations, master's theses, and several constructive outcomes for transformational leadership (Batista- Foguet et al., 2021; Erkutlu, 2008).

The MLQ survey questionnaire is published by Mind Garden, Inc. Since 1994, Mind Garden Inc. has been an independent psychological publishing company of leadership, coping, anxiety, and many other assessments and developmental materials which seek to preserve and grow important assessments. In addition, Mind Garden Inc. provides a rapid response to purchasing permission to reproduce their products via PDF as well as online access and scoring

of instruments. Hence, validity was maintained as valid instruments were used to measure the constructs.

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

The MSQ is a valid and reliable test used to gather information about the employee job satisfaction of participants (Buitendach & Rothmann, 2009). The MSQ was measured by the LPI, using Cronbach's alpha (α) as 0.77 (Meyer & Allen, 1997), and tested by different professional groups. The LPI has been tested for the instrument's soundness and intends to test what it intends to measure. As empirical research has demonstrated, the LPI received top scores of psychometric validities among 18 different leadership instruments. For this study, the Short Form MSQ was used and consisted of 20 items from the long form MSQ that represent each of the 20 scales. The short form consists of 3 scales. According to Guion (1978), this instrument gives reliable, valid, and well-normed indications of general satisfaction at work and 20 aspects of satisfaction, collapsible into intrinsic and extrinsic components. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire was created due to the work adjustment program (Weiss et al., 1964). Numerous researchers have evaluated the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire to confirm its validity. This instrument has been validated through recent studies using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and a long history of successfully 55 MSQ being used. Hence, validity was maintained as valid instruments were used to measure the constructs.

Validity and reliability were ensured in utilizing the interview techniques as well. Detailed field notes were assured by employing good quality recording and devices transcribed to digital files to maintain reliability. The digital file was transcribed onto a Zoom Video Communication document, transferred to NVivo software, and coded. This added a level of reliability.

Triangulation

This study employed triangulation which refers to multiple data sources in qualitative research to comprehend the phenomenon. Denzin (1978) defines triangulation as a combination of methodologies in research that is of the same phenomenon. There are four types of triangulations; method, investigator, theory, and data source triangulation (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1999). For this study, methods triangulation was employed. Methods triangulation involves multiple methods of data collection (Polit & Beck, 2012) at the same time and includes interviews, observations, and field notes (Carter et al., 2014). Bygrave (2020) asserts that mixed methods design entails sequential qualitative analyses of documents, quantitative surveys, and qualitative surveys. In this study, the researcher triangulated the results of the qualitative data to confirm findings from the MLQ and the MSQ surveys. This allowed the researcher to compare data from the surveys in Phase I to interview data in Phase II. Moreover, triangulation was used to enrich and expand data that the researcher received from data surveys and see if there were the emergence of themes.

Protection of Human Subjects

Punch (2014) considered research as a method of collecting data from people and about people. The study considered the potential benefits and risks of conducting this study. Israel and Hay (2006) postulated that research participants need to be protected and develop a trust with them, prompting the integrity of the research, protecting against misconduct which may reflect on their organizations or institutions, and coping with new challenging problems. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggested, attention needs to be directed toward ethical issues when conducting a research study during data collection, analysis, reporting, sharing, and storing information.

The study maintained ethical standards and practices in accordance with Northwest University values and principles. Before the start of the study, the primary researcher completed the “Protection Human Research Participants Online Training.” The study ensured compliance with the guidelines for conducting research by Institute Review Board (IRB). Once approval was granted by the Northwest University IRB committee, an email was sent to all participants who met the criteria for the study. Informed consent was provided to participants via email and required. Once participants agreed to conduct the two-phase study, an email was sent with a link to Survey Monkey to the 45 MLQ rater form questionnaire. Once participants completed the survey phase of the study, virtual interviews were scheduled with the participants through Microsoft Teams with a link to the video and audio interview session. The Northwest University consent letter instructed all subjects that their participation was voluntary, and they could choose to withdraw at any time. In addition, the study was anonymous, protecting the subject’s identity throughout the process and protecting the government agency identifier.

Approval was also obtained from the local government organization in Washington State Review Board, and the researcher’s gatekeeper is one of the managers of the organization. Participation in the study was voluntary, and responses were anonymous. The survey research analysis and documentation were printed and will be stored and kept in a locked file in a locked room in researcher’s the residence for one year. After this, information will be destroyed.

Summary

Chapter 3 contained an in-depth description of the research methodology and design, data collection as well as the procedures of the study. This chapter outlined the research questions and hypotheses, the purpose of the study, and the population sample, including the variables chosen

and study instruments used. Chapter 3 presented the data analysis used in Chapter 4 of the study. Chapter 4 presents the data analysis and findings of this research study.

Chapter 4- Presentation, Data Collection, and Analysis of Data

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data and provide a summary analysis of each table. This mixed-method grounded theory study sought to determine the statistically significant relationship between transformational leadership in relation to employee job satisfaction in a COVID-19 pandemic era at a local government agency in Washington state. Employee satisfaction is a key component to address in ensuring employee retention for organizations. As research has demonstrated, employee turnover has negative consequences for organizations (Dess & Shaw, 2001; Hayward et al., 2016; Park & Shaw, 2013). Transformational leadership has been a leadership theory that has been widely studied for the past 20 years; however, there are still gaps in the literature around the relationship between this leadership style and employee satisfaction which is still disputed. In addition, few studies directly measure this association between the theory and improved employee satisfaction. This study, unlike past studies, investigated transformational leadership and employee satisfaction at a local Washington government agency during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This investigation examined the relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction since COVID-19 to determine to what extent transformational leadership style predicted overall employee job satisfaction. Albeit the four dimensions of transformational leadership were the independent variables in the study. The dependent variable was the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government organization in Washington state. For this research study, data were collected from three main sources. The survey item-total used for Phase I of the study was 70. There were five demographic questions, 45 MLQ items, and 20 MSQ items, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2*Number of Items Found in the Data Collection Study*

Instruments	Description	Number of Items
Demographic Questions	Participant demographics	5
Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)	MLQ Rater 5X Short Form	45
Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)	MSQ Short Form 1977	20
Open-Ended Interview	3 Open-ended questions and 9 probing questions.	12

For the first phase of the study, data were collected from two online surveys through Survey Monkey in the Winter of 2022. Data for the first phase of the study was transferred from Survey Monkey into the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28 for further analysis and testing of all the hypotheses. Data accuracy was verified to test reliability. The researcher collected, entered, verified, and analyzed data using SPSS. There were no unanswered survey questions on the MLQ or MSQ survey. The participants were interviewed for the second phase of the study. The purpose of Chapter 4 is to present the results of the data analysis and the findings starting with the descriptive statistics, then inferential statistics, Somer's *d* analysis and interpretation, analysis of the open-ended interview questions, and triangulation of the data collection.

Phase I Analysis of Data

Research Questions and Hypotheses

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, research questions are as follows with their corresponding null hypotheses. The study was guided by these 6 research questions:

RQ1: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of transformational leadership used and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

H₀₁: A statistically significant relationship does not exist between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction.

H_{A1}: A statistically significant relationship does exist between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction.

RQ2: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of idealized influence (attributes) and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

H₀₂: A statistically significant relationship does not exist between idealized influence (attributes) and employee job satisfaction.

H_{A2}: A statistically significant relationship does exist between idealized influence (attributes) and employee job satisfaction.

RQ3: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of idealized influence (behaviors) and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

H₀₃: A statistically significant relationship does not exist between idealized influence (behavior) and employee job satisfaction.

H_{A3}: A statistically significant relationship does exist between idealized influence (behavior) and employee job satisfaction.

RQ4: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's use of inspirational motivation and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

A statistically significant relationship does not exist between inspirational motivation and employee job satisfaction.

H_{A4}: A statistically significant relationship does exist between inspirational motivation and employee job satisfaction.

RQ5: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's use of intellectual stimulation and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

H₀₅: A statistically significant relationship does not exist between intellectual stimulation and employee job satisfaction.

H_{A5}: A statistically significant relationship does exist between intellectual stimulation and employee job satisfaction.

RQ6: Is there a statistically significant relationship between the leader's use of individualized consideration and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency?

H₀₆: A statistically significant relationship does not exist between individualized consideration and employee job satisfaction.

H_{A6}: A statistically significant relationship does exist between individualized consideration and employee job satisfaction.

Data Collection

There were 20 participants from a local government organization who completed the MLQ 5X-Short form rater and MSQ short form. Upon completion, Survey Monkey sent a link to notify the researcher that the participant had completed the surveys, which were followed by Phase II of the study. There was a 100% completion rate for survey data, which consisted of a total of 20 responses, 17 females and 3 males. Interview data for phase II of the study was transferred to NVivo 12 Software for further analysis.

The MLQ, which measured transformational leadership behavior, and the MSQ, which measured employee job satisfaction, were used for the first phase of the data collection process

for the quantitative data collection. Qualitative data was collected upon the completion of the first phase of the data collection process by means of an open-ended interview process with the same participants of phase I. There were three open-ended interview questions with 9 probing questions.

