SPECIFIC COMMUNICATION CHOICES OF A TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER THAT FOLLOWERS PERCEIVE AS NECESSARY FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The basis of this research is to examine the transformational leader in regards to the way he or she communicates. The study will pursue a unique angle on this topic and examine leadership communication choices from the viewpoint of the follower. The rationale behind this focus is that the follower has insight into the effectiveness of the leader’s communication choices by process of affiliation. The thesis goal therefore, is to answer what the specific communication choices are of a transformational leader that followers perceive as necessary for effective leadership. This paper provides an overview of research and three theories that elucidate the key communication competencies of an effective transformational leader. It analyzes and discusses empirical data on transformational leadership communication choices retrieved by way of follower-ship ethnographic interviews. The study extends the research to include not just the perspective of the transformational leader’s follower-ship but also specific communication tools and signals from their unique perspective that, when applied and taught, will potentially foster more effective leaders and provide an important transformational leadership training tool.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE PROBLEM AND STUDY GOAL

Leaders lead. Some leaders are powerful in their influence and some leaders are not. Some have large entourages and some have few in their follower-ship. How leaders influence is broadly studied and how a leader achieves this influence can be individualistic and is often carried out within a particular style. One such style is known as Transformational Leadership. This paper will examine the transformational leader in regards to the way he or she communicates. It will pursue a unique angle on this topic and examine communication choices made by the leader from the viewpoint of the follower. The goal of this thesis is to answer what the specific communication choices are of a transformational leader that followers perceive as necessary for effective leadership.

The transformational leader is broadly defined as someone who expands and elevates the interests of their followers (Madlock, 2008). They ride on the dynamic of change (Tichy & Ulrich, 2008), and generate awareness, acceptance, purposes and mission within the organization (Bass 1990). An effective transformational leader is thought to have the distinct ability to communicate well, to express and be understood.

Communication is frequently cited as a critical component of leadership. The challenge of this study is in defining how exactly communication occurs between the leader and follower and which communication choices define an effective or successful transformational leader. The objective of this work is to empirically examine the communication choices of the transformational leadership style from the follower-ship
perspective. The rationale behind this focus is that the follower has insight into the effectiveness of the leader’s communication choices by process of affiliation. It is expected that by approaching this research topic from the perception of the follower, clarity in regards to which communication choices make the transformational leader good or effective will surface.

1.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Limited research is available in this discipline from the follower-ship perspective. Study on leadership has historically been heavily leader-focused with little attention paid to followers (Collinson, 2006). Far less available, is literature from the viewpoint of the follower, particularly in regards to the communication choices a leader makes that renders the leadership effective or ineffective. Consequently, there is value in research describing how exactly an effective transformational leader performs communication competency choices, or which leadership communication choices are best for leadership effectiveness, from the follower’s perception.

Research, containing this evidence, could potentially assist in leadership training and/or leadership behavior modification. Thus, additional investigation in this topic area is important. It will assist researches in further understanding transformational leadership communication and it could reasonably assist transformational leaders in the further development of their influence extending their communication effectiveness. Hearing from the unique perspective of the transformational leader’s follower-ship gives this research validity and potentially substantiates transformational leadership behaviors and
outcomes. It could assist transformational leaders in recognizing specific communication tools and signals that, when applied and taught, cultivate greater leadership effectiveness.

Ultimately, this paper will provide evidence that extending the research and appreciating transformational leadership communication choices from the follower’s perspective is valid and important. “Without the follower there would be no leader” (Collinson, 2006, p.179).

1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Communication** - “The relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response” (Griffin, 2008, p.6).

**Transformational Leader** – a type of leader who expands and elevates the interests of their followers (Madlock, 2008).

**Follower** - an adherent or supporter who follows another in regard to his or her ideas or belief.

**Direct Communication** - communication that primarily uses words.

**Indirect Communication** - the surrounding context of communication, such as non-verbal cues, listening capacity, voice tone, impressions etc…

**Verbal Communication (V)** – The use of words to create and interpret messages that elicit a response.

**Non-Verbal Communication (NV)** - The sending and receiving of wordless interactions that create and interpret messages eliciting a response.
1.4 ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One briefly introduces the topic of this study; the communication choices of a transformational leader that render him or her effective from the unique perspective of the follower. It references the goal of the research and gives some definition of terms. Chapter Two presents an in-depth review of the literature within this discipline. It incorporates the philosophical assumption, the theoretical basis, and the rationale behind the research question. It considers why this research is important and how it contributes to further understanding of leadership communication within the field. Chapter Three explains the scope and methodology of the study. It details the research method used and clarifies how data were collected and analyzed. Chapter Four explains the studies results and summarizes the implications of the findings. It outlines the data collected and analyzes and discusses the outcomes of the study with respect to the research question. Chapter Five concludes the work with a complete thesis overview. It includes a synopsis of the study limitations, and gives further recommendations to enhance the subject.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION OF LITERATURE

This literature review provides an overview of research surrounding the specific communication choices of a transformational leader that followers perceive as necessary for effective leadership. Transformational leadership is a topic that has been widely studied in regards to what competencies and traits are commonly exhibited in the leadership behavior. The research identifies the variables associated with transformational leadership behavior and it gives insights into the desired outcomes of the leader as he or she impacts and interacts with followers. There is ample research, as well, when considering communication and leadership theory, accepted definitions within the disciplines, and outcomes associated with this leadership style. There is limited research however, that describes how exactly a transformational leader performs these types of communication competencies, or which leadership communication choices are best, from the follower’s perception, to become effective as a transformational leader.

2.2 PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS

If indeed, good leaders are made and not born than the question bears asking, what do they do that makes them good? The assumption in this statement is that good leadership is learned and developed, not innate (Kouzes & Posner, 1987). Leadership is widely accepted as a process whereby a person influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2007). How a leader achieves this influence bears consideration. The leader is dependant on the follower. To be a leader, of any kind,
there has to be a subject to lead. The follower as well however, is dependant on the leader. Without the one there would not be the other. The relationship between leader and follower is multifaceted and often complex requiring collaboration and understanding.

