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# The Relationship Between Levels of Moral Reasoning and Transformational Leadership Behaviors of West Virginia Public School Administrators

Cynthia L. Daniel

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEVELS OF MORAL REASONING AND  
TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS OF WEST VIRGINIA PUBLIC  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Cynthia L. Daniel

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## Abstract

**The Relationship Between Levels of Moral Reasoning and Transformational Leadership Behaviors of West Virginia Public School Administrators****Cynthia L. Daniel**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between levels of moral reasoning and the use of transformational leadership behaviors of public school administrators in West Virginia. The *Defining Issues Test-2* was used to measure levels of moral reasoning. Transformational leadership behaviors were measured by the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x*.

The population for the study consisted of 55 superintendents; 62 deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents and 250 randomly selected principals. A total of 103 administrators participated in the study. A one-shot case study design was used. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation, T-Test for independent samples, and one-way analysis of variance were used for purposes of data analysis. An alpha level of .05 served as the level of significance. Data were entered and manipulated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software.

Results of the study indicated no statistically significant relationship between the administrators' levels of moral reasoning and their use of transformational leadership behaviors. Additionally, there was no significant difference between the moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors of male and female administrators.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my father, Nathan Kaplan. Though it has been 18 years since his death, I still think of him everyday and cherish the wonderful memories that we had together. I know how proud he would be today of “Daddy’s little girl.”

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

The role of today's school administrator has become increasingly more complex (Colgan, 2003; Fullan, 2003; Hopkins, 2000; Johnson, 2002; Norton, 2002; Pavin, 1991; Quinn, 2003; Rooney, 2003; Stronge, 1998). Responsibilities center around vision and planning, instructional leadership, discipline, communication, community relations, professional development, budget and finances, personnel issues, curriculum, and legislative mandates, just to name a few (Norton, 2002, Quinn, 2003). Most recently, school administrators and school systems have been faced with increasing pressure to address issues surrounding accountability such as standardized testing and closing the achievement gap between white students and students of color (Natkin, Cooper, Fusanelli, Alborano, Padilla, and Ghosh, 2002).

The recent emphasis on accountability has school administrators using terminology such as rewards, sanctions, high-stakes testing, unfunded mandates, and widespread school reform (Harvey, 2003; Voke, 2002). Proponents of increased accountability contend that it is long overdue and that educators must stop making excuses and begin to make changes (Haycock, 2003; Jerald, 2003). Opponents cite an overemphasis on standardized testing and too much reliance on a single test score (Abrams & Madaus, 2003). Edwards (2003) noted that some school districts may even be lowering standards in an attempt to allow enough students to attain specified test scores so that sanctions are not invoked.

Accountability is only one of many areas in which educational administrators must make tough decisions. Each day, dilemmas occur and decisions must be made. Administrators know that the decisions made will have moral implications for the entire school community (Denig &

Quinn, 2001). Sirontnik (2002) contends that public education is a moral endeavor, and that educators must act in a reasonable and responsible way.

School administrators today must possess more than the technical skills necessary to be effective leaders (Denig & Quinn, 2001, Furin, 2004). Administrators need to demonstrate moral authority and wise decision making (Fullan, 2002; Kidder & Born, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1992). Kelleher (2002) noted that effective administrators operate with a set of core values. These core values help to guide the administrator's level of moral reasoning and also become the basis for transformational leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998). Transformational leadership results when administrators focus on reaching new levels to better the lives of others and involving stakeholders in a democratic way (Furin, 2004).

The majority of literature on the topic of moral reasoning and leadership deals with business and other professions outside of education (Craig, 1993). A 1990 national survey found that the moral practices and behaviors of business leaders were given at best a grade of "C". Sixty eight percent of participants surveyed believed unethical or immoral behavior of business executives was the primary cause for the decline in business productivity and success (Patterson & Kim, 1991). Researchers need to be clear on the ethical and moral elements of leadership in order to be able to clearly define leadership itself (Ciulla, 1998).

Turner, Barling, Epitropaki, and Milner (2002) studied the relationship between moral reasoning and transformational leadership of leaders in three organizations from two countries. Results indicated that leaders who had lower levels of moral reasoning exhibited fewer transformational behaviors. The findings provide empirical evidence for theorists who argue that higher moral development is related to greater use of transformational leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Lichtenstein, Smith, and Torbert, 1995).

The relationship between moral development and leadership was studied with a group of elders in a small Kenyan community (Harkass & Edwards, 1981). Results of the study indicated that the leaders who exhibited more complex moral reasoning had greater interpersonal connections with their stakeholders.

Little research has been done relating to ethics and moral reasoning and public school administration (Craig, 1993). This study explored the relationship between levels of moral reasoning of public school administrators and their use of transformational leadership behaviors. A review of the literature on both moral reasoning and transformational leadership is included to provide a better understanding of both constructs.

### Moral Reasoning

From the work of Aristotle to today's contemporary moral philosophers, the concept of moral reasoning has been studied. Heslip (1997) noted that educational leaders should be interested in a philosophical approach to their work, in that their work requires them to be engaged in ethical and moral matters. Educational leaders who have an understanding of moral and ethical philosophical theories may be better equipped to make decisions involving moral matters.

The concepts of morality and moral reasoning were initially studied by Lawrence Kohlberg (1969). Kohlberg developed a theory of cognitive moral development to explain how people think and interact within their environment. As a clinical psychologist, Kohlberg was very interested in French psychologist Jean Piaget's earlier work on moral judgment. Kohlberg studied both children and adolescents and from his work, he developed three levels and six stages of moral reasoning (Crain, 1985).

Level One of Kohlberg's hierarchy is known as preconventional morality. At this level, there are two stages: obedience and punishment and individualism and exchange. Individuals operate from an egocentric point of view. Level Two is known as conventional morality. Here, individuals may operate at either stage three – interpersonal relationships, or stage four – maintaining social order. Individuals operate from a perspective of relationships with other people. Individuals may also differentiate societal points of view from interpersonal motives. Level Three is known as postconventional morality. At Level Three are stages five and six – social contract and individual rights and universal principles. Decisions are made from social and moral perspectives based on universal principles (Kohlberg, 1984).

Kohlberg's (1984) scale involves moral thinking, not action. Therefore, people who talk at a high moral level may not always behave accordingly. Kohlberg, however, believed there was a positive relationship between higher levels of moral reasoning and moral behavior (Crain, 1985).

Moral reasoning involves asking how it is that people responsibly attempt to figure out what is true (Richardson, 2003). Moral reasoning will be useful to those who are interested in determining the right answer to a concrete moral problem. Understanding moral reasoning is important for educational administrators, as they are faced with moral dilemmas on a regular basis. Research indicates that individuals can understand not only their reasoning used when dealing with moral dilemmas, but also the reasoning of the stage(s) in which they operate (Gardiner, 2003).

Moral reasoning may differ between men and women (Eagly, Karau, and Johnson, 1992; Garfinkel, 1988; Helgeson, 1990). In a study of superintendents, differences were found in how men and women define ethical or moral behaviors (Garfinkel, 1988). While both men and

women superintendents valued the constructs of trust and competence, there were different expectations between the two groups. Men believed that subordinates should not discuss matters relating to the job unless so instructed, and that doing so would be seen as disloyal. Women superintendents, on the other hand, believed subordinates should talk openly about job-related issues, and that instructing them not to do so was unethical and even immoral (Garfinkel, 1988).

Women in leadership positions emphasize relationships, affiliation, shared goals, authenticity, intuitiveness, and caring (Hampel, 1988; Helgeson, 1990; Loden, 1985; Rosener, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1987). These qualities become central in the actions of women administrators. Achievement comes with building connections between and among people (Hampel, 1988). The emphasis on relationships and caring is consistent with Regan and Brooks' (1995) definition of caring as "the translation of moral commitment to action on behalf of others" (1995, p.27).

The importance of relationship building and its connection to moral responsibility with women administrators was studied by Hackney and Hogard (1999). The purpose of the study was to discover transitions women undergo as they leave the classroom for administrative positions. Three themes emerged from the study. These themes were: the importance of relationships; the moral responsibility for care of the relationships; and a need for service, which was grounded in ethics and morality. An emphasis was placed on standing up for personal beliefs (Hackney and Hogard, 1999).

Grogan and Smith (1998) studied female superintendents and how they resolved moral dilemmas. The study found that even though budgets and finances were mentioned by most of the participants, all superintendents noted that the most difficult situations for them involved making decisions about students and staff. The study found that the ethic of caring can be very effective for women when making decisions. It is argued that because women have traditionally

been responsible for child care and other service, many women's moral reasoning is founded on a duty to care. Gilligan (1993) contends that moral reasoning of women is "contextual and narrative" (p.19) and this can help guide moral decisions.

Assumptions are often made about educational administrators and their abilities to operate under general accepted moral standards (Grove, 1999). These assumptions are flawed. Administrative training programs have not traditionally addressed moral reasoning and moral leadership as primary components for prospective administrators. More emphasis needs to be placed on the importance of moral choices and moral reasoning and not simply technical aspects of the profession (Grove, 1999).

Moral reasoning plays an important role in the development of ethical leaders. Ethical and moral leaders must possess character, competence, and commitment (Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1992). These leaders must also be able to effectively lead people by a shared vision. Moral leaders must also make strong commitments to the organization, their constituents, and their values (Fullan, 2003; Hawkins, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1992). These aforementioned characteristics are the foundation for leadership that is not only moral, but transformational.

#### Transformational Leadership

First identified by Burns in 1978 and later extended by Bass and others, transformational leadership is characterized by meeting the needs of followers as well as elevating them to a higher moral level. There is a focus on intrinsic and moral motives and needs. There is a shared purpose for the good of the group and the norms of the group become more important than individual needs (Bass, 1997; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Lontos, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1999).

Transformational leadership is different than transactional leadership (Burns, 1978). In transactional leadership, relationships between leaders and followers are based on a series of

exchanges or bargains. There are rewards for accomplishments (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership goes beyond exchanging rewards for performance by inspiring followers to transcend their own self-interests for a higher, collective, purpose (Burns, 1978). Transactional leaders manage outcomes and aim for compliance of the members of the organization. Transformational leaders encourage open-ended intellectual stimulation and a commitment to treating people fairly (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998).