Results

Two surveys accounted for the total amount of 40 surveys among the 20 participants: the MLQ 45 items and MSQ 20 items. Both surveys used a Likert-type scale. The MLQ questionnaire data predicted the variable of transformational leadership, while the MSQ was used to measure employee satisfaction. Table 3 shows the scoring for the MLQ 5X instrument.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 3

Scoring for the MLQ 5X

Scale	Questions
Idealized Influence (Attributes)	10,18,21,25
Idealized Influence (Behaviors)	6,14,23,34
Inspirational Motivation	9,13,26,36
Intellectual Stimulation	2,8,30,32
Individual Consideration	15,19,29,31

From Avolio, B., & Bass (1995). *Multifactor leadership questionnaire*.

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Transformational leadership scores were created for each of the 20 participants by summing the items and dividing by the number of items that make up the scale as shown in Table 4. Individual scores were based on the lower-level ratings for the MLQ scoring key (5x)

short. There were five scales used for transformational leadership. Once completed, the total scores were added to a 5-point Likert scale for a total score for transformational leadership in SPSS.

Table 4

Scoring for MLQ

Scale	Idealized influence (attitude)	Idealized influence (behaviors)	Inspirational motivation	Intellectual stimulation	Individual consideration
Total number of items	4	4	4	4	4
Missing answers	0	0	0	0	0

Scoring for the MSQ Short Form

Employee satisfaction scores were created for each of the 20 participants by calculating the raw scores from the three scales of intrinsic: 12 items, extrinsic: 6 items, and general satisfaction: 20 items which is the total of the two previous scales as seen in Table 5. A percentile score was created from the raw scores, and the general percentile score was used to determine where participants scored on a 5-point Likert scale which was added to SPSS. The average of the normative data for the MSQ Short form was used in calculating the percentiles.

Table 5

Scoring for MSQ

Scale	Intrinsic	Extrinsic	General Satisfaction
Total Number of Items	12	6	20
Missing answers	0	0	0

Data Analysis

For the first phase of the data collection, once the 20 participants completed the data collection process by completing the surveys and interviews, data was downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet and cleaned. There were 40 completed surveys that were uploaded to SPSS for analysis. For the second phase of the study, interviews were recorded, transcribed, and uploaded to NVivo for further analysis.

Internal Reliability Test

The MLQ has been reported to be reliable and valid in past research studies. Field (2018) posits that Cronbach's alpha of .70 supports adequate internal reliability consistency. Prior research shows that this subscale reports internal consistency reliability of 0.61 (Avolio & Bass, 2004).

The MSQ instrument is a reliable tool that measures reliability and validity numerous times. As argued by Weiss et al. (1967), the MSQ has been found to be a reliable measure of general satisfaction as it has undergone extensive analysis.

Assumptions of Somers'*d*

The hypotheses were tested using Somers'*d* to test for the association between the two variables of transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction through ordinal data statistics. In addition, an interpretive analysis of the null hypotheses was included in this section of the study. Two assumptions were considered to run Somers'*d*. The first assumption related to how the variables were measured, and the second assumption related to how the data fitted the Somers'*d* model.

For the first assumption, one dependent variable of employee satisfaction and one independent variable of transformational leadership was measured on an ordinal scale. A 5-point Likert scale for this measurement rated the variables from “very satisfied” to “very dissatisfied.” As noted, Likert-type scales result in ordinal scale data (Boone & Boone, 2012). The second assumption looked at the monotonic relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. Hence, a monotonic relationship exists when either: (a) the variables increase in value together; or (b) as one variable value increases, the other variable value decreases (Somers, 1968).

As noted, Somers’ d is an asymmetric measure of association between two variables (Somers, 1962). In this study, there appeared to be a distinction between the dependent variable, employee satisfaction, and the independent variable transformational leadership. As Liebetrau (1983) argues, Somers’ d is the difference between the conditional probability of concordance and the conditional probability of discordance, assuming that the values of the independent variable are unequal.

Research Questions

Research Question 1

Research question 1 hypothesized a statistically significant relationship between the leader’s level of transformational leadership and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency. To test this hypothesis, 20 employees in a local government agency were asked to rate their job satisfaction as it related to transformational leadership traits demonstrated by leadership. All participants were included in the analysis, and there were no missing cases.

For example, as shown in Table 1, where the leaders demonstrated less transformational leadership styles, employees were most likely to report being either ‘very dissatisfied;’ or

‘dissatisfied’. Where transformational leadership styles were used, often employees indicated ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with the level of employee job satisfaction.

Table 1

Crosstabulation Results for Transformational Leadership and Employee Job Satisfaction (N = 20).

Demonstrated Transformational Leadership (MLQ)	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
1	1	0	0	0	1
1	1	1	0	0	2
Sometimes	2	0	0	1	3
2	0	1	1	0	2
3	2	4	0	1	7
Often	0	0	0	1	1
3	0	0	0	1	1
3	0	0	1	0	1
4	0	0	1	1	2
Total	6	6	3	5	20

In addition to crosstabulation, a Somers’ *d* correlation analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis further, as seen in the Approximate Significance in Figure 4. The analysis revealed a significant ($d = .442, p < .01, 95\% \text{ CI}$) positive association between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction. This indicated that having the leader’s transformational leadership level available improved the ability to predict employee job satisfaction at a local government organization in Washington State by 44.2%. Hence, as transformational leadership increased, so did employee job satisfaction. Since the alpha error of probability was less than .01, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 hypothesized a statistically significant relationship between the leader’s level of idealized influence (attributes) and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency. To test this hypothesis, 20 employees in a local government agency

were asked to rate their job satisfaction as it related to idealized influence (attributes) traits demonstrated by leadership. All participants were included in the analysis, and there were no missing cases.

Table 2

Crosstabulation for Idealized Influence (attitudes) and Employee Job Satisfaction (N=20).

Idealized Influence (attitudes) (MLQ)	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Once in a while	1	0	0	0	1
Sometimes	2	3	0	1	6
Often	3	3	1	2	9
Frequently, always	0	0	2	2	4
Total	6	6	3	5	20

Somers' d correlation analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis further, as seen in the Approximate Significance in Figure 8. The analysis revealed a significant ($d = .444$ $p < .05$, 95% CI) positive association between idealized influence (attributes) and employee job satisfaction. This indicated that having the leader's idealized influence (attributes) level available improved the ability to predict employee job satisfaction at a local government organization in Washington State by 44.4%. Hence, as idealized influence (attributes) increased, so did employee job satisfaction. Since the alpha error of probability was less than .010, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 hypothesized a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of idealized influence (behaviors) and the level of employee job satisfaction in a

local government agency. To test this hypothesis, 20 employees in a local government agency were asked to rate their job satisfaction as it related to idealized influence (behaviors) traits demonstrated by leadership. All participants were included in the analysis, and there were no missing cases.

Table 3

Crosstabulation for Idealized Influence (behaviors) and Employee Job Satisfaction (N=20).

Idealized Influence (behavior) (MLQ)	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Once in a while	2	0	0	0	2
Sometimes	2	2	1	2	7
Often	2	4	1	2	9
Frequently, always	0	0	1	1	2
Total	6	6	3	5	20

In addition to crosstabulation, a Somers' d correlation analysis was conducted to further test the hypothesis, as seen in Figure 12. The analysis revealed a significant ($d = .336, p = .096$, 95% CI) showing no association between idealized influence (behaviors) and employee job satisfaction. Notice that when the finding is not significant, the researcher reported the actual p -value. This indicated that having the leader's idealized influence (behaviors) available did not improve the ability to predict employee job satisfaction at a local government organization in Washington State by 33.6%. Hence, idealized influence (behaviors) increases and does not affect employee job satisfaction. Since the alpha error of probability equals .096, the null hypothesis failed to reject.

The findings of this research present sufficient evidence to indicate that the relationship between employee job satisfaction and the MLQ leadership dimension of idealized influence (behaviors) were not associated. In essence, this component of transformational leadership, idealized influence (behaviors) where leaders exercise ethical behaviors motivated by their integrity, showed no significance in association.

Research Question 4

Research question 4 hypothesized a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of inspirational motivation and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency. To test this hypothesis, 20 employees in a local government agency were asked to rate their job satisfaction as it related to inspirational motivation traits demonstrated by leadership. All participants were included in the analysis, and there were no missing cases.

Table 4

Crosstabulation for Inspirational Motivation and Employee Job Satisfaction (N=20).

Inspirational Motivation (MLQ)	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Once in a while	2	1	0	0	3
Sometimes	2	1	0	1	4
Often	2	2	3	1	8
Frequently, always	0	2	0	3	5
Total	6	6	3	5	20

In addition to crosstabulation, a Somers' *d* correlation analysis was conducted to further test the hypothesis, as seen in the Approximate Significance in Figure 16. The analysis revealed a significant ($d = .455, p < .01, 95\% \text{ CI}$) positive association between inspirational motivation

and employee job satisfaction. This indicated that having the leader's inspirational motivation level available improved the ability to predict employee job satisfaction at a local government organization in Washington State by 45.5%. Hence, as inspirational motivation increased, so did employee job satisfaction. Since the alpha error of probability was less than .01, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question 5

Research question five hypothesized a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of intellectual stimulation and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency. To test this hypothesis, 20 employees in a local government agency were asked to rate their job satisfaction as it related to intellectual stimulation traits demonstrated by leadership. All participants were included in the analysis, and there were no missing cases.