This study focuses on the transformational leader/ follower relationship and assumes that the follower has insight into the effectiveness of the affiliation. By approaching this research from the perception of the follower it is expected that clarity in regards to which communication choices make the transformational leader good or effective will surface.

2.3 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational leadership is broadly defined as leaders expanding and elevating the interests of their followers (Madlock, 2008). These people in charge ride on the dynamic of change (Tichy & Ulrich, 2008), they generate awareness, acceptance, purposes and mission within the organization, and they motivate their followers to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group (Bass 1990). These leaders articulate a vision and have high performance expectations (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990).

Burns (1978) introduced the concept of transformational leadership with the rationale that this type of leader strives to promote change in groups, individuals, and organizations beyond simple compliance of the followers. The transformational leader attempts to raise the morals, values and ideals of the followers by fostering good relationships and encouraging excellence in an effort to keep followers in line with the needs and requirements of the leader and the group or organization. Podsakoff,
MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) extends Burns’ research and examined the impact of the transformational leader behavior on the organizational citizenship behavior as it pertained to trust and satisfaction in the work place. Through survey data they discovered four key leadership behaviors that defined the transformational leader. They established that the transformational leader is proficient at developing a vision and getting the employees to accept it. They discovered as well that these leaders have high performance expectations and convey these expectations to their subordinates; they show concern for the personal needs and feelings of their subordinates and they encourage employees by providing recognition and positive feedback for work well done. (p 132-135).

Bass (1999) takes it one step further and considers the followers. He believes followers want to identify with the transformational leader. He contends the transformational leader is one who inspires, intellectually stimulates, is individually considerate of his or her followers and is needed in the work place. Bass believes identification with the organization comes through trust in the leadership (p. 10). In his paper, From Transactional to Transformational Leadership: Learning to Share the Vision, Bass (1990) says “Superior leadership performance — transformational leadership occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group” (p.21). In this research, he cites charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration as behaviors of transformational leadership. Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) extend this thought and say key behaviors of successful transformational
leaders may also include “articulating goals, building an image, demonstrating confidence, and arousing motivation” (p.650). They go on to infer that these behaviors have the power to convince and motivate with an influence that has the potential to cause followers to accomplish exceptional feats.

A number of studies have been done that highlight the transformational leadership approach in various settings. This paper assists in understanding some communication choices made by transformational leaders. Liethwood (1992) explores this leadership approach in the classroom and compares relationships among teachers, students, administrators, staff and parents. He and his colleagues completed three case studies of 12 improving schools where they discovered that transformational schoolteachers are actively involved in three basic leadership roles. 1) They help staff develop and maintain a professional school culture. 2) They are foster teacher development and 3) they assist with problem solving so people can work together more efficiently (pp. 9-10).

Liethwood argues that transformational leadership influence makes a sizeable difference within teacher collaboration practices (p.11). Hoffman and Frost (2006) examine the impact of multiple intelligences on the dimensions of transformational leadership. Their findings indicate that this framework is a useful approach in understanding individual differences associated with this leadership method.

Research has also been performed in regards to the relationship between the constructs of emotional intelligence and transformational leadership (Antonakis, Ashkanasy, & Dasborough, 2009), (Harms & Crede, 2010). MacKenzie, Podsakoff & Rich (2001) explore transformational leadership from the perspective of salesperson performance. They discovered that this leadership approach not only influences
salespeople to perform at a high level but it also directly affects citizenship behavior. They found, as does much of the research, (Bass 1990), (Bass 1999), (Hogg & Van Knippenberg, 2003), (Liethwood 1992), (Matveev & Livna, 2007), (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990), (Tichy & Ulrich, 2008), that trust in the leader is very motivational.

2.4 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERS AND COMMUNICATION

Communication is not simple to define because its scope is extensive and multifaceted. It is broadly referred to as a system where observation and intentionality coexist side by side. Griffin (2008) states the definition as, “the relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response” (p.6). Littlejohn and Foss (2008) argue that it is the imparting or exchanging of information and action, central to human life.

Schirmer, Mauksch, Lang, Marvel, Zoppi, Epstein, Brock, and Pryzbylski (2005) argue that effective communication is dependant on both observable and non-observable behaviors. These behaviors are exhibited in the deliverer as well as in the receiver of the communicated message making the two-way process unpredictable at times. The communicator must adapt, be responsive, and manage self-awareness during the process of talking and listening. Consequently, what constitutes effective communication in one setting may be ineffective in another.

In much of the literature on transformational leadership these leaders are depicted as communicators. Macik-Frey (2007) argues that transformational leadership, is dependent upon communication and that interpersonal communication competence is positively related to transformational leadership (p.40). Macik-Frey performed a study to
attempt to determine how much of a role communication plays in the relationship between the transformational leader and the emotional or affective nature of the communication behavior. The study concludes that “communication is not simply a component of leadership but rather leadership is a unique form of communication” (p. 107).

Matveev and Lvina (2007) augment this area of research. They argue, “communication style is a critical distinguishing factor in whether the leader’s message will be remembered and endorsed” (p. 7). They go further and identify rhetoric as a specific method of communication used by the transformational leader. They believe that the transformational leader relies heavily on rhetoric to convey a message and articulate the vision. According to these researchers, the transformational leader is adept at using language, metaphors, images, and symbols to influence their followers and they are proficient in using nonverbal cues as well. They say, “Transformational leadership, therefore, is partially dependent on the leader's ability to competently engage in interpersonal communication” (p. 7).

Research by Mayfield & Mayfield (2009) includes study on speech types and the unique roles associated with three speech types and leader communication. They state, “Leader-to-follower speech communication can be categorized into one of three speech types. These speech types are direction-giving language, empathetic language, and meaning-making language. Each of the three speech types composes non-overlapping, comprehensive categories” (p. 66). The leader, they contend, must use all three types, collaboratively in order to improve worker outcomes.

Madlock (2008), on the other hand, argues that communication competence encompasses elements of knowledge, motivation, skill, behavior, and effectiveness. Listening and negotiation are two competencies Madlock endorses as leaders appeal to
the interest of their followers. He specifically names responding to information in a timely manner and actively listening to other points of view as effective competencies (p. 63).