Developing and maintaining a collaborative culture within the organization is characteristic of transformational leadership (Fullan, 2001; Leithwood, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991). This culture is established when the leader fosters the values of honesty, loyalty, fairness, justice, and equality. The leader sets examples to be emulated by others and is responsible for the moral environment of the group or organization (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Greenleaf, 1977). The leader is grounded in moral foundations (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders must also be consciously aware of their own moral beliefs and the basis for those beliefs (Sample, 2002).

Transformational leaders are driven by duty and obligation, and the motivator is “what is good gets done” (Sergiovanni, 1999, p.70). Transformational leaders follow community ideals and values from within the organization (Etzioni, 1993). Leaders are focused and use moral principles to pull members of the organization together for a common cause. The idea of shared community norms and shared values become the source of authority (Sergiovanni, 1999). The cultivation of the shared purpose and norms become the “moral voice” for all members of the organization (Sergiovanni, 1996). Transformational leaders operate with moral purpose (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Moral purpose evolves over time as relationships are built and as intrinsic commitment is developed (Fullan, 2001). When transformational leaders lead with

moral purpose, the intent is to make a positive difference in the lives of employers and society (Fullan, 2001).

Similar characteristics exist between transformational leadership and moral leadership (Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1992). Both place a priority on values, building a covenant of shared values, and transforming organizations into communities. There is a commitment to the professional ideal and responsiveness to the work itself. There is also a strong sense of collegiality.

Educational leaders today face much more difficult challenges than routine technical issues of the past (Heifetz, 1994). Leaders must promote ethical policies, procedures, and processes in the organization. There must be a clearly stated ethical code of conduct and central core of moral values. This code becomes internalized by all members of the organization and develops into moral standards that become consistent practice (Burns, 1978; Howell & Avolio, 1992). Transformational leaders allow this to happen within the organization.

Transformational leadership is not an uncommon leadership style, nor is it exclusive to executives and world-class leaders (Bass, 1985). Some degree of transformational leadership was practiced in industrial settings as well as in the military. In addition, transformational leadership was positively correlated with leader effectiveness as perceived by subordinates (Bass, 1985). Subordinates exceeded job expectations and requirements, generated higher commitment, and expressed greater job satisfaction with transformational leaders (Bass, 1985, 1998).

More studies are needed on transformational leadership and its relationship to the moral dimension of educational administration (Ciulla, 1998; Lincoln, 1989). Transformational leadership theory needs more analysis and empirical testing in hopes of addressing some of the

basic moral problems of leadership. Further research may help define the moral responsibilities of leadership (Ciulla, 1998).

### Summary and Purpose of the Study

A review of the literature supports the fact that educational leaders are faced with a multitude of job responsibilities and must make difficult choices on a regular basis. The literature also suggests that moral reasoning and transformational leadership may assist educational leaders when having to make the difficult decisions.

Given that, what is the relationship, if any, between levels of moral reasoning of educational leaders and their use of transformational leadership behaviors? The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between levels of moral reasoning and the use of transformational behaviors of public school administrators in West Virginia.

### Research Questions

In this study, the following research questions were asked:

1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the moral reasoning levels of superintendents; deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents; and principals and their use of transformational leadership behaviors?
2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the moral reasoning levels of male and female superintendents; deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents; and principals and their use of transformational leadership behaviors?

### Operational Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following operational definitions were used:

1. Level of Moral Reasoning – the respondent's "P" score on the *Defining Issues Test-2*.

2. Transformational Leadership Behavior Usage – the respondent’s five subscale scores of Idealized Influence (Attributed or Charisma), Idealized Influence (Behavior), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individual Consideration on the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x*.
3. Superintendents – county level administrators who hold the position of superintendent in the fifty- five counties in West Virginia.
4. Deputy, Assistant, and Associate Superintendents - county level administrators who hold the position of deputy, assistant, or associate superintendent in the fifty- five counties of West Virginia.
5. Principals – the building level administrators of K-12 public schools who hold the position of principal in fifty- five counties of West Virginia.
6. Gender – the gender (male or female) of the respondent as reported on the demographic component of the *Defining Issues Test- 2*.
7. Age – age in years of the respondent as reported on the demographic component of the *Defining Issues Test-2*.

### Significance of the Study

Gulick and Urlick (1937) identified seven tasks of administrators: planning, organizing, staffing, developing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting. An understanding of the relationship between administrators’ levels of moral reasoning and their use of transformational leadership behaviors could benefit both the public school system as well as higher education institutions.

An understanding of the relationship between moral reasoning and transformational leadership can assist district and school level administrators as they lead organizations through

the complexities of current federal legislation as well as other widespread educational reform. This understanding can also assist administrators as they advocate for public education and the need for quality professionals.

School boards and superintendents may find the information from the study helpful as they hire new administrators. The information may lead to preferred qualities being listed in job descriptions. School districts may also consider planning and budgeting for appropriate professional development for current administrators in order to increase awareness of the relationship of moral reasoning to transformational leadership.

This study also has implications for higher education institutions that have educational leadership programs. The information could be beneficial as programs of study are revised and course offerings are developed in order to better prepare future administrators.

Finally, Haller and Kleine (2001) assert that the administrator should carry out the tasks defined by Gulick and Urlick (1937) in order to accomplish the organization's purpose. In the case of school, that purpose is to create changes in learners.

Therefore, an increased understanding of the relationship between moral reasoning and transformational leadership may enable the administrator to make decisions that will lead to improved student performance.

#### Limitations of the Study

1. Data in this study were provided by superintendents; deputy, assistant, and associate superintendents; and principals in public schools in West Virginia and may not generalize to other public school superintendents; deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents; and principals in other states (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

2. This study used self-reported instruments and was limited to the accuracy of the respondents' responses (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).
3. The demographics of the normative sample of the *Defining Issues Test-2* differ from the sample in this study and may be culturally biased (Crain, 1985).
4. Data in this study were collected using a single instrument for each variable (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

## Chapter Two

### Review of the Literature

Public education is a moral endeavor (Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1996; Sirotnik, 2002). Schools have a moral place in our society in that they serve a common good (Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1996). Goodlad (1984) identified four moral dimensions of schooling: to enculturate students into an understanding of our political and social democracy, to provide an access to knowledge, to provide a nurturing pedagogy, and to promote responsible stewardship. Morality is inherent in public education.

Central to the relationship between morality and schooling is the educational leader. Educational leaders are responsible for providing a moral purpose to school and for creating an atmosphere that will positively transform the lives of students (Fullan, 2002; Fullan, 2003). This requires leaders to demonstrate behaviors consistent with both moral reasoning and transformational leadership. This study examined the relationship between moral reasoning and transformational leadership of public school administrators in West Virginia.

### Background

More than ever, the role of today's school administrator has become increasingly more complex and stressful (Colgan, 2003; Fullan, 2003; Hopkins, 2000; Johnson, 2002; Norton, 2002; Pavin, 1991; Quinn, 2003; Rooney, 2003; Stronge, 1998). Responsibilities center around vision and planning, instructional leadership, discipline, communication, community relations, professional development, budget and finances, personnel issues, curriculum, and legislative mandates, just to name a few (Norton, 2002; Quinn, 2003). Expectations for school leaders are set by federal, state, and local mandates and policies. Most recently, school administrators and school systems have been faced with increasing pressure to address issues surrounding

accountability such as standardized testing and closing the achievement gap between white students and students of poverty and color (Natkin et al., 2002).

The increasing pressure from recent emphasis on accountability has some school administrators focusing on rewards, sanctions, high-stakes testing, unfunded mandates, and widespread school reform (Harvey, 2003; Voke, 2002). According to a recent survey by the Wallace Foundation (Johnson, 2004), more than 80% of school leaders believe that testing and accountability are here to stay and that there is a much greater emphasis now than ever before on curriculum and instruction. Proponents of increased accountability contend that it is long overdue and that educators must stop making excuses and begin to make changes (Haycock, 2003; Jerald, 2003). Opponents cite an overemphasis on standardized testing and too much reliance on a single test score (Abrams & Madaus, 2003). Others complain that testing intrudes into local school affairs and triggers unfair sanctions for schools that fail to meet standards (Johnson, 2004). Edwards (2003) noted that some school districts might even be lowering standards in an attempt to allow enough students to attain specified test scores so that sanctions are not invoked.

Accountability is only one of many areas in which educational administrators must make tough decisions. Each day, dilemmas occur and decisions must be made. Administrators know that the decisions made will have moral implications for the entire school community (Denig & Quinn, 2001). Sirontnik (2002) contends that public education is a moral endeavor, and that educators must act in a reasonable and responsible way.

In a 2001 study conducted by the Public Agenda, a nonprofit, non partisan research and educational organization, hundreds of public school superintendents and principals were surveyed about the challenges they face in their professions. The superintendents and principals

responded to questions from a broad range of topics that included academic standards, funding, and personnel issues. The topics of politics and bureaucracy topped the list of complaints by both groups. In fact, half of the respondents stated that they have to “work around the system” in order to get things done the way they want them to be done (Johnson, 2002). The idea of “working around the system” has significant implications for moral and ethical decision-making.

School administrators today must understand that they will be faced with tough decisions from time to time (Kidder & Born, 2002). Administrators must possess more than the technical skills necessary to be effective leaders (Denig & Quinn, 2001; Furin, 2004). Administrators need to demonstrate moral authority and wise decision making (Kidder & Born, 2002; Fullan, 2002; Sergiovanni, 1992). Administrators must also be able to address moral dilemmas that will occur in schools (Fullan, 2001; Goodlad, 1984; Sergiovanni, 1992). Moral leaders should apply the principles of respect and benefit maximization (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1988). The moral leader also takes into consideration what is best for all members of the organization. There is a moral responsibility to make members of the organization feel welcome, wanted, and respected (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Kelleher (2002) noted that effective administrators operate with a set of core values. These core values help to guide the administrator’s level of moral reasoning and also become the basis for transformational leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998). Transformational leadership results when administrators focus on reaching new levels to better the lives of others and involving stakeholders in a democratic way (Furin, 2004).