Table 5

Crosstabulation for Intellectual Stimulation and Employee Job Satisfaction (N=20).

Intellectual Stimulation (MLQ)	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Once in a while	2	0	0	0	2
Sometimes	3	4	1	3	11
Often	1	2	1	2	6
Frequently, always	0	0	1	0	1
Total	6	6	3	5	20

In addition to crosstabulation, a Somers' d correlation analysis was conducted to further test the hypothesis, as seen in Figure 12. The analysis revealed a significant ($d = .361, p = .070, 95\% \text{ CI}$) showing no association between intellectual stimulation and employee job satisfaction.

Notice that when the finding is not significant, the researcher reported the actual p -value. This indicated that having the leader's intellectual stimulation available did not improve the ability to predict employee job satisfaction at a local government organization in Washington State by 36.1%. Hence, as intellectual stimulation increases, it does not affect employee job satisfaction. Since the alpha error of probability equals .07, the null hypothesis failed to reject.

The findings of this research present sufficient evidence to indicate that the relationship between employee job satisfaction and the MLQ leadership dimension of intellectual stimulation were not correlated. This component of transformational leadership, where leaders contribute to employees being more involved by being creative, showed no significance in association.

Research Question 6

Research question 6 hypothesized a statistically significant relationship between the leader's level of individualized consideration and the level of employee job satisfaction in a local government agency. To test this hypothesis, 20 employees in a local government agency were asked to rate their job satisfaction as it related to individualized consideration traits demonstrated by leadership. All participants were included in the analysis, and there were no missing cases.

Table 6

Crosstabulation for Intellectual Stimulation and Employee Job Satisfaction (N=20).

Intellectual Stimulation (MLQ)	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Total
Once in a while	2	0	0	0	2
Sometimes	4	6	1	2	11
Often	0	0	2	2	3
Frequently, always	0	0	0	1	4
Total	6	6	3	5	20

In addition to crosstabulation, a Somers' d correlation analysis was conducted to further test the hypothesis, as seen in Figure 24. The analysis revealed a significant ($d = .520, p < .01, 95\% \text{ CI}$) positive association between individualized consideration and employee job satisfaction. This indicated that having the leader's individualized consideration level available improved the ability to predict employee job satisfaction at a local government organization in Washington State by 52.0%. Hence, as individualized consideration increased, so did employee job satisfaction. Since the alpha error of probability was less than .003, the null hypothesis was rejected.

This dimension of transformational leadership showed the highest score and a significant positive relationship with employee job satisfaction. This demonstrated that when leadership behaviors displayed individualized consideration, employee job satisfaction increased. The findings of this research present sufficient evidence to indicate that a statistically significant relationship exists between employee job satisfaction and the MLQ leadership dimension of individualized consideration.

Table 7

Summary of Leader's Level of Each Independent Variable and the Relationship to Employee Job Satisfaction (N = 20).

Relationship to employee job satisfaction	Somers' d	Asymptotic standard error	Approximate T	Approximate significance
Leader's level of				
Transformational leadership	0.442	0.129	3.210	.001***
Idealized influence (attributes)	0.444	0.155	2.568	.010**
Idealized influence (behaviors)	0.336	0.185	1.662	.096*
Inspirational motivation	0.455	0.152	2.887	.004***
Intellectual stimulation	0.361	0.181	1.814	.070*
Individualized consideration	0.520	0.153	2.951	.003***

* $p < .100$. ** $p < .050$. *** $p < .010$. **** $p < .001$

Phase II Analysis of Data

Phase II of the study considered the qualitative phase through open-ended interviews, which comprised 3 questions and 9 probing questions. For this stage, the grounded theory qualitative study consisted of open-ended interviews, which were used to quantify the level of employee satisfaction to get the lived experiences of participants to understand the level of employee satisfaction and confirm findings. According to Bickman and Rog (2009), in utilizing both qualitative and quantitative strategies, the mixed-methods researcher is provided with rich data sets, including both narrative and numerical data. In addition, this process was used to see if there were additional emerging themes. Creswell (2014) avers that qualitative data can build directly upon quantitative data results to study the results more in-depth. Furthermore,

For this phase, data collections through interviews were conducted by the same 20 participants who completed both surveys in Phase I of the study through Zoom Video Conferencing. Interviews were scheduled after the first phase was completed. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The data analysis uncovered trends and emerging themes in NVivo 12 software. Nodes were created to interpret employee satisfaction, which was a reoccurring theme, to code the themes. Participants did not request summary sheets to ensure that the transcripts accurately portrayed their responses. The researcher reviewed summary sheets to ensure the accuracy of participant responses after each interview. Findings were based on the analysis of the open-ended interview questions responses, which were later triangulated with phase I survey data.

Open coding was conducted to explore the understanding of participants' experiences with leadership in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities since COVID-19 and the support they had in their organization. In addition, nodes were created that highlighted themes around

employee job satisfaction in their organization. The researcher utilized constant comparison for emerging themes and constructed codes through nodes created by NVivo coding.

Giannakopoulos et al. (2021) noted that concepts generated by raw data are grouped into conceptual categories. There were three open-ended questions:

1. Please share your experience working since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in your organization.
2. Please share your experience with leadership in fulfilling your roles and responsibilities in your organization since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Share your experience regarding the level of support you had in your organization during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Probing Questions:

1. Probe: What were work-related challenges?
2. Probe: What were work-related successes and achievements?
3. Probe: Please share a story about how your leader leads.
4. Probe: Please share any positive support and/or mentoring behavior you received from leadership.
5. Probe: Please share about leadership behavior.
6. Probe: Please share your leader's vision and goals.
7. Probe: Please share leaders' ideas about being creative.
8. Probe: What were the challenges or concerns you experienced in your organization?
9. Probe: What are some of the strengths or supports that you experienced?

Results

For the purpose of this study, open-ended interviews were conducted with 20

employees through convenient sampling who currently work at a local government agency in Washington state to add richness to the quantitative data. The interview questions were piloted by two employees who met the requirement prior to the interview process. 20 employees signed consent forms and filled out demographic forms to participate in the study (Appendix A and B). There were 3 men and 17 women who participated in the study. Participants chose to answer all questions, including any probing questions which were asked of them. All questions were answered in detail by all participants.

Once the interviews were completed, they were saved to the researcher's desktop. Each participant was assigned identifiers (Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, to Participant 20) to maintain confidentiality when reporting the results. The raw data were imported to NVivo 12 software. NVivo allows for collecting, organizing, analyzing, and visualizing data to facilitate coding for thematic narrative synthesis (Elliot- Mainwaring, 2021). Nodes were created for participant interviews and coded to highlight, and color strips were created for each node. The researcher displayed findings in word clouds and hierarchies. Interview questions with the 20 participants resulted in several responses, of which themes emerged that accounted for the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction of participants' jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings were organized by themes. There were seven core themes noted, including Support, Communication, Leadership, Telework, Safety and Empowerment, and Trust. A hierarchy was created for other themes under the core theme categories.

The themes were as follows:

1. Support
2. Communication
 - (a) Stress

3. Leadership
 - (a) Change in Leadership
 - (b) Upper Leadership
 - (c) Direct Leadership
4. Telework
 - (a) Work-life Balance
 - (b) Workload
 - (c) Equipment Availability
5. Safety
 - (a) Uncertainty
 - (b) Feeling of Isolation
6. Empowerment
7. Trust

The themes that emerged from interviewing the 20 participants were significant factors that influenced employee job satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Theme 1: Support

Support was the most common theme among all participants in the study. All 20 participants noted that support was a factor in employee satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The findings reveal that 18 participants felt supported due to direct leadership in their roles which was viewed as a factor of employee satisfaction. In comparison, two participants were dissatisfied with the level of support received. Some of the contributing factors expressed by participants around support were leaders being accommodating to the transition, having the

flexibility and opportunity to be creative being remote, and leaders providing feedback on functions during uncertain times. Participants supporting statements are as follows:

I do feel, though, that there has been a lot of support if you know what I mean. I think I've had to take some time off for certain personal reasons, and I feel like there is understanding and support [contributing to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 1)

I guess lucky, it doesn't describe the feeling fully but compact coming up with another word but super lucky that we have a manager that understands public health [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 10)

Very little support. I feel like this is not just me; I feel like as our team. We have all been kind of floating and trying to keep our heads above water [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 5)

So I felt that, that my supervisor, direct supervisor, was pretty accessible to me, and I appreciated that [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 19)

Theme 2: Communication

Communication was a parent theme with one sub-theme of stress. Findings reveal that 12 participants saw stress as a dissatisfying factor since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as there were additional tasks and new systems were implemented. Other contributing factors to stress were work and system transitions, heavier workloads, and struggling with technology for remote work at the beginning of the pandemic. 12 participants viewed a lack of communication as a dissatisfying factor, while 2 participants revealed that communication was a satisfying factor to them.