Abundant research identifies the variables associated with transformational leadership behavior such as influence or charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1990, Madlock, 2008, Matveev & Livna, 2007) but the research is not rich with descriptions of the exact skills employed to achieve this behavior. Some communication competencies, such as the ability to articulate through rhetoric and to competently construct messages and engage in communication (Matveev & Livna, 2007) and specific language focuses, such as motivation, used in leadership (Sharbrough, Simmons & Cantrill, 2006) are common skills identified in the transformational leadership literature.

Admittedly, research acknowledges communication as a key factor in effective transformational leadership but it does not demonstrate concrete evidence in regards to the exact communication signals used to generate this effectiveness. Nailing down specifics in regards to what a transformational leader does to communicate effectively is evasive, perhaps because limiting the definition of communication to specific competencies or choices is challenging. Research pertaining to the specific communication competencies of the transformational leader that lends to the effectiveness of this leadership approach was not as plentiful as research about transformational leadership itself.
2.5 FOLLOWER-SHIP

Research on leadership has historically been heavily leader-focused with little attention paid to followers (Collinson, 2006). Collinson believes, “the essence of leadership is follower-ship and that without followers there can be no leaders” (p.179). As stated, literature describing the behavior outcomes of a transformational leader and the ultimate influence of that behavior, on the follower, is plentiful. However, finding literature from the viewpoint of the follower and particularly in regards to the communication choices a leader makes that renders the leadership effective or ineffective is far less available.

Some insight into follower-ship is conveyed by discussing leadership communication outcomes and leadership behavioral outcomes as they manifest in follower performance. Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman and Fetter (1990) make the statement that “effective leaders transform or change the basic values, beliefs, and attitudes of followers so that they are willing to perform beyond the minimum levels specified by the organization” (p.108). They further claim the trust and respect followers feel toward the leader determines how they will ultimately perform. More recently however, Mayfield & Mayfield (2009) stated, “much of how actual leader communication translates into worker outcome changes remains unclear”(p. 66). Partially as a result of this ambiguity in research, Mayfield and Mayfield focus their study on elements of motivating language (ML) and say, “Leader motivating language use has been shown to be linked to many worker outcomes” (p.67). They attempt to connect increased worker performance and an increase in job satisfaction with an increase in motivating language. They do admit however, that motivating language in this case, does not stand-alone and
appropriate leadership behaviors are needed in order to support leader-follower communication. “It is not enough to simply talk a good game, leaders must be able to put this communication into concrete, positive leader behavior” (p.79).

2.6 THE THEORETICAL BASIS

There is benefit to considering theory behind communication, leadership, and the relationship between the leader and follower. Incorporating these theories will extend the research towards discovering, from the lens of the follower, the specific communication choices necessary for motivation and effective leadership.

2.6.1 SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY

Researchers have been increasingly interested in the role of exchange within organizations. Social exchange theory (SET) is considered among the most influential conceptual paradigms for understanding workplace behavior (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005).

Wayne, Shore and Liden (1997) describe Social Exchange Theory as a process of exchange between two people. If one person does another a favor than there is the expectation of a future return. Their survey research was based on the premise that employees develop exchange relationships with organizations and supervisors alike for the purpose of support but how the exchanges manifest was not clear. Through the research Wayne, Shore and Liden concluded that both Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) provided social exchange, sometimes
simultaneously. Their combination brings the research together in an integrated model of social exchange.

Relational leadership extends the social exchange theory as well, in that its orientation starts with process (Unl-Bien, 2006). Bass (1999) believes the social exchange theory is important to the transformational leadership paradigm because the paradigm leads predominately through relationship by way of a leader-member exchange due to its reliance on the exchange of rewards. He contends that Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) leans on the perceived quality of the twofold relationship between a subordinate and his or her immediate supervisor.

2.6.2 LEADER-MEMBER EXCHANGE THEORY

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) follows along the same premise as Social Exchange Theory (SET). According to Uhl-Bien (2006), The most prominent relationship-based leadership approach is the leader–member exchange (LMX) theory. It is an exchange theory of leadership that is constructed around the relationship and interpersonal trust between the leader and followers (Brower, Schoorman & Tan, 2000). LMX recognizes a two-way interactive relationship between leader and follower based on organizational outcomes. According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) the domains of leadership include the leader, the follower, and the relationship. They contend, “effective leadership processes occur when leaders and followers are able to develop mature leadership relationships (partnerships) and thus gain access to the many benefits these relationships bring” (p.225).
Research shows the relationship between the leader and follower in LMX is not always uniform. It exists on the basis of leadership influence for the purpose of organizational outcomes (Brower, Schoorman & Tan, 2000, Dunegan, Duchon & Uhl-Bien, 1992, Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, Uhl-Bien, 2006). The superiors often have limited time and resources resulting in a limited choice of exchange and consequently they do not treat all subordinates the same. Thus, followers may find themselves on the outside of the inner circle of the superior/subordinate relationship. This in-group versus out-group hierarchy is a phenomenon, within organizational leadership structures, that many followers recognize as reality and willingly accept (Graen & Graen, 2006).

2.6.3 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

Similar to LMX, Social Identity Theory shares the premise that individuals within the organization recognize group identity as valuable. This becomes important when analyzing the competencies that make transformational leaders effective and when analyzing how followers identify themselves with leadership and the group or team. Ellemers, Gilder and Haslam (2004) make the case that within social identity theory people think of themselves and others in terms of the particular group membership they are a part of not just in terms of whom they interact or exchange with. They argue, “the perception of a common identity with the leader is crucial for the leader’s effectiveness in mobilizing individual efforts toward collective goals” (p.472). Transformational leaders motivate followers to work for collective goals and transcend self-interest for the good of the whole (Hogg & Van Knippenberg, 2003). Hogg (2001) states, “Leadership is a process of influence that enlists and mobilizes the involvement of others in the attainment
of collective goals; it is not a coercive process in which power is exercised over others” (p.194). Hogg argues as well, that leadership, viewed through the social identity theory, is a group process that arises through categorization and depersonalization.

