

Elements of Outstanding Leadership: A Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Study of the  
Development of Transformational Leadership

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I have adhered to the university policy regarding academic honesty in completing this  
assignment

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### Abstract

The present study used the theory of transformational leadership to identify the relationship between predecessors consisting of emotional intelligence, environment and belief system and the impact of early life experiences with future leadership development. Specifically, what is the role of the predecessors in determining whether a leader is more likely to develop into a transformational leader? Heavy emphasis is placed on the role of early life experiences in leadership development. A convergent parallel mixed methodology consisting of both qualitative and quantitative methods was used for this study. Data was collected using survey questionnaires and interviews distributed to University alumni and current students in a university based leadership program. Statistical analysis including one- sample t-test will be used to analyze and interpret data A three level coding process will be used to analyze the interviews. Results and findings converged to confirm the impact of early life experiences as significant in relation to predecessors and the likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The Transformational Holistic Leadership Development Model emerged from the studies findings. Conclusions and suggestions for future research include developing a training program to better educate parents regarding personal and role model leadership practices, in addition to further establishing validity of the Transformational Holistic Leadership Development Model.

*Keywords:* transformational leadership, predecessors, early life experiences, emotional intelligence, environment, belief system, survey questionnaire, leadership development

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### **Introduction**

In recent decades effective leadership has been described through the theory of Transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, Avolio & Goodheim, 1987; Boleman, 2008; Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007; Wang & Huang, 2009). There are many different forms and theories of leadership; transactional, attribution, and charismatic (Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007). Transformational leadership has been known to bring about highly influential outcomes both for the leader and the followers. Positive outcomes such as higher productivity, group cohesiveness and job satisfaction has been reported in followers (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005, Barbuto & Burbach, 2006; Wang & Huang, 2009). Additionally leaders identified with characteristics such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration are linked with transformational leadership (Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007; Wang & Huang, 2009).

Transformational leadership (Bass et. al., 1987) results in higher-order change and builds upon the transactional theory of leadership. This is accomplished with charisma and by focusing on aspirations, in addition to being concerned with the individual and their intellectual stimulation (Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007). Transformational leaders inspire followers to think beyond themselves, work towards the shared vision and goals of the organization and “develops people as resources and move them to a higher state of existence, transforming them in the process” (Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007, p. 54). Both theories of leadership have proved to possess important elements of effective leadership. In reality these theories actually build off one another. Despite this fact, transformational leadership and impact for followers has proven to sustain the best positive long term change, development and growth for both leaders and followers (Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007).

**Statement of the Problem**

The discipline of leadership is saturated with studies regarding the effectiveness of differing styles, traits and characteristics of leaders (Gilley, Gilley & McMillan, 2009; Hoffman, Woehr, Maldagen-Youngjohn & Lyons, 2010; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Wang & Huang, 2009). Before obtaining their position as leaders what elements are involved in the development of transformational leaders? Barbuto and Burbach (2006) note there is more known about the outcomes rather than the predecessors of transformational leadership. Furthermore,

This disparity is unfortunate because those people seeking transformational leaders have few means for predicting what behaviors characterize such leaders. Efforts to determine the dispositional and situational antecedents of transformational leadership are essential to advancing the transformational leadership field (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006, p. 51-52).

Identifying predecessors in the development of transformational leadership will add valuable knowledge that will serve as a roadmap for building successful leaders. The desire is that the domino effect of learning to develop successful leaders will translate into the development of transformative future organizations and communities.

**Purpose of the Study**

This research will study the relationship between early life experiences as predecessors for the development of transformational leadership. For the purpose of this study snowball sampling through the use of survey questionnaires are conducted with current and alumni members of I L.E.A.D., a local university leadership program. Data will be collected around the topic of the development of transformational leaders in relation to impact of early life experiences and precursors.

### **Significance of the Study**

Results of this study will serve as a guide to leaders, professionals, and all interested parties regarding the elements that contribute to building, developing, and training transformational leaders. Through this studies focus on leadership predecessors identified as emotional intelligence, environmental, and belief system in the formation of leaders, the opportunity to add to leadership studies involving antecedents of positive development will be available.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

This study investigates the precursors of Transformational Leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985). Encouraging individuals to go beyond themselves and strive to work towards the attainment of a shared goal or vision is a defining element of this theory. But how does the leader come to the place personally, of possessing this effective and self-actualizing transformative leadership style? Further more what are the differentiating factors that drive individuals to achieve leadership at the world-class level? In the formation of this study the theoretical perspective that has been adopted is as follows: Transformational leaders are birthed when the elements of emotional intelligence, environmental factors, and an individuals belief system are nurtured and developed. Early life experiences allow the individual to develop positive skills over time that reinforce there potential as future emerging leaders. It is believed that these three elements are the birthing ground for transformative leadership.

### **Research Method**

Primary data for this investigation will be obtained using a sequential mixed methods approach. Both quantitative questionnaire surveys and qualitative interviews will be collected and analyzed. Through voluntary recruitment, surveys will be distributed to a sample of



university students in leadership development programs or courses, including those within the I L.E.A.D. leadership development program. Two groups will be tested, current students who are either participating in, or leading the i L.E.A.D. program. The participants will answer questions related to their experiences of leadership development in relation to the antecedents of emotional intelligence, environment and belief system. Early life experiences are the moderating variable within the study. This study will utilize statistical methods calculated by IBM SPSS to analyze the quantitative responses, while a three step coding process will interpret the qualitative interview responses provided by the selected sample population. A pragmatic worldview in association with a problem-centered, pluralistic philosophy is held with this study (Creswell, 2009).

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Leadership:** the act of stimulating, engaging, and satisfying the motives of followers that result in the followers taking a course of action toward a mutually shared vision (Boseman, 2008).

**Transformational leadership:** Inspire followers to think beyond themselves, work towards the shared vision and goals of the organization and “develops people as resources and move them to a higher state of existence, transforming them in the process” (Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007, p. 54).

**Transactional leadership:** a system of rewards and benefits provided by the leader in exchange for completed tasks by the follower (Bromley & Kirschner, 2007).

**Predecessors:** identified as the elements of emotional intelligence, environment and belief system. The factors are believed to impact positive development of individuals into transformational leaders.

**Emotional intelligence:** possessing abilities including self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills; further having the capacity to identify and aide in the impactful management of the emotions of those in your surrounding environment (Goleman, 1995).

**Attachment style:** internal working models resulting from first interactions with caregivers during infancy. Comprised of three elements: 1) who the attachment figure is, 2) how the attachment figure is expected to respond, and 3) how acceptable the self is in the eyes of the attachment figure (Bowlby, 1973 as cited in Keller, 2003, p. 144).

**Role models:** These are individuals who through behavior modeling have influenced the area of leadership development. Experienced early in life, the individual models and adopts the style of leadership demonstrated by the role model (Hartman & Harris, 2001).

**Decision-making:** identified as the ability to make sound judgments this study highlights the six stages of moral development (Kohlberg, 1981; 1984) and the four-stage model of the moral decision making process (Rest, 1986) in addition to the elements of ethical predisposition, moral identity (Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007).

**Self-Views:** defined as identity. This identity consists of a self-conception or a self-definition (Erickson, 1964). Self-views are suggested to be the building blocks of self-esteem. Formed from interactions with primary caregivers, children develop internal “working models” or mental representations of the self and others that influence emotion regulation, behavior and the development of personality (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1973 as cited in Park, Crocker & Mickelson, 2004, p. 1243).

**Self-Worth:** a result of early affective experiences (e.g. treatment from a principle care giver). Before complex cognitive systems are formed children learn from their environment to

either perceive acceptance or disdain from others. This translates to a sense of pride or shame also identified as worthiness (Rosenberg, 1986 as cited in Pelham & Swann, Jr., 1989).

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

Certain parameters have been set for the study by the researcher. First, the sample population consists of university students ranging in age from late teens to early/mid 30's. Additionally, the population is specified to students within and affiliated with a university leadership development program. This study will not address university students as a whole, but will focus on the perspectives of individuals who are already making efforts towards leadership development. This study will not make conclusive statements such that only university students within leadership programs will develop into transformational leaders. Evidence of precursors alone will not be stated as determining an individual's likelihood to become transformative leaders.

Due to the scope of this research project, time and sample bias were the greatest limitations. With the constraint of using university students it was important to ensure that students were not distracted away from educational responsibilities by time required for participation in the study. If more time was allotted a longitudinal approach may prove more favorable method for the scope of the proposed research (Creswell, 2009). Use of this method would allow the use of a long-term research focus. In studying leadership, specifically developmental precursors and experiences of individual's perspectives of personal experiences is best captured through a longitudinal procedure. Sample bias is an additional limitation. All participants are recruited from a specified sample of University students. Through the studies use of snowball sampling generalized conclusions cannot be made regarding the university

population. Further investigation through the use of random sampling would provide the researcher with a superior source of validity regarding the studies findings.

### **Summary**

The transformational leadership theory will be used as the foundation of this study to understand the impact of predecessor elements and early life experiences on leadership development. The established leadership predecessors have been noted as emotional intelligence, environment and belief system. This study will use a sample of University students to test the relationship between early life experiences, predecessors and leadership development. The researcher has established numerous parameters in order to shape the study. There are also noted limitations that may affect the results beyond the researcher's control. While there is a plethora of research and literature on the topic of leadership there is a noted gap for research related to antecedents of transformational leadership (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006). This study aims to add to the literature concerning this phenomenon in hopes to reveal that successful leadership is attainable for all who desire.

### **Literature Review**

When studying great leaders no matter what field or profession often times there seems to be similar characteristics, habits and even at times experiences that have provided leaders with the capacity to achieve a level of success. For decades, the great debate has been whether leaders are born or made. Many scholars began believing that leaders were born. The “great man” leadership theories were dominant in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). These theories suggested that great leaders were born not made. The men who were seen and recognized as exceptional leaders were believed to have a predisposition for greatness due to their inheritance of successful traits through genetics (Hoffman, Woehr, Maldagen-Youngjohn, & Lyons, 2010). Over time, research has shown that successful leaders are both born and made through the habit of learning, acquiring, and developing of skill sets (Hoffman et al., 2010; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991).

This study focuses on the areas of emotional intelligence, environment and belief system as predecessors that play an important role in the development of leaders identified as transformational. Research has shown that emotional Intelligence has been identified as an important role in the leadership process, and furthermore serves as a plausible predictor of the coming of future leaders (George, 2000; Goleman, 1995; Wang & Huang, 2009). For the purpose of this study emotional intelligence will be defined as possessing abilities including self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills; further having the capacity to identify and aide in the impactful management of the emotions of those in your surrounding environment (Goleman, 1995).

Environment and background influences of an individual are key components that determine to a high degree an individuals level of effectiveness in all areas of life. Specifically,

the areas of family dynamics, love/attachment styles, and role models are the factors of interest. The research gathered will aide in gauging how the specific environmental elements impact the developmental formation of transformational leaders (Avolio, Rutundo & Walumbwa, 2009; Madsen, 2010; Keller, 2003; Hartman & Harris; 2001; Ferguson, Grice, Hagman & Peng, 2006). Regarding belief system, the current research has identified decision-making, self-views and self-worth as impacting elements developing transformational leaders. Previous research has tied individuals with a positive self-concept and self-assurance perceived through self-worth as possessing greater abilities of decision-making, interpersonal performance and leading others through influence (Chan, 2000; Staw & Barsade, 1993; Isen, 2001; Barbuto & Barbach, 2006; Scharf & Mayselless; 2009).

It is believed that through developing and maintaining a healthy view of oneself this healthy state of mind can be translated to others. By studying the relationship between transformational leaders, impact of early life experiences and predecessors of emotional intelligence, environment and belief system this research aims to contribute to the literature of transformational leadership. Parents, teachers, organizations, aspiring leaders and anyone with a desire to develop leadership skills will benefit from the knowledge gained from the research through identification of the precursors essential for building transformational leaders.

### **Transformational Leadership and Leadership Success**

In 1978, Burns developed the construct of transformational leadership (Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007). Bass (1985) further advanced the concept. Bass (1987) identified three behaviors of transformational leadership: charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (p. 52). A fourth factor, inspirational motivation was later added to the three-factor model (Bass & Avolio, 1990). The factor charisma was later changed to

idealized influence (Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam, 2003). These four characteristics: *intellectual stimulation*, *individualized consideration*, *inspirational motivation*, and *idealized influence*, were identified as transformational behaviors and have proven to impact positive change for organizations, followers and the individual (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006, Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007).

The impact of transformational leadership has become so vast over the last two decades, this theory is currently observed as the most widely accepted leadership paradigm (Wang & Huang, 2009). Leaders identifying with the transformational leader behaviors experience success for several reasons. Idealized influence within leaders has identified them as someone who is admired, respected and trusted. As a result, followers seek to identify with and emulate the leader (Wang & Huang, 2009). Transformational leaders are successful at providing meaningful challenges. These serve to motivate and inspire their followers, and provide a vision for appealing future states (Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley; Wang & Huang, 2009). In addition, transformational leaders are successful at impacting transformational change in organizations. Outcomes connected with innovativeness and creativeness in problem solving, teamwork and direct positive influence on work environment has been identified (Gilley et al., 2009; Wang & Huang, 2009; Boseman, 2008). Leaders who operate in the transformational behaviors learned these skills at some point. Are these skills equally learned among all periods of an individuals life or are certain developmental periods more important than others?

Leadership skills have been associated with children as young as elementary school aged (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006; Avolio et al., 2009). Scharf & Mayseless (2009) identify skills such as prosocial interpersonal orientations and skills. Hawley (1999) noted “leadership skills reflect a developmental process and can be detected even in childhood” (as cited in Scharf & Mayseless,

2009, p. 73). Numerous factors have been tied to the development of identified leadership qualities in children. For the purpose of this study these have been identified as precursors. Early life experiences can impact the role of leadership development and should be studied. As children are developed so are their skills and capacity for leadership growth.

### **Early Experiences and Leadership Development**

Previous works have briefly mentioned the importance of early life experiences on the leadership development process (Conger, 2004). Genes help determine our capacity for cognitive abilities and energy levels. Furthermore, our family environment shapes the development of leadership qualities in the areas of “self-confidence, achievement drive, communication skills, and interpersonal competence” (Conger, 2004, p. 136). As individuals develop from children to adolescent’s environment has been noted to play a larger role in the decision-making process. According to Taylor, McGue & Lacono (2000), in adolescent years of youth environment is reported to account for 82% of the variation in adolescent delinquency (as cited in Avolio et al., 2009, p. 331). As individuals our experiences in school often provide us with our first opportunities to lead, and model “first-hand leadership” (Conger, 2004, p. 136).