Communication supporting statements:

I just feel that the communication that trickles down to our team is huge. It feels like it's after the fact that something has been determined by leadership and, and it makes it more challenging [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 1)

Well, I will say like she's done well. For one, she shows up for the most part in meetings, she's there to listen. She wants to hear what we have to say, and there's open conversation [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 10)

There has been a real lack of clarity. Some of this is because we were in an emergency and just had to be constantly responding to the next thing coming up, but a real lack of any kind of comprehensive vision or clarity, from a kind of a morale perspective [contributed to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 18)

I thought that communication was more challenging, too, because you no longer had the physical cues of people. So sometimes communication could be misunderstood when it's remotely sent to you [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 19)

So, I think there's been a little bit of a disconnect and not always satisfying answers to those kinds of questions, and instead, a little more of us would say, generally a little more rigid around that communication [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 8)

Stress supporting statements:

It was kind of a struggle sometimes to get the technology up and running, and everything [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 18)

There was a new body of work that came on that I had to take on that I felt like I had no idea what I was doing. I didn't understand the service area [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 16)

Using a new invoice system, we've documented the challenges that seem to be dismissed [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 12)

It was kind of a very frustrating, very frustrating process. I got it done, and I'm very proud of myself because I could get it done [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 19)

Theme 3: Leadership

Leadership was a parent theme in the hierarchy, preceded by three sub-themes of Change in Leadership, Upper Leadership, and Direct Leadership. The findings displayed that five out of the twenty participants saw change in leadership as a dissatisfying factor; for the direct leadership sub-theme, two participants were dissatisfied while 8 participants were satisfied with their direct leadership. Regarding the sub-theme of upper leadership, seven participants felt dissatisfied as they felt disconnected from the greater leadership. Participants supporting statements are as follows:

Change in leadership supporting statements:

I mean, there's been so much leadership turnover [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 18)

So, every change in any leadership hierarchy does affect organization and does affect the way that we do our work [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 2)

Major challenge was that there was departmental leadership turnover during this period. So, you know, during a time when continuity was already really interrupted [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 8)

Had a vast change of leadership. The pandemic has occurred, there's been a lot of organizational changes. A lot of administrative changes which could have been rolled out a whole lot smoother [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 20)

Direct Leadership supporting statements:

My experience with my direct supervisor and manager has been very positive [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 4).

That I would say from my immediate manager I have had, she's just been available for troubleshooting conversations, to be a sounding board to work through approach on different aspects of my work [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 8)

I think in leadership style, this individual is hands-off, which for the most part is great, but also can be a challenge. Sometimes, because I do have to be self-directed kind of, you know, sort of manage my time well. Make sure I'm managing my own time and, yeah, doing what I need to do to kind of stay motivated [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 18)

Upper Leadership supporting statements:

I think the department was behind on that. Mainly because they're not forward-thinking [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 12)

Feel like I don't really feel supported honestly from higher leadership [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 18)

Honestly, the greater leadership above that is kind of, I mean, it's just, it feels disconnected from me personally [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 10)

The leadership above them, I think, like the management of the whole division and the director of the, of the department. I think has been like band-aids and tape to keep things going [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 4)

Theme 4: Telework

Telework was a parent theme identified by participants and had three sub-themes associated with it which included work-life balance, workload, and equipment availability. The

results reveal that nine out of the 20 participants viewed equipment availability as a satisfying factor as the organization made equipment available to employees, while 3 out of the 20 participants expressed dissatisfaction regarding equipment availability concerning office space and other technological equipment. Additionally, 10 participants were dissatisfied with the increased workload since the pandemic. Only one participant of the sub-theme work-life balance was satisfied, while six participants expressed dissatisfaction with managing work-life balance. Regarding the parent theme of telework, only three 3 participants express a level of dissatisfaction. The participants supporting statements are as follows:

Telework supporting statements:

It was more challenging, having work issues because I was at home [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 19)

So, so I just missed that interaction. That's what I really, I think, missed the most is the interaction with colleagues' ability to like not to be on camera. You know it's like I'm on camera all the time now. ability to not be on camera and just like be myself, and I have, you know, healthy relationships at work [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 18)

I like the ability of not having to commute and waste a lot of time, and I feel more productive being at home [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 13)

Equipment supporting statements:

I feel like I was fortunate because at that time I was working at home already a couple of days a week, so I did have the, the right work equipment at all, and I, you know I felt like that was, was helpful or help with the stress [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 1)

So, the challenges for me are that I am not super savvy with online data. Navigating data systems, and we've had a lot of new data systems and financial systems, and they've been

difficult to use and learn and super demanding and time [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 4)

Work-Life Balance supporting statements:

I just, it wasn't clear to me; it felt like you're expected to work and figure out what you're going to do with your kids, and also homeschool them, and you know, do everything [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 10)

It's been easier to just work from home. It provides more of a work-life balance [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 20)

Workload supporting statements:

Well, the work. I think for me and for us has been pretty consistent. So there has not been a single moment of stoppage of work [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 14)

Workload has been a little bit crazier since the pandemic just because we had a lot of new rollout projects that we must do or a new work that has been added to our workload, compared to how we were doing this is prior [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 13)

So I found myself sometimes actually working, I mean way, much later hours than I had when I was at the office [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 19)

Theme 5: Safety

Safety was the parent theme in the hierarchy, while Feelings of Isolation and Uncertainty were the sub-themes. The results revealed that only two of the twenty participants saw Safety as a satisfier for employee job satisfaction, while five participants viewed feelings of isolation as a dissatisfying factor, and five participants viewed uncertainty as a dissatisfying factor towards employee job satisfaction.

Participant supporting statements for the subcategory of isolation are as follows:

I felt a little isolated from people, but overall, I think it's, I've adapted to the way of doing business this way. [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 19)

So that's an example of feeling like we were kind of a little bit left on our own and staff to work it out. In terms of making sure we get our jobs done [contributes to employees' dissatisfaction]. (Participant 8)

The connection with people, my team, my providers [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 7).

Supporting statements for the subcategory of uncertainty are as follows:

For instance, leading, you'll come back in July, know you're going to be coming back in September, know you're going to be coming back now march of 2022, leading in a time of uncertainty, what does that look like well all the people come back together.

Also, when a, when a manager or a leader or a supervisor works on other projects, it's not.

They're often spread very thin, like returned to office work as well as being a manager or supervisor, the planning unit or some other there's, there's a lot of competing priorities for the work and what the work is going to look like on any given day or any given week [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 2)

Really positive experience means scary in the sense because there was so much unknown there and then about, you know, just safety protocols that was changing a lot. And it was pre vaccines, of course [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 8)

Theme 6: Empowerment

Seven out of the twenty participants felt a sense of Empowerment was a satisfying factor for employee job satisfaction. This theme of empowerment exemplifies how leaders can espouse on transformational leadership style to inspire others and is consistent with the statement by

Kouzes and Posner (2017), who contend that commitment cannot be commanded but can be enlisted to achieve a common vision by appealing to shared aspirations. Participants generally felt a sense of empowerment. However, one participant felt more coaching, and feedback was needed, which may have been helpful. Participants supporting statements around Empowerment are as follows:

My Leader was pretty hands -off with me, which I appreciate because I liked operating that way [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 15)

On the other hand, I've gotten some independence and ability to kind of figure out how to do things on my own or figure out what works best for me [contributes to employee job satisfaction]. (Participant 16)

You know coaching or feedback, or something might be helpful [contributes to employee dissatisfaction]. (Participant 18)

Theme 7: Trust

This theme dealt with employees feeling a sense of trust from leadership in making decisions to manage work functions. This theme spoke to leadership through the lens of transformational leadership and trust. Relationships built on trust enable employees to take on responsibilities. Only two out of the twenty participants saw Trust a satisfying factor in employee job satisfaction. Supporting statements around Trust are as follows:

I appreciate the fact that my direct supervisor trusts me to know what I can do and what I can't do as far as work assignments and understands that my work may be unique to other people's work [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 2)

I kind of have to make this call, like what the priority is on this, and I mean, perhaps that speaks to the trust that my organization has in me [contributes to employee satisfaction]. (Participant 18)

Triangulation

As noted, triangulation was used to validate the surveys and enrich and expand the data in phase I of the study. Triangulation was conducted to assess the association between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction as reflected by their overall survey ratings. The aim of triangulation is to enhance the validity of data (Carter et al., 2014; Yin, 2008). In addition, Tibben (2015) argues that triangulation encourages researchers to acquire more perspectives for data collection and analysis.

In looking at triangulation of the data, for instance, in Theme 1: Support, Participant 3, who had a high rating for transformational leadership and a high rating of employee satisfaction, stated, “From my viewpoint, she's been more than a supportive and accommodating leader which helped me to transition. She pointed me in the direction of places or people that I needed to speak, which has been amazing at supporting me and anybody else on the team.” [Triangulation] (Participant 3). This also aligned with research question RQ1, RQ2, RQ4 with Participant 3 response which shows a statistically significant relationship between RQ1: transformational leadership and employee satisfaction as well as RQ2: idealized influence and RQ4: inspirational motivation. Another example where data triangulation confirmed the validity of the study considers Theme 3: Leadership. Participant 17 noted “I felt like for me personally though leadership has always been pretty responsive to me like if I have questions like, even if it might take a while, they'll eventually get to it” [Triangulation] (Participant 17). This alignment with RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3 demonstrated a triangulation between quantitative and qualitative data. Participant 17 also had a high rating for transformational leadership and employee satisfaction.