Turner et al. (2002) studied the relationship between moral reasoning and transformational leadership of leaders in three organizations from two countries. Results indicated that leaders who had lower levels of moral reasoning exhibited fewer transformational

behaviors. The findings provide empirical evidence for theorists who argue that higher moral development is related to greater use of transformational leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Lichtenstein et al., 1995).

Moral development and leadership were studied with a group of elders in a small Kenyan community (Harkass & Edwards, 1981). Results of the study indicated that the leaders who exhibited more complex moral reasoning had greater interpersonal connections with their stakeholders. Similar results were found in a study with a group of male leaders in Papua New Guinea (Tietjen & Walker, 1985).

Leaders need to commit to, model, and enforce the ideals of moral leadership. (Ciulla, 1998). The ethics and morals of the leader affect all individuals in the organization and serve as the basis for how others make choices and decisions themselves. The moral reasoning used by the leader helps to define what is important to the others in the organization and helps to motivate them in their own choices (Ciulla, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1990). Leadership with moral reasoning at the center touches all members of the organization by tapping their emotions, appealing to their values, and responding to connections with others (Greenfield, 1991).

The majority of literature on the topic of moral reasoning and leadership deals with business and other professions (Craig, 1993). A 1985 survey conducted by the *New York Times/CBS News* found that more than half of the American public believe corporate executives are dishonest and almost 60% believe white-collar crime occurs on a regular basis. A 1990 national survey found that the moral practices and behaviors of business leaders were given at best a grade of "C". Sixty eight percent of participants surveyed believed unethical or immoral behavior of business executives was the primary cause for the decline in business productivity and success. This perception of the executive class can lead to workers feeling justified in

responding with increased absenteeism, indifference, and generally poor performance (Patterson & Kim, 1991).

A 1992 survey of more than 100 professionals in marketing and sales found that 58% of the respondents felt business leaders today have lost their “moral compass”. The most serious issues were found with senior level executives (James & LaMotta, 2002). Two thirds of the respondents thought that organizations should have a written code of ethics, and nearly two thirds felt that the moral and ethical culture of the organization is the responsibility of the leader (James & La Motta, 2002).

Research from Gini (1996) supports the position that the leader is responsible for setting the moral and ethical expectations for the organization. Business leaders are faced with moral and ethical decisions daily. A 2002 article from Free Markets Insider revealed that 80-90% of businessmen in the United States prescribe to some sort of “restrictive morality”. The basis for this morality is often spiritual. The concept of morality may be associated with choice while ethics may be characterized by the organization itself. In other words, an individual’s “moral core” determines the ethical culture of the organization (Free Markets Insider, 2002).

The moral and ethical culture within the workplace develops from the leader of the organization. Leaders are important and influential to the culture of the organization. It is the responsibility of the leader to create and maintain trust (Kouzes & Posner, 1993).

Little research has been done relating to ethics and moral reasoning and public school administration (Craig, 1993). This study explored the relationship between levels of moral reasoning of public school administrators and their use of transformational leadership behaviors. A review of the literature on both moral reasoning and transformational leadership is included to provide a better understanding of both constructs.

## Moral Reasoning

From the work of Aristotle to today's contemporary moral philosophers, the concept of moral reasoning has been studied. Heslip (1997) noted that educational leaders should be interested in a philosophical approach to their work, in that their work requires them to be engaged in ethical and moral matters. Educational leaders who have an understanding of moral and ethical philosophical theories may be better equipped to make decisions involving moral matters.

Morality begins as a set of culturally defined set of rules, but later becomes real when individuals make free choices of whether or not to accept and abide by the rules. Morality can be based on habit (custom morality) or on reason and choice (reflective morality) (Dewey, 1960).

Moral reasoning is used to resolve moral dilemmas. Moral dilemmas share the following characteristics: a concern about what is the right thing to do, not just the most expedient or least complicated; a need for more than just facts to settle the dilemma; and a conflict between two principles (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1988). Moral reasoning applies a series of questions to each of these characteristics in order to reach a decision (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1988). It is like other forms of reasoning. Moral reasoning is logical and objective, and involves the consideration of all possibilities and legitimate criticisms as well as the testing of existing theories against experience (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1988).

Unfortunately, there is no guidebook that educational leaders can use to solve moral dilemmas (Kidder, 1995; Richardson, 2003; Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1988). Decisions to moral dilemmas require sensitivity, rationality, and the development of moral theory. Intuitions are also important and provide data for construction of moral theory used in moral reasoning (Strike,

Haller, & Soltis, 1988). The moral theories are not developed in a vacuum, but rather over a period of time and are influenced by personal moral convictions (Richardson, 2003).

Developing and defining a moral theory is similar to trying to describe rules that govern our use of grammar. Individuals have intuitions about using language correctly without necessarily being able to develop a rule about the use of the language. The same is true with moral theory. There is an interaction between moral intuition and moral theory. Each influences the other. Individuals need to find a balance between moral intuition and theory when using moral reasoning to solve a dilemma (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1988)

The concepts of morality and moral reasoning were studied by Lawrence Kohlberg (1969). Kohlberg developed a theory of cognitive moral development to explain how people think and interact within their environment. As a clinical psychologist, Kohlberg was very interested in Piaget's work on moral judgment. Kohlberg studied both children and adolescents and from his work, he developed three levels and six stages of moral reasoning (Crain, 1985).

Morality is viewed as something external at Level One of Kohlberg's hierarchy, known as preconventional morality. At this level, there are two stages: obedience and punishment and individualism and exchange. There is some sense of right action and an idea of fair exchange. Individuals operate primarily from an egocentric point of view. Individual interests are at the center of decision-making and there is little to no identification with family or community (Crain, 1985; Kohlberg, 1984).

Conventional morality is illustrated at Level Two. The label "conventional" is used at this level because the assumption is made that the attitudes and decisions would be shared by the entire community (Crain, 1985). Here, individuals may operate at either stage three—interpersonal relationships, or stage four—maintaining social order. Moral reasoning moves from

two person relationships to society as a whole. Individuals operate from a perspective of relationships with other people. Individuals may also differentiate societal points of view from interpersonal motives. A shift occurs at this level with these two stages from unquestioning obedience to a concern for motives that are good. There is an emphasis on obeying laws, respecting authority, and maintaining social order to prevent chaos (Crain, 1985; Kohlberg, 1984).

The third and final level, Level Three, is known as post-conventional morality. At Level Three are stages five and six—social contract and individual rights and universal principles. Though values might differ, there is a belief that all rational people want basic rights and democratic procedures for improving society. Decisions are made from social and moral perspectives based on universal principles. Individuals look at society as a social contract in which people enter freely and aim to do what is best for everyone (Crain, 1985; Kohlberg, 1984).

Following the ideals of great moral leaders such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Kohlberg's stages and levels of moral reasoning and development are universal (Crain, 1985). The rationale for the universality of the levels is that the levels are based on modes of reasoning rather than specific beliefs. Studies in a variety of countries and cultures support the idea that the stages and levels are universal (Crain, 1985).

An important point to consider is that Kohlberg's (1984) scale involves moral thinking, not action. Therefore, people who talk at a high moral level may not always behave accordingly. Kohlberg, however, believed there should be some positive relationship between higher levels of moral reasoning and moral behavior because the higher stages of reasoning involve stable and general standards (Crain, 1985).

In *Lives of Moral Leadership*, author Robert Coles profiles individuals who have exemplified moral leadership in our society. Coles (2000) addresses the moral contributions that these individuals have made to society and contends that the behaviors and actions of these individuals are based on their moral thinking and reasoning. Coles defines a moral leader as someone who “calls upon moral passion within oneself, sets it in motion among others, and does so resourcefully” (Coles, 2000, p.192). Individuals need to work toward advancing moral leadership by both modeling and supporting others (Coles, 2000).

Moral reasoning involves asking how it is that people responsibly attempt to figure out what is true (Richardson, 2003). Moral reasoning will be useful to those who are interested in determining the right answer to a concrete moral problem. Understanding moral reasoning is important for educational administrators, as they are faced with moral dilemmas on a regular basis. Research indicates that individuals can understand not only their reasoning used when dealing with moral dilemmas, but also the reasoning of the stage(s) in which they operate (Gardiner, 2003).

Educational leaders face unique moral and ethical dilemmas (Greenfield, 1991; Heslip, 1997). Not only are there the obvious day-to-day dilemmas, there are often complex policies and structures that have hidden implications for ethical and moral decision-making (Greenfield, 1991). Leaders have an obligation to exercise authority in an ethical and moral way (Greenfield, 1991).

Often, educational leaders must deal with ethical or moral dilemmas that are not as easy as a choice between right and wrong. Instead, they are faced with making a choice between two “rights” (Kidder, 1995). For example, choosing whether or not to accept a bribe in return for changing a policy would be choosing between a right and a wrong. However, deciding whether

to spend limited dollars in a budget for a gifted program or a dropout prevention program presents a different situation. Both programs are worthwhile and needed, yet there is only money for one. In this case, there is a moral dilemma that requires the leader to use moral reasoning to make a decision (Kidder, 1995; Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1988).

Other times, educational leaders are faced with making decisions that involve people who have very different values or interests. These decisions can be very difficult and require reflection, consideration, and the use of moral reasoning (Kidder, 1995). The leader must be willing to make decisions using a defined set of ethical and moral standards. The leader must also be fully informed and get information from all perspectives. She must also be able to provide alternatives when making a decision so that it does not always become an either/or situation (Kidder, 1995).

### *Gender and Moral Reasoning*

There is literature to support the idea that moral reasoning may differ between men and women (Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992; Garfinkel, 1988; Helgeson, 1990). In a study of superintendents, differences were found in how men and women define ethical or moral behaviors (Garfinkel, 1988). While both men and women superintendents valued the constructs of trust and competence, there were different expectations between the two groups. Men believed that subordinates should not discuss matters relating to the job unless so instructed, and that doing so would be seen as disloyal. Women superintendents, on the other hand, believed subordinates should talk openly about job-related issues, and that instructing them not to do so was unethical and even immoral (Garfinkel, 1988).