Avolio, et al., (2009) studied parenting styles, rule breaking behavior and early life experiences as determinants of emerging future leaders found that early life experiences contribute to explaining future emergence in leadership roles (p. 338). According to White (1982), “One of the essential characteristics of individuals who assume leadership roles is a firm belief in what they are striving to accomplish, and a belief in their own capabilities and motivation to do so” (Avolio et al., 2009). A high level of self-confidence is essential for the individual to persist with focused effort. Bandura (2008) identifies such self-confidence as resilient self-efficacy. Furthermore, according to Bandura (2008),” this type of self-assurance can



be developed through observing, personal experiences, being coached and/ or some combination of the three” (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 330). Conger (2004) identifies three areas in developmental respects that early experiences permeate,” 1) the baseline capacities necessary for early leadership, 2) the drive one has to become a leader, and 3) the arenas in which one will make leadership contributions” (p. 136).

### **Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Development**

Emotional intelligence has been linked to transformational leadership (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006; Wang & Huang, 2009). An individual’s leadership style reflects a great degree on their personality, both innate and learned traits. Emotional intelligence, a term introduced by Goleman (1995) involves the concern for others, their emotions, moods, and having the ability to both sense and manage these areas. The role of emotions has become prominent in the study of leadership. According to Barbuto & Burbach (2006), “ The focus on the leader’s ability to manage complex social and personal dynamics is centered in the concept of emotional intelligence” (p. 52). In successfully managing one’s own emotions a leader is better equipped to support the emotions of those who they lead.

Combining emotional intelligence with leadership would produce favorable results. First, followers would feel a sense of worth and value from their leaders, due to the leaders ability to read and connect with the follower emotionally. As a result this would in term permit the leader to attain a level of influence with the follower that will lead to high levels of productivity, loyalty, and a lasting organizational following and impact. Goleman (1995) “claims that emotional intelligence has an effect on both physical and mental health, as well as career achievement” (as cited in Wang & Huang, 2009, p. 383). There is a clear connection to the fact that possessing emotional intelligence is the success factor key that allows leaders to attain the

level of transformative leader status and reap the rewards of its benefits, more so than the counterpart leader who does not possess emotional intelligence. Five elements of emotional intelligence have been identified: self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy and social skills. In addition to transformational leadership, emotional intelligence has been identified as being identified in children displaying leadership qualities. A study involving elementary school children identified children exemplifying leadership qualities as having a positive representation of themselves and showing concern for others (Popper, Mayselless & Castelnuovo, 2000; Popper & Mayselless, 2003; Scharf & Mayselless, 2009).

***Self-awareness.*** An individual's ability to perceive emotions in one self and identify them in others. (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006; Goleman, 1995). According to Church (1997) these individuals possess greater levels of self-management and self-monitoring, skills that are positively related to transformational leadership (as cited in Barbuto & Burbach, 2006). Greater awareness allows leaders to understand themselves at a deeper level, therefore understanding and influencing others.

***Self-management.*** According to Barbuto & Burbach (2006), "People become aware of their own internal states when attention is directed inward; this simple manipulation often seems sufficient to reduce negative feelings and improve judgment" (p, 53). Self-management in leaders has proven to have positive effects for leaders influence with followers.

***Self-motivation.*** Transformational leaders are self-motivated. Sosik & Megerian, (1999) found that transformational leaders possess a firm belief in their ability to influence their environment, are actively connected with their organization and feel empowered (as cited in Barbuto & Burbach, 2006).

*Empathy.* Empathy allows transformational leaders to understand follower's point of view (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006) The development of this skill would prove beneficial for both leadership and personal relationship. Empathy has been detected in youth displaying leadership qualities (Burns, 1978; Scharf & Mayseless, 2009).

*Social skills.* Individuals operating in this skillset have the ability to promote desirable responses in others (Goleman, 1998). Under the umbrella of social skills 8 competencies have been identified: Influence, communication, conflict management, leadership, change catalyst, Building bonds, collaboration and cooperation and team capabilities (Goleman, 1998). The impact of Emotional Intelligence through social skills have been proven to positively reinforce leadership by creating change, increasing satisfaction, imparting positive vision and ideals that synergize followers, and allowing the individual to view themselves and others through a lens of value and significance (Goleman, 1998; Barbuto & Burbach, 2006; Scharf & Mayseless, 2009; Wang & Huang, 2009).

### **Environmental Influences and Character Development**

Our environment is a large determinant of who we are and as a result what we believe and what we become. Leaders are a by-product of the example of leaders preceding them. For all individuals the first, most influential role models and source of leadership comes from the home. This environment is crucial specifically in the character development, sense of morals, values and views/beliefs of self. In dissecting the leadership developmental process, we must first look at the early influences of an individual. Previous research suggests that 30% of variance in leadership style and emergence into leadership roles are due to genetic factors, while the remaining variance combines non-shared environmental influences such as role models and early opportunities for leadership development (Avolio, et al., 2009). Prior to the popularity of

leadership studies, parents have been noted to play a major role in modeling to children through social learning theory (Bandura, 1969). This theory states, that behaviors are learned and reproduced in children through social modeling. In this case, the behaviors of the parent are observed by the child, stored as the basis of leadership training, built upon and recalled in future situations. The parent is the first leadership trainer who teaches the child how to make sense of experiences, how to treat others, how to persevere under challenging conditions, how to develop, and how to perform (Avolio et. al, 2009). “This form of socialization associated with effective parenting processes focuses on how children come to understand the values, beliefs and perspectives that guide their thinking and behavior later on in life” (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 331). This suggests that parents have a great responsibility to “train up” their children in a way that will enable them to handle emotions, victories and challenges successfully.

Many research studies have looked at leadership in terms of personality traits, IQ, and other influences such as culture. The reality is that no single trait or influence is incumbent of leadership. All are important, each serving a different role and together has the ability to produce the emergence of a great leader. Murphy and Reichard (2011) assert it is the combination of personality, parenting, and developmental experiences, which affects the extent to which the leader can actually perform the required leader behaviors. Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of possessing traits of a leader. Popper & Mayseless (2003) state that parents have the ability to influence and reinforce desired leadership traits in their children, such as achievement orientation, self-confidence, and self-esteem. These traits are nurtured through “good parenting” in congruence to the transformational leadership style.

The critical role of parents in shaping leaders from an early age is highlighted through McClelland’s (1961,1975) theory of motivation(as cited in Murphy & Reichard, 2011, p. 14).

Three factors might be considered: (1) the need for achievement (competitiveness, attention to goals, and risk taking); (2) the need for affiliation (desire to be connected or interacting with other people); and (3) the need for power (need to have domination over others for either individual gain or group gain). Effort produced to fulfill these needs through motivation, in combination with the needs themselves, have been found to positively relate to leader effectiveness (Murphy & Reichard, 2011). According to McClelland's (1961, 1975) theory of motivation:

Successful leaders have been noted to have a moderate need for achievement and affiliation and a high need for power. Parents can help to increase a child's need for achievement through encouraging goal setting and independence. Parents who emphasized the importance of having influence over one's destiny, whether through career advice or by encouraging their children to control others through leadership roles, will influence their child's leadership desires and perhaps the leadership style they exhibit (as cited by Murphy & Reichard, 2011, p. 14).

These studies demonstrate the influential role of parents in shaping initial leadership associations. Next, the researcher will discuss the differing parental styles and which, if any, are related to more favorable leadership styles. Avolio et al., (2009) notes

In sum, parenting orientation is expected to impact a wide range of outcomes through its influence on individual development, pro-social and antisocial behavior, academic achievement, goals, etc. It is through these mechanisms that we believe that parenting practices experienced early in life are likely to influence leadership roles assumed into adulthood (p.331).

Madsen (2010) reports a cross-cultural study conducted through extensive interviews with six successful Arab women leaders. The study explored the influences that current Arab women leaders attributed to their leadership development and success, such as education and family. All six women reported growing up in stable homes. This familial stability fostered in

them a natural level of confidence and self-esteem. Due to parental support, particularly the support of fathers, the women developed a sense of possibility regarding future opportunities for education and learning (parallel to achievement drive). This fosters the idea that both women and men have the same opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge needed for leadership. Through findings of numerous research studies, we can conclude that parents have been identified as the initial trainers and have been tasked with the responsibility of nurturing children's leadership potential for future development.

The level that leadership skills are nurtured and reinforced in youth depends on the type of parental support (parenting style and attachment style) that children receive. Four parenting styles have been identified, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and uninvolved. According to Baumrind (1991) the bulk of parenting research lends support to the benefits of authoritative versus authoritarian parenting (as cited in Avolio et al., 2009, p. 331). The less popular of the two parenting styles permissive and uninvolved, have been defined as follows: permissive parenting, also known as indulgent parenting, is characterized by few demands and rarely disciplines their children. These parents are more interested in being a friend to the child than a parent. Uninvolved parenting, also known as detached parenting, is characterized by few demands, low responsiveness and low communication. In most cases, but not all, parents are there just to fulfill basic needs of the child.

### **Belief System and Formation of Moral Development**

The level of significance that a person holds of themselves and others impacts their level of leadership success and influence. The field of moral development has been influenced by theories and models such as Piaget's (1932) Theory of Cognitive Development, Kohlberg's (1981, 1984) Theory of Cognitive Moral Development, and Rest's (1986) four-stage model of

decision-making. According to Rest (1979), “Moral reasoning is thought to be one’s conceptual and analytical ability to frame socio-moral problems using one’s standards and values in order to judge the proper course of action” (as cited in Sivanathan & Fekken, 2002, pg. 199). Additionally, Kohlberg (1981) identified moral judgment or determining what is right and wrong as the most critical element contributing to moral behavior. Our thoughts are the basis for our decisions, our decisions are the basis for our actions, and our actions are the basis for our well being and quality of life.

Prior to the formation of these cognitive systems, the foundation for what we believe of others and ourselves is set during the early environmental years. The beliefs that we adopt of ourselves and ultimately apply to our interactions with others find their roots in attachment theory. The base of this theory uncovers an essential framework for understanding two elements. First, how people form close emotional bonds with others, and second, the fact that people seek attachments with others to balance emotional distress and to experience security (Ainsworth et al., 1978, Bowlby, 1973, 1980, 1982; Sroufe & Walters, 1977). From attachment theory individuals in combination with interactions experienced with primary care givers allow children to develop internal “working models”, also identified as mental representations of self and others. The mental model formed works to accomplish the goals of representing beliefs regarding one’s lovability and worthiness of care/attention, in addition to influencing emotional regulation, behavior, the development of personality, and how emotionally available and responsive we perceive others will be towards our needs (Park et al., 2004).

As we develop, the foundation regarding our beliefs translates across all areas of our lives. Through secure attachments, we have the capacity to develop high regards for ourselves. This translates to positive relationships and interactions with others (Pelham & Swann, Jr. 1989,

Park et al., 2004, Reynolds & Ceranic, 2007). In regards to leadership, a positive regard leads to a heightened capacity for moral reasoning. Research confirms this results in higher levels of personal performance and team leadership effectiveness (Turner, Barling, Epitropaki, Butcher & Milner, 2002). Furthermore, both transformational and transactional leadership styles have been identified to work together to elevate the impact of moral reasoning. Specifically, transformational leadership builds upon transactions with transformational behaviors. According to Turner et al., (2002), “leaders with more complex moral reasoning will be able to draw on more sophisticated conceptualizations of interpersonal situations, are more likely to think about problems in different ways, and are aware of a larger number of behavioral options (p. 306)”. The results of these attributes are an ability to visualize and value goals that extend beyond self and reach to serve the collective good of others (Turner et al., 2002).

As leaders it is important to gain an understanding of the components, attitudes and supporting elements, both large and small that will allow us to experience the most success. We cannot take others where we have not been ourselves. Therefore, we must understand how to function well as individuals through attaining, developing and nurturing a healthy belief in ourselves and our abilities. It is believed that developing this mindset personally will allow us to spread that same positive belief to all individuals who may look to us as a source of support and encouragement.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theory of Transformational Leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) has been identified as the most impacting form of leadership. A transforming leader acts to maximize the needs of the followers through the behaviors of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. In this study the researcher explores the



predecessors essential for the development of transformational leaders. Unlike previous beliefs that great leaders are born, transformational leaders are made. In this study the researcher sets out to investigate the impact of early life development in the areas of emotional intelligence, environment and belief system and its relationship to transformational leadership. In accordance with this theory, it is through positive experiences of the combined identified predecessors, an individual has a greater likelihood to become a transformational leader. The relationships between these factors is identified is modeled in Figure 1 below.

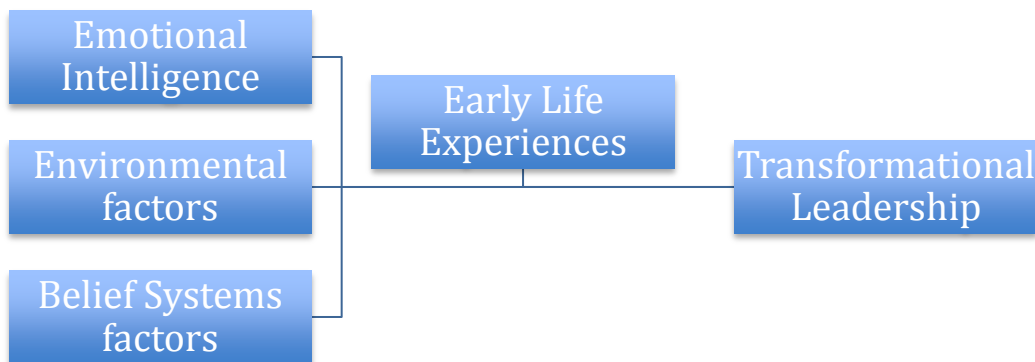
**Dependent variable (DV).** *Transformational leadership* theory was developed by Burns (1978), and Bass (1985). Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are the four behaviors identified with transformational leaders. These leaders experience the most success as leaders through inspiring followers to think beyond themselves, work towards the shared vision and goals of the organization and “develops people as resources and move them to a higher state of existence, transforming them in the process” (Bromley & Kirschner-Bromley, 2007, p. 54).

**Independent variable one (IV1).** *Emotional Intelligence* positively impacts the development of transformational leadership by possessing abilities including self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills; further having the capacity to identify and aide in the impactful management of the emotions of those in your surrounding environment (Goleman, 1995).

**Independent variable two (IV2).** *Environmental factors* encompass the elements of family dynamic, attachment style, and role models, these components are believed to positively shape the development of transformational leaders (Avolio et al., 2009).

**Independent variable three (IV3).** *Belief System* is identified as decision-making, self-views and self-worth, these factors infer a positive impact on the development of transformational leaders. Previous research has tied individuals with a positive self-concept and self-assurance perceived through self-worth as possessing greater abilities of decision-making, interpersonal performance and leading others through influence (Staw & Barsade, 1993; Chan, 2000; Isen, 2001; Barbuto & Barbach, 2006; Scharf & Mayseless; 2009).