2.7 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE

As evidenced in this literature review, research is abundant in the study of transformational leadership; what it is, the behaviors surrounding it and the outcomes as a result of implementing it. There is abundant research as well in the field of communication competency. Verbal and non-verbal communication, response versus delivery, and expected outcomes as a result of appropriate expression. Research also exists for theory in both disciplines of communication and leadership. Little research is published, however, from the follower-ship perspective, regarding the transformational leader communication choices that result in effective leadership outcomes.

Additional study to extend research to include specific communication choices of a transformational leader and how, from the lens of the follower, those choices determine effectiveness would enhance the discipline. The voice of the follower is weak in the literature and appreciating leadership communication choices from the follower perspective is not only valid but also imperative. “Without the follower there would be no leader” (Collinson, 2006, p.179). The research available is predominately through the lens of the leader and the behaviors they exhibit. There is room to extend this research and apply it to leadership training and development.
CHAPTER 3: 
SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 SCOPE

The expanse of research that exists on leadership provides many perspectives on effective leadership. In some research it is even argued that effective communication skills are at the forefront of the requirements of leadership success (Levine, Muendien & Brooks, 2010). However, determining which specific communication choices are used to create effective leadership communication skills needs additional research. This study narrows the focus from all leadership styles to the transformational leadership style. It further reduces the focus by researching, from the follower-ship point of view, the specific communication choices a transformational leader makes and how those choices determine leadership effectiveness.

It is clear, from the previously established body of knowledge, that research is heavy with leadership competencies from the viewpoint of the leader. Research however, is not as prolific from the lens of the follower. The follower is the player in the leader/follower relationship who can shed a receptor perspective on leadership success. Arguably, they are the ones most influenced by effective or ineffective leadership capabilities. The goal therefore, is to discover the specific communication choices that lead to transformational leadership effectiveness through the lens of the follower.
3.2 METHODOLOGY

In order to obtain the desired information this study used an ethnographic, qualitative interview, research approach. The goal was to study the perceptions and feelings of followers of transformational leaders and find out their thoughts in regards to their leaders communication choices. In qualitative research, individuals through interaction with their world, socially construct meaning. Their reality is not fixed; there are multiple interpretations. The research does not attempt to predict the outcome but instead lends to interpreting the data in a more natural setting (Merriam, 2002).

Ethnographic research is a qualitative research method that purposes to find out about and understand cultural occurrences. It is often employed to gather empirical data about cultures and their way of life. Ethnography is a valuable learning process that helps the researcher decipher information and systems of meanings that guide a cultural group. Followers who have been lead by transformational leaders are, by association, a part of their own cultural group; a unique follower-ship group in a specific leadership culture.

Employing the ethnographic method of research for this study allowed the researcher to describe insights shared from the follower’s perceptions about the communication choices necessary for effective transformational leadership. These documented accounts originated through a flexible data collection process of observations and qualitative semi-structured interviews.

The interviews were adaptable, conversational in nature, and opened for spontaneous response. The questions were open-ended and the interviewer made an active effort at building rapport with the informant. Within this setting, the interviewer’s
task was to “obtain information while listening and encouraging another person to speak” (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p.319).

The qualitative interview method was chosen because it allowed the researcher to get an insiders point of view of transformational leader communication. It provided an open platform for the informant to express opinions on what they believe makes a transformational leader effective and which communication choices enhance the leadership outcome. This method was elastic. During the data-gathering phase the choice and design of this approach were constantly modified. The modifications were based on ongoing analysis resulting in investigation of important new issues and questions as they arose.

The research method chosen for this study was suitable. However, qualitative interviewing can be challenging. According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) the interviewer has to know how to build rapport quickly and how to keep the interviewee talking on the topic of interest. The interviewer must remain neutral and not bias the data by imposing an outside belief system or worldview upon the process. If the data is to be rich with evidence, it must source from the interviewee. The interviewer has to know how to open the interview in very broad terms and establish the general direction of the conversation. The interviewer only speaks as much as is necessary to encourage rapport and keep the interview going.

3.3 SAMPLE SELECTION

The sample selection for this study was performed through a non-random purposive sampling process because the emphasis was on the quality not quantity of the
sample. The selection was based on intent with a particular sub-set of people in mind who matched a specific profile. This sample was small and fairly homogenous. It was constructed to serve a very specific purpose, to talk with followers of transformational leaders and get their perception on leadership communication effectiveness.

Ten individuals were initially invited to participate in the study; of the ten, eight were selected. Each person had to be precise in his or her understanding of what a transformational leader was. They had to have been in a transformational leader/follower relationship in the role of “follower” at one point in their lives. They also had to be willing to share their opinions regarding the communication effectiveness or ineffectiveness of that leader.

Geographic convenience was a consideration in the selection process as well. Each informant was in close geographic proximity to the researcher. This geographic convenience made them easily accessible for follow up conversation and clarification when necessary. In an effort to reduce bias, four men and four women were selected all currently employed full-time within assorted professions. They were each given an informed consent form to read and sign that stated the intent of the study, a description of a transformational leader, a statement of affirmation and a confidentiality agreement (Appendix A).

3.4 PROCEDURE

Before beginning the qualitative interviews, research interview agreements were collected from each informant and one-hour interview time slots were scheduled with each person. One-on-one interviews were conducted over a two-week period. Each
conversation ranged from one to two hours in a single sitting and was held in a private neutral setting.

The interviews began with a brief presentation from the interviewer regarding the scope and format of the interview as well as ethical protocol considerations. Signing the interview agreement form, which also included the confidentiality statement, was discussed and completed and the session recording equipment was also explained.

The interviews were recorded using a computer with audio software and an imbedded microphone. The informants ignored the computer for the most part and spoke without distraction. Recording the interview was an important part of the data collection process. It made documentation of what and how things were said possible. “Qualitative researchers are frequently interested not just in what people say but also in the way that they say it” (Interviewing in qualitative research, n.d., p.321). The recordings gave depth to the analysis portion of the study and made frequent data reflection and review possible.

The interviewer, as a prompt to keep the interview on track, used an interview guide of five predetermined questions.

The five questions were:

1. Tell me about the transformational leader in your life
2. Why were you a follower of that leader?
3. How did your transformational leader communicate?
4. Which communication choices made by him/her assisted in making him/her effective?
5. Give specific examples of ways you interacted with your leader.
Question number one was the only question used in every interview. It was used to open the conversation and get the informant discussing their perceptions and feelings of transformational leadership. The remaining four questions were only used if necessary and in flexible order in an effort to keep the interview flowing in the direction of the sought after information.