Several studies on gender and leadership have concluded that there might be differences not only with moral reasoning but with other leadership characteristics as well (Ashmore, Del

Boca, & Wohlers, 1986; Chapman, 1975; Munson, 1970; Williams, 1982). Chapman (1975) found that the differences in leadership characteristics of men and women might be the result of both societal and cultural expectations. In one study, women were found to be friendlier and more likely to express appreciation for good work (Munson, 1979). Both the Chapman and Munson studies suggest that society may have different expectations for leadership characteristics in men and women. Women are expected to be warm, sympathetic, and aware of feelings while men are expected to be assertive and dominant (Ashmore, Del Boca, and Wohlers, 1986; Williams, 1982).

Communication also differs between male and female leaders (Hollander & Yoder, 1978; Josefowitz, 1980; Morsink, 1970). Gender may play a role in not only what is communicated but also how it is communicated. Men and women communicate differently because they listen differently. Women may listen for feelings while men may listen for facts. (Borisoff & Merrill, 1985). In one study, Morsink (1970) found that female principals demonstrated a higher level of consideration than male principals. This supports a later study that found female managers as having more of an “open door policy” than their male counterparts (Josefowitz, 1980). Women strive for effective communication through the use of strong interpersonal skills and the creation of positive group efforts while men focus on tasks and recognition (Hollander & Yoder, 1978).

There is literature to support the notion that women in leadership positions emphasize relationships, affiliation, shared goals, authenticity, intuitiveness, and caring (Hampel, 1988; Helgeson, 1990; Loden, 1985; Rosener, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1987). These qualities become central in the actions of women administrators. Achievement comes with building connections between and among people (Hampel, 1988). The emphasis on relationships and caring is

consistent with Regan and Brooks' (1995) definition of caring as "the translation of moral commitment to action on behalf of others" (1995, p.27).

Hackney and Hogard (1999) studied the importance of relationship building and its connection to moral responsibility with women administrators. The purpose of the study was to discover transitions women undergo as they leave the classroom for administrative positions. Three themes emerged from the study. These themes were: the importance of relationships; the moral responsibility for care of the relationships; and a need for service, which was grounded in ethics and morality. An emphasis was placed on standing up for personal beliefs (Hackney and Hogard, 1999).

The first theme, relationship building, became the central focus with all of the women in the study. The women depended on the connections and relationships they made in their lives, both professionally and personally. Affiliation with others was an integral part of their leadership style. Some of the women even defined their own leadership by the relationships they had made (Hackney & Hogard, 1999).

The second theme, the need for having a moral responsibility to take care of the relationships, is strongly related to the first theme. Results of the study indicated that women put more emphasis on the needs of others rather than considering their own individual needs. For the women in the study, this moral responsibility to consider others in a relationship was not just an occasional action, but rather, a way of leading and living (Hackney & Hogard, 1999). The act of putting the needs of others before an individual's own needs is characteristic of transformational leadership (Sergiovanni, 1991).

The third theme of the study, the need for service that is grounded in ethics and morality, also is consistent with transformational leadership. The women in the study expressed a desire to

give back to their profession and to make a positive contribution to the school and to the lives of the people in the organization. The idea of service was driven by a desire to build community in the organization and to help build moral leaders within the organization (Hackney & Hogard, 1999).

Additionally, Grogan and Smith (1998) studied female superintendents and how they resolved moral dilemmas. The study found that even though budgets and finances were mentioned by most of the participants, all superintendents noted that the most difficult situations for them involved making decisions about students and staff. The study found that the ethic of caring can be very effective for women when making decisions. It is argued that because women have traditionally been responsible for child care and other service, many women's moral reasoning is founded on a duty to care. Gilligan (1993) contends that moral reasoning of women is "contextual and narrative" (p.19) and this can help guide moral decisions.

Assumptions are often made about educational administrators and their abilities to operate under general accepted moral standards (Grove, 1999). These assumptions are flawed. Administrative training programs have not traditionally addressed moral reasoning and moral leadership as primary components for prospective administrators. More emphasis needs to be placed on the importance of moral choices and moral reasoning and not simply technical aspects of the profession (Grove, 1999).

Leaders need to have the moral courage to change the nature of relationships with their followers (Ciulla, 1998). There needs to be a shift from power to empower. Words alone are not enough. The actions of the leader are critical to empowering others in the organization. These actions must be honest, authentic, and sincere (Ciulla, 1998).

Given the complexity of the decision making that is required, moral reasoning plays an important role in the development of ethical leaders. Ethical and moral leaders must possess character, competence, and commitment (Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1992). These leaders must also be able to effectively lead people by a shared vision and common goals. Moral leaders must also make strong commitments to the organization, their constituents, and their values (Fullan, 2003; Hawkins, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1992). These aforementioned characteristics are the foundation for leadership that is not only moral, but also transformational.

### Transformational Leadership

The concept of transformational leadership was first identified by Burns in 1978 and later extended by Bass and others (Bass, 1997). Transformational leadership is characterized by meeting the needs of followers as well as elevating them to a higher moral level. There is a focus on intrinsic and moral motives and needs. There is a shared purpose for the good of the group and the norms of the group become more important than individual needs (Bass, 1997; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Lontos, 1998; Sergiovanni, 1999).

### *Transformational versus Transactional Leadership*

In direct contrast to transformational leadership, the concept of transactional leadership was also identified (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership differs from transactional leadership (Burns, 1978). In transactional leadership, relationships between leaders and followers are based on a series of exchanges or bargains. There are rewards for accomplishments. Transactional leadership can be immobilizing and manipulative, and often seeks to control subordinates rather than foster an atmosphere of mutual respect. (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership goes beyond exchanging rewards for performance by inspiring followers to transcend their own self-interests for a higher, collective, purpose (Burns, 1978).

Transactional leaders manage outcomes and aim for compliance of the members of the organization. Transformational leaders encourage open-ended intellectual stimulation and a commitment to treating people fairly (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998).

Transactional leadership emphasizes “what gets rewarded gets done”, while transformational leadership emphasizes “what is good gets done.” (Sergiovanni, 1991). Extrinsic gain is the motivator for transactional leaders and involvement is calculated, while duty and obligation motivate the transformational leader and involvement is moral (Sergiovanni, 1991). In transactional leadership, followers achieve a negotiated level of performance based on an agreement that is reached between the subordinate and the leader. As long as both find the agreement mutually rewarding, the relationship is likely to continue (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Transformational leadership involves an extra commitment and effort from subordinates and a maximum performance and an intrinsic work motivation (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Original assumptions were made about both transactional and transformational leadership. It was once believed that transactional and transformational leadership were at opposite ends of the continuum and that a person was either “one or the other” (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978). Bass (1985) later conceptualized that transformational leadership was actually an augmentation of transactional leadership. Several studies support the idea that transformational leaders build on the characteristics of transactional leadership in order to contribute to the extra performance of the members of the organization (Bass, 1985). Studies indicate that both transactional and transformation leadership behaviors can be displayed by the same leader at different times while also complementing each other (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Koh, Terborg, and Steers, 1991).

Several studies have been done to attempt to understand how transformational leadership is developed. McCarthy, Johnson, Vernon, Molson, Harris and Jang (1998) found that genetics may play a role in the emergence of transformational leaders. Socialization, learning, parental interest, and parental moral standards also were found to play a part in the development of transformational leaders (Avolio, 1994). Favorable experiences in elementary and high school as well as first jobs also were predictors of transformational leaders (Avolio, 1994).

Transformational leadership is characterized by the components of charisma, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation (Bass, 1985). Each of these characteristics is included on the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)*, a survey that measures both transactional and transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2000).

Of all the characteristics of transformational leadership, charisma may be the most important (Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Howell, 1988; Zaleznik, 1989). Charismatic leaders strive to inspire others in the organization to transcend their own interests for the interests of the greater good. Transformational leaders use charisma to identify deficiencies in the status quo, formulate and articulate a shared vision, and implement innovative ways of achieving the vision (Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1988). They create enthusiasm for others in the organization and set examples that often involve personal sacrifice or heroic deeds (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). One such example is Lee Iacocca, former president of the Chrysler Corporation. Iacocca took over the failing corporation and accepted a mere dollar for his first year's salary. Actions such as those of Iacocca result in a stronger relationship between subordinates and leaders and set the tone for a higher commitment for shared goals and task performance (Conger & Kanungo, 1988).

The second characteristic of transformational leadership is individualized consideration. Transformational leaders have a moral responsibility to take care of others in the organization. In turn, subordinates have a moral obligation to be loyal and trustworthy (Bass & Avolio, 2000). Transformational leaders model individualized consideration in order to foster cultures that are conducive to risk taking and problem solving. Desired changes are articulated and communicated and an atmosphere of acculturation occurs (Bass & Avolio, 2000; Stites-Doe, Pillai, and Meindl, 1994).

The third characteristic is intellectual stimulation. Here, the leader increases awareness of problems and provides a framework for possible solutions (Bass, 1985). While Bass does not assert that transformational leaders are more moral than transactional leaders, he does contend that transformational leaders are more likely to raise the attitudes and behaviors of members in the organization while transactional leaders act more like managers and are involved with compromise and control (Bass, 1985).

The transformational leader develops and maintains a collaborative culture within the organization. (Fullan, 2001; Leithwood, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1991). This culture is established when the leader fosters the values of honesty, loyalty, trust, fairness, justice, and equality. The leader sets examples to be emulated by others and is responsible for the moral environment of the group or organization (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Greenleaf, 1977). The leader is grounded in moral foundations (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders must also be consciously aware of their own moral beliefs and the basis for those beliefs (Sample, 2002).

Sergiovanni (1991) defined transformational leadership with three concepts: building, bonding, and banking. Building involves empowering others and raising expectations of both the leader and the follower in order to bring about higher levels of commitment and performance.

Bonding elevates the organization to a higher moral level through a shared covenant. Banking supports an atmosphere where the transformation becomes routine and part of the daily practices of everyone in the organization.

Trust is a very important factor in transformational leadership (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1991). Central to developing and maintaining an organizational culture that fosters trust is the leader. The leader needs to model and facilitate relational trust (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Relational trust serves four purposes: it reduces the sense of vulnerability that members of the organization may experience, especially when taking on new challenges; it facilitates problem solving within the organization; it allows for both organizational norms and mutual support for individual efforts; and it creates a moral resource. This resource influences the development of relationships and beliefs (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

Bryk and Schneider (2002) identified schools with high levels of trust. These same schools were revisited three years later. In each of the schools, there was a strong commitment to innovation, outreach to parents, and commitment to the school community as a whole. These features are positively associated in the literature with greater organizational effectiveness.