**Moderating variables (MV).** *Early Life Experience* - The strength of the association between the preceding factors of emotional intelligence, environment and belief system may be impacted by the element of early life experiences. All individuals are believed to have opportunities to develop into successful leaders through the habit of learning, acquiring, and developing of skill sets (Hoffman et al., 2010; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991). Although valid previous works show that early life experiences are determinants of emerging future leaders and contribute to explaining future emergence in leadership roles (Avolio et al., 2009).



*Figure 1.* The model of the theoretical framework of the effect of early life experiences on transformational leadership.

### Summary

The literature reviewed in this study explores the topic of leadership development. Specifically, the areas of leadership success, early life experiences, emotional intelligence,

environmental influences, belief system and the formation of moral development as it relates to transformational leadership. The following chapter will identify the study's research questions and will define how the quantitative and qualitative methods will be executed.

### **Research Methodology**

This study will utilize an explanatory sequential mixed method design to collect, measure, code and interpret data regarding the development of transformational leadership. A Pragmatic world-view is associated with this study. This study is conducted from a pluralistic philosophical view since Pragmatism is not connected to one spectrum of philosophy (Creswell, 2014). As a result, both quantitative (survey questionnaire) and qualitative (open-ended interview) methods will form the current research. Transformational leadership theory (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) has been a popular topic of research over the last three decades (Northouse, 2010). This study takes a problem-centered view through investigating the impact of the areas of personality, environment and an individuals belief system on the development of transformational leadership (Creswell, 2014). The proposed research will test to identify the validity of the research questions by looking intently at the three independent variables and testing a set of ideas (Creswell, 2009) The explanatory sequential mixed methodology involves a two-phase process in which the researcher will collect quantitative data and use statistical methods to analyze the responses, and then uses the findings to develop the interview conducted in the second qualitative phase. Data for this investigation will be obtained from a sample of University students within the i L.E.A.D. leadership development program. This chapter provides a detailed account of the materials, instruments and criteria used for sample selection and research design for the proposed study.

### **Research Questions**

The researcher sets out to understand the developmental process of successful transformational leaders. Specifically, the research is looking to test for a relationship between the elements of personality, environment and belief system.

**Research question one (RQ1):** Does emotional intelligence indicated by self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy and social skills indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational?

*Null hypothesis one (Ho1):* Emotional intelligence does not indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis one a (Ha1a):* Self-awareness is a factor of emotional intelligence that indicates a greater likelihood than a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis one b (Ha1b):* Self-management is a factor of emotional intelligence that indicates a greater likelihood than a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis one c (Ha1c):* Self-motivation is a factor of emotional intelligence that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis one d (Ha1d):* Empathy is a factor of emotional intelligence that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis one e (Ha1e):* Social skills are a factor of emotional intelligence that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

**Research question two (RQ2):** Do environmental factors, family dynamic, attachment styles, and role models indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational?

*Null hypothesis two (Ho2):* Environmental factors indicated by family dynamic, attachment styles, and role models do not indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis two a (Ha2a):* Family dynamic is an environmental factor that indicates a greater likelihood than a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis two b (Ha2b):* Attachment style is an environmental factor that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis two c (Ha2c):* Role models are an environmental factor that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

**Research question three (RQ3):** Does an individual's belief system, decision making, self-views and self-worth indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational?

*Null hypothesis three (Ho3):* Development of an individuals belief system, decision-making, self-views and self-worth does not indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis three a (Ho3a):* Decision-making is a factor of belief system that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis three b (Ho3b):* Self-views are a factor of belief system that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis three c (Ho3c):* Self-worth is a factor of belief system that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

There has been a continuing debate regarding whether leaders are born or made. Numerous studies (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991; Conger, 2004; Hoffman et al., 2011) support both arguments, agreeing while a combination of both are at work for leadership development, there is no doubt that all leaders must go through a development process. The survey questionnaire of university students will allow the researcher to both test and identify impacts of leadership development within a population.

**Setting**

The data for this study will be collected at the campus of local universities in the Baltimore, MD and Washington DC areas. Specifically, two groups have been identified. Group 1, consists of current students participating in leadership development programs and courses, including those within the i L.E.A.D. program. Group 2, consists of TULC student leaders selected by the i L.E.A.D. program director and staff as individuals who exemplify extraordinary leadership skills, will be targeted for this study. This site was viewed as ideal for the reason that individuals within this university program are those striving to develop themselves in an effort to become great future leaders. Although participants of Group 1 are not yet working everyday within leadership positions with multiple years of experience, the opinions of these students are valuable. They provide the perspective of subjects who are towards the end, but still close to the critical early life development phase of the independent variable factors (personality, environmental and belief system) that are being controlling for within the study.

**Population**

The population of participants will range from students both male and female of all ethnicities. Ages of students will range from late teens to early 30's. Participants must be at least 19 years old to participate in the survey and will be asked prior to survey administration. Individuals under 19 will be unable to participate due to their needed consent of a parent or legal guardian as they are considered minors (Creswell, 2009). The sample size for this study is calculated based on a estimate of nearly 2,000 i L.E.A.D. university organizational members, both Alumni and current. The sample size is 323 participants with a 5.0% margin of error, 95% confidence interval and 50% expected response rate (Raosoft, 2004). Consent forms will be signed and recorded for all individuals participating prior to the collection of data for this study.

Snowball sampling will be used, and is best for this particular study. This decision was made due to the need to capture multiple opinions and perspectives among both leaders and observers of leaders from two different groups within the same sample. The snowball sampling strategy, the most common form of purposeful sampling, according to Merriam (2009) involves “locating a few key participants who easily meet the criteria you have established for participation in the study” (p. 79). Student participants will be asked to fill out consent forms and participate in the survey while attending an i L.E.A.D. program related function held on campus. See informed consent form in Appendices section.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All participants will be informed of the purpose of this study and how their responses will be used. Participants will be allowed to withdraw from the study at any point. The surveys will be stored and held for three years after completion of the study. After the three-year period all documents will be shredded. Privacy of participants will be ensured at all times. The survey will take 15-20 minutes to complete and will be administered while attending an i L.E.A.D. program related function held on campus. The researcher will solely have access to the survey responses of all participants. As alumni of the university the researcher will contact the programs director to discuss the purpose of research and request access to the program and students. Access to former i L.E.A.D members personal contact information such as email addresses and phone numbers could prove a breach in privacy. Before contact with any campus students or former student is made all documents including informed consent forms and survey questionnaires will be presented upon request to the univeristy i L.E.A.D director.

There is no known deceit associated for participants of the study. The aim of the researcher is to benefit both the researcher and the participants. The researcher will benefit for



the purpose of data collection in identifying impacting factors on the development of transformational leaders. Student and Alumni benefits include, but are not limited to; greater self-awareness, impacting commitment level to leadership development, reflection, personal assessment and appreciation, among others.

The risks associated for the participants of the study are minimal. There is no potential for physical risks regarding participants. However, there are other potential risks that should be noted. Participants may experience discomfort, anxiety or negative emotions when answering the survey questionnaire. Under the IRB policies, participants have the right to skip over questions, withdraw from the study and seek outside resolutions at any time without consequences. These options will be stated in the informed consent document presented to all participants prior to the administration of the questionnaire. Personal contact information for the university faculty advisor supervising the study will be listed on the informed consent document distributed and signed by all participants. This will suffice as a resource if further actions are required. This information will be kept separate from the survey and interview responses and there will be tangible connection between informed consent, participation and responses within the survey. Survey and interview responses will be published as aggregated data and results. Interview participants will be identified as pseudonyms. Only the researcher's research supervisor may review the completed informed consent documents will be kept in a secure location accessible to only the researcher. These documents will be destroyed three years after the completion of the study.

As a method of protection for themselves and others involved, all participants will be encouraged to keep their responses confidential. Anytime human subjects are involved in a research study there are ethical considerations that must be addressed. In alignment with the

BGS Institutional Review Board all risks and related issues for the study have been considered. The researcher understands that failure to ethically conduct, gather and analyze data places all parties involved at great risks. For the purpose of this study it must be considered whether participation in this study compromises the program director's position in regards to the population sample size. Additionally, the nature and type of questions proposed within the questionnaire must be taken into consideration for participants. Confidentiality of survey participation and individual responses is an important consideration factor regarding the protection of participants, as they will be providing personal opinions regarding leadership. Depending on the information shared this could prove to be compromising and a conflict of interest, if less than favorable information is provided about current leadership figures within the organization. As a result, providing a quiet location outside the i LE.A.D. program event for the participant may be an ethical protection preference.

### **Quantitative Research Strategy**

Recruitment for the study will begin by contacting the university i LE.A.D. program director. The purpose of the study, the role of the researcher and the requirements of the participants were laid out in written form for the program director. The documents provided were as follows; the informed consent form, the survey questionnaire, and the questions directed towards the programs alumni. There are two groups that will be tested within the calculated sample size. Group 1 consists of active i L.E.A.D. members who are currently enrolled as students within the university. Group 2, consists of TULC student i L.E.A.D. program members. The chosen TULC leaders were personally selected by i L.E.A.D. staff as individuals excelling as leaders within their university. The criteria provided to i L.E.A.D. staff for student leader selection consisted of a) students of the school and program, b) individuals who are positively

involved with the university and program, (i.e. mentoring to current students, supporting i L.E.A.D. programs and events), c) individuals experiencing advancement/ continuous levels of leadership growth. After access to the desired population was granted from the university, the researcher worked closely with the program's director to choose a date and related i LE.A.D. event to administer the survey.

Group 1 was administered the survey at the university's spring leadership conference held on campus focused around the topic of Building a legacy through leadership. The informed consent form was attached to the questionnaire laying out the guidelines, potential risks and rights to confidentiality and privacy associated with the study. Participants filled out the consent form at the event prior to survey administration. Prior to dismissing for a breakout session during the event, surveys are passed out to students in attendance. The director made an announcement encouraging all interested students to visit the table in the back of the room near the door to participate in the survey. Students are reminded to fill the questionnaire out alone, participants under the age of 19 are not able to take part in the study, and the final instruction to all participants was to drop the forms in the box when completed. All participants are thanked at the completion of the survey as they return their materials. To increase participation students at other local universities, who were participating in leadership development activities or leadership courses, were invited to join the study.

Group 2 consisting of excelling i L.E.A.D. TULC students identified by the i L.E.A.D. director and staff will be contacted through a mass email describing their selection criteria, purpose for email and request for participation in the study. The email explained that a former alumni of the school and current graduate student would be in attendance, seeking participation in a 15-20 minute survey questionnaire from all interested members for the purpose of collecting

data on the topic of transformational leadership and development factors. The informed consent form was embedded in the survey link within to the email laying out the guidelines, potential risks and rights to confidentiality and privacy associated with the study. Once surveys questionnaires have been conducted with both groups, data will be compared and analyzed. A detailed description of this process will be outlined in the following data analysis chapter.

**Tests and measurements.** Upon completion of data collection procedures all information will be input into IBM SPSS 21.0.0.0 32 bit edition. Frequencies, correlations, strengths, significance and associations will be determined for the two groups using statistical tests.

*Frequency/descriptive* statistics will prove beneficial for interpretation of data regarding the development of transformational leaders between groups. Descriptive statistics will provide information such as the minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation for all desired variables (Szafran, 2012). Understanding the values of standard deviation will be beneficial in identifying the strength of significance and level of association. Frequency charts, also called univariate charts display the results for just a single variable (Szafran, 2012, p. 80). The use of frequency charts will allow the researcher to visually compare the impact of each desired variable both individually and collectively.

*Pearson's correlation* tests how strong the association is between two variables. The current study has been identified as having a one tailed directional association. Using the Pearson's correlation the research suggests there is a positive correlation between the development of transformational leaders and the identified independent variables. 0.5 to 1.0 is an indicator of a strong positive correlation. A strong negative correlation is represented at values of -1.0 to -0.5 (Szafran, 2012). Pearson's correlation shows a two-tailed significance. For studies

utilizing a one-tailed directional hypothesis, divide the significance by 2 ( $/2$ ). (Szafran, 2012, p. 394).

*One sample t- test* is a statistical hypothesis test about the mean of one variable for one population (Szafran, 2012, p. 301). To reject the null hypothesis the probability has to be equal to or less than .05. This includes a margin of error of no more than 5%. (Szafran, 2012). A statistically significant difference is indicated with a value of less than or equal to 0.5. One-sample t-test is the hypothesis-tested measure needed for the current research study. The One-Sample T-Test procedure can be one-tailed or two-tailed and is used to compare a sample from a single population (Szafran, 2012, p. 322). For the purpose of this study the current student and TULC i L.E.A.D. groups although different qualifying criteria are within the same population and tested for the same independent variables of emotional intelligence, environment, and belief system in relation to transformational leadership.

### **Survey Protocol**

The survey questionnaire included questions regarding participant's background, family history and personal opinions about their development as an individual and it's perceived correlation to leadership. The questions provoked memories of childhood, teenage and young adult development, in addition to current leadership activities and aspirations for desired leadership goals in the future. Some of the questions developed were modeled after the Myers Briggs personality questionnaire test based on the personality type theories of Carl Jung and Isabel Briggs Myers type theory (humanmetrics.com, 2013).

An in person questionnaire survey protocol was chosen as the best method for Group 1 administration. The survey took place at the conclusion of an i L.E.A.D. university sponsored program relating to the topic of Building a legacy through leadership. The topic of discussion is

ideal to prelude the survey given to students. Their minds have been stimulated to think of their lives and the legacy they are building and striving to build in the future. Students are notified of their request for participation at the event through an announcement prior to dismissing for a breakout session. The surveys are distributed to students with an attachment of the informed consent document reviewing the purpose of the study, guidelines and rights to confidentiality. Group 2, consisting of TULC i L.E.A.D. students will be presented with a similar questionnaire to Group 1. The best method of distribution for group 2 will be an online link sent through email. There are no differences between the two groups in reference to the survey. The differences can be seen during the qualitative interview protocol in questions regarding current student leadership perceptions, opportunities, and advancements and the correlation to independent variable development factors both personally and professionally.

Participants responded to personal, developmental and situational questions and statements. The survey consists of nominal, ordinal and interval/scaled questions and statements.

Examples of each type of question include:

Growing up were their role models who impacted your life?

Yes, positively in many ways

Yes, negatively in many ways

I had no role models growing up

Leaders who understand how to work well and communicate with others have higher levels of influence?

True or False

Using the scale below, select the number that best corresponds with how you feel about each statement:

My level of self-confidence impacts my level of motivation to successfully complete tasks?

1-Strongly Disagree

2-Disagree

3-Neither agree nor disagree

4-Agree

5-Strongly Agree

Survey responses will remain confidential. For the purpose of this study personal identifying information such as age and gender are the only personally identifying data included in the survey. This will aide in identifying trends that will provide opportunities for future research.