Following each interview the researcher took time to review the written notes, check the audio clarity and summarize key information. This summation process was important because it worked as a “self-correcting force” (Caputo, n.d.). It allowed the researcher to verify information given in the interview, it exposed the gaps in the research, and it quickly determined if a follow-up interview with the informant was necessary.

3.5 RESEARCH VALIDITY

Ethnography cannot control extraneous variables and it is based typically on a phenomenon. Thus research validation was established as the researcher endeavored to compare and contrast with similar phenomenon such as, comparable leadership cultures that share a similar theoretical basis. As well, the researcher observed and interpreted the extraneous variables in the data based on systematic reasoning through possible causes and effects. For example, the researcher considered subject personality differences as one reason an interviewee might have mentioned a leadership communication choice as valuable to them where as the others did not mention it at all.
3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

There were some ethical issues to consider in this study. It was necessary that the researcher take deliberate steps to protect the sources of the information and protect the anonymity of the informant. Because this interview format was conversational and open-ended in nature, the informant could potentially say something that would jeopardize his or her position in a system or cause relational conflict. Thus, in an effort to make the participants feel comfortable with the process, they were given the opportunity to discontinue the interview at any time. Further, as a means of protection, the interviewees were ensured confidentiality through a consent form (Appendix A). This consent form doubled as a confidentiality agreement that pledged anonymity and was signed by the informant.
CHAPTER 4

THE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter takes an in-depth look at the discoveries of an ethnographic qualitative study employed to investigate specific communication choices used to create effective leadership communication skills in the transformational leader. Analysis of the meaning and implications of the findings, with regards to how they weigh against the given literature within this research paper, are examined.

Unique to this study was the viewpoint taken; eight transformational leader followers were selected as a non-random sample. The study was conducted in an effort to identify the communication choices of effective transformational leaders specifically from the vantage point of the follower. The data were collected through one-on-one interviews that were noted, audio taped and scribed. There were four male and four female follower-ship subjects all from transformational leader relationships independent of one another. The data collection process took place over a two-week period and required the researcher to interpret and make sense of information, in terms of meaning shared from the followers, from a naturalistic approach. It was a time intensive interactive process shaped by both the interviewee’s and the researcher.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

During each interview the researcher, took field notes of words spoken and behavioral observations. An audio version was also captured. The field notes were read
and the audio was heard many times in an effort to encapsulate and code as much meaningful data into as many common themes as possible.

Coding and sorting data was a critical part of this qualitative research analysis. It took time and was a fluid process. By analyzing the data in light of the research question the information was initially separated into two parts, data pertinent to answering the research question and data that did not directly apply. Once the pertinent information was identified general labels were established to broadly categorize the data. As new observations and insights emerged throughout the analysis process additional categories and sub-categories were developed, labeled and sorted.

Each interviewee was given an identification number. There were eight interviews analyzed so the numbers 1-8 were used to distinguish between them. The data acquired from each single interview collection was studied carefully and applicable information was extracted. Considering each interview data collection independently provided an initial surface recognition of possible outcomes. Extending from the single interview collection to the eventual comparison and grouping of data from all the eight sessions however was when these outcomes presented themselves into themes, patterns, similarities and differences. These outcome groupings naturally emerged and were placed into coherent categories and sub-categories.

4.2.1 DIRECT VERSUS INDIRECT COMMUNICATION CATEGORIES

The initial two categories that emerged were direct communication and indirect communication. Direct communication, in the context of this paper, refers to communication that primarily uses words. Indirect communication on the other hand
refers primarily to the surrounding context of a conversation, such as non-verbal cues, listening capacity, voice tone, impressions etc…

The direct and indirect categories alone however, were too broad by themselves and did not examine the data with enough detail. Sub categories were added to analyze the material with additional precision and detail and codes were used to clarify the communication choices further. For example, listening and smiling were sub categories of the “in-direct” category and were coded non-verbal (NV). Story telling and words of affirmation were sub categories of the “direct” category and were coded verbal (V).

4.2.2 ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Along with the more obvious documented communication choices, mentioned by the subjects, additional data that did not naturally fit into a communication sub category or a verbal versus non-verbal coded model was identified. This supplementary data became apparent when the interviewees inadvertently elaborated on their feelings surrounding the relationships they had with their leaders. The research would be incomplete if this data was not included. The feelings expressed by the interviewees tied directly to the way their transformational leader in question communicated. The data was added as an outcome category and coded as feeling (F).

It was also necessary throughout the analysis process to differentiate between what seemed to be critical information and what appeared to be less critical. Identifying the number of respondents who mentioned the same communication choice as important to the effectiveness of their leader was crucial in determining whether or not the information was considered vital. When themes and patterns conflicted or did not seem
to fit, it was important to explore the paradoxes and attempt to interpret the differences. Comparing the researcher’s written notes, impressions, and quotes along with the live audio feed gathered during the interviews assisted in this process.

4.3 STUDY RESULTS

This research clearly identifies common communication choices made by the transformational leader as well as some outcome components from the follower-ship viewpoints. The open ethnographic interview design generated data that could be formatted into a chart exposing some clear communication patterns. Interestingly, there were a few sub categories which every follower interviewed mentioned as communication choices used by their leader. Thus, these were considered critical findings.