Summary

Chapter 4 provided the summation of the quantitative data, descriptive statistics, analysis, demographic tables, figures and graphs, interpretation of the qualitative data, results, and summary. The analyses constructed were about Somers' *d* assumptions, correlational analysis, and hypothesis testing. The results of the study indicated that there was a positive relationship between transformational leadership, and employee job satisfaction in a local government organization in Washington state. There were 20 responses collected from two surveys for Phase I which dealt with quantitative data and the same participants went through an interview process for Phase II of the study.

Somers' *d* analysis for the first hypothesis showed a significant relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction. The second hypothesis also indicated that there was a relationship between idealized influence (attitudes) and employee job satisfaction which was significant. The third hypothesis showed a negative relationship between idealized influence (behaviors) and employee satisfaction. Findings for the fourth hypothesis revealed a positive and significant relationship between inspirational motivation and employee job satisfaction. For the fifth hypothesis, there was no association between intellectual stimulation and employee job satisfaction. Lastly, findings for the sixth hypothesis indicated a significant positive relationship between individualized consideration and employee job satisfaction.

Chapter 5 provides an overview, summary, implications, conclusions, future research, recommendations, and reflections.

Chapter 5

Summary of Findings, Future Research, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Overview

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, leadership has been a significant component for organizations in managing their workforce through unprecedented change. As there have been several challenges, uncertainty, and ambiguity for leaders in organizations, leadership need to be apt with the most appropriate leadership styles to effectively respond to disruptive change. Researchers have attempted to demonstrate the association between employee satisfaction and leadership, specifically transformational leadership, for years (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). This investigation was designed to determine whether there was a relationship between transformational leadership style and employee job satisfaction in a government organization during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine a statistical association between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction since the unprecedented change of the COVID-19 pandemic in a local government organization in Washington state. The theoretical framework was based on Bass's four dimensions of transformational leadership styles: (a) idealized influence, (b) inspirational motivation, (c) intellectual stimulation, and (d) individualized consideration. The study was a mixed-methods grounded theory study with two phases. Six research questions were used to test the association between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction among local government employees. Somers' *d* analysis was used to test the association between the two variables through ordinal data statistics.

Although there has been a significant amount of research around transformational leadership for decades, there is still a lack of discussion around underlying mechanisms and

boundary conditions of the influence on employee satisfaction (Chen et al., 2022). Consequently, there is an exiguity of research in understanding if transformational leadership can effectively improve employee job satisfaction in an era of unprecedented change like COVID-19. In addition, studies around transformational leadership have been conducted in more normalized climates, and few measure the association between the two variables during disruptive change (Miller, 2020). In conducting an investigation of the literature, there is minimal research on studies that measure the association between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction in a government organization during disruptive change such as the pandemic. Due to this gap in the literature, there is a lack of understanding in determining how transformational leadership influences employee job satisfaction through unprecedented change. Albeit this research study filled this gap in the literature.

This chapter summarizes the findings of the six research questions and hypotheses using data of 20 employees from a local government organization in Washington State. Chapter 5 is divided into six sections: (a) overview, (b) a summary of the findings from the data reproduced from the copywriting of the owner, (c) the implications and significance of the study, (d) recommendations for future research, (e) conclusion and (f), reflections.

Summary of Findings

As stated, the purpose of the study was to explore a statistical association between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction since the disruptive change of the COVID-19 pandemic with 20 employees at a local government organization in Washington state. Data were examined individually to test the association between the variables of transformational leadership and employee satisfaction since the onset of the pandemic.

There were six research questions followed by six hypotheses tested with the data collected from the 20 participants at a local government organization. Somers' d was used to determine the association between the independent variable of transformational leadership and dependent variable of employee satisfaction. There was a statistical significance of association between dimensions of transformational leadership and employee satisfaction except for idealized influence (behaviors) and intellectual stimulation, which failed to reject the null hypothesis.

Implications and Significance

Theoretical Implications

There were theoretical implications of this study which used a sample of 20 participants on the cusp of COVID-19 at a local government agency to investigate the relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction in Washington state. Future researchers can apply the study results to further investigate transformational leadership behaviors in crises relating to employee satisfaction. The MLQ was used to measure leadership behaviors, while the MSQ rated employee satisfaction. In addition, the same sample of participants was interviewed, which provided the qualitative phase and allowed for emergent themes. In general, the study determined that transformational leadership was a significant predictor of employee job satisfaction, as detailed by Somers' d analysis. However, it failed to reject the dimensions of idealized influence behaviors and intellectual stimulation.

As recognized by employees of this organization, this study determined if there was an association between the two variables of transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction. The findings indicate several important implications for leadership theory. This

study contributed to leadership research by confirming the relationship or the association between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, this study expanded the framework of this leadership style through expansive change and confirmed the validity of the MLQ and MSQ survey instruments.

Practical Significance

This research offered several insights for managers, leaders, and organizations in the field of organizational leadership. The practical implications and application for employers to reevaluate employees' perception of employees' opinions by being a part of major decision-making processes matters. The significance of exploring the relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction since the COVID-19 pandemic era in a local government organization in Washington can assist organizations with implementing the most appropriate leadership styles that can affect organizational effectiveness and performance. In addition, this study provides implications for leadership praxis that can reduce turnover, increase productivity, respond adequately to disruptive change allows for organizations to sustain their workforce and achieve their desired outcomes and goals. The findings in the study are pertinent to all levels of leadership and leaders across any industry for a more effective and satisfied workforce. The results of this study could also help with developing strategies that can improve leadership programs and aid with employee development. These findings could be used by leaders to increase success in their organizations by using effective leadership styles especially when responding to a crisis.

Work functions seem to be somewhat better for the organization as staff felt valued, which allowed staff to feel inspired. As employees interviewed asserted, it motivates staff when they feel managers are trying to make the organization the best when they communicate with

passion. Albeit the implications suggest that the satisfaction level of employees was dependent on transformational leadership dimensions by employees feeling motivated, engaged, having shared values, and achieving personal growth and self-actualization.

This research can assist with employee development and leadership training and improvement and produce a change in the organization, which increased leadership effectiveness and employee satisfaction. Within this sample, the themes of support, communication, leadership, trust, empowerment, telework, and safety demarcate the significance of the transformational leadership style. The willingness and ability of leaders to motivate, and inspire others, while influencing employees, and driving employees to achieve more than expected, is a crucial aspect of organizational effectiveness during and post-pandemic era.

The study questions the human relations approach centered around the study and practice of organizational communications for this organization. Choi et al. (2021) study considers organizational communication as a comprehensive interaction process with internal and external environments to achieve organizational goals and achieve sustainable management based on communication and information exchange with members within the organization based on hierarchical order. This approach considers human needs and attitudes in the workplace and needs to align with leaders providing opportunities for growth and development through training and employee engagement in aspects of decision-making. The implication is that leaders who practice transformational leadership will attain highly satisfied employees who align with the organizational attainment of goals and desired outcomes. Organizations need to promote leadership that is attuned to developing their leadership behavior, including the perceptions of their workforce, which allows room for improved communication and commitment of employees to the organization.

From the qualitative phase of the study, it is evident that a leader's actions impact how employees function through expansive change. As noted in Chapter 4, Support was the most common theme in Phase II of this study, which highlighted the triangulation of the study. As Chand (2021) posits, "Leaders who adjust their plans to support their employees earn enormous reservoirs of trust and respect" (p. 21). Hence, by implementing effective leadership approaches through a crisis like transformational leadership which speaks to motivating employees, employees will feel a sense of value which helps with retaining employees. In addition, it became apparent from the study's findings that employees seek more direction and seek more certainty in times of crisis. Participants emphasized the importance of leadership where leaders could improve communication and provide support and direction that fits the employees' interests, especially during a crisis when more direction is needed. Based on the results of the study, when leaders provide support and effective communication, employees feel more supported, which increases their productivity. As Kelly and MacDonald (2019) assert, leadership styles that encourage supervisor-subordinate communication in the workplace are the most effective. Subordinates who feel comfortable communicating with their supervisors believe that their ideas are valued, while subordinates who do not have such relationships do not feel valued. This study has demonstrated that leadership behavior can impact employee satisfaction while in crisis.

Substantive Significance

Regarding the substantive significance that draws on the insights of employee satisfaction, transformational leadership dimensions can successfully be utilized to enhance leadership behaviors in response to unprecedented change, adding to academic research. Considering the empirical thresholds of transformational leadership in relation to employee

satisfaction, the results of the research study are substantive as it utilized mixed methods research through quantitative data where two survey instruments were used, and qualitative data where open-ended interview questions were used. Conducting a mixed methods study provided insight into filling the gaps in previous research, which recommended that future research include both qualitative and quantitative methods to discover differences that a quantitative approach does not address in relation to transformational leadership behaviors in government organizations regarding certain tasks (Johnson, 2012). Hence, this study's mixed-methods approach addressed such discoveries of leadership behaviors through enormous change as participants conducted two surveys and an open-ended interview.