### **Qualitative Research Strategy**

Participants were selected specifically from the TULC student leader group who completed the survey. Voluntary willingness to participate in the journal and interview phase, and their acknowledgement of the need to be natural, honest and transparent in their journals and their response to the interview questions was required. In addition to participating in an in depth interview the recruitment email states that participants will be asked to keep a reflection journal for the duration of the study. The journals will serve as additional documents for the purpose of enhancing the researcher's desire to understand the participant's perspectives of transformational leadership development accounts and the personal impact upon their lives. Creswell (2009) recommends the use of diverse data collection methods that explore more than the typical interview and observation approaches. Differing forms allow researchers to "capture useful information that observation and interviews may miss" (Creswell, 2009, p. 181). Reflection journals may assist participants to recall significant interpretation of events that otherwise may not have been recalled during the interview.

The informed consent document was attached to the email generated and sent to the specified group. Upon receiving a response to the recruitment email Group 2, TULC i L.E.A.D. student members will receive a list of available dates and times for the interviews. Group 2, participants will be interviewed face to face in the coming days following an i L.E.A.D. Spring Leadership conference event held on campus focused around the topic of Building a legacy through leadership. A featured keynote speaker was in attendance at the event. Prior to the event an email was sent to all TULC student members. The email explained that a former alumni of the school and current graduate student would be in attendance at the event, seeking participation in a 30-45 minute face to face interview from a sample of interested members for the purpose of collecting data on the topic of transformational leadership and development factors. Following receipt of the informed consent document and agreement to keep a personal journal for the week leading to the interview and week after the interview time was scheduled. The interview was conducted in a quiet place free from distractions. This will take place at a local destination outside of campus or an on campus location outside of the i L.E.A.D. office. This was done to protect the confidentiality of all voluntary participants. The researcher also desires for the participants to be in an environment that will allow them to feel comfortable.

Group 2 consisting of excelling i L.E.A.D. TULC students identified by the i L.E.A.D. director and staff will be contacted through a mass email describing their selection criteria, purpose for email and request for participation in the study. The informed consent form and a link to the survey questionnaire will be attached and returned indicating their acceptance to participate in the study. Upon receiving a response to the recruitment email Group 2, TULC i L.E.A.D. student members will receive a list of available dates and times for the interviews. Group 2, participants will be interviewed face to face in the coming days following an i L.E.A.D.



Spring Leadership conference event held on campus focused around the topic of Building a legacy through leadership. A featured keynote speaker was in attendance at the event. Prior to the event an email was sent to all TULC student members. The email explained that a former alumni of the school and current graduate student would be in attendance at the event, seeking participation in a 30-45 minute face to face interview from a sample of interested members for the purpose of collecting data on the topic of transformational leadership and development factors. Following receipt of the informed consent document and agreement to keep a personal journal for the week leading to the interview and week after the interview time was scheduled. The interview was conducted in a quiet place free from distractions. This will take place at a local destination outside of campus or an on campus location outside of the i L.E.A.D. office. This was done to protect the confidentiality of all voluntary participants. The researcher also desires for the participants to be in an environment that will allow them to feel comfortable.

The researcher will gain permission from group participants to have interviews recorded for accurate interpretation purposes. Detailed notes will also be recorded during all interviews with participants. Once interviews have been conducted, data will be compared and analyzed. A detailed description of this process will be outlined in the following data analysis chapter.

### **Interview Protocol**

The interview consisted of a combination of both open-ended and semi-structured questions. Qualitative interviews consist of unstructured and generally open-ended questions to draw from the views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2009). The questions spanned from topics regarding participant's background, family history and personal opinions about their development as an individual and it's perceived correlation to leadership. The questions will provoke memories of childhood, teenage and young adult development, in

addition to current leadership activities and aspirations for desired leadership goals in the future. The interview questions developed were based on the Theory of Transformational Leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) in connection with the topics of early life development, emotional intelligence, environment and belief system. The concepts were used to develop the interview questions.

An in person interview protocol was chosen as the best method for administration. The interview will take place the week following an i L.E.A.D. University sponsored program relating to the topic of Building a legacy through leadership. The topic of discussion is ideal to prelude the interview with selected student participants. Their minds have been stimulated to think of their lives and the legacy they are building and striving to build in the future. Students will be notified of their request for participation prior to the event from an email containing an attachment of the informed consent document reviewing the purpose of the study, guidelines and rights to confidentiality.

Participants responded to personal, developmental and situational questions and statements. The interview consisted of open-ended and semi-structured questions. Examples of each type of question include:

Examples of open-ended questions:

As a leader, what do you feel are the most valuable assets a leader possesses?

How do you feel your background influences have impacted your leadership, if at all?

How would you describe your leadership style?

In your opinion what defines a transformational leader?

The researcher asked these types of questions to allow the participants to think about their leadership development experiences as a whole from childhood through present. These questions focus on the self while incorporating outward impacting elements and experiences. At times

probing questions were offered by the researcher to enhance the intellectual stimulation of the participant. This allowed participants to further recall the experiences called upon by the selected interview questions.

Examples of semi-structured questions:

How has your family background including parents, siblings, etc. positively impacted you as a leader?

Who would you describe as role models in your life and how has the examples set before you impacted your leadership and personal development?

These types of questions can provide participants with examples of how role models are tied to their development. At times probing questions will be offered by the researcher to enhance the intellectual stimulation of the participant. This will allow the participants to further recall the experiences called upon by the selected interview questions. At the conclusion of the interview all participants were allowed to add any further remarks, comments or additional analysis of interview questions they deemed necessary. Participants were thanked for their time and reminded that interviews will remain confidential. For the purpose of this study personal identifying information such as age and gender are the only pieces of data included in the interview. This will aide in identifying trends that will provide opportunities for future research.

### **Data Analysis Strategy**

The goal of data analysis is to make sense of our data. This process involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting the information the researcher has collected and making sense of what people have said (Merriam, 2009, p. 176). The present study is congruent with Creswell (2009) in relationship to collecting open-ended data from the use of questions. As a result this generates the development of data analysis from information supplied by participants.

A general form of coding will be used to interpret the interview transcripts in relation to transformational leadership development, precursors as determinants and early life experiences.

*Thematic coding* will be conducted through the researchers process of reading through, organizing and preparing the data for analysis (Creswell, 2009). From this procedure a general sense and overall meaning of the data collected is obtained. By using the theory of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) as a base the researcher can systematically classify the data into schemes consisting of categories or themes (Merriam, 2009, p. 188).

Following general coding

*Pattern coding* will further identify relationships derived from participant data. Categories, and explanations for findings in research can be identified at this level (Creswell, 2009). From analyzing the patterns and categories, new levels of understanding and emerging findings within the collected interviews may arise.

*Triangulation.* At this level of data analysis a comparison of previous patterns and themes identified in the preceding sections of coding is reviewed by the researcher (Saldana, 2009). Results may include but are not limited to emerging ideas, validation of hypothesis and topics for future research. This is accomplished by comparing the original data collected from participants to what has been found.

## **Summary**

This chapter provides a review of the quantitative and qualitative mixed methodology to be used in measuring the predecessors of transformational leadership. The data will be collected using a questionnaire comprised of scaled, rank order and nominal questions, in addition to an open ended interview protocol that utilizes a three step coding system for interpretation. The following chapter will analyze the data retrieved.

### Quantitative Results

In this chapter the researcher examined the response data collected from quantitative survey questionnaires from a sample of university level students. Statistical analysis specifically: frequency/descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlations, and one sample t-tests were used to interpret quantitative results. In the following chapter, qualitative data analysis utilized a three step coding process consisting of thematic coding, pattern coding, and triangulation. This dual mixed methods procedure was utilized to capture multiple perspectives of the impact of early life experiences within leadership development.

### Sample

A total of 79 responses were collected using the survey questionnaire. The original sample was intended to be distributed to 323 participants. This response rate yields a 10.83% margin of error. Of the 79 participants 57 (72.2 %) were female and 22 (27.8%) were male (See Table 1). The population sample size proved to be ethnically diverse (See Table 2). However the most represented ethnicities comprised of 34 (43%) White, and 30 (38%) Black or African American. Two methods of survey distribution was utilized; online through a google form link and in person following a campus based leadership development activity.

Table 1. *Frequency: Gender*

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Female	57	72.2	72.2
	Male	22	27.8	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0

Table 2. *Frequency: Race/ethnicity.*

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
		1	1.3	1.3
Asian	5	6.3	6.3	7.6
Black or African American	30	38.	38.0	45.6
		0		
Valid Hispanic or Latino	5	6.3	6.3	51.9
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	4	5.1	5.1	57.0
White	34	43.0	43.0	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	

### Data Analysis and Coding

Using the IBM SPSS Statistical Software (Version 21) Pearson's  $r$  correlations and one sample t-tests were utilized to determine the significance and strength of relationships found between the Dependent Variable of Transformational Leadership and the Independent Variable factors including Emotional Intelligence, Environment and Belief System. The data analysis and coding was performed in sets of Pearson's correlation and one-sample t-tests for each grouping of dependent variable to independent variable, beginning with transformational leadership and emotional intelligence. Then transformational leadership and environment, transformational leadership, and belief system. Finally the relationship between the dependent and moderating variables, transformational leadership and early life experiences, is examined.

***Pearson's correlation: Emotional intelligence.*** The results from these correlation tests reveal numerous strong relationships between the dependent variable (transformational leadership) and each of the independent variables (emotional Intelligence, environment and belief system). The results displayed in Table 3 show significant relationships specific to emotional intelligence. The identified relationships fall between .400 and .599, therefore the relationships are recognized as strong (Szafran, 2012) Seventy-nine of the correlations examined between transformational leadership and emotional intelligence, five relationships proved the

strongest. There is a strong positive correlation (.528, .000, 78) between individuals who enjoy checking in with teammates to accomplish goals (Achievement Checks) and individuals who consider ethics when making decisions (Ethical Decisions). Strong correlations were also identified for the following relationships; Helping others and Optimistic (.461, .000, 77), Achievement checks and Optimistic (.509, .000, 77), Creative thinking and EQ-Higher influence (.436, .000, 79), and EQ-Relating and Helping Others (.434, .000, 76). The strong positive relationships indicate that an increase in the primary variable results in an increase in the secondary variable (Szfran, 2012). These results confirm the research inferring a positive link between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership (Barbuto & Burbach, 2006; Wang & Huang, 2009).

Table 3. *Correlations: Transformational leadership vs. Emotional intelligence.*

		Ethical Decisions	Optimistic	Achievement Checks	Performance Goals	Quality Relationships	EQ-Higher Influence	EL-Model Influence
Ethical Decisions	Pearson	1	.324**	.528**	.195	.202	.141	.394**
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.000	.090	.078	.218	.001
	N	78	76	78	77	77	78	74
Optimistic	Pearson	.324**	1	.509**	.258*	-.019	.271*	.082
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.000	.025	.874	.017	.488
	N	76	77	77	76	76	77	73
Achievement Checks	Pearson	.528**	.509**	1	.360**	.166	.286*	.383**
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.001	.147	.011	.001
	N	78	77	79	78	78	79	75
Performance Goals	Pearson	.195	.258*	.360**	1	.313**	.196	.362**
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.090	.025	.001		.006	.086	.002
	N	77	76	78	78	77	78	74
Quality Relationships	Pearson	.202	-.019	.166	.313**	1	.031	.105
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.078	.874	.147	.006		.789	.374
	N	77	76	78	77	78	78	74
EQ-Higher Influence	Pearson	.141	.271*	.286*	.196	.031	1	.037
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.218	.017	.011	.086	.789		.751
	N	78	77	79	78	78	79	75
EL-Model Influence	Pearson	.394**	.082	.383**	.362**	.105	.037	1
	Correlation							
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.488	.001	.002	.374	.751	
	N	74	73	75	74	74	75	75

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**One-sample t-test: Emotional intelligence.** A one- sample t-test was used as a method of hypothesis testing for all research questions for the current study. Test results for RQ1: Does emotional intelligence indicated by self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy and social skills indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational, is shown in Tables 4 and 5. The one sample statistics are shown in Table 5. The one sample test for the factors of emotional intelligence that indicate transformational leadership is listed in Table 4. Statistical significance was revealed as follows: EQ-Higher influence (80.00, 78, .000), EQ-Relating (21.12, 75, .000), EQ-Understanding people (39.22, 75, .000), EQ-Emotional Focus (22.50, 77, .000). Table 5 shows all results as being less than 0.05, which indicates the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis factors are likely. According to the p-value (probability value) shown in Table 4 the results suggest that emotional intelligence does indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. RQ1 indicates a one-tailed directional significance level. Therefore,  $.000/2$  indicates significance level remains .000.

Table 4. *One sample t-test: Emotional intelligence.*

	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
EQ-Higher Influence	80.000	78	.000	1.013	.99	1.04
EQ-Relating	21.117	75	.000	1.763	1.60	1.93
EQ-Understanding People	39.223	75	.000	1.803	1.71	1.89
EQ-Emotional Focus	22.498	77	.000	2.282	2.08	2.48

Table 5. *One-sample statistics: Emotional intelligence.*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EQ-Higher Influence	79	1.01	.113	.013
EQ-Relating	76	1.76	.728	.083
EQ-Understanding People	76	1.80	.401	.046
EQ-Emotional Focus	78	2.28	.896	.101



***Pearson's correlation-Environment.*** Table 6 identifies 128 total correlations between the dependent variable (transformational leadership) and environment. Of the 128, 49 were moderate, ranging from .200-.399, and 79 were strong to very strong (Szafran, 2012). Results reveal nine significantly strong correlations including three strong negative relationships. There was a positive relationship between Helping Others and Env-Traumatic Events (.429, .000, 66). This infers the greater the traumatic impact of an event in an individual's life the greater the desire to help others. Env-Quality of Life was positively correlated to Env-Stability (.593, .000, 77) revealing the higher the stability experienced by participants the higher their perceived quality of life. The remaining strong positive relationships were Env-Parental Support and Env-Quality of life (.536, .000, 77), Env-Emotional Support and Env-Quality of Life (.597, .000, 75), Env-Emotional Support and Env-Parental Support (.518, .000,76), and finally, Env-Stability and Env-Emotional Support (.533, .000, 76). For each factor the results infer the increase in one variable probes the increase in the secondary variable (Szfran, 2012).

Additionally, three strong negative relationships were identified; Env-Stability and Env-Traumatic Event (-.502, .000, 77), Env-Dual Parenting and Env-Traumatic Event (-.467, .000, 76), and, Env-Stability and Env-Single Parenting (-.528, .000, 44). For each of these variables the increase in one produces a decrease in the secondary variable (Szafran, 2012). All factors for environment are significant at the 0.01 to 0.05 level of significance. These results further confirm the critical role that both parents and environment play in the healthy development of individuals as leaders (Madsen, 2010; Murphy & Reicherd, 2011; Popper & Mayselless, 2003).