Charted below is documentation from the follower’s perception of the most frequently mentioned communication choices of the transformational leader. The first column indicates the number of individual interviewees who mentioned the communication choice listed in the “sub-category” column. The narratives, in column four, are direct quotes extracted from the interviews.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Interviewees</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sub Category/ Communication Choice</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Narratives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>In-Direct</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>NV</td>
<td>Face to face rules all. Discipline always happened face-to-face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Name Use</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>He knows and uses my name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Speaks clearly and directly</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>He always told us straight and told us why, which eliminated any uncertainties or doubt. There were clear lines of authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>In-Direct</td>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>NV</td>
<td>His eye contact told me he was engaged with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>In Direct</td>
<td>Listened</td>
<td>NV</td>
<td>He would listen as though he was genuinely interested.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Asked Questions</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>She wanted me to think. She would not just give me the answer she would ask me a question and make me think it through to an eventual answer. His questions lead me to the answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Active Listener</td>
<td>V/NV</td>
<td>He was present in meetings; he would ask for clarification in regards to something I said and be interested in my response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>In-Direct</td>
<td>Set Example</td>
<td>V/NV</td>
<td>She never asked me to do what she was not willing to do herself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In-Direct</td>
<td>Smiled</td>
<td>NV</td>
<td>His smile made him seem approachable. I was encouraged by her smile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Words of affirmation</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>He congratulated my steps of achievement along the way. He verbally complimented me, sometimes publicly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In-Direct</td>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>NV</td>
<td>A pat on the back would go along way. He wasn’t afraid to stand close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Storytelling</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>He was good at painting pictures with verbal imagery. His stories often made a point. He would share stories about his personal triumphs and failures. I felt like I was part of his process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In-Direct</td>
<td>Gifts</td>
<td>NV</td>
<td>He wrote notes of appreciation. Once she honored me at a board meeting with a certificate of appreciation and said thank you. Still today that stands out as a career highlight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>The leader engaged the follower personally.</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>He would take time and sit and talk, just to get to know me. I felt valued and that felt good to me as his employee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In-Direct</td>
<td>The follower wanted to work hard for the leader.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>As a follower you borrow their belief in you. He inspired because he was inspired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>In-Direct</td>
<td>The leader transferred a part of her/him self to the follower.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>I owe my success to her. He taught me to follow and to lead. Some of his sayings I still think of today and even occasionally use; they impacted me and taught me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>In-Direct</td>
<td>The leader trusted the follower.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>He trusted me to perform. It was sort of silently expected. He was willing to take a chance with me. He believed in my ability even more than I did.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional communication choices were discussed throughout the interviews that are not charted above. They were mentioned with less frequency by fewer interviewees and thus considered less critical. For example, only two of the interviewees specifically referred to their transformational leader subjects as well spoken. One said, “He was well spoken, he could get me to believe him just by the words he used. He was articulate and intentional when he spoke” (number 4). The other said, “I listened when he spoke because he spoke well and on purpose, he didn’t waste his words” (number 3).

This is an interesting finding in light of some of the current transformational leadership communication literature reviewed. Matveev and Lvina (2007) argue that rhetoric is a powerful method of communication for the transformational leader and that this type of leader uses it to convey messages and articulate vision. According to these researchers this leadership type successfully influences their followers with the use of rhetorical language and yet, only two followers in the eight interviews done for this study spoke of this trait as important.

The less frequently mentioned communication choices of the transformational leaders, when independently considered, one at a time, appear valuable to the research, and they are. But in this study, because they were infrequently mentioned, they are recognized as less critical and not included in the data analysis chart. However, these infrequent statements still merit some additional examination.

The eight followers individually talked about their leaders communication choices from their personal perspectives and they each described their experiences through the lens of their personal point of view. Because of this, when examining the less frequently
mentioned communication choices it was important to focus on phenomena talked about by more than one interviewee. Research validation was established as the researcher endeavored to compare and contrast the similar phenomenon. If more than one person mentioned the same communication signal as a method towards effective leadership than it substantiated further investigation. For example, all eight interviewees talked about their leaders asking questions as a form of leadership communication but only two mentioned that their leaders were well spoken. Further, only two followers said their leadership used inspirational quotes to influence and only three talked about the ingredient of humor within their interactions.

Through the analysis and comparison of this data it appears that from the followers perspective, in regards to the leaders communication choice, the leader asking the follower to participate in the relationship by asking him or her questions is a more effective method of communication than simply communicating through the use of polished rhetoric, well known quotes or humor. This finding validates the Leader-Member Exchange Theory as an extension to this research in that it recognizes a two-way interactive relationship between leader and follower.

Further investigation of the data also found, as the information was categorized and separated into themes, patterns, similarities and differences, that the interviewees spoke more often about the effective non-verbal communication choices used by their leadership than they did about the verbal communication choices. This is evidenced within the data analysis chart and was seen within the less frequently mentioned phenomena as well. Non-verbal gesturing, specifically nods; hand shakes; voice tone and posturing were singled out as communication choices used by their transformational
leaders. However, these particular non-verbal expressions were mentioned less frequently than the choices listed in the data analysis chart; specifically eye contact, listening, touch, and smiling. This result gives some indication that the follower may not recognize these communication skills with the same level of importance as the ones more frequently mentioned.

Interestingly, the non-verbal signals were pointed out, in greater frequency, as an effective communication choice than the verbal was. Some scholars today however are not convinced that non-verbal and verbal communication can be separated. “A major current trend is to emphasis mutual or co-active influences” (Jones & LeBaron, 2002, p. 503). Going back to Griffin’s (2008) broad definition of communication as, “the relational process of creating and interpreting messages that elicit a response” (p.6), co-active influences seem to makes sense. Non-the-less the follower-ship, in this study, did separate non-verbal selections from verbal selections when talking about the specific communication choices of their transformational leaders.

These findings are valuable in that they expose effective communication choices of the transformational leader from the perspective of the follower and in so doing extend the current literature by adding depth and specifics to the research. Arguably the follower is the player in the leader/follower relationship who can shed light on leadership success. This ethnographic, flexible data collection process has produced some interesting results that warrant further discussion.
4.4 DISCUSSION

This study implies that there are specific communications choices made by transformational leaders that render their leadership effective from the perception of followers. Analyzing transformational leadership communication choices from the viewpoint of the follower exposed what was important to the follower and why certain communication choice was valuable in regards to leadership effectiveness. It extended the research from a strong outcome or result-based communication argument to more of a how-to based communication premise. This research clearly outlined specific communication selections, patterns, and tactics used by transformational leaders. The six prominent communication choices exposed through this research and expressed by all eight interviewees were; face-to-face interactions between the follower and their leader; the leader knowing and using the follower’s name; the leader speaking directly and clearly to the follower; the leader connecting with the follower by using eye contact; the leader genuinely listening to the follower and finally, the leader engaging the follower with open ended questions.