Another substantive significance of this study considers such research being done more frequently as there have been no other studies done that explore the association between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction since unprecedented change as COVID-19. The pandemic can impact the findings of this study, and other studies need to be current. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly shifted perspectives on leadership roles through a crisis. This study suggests that transformational leadership has significant positive effects on crisis management. Purnomo (2021) postulated that leaders' abilities allow organizations to work together toward the organization's vision out of a crisis which thus becomes a critical factor.

Implications

The implications of the COVID-19 pandemic era were still in question at the time of this research study. COVID-19 has had several impacts on the daily livelihood of millions of Americans and the world, as few were prepared for this pandemic. More research will be needed

as there have been several shifts with the changing mechanics and dynamics of organizations in America and the world.

Organizations need to place more emphasis on strategic planning. As Biddle (2020) argues, organizations that proactively monitor threats can be apt with the resources to respond to vulnerabilities facing them. The implications of the COVID-19 pandemic are still under consideration. However, this research broadened the scope of an effective leadership style used to improve employee job satisfaction through a crisis. In addition, organizations should consider using transformational leadership training during a crisis, notably since this study showed a statistically significant relationship between employee job satisfaction and transformational leadership, which can be beneficial for organizations meeting their work functions and outcomes successfully.

Leadership Training

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, organizations face a new reality in this expansive change in meeting successful outcomes, so leadership needs to be examined in response to the continuity of work functions. As leadership is a vital asset of any organization, leaders and executive management should be trained on the practices and approaches of transformational leadership, creating environments where employees feel satisfied, valued, and effective. As organizations go through unprecedented shifts, integrating such transformational leadership styles into performance plans for leaders ensures that government leaders identify and recognize the difference in leadership approaches and focus their leadership on what can be efficacious and beneficial in attaining the desired results of the organization. In addition, by utilizing such leadership praxis through disruptive change, local government organizations can ensure high employee morale, reduced hiring, and increased production. Furthermore, more

employees feel satisfaction in working for an organization apt with practical tools to manage change successfully. Further, providing such training, which improves leadership, could result in a shared vision and mission for city leadership and, in return, ensure overall employee job satisfaction. Therefore, such activities that implement transformational leadership approaches may increase leadership effectiveness, which provides employee job satisfaction.

Study Limitations

There were many motivating and unmotivating forces that catalyzed this research study. This doctoral study presented three limitations. The first limitation was utilizing a convenient sampling method. However, by using a convenient sampling method, the researcher acquired the target study participants to attain the data collection and analyze the data in a short period of time. A second limitation was the data collection instruments used in Phase I of the study. Though the MLQ and MSQ are valid research instruments used to test quantitative data, these instruments may not address all aspects of leadership behavior and employee job satisfaction. Other factors may influence perceptions about leadership and employee job satisfaction. A third limitation was that the information provided by employees might not be factual, which can be a limitation when using study participants for various reasons or even biases. Nonetheless, since this was a mixed-methods study, employees had the opportunity to provide their responses using different instruments and different platforms.

Recommendations

Recommendations for Future Research

This research study acquired several recommendations that could improve leader and employee relations and improve workforce satisfaction. This research was aimed at adding to the

body of literature and showed a statistically significant association between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction since the COVID-19 pandemic era in a local government organization. Expanding what is known about the literature could improve employee and employer relationships, management styles, and outcomes regardless of experiencing disruptive change. As Purnomo et al. (2021) suggest, research related to crisis management can enrich various variables such as transformational leadership in qualitative analysis. Future research can help with expanding the literature and understanding of employee job satisfaction for any organization experiencing change as change is inevitable.

Expanding the sample size to the three divisions in this local government department rather than just using convenient sampling from a division of the department could give more insight into the qualitative element of this research on the lived experiences of participants of the study. In the future, researchers could use different sampling methods, such as probability sampling, which allows for extensive insight into the model. A larger sample for the data collection of the study will seek more focus on this leadership style in the department. Another recommendation would be to repeat this research study and include leader ratings for the MLQ rather than the MLQ short form where employees rated someone in a higher position. This study only consisted of employees rating an individual who leads them. Though the sample population met the conditions for being statistically significant, including leaders who rate themselves and employees who rate them can improve validation and reliability in creating a leadership training program to improve leadership styles for this local government organization and other government and non-government organizations.

Although the results of the study suggest leaders have a strong influence overall on employees, the dimensions of idealized influence (behaviors) and intellectual stimulation were

not significant in enhancing job satisfaction. Broadening the scope of leadership styles rather than transformational leadership theory concerning employee job satisfaction used through disruptive change can play a vital role in nullifying the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering other leadership styles such as servant leadership, adaptive leadership, situational leadership, or others are needed to foster and expand the relationship between leadership styles beneficial to employee job satisfaction. It is best for leaders to know what methods or practical implications are needed to achieve the most rewarding outcomes, highlighting the role of transformational leadership.

Further research can broaden the understanding of what employee job satisfaction means to employees. Although the researcher used validated research instruments to acquire data that align with employee job satisfaction, future studies can broaden this scope using a 100% qualitative methodology, which focuses on more emergence of themes, especially while experiencing disruptive change, to further highlight the employee satisfaction variable. A study examining the correlation between employee job satisfaction and age can provide a deeper understanding between employers and employees. For example, younger employees account for 17.6% of the workforce, while 33.9% are 50 and older (“OPM: Stop Using KSAs When Hiring,” 2009; U.S. Office of Personnel Management [OPM], 2015). Hence, understanding job satisfaction to retain current employees and attract younger talent (Wang & Brower, 2019) can benefit the organization and speak to diversity in the workforce while understanding employee job satisfaction.

Conclusion

Leadership is a significant component of any organization. Leadership style affects leadership effectiveness and employee satisfaction in local government organizations. Therefore,

leadership training is essential as it aids leaders in acquiring the most appropriate approaches to lead successfully, especially through revolutionary change. This research study was a mixed-methods grounded theory study that used quantitative and qualitative data to establish a statistically significant association between transformational leadership theory and employee job satisfaction. One of the most important findings of this research was the association between transformational leadership and high job satisfaction scores among participants who worked at a local government agency in Washington state.

Transformational leadership theory, established by James MacGregor Burns and developed by Bass (1985), which considers the four dimensions of transformational leadership where leaders recognize and articulate a clear vision through change, is a useful theory in explaining and understanding employee satisfaction in a local government organization. Extant findings using quantitative data analysis verify this theory (Malik et al., 2017; Mujik et al., 2014; Nazim, 2016; Wang et al., 2014; Yukl, 2008; Zhang et al., 2012). Some studies have supported a link between transformational leadership and employee satisfaction (Bhatti et al., 2021; Kouni et al., 2018; Mujkic et al., 2014). However, recent research on the effectiveness of transformational leadership theory in promoting employee satisfaction during disruptive change such as COVID-19 is insubstantial (Ratana et al., 2020).

This study addressed the gap in the literature by adding to the body of empirical research around transformational leadership in relation to employee job satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. This mixed-method study used triangulation which validated the results of the quantitative surveys and enriched the data. Adding the qualitative element in seeking a deeper understanding of participant responses provided the researcher with deeper insight into participant responses and the emergence of themes. The study revealed that the behaviors of

transformational leadership style were rated as the most used form of leadership where employees felt satisfied with direct leadership; however, in conducting Phase II of the study through the open-ended interviews, employees expressed dissatisfaction with upper leadership in their department with needing more direction, support, and communication.

The results of this study were centered on the data analysis, which comprised of the responses of participants of the study provided in the research questions from the quantitative and qualitative phases. The study emphasized a significant relationship between transformational leadership styles and overall employee job satisfaction regarding the dimensions of idealized influence (attitudes), inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration. As the research demonstrated, these dimensions of transformational leadership showed a relatively high degree of positive association leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Albeit the strength of association between intellectual stimulation and idealized influence (behaviors) in relation to employee job satisfaction did not show a correlation and failed to reject the null hypothesis. The Somers'*d* analysis revealed that the transformational leadership style was the significant predictor of the overall employee job satisfaction. The study provided evidence that leaders can be more effective in the satisfaction of employees when they frequently practice transformational leadership dimensions used effectively through the crisis. In general, the study results suggest that the transformational leadership style positively impacts employees; however, two dimensions of transformational leadership did not show a significant association with employee job satisfaction. Therefore, leaders need to be more cognizant of their leadership behaviors as they can significantly impact their workforce through disruptive change and utilize necessary leadership styles that would benefit any local government organization, primarily through a disruptive change of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reflections

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the world, disrupted economies, and forced organizations to innovate and change the way they conduct their work functions (Almohamad et al., 2020). Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, employee job satisfaction has been a significant issue. As noted by McKeown (2010), employee turnover negatively impacts organizations. Worldwide, organizations face a new reality in this expansive change in meeting successful outcomes, so leadership has been examined in response to the continuity of work functions. In addition, for organizations to have a competitive advantage, leaders must reimagine leadership that speaks to retention and turnover strategies which should be prioritized for businesses to survive, regardless of substantive change. As Brief and Weiss (2008) postulated, empowering employees through employee job satisfaction leads to improved performance, employees being inspired, less turnover, and influencing levels of creativity and activity.