In each of these schools, the leader was the person responsible for developing the trust within the organization. These transformational leaders exhibited behaviors of respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity. The behaviors became embedded into the organization (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

In 1998, the National Association of Headteachers, the largest association of headteachers in the United Kingdom, conducted a study on characteristics of effective schools. Researchers visited schools, conducted interviews, and collected other supporting documentation. Data revealed similar characteristics in all of the schools; the principal was

values led, people centered, achievement oriented, inward and outward facing, and capable of managing multiple dilemmas (Day, 2000). The principals embraced core values of care, equity, high expectations, and high achievement. These values were clearly communicated to everyone in the schools. The principals encouraged collaboration and also took time to reflect on their own practices (Day, 2000). The study concluded that the principals' transformational leadership behaviors were central to the effectiveness of the schools.

Leithwood (1992) defines three fundamental goals of the transformational leader in education. These goals are: helping the staff to develop and maintain a supportive and collaborative school culture, fostering the professional growth and development of teachers, and assisting teachers and staff in learning to solve problems more effectively. Leaders involve all stakeholders in collaborative goal setting, which in turn reduces teacher isolation. Leaders also motivate and stimulate new thinking and ideas within the organization (Leithwood, 1992).

#### *Transformational Leadership and Morality*

Along with developing relationships and building trust, transformational leaders are driven by duty and obligation, and the motivator is "what is good gets done" (Sergiovanni, 1999, p.70). Transformational leaders follow community ideals and values and the organization operates with a "we" rather than a "they" approach (Etzioni, 1993). Leaders are focused on a shared vision and use moral principles to pull members of the organization together for a common cause. The idea of shared community norms and shared values become the source of authority (Sergiovanni, 1999). The cultivation of the shared purpose and norms become the "moral voice" for all members of the organization (Sergiovanni, 1996).

Transformational leaders are involved with leading deep, cultural changes. For educational leaders, this involves a commitment from all stakeholders to improve the learning of

students (Fullan, 2003). Leadership of this nature is guided by moral purpose (Fullan, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Moral purpose evolves over time as relationships are built and as intrinsic commitment is developed (Fullan, 2001). When transformational leaders lead with moral purpose, the intent is to make a positive difference in the lives of employees and society (Fullan, 2001).

Similar characteristics can be found between transformational leadership and moral leadership (Fullan, 2003, Sergiovanni, 1992). Both place a priority on values, building covenant of shared values, and transforming organizations to communities. There is a commitment to the professional ideal and responsiveness to the work itself. There is also a strong sense of collegiality. Transformational and moral leadership are purposeful (Sergiovanni, 1992).

Educational leaders today face much more difficult challenges than routine technical issues of the past (Heifetz, 1994). Leaders must promote ethical policies, procedures, and processes in the organization. There must be a clearly stated ethical code of conduct and central core of moral values. This code becomes internalized by all members of the organization and develops into moral standards that become consistent practice (Burns, 1978; Howell & Avolio, 1992). Transformational leaders allow this to happen within the organization.

Studies on transformational leadership found that it is not an uncommon leadership style, nor is it exclusive to executives and world-class leaders (Bass, 1985). Some degree of transformational leadership was practiced in industrial settings as well as in the military. In addition, transformational leadership was positively correlated with leader effectiveness as perceived by subordinates. Subordinates exceeded job expectations and requirements, generated higher commitment, and expressed greater job satisfaction with transformational leaders (Bass, 1985, 1998).

The most commonly used measure of transactional and transformational leadership is the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)* (Bass & Avolio, 2000). In recent years, the *MLQ* has been used in almost 200 studies, dissertations, and theses around the world. More than two dozen empirical studies using the *MLQ* found a strong positive correlation between the components of transformational leadership and measures of performance (Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam, 1996). A 1996 study by Barling, Weber and Kelloway found that commitment and performance of followers' was greater when managers exhibited transformational behaviors. Waldman, Bass, and Einstein (1987) also found subordinate performance appraisals were higher in organizations that had transformational leaders.

#### Summary

A review of the literature supports the fact that educational leaders are faced with a multitude of job responsibilities and must make difficult choices on a regular basis. The literature also suggests that moral reasoning and transformational leadership may assist educational leaders when having to make the difficult decisions.

More studies are needed on transformational leadership and its relationship to the moral dimension of educational administration (Ciulla, 1998; Lincoln, 1989). Transformational leadership theory needs more analysis and empirical testing in hopes of addressing some of the basic moral problems of leadership. Further research may help define the moral responsibilities of leadership (Ciulla, 1998).

## Chapter 3

### Methods

#### *Introduction*

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the levels of moral reasoning and the use of transformational leadership behaviors of public school administrators in West Virginia. This chapter provides a description of the population sampled and the instruments used to measure levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors. A description of the statistical methods that were used to analyze the data is also included.

#### Procedures

##### *Population and Sample*

The population for this study was West Virginia public school administrators. Specifically, these administrators included 55 superintendents; 62 deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents; and 720 principals. Information regarding the population was obtained through a West Virginia Department of Education staffing report (2004).

All 55 superintendents were surveyed; therefore, the population of the superintendents was the sample. The entire population of deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents was also surveyed, thus making the population for this group the sample as well. A random sample of 250 principals was selected to participate in the study. This number was based on suggested sample sizes for various populations (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Generalizability was limited to public school administrators in West Virginia.

### *Instrumentation*

Two instruments were used to gather data for this study. The first instrument, the *Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2)*, developed by Rest and Narvaez (1998), was used to measure levels of moral reasoning. The second instrument, the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x-Short (MLQ-5x)*, developed by Bass and Avolio (1995, 2000), was used to measure transformational leadership

### *Defining Issues Test—2*

The *Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2)* is an updated version of the original *Defining Issues Test (DIT)* devised 25 years ago. The *DIT-2* is a paper and pencil test designed to measure moral judgment based on the theory of Kohlberg's moral stages (Kohlberg, 1984). The *DIT-2* has updated stories, is shorter, and has clearer instructions than the earlier version (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003).

The *DIT-2* consists of five hypothetical dilemmas. Respondents read each dilemma and then were presented with twelve issues related to each dilemma. Respondents rated and ranked each issue in terms of its importance. Ratings were done using a five- item Likert scale ranging from “*great importance*” to “*no importance.*” Respondents were then being asked to rank the four most important issues from the list of twelve.

Based on the responses given, each respondent received a “P” score. The “P” score represents the proportion of items selected that appeal to Stages 5 and 6 of Kohlberg's moral stages. The “P” score is a sum of scores from Stages 5 and 6, converted to a percent. The “P%” score can range from 0 to 95 and is interpreted as the extent to which a person prefers post-conventional moral thinking (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003).

Test-retest reliability correlations for the *DIT* range from .71 to .82 for the “P” score (Sutton, 2003). The correlation of *DIT* with *DIT-2* is .79, nearly the test-retest reliability of the *DIT*. The value for Cronbach’s alpha is .77 for the “P” score (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003; Sutton, 2003).

Validity for the *DIT* is assessed in terms of 7 criteria: 1) differentiation of various age/education groups, 2) longitudinal gains, 3) relation to cognitive capacity measures, 4) moral education interventions, 5) prosocial behaviors and professional decision making, 6) political attitudes and political choices, and 7) reliability (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003). The *DIT* shows discriminate validity from verbal ability/general intelligence and from conservative/liberal political attitudes. Information in a *DIT* score predicts to the aforementioned validity criteria above and beyond that accounted for by verbal ability or political attitude (Bebeau and Thoma, 2003). In studies so far, the *DIT-2* does not sacrifice reliability or validity (Bebeau and Thoma, 2003).

While the *DIT-2* has normative data that are somewhat diverse in terms of age, educational level, and geographical regions, it is recommended that caution be used when comparing data sets with the normative information (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003). This recommendation was included as a limitation in Chapter One.

#### *Multifactor Leadership questionnaire 5x*

The *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x (MLQ5x)* is a shorter version of the original *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*, a widely used instrument to measure characteristics of leadership behaviors. Both the *MLQ* and the *MLQ5x* measure the respondent’s use of transformational and/or transactional behaviors.

The questionnaire consists of 45 statements that describe leadership behaviors. Respondents were asked to judge how frequently each statement fit them using a five-point Likert scale. The ratings range from 0 to 4, with 0 meaning “not at all”, and 4 meaning “frequently, if not always.”

Each item is associated with an attribute associated with either transformational or transactional leadership styles. The attributes associated with transformational leadership are: Idealized Influence (Attributed or Charisma), Idealized Influence (Behavior), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individual Consideration. Twenty of the forty-five items are associated with transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 2000).

Average scores were obtained for each attribute by summing the items and dividing the number of items that make up the scale. These scores were then reported as subscale scores.

Several validation studies have been conducted on the *MLQ5x*. Fourteen samples were used to validate and cross-validate the *MLQ5x*. A series of factor analyses were completed to select items that exhibited the best convergent and discriminate validities (Bass & Avolio, 2000). A GFI (Goodness of Fit) index of .9 was established.

Reliabilities for total items and for each leadership subscale on the *MLQ5X* range from .74 to .94. All of the scales' reliabilities exceed standard cut offs for internal consistency recommended in the literature (Bass & Avolio, 2000). The available research provides evidence that the *MLQ5x* consistently measures the constructs in keeping with Bass's theory of transformational and transactional leadership (Pittenger, 2003).

#### *Design and Data Collection*

A one-shot case study design was used (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Each respondent received copies of both instruments, along with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study

as well as directions for completing both instruments. Demographic data, including gender, age, and administrative title, was collected as well.