The follower-interviewees talked about all six of these forms of communication as important for leadership success. They spoke through their personal experience and elaborated on how these specific communication selections were implemented and how those choices affected the outcome of their particular leader/follower relationships.

As a whole, the group of followers interviewed each stated, in one way or another, that the leader/follower relationship they experienced was interactive and valuable. All interviewees talked about their leader in affirmative terms and spoke of personal changes in their lives as a result of following this leadership style. “She
believed in me,” number six said. “She respected me and I owe my success to her.”

Number one commented, “He was aware of where I was and what I was doing, I felt as if I mattered.” This outcome data correlates with current transformational leadership literature. As referenced previously in this paper, literature on transformational leadership frequently cites behavior traits and communication outcomes and strengths as valuable, (Bass, 1990, Ewing & Lee, 2009, Madlock, 2008, Matveev & Livna, 2007, Sharbrough, Simmons & Cantrill, 2006).

All interviewees spoke plainly about specific communication choices their leaders make, as noted in the data analysis chart. They also shared both direct and in-direct communication competencies and they talked passionately about the influence their leaders had on them. The social exchange that took place between the leader and the follower was articulated as an important part of the relational and organizational process and appeared to transpire equally between them. The followers by in large felt taken care of by their leaders and they in turn appeared willing to work hard for them. “He gave me the tools to do the job by asking open ended questions and enlightening the options. I was expected to participate and to think,” said number five. Interviewee number eight spoke directly to an equality of sorts in his relationship with his leader. “I liked working for him and I worked hard, showed up early left late sort of thing. We all did, the whole team. I think he worked as hard as the rest of us and he was always good at saying thanks.”

All three theories referenced in this research; Social Exchange Theory (SET), Leader Member Exchange (LMX) and Social Identity Theory (SIT), make note of a group process involvement between the leader and their followers. These processes such
as, working toward collective goals (SIT), the development of mature leader follower relationships (LMX), and the exchange for the purpose of future return between the leader and followers (SET) were all evidenced in the interviews. Specifically, follower identification with the leader and the team showed up in the interviews as well. This proved to be a valuable part of the communication between the leader and follower, as the followers seemed to identify with their leader and the mission of the task or organization. Number two said, “By his example he got me to want to be like him,” and number three said, “He was a part of the team, a new customer would not immediately know he was the boss, but we knew he was in charge.”

An additional element in the research, that bears mentioning, was the communication that took place between the followers and their leaders that was follower driven. Communication is a two way process and the interviewee’s spoke of dialogue and reciprocated information that they had a part in or initiated. For example, this was evidenced as active listening in a story number one shared.

I expressed my anger to him by making a snide remark. In a calm voice, he asked me why I was behaving like I was, why I was mad. When I told him why, in my uptight kind of way, he asked a clarifying question that made me think about my behavior and my reason. I relaxed some and answered his question with a new perspective. He responded with reassurance and constructive suggestions… I felt like he wanted me as part of the team and he wanted to maximize my skill.

This communication pattern enhanced the results of this study because the communication was not leader initiated; the follower was the one who started it. The implication here is that the leader and the follower, in the transformational
leader/follower relationship, communicate with each other for success. They work together towards a vision. The interviewee’s also confirmed, through the sharing of their personal stories and observations, that the transformational leader is not authoritarian or dictatorial. These follower confirmations concur with research previously cited regarding the leadership traits of the transformational leader. The article by Burns (1978) shows that transformational leaders strive instead for more than simple compliance from their followers and the article by Madlock (2008) stresses that transformational leaders work to expand and elevate the experience of their followers.

Additionally, through the lens of the follower-ship viewpoint, the research contrasted similarities and differences in the communication choices. With the exception of the six communication selections referred to above, not all interviewed followers talked about the same choices as important to transformational leadership effectiveness. This study separated the frequently talked about selections from the less frequently talked about selections and as a result deemed them critical or less critical to the outcome of leadership effectiveness. For example, if a method was mentioned by four or more of the followers interviewed, then that communication choice seemed credible and was considered critical to leadership effectiveness. However, if a method was mentioned by less than four of the followers interviewed, that communication choice didn’t appear to be as convincing and was considered less critical to leadership effectiveness. If all eight interviewees, at independent interviews, mentioned the same communication choice than it was concluded that that particular method of communication was vital to transformational leadership effectiveness. However, if only one interviewee, for instance, mentioned a communication choice then it was not deemed vital.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARIES AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study, while it brought to light some specific communication choices used by transformational leaders, had some limitations. Ethnography as a research method presents limitations because it is difficult to replicate. Replication of the findings is based on researcher agreement (Burns, 1994). In this study, eight separate interviews took place with one researcher in eight unique neutral settings where the researcher could not maximally control external variables. Consequently replicating each interview exactly so as to create researcher agreement would be very difficult, possibly causing variables in the descriptions of the phenomena under study. The validity of this type of research comes into question because it is difficult to replicate and compare however, as shown within this study, the interviewees often collaborated information and opinions. Completely independent of one another they shared similar verdicts and in so doing established an amount of research validity.

An additional limitation to this study was the small sample size. The sample size was constructed to serve a very specific purpose, to talk with followers of transformational leaders and get their perception on leadership communication effectiveness; the sample achieved that purpose. However, the responses were limited to only eight people. A larger sample size could reduce the chances of discovery failure and single source bias. When reviewing this study, it was important to acknowledge whether data from a single source may be responsible for the results received. The outcomes of this studies were weakened considering the information was gathered from a small
sample of self-reporters and not from a collection of multiple and externally verifiable sources. In an effort to make up for the shortcomings of the small sample size the results between interviews were itemized and compared. As indicated in the results portion of this paper, some communication choices sited were not included in the chart of findings because they were infrequently mentioned. As a result of the infrequency of their discussion they were regarded as less critical and not included in the final output. A larger sample size could potentially vary these results.