Table 6. *Correlations: Transformational leadership versus environment.*

		Ethical Decisions	Optimistic	Achievement Checks	Performance Goals	Quality Relationships	Env-Stability	Env-Traumatic Impact	Env-Emotional Support	EL-Model Influence
Ethical Decisions	Pearson Correlation	1	.324**	.528**	.195	.202	.380**	.181	.338**	.394**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.000	.090	.078	.001	.148	.003	.001
	N	78	76	78	77	77	76	65	75	74
Optimistic	Pearson Correlation	.324**	1	.509**	.258*	-.019	.263*	.092	.153	.082
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.000	.025	.874	.022	.463	.194	.488
	N	76	77	77	76	76	76	66	74	73
Achievement Checks	Pearson Correlation	.528**	.509**	1	.360**	.166	.262*	.172	.331**	.383**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.001	.147	.021	.167	.003	.001
	N	78	77	79	78	78	77	66	76	75
Performance Goals	Pearson Correlation	.195	.258*	.360**	1	.313**	.221	-.027	.222	.362**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.090	.025	.001		.006	.055	.828	.055	.002
	N	77	76	78	78	77	76	65	75	74
Quality Relationships	Pearson Correlation	.202	-.019	.166	.313**	1	.094	-.002	.161	.105
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.078	.874	.147	.006		.421	.989	.168	.374
	N	77	76	78	77	78	76	65	75	74
Env-Stability	Pearson Correlation	.380**	.263*	.262*	.221	.094	1	.483**	.597**	.485**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.022	.021	.055	.421		.000	.000	.000
	N	76	76	77	76	76	77	77	66	75
Env-Traumatic Impact	Pearson Correlation	.181	.092	.172	-.027	-.002	.483**	1	.308*	.329**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.148	.463	.167	.828	.989	.000		.012	.008
	N	65	66	66	65	65	66	66	66	64
Env-Emotional Support	Pearson Correlation	.338**	.153	.331**	.222	.161	.597**	.308*	1	.638**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.194	.003	.055	.168	.000	.012		.000
	N	75	74	76	75	75	75	66	76	74
EL-Model Influence	Pearson Correlation	.394**	.082	.383**	.362**	.105	.485**	.329**	.638**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.488	.001	.002	.374	.000	.008	.000	
	N	74	73	75	74	74	74	64	74	75

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**One-sample t-test: Environment.** Tables 7 and 8 show results for RQ2: Do environmental factors, family dynamic, attachment styles, and role models indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational? The one sample statistics are seen in Table

8. The one-sample test results for the factors of environment that indicate transformational leadership are found in Table 7. Statistical significance was revealed as follows: Env-Quality of Life (19.76, 77, .000), Env-Stability (14.85, 76, .000), Env-Traumatic Event (27.37, 77, .000), Env-Traumatic Impact (14.62, 65, .000), Env-Dual Parenting (24.50, 75, .000), Env-Single Parenting (11.60, 43, .000), Env-Non Biological Parenting (65.26, 56, .000), Env-Parental Support (31.54, 76, .000), Env-Emotional Support (13.89, 75, .000), Env-Financial Support (39.22, 75, .000). Table 7 shows all results as being less than 0.05, which indicates the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis factors are likely. According to the p-value (probability value) shown in Table 8, the results suggest that environment does indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. RQ2 indicates a one-tailed directional significance level. Therefore,  $.000/2$  indicates significance level remains .000.

Table 7. *One sample t-test- environment.*

	Test Value = 0		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df			Lower	Upper
	Env-Quality of Life	19.756			77	.000
Env-Stability	14.846	76	.000	2.052	1.78	2.33
Env-Traumatic Event	27.369	77	.000	1.551	1.44	1.66
Env-Traumatic Impact	14.622	65	.000	2.697	2.33	3.07
Env-Dual Parenting	24.500	75	.000	1.342	1.23	1.45
Env-Single Parenting	11.596	43	.000	2.568	2.12	3.01
Env-Non Biological Parenting	65.262	56	.000	3.895	3.78	4.01
Env-Parental Support	31.540	76	.000	1.104	1.03	1.17
Env-Emotional Support	13.887	75	.000	1.803	1.54	2.06
Env-Financial Support	39.223	75	.000	1.803	1.71	1.89

Table 8. *One sample statistics- environment.*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Env-Quality of Life	78	1.47	.659	.075
Env-Stability	77	2.05	1.213	.138
Env-Traumatic Event	78	1.55	.501	.057
Env-Traumatic Impact	66	2.70	1.498	.184
Env-Dual Parenting	76	1.34	.478	.055
Env-Single Parenting	44	2.57	1.469	.221
Env-Non Biological Parenting	57	3.89	.451	.060
Env-Parental Support	77	1.10	.307	.035
Env-Emotional Support	76	1.80	1.132	.130
Env-Financial Support	76	1.80	.401	.046

**Pearson’s correlation: Belief system.** Table 9 identifies 138 correlations between the dependent variable (transformational leadership) and belief system. Moderate relationships were found for 57 of the 138 correlations. Strong relationships identified the remainder of the associations, with nine relationships emerging as the most significant: BS-Respect and BS-Encourage goals (.615, .000, 77), BS-Responsibility and BS-Encourage Goals (.575, .000, 76), BS-Responsibility and BS-Respect (.651, .000, 74), DV-Achievement Checks and BS-Respect (.503, .000, 75), DV-Ethical Decisions and BS-Respect (.449, .000, 74), DV-Optimistic and BS-Respect (.417, .000, 73), DV-Achievement Checks and BS-Responsibility (.517, .000, 76), BS-Ethics and BS-Responsibility (.477, .000, 75), and last BS-Confidence and BS-Personal Abilities (.557, .000, 75). All relationships are significant at the 0.01 to 0.05 level of significance. These findings prove that an increase in one variable results in the increase of the second variable (Szafran, 2012). Two factors; BS-Motivation and DV-Positive group communication were found to have the least amount of correlations.

Table 9. *Correlations: Transformational leadership versus belief system.*

		Ethical Decisions	Optimis- tic Checks	Achievem- ent Goals	Performa- nce Goals	Quality Relations hips	EL- Model Influen- ce	BS- Perso- nal Abilitie s	BS- Motivati- on	BS- Ethi- cs	BS- Responsib- ility	BS- Resp- ect	BS- Encoura- ge Goals
Ethical Decisions	Pearson Correlati- on		.324**	.528**	.195	.202	.394**	.329**	.200	.320**	.466**	.449**	.352**
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.004	.000	.090	.078	.001	.004	.088	.005	.000	.000	.002
	N	78	76	78	77	77	74	75	74	76	75	74	76
Optimistic	Pearson Correlati- on	.324**	1	.509**	.258*	-.019	.082	.318**	.024	.295**	.336**	.417**	.339**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.004		.000	.025	.874	.488	.006	.838	.011	.003	.000	.003
	N	76	77	77	76	76	73	74	73	74	75	73	75
Achievem- ent Checks	Pearson Correlati- on	.528**	.509**	1	.360**	.166	.383**	.254*	.218	.387**	.517**	.503**	.346**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.000		.001	.147	.001	.027	.061	.001	.000	.000	.002
	N	78	77	79	78	78	75	76	75	76	76	75	77

	Pearson	.195	.258*	.360**	1	.313**	.362**	.060	.302**	.229	.245*	.295*	.283*
	Correlati												
Performan													
ce Goals	Sig. (2-	.090	.025	.001		.006	.002	.607	.009	.048	.034	.011	.013
	tailed)												
	N	77	76	78	78	77	74	75	74	75	75	74	76
	Pearson	.202	-.019	.166	.313**	1	.105	.023	.062	-.035	.116	.055	.006
	Correlati												
Quality													
Relationsh	on												
ips	Sig. (2-	.078	.874	.147	.006		.374	.846	.599	.763	.323	.644	.961
	tailed)												
	N	77	76	78	77	78	74	75	75	75	75	74	76
	Pearson	.394**	.082	.383**	.362**	.105	1	.377**	.315**	.247	.498**	.472**	.439**
	Correlati												
EL-Model													
Influence	on												
	Sig. (2-	.001	.488	.001	.002	.374		.001	.006	.034	.000	.000	.000
	tailed)												
	N	74	73	75	74	74	75	74	74	74	74	73	75
	Pearson	.329**	.318**	.254*	.060	.023	.377**	1	.291*	.183	.297**	.295*	.305**
	Correlati												
BS-													
Personal	on												
Abilities	Sig. (2-	.004	.006	.027	.607	.846	.001		.012	.116	.010	.011	.007
	tailed)												
	N	75	74	76	75	75	74	76	74	75	75	74	76
	Pearson	.200	.024	.218	.302**	.062	.315**	.291*	1	.218	.324**	.230	.183
	Correlati												
BS-													
Motivation	on												
	Sig. (2-	.088	.838	.061	.009	.599	.006	.012		.062	.005	.051	.116
	tailed)												
	N	74	73	75	74	75	74	74	75	74	74	73	75
	Pearson	.320**	.295*	.387**	.229*	-.035	.247*	.183	.218	1	.477**	.355**	.278*
	Correlati												
BS-													
Ethics	on												
	Sig. (2-	.005	.011	.001	.048	.763	.034	.116	.062		.000	.002	.015
	tailed)												
	N	76	74	76	75	75	74	75	74	76	75	74	76
	Pearson	.466**	.336**	.517**	.245*	.116	.498**	.297**	.324**	.477**	1	.651**	.575**
	Correlati												
BS-													
Responsib	on												
ility	Sig. (2-	.000	.003	.000	.034	.323	.000	.010	.005	.000		.000	.000
	tailed)												
	N	75	75	76	75	75	74	75	74	75	76	74	76
	Pearson	.449**	.417**	.503**	.295*	.055	.472**	.295*	.230	.355	.651**	1	.615**
	Correlati												
BS-													
Respect	on												
	Sig. (2-	.000	.000	.000	.011	.644	.000	.011	.051	.002	.000		.000
	tailed)												
	N	74	73	75	74	74	73	74	73	74	74	75	75
	Pearson	.352**	.339**	.346**	.283*	.006	.439**	.305**	.183	.278	.575**	.615**	1
	Correlati												
BS-													
Encourag	on												
e Goals	Sig. (2-	.002	.003	.002	.013	.961	.000	.007	.116	.015	.000	.000	
	tailed)												
	N	76	75	77	76	76	75	76	75	76	76	75	77

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**One-sample t-test: Belief system.** Tables 10 and 11 show results for RQ3: Does an individual's belief system, decision making, self-views and self-worth indicate a greater

likelihood that a leader will become transformational? Table 11 indicates the one sample statistics. The one sample test for the factors of belief system that indicate transformational leadership is listed in Table 10. Statistical significance was revealed as follows: BS-Confidence (37.23, 75, .000), BS-Personal Abilities (16.58, 75, .000), BS-Openly Share (22.30, 76, .000), BS-Decision Making (28.21, 72, .000), BS-Motivation (17.61, 74, .000), BS-Ethics (20.52, 75, .000), BS-Responsibility (17.80, 75, .000), BS-Respect (14.64, 74, .000), BS-Encourage Goals (12.40, 76, .000). Table 10 shows all results as being less than 0.05, which indicates the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis factors are likely. According to the p-value (probability value) shown in Table 11, the results suggest that belief system does indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. RQ3 indicates a one-tailed directional significance level. Therefore,  $.000/2$  indicates significance level remains .000.

Table 10. *One sample t-test: Belief system.*

	Test Value = 0		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df			Lower	Upper
	BS-Confidence	37.231			75	.000
BS-Personal Abilities	16.584	75	.000	2.674	2.35	2.99
BS-Openly Share	22.302	76	.000	1.779	1.62	1.94
BS-Decision Making	28.207	72	.000	1.616	1.50	1.73
BS-Motivation	17.608	74	.000	1.800	1.60	2.00
BS-Ethics	20.518	75	.000	1.882	1.70	2.06
BS-Responsibility	17.801	75	.000	1.368	1.22	1.52
BS-Respect	14.641	74	.000	1.387	1.20	1.58
BS-Encourage Goals	12.404	76	.000	1.377	1.16	1.60

Table 11. One sample statistics-belief system.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
BS-Confidence	76	1.07	.250	.029
BS-Personal Abilities	76	2.67	1.405	.161
BS-Openly Share	77	1.78	.700	.080
BS-Decision Making	73	1.62	.490	.057
BS-Motivation	75	1.80	.885	.102
BS-Ethics	76	1.88	.799	.092
BS-Responsibility	76	1.37	.670	.077
BS-Respect	75	1.39	.820	.095
BS-Encourage Goals	77	1.38	.974	.111

*Pearson's correlation-Early life experiences.* The moderating variable, early life experiences revealed a total of 81 correlations, 39 moderate and two strong in association with the dependent variable (Transformational leadership). A strong relationship was identified between EL-Model Description and EL-Parental Models (.492, .000, 51) indicating that many of the participants identified parents as role models growing up. Additionally, results show that EL-Support System and EL-Parental Models (.519, .000, 76) produce a strong positive relationship revealing the more that parents serve as role models to their children growing up the more support their children perceive and receive. This supports two paradigms of research previously identified; the impact of parenting styles (Avolio et al., 2009) and the role of social modeling (Bandura, 2008). Together these elements produce an essential system for positive development during the early life years and beyond. Both associations prove to be significant at the 0.01 to 0.05 level of significance.

Table 12. *Correlations: Transformational leadership versus early life experiences.*

		Ethical Decisions	Optimistic	Achievement Checks	Performance Goals	Quality Relationships	EL-Model Influence
Ethical Decisions	Pearson	1	.324**	.528**	.195	.202	.394**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004	.000	.090	.078	.001
	N	78	76	78	77	77	74
Optimistic	Pearson	.324**	1	.509**	.258*	-.019	.082
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004		.000	.025	.874	.488
	N	76	77	77	76	76	73
Achievement Checks	Pearson	.528**	.509**	1	.360**	.166	.383**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.001	.147	.001
	N	78	77	79	78	78	75
Performance Goals	Pearson	.195	.258*	.360**	1	.313**	.362**
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.090	.025	.001		.006	.002
	N	77	76	78	78	77	74
Quality Relationships	Pearson	.202	-.019	.166	.313**	1	.105
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.078	.874	.147	.006		.374
	N	77	76	78	77	78	74
EL-Model Influence	Pearson	.394**	.082	.383**	.362**	.105	1
	Correlation						
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.488	.001	.002	.374	
	N	74	73	75	74	74	75

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**One-sample t-test-Early Life Experiences.** Tables 13 and 14 show results for Moderating Variable, Early Life Experiences. Table 14 indicates the one sample statistics. The one sample test for the factors of early life experiences that indicate transformational leadership is listed in table 13. Statistical significance was revealed as follows: EL-Support System (16.17, 76, .000), EL-Model Influence (16.95, 74, .000), EL-Model Leadership (45.08, 73, .000), EL-Parental Models (22.57, 75, .000), EL-Model Descriptions (10.81, 50, .000). Table 13 shows all results as being less than 0.05, which indicates significance. According to the p-value (probability value) shown in Table 14, the results suggest that early life experiences do have an impact to future leadership development.