Data for the study were collected through use of the U.S. mail. Both instruments, along with the cover letter and request for demographic data, were mailed to each respondent. Respondents were asked to return answer sheets and demographic information in an enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope. Follow up postcards were sent and phone calls were made to respondents approximately 14 days after the initial mailing. A second mailing occurred for some respondents who did not return the instruments. Though not obtained, a return rate goal of 50% plus one was established before conducting the data analysis (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

#### *Data Analysis*

Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. With descriptive statistics, the goal is to describe, summarize, or make sense out of a set of data. Inferential statistics make inferences and draw conclusions about populations based on sample data (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). The analyses of a relationship between levels of moral reasoning and the use of transformational leadership behaviors were completed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. With correlational research, there is no manipulation of an independent variable (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). Instead, the relationship between the two variables (moral reasoning and transformational leadership) was studied. The correlation coefficient provided information about the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). Analysis of the data was not used to identify causes, as correlational research is not causal-comparative (Johnson & Christensen, 2000).

Differences in male and female respondents were analyzed using a t-Test for independent samples. This common statistical test is used with a quantitative dependent variable and a

dichotomous independent variable (Johnson & Christensen, 2000). The purpose of the test was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

A one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the differences in role of the respondents. Analysis of variance is used with one quantitative dependent variable and one categorical independent variable (Johnson & Christenen, 2000). Data analysis was done through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

### Summary

The procedures described in this chapter were used to examine the relationship between the levels of moral reasoning and the use of transformational leadership behaviors of public school administrators in West Virginia. Samples from the population were invited to participate in this study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

## Chapter 4

### Presentation and Analyses of the Data

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between levels of moral reasoning and the use of transformational leadership behaviors of public school administrators in West Virginia. The investigation collected information relative to a moral reasoning score and its relationship to attributes of transformational leadership. Demographic data of gender, role, and age were also collected from the administrators who included superintendents; deputy, associate, and assistant superintendents; and principals. Results of this study are presented in four sections: 1) descriptive data, 2) statistical analyses, 3) presentation and analysis of findings related to each research question, and 4) summary.

#### Descriptive Data

##### *Sample*

The population for this study consisted of West Virginia public school administrators. Specifically, these administrators included 55 superintendents; 62 deputy, associate, or assistant superintendents; and 720 principals. The entire population of superintendents and deputy, associate, and assistant superintendents were surveyed and used as the sample. A random sample of 250 principals was surveyed.

Twenty-four of the superintendents returned the instruments for a response rate of 43%. Of the 24, 17 were male and seven were female. The response rate of deputy, associate, and assistant superintendents was 31%, with 19 out of 62 instruments returned. In this sample, 12 were male and seven were female. In the principal sample, the response rate was 24%, with 60 out of the 250 principals returning the instruments. Thirty-one principals were male and 29 were female. A total of 103 administrators (60 male and 43 female) returned both instruments for a

response rate of 28%. The age of the administrator respondents ranged from 32 to 75 with a mean of 51.8 years and a standard deviation of 7.8.

### *Moral Reasoning*

The *Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2)* was used to measure levels of moral reasoning for each respondent. A “P” score was obtained for each respondent. The score represents the proportion of items selected that appeal to Stages 5 and 6 of Kohlberg’s moral stages. The “P” score is a sum of scores from Stages 5 and 6, converted to a percent. The score can range from 0 to 95 and is interpreted as the extent to which a person prefers postconventional moral thinking (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003). The mean “P” score for the respondents was 33.08 with a standard deviation of 15.07.

### *Transformational Leadership*

The *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x (MLQ5x)* was used to measure respondents’ characteristics of leadership behaviors. Subscale scores (with a score range of 0-4) were calculated from five attributes associated with transformational leadership. These attributes are: Idealized Influence (Attributed or Charisma), Idealized Influence (Behavior), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individual Consideration. Subscale scores ranged from 1.75-4 for Idealized Influence (Attributed or Charisma) with a mean of 3.12. Idealized Influence (Behavior) subscale scores ranged from 2-4 with a mean of 3.36. Inspirational Motivational subscale scores ranged from 2-4 with a mean of 3.46. Intellectual Stimulation subscale scores ranged from 2-4 with a mean of 3.19. Individual Consideration subscale scores ranged from 2.25-4 with a mean of 3.31.

### Statistical Analyses

The statistical test used to examine the relationship between the two variables of moral reasoning and transformational leadership was the Pearson product moment correlation. Differences in male and female respondents were analyzed using a T-Test for independent samples. A one- way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the differences in role of the respondents.

Data were entered and manipulated using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. An alpha level of .05 served as the level of significance.

### Findings

Findings from the study are presented in this section along with a discussion of each research question as presented in Chapter 1.

Question 1–Is there a statistically significant relationship between the moral reasoning levels of superintendents; deputy, associate, or assistant superintendents; and principals and their use of transformational leadership behaviors?

The relationship between the administrators' levels of moral reasoning and their use of transformational behaviors was analyzed by determining the correlation coefficients between the respondents' "P" scores and their subscale scores of Idealized Influence (Attributed or Charisma), Idealized Influence (Behavior), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individual Consideration (Tables 1-5). The Pearson product moment correlation test indicated there was no significant relationship between moral reasoning and Idealized Influence (Charisma)  $r(N=103) = .125, p < .01$ ; Idealized Influence (Behavior)  $r(N=103) = .103, p < .01$ ; Inspirational Motivation  $r(N=103) = .048, p < .01$ ; Intellectual Stimulation  $r(N=103) = .141, p <$

.01; or Individual Consideration  $r(N=103) = .020$ ,  $p < .01$ . All coefficients indicated a weak positive relationship; however, there was no significance at the .05 level.

No statistically significant relationship was found between moral reasoning and the transformational leadership attribute of Idealized Influence–Charisma, an attribute characterized by a leader’s personal accomplishments (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood, 1994). A correlation coefficient of .125 was established (Table 1).

Table 1

*Correlation Between Moral Reasoning and Idealized Influence- Charisma (AC) (N=103)*

		Moral Reasoning	Idealized Influence-Charisma
Moral Reasoning	Pearson Correlation	1.00	.125
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.207
	N	103	103
Idealized Influence-Charisma	Pearson Correlation	.125	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.207	
	N	103	103

Likewise, no significant relationship was found between moral reasoning levels of the administrators and the transformational attribute of Idealized Influence-Behavior, an attribute characterized by a leader’s modeling of character and behavior for her subordinates (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood, 1994). A correlation coefficient of .103 indicated a very weak, positive association between the two variables (Table 2).

Table 2

*Correlation Between Moral Reasoning and Idealized Influence-Behavior (II) (N=103)*

		Moral Reasoning	Idealized Influence-Behavior
Moral Reasoning	Pearson Correlation	1.00	.103
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.299
	N	103	103
Idealized Influence - Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.103	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.299	
	N	103	103

There was no significant relationship between moral reasoning and Inspirational Motivation, or the administrators' use of a powerful and dynamic presence to communicate high expectations (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood, 1994). A correlation coefficient of .048 was obtained (Table 3).

Table 3

*Correlation Between Moral Reasoning and Inspirational Motivation (IM) (N=103)*

		Moral Reasoning	Inspirational Motivation
Moral Reasoning	Pearson Correlation	1.00	.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.631
	N	103	103
Inspirational Motivation	Pearson Correlation	.048	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.631	
	N	103	103

A positive, but weak association was found between moral reasoning and Intellectual Stimulation. This transformational leadership attribute is characterized by the leader's ability to help others think of old problems in new ways (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood, 1994). A correlation coefficient of .141 was obtained for the two variables (Table 4).

Table 4

*Correlation Between Moral Reasoning and Intellectual Stimulation (IS) (N=103)*

		Moral Reasoning	Intellectual Stimulation
Moral Reasoning	Pearson Correlation	1.00	.141
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.157
	N	103	103
Intellectual Stimulation	Pearson Correlation	.141	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.157	
	N	103	103

Moral Reasoning and Individual Consideration had the weakest association with a correlation coefficient of .020 (Table 5). Leaders who exhibit individual consideration attend to the needs of others and make everyone feel that their contributions are valued (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood, 1994).

Table 5

*Correlation Between Moral Reasoning and Individual Consideration (IC) (N=103)*

		Moral Reasoning	Individual Consideration
Moral Reasoning	Pearson Correlation	1.00	.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.841
	N	103	103
Individual Consideration	Pearson Correlation	.020	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.841	
	N	103	103

Question 2 – Is there a statistically significant relationship between the moral reasoning levels of male and female superintendents; deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents; and principals and their use of transformational leadership behaviors?

The relationship between the administrators' gender and their levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors was examined by using a t-Test for equality of means.

The test was used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

The mean score for female levels of moral reasoning was 36.22 with a standard deviation of 19.94 (N=43). Mean scores for females (N=43) for each of the attributes of transformational leadership were as follows: Idealized Influence (Charisma) 3.15, Idealized Influence (Behavior) 3.36, Inspirational Motivation 3.44, Intellectual Stimulation 3.25, and Individual Consideration 3.36.

The mean score for male levels of moral reasoning was 31.34 with a standard deviation of 13.42. Mean scores for males (N=60) for each of the attributes of transformational leadership were as follows: Idealized Influence (Charisma) 3.10, Idealized Influence (Behavior) 3.30, Inspirational Motivation 3.47, Intellectual Stimulation 3.16, and Individual Consideration 3.26.

The t-Test for equality of means revealed the following t scores when equal variances were assumed: Moral Reasoning  $t = 1.485$ , Idealized Influence (Charisma)  $t = .435$ , Idealized Influence (Behavior)  $t = .631$ , Inspirational Motivation  $t = -.291$ , Intellectual Stimulation  $t = .954$ , and Individual Consideration  $t = 1.184$ . All had a *df* of 101. There was no statistically significant difference between the two groups in any of the behaviors.

Females had a higher mean score than males for moral reasoning and for four of the five transformational leadership attributes. Males had a higher mean score than females on the attribute of Inspirational Motivation. The data are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

*Differences in Moral Reasoning and Transformational Leadership Behaviors Between Male and Female Administrators*

Behavior	Male		Female		t
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Moral Reasoning	31.34	13.42	36.22	19.94	1.485
Idealized Influence-Charisma	3.10	.48	3.14	.47	.435
Idealized Influence-Behavior	3.30	.50	3.36	.48	.631
Inspirational Motivation	3.47	.42	3.44	.43	-.291
Intellectual Stimulation	3.16	.51	3.25	.44	.954
Individual Consideration	3.26	.42	3.36	.42	1.184

#### Ancillary Findings

Though not included in the research questions, a statistical analysis was conducted to determine if there were differences between the roles of the respondents and their levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine significance between groups and within groups.