The theoretical framework of Bass's foundational transformational leadership, which presents the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, presents a platform for leaders and organizations to consider when implementing strategies in responding to change. These four dimensions of transformational leadership are effective since they cover an expansive range of leaders and their followers' characteristics and behaviors including shared vision, goals, values, emotions, ethics, and standards (Bak et al., 2022).

There was a statistical significance between the association between the two variables in exploring the relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction. While employees at a local government agency in Washington state are generally satisfied, the

dimensions of intellectual stimulation and idealized influence (behaviors) of transformational leadership failed to reject the null hypothesis, which needs further study. Albeit, the study revealed that people seek more certainty and direction when there is a crisis. As a result, leadership styles need to change when chaos is present. In addition, leaders need to lead by example and mobilize their followers' commitment to achieving results beyond what is expected.

This study concluded that although, in general, transformational leadership is a leadership style used to respond to change, the imputation of adaptive and situational leadership styles can leverage the direction and structure in sustaining the workforce through unprecedented change. In addition, in exploring the relationship between transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction in the era of disruptive change, participants in the study provided key determinants of effective leadership strategies which impact employee job satisfaction and can reduce turnover in crisis: (1) support, (2) communication, (3) leadership (4) telework, (5) safety (6) empowerment and (7) trust.

This study added to the limited body of research around transformational leadership and employee satisfaction at a local government organization during the COVID-19 pandemic era. Teleworking is an area with limited research on transformational leadership and employee job satisfaction when studying government employees, which may affect satisfaction. In addition, with the shift to employees fully teleworking since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, more research is needed to prove the effectiveness of this leadership style in relation to employee job satisfaction. The world is still in the cusp of COVID-19 and organizations are still dealing with managing such change that came with the pandemic. As history has shown, it is not a matter of if another pandemic will occur but when and what the consequences will be for organizations that are not prepared (Biddle, 2020). Therefore, further research is needed on other leadership

styles relating to employee job satisfaction that effectively respond to disruptive change, especially when advancing leadership theory and practice.

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Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Race/Ethnicity Categories

Check all that apply:

Ethnically of Hispanic/Latino origin: _____

White/European American: _____

Black/African American: _____

Asian: _____

American Indian/Alaska Native: _____

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: _____

Aboriginal: _____

Other: _____

2. Gender

Male

Female

Prefer Not to Answer

3. Fulltime Permanent Employee: YES () NO ()

4. Duration of Employment at this government organization: _____

5. Current Position: _____

Appendix B

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire

Form 5X Short

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MLQ Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire™ Leader Form (5x-Short)

My Name: _____ Date: _____

Organization ID #: _____ Leader ID #: _____

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

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

Use the following rating scale:

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

1.	I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts	0	1	2	3	4
2.	I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate.....	0	1	2	3	4
3.	I fail to interfere until problems become serious.....	0	1	2	3	4
4.	I focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards.....	0	1	2	3	4
5.	I avoid getting involved when important issues arise	0	1	2	3	4
6.	I talk about my most important values and beliefs.....	0	1	2	3	4
7.	I am absent when needed	0	1	2	3	4
8.	I seek differing perspectives when solving problems	0	1	2	3	4
9.	I talk optimistically about the future	0	1	2	3	4
10.	I instill pride in others for being associated with me	0	1	2	3	4
11.	I discuss in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets	0	1	2	3	4
12.	I wait for things to go wrong before taking action	0	1	2	3	4
13.	I talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished	0	1	2	3	4
14.	I specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose.....	0	1	2	3	4
15.	I spend time teaching and coaching	0	1	2	3	4

Continued =>

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	Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
	0	1	2	3	4
16. I make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved	0	1	2	3	4
17. I show that I am a firm believer in "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."	0	1	2	3	4
18. I go beyond self-interest for the good of the group	0	1	2	3	4
19. I treat others as individuals rather than just as a member of a group	0	1	2	3	4
20. I demonstrate that problems must become chronic before I take action	0	1	2	3	4
21. I act in ways that build others' respect for me	0	1	2	3	4
22. I concentrate my full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures	0	1	2	3	4
23. I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions	0	1	2	3	4
24. I keep track of all mistakes	0	1	2	3	4
25. I display a sense of power and confidence	0	1	2	3	4
26. I articulate a compelling vision of the future	0	1	2	3	4
27. I direct my attention toward failures to meet standards	0	1	2	3	4
28. I avoid making decisions	0	1	2	3	4
29. I consider an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others	0	1	2	3	4
30. I get others to look at problems from many different angles	0	1	2	3	4
31. I help others to develop their strengths	0	1	2	3	4
32. I suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments	0	1	2	3	4
33. I delay responding to urgent questions	0	1	2	3	4
34. I emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission	0	1	2	3	4
35. I express satisfaction when others meet expectations	0	1	2	3	4
36. I express confidence that goals will be achieved	0	1	2	3	4
37. I am effective in meeting others' job-related needs	0	1	2	3	4
38. I use methods of leadership that are satisfying	0	1	2	3	4
39. I get others to do more than they expected to do	0	1	2	3	4
40. I am effective in representing others to higher authority	0	1	2	3	4
41. I work with others in a satisfactory way	0	1	2	3	4
42. I heighten others' desire to succeed	0	1	2	3	4
43. I am effective in meeting organizational requirements	0	1	2	3	4
44. I increase others' willingness to try harder	0	1	2	3	4
45. I lead a group that is effective	0	1	2	3	4

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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

Continued =>

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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

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MLQ Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Scoring Key (5x) Short

My Name: _____ Date: _____

Organization ID #: _____ Leader ID #: _____

Scoring: The MLQ scale scores are average scores for the items on the scale. The score can be derived by summing the items and dividing by the number of items that make up the scale. All of the leadership style scales have four items, Extra Effort has three items, Effectiveness has four items, and Satisfaction has two items.

	Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
	0	1	2	3	4
Idealized Influence (Attributed) total/4 =					
Idealized Influence (Behavior) total/4 =					
Inspirational Motivation total/4 =					
Intellectual Stimulation total/4 =					
Individualized Consideration total/4 =					
Contingent Reward total/4 =					
Management-by-Exception (Active) total/4 =					
Management-by-Exception (Passive) total/4 =					
Laissez-faire Leadership total/4 =					
Extra Effort total/3 =					
Effectiveness total/4 =					
Satisfaction total/2 =					
<hr/>					
1.			Contingent Reward	0	1 2 3 4
2.			Intellectual Stimulation	0	1 2 3 4
3.			Management-by-Exception (Passive)	0	1 2 3 4
4.			Management-by-Exception (Active)	0	1 2 3 4
5.			Laissez-faire	0	1 2 3 4
6.			Idealized Influence (Behavior)	0	1 2 3 4
7.			Laissez-faire	0	1 2 3 4
8.			Intellectual Stimulation	0	1 2 3 4
9.			Inspirational Motivation	0	1 2 3 4
10.			Idealized Influence (Attributed)	0	1 2 3 4
11.			Contingent Reward	0	1 2 3 4
12.			Management-by-Exception (Passive)	0	1 2 3 4
13.			Inspirational Motivation	0	1 2 3 4
14.			Idealized Influence (Behavior)	0	1 2 3 4
15.			Individualized Consideration	0	1 2 3 4

Continued =>

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	Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
	0	1	2	3	4
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					
20.					
21.					
22.					
23.					
24.					
25.					
26.					
27.					
28.					
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40.					
41.					
42.					
43.					
44.					
45.					

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The MLQ -- I've finished my data collection... Now what?

Step 1: Acquire the Manual for the MLQ

If you need to order the manual, you may go online and with a credit card order a PDF/electronic copy to be delivered same day. <http://www.mindgarden.com/multifactor-leadership-questionnaire/238-mlq-manual.html>

Step 2: Group the MLQ Items

Use the MLQ Scoring Key to group items by scale (See below for classification of items and scales).

Step 3: Calculation of Averages

Calculate an average by scale. (Example: the items which are included in the Idealized Influence (Attributes) are Items 10,18,21,25. Add the scores for all responses to these items and divide by the total number of responses for that item. Blank answers should not be included in the calculation). Note: you may find a spreadsheet tool such as MS Excel to be helpful in recording, organizing and calculating averages.

Step 4: Analysis

The MLQ is not designed to encourage the labeling of a leader as Transformational or Transactional. Rather, it is more appropriate to identify a leader or group of leaders as (for example) "more transformational than the norm" or "less transactional than the norm".

One option for analysis is to compare the average for each scale to the norm tables in Appendix B of the MLQ Manual. Example: by looking at Appendix B Percentiles for Individual Scores table in the back of the Manual, you will see that a score of 2.75 for Idealized Attributes [also known as Idealized Influence (Attributes)] is at the 40th percentile, meaning 40% of the normed population scored lower, and 60% scored higher than 2.75.