Table 13. One sample t-test: Early life experiences

	Test Value = 0		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df			Lower	Upper
	EL-Support System	16.173			76	.000
EL-Role Model	35.057	76	.000	1.078	1.02	1.14
EL-Model Influence	16.954	74	.000	1.720	1.52	1.92
EL-Model Leadership	45.078	73	.000	1.041	.99	1.09
EL-Parental Models	22.570	75	.000	2.158	1.97	2.35
EL-Model Description	10.808	50	.000	1.961	1.60	2.33

Table 14. One sample statistics: Early life experiences.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
EL-Support System	77	1.77	.958	.109
EL-Role Model	77	1.08	.270	.031
EL-Model Influence	75	1.72	.879	.101
EL-Model Leadership	74	1.04	.199	.023
EL-Parental Models	76	2.16	.834	.096
EL-Model Description	51	1.96	1.296	.181

## Summary

In this chapter the researcher explained how the responses were analyzed and reported. Using the IBM SPSS statistics software descriptive and inferential statistics were used to identify strong correlations and significant relationships among the data. Significant results were revealed



between the independent and dependent variables. The next section will discuss the findings of the qualitative interviews. This will be accomplished by utilizing a qualitative three step coding process.

### **Qualitative Findings**

In this chapter the researcher examined responses from nine participants to interviews of open-ended and semi-structured questions. A three level coding process was used to interpret the responses. The researcher will describe the participants, the findings at each level of coding and analysis, and will finish with a discussion of the triangulation of the qualitative results. Following this procedure, the results and findings of the dual methods will be converged and compared to draw conclusions regarding the relationship between transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, environment, and belief system in conjunction with leadership development.

#### **Participants**

The researcher selected the method of snowball sampling to recruit participants for this study. This method proved to be best due to the ability to capture multiple opinions and perspectives among both leaders and observers of leaders from two different groups within the same sample. Furthermore, a diverse assortment of age, gender and ethnicities were gained from the use of snowball sampling. A total of nine individuals, six males and three females participated in the phenomenological interviews. All interviews were conducted face-to-face, in person. Each of the participants were identified as student leaders and held a leadership position at their university.

Interview participant bios are as follows: Participant 1, was a 27 years old Hispanic male, classified as a senior. Participant 2, was a 32 year old Hispanic male, classified as junior/senior. Participant 3, was a 22 year old Black (African) female, classified as non graduating senior. Participant 4, was a 32 year old Black male, classified as a 1<sup>st</sup> semester Alumni. Participant 5, was a 27 year old Black (Caribbean) male, classified as a 2<sup>nd</sup> year MBA student. Participant 6,

was a 21 year old White male, classified as a Junior. Participant 7, was a 20 year old White male, classified as a Junior. Participant 8, was a 22 year old White female, classified as a Senior. Participant 9, was a 20 year old Black female, classified as a sophomore.

### Data Analysis and Coding

The researcher completed three stages of coding during the analysis process, thematic, pattern and triangulation. Thematic coding was completed as an initial level of analysis

**Thematic coding.** For this study, the initial coding phase was completed through the process of thematic coding. Saldana (2013) regards a theme as something that is not coded, but is an outcome of coding, categorization and analytic reflection (p. 175). Utilizing this process the researcher was able to breakdown interview transcripts from participants on the topic of early life experiences and leadership development into chunks of data. Naming the chunks of data with appropriate themes provided a further understanding of what was captured during the collection phase. In this study the researcher thoroughly and repeatedly listened to each interview to ensure that all data and nuances of data was noted and addressed. With the consent of participants all interviews were recorded to serve as an enhancement tool. Considering the extensive nature of interviews this proved to be an effective solution for the current mixed methods approach.

Table 15. *Thematic coding.*

Portions of data	Resulting theoretical constructs
*Parents encouraged exploring & creativity *Grew up respecting parents *Non-verbal parental expression caused negative self-views.	Leadership Development is "Parent" Driven
*Instilled positive values-commitment, giving back serving others, responsibility *Lead by example *Learned important values at young age	Leadership Development is "Value" Driven

Table 16. *Thematic coding, continued.*

Portions of data	Resulting theoretical constructs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Learned responsibility from running school store in elementary school.</li> <li>*First leadership program at Community College, a semester on cohort changed my life.</li> <li>*Siblings have less drive for exploration &amp; achievement due to seeing parents in negative depressive state</li> </ul>	Leadership Development is “Experience” Driven
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Awareness of value &amp; importance of leadership came as I matured</li> <li>*Learn to be comfortable outside of comfort zone</li> <li>*ability to connect with others and shake negative habits became better over time with maturity</li> </ul>	Leadership Development is “Maturity” Driven
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Saw authentic passion &amp; desire to make impact from teachers</li> <li>*Unspoken, but significant impact from Uncle. Saw his dedication &amp; love for his craft</li> <li>*Supportive family dynamic has instilled in me a supportive leadership style for those around me.</li> </ul>	Leadership Development is “Role-Model/ Relationship” Driven
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Role models instilled desire to incorporate a positive legacy of helping others achieve positive success.</li> <li>*Love being able to give students tools to make a positive impact in their lives and community</li> <li>*No one has to be the leader all the time, but everyone has to be the leader sometimes</li> </ul>	Leadership Development is “Legacy/ Significance” Driven
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Role models helped me develop a high standard for myself and others</li> <li>*Self-less leadership important, but not always easy</li> <li>*Role models (family) instilled that extreme accountability and reliability should be shown to the people on your team.</li> </ul>	Leadership Development is “Accountability/Responsibility” Driven

After completing the theming process, the researcher developed thematic coding memo’s, which describe the following items: How the themes were developed and dissected, what was learned, creative brainstorm highlighting what has surfaced/emerged from the data, and any links to the literature review (if applicable).

**Thematic Coding Memo.** Maturity driven elements of leadership development promotes awareness, acceptance responsibility of growth opportunities as an individual and leader. Experience driven leadership development i.e. “Defining Moments” allowed for the capacity of maturity. Maturity occurs once awareness of an opportunity to improve character, habits or

relationships has been identified and the desire to see the change occur converge together to ignite forward movement.

**Pattern coding.** The second level of coding, pattern coding, was accomplished by separating first-level theoretical construct titles into categories. According to Creswell (2009), categories, and explanations for findings in research can be identified at this level. From the process of condensing the categories three emerging patterns related to leadership development were identified: Human Relational, Inward Acknowledgement and Outward Influence.

The pattern of *Human Relational* emerged from theoretical construct titles of Parent and Role Model/Relationship driven leadership development. *Inward Acknowledgement* is the title of the second emerging pattern for leadership development. Value, maturity and accountability/responsibility are the theoretical constructs clustered under this pattern. The third and last emerging pattern consisting of experience and legacy/significance is entitled *Outward Influence*.

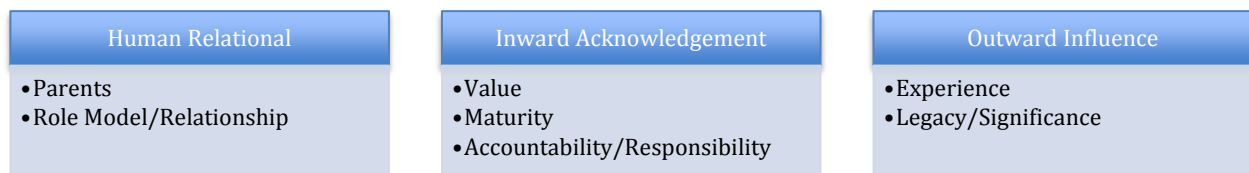


Figure 2. *Pattern coding.*

***Human relational.*** The data analysis of the theoretical constructs Parent and Role Model/Relationship reveals that participants had numerous similarities worth noting. All nine-interview participants were a product of two parent households. Additionally, majority of

participants (six out of nine) report being very close with parents, family and experiencing very encouraging, nurturing and loving environments. Also, participants note a positive family dynamic /attachment. Participant 8, identified the family as the most influential role models growing up, specifically dad and grandma. This confirms the research literature of Popper & Mayseless (2003), which states that parents have the ability to influence and reinforce, desired leadership traits in their children, such as achievement orientation, self-confidence, and self-esteem. These traits are nurtured through “good parenting” in congruence to the transformational leadership style. Additionally, this supports two paradigms of research previously identified; the impact of parenting styles (Avolio et al., 2009) and the role of social modeling (Bandura, 2008). Together these elements produce an essential system for positive development during the early life years and beyond.

*Inward acknowledgment.* Extensive review of the responses gathered during the interviews has identified commonality of participant responses and experiences under the value, maturity and responsibility/accountability theoretical constructs. Under the value construct development of reoccurring values were shared for the following topics: teamwork (i.e. relationship development skills), responsibility, serving others, and open-mindedness. Participants noted commonality regarding Maturity driven leadership development responses regarding the topics of awareness, acceptance, responsibility of growth opportunities and developing intentionality of thought and action. Under the Accountability/Responsibility construct all participant responses stemmed from a heavy emphasis on the mental maps developed through observation of role models during both early and current stages of development. All noted topics converge to encourage further development of foundational

leadership abilities. The inward acknowledgment of these areas fosters a commitment to strive for a deepen understanding of how learned thoughts, actions and views have an outward impact.

***Outward influence.*** After further analysis of the “Experience” driven theoretical construct an underlining pattern identifying experiences as “defining moments” emerged from participant responses. Awareness of self and others, collaboration, opportunities for development of skills were the most common resulting factors of “Experience” driven leadership development, i.e. “defining moments” from participant responses. This affords individuals the opportunity to move beyond the perceptions of self by raising their capacity to understand and incorporate the well being of others. The pinnacle of participant responses clustered under the “Legacy/Significance” construct were rooted in the idea that being conscious of other successful leaders and following their paths can help you to personally blaze a trail of significance. Additionally, the foundation of this construct emerged with a role model, experience and value focus. Participant 8 noted that her life changing experience of leadership development through a program in community college instilled the value of giving back. Today this translates to now taking on the responsibility of sharing with others student leadership values/lessons and helping to shape them just as she was shaped. Together the constructs of “Experience” and “Legacy/Significance” focus on the ability for outside elements to not only encourage and shape our leadership development, but allow us to strive to make a lasting impact and difference for those coming after us.

**Triangulation – qualitative.** Creswell (2014) identifies validity as one of the strengths of qualitative research. Establishing a validity base is accomplished by determining whether the findings are accurate from all standpoints; the researcher, the participant or the readers of an account (p. 201). Triangulation is the method that identifies, explores and connects this process

by way of the researcher comparing data at each level of coding previously conducted. The clustered constructs revealed from pattern coding (Human Relational, Inward Acknowledgement and Outward Influence) are compared with emerging categories from the thematic level of coding and the raw data. Multiple points of confirmation suggest that each of the emerging theoretical constructs influence one another.

Leadership development is composed of Human Relational elements. As the initial sources of contact and interaction for all individuals, they serve as foundational building blocks for all personal and leadership development, both Inward Acknowledgement and Outward Influence. After parents and role models have laid the initial groundwork of leadership development through the Human Relational side the area of inward acknowledgement can be formed, nurtured and shared over time. Outward Influence carries a high value for the elements of both previous patterns. Without the Human Relational elements of Parents and Role Models the Outward Influence capsule of leadership development would have no foundation, direction or guide for which our experiences as leaders and the desire to attain leadership significance/legacy to follow. Additionally, Inward Acknowledgement serves as an avenue of stability of action and thought can either ignite or hinder an individual's future development.

Based on the research outlined from the literature review in relation to data analyzed from participant interview responses, the findings infer that early life experiences have a substantial impact on an individual's leadership development process. The characteristics, behaviors and values outlined by the participants proved to have a strong link to the dependent variable, transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) and independent variables (emotional intelligence, environment, and belief system).



**Summary**

In this chapter the researcher explained the procedure of analysis for the convergent parallel Mixed Methods research study. Using the IBM SPSS Statistical software to analyze the quantitative data, and the three step qualitative coding process, significant associations were found between the dependent variable and the independent variables. The Discussion chapter will accomplish two goals. First, to further analyze and triangulate the quantitative results in comparison to the qualitative findings. Finally, conclusions, recommendations and answers to the research questions identified in the research methods chapter will be drawn.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the development of transformational leadership with an emphasis on the impact of early life experiences. The areas of emotional intelligence, environment and belief system were assessed to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to outstanding leadership development. In this chapter the researcher will use the convergent approach (Creswell, 2014) to compare the results of the mixed methodology design. According to Creswell (2014) the convergent approach consists of a report noting whether there is a convergence or divergence between the two sources of information, and includes a report comparing the results from the two database (p. 223). Last, responses to research questions, recommendation and implications for the future are identified.

### **Triangulation of Quantitative Results and Qualitative Findings.**

*Convergence postulate.* The dependent variable of transformational leadership was found to positively impact all identified independent variables. The first row of Table 13 *Mixed Methods Triangulation*, shows strong relationships specifically between the Human Relational pattern and transformational leadership, in addition to the Inward Acknowledgement pattern and transformational leadership. Role models in congruence with the Human Relational pattern, and the independent variable, environment identifies a strong correlation between traumatic events and helping others. The presence of role models in an individual's life helps them to process through traumatic events. As a result, individuals are more inclined to develop a commitment to help others in the future due to the support they received. Participant 2 noted a traumatic early life experience of having braces on both legs, and being told by doctors that he would not run without them. The encouragement and positive beliefs from his parents allowed him to overcome this obstacle. Now as a student leader he enjoys helping people accomplish their goals. From his

ability to push past hard times and feelings of doubt he has transferred that belief to others through his leadership style and now encourages others to push forward and be positive.

Table 17. *Mixed methods triangulation.*

	Human Relational	Inward Acknowledgement	Outward Influence
DV-Transformational Leadership	Role Models: Helping Others - Traumatic Events (.429, .000, 66)	Values: Optimistic - Respect: (.417, .000, 73) Maturity: Achievement Checks - Respect: (.503, .000, 75) Account/Responsibility: Achievement Checks - Responsibility: (.517, .000, 76)	Achievement checks-Optimistic (.509, .000, 77)
IV-Emotional Intelligence			Experience: Creative thinking - Higher Influence: (.436, .000, 77) Legacy/Significance: Relating - Helping Others: (.434, .000, 76)
IV-Environment	Parents: Parental Support - Quality of Life: (.536, .000, 77) Role Models: Support System - Parental Models: (.519, .000, 76)		
IV-Belief System		Account/Responsibility: Ethics - Responsibility: (.477, .000, 75), Values: Confidence - Personal Abilities (.557, .000, 75)	

The factors of values, maturity and responsibility/accountability work together to promote awareness of the inward acknowledgement pattern and converge with belief system elements of leadership development. Participant findings and survey responses were shown to positively relate to transformational leadership elements of optimism and achievement checks (displaying the capacity to work well with others to check in and achieve goals collectively). Congruence of these factors is seen through the response from Participant 6, stating “My father’s

hard work taught me that as a leader you have to be willing to commit the time in order to get things you want in life. This value has translated into all areas of my life”. Participant 8 further confirms this by her response, “I’ve learned to have a healthy disregard for the impossible. Work hard to pursue your vision as a leader even if others doubt.” She continues, “Don’t regret anything. Instead allow your setbacks to move you forward positively”. In congruence with the achievement checks element of the dependent variable transformational leadership Participant 5 noted “His role models (i.e. family) instilled that extreme accountability and reliability should be shown to the people on your team”. According to Participant 1, “Maturity built his self-esteem over time” Additionally, his ability to connect with others and shake negative habits became better over time with maturity.