The short time frame allotted for this study was a significant factor as well. Only two weeks were used to gather all the data from eight follower subjects. Adding additional subjects to the sample would have benefited this study but would also have required additional time for research and analysis that was not available. The data and analysis was thorough considering the time restraints but additional time could prove to be beneficial in the further development of this work.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the results of this study it is suggested that a larger interview sample be enlisted to participate in the research. The larger sample size would potentially validate or discount the study results by extending the communication choice inventory. A larger sampling could alter the ratio of the choices mentioned and could potentially even add selections not yet recognized. For example, results from the list of infrequently talked about choices, that consequently became less critical in their position in the study, could potentially be mentioned more often and change their ratio priority on the list. This
change could alter the number of communication choices referenced in the study and ultimately add selections to the data analysis chart.

As well, future study into the further development of this research question could benefit from incorporating greater variability into the data collection process. The ethnographic interview research design used in this study was appropriate for data discovery related to this research question and ultimately it did produce usable data. However, adding to it would assist in offsetting bias or in any discovery failure present. Augmenting the research with a survey for instance, written from the results of the ethnographic interviews, and distributed to a broad sampling of transformational leadership followers, may further confirm findings and substantiate the results.

If time and money were available, the ethnographic research design of this study could also be expanded to include field study observation as well. Expanding the research to include field observation of follower/leader relationships would enlarge the research by incorporating empirical data about phenomena surrounding these relationships, their cultures and their way of life. Field observation would offer additional research validity by adding supplementary comparables and contrasts to the study.

5.3 CONCLUSION

Attempting to discover specific communication choices of transformational leaders that followers perceived as necessary for effective leadership was the theoretical foundation of this paper. It is important as a training tool as well as a means to extend the current literature with a voice from the follower-ship. The philosophical assumption
influencing this research is that good leaders are made not born. This follows the premise of the work by Kouzes and Posner (1987) suggesting that leadership is learned and developed, not innate. This research paper brought focus to the transformational leader/follower relationship and suggests that the follower has insight into the effectiveness of the leader’s communication choices by process of affiliation.

This paper adds to the vast research available on transformational leadership. The topic has been widely studied in regards to what competencies and traits are commonly exhibited in the leadership behavior. However, limited research is available in this discipline from the follower-ship perspective. Study on leadership has historically been heavily leader-focused with little attention paid to followers (Collinson, 2006). Research describing how exactly an effective transformational leader performs these types of communication competencies, or which leadership communication choices are best, from the follower’s perception are incomplete and required additional investigation.

Three theories extended this research towards discovering, from the lens of the follower, the specific communication choices necessary for motivation and effective leadership; Social Exchange Theory, Leader Member Exchange and Social Identity Theory. All three of these theories referenced a group process involvement between the leader and their subjects. It was discovered, in this research, that this group process was valuable. All eight followers interviewed experienced some sense of positive identification with their leader. They all referenced this connection in one way or another as shared or equal and spoke of it as a valuable part of their interaction.

This study used an ethnographic interview research design to explore the research question. Ethnography was a valuable tool that enhanced the learning progression and
assisted in deciphering information and systems of meanings within the follower’s cultural group. It was confirmed that followers who have been lead by transformational leaders are, by association, a part of their own cultural group; a unique follower-ship group in a specific leadership culture. By listening to the followers interviewed in this study, the researcher was able to identify variables associated with transformational leadership behavior and offer insight into effective leadership communication choices.

Following the process of coding and sorting all data, it became apparent that there were six communication choices singled out as necessary for effective transformational leadership by all eight followers. These choices were, face-to-face interactions; the leader knowing and using the follower’s name; the leader speaking directly and clearly to the follower; the leader using eye contact; the leader genuinely listening to the follower and the leader interacting with open-ended questions. The data analysis chart, included in this study, shows these and the other most popular responses. They were coded and put into specific communication categories. As a result of the coding process an additional discovery surfaced. The followers each recognized a separation between non-verbal and verbal communication choices. The non-verbal communication choices were referenced more frequently than verbal ones. This was true even within the selections that did not make it onto the data analysis chart because of their infrequent reference.

The results within this study assist in enhancing and augmenting the current research available in this discipline by creating a stronger voice for the follower within the literature. Appreciating transformational leadership communication choices from the follower’s perspective is not only valid but also imperative. “Without the follower there would be no leader” (Collinson, 2006, p.179). This paper extends as well, the research to
include not just the perspective of the transformational leader’s follower-ship but also specific communication tools and signals from their unique perspective that, when applied and taught, will develop more effective leaders.
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leader-member exchange: a social exchange perspective. *Academy of Management Journal, 40*(1), 82-111.
You have been invited to participate in a voluntary interview process as part of the research-gathering phase of my thesis. This thesis is my final project to receive a Masters in Communication and Leadership Studies through the school of Professional Studies at Gonzaga University.

This thesis study focuses only on the transformational leadership style and the communication choices of that leadership type. The question I seek to answer is, “what are the specific communication choices of a transformational leader that their followers perceive as necessary for effective leadership?”

Admittedly, there are many different types of leadership. Below is a general description of a transformational leader. For the accuracy of the study it is imperative that the leadership style we discuss, in the interview, is transformational by nature. Please read the description and sign the affirmation if you can confirm that you have followed such a leader at some point in your life. For your protection, a confidentiality agreement is also included to read and sign.

**Transformational leadership described**

This type of leadership is broadly defined as leaders expanding and elevating the interests of their followers. These leaders ride on the dynamic of change, they generate awareness, acceptance, purpose and mission within the organization. The transformational leader articulates a vision, has high performance expectations, and strives to promote change in groups, individuals, and organizations beyond simple compliance of their followers. They attempt to raise the morals, values and ideals of their followers by fostering good relationships and encouraging excellence. The transformational leader motivates their followers to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group. Charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are all behaviors of transformational leaders. They build trust, act with integrity, inspire others, encourage innovative thinking, and coach people to a common goal.
Affirmation Statement:

I affirm that I have been a follower of a transformational leader with similar traits as indicated above. I will do my best to speak to that leadership style throughout the interview.

_____________________________________________  __________________
Signature of Affirmation                          Date

Confidentiality Statement:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you would like to participate, information collected from your completed interview will be used only for the purpose of acquiring knowledge for this study. The interviewer seeks to understand the follower’s perceptions of the communication choices that make a transformational leader effective. Your personal and professional identity will remain anonymous.