Data from the analysis of variance indicated no significant differences between superintendents; deputy, associate or assistant superintendents; and principals and their levels of moral reasoning and transformational behaviors (See Table 7). Though not significant, the transformation leadership attribute of Individual Consideration had an F value of 2.569 with a significance level of .082. Other F values were as follows: Moral Reasoning .412, Idealized

Influence (Charisma) 1.340, Idealized Influence (Behavior) .097, Inspirational Motivation .155, and Intellectual Stimulation .396. These data are presented in Table 7 (Nicol & Pexman, 1999).

Table 7

*One-Way Analysis of Variance for Effects of Role on Moral Reasoning and Transformational Leadership Behaviors*

Variable and Source	SS	MS	F (2,100)
Moral Reasoning			
Between Groups	228.370	114.185	.412
Within Groups	27691.688	276.917	
Idealized Influence (Charisma)			
Between Groups	.593	.297	1.340
Within Groups	22.140	.221	
Idealized Influence (Behavior)			
Between Groups	.045	.023	.097
Within Groups	23.309	.233	
Inspirational Motivation			
Between Groups	.057	.029	.155
Within Groups	18.371	.184	
Intellectual Stimulation			
Between Groups	.185	.093	.396
Within Groups	23.396	.234	
Individual Consideration			
Between Groups	.888	.444	2.569
Within Groups	17.289	.173	

### Summary

Data for this study were obtained from a random sample of West Virginia public school administrators. Twenty-four superintendents; 19 deputy, associate, and assistant superintendents; and 60 principals participated in the study. Of the 103 total participants, 60 were male and 43 were female. The study was conducted to examine the relationship between the levels of moral reasoning and use of transformational leadership behaviors of the administrators. Factors of gender and role were also examined.

Two instruments were used to collect data. The *Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2)* was used to measure moral reasoning levels. The *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x-Short (MLQ-5x)* was used to measure transformational leadership behaviors. Both instruments, along with a cover letter, were sent to participants via U.S. mail. A stamped, addressed envelope was provided for return of the instruments.

A one-shot case study design was used (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The relationship between levels of moral reasoning and use of transformational leadership behaviors was analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Differences in gender were analyzed using a t-Test for independent samples. Differences in role were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Data were entered and analyzed at the .05 alpha level of significance using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

No statistically significant relationship was found between the administrators' levels of moral reasoning and their use of transformational leadership behaviors. A correlation coefficient was obtained to examine the relationship between moral reasoning and each of the five attributes of transformational leadership as defined on the *MLQ-5x*.

Data from a t-test for independent samples indicated no statistically significant differences between gender and levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors. Data from a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated no statistically significant relationship between role of the administrator and their levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors.

## Chapter 5

### Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations as they relate to the study. The chapter is divided into the following sections: summary of purpose; summary of procedures used; summary of descriptive data; summary of findings, conclusions and discussion of implications; and recommendations for further research.

#### *Summary of Purpose*

study examined the relationship between the levels of moral reasoning and the use of transformational leadership behaviors of public school administrators in West Virginia. The following research questions guided the study:

1. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the moral reasoning levels of superintendents; deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents; and principals and their use of transformational leadership behaviors?
2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the moral reasoning levels of male and female superintendents; deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents; and principals and their use of transformational leadership behaviors?

#### *Summary of Procedures*

A one-shot case study research design was used to examine the relationship between the levels of moral reasoning and the use of transformational leadership behaviors of public school administrators. Fifty-five superintendents; 62 deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents, and 250 K-12 principals were selected to participate in the study. The entire populations of both superintendents and deputy, assistant, and associate superintendents served as the sample, as did 250 randomly selected principals.

Each participant in the sample received two instruments to complete, along with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, via U.S. mail. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was included for returning the completed instruments. Participants were asked to provide demographic data that included age, gender, and role.

Numerous attempts were made to increase the return rate. Follow up postcards were mailed to participants approximately two weeks after the initial mailing. Phone calls and emails were made encouraging participants to return the instruments. A second mailing was also done as an attempt to increase the rate. The executive director of a local professional organization also assisted in reminding the administrators to return the instruments. The researcher's committee recognized the efforts that were made to collect the data and after consultation with all committee members, the committee chair granted permission for continuation of the study using the 103 participants who responded. Possible explanations for the lower than expected return rate for this study are discussed in the *Conclusions and Discussion of Implications* section of this chapter.

Two instruments were used to collect data for the study. The first instrument, the *Defining Issues Test-2 (DIT-2)*, was used to measure levels of moral reasoning. The *DIT-2* is an updated version of the original *Defining Issues Test* devised 25 years ago. The test is designed to measure moral judgment based on the theory of Kohlberg's moral stages (Kohlberg, 1984). The instrument presents five hypothetical dilemmas in which the participants read each dilemma and then rate and rank a series of issues related to each dilemma. Ratings were given using a five-item Likert scale. Each participant received a "P" score based on the responses given. The "P" score represents the proportion of items selected that appeal to Stages 5 and 6 of Kohlberg's

moral stages. The score is reported as a percentage within a range of 0-95 and represents the extent to which a person prefers postconventional moral thinking (Bebeau & Thoma, 2003).

The second instrument, the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x (MLQ5x)*, was used to measure transformational leadership behaviors. The *MLQ5x* is a shorter version of the *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire*. The questionnaire consists of 45 statements that describe leadership behaviors. Twenty of the 45 statements are associated with transformational leadership and are categorized under the five attributes of Idealized Influence (Charisma), Idealized Influence (Behavior), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individual Consideration. Participants rated each statement using a five-point Likert scale. Mean scores for each attribute were obtained by summing the rating of each item and dividing by the number of items and were reported as five separate scores.

Data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson Product Moment Correlations were obtained to examine the relationship between levels of moral reasoning and use of transformational leadership behaviors. A t-test for independent samples was used to analyze differences in male and female administrators. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences in role. An alpha level of .05 was used to determine statistical significance.

#### *Summary of Descriptive Data*

A total of 103 administrators returned both instruments for an overall response rate of 28%. Twenty-four of the 55 superintendents returned instruments for a response rate of 43%. Of these 24, 17 were male and 7 were female. Nineteen of the 62 deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents returned instruments for a response rate of 31%. Of the 19, 12 were male and seven were female. Principals had the lowest response rate at 24%, with 60 out of 250 surveyed

returning instruments. The age of the respondents ranged from 32 to 75 with a mean of 51.8 years and standard deviation of 7.8.

The mean “P” score for respondents on the *DIT-2* was 33.08 with a standard deviation of 15.07. Mean subscale scores on the *MLQ-5x* were as follows: Idealized Influence (Attributed or Charisma) 3.12, Idealized Influence (Behavior) 3.36, Inspirational Motivation 3.46, Intellectual Stimulation 3.19, and Individual Consideration 3.31.

### *Summary of Findings*

Data gathered and analyzed to examine the relationship between the levels of moral reasoning and the use of transformational leadership behaviors of West Virginia public school administrators revealed no statistically significant relationship. There was no statistically significant relationship between moral reasoning and Idealized Influence (Attributed or Charisma), Idealized Influence (Behavior), Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, or Individual Consideration. Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference between male and female public school administrators and their levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors. Likewise, no statistically significant difference was found between role and levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors.

### *Conclusions and Discussion of Implications*

A review of the literature suggests a possible relationship between higher moral development and greater use of transformational leadership among leaders (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Harkass & Edwards, 1981; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Lichtenstein et al., 1995, Turner et al., 2002). In this study, there was no statistically significant relationship between levels of moral reasoning and use of transformational leadership behaviors among public school administrators.

Data from the study do not support the literature. The following reasons are offered as possible explanations.

First, much of the literature that supports moral reasoning and leadership originates in the business world (Craig, 1993; Free Markets Insider, 2002; James & La Motta, 2002; Patterson & Kim, 1991). Little research has been done relating to moral reasoning and public school administrators (Craig, 1993). The types of leadership and moral issues that face business leaders may be very different than those of educational leaders. Business leaders do not make decisions based on what is in the best interest of children. Educational leaders ultimately have the responsibility of making decisions that will maximize student potential and success. As Martin Luther King Jr. once said, “If we are to avoid deforming the souls of the students, we must steer through the many distractions that assail us from all sides. We will lead morally, deliberately, and dialogically to achieve both social justice and academic excellence for all the students entrusted to us” (Temes, 1996, p. 80).

A second explanation for the results of this study may be related to the instruments used to measure both moral reasoning and transformational leadership. Participants were asked to complete both the *DIT-2* and the *MLQ5x*. The *DIT-2* was lengthy and required participants to make decisions about moral dilemmas that were not typical examples of decisions that are routinely made in an educational setting. Additionally, the norming sample for the *DIT-2* was not comparable to the sample in this study, and thus, may have impacted the results.

Organizational samples used in both the initial and replication analysis of the *MLQ5x* were also different from the sample used in this study. The vast majority of the sample included participants from business, government agencies, and the military. No educational agencies were included. Subordinates from each of these areas were asked to rate their leaders. In this

study, the *MLQ5x* was self-reporting. Sampling the West Virginia public school administrators' subordinates may have yielded different results.

The lower than anticipated return rate may also have affected the results of the study. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) recommend a minimum return rate of 50% plus one before conducting data analysis. This study had a sample size of 367. One hundred and three participants returned surveys for a return rate of 28%. Follow up post cards, phone calls, and mailings were made in an attempt to improve the return rate.

Requiring participants to complete two instruments may have been a factor that led to a smaller than expected return rate. Public school administrators are faced with a multitude of tasks and often, tasks that are not a priority are put aside or forgotten about all together. Timing of the mailing may also have been a factor for the lower than expected return rate. The instruments were mailed to participants in late October. This is a time when many are preparing for the holiday season and may not be as responsive to requests to participate in studies not required as part of their professional duties.

A few surveys were returned with handwritten notes indicating refusal to participate in the study. One possible explanation could be the reluctance by some to disclose personal information about choices dealing with moral issues. Some of the items on the *DIT-2* deal with issues that are personal in nature and may have made some feel uncomfortable.