The outward influence pattern consisting of experience and legacy/significance elements converge with transformational leadership and emotional intelligence. The strong correlations identified between creative thinking and higher influence was also found between relating and helping others. Participant 8 confirms congruence with her response “ I have been instilled with the value of giving back in regards to now taking the responsibility of sharing with other students leadership values/lessons and helping to shape them just as I was shaped”. According to Participant 2, due to an experience as a school club leader he learned to remain calm when others emotions are high. He stated, “This will allow you to make the best decision and solve problems”. Additionally he noted that maturity allowed him to begin to implement these lessons learned. Participant 6 noted the importance of listening to people, understanding the situation and offering the best help. While all three patterns (Human Relational, Inward Acknowledgement and Outward influence) the individual themes (Leadership development is Parent, Value, Experience, Maturity, Role Model/Relationship, Legacy/Significance,

Accountability/Responsibility) and independent variables (emotional intelligence, environment and belief system) prove to function interdependently in relation to transformational leadership, the strength of these variables is likely greatest in their convergence compared to the substantial effect of any one variable.

### **Research Questions**

**Research question one (RQ1):** Does emotional intelligence indicated by self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation, empathy and social skills indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational?

Previous literature suggested that emotional intelligence and transformational leadership are closely connected. The convergence of the findings and results confirms this relationship. The university student leaders all identified the ability to first understand yourself and then connect with others as a necessity for effective leadership. The researcher believed the impact of early life experiences in connection with emotional intelligence would reveal a strong relationship to the development of transformational leadership. Based on the views collected from the surveys and interview participants the awareness of the impact of emotional intelligence was not recognized or implemented until a greater understanding of this skill was developed as the participants matured in age and experience. Therefore, early life experiences was not found to have a substantial impact the development of emotional intelligence within individuals.

***Null hypothesis one (Ho1):*** Emotional intelligence does not indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

***Alternate hypothesis one a (Ha1a):*** Self-awareness is a factor of emotional intelligence that indicates a greater likelihood than a leader will become transformational.

Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 4 and 5 the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha1a is accepted, which indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results EQ-Emotional Focus (22.50, 77, .000) proves this relationship significant.

***Alternate hypothesis one b (Ha1b):*** Self-management is a factor of emotional intelligence that indicates a greater likelihood than a leader will become transformational.

Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 4 and 5, the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha1b is accepted, which indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results EQ-Emotional Focus (22.50, 77, .000) proves this relationship significant.

***Alternate hypothesis one c (Ha1c):*** Self-motivation is a factor of emotional intelligence that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 4 and 5 ,the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha1c is accepted, which indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results EQ-Higher influence (80.00, 78, .000) proves this relationship significant.

***Alternate hypothesis one d (Ha1d):*** Empathy is a factor of emotional intelligence that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 4 and 5, the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha1d is accepted, which indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results EQ-Understanding people (39.22, 75, .000) proves this relationship significant.

***Alternate hypothesis one e (Ha1e):*** Social skills are a factor of emotional intelligence that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 4 and \_5 the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha1e is accepted, which indicate, a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results EQ-Relating (21.12, 75, .000) proves this relationship significant.

**Research question two (RQ2):** Do environmental factors, family dynamic, attachment styles, and role models indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational?

The study revealed significant congruence between the literature's claim that environment is an essential component to leadership development, in addition to the convergence of the data sources. Responses show that early life experiences create an additional layer for learning and repeating foundational values, habits and experiences that serve as a base (both conscious and unconscious) for future leadership development.

**Null hypothesis two (Ho2):** Environmental factors indicated by family dynamic, attachment styles, and role models do not indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

**Alternate hypothesis two a (Ha2a):** Family dynamic is an environmental factor that indicates a greater likelihood than a leader will become transformational.

Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 7 and 8, the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha2a is accepted, which indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results Env-Quality of Life (19.76, 77, .000), Env-Stability (14.85, 76, .000) proves this relationship significant.

**Alternate hypothesis two b (Ha2b):** Attachment style is an environmental factor that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 7 and 8, the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha2b is accepted, which indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results Env-Parental Support (31.54, 76, .000), Env-Emotional Support (13.89, 75, .000), Env-Financial Support (39.22, 75, .000) prove this relationship significant.

*Alternate hypothesis two c (Ha2c):* Role models are an environmental factor that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 7 and 8, the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha2c is accepted, which indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results Env-Dual Parenting (24.50, 75, .000), Env-Single Parenting (11.60, 43, .000), Env-Non Biological Parenting (65.26, 56, .000) prove this relationship significant.

**Research question three (RQ3):** Does an individual's belief system, decision making, self-views and self-worth indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational?

This study reveals how individuals think impact how they act and consequently what they do with those actions. The literature shows that transformational leaders have a high belief in themselves, their abilities and others. Multiple respondents confirmed the research stating that through personal leadership and public leadership it is essential to positively push forward. The findings show that when you possess a positive belief system you can reach above limiting beliefs or circumstances to achieve great things, personally and as a unit. In congruence with the literature the convergence of findings prove that early life experiences lay the foundation for the mindset we adopt as individuals.

*Null hypothesis three (Ho3):* Development of an individuals belief system, decision-making, self-views and self-worth does not indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

*Alternate hypothesis three a (Ha3a):* Decision-making is a factor of belief system that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.



Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 10 and 11, the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha3a is accepted, which indicate a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results BS-Decision Making (28.21, 72, .000), BS-Ethics (20.52, 75, .000), BS-Responsibility (17.80, 75, .000) prove this relationship significant.

*Alternate hypothesis three b (Ha3b):* Self-views are a factor of belief system that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 10 and 11, the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha3b is accepted, which indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results BS-Confidence (37.23, 75, .000), BS-Personal Abilities (16.58, 75, .000), BS-Respect (14.64, 74, .000) prove this relationship significant.

*Alternate hypothesis three c (Ha3c):* Self-worth is a factor of belief system that indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational.

Based on the one sample t-test in Tables 10 and 11, the null hypothesis is rejected and Ha3c is accepted, which indicates a greater likelihood that a leader will become transformational. The results BS-Openly Share (22.30, 76, .000), BS-Motivation (17.61, 74, .000), BS-Encourage Goals (12.40, 76, .000), prove this relationship significant.

## **Conclusions**

From initial analysis of Participants responses through combined interviews and survey questionnaire's the following interpretations are identified from the process of convergence. The seven Theoretical Constructs identified during the Thematic coding process revealed a plethora of emerging data. Let's begin with the significant note that all interview participants came from two parent households. The environment for most growing up was described as very loving, supportive and encouraging. These findings are in congruence with previous research from

Conger (2004) and Avolio et al., (2009) noting the impact of family environment and early life experiences regarding the process of how these variables are involved in shaping the development of future leadership qualities.

The research shows that for the homes where both parents were there, but one parent was less involved or more detached, negative effects were seen specifically in males regards to lower self-esteem and self-views growing up. Participants 1 and 4 both experienced this difficulty growing up. These findings converge with previous literature (Avolio et al., 2009; Madsen 2010) to describe the powerful impact of the parent's roles, specifically fathers in a child's life. For participants whose parents and family created a positive environment, all developed a firm belief in themselves and their abilities. Additionally the participants who experienced receiving support from parents, but had negative experiences with siblings also encountered lowered self-esteem. At the core of leaders you can look back into early life influences and see the same characteristics, mannerisms and personality traits manifested into who they have become today (both positive and negative). Findings show that many leaders, especially those identified from youth are in environments that promote constant leadership growth. As a result, the findings show that many leaders have already gained awareness of weaknesses and are actively working to improve themselves as individuals and leaders. Parents play critical role in how far children develop and grow as leaders based upon two factors. First, the traits they pass to children (not always controllable i.e. personality). Second, the actions displayed and the commitment to maturity and growth as leaders the child views over time from parents.

Furthermore, many values were developed from interactions and experiences with parents, teachers and role models. A primary base of values was learned from early life experiences. Findings show that as individuals mature and grow; additional levels of values can

be added to the foundational base. Stability appears to be the driving force of positive value formation. Values appear to be constant across the lifetime of an individual. Findings assert that with age commitment and belief in values continue to grow and do not diminish. Values of participants (student leaders) were found to be synonymous with topics of thought and action (decisions), independence (achievement), responsibility, collaboration and exploration of others and self. From the study the belief emerged that initial value formation is developed from inside the environment, while additional values developed throughout the lifetime stem from personally impacting experiences outside the environment.

From the emergence of the *Experience Driven* leadership development theoretical construct the following conclusions were drawn. The convergence of the two data sources identified congruence to the idea that experience driven leadership development can also be stated as defining moments. Findings show when the defining moments are backed with positive reinforcement, modeling and encouragement through environment the result is the creation of higher intellectual pathways, beliefs, and habits of success that can be translated into opportunities to engage in experiences. These experiences aide to further solidify values and beliefs that have been formed through foundational early life and continuous experiences. Participant 7 mentioned a few defining moment experiences that have significantly impacted his life and actions. First, he stated that growing up he saw his parents as creators (makers), not consumers. He saw them continuously working on different projects. As a result they had developed habits such as consuming minimal television. Participant 7 stated, “This value has transformed into my ideals today”. As a 20-year-old college student he enjoys reading books, and learning new skills to continuously expand himself and his knowledge base. In another scenario Participant 7 mentioned the following, “An early life positive experience of building a

robot with my father in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade was a significant opportunity that encouraged the belief that I can accomplish anything”.

The opposite is also true, when these defining moments are backed with reinforcement, modeling and non-existent or lacking encouragement through environment, the result is the creation of lower intellectual pathways, beliefs and habits that can be translated into mediocrity or lower achievement capacity.

According to Participant 7,

Due to economic downturn and loss of job, family dynamic and behavioral characteristics of my parents have changed. As a result, I have noticed a negative psychological toll on my parents and my younger siblings. My younger brothers have less drive for exploration and achievement due to seeing my parents in a negative depressive state.

Participant 7 continues,

The things that made my parents successful and respected, they stopped doing. They consume television all the time now. They are no longer creative. They have changed from nurturing to depressive. As a result my brothers have created habits of consuming a large amount of video games and television.

Awareness of self and others, collaboration, and opportunities for development of skills were the most common resulting factors of the experience driven leadership development (i.e. defining moments) for participants.

*Maturity Driven* leadership development has been identified to promote awareness, acceptance, and responsibility of growth. These components work together to foster an intentionality of thought and action as an individual and a leader. Findings imply the emerging theoretical constructs impact and move across one another. For example, *experience driven* leadership development i.e. defining moments allowed for the space for maturity. In relation to transformational leadership Participant 2 stated, “I have switched to a positive leadership style.

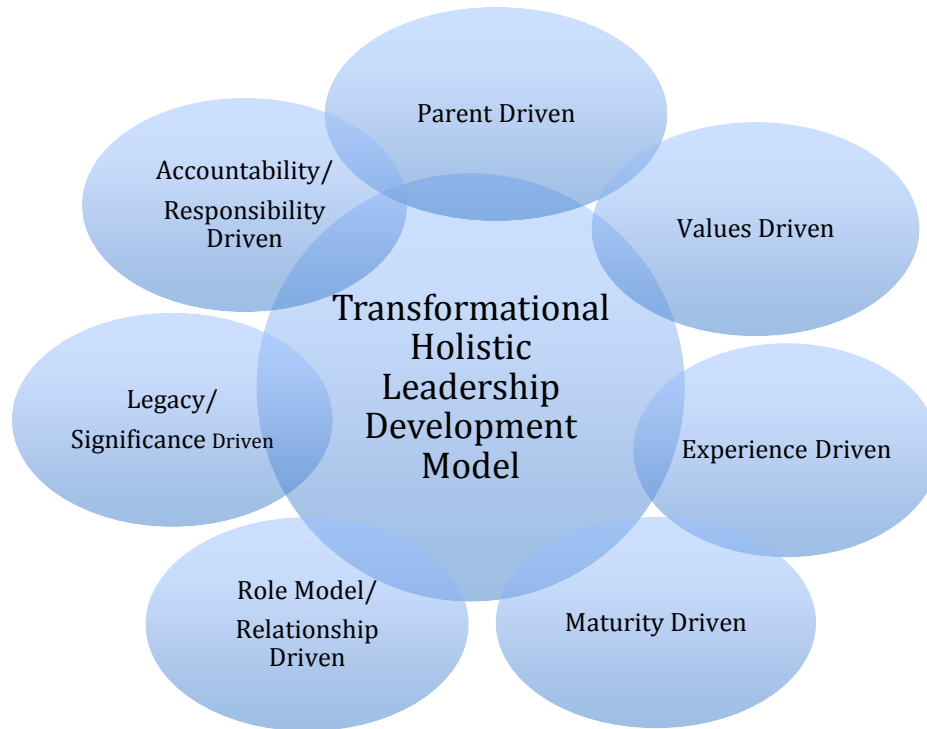
This includes motivating people to help them achieve something, inspiring and leading by actions.” Additionally the participant mentioned this switch was a result of maturity and experiences in different settings. The conclusion can be drawn that maturity occurs once awareness of an opportunity to improve character, habits or relationship has been identified and the desire to see the change occur meet together to ignite forward movement.

The findings for *Role Model/Relationship Driven* leadership development converge to conclude the following; we connect with others in the same way that we experienced and saw modeled before us during early life experiences. This includes, the areas of personality traits, value driven and experience driven. Additionally findings reveal much of leadership values and recognized leadership style has a direct connection to role models and impacting relationships. In congruence with previous literature (Bandura, 1969; Murphy & Reichard, 2011), authority figures help to define and shape how we operate as leaders. This study found the repeated sources of role models and significant relationships were connected with parents, colleagues, peers, and school professors/leaders.

From the conclusions derived from the *Legacy/Significance Driven* leadership development construct the belief has been adopted that being conscious of other successful leaders and following their paths can aide you in personally blazing a trail of significance. This construct was very closely connected to role model, experience and value focused accounts. Personal focus works together with “Experience” Driven leadership development to allow the maturity needed for long-term vision of significance. Regarding the final theoretical construct of *Accountability/Responsibility Driven* leadership development from the findings there proved to be a commitment to underlying factors of moral values, decision making, individual and collective achievement. For many participants the awareness of the importance of

accountability/responsibility was derived from many of the values learned by parents, role models, values, experience and maturity and all these help to establish the desire for significance through legacy. This construct identifies a heavy emphasis on the mental maps developed through observation and role models.