See next page

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Characteristic	Scale Name	Scale Abbrev	Items
Transformational	Idealized Attributes or Idealized Influence (Attributes)	IA or II(A)	10,18,21,25
Transformational	Idealized Behaviors or Idealized Influence (Behaviors)	IB or II(B)	6,14,23,34
Transformational	Inspirational Motivation	IM	9,13,26,36
Transformational	Intellectual Stimulation	IS	2,8,30,32
Transformational	Individual Consideration	IC	15,19,29,31
Transactional	Contingent Reward	CR	1,11,16,35
Transactional	Mgmt by Exception (Active)	MBEA	4,22,24,27
Passive Avoidant	Mgmt by Exception (Passive)	MBEP	3,12,17,20
Passive Avoidant	Laissez-Faire	LF	5,7,28,33

Characteristic	Scale Name	Scale Abbrev	Items
*Outcomes of Leadership	Extra Effort	EE	39,42,44
Outcomes of Leadership	Effectiveness	EFF	37,40,43,45
Outcomes of Leadership	Satisfaction	SAT	38,41

*As the term connotes, the Outcomes of Leadership are not Leadership styles, rather they are outcomes or results of leadership behavior.

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Online administration and scoring of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire is available from Mind Garden, (<https://www.mindgarden.com/16-multifactor-leadership-questionnaire>). Mind Garden provides services to add items and demographics to the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Reports are available for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.

If your research uses an online survey platform other than the Mind Garden Transform survey system, you will need to meet Mind Garden's requirements by following the procedure described at mindgarden.com/mind-garden-forms/58-remote-online-use-application.html.

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Citation of the instrument must include the applicable copyright statement listed below.

Sample Items:

As a leader

- I talk optimistically about the future.
- I spend time teaching and coaching.
- I avoid making decisions.

The person I am rating....

- Talks optimistically about the future.
- Spends time teaching and coaching.
- Avoids making decisions

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Most", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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

Appendix C

Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire

(Short Form)

minnesota satisfaction questionnaire

(short-form)



Vocational Psychology Research
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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minnesota satisfaction questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to give you a chance to tell **how you feel about your present job**, what things you are **satisfied** with and what things you are **not satisfied** with.

On the basis of your answers and those of people like you, we hope to get a better understanding of the things people **like and dislike about their jobs**.

On the next page you will find statements about your **present** job.

- Read each statement carefully.
- Decide **how satisfied you feel about the aspect of your job** described by the statement.

Keeping the statement in mind:

—if you feel that your job gives you **more than you expected**, check the box under **“Very Sat.”** (Very Satisfied);

—if you feel that your job gives you **what you expected**, check the box under **“Sat.”** (Satisfied);

—if you **cannot make up your mind** whether or not the job gives you what you expected, check the box under **“N”** (Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied);

—if you feel that your job gives you **less than you expected**, check the box under **“Dissat.”** (Dissatisfied);

—if you feel that your job gives you **much less than you expected**, check the box under **“Very Dissat.”** (Very Dissatisfied).

- Remember: Keep the statement in mind when deciding **how satisfied you feel about that aspect of your job**.
- Do this for **all** statements. Please answer **every** item.

Be frank and honest. Give a true picture of your feelings about your **present job**.

Ask yourself: How **satisfied** am I with this aspect of my job?

Very Sat. means I am very satisfied with this aspect of my job.

Sat. means I am satisfied with this aspect of my job.

N means I can't decide whether I am satisfied or not with this aspect of my job.

Dissat. means I am dissatisfied with this aspect of my job.

Very Dissat. means I am very dissatisfied with this aspect of my job.

On my present job, this is how I feel about . . .	Very Dissat.	Dissat.	N	Sat.	Very Sat.
1. Being able to keep busy all the time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The chance to work alone on the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The chance to do different things from time to time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The chance to be "somebody" in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The way my boss handles his/her workers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The competence of my supervisor in making decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Being able to do things that don't go against my conscience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The way my job provides for steady employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The chance to do things for other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The chance to tell people what to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The chance to do something that makes use of my abilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. The way company policies are put into practice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. My pay and the amount of work I do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. The chances for advancement on this job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. The freedom to use my own judgment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. The chance to try my own methods of doing the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. The working conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. The way my co-workers get along with each other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. The praise I get for doing a good job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Very Dissat.	Dissat.	N	Sat.	Very Sat.

Name _____ Today's Date _____ 19____
Please Print

1. Check one: Male Female

2. When were you born? _____ 19____

3. Circle the number of years of schooling you completed:

4 5 6 7 8

Grade School

9 10 11 12

High School

13 14 15 16

College

17 18 19 20

Graduate or
Professional School

4. What is your present job called? _____

5. What do you do on your present job? _____

6. How long have you been on your present job? _____ years _____ months

7. What would you call your **occupation**, your usual line of work? _____

8. How long have you been in this line of work? _____ years _____ months

Appendix D

Phase II

Qualitative Open-Ended Questions

Research Study Title: Employee Job Satisfaction in the COVID-19 Pandemic era

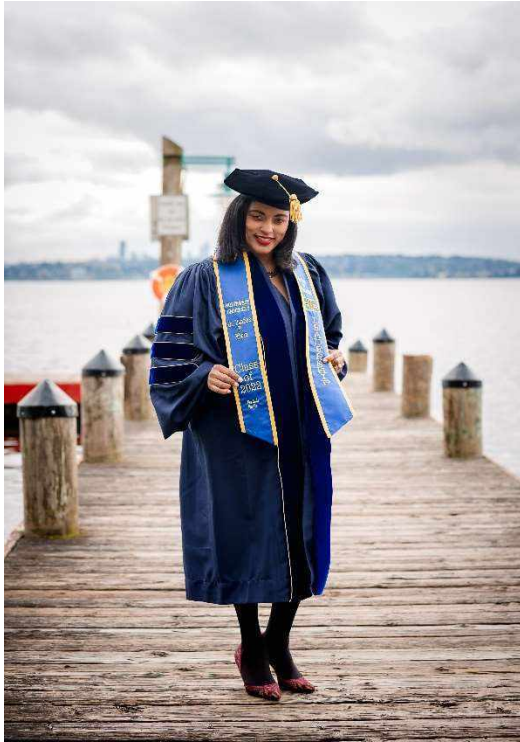
Instructions: There are three open-ended questions which drive the qualitative aspect of this study. The questions below are used for the second phase of the study after the first phase has been completed. The questions are listed as follows:

1. Please share your experience working since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic in your organization.
Probe: What were work related challenges?
Probe: What were work related successes and achievements?

2. Please share your experience with leadership in fulfilling your roles and responsibilities in your organization since onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - a) Probe: Please share a story about how your leader leads.
 - b) Probe: Please share any positive support and/or mentoring behavior you received from leadership.
 - c) Probe: Please share about leadership behavior
 - d) Probe: Please share about leader's vision and goals
 - e) Probe: Please share leaders' ideas around being creative.

1. Share your experience regarding the level of support you had in your organization during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic?
 - a. Probe: What were the challenges or concerns you experienced from your organization?
 - b. Probe: What are some of the strengths or supports that you experienced?

Closing Statement: Thank you for your participation and willingness to share your experiences.



Dr. Pauline B. Elwin on graduation day 2022

Dr. Pauline B. Elwin is a certified organizational change management consultant, leadership coach, and transformational leadership powerhouse who has worked in government organizations and nonprofits. Dr. Elwin is from the Commonwealth of Dominica in the eastern Caribbean, the home of the first woman prime minister Dame Mary Eugenia Charles, dubbed the iron lady. Inspired by the iron lady, she has navigated ways to encourage, empower and enlist women into more leadership positions and advocate for women's rights and issues. Dr. Elwin is an experienced practitioner with over fifteen years of first-hand experience in government and non-profit organizations. She combines theory with practice to curate dynamic solutions to meet the needs of diverse individual teams and organizations in achieving desired goals and outcomes.

Dr. Elwin has led change initiatives through her career. Experiencing leadership at their peak and pitfalls, her curiosity drove her to seek a more theoretical approach in organizational leadership with the aim of finding solutions to address such gaps while leveraging successful outcomes and goals for any organization. Dr. Elwin enrolled in the doctoral program at

Northwest University where she gained esteemed leadership education. She graduated with a Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership/Business & Consulting as well as a Master of Applied Leadership Theory from Northwest University in 2022. Dr. Elwin's research suggested several theoretical and practical implications for organizations and leadership, in meeting their work functions and outcomes successfully regardless of disruptive change. Dr. Elwin also holds a bachelor's degree from John Jay College of Criminal Justice (CUNY), and a Master of Arts degree in Sociology from Brooklyn College (CUNY). As a global thought leader, Dr. Elwin has presented at both national and global conferences on various streams around leadership approaches and successful leadership traits at the International Leadership Association (ILA). Dr. Elwin is also an Executive Board member of Leadership & Peace at ILA.

Dr. Elwin was a champion of the Dissertation Warriors, a multifaceted mentorship community for the doctoral women's network at Northwest University. She has advocated for employees' rights for historically underrepresented groups. Her enthusiasm is contagious, and she exudes charisma and drive for leading with change through transformation and has a global passion for transformational leadership. Dr. Elwin is the CEO of Elwin Innovative Global Consulting LLC. which specializes in a comprehensive approach framed at meeting organizations or individual goals and objectives through professional expert consulting and development services to include organizational change management, business content development, strategic planning, leadership coaching and professional development, professional grant and proposal writing and diversity, equity, and inclusion consulting.

You can find out more about Dr. Pauline B. Elwin on LinkedIn @
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/dr-pauline-elwin-edd-maalt-ma-cdr-167b1278/>

or

www.elwinglobalconsulting.com