A review of the literature also suggests significant differences between men and women and their levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership (Ashmore, Del Boca, & Wohlers, 1986; Borisoff & Merrill, 1985; Chapman, 1975; Eagly, Karau, & Johnson, 1992; Garfinkel, 1988; Grogan & Smith, 1998; Helgeson, 1990; Hollander & Yoder, 1978; Josefowitz, 1980). In this study, no statistically significant difference was found between male and female

public school administrators and their levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors. This supports a study by Evans, Forney and Guido-DiBrito (1998) in which no significant gender differences were found in *DIT* samples of thousands of participants. Again, a possible explanation for the outcome of the results of the study can be found in the lower than expected response rate of the participants.

Another possible explanation could be related to new research on the emergence of collegial learning communities for educational leaders in which collaborative conversations take place and leaders take the time to learn from each other in order to more effectively deal with the ever increasing demands of the profession (Newcomb, 2004). Both men and women are included in these collegial communities and can benefit from the positive relationships that are formed. Additionally, Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) recently published findings from a meta-analysis on effective school leadership behaviors. Findings identified 21 responsibilities that were correlated with student achievement. These responsibilities were not related to gender.

Ancillary findings indicated no statistically significant difference between the role of the public school administrator and the levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors. Specifically, there were no differences in moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors of superintendents; deputy, assistant, or associate superintendents; and principals. School leaders today, regardless of whether they operate at the school or district levels, have common accountability measures as part of recent federal and state legislation. District and school leaders are now working together to achieve mutually established goals. Despite the increased pressures and demands, a 2003 Public Agenda's recent survey (Farkas, Johnson, and Duffett, 2003) revealed that school administrators remain resilient and optimistic. Common issues are facing both district and school level leaders across the country. Leaders

have identified common problems and have begun to work together to find common solutions. This may explain the findings from the study. The lower than expected response rate may also have contributed to the findings.

Findings from this study did not support the literature on the relationship between moral reasoning and transformational leadership behaviors. Conclusions from the findings, along with implications and possible explanations have been provided. Recommendations for further research follow.

#### *Recommendations for Further Research*

Though no statistically significant relationship between moral reasoning and transformational leadership was found in this study, more research in these areas should be continued. Public education in the United States is currently under intense scrutiny due to recent federal legislation and increased accountability mandates. It is vital that educational leaders have both the moral and leadership skills necessary to enable all students to be successful. As Fullan (2003) states, “Moral purpose of the highest order is having a system where all students learn, the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced, and what people learn enables them to be successful citizens and workers in a morally based knowledge society” (p. 29). Leithwood (1994) contends that transformational leadership skills are necessary for education leaders if they are to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Given this, the following recommendations for further research are presented.

1. The study be replicated with a sample from a larger population to provide greater generalizability.
2. Separate studies be conducted with specific groups of educational leaders (i.e. superintendents only, principals only, etc.) with larger sample sizes.

3. Studies examining the relationship between moral reasoning and transformational leadership be conducted using instruments other than the *DIT-2* and the *MLQ5x*.
4. Studies be conducted in which subordinates rate their leaders on the factors of moral reasoning and transformation leadership instead of participants being asked to self report.
5. Studies be conducted with more concise instruments that measure both moral reasoning and transformational leadership.
6. Studies be conducted to examine the relationship between age and levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership.
7. Studies be conducted to examine the relationship between years of experience and levels of moral reasoning and transformational leadership.
8. Studies be conducted to examine the relationship between moral reasoning and other forms of leadership.
9. Studies be conducted to examine the extent to which moral reasoning is incorporated into higher education leadership programs.
10. Studies be conducted to examine the extent to which transformational leadership is incorporated into higher education leadership programs.
11. Studies be conducted to examine the extent to which moral reasoning is used as a criterion for hiring educational administrators in public schools.
12. Studies be conducted to determine the extent that professional development is offered to practicing public school administrators in the areas of moral reasoning and transformational leadership.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A – *Defining Issues Test-2*

**DIT-2**  
**Defining Issues Test**  
**Version 3.0**

**University of Minnesota**  
**Center for the Study of Ethical Development**

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This questionnaire is concerned with how you define the issues in a social problem. Several stories about social problems will be described. After each story, there will be a list of questions. The questions that follow each story represent different issues that might be raised by the problem. In other words, the questions/issues raise different ways of judging what is important in making a decision about the social problem. You will be asked to rate and rank the questions in terms of how important each one seems to you.

The questionnaire is in two parts: one part contains the instructions (this part) and the stories presenting the social problems; the other part contains the questions (issues) and the answer sheet on which to write your responses. Here is an example of the task:

**Presidential Election:**

Imagine that you are about to vote for a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. Imagine that before you vote, you are given several questions, and asked which issue is the most important to you in making up our mind about which candidate to vote for. In this example, 5 items are given. On a rating scale of 1 to 5 (1=Great, 2=Much, 3=Some, 4=Little, 5=No), please rate the importance of the item (issue) by filling in with a pencil one of the bubbles on the answer sheet by each item.

Rate the following 12 issues in terms of importance 1-5

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 1. Financially, are you personally better off now than you were four years ago?                        |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 2. Does one candidate have a superior moral character?   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 3. Which candidate stands the tallest?   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 4. Which candidate would make the best world leader?   |
| 1 2 3 4 5 | 5. Which candidate has the best ideas for our country's internal problems? like crime and health care? |

Further, the questionnaire will ask you to rank the questions in order of importance. In the space below, the numbers 1-12 represent the item number. From top to bottom, you are asked to fill in the bubble that represents the item in first importance (of those given you to choose from), then second most important, third most important, and fourth most important. Please indicate your top four choices. You might fill out this part as follows:

**Rank which issue is the most important (item number).**

Most important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Second most important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Third most important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Fourth most important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

Note that some of the items may seem irrelevant to you or not make sense to you – in that case, rate the item as “No” importance and do not rank the item. Note that in the stories that follow, there will be 12 items for each story, not five. Please make sure to consider all twelve items that are printed after each story.

In addition, you will be asked to state your preference for what action should be taken in the story. After the story, you will be asked to indicate the action you favor on a three point scale – (1=strongly favor, 2=can’t decide. 3=strongly oppose).

In short, read the story from this booklet, then fill out your answers on the answer sheet. Please use a #2 pencil. If you change your mind about a response, erase the pencil mark cleanly and enter your new response.

Please now turn to the Answer Sheet.

(Instrument continues with five stories and a set of issue questions for each story that are rated and ranked as per the example above).

*Appendix B – Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x*

**Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire  
Leader Form**

**Name:**

**Date:**

**Organization ID#:**

**Leader ID#:**

**This questionnaire is to describe your leadership style as you perceive it. Please answer all items on this answer sheet. If an item is irrelevant or if you are unsure about the answer, leave the answer blank.**

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

**Use the following rating scale:**

Not at all	Once in a While	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Frequently/Always
0	1	2	3	4

- |     |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  | I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6.  | I talk about my most important values and beliefs               | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. | I spend my time teaching and coaching.                          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31. | I help others to develop their strengths.                       | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 44. | I increase others' willingness to try harder.                   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

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Appendix C – Cover Letter

November 15, 2004

Dear Colleague,

I am conducting a research study to fulfill requirements for the Marshall University Doctoral program in Leadership Studies. The purpose of my study is to examine the relationship between levels of moral reasoning and use of transformational leadership behaviors of West Virginia public school administrators. I will be surveying superintendents, assistant superintendents, and principals. I am asking for you to participate in this study.

You are being asked to complete two instruments—the Defining Issues Test 2 (DIT-2) and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire Form 5x. The first instrument measures moral reasoning and the second measures the use of transformational leadership behaviors. Directions for each instrument are included on each form.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate. Your responses will remain anonymous and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process. You will not be identified by name in any subsequent reports. The numbers on the instruments will enable me to match your results during data collection and analysis.

Please complete both answer sheets and return to me in the enclosed, addressed, stamped envelope. Time needed to complete both instruments should be about thirty to forty minutes.

I will be happy to share my results with anyone who is interested. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, you can contact Dr. Stephen Cooper, IRB#2 Chair at 304-696-7320. If you have any questions about the study, please contact me at 304-348-6145 (work) or 304-346-7866 (home) or email at [cldaniel@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:cldaniel@access.k12.wv.us).

Thank you for your cooperation and assistance with this study.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Daniel  
Doctoral Candidate

Enclosures

Appendix D – Follow Up Post Card

You recently received information asking for your participation in a study for completion of my doctoral program at Marshall University. I would appreciate your participation in this study. Please complete both instruments and return in the stamped, addressed envelope. If you choose not to participate, please return all materials in the stamped, addressed envelope. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance.

Cynthia Daniel  
MU Doctoral Candidate

Appendix E – IRB Approval Letter



## Curriculum Vita

Cynthia L. Daniel  
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## **EDUCATION**

Marshall University, Huntington WV Anticipated December 2005  
 Degree – *Doctor of Education* in Educational Leadership Studies with a minor in Curriculum and Instruction. Dissertation: The Relationship Between Levels of Moral Reasoning and Transformational Leadership Behaviors of West Virginia Public School Administrators.

**Marshall University**, Huntington, WV December 2002  
*Degree- Specialist of Education* in Superintendency

**Marshall University**, Huntington, WV December 1997  
*Degree – Master of Arts* in Educational Leadership Studies

**West Virginia College of Graduate Studies**, Institute, WV August 1990  
*Degree – Master of Arts* in Secondary School Counseling

**University of Charleston**, Charleston, WV May 1984  
*Degree – Bachelor of Arts, Magna Cum Laude*, in Multicategorical Special Education

## **EMPLOYMENT**

**Kanawha County Schools, Charleston, WV** *1984-Present*  
 Secondary Special Education Classroom Teacher 1984-1996  
 Curriculum Supervisor 1996-1997  
 Assistant Principal for Curriculum, Riverside High 1997-2000  
 Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction 2000-Present

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

American Association of School Administrators  
 Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
 Phi Delta Kappa  
 RESA III Advisory Council  
 West Virginia Advanced Placement Advisory Council  
 West Virginia Association of School Administrators