**Transformational holistic leadership development.** As a result of the analysis, convergence and congruence that has been displayed across data sources and literature, the Transformational Holistic Leadership Development Model has emerged. This model can be adopted and applied by any person with the mental capacity to learn from foundational parental/role model exposure of the past, continuously develop themselves through present values, areas of responsibility and an awareness that is only gained through the choice and implementation of maturity. Last, through the transformation that “defining moment” experiences reveal, a new commitment to leadership development and a higher level of leadership effectiveness can be attained. This includes a desire to build significance through legacy, not only for yourself, but expands the leadership reach to include those who will follow. This model believes that while there is no doubt that early life experiences play a substantial role in an individual’s leadership development, true outstanding (i.e. transformational) leaders have developed and act upon a continuous journey to optimal leadership effectiveness. Whether your early life experiences were favorable or not, the success is found not in focusing on what was done or not done for us in the past, but in how we choose to apply the experiences from our past to the realities of where we are today to draw us to greater opportunities for personal and shared development of others in the future.



*Figure 3.* Transformational holistic leadership development model.

### **Recommendations and Implications**

The researcher has introduced a model to direct, encourage and produce the development of future transformational holistic leaders. Further research is suggested to ensure the reliability of this model. While this was not noted specifically during data collection, the element of diversity regarding leadership development emerged through the study. The researcher suggests that future studies focus specifically on the impact of diversity as it relates to outstanding leadership development. Due to the parameters of focusing solely on university specific students, it would prove beneficial to enlarge the population to gain the perspectives of individuals at the university level who are not involved in leadership clubs or activities. Additionally, including adults both within and outside leadership roles who allow for the depth of leadership development to be further explored would prove a tremendous benefit. Although the precursors of emotional intelligence, environment, belief system, and early life experiences have proved to

be healthy predictors of an individual's development towards transformational leadership, they are not exclusive, meaning that without these identified factors attaining transformational leadership is not possible.

Time and sample proved to be limiting factors of the study. Of the 324 sample size, 79 participants were able to complete the survey in full due to time and organizational constraints. Nine participants responded to the qualitative interviews. In the future researchers should aim to survey the specified population to ensure the most accurate results. Additionally, more time should be allotted for data collection and analyzing when working with students. Lack of ability to access student population within a timely manner caused major setbacks in attaining data. As a result, partnership with another local university was requested. Due to time constraints needed to apply and clear through the universities IRB board, partnership with the school was unable to move forward. The length of the survey questionnaire should also be taken into consideration when working with students. The questionnaire for the current study was considered long. Although students did voluntarily participate, the success rate will increase for future studies when population specific tools for success are implemented. In the future it would be beneficial for research questions to specifically address outcomes for the moderating variable, early life experiences. This will allow for a directly recorded impact to the dependent and independent variables.

The researcher recommends a training program be developed that helps to make parents aware of the great role as initial leadership source, nurturers and models they play in the development or non-development of their children's lives. Many parents may believe they add immense value to their children by buying them material things. While these objects are not bad, the greatest values they impart to their children are the values taught through their actions in the



home and society. In addition, further instructional applications should be developed to aide all interested in the process of continuous understanding and implementation of leadership development; past, present, and future.

### **Summary**

The aim of this study was to discover the impact of early life experiences in connection to the precursors of emotional intelligence, environment, and belief system as it relates to individuals likelihood to develop into a transformational leader. The population for the study consisted of university level students who possessed leadership positions. The participants were recruited through purposeful snowball sampling. The final sample consisted of 79 survey responses and 9 interview participants. Surveys were administered both online through an email survey link and in person. All interviews were conducted face to face. From the IBM SPSS statistical analysis and three level coding process findings proved the convergence of the dual methods to be congruent in connection to significant relationships between the dependent and independent variables.

The following theoretical constructs emerged from the study: Leadership development is Parent, Values, Experience, Maturity, Role Model/Relationship, Legacy/Significance, Accountability/Responsibility Driven. These constructs were organized into three patterns: Human relational, Inward acknowledgement and Outward influence. Findings and analysis also led to significant discoveries such as strong correlations (.436, .000, .77) between creative thinking (DV) and EQ-Higher influence (IV). In addition to other correlations identified across the variables, this proved the quantitative congruence to transformational leadership characteristics and its relationship to the specified independent variables.

The Transformational Holistic Leadership Development Model was introduced and, which I recommend is further developed as a model that serves to aspire all individuals towards the belief that outstanding leadership development can be achieved. Additionally, the researcher recommends a training program empowering and educating parents to better direct leadership modeling for themselves and their children's future development.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Recruitment Materials

My name is Danielle Stradford. As a proud Alumni of Towson University and current graduate student I am seeking voluntary participation from students affiliated with the Towson University iL.E.A.D. program. I am second year graduate student pursuing a M.S.A. in Organizational Management with a concentration in Organizational Development. I am conducting my thesis research on the topic of leadership development with a heavy emphasis on the role of early life experiences. The details of this project include participation in a 15-20 minute survey questionnaire, a reflective journaling process (instructions to follow) and a 30-45 minute one-on-one interview. All methods will be used for the purpose of collecting data on the topic of transformational leadership and development factors.

**Attached please find the survey questionnaire** including the informed consent document laying out the guidelines, potential risks and rights to confidentiality and privacy associated with the study. Your assistance is appreciated and furthermore your willingness to add to the expansion of leadership development studies and training programs is highly valued.

#### **Areas of Focus:**

Early life experiences and how the following areas were shaped:

Belief system (decision-making, self-views, self-worth),

Environment (role models, attachment styles)

Emotional intelligence (ability to understand yourself and connect with others)

Survey link:

<https://docs.google.com/a/students.trinitydc.edu/forms/d/1u6XN7ZXLmpaKTSYH4bXWiddIzb5fOSI6KLXOmCkMk5M/viewform>

Thank you!

## Appendix B: Informed Consent Document

### Elements of Outstanding Leadership: A Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods Study of the Development of Transformational Leadership

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study examining \_the antecedents of effective leadership development from youth to young adulthood, which will add to the knowledge related to Transformational Leadership. My name is Danielle Stradford and the data collected in this interview will help fulfill the requirements for a Master of Arts/ Master of Science in Administration in Organizational Management at Trinity Washington University. I am under the supervision of my faculty advisor Dr. Kelley Wood.

**Participation Requires of You:** To complete a survey and some participants will be selected to participate in an interview. There is no planned use of deception involved in this study.

**Your Privacy:** Your participation in this study and your responses will be kept confidential. Any reference to you will be by pseudonym, including any direct quotes from your responses. This document and any notes or recordings that might personally identify you as a participant in this study will be kept in a locked place that only the researcher will have access to. Only the researcher and the research supervisor might know who has participated in this study. Three years after the completion of this research study all personally identifying information will be destroyed.

**Risks to you:** There are five acknowledged risks generally associated with participation in research studies such as this one: Physical, psychological, social, economic, and legal. The researcher foresees minimal risk for those who choose to participate in this study. There are no foreseen physical risks associated with this study; other risks might include the following:

You might experience anxiety, discomfort, or negative emotions as a result of responding to the questions asked of them in this research study. If you experience a negative reaction, you may choose to skip the question, to withdraw from the study, or you may contact my faculty advisor or the SPS Institutional Review Board, especially if your discomfort continues after the study. See the contact information on the page below.

You might experience social, economic, or legal implications if you share your responses or your participation in this study with others. If you choose to participate in this study, you are encouraged to keep your participation in this study and your responses confidential. The researcher will maintain your confidentiality throughout the study, and will destroy the records of your participation three years after the study is complete.

**Benefits to You:** There are not foreseen direct benefits to you regarding participation in this study beyond the general knowledge that you are assisting in furthering the knowledge related to this research topic, and assisting the researcher in completing the degree requirements. There is no compensation associated with participation in this study.



**Informed Consent Form**, continued:

**Elements of Outstanding Leadership: An Explanatory Mixed Methods Study of the  
Development of Transformational Leadership**

This document acknowledges you understand of your rights as a participant in this study, which the researcher has explained to you prior to signing this document.

I acknowledge that the researcher has explained my rights, the requirements of this study, and the potential risks involved in participating in this study. I understand there is no compensation for, or direct benefit of participating in this study. By signing below and providing my contact information I am indicating that I consent to participate in this study, that I am at least 18 years of age, and I am eligible to participate in this study.

You may withdraw from this study at any time by notifying me by email. If you have any concerns regarding your participation in this research study you may contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Kelley Wood, or the BGS Institutional Review Board (IRB), which oversees the ethical practice of research involving human participants conducted by students of the Trinity Washington University School of Business and Graduate Studies. You may ask for a copy of this document for your own records.

Signed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number, Email Address, or Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation,

Danielle Stradford  
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SPS-BGS Institutional Review Board Committee  
(202) 884-9620, or  
BGS@TrinityDC.edu with BGS IRB in the subject line.

**Appendix C: Survey Instrument****Elements of Outstanding Leadership Survey Questionnaire**

What is your gender?

Male, Female

What is your ethnicity?

Hispanic or Latino, White, American Indian or Alaska Native

Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Do you consider yourself a leader? \*

Yes, No

I view leaders as people who are influential \*

True, False

What is the priority level for developing your leadership skills? \*

Top Priority 1 2 3 4 5 Least Priority

I go beyond self-interest for the good of the group. \*

True, False

How would you rate your consideration of the moral and ethical consequences of decisions \*

Very good 1 2 3 4 5 Not good

When working with others I can easily communicate often resulting in positive agreement for others \*

Easily, Sometimes, Not Often, Never

Others often say they become excited or inspired when engaging in conversation with me

\*

True, False

How often do you talk optimistically about the future? \*

Frequently 1 2 3 4 5 Not at all

How often do you look for ways to think critically and challenge the status quo when working with others to solve problems? \*

Very often, Often, Sometimes, Not often, Never

You enjoy creating new ways to solve problems \*

Yes, No

Please indicate whether you view problems as set backs or opportunities for growth \*

Very likely, Likely, Neutral, Unlikely, Very Unlikely

When in a group you allow others to come up with solutions instead of providing your input and opinions \*

Always, Often, Sometimes, Never

Hearing the concerns of others is more important than talking about yourself \*

True, False

Please rate your level of excitement from helping others achieve their goals \*

Very excited, Excited, Neutral, Rarely excited, No excitement

People value your opinion and come to you for advice \*

Always, Often, Sometimes, Never

Please rate the level of importance for checking in periodically to make sure your team and it's members are achieving it's goals \*

Very important 1 2 3 4 5 Not important

Completing tasks without social connection is my preferred work style \*

True, False

I prefer to know what I can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved \*

Very important 1 2 3 4 5 6 Not important

In a team environment I enjoy receiving rewards for achievement vs. building quality relationships with teammates and leaders \*

Extremely important 1 2 3 4 5 6 Not important

Leaders who understand how to work well and communicate with others have higher levels of influence \*

True, False

In your opinion relating to others has a higher value than just getting tasks completed \*

Frequently, Often, Sometimes, Never

Possessing a high level of knowledge or expertise is more important than understanding people \*

True, False

Which word or phrase below indicates how often you are able to stay focused on tasks when experiencing emotional difficulties? \*

Frequently, Often, Sometimes, Never

Which word or phrase below indicates how you would rate your quality of life during your childhood? \*

Satisfactory, Average, Below Average, Unsatisfactory

Please rate how stable you perceive your home environment to be growing up. \*

Very stable 1 2 3 4 5 Very unstable

Did you experience any traumatic events growing up? \*

Yes, No

What was the overall impact on your life from this event \*

Very positive 1 2 3 4 5 6 Very negative

I grew up with both parents present in the home \*

True, False

If raised in a single parent home, which word or phrase below indicates the reason why \*

Divorce/Separation, Death of parent, Incarceration, Other

Which word or phrase below best indicates your parental dynamic if raised by individuals other than parents \*

Adopted, Foster care system/orphan, Family other than biological parents,  
None of the above

I grew up feeling both loved and supported by my parent(s)/guardian(s)

True, False

What is the level of emotional support and guidance you felt from your parent(s)/guardian(s) \*

Very supportive 1 2 3 4 5 Non supportive

My parents/guardians were only involved in my life to provide financial support \*

True, False

Which word or phrase below indicates the perceived strength of your support system (family, friends, role models) growing up \*

Very strong, Strong, Average, Weak, Very weak

Did you have role models growing up? \*

Yes, No

What type of influence did these role models have on your life? \*

Very positive 1 2 3 4 5 Very negative

The role models who have influenced my life possess desirable leadership qualities? \*

True, False

The role models who I looked up to growing up were my parents? \*

Always, Often, Sometimes, Never

Which word or phrase below indicated the best description of the role models who impacted your life growing up? \*

Parents, Teachers, Family outside of parents,

Celebrity/famous individual, Character from book or movie

I would describe myself as possessing self-confidence \*

Yes, No

Indicate your level of self-confidence in your personal abilities

Very high 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very low

Which word or phrase indicates how willing you are to openly share ideas in a group/team setting? \*

Always, Often, Sometimes, Never

Do you often make decisions based off what others think is right instead of your personal beliefs? \*

Yes, No

My level of self-confidence impacts my level of motivation to successfully complete tasks? \*

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

When faced with making decisions I often choose what is right, even if it is not the popular choice? \*

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Acting responsibly is important to me? \*

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Respect is an important factor that I believe should not only be given, but received? \*

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

Growing up I was encouraged to believe in myself and work hard to achieve my desired goals? \*

Strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 Strongly disagree

**Appendix D: Interview Instrument**

Is there a pseudonym you would like to use for your name in this study?

1. What is your name?
2. Age?
3. What is your ethnicity?
4. Classification in school?
5. What is your student leadership role at your school?
6. How long have you been in that position and what are some of the duties and responsibilities?
7. What type of impact do you feel that your early life experiences including the areas of your environment, belief system and emotional intelligence has played in shaping your development over the years as a leader?
8. Growing up who were the most influential persons in your life and why?
9. What type of impact did they have and how does this translate into your leadership today?
10. Describe your relationship/connection with your parents or caretakers growing up  
Probing: Did you feel a sense of security, love, abandonment?
11. How has this relationship impacted your self-esteem and self-views as an individual?
12. How do you feel your experiences in connecting with your parents/caretakers has impacted your ability to now connect with others?
13. Describe the role personality, specifically emotional intelligence has played in your development as a leader.
14. In what ways do you feel your early life experiences has impacted your leadership views and values today?
15. How would you describe yourself as a leader?
16. Who are the people you consider as leaders today?
17. What do you admire about them as leaders that you can implement as you lead others?