



## Leadership Behaviors in the Killeen Independent School District

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This cross-sectional survey study is based on the assertion that transformational leadership is a pattern of behaviors to be used in given situations. However, the current body of knowledge has led leaders to equate transformational leadership with other models and to believe that becoming a transformational leader is a sequential process. This study seeks to determine how leaders in the Killeen Independent School District (KISD) construe an ideal transformational leader and how these leaders view themselves compared to an ideal transformational leader. Results showed these leaders had a high degree of understanding and reported adopting situational behaviors over transformational and transactional. This study reveals existing obstacles that restrict the use of transformational behaviors within the system and proposes that further study is required to isolate and overcome these obstacles.

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**R**esearchers of transformational leadership have attempted to show a distinct boundary between transactional and transformational leadership styles with the implication that transformational leadership was the last step taken when transitioning to an ideal leader (Goodwin, Wofford, & Whittlington, 2001). Researchers have also attempted to determine the transformational leadership behaviors within a given situational construct or organizational culture (Waldner, 2005). Organizational leaders, consultants, and leadership scholars have attempted to train subjects in transformational leadership methods where there has been little or no previous leadership training or education (Sivanathan, Turner, & Barling, 2005). Goodwin et al. (2001) and Bass, Avolio, Jung, and Berson (2003) contended that no distinct boundary existed—that higher order transactional leaders could be lower order transformational leaders and vice versa. Bass (1990) argued that transformational leadership augmented transactional leadership, and Tichy and Devanna, (1986, as cited by Bass) posited that transformational leadership was a pattern of behavior that expected leaders to use the method or style of leadership that best fit the situation.

The current body of transformational leadership knowledge has led leaders, whether in the private sector or in public education, to equate transformational leadership with other widely researched leadership models (Currie, Boyett, & Suhomlinova, 2005; Eyal & Kark, 2004;

Friedman, 2004; Sternberg, 2005). Leaders at all levels need to understand that becoming a transformational leader is not a sequential process. Transformational leadership is a philosophy of vision, values, and empowerment that encompasses the daily transactions required for organizational operations (Burns, 2003).

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to determine how leaders construe an ideal transformational leader and how such leaders view themselves with respect to an ideal transformational leader, specifically studying educational leaders within the Killeen Independent School District in Killeen, Texas. The study was conducted by comparing self-reported characteristics, behaviors, and leadership styles using an instrument that was based on the hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behavior developed by Yukl, Gordon, and Taber (2002), who developed and defined these behaviors as task, relations, and change. Yukl et al. contended that transformational leadership encompasses the major leadership styles through situational awareness and a balance of the use of both power and traits to determine the best method or the behaviors required for the situation. This study attempts to determine transformational leadership behaviors displayed by leaders through the comparison of the ideal transformational leader, as reported by the educational leaders, and the self-reported behaviors of these leaders. The following research questions were developed for this study:

RQ1. How do the educational leaders in the Killeen Independent School District define transformational leadership?

(The educational leaders' definitions of transformational leadership led to the next two research questions):

RQ2. What behaviors do educational leaders in the Killeen Independent School District believe are those of a transformational leader as defined by task, relations, and change behaviors?

RQ3. What leadership behaviors do educational leaders in the Killeen Independent School District believe they have adopted for their leadership style, as defined by task, relations, and change behaviors?

The sample was selected from 150 leaders from within the school district, including the superintendent, assistant superintendents, chief of staff, district directors, principals, and assistant principals.

The following sections will discuss a literature review of transformational leadership and educational leadership, and the methodology and analysis, and a discussion of the study's implications.

### **Transformational Leadership**

Twenty-first century leaders will have to be more versatile, more ethically and morally bounded, more empowering, and more visionary to be able to meet the needs of their followers, the organization, and stakeholders (Bennis, 2003). Additionally, leaders must also be prepared to work transactional operations, ensuring the completion of daily tasks and requirements (Barbuto, 2005; Durante, 2005; Friedman, 2004). Bass (1990) has stated that transformational leaders work to change a framework and were thought of as intellectuals, reformers, revolutionaries, heroes, and idealists. Transformational leaders also are able to unite their subordinates and change their goals and beliefs, resulting in higher levels of performance and morality among individuals

(Rude, Paolucci-Whitcomb, & Comerford, 2005). Exceptional transformational leaders articulate strong values and ideals, motivating subordinates in supporting the values and ideals for the greater good (Rude et al.).

Behavior has been an important variable in leadership literature. Researchers have used behavior, in part and in total, as the basis for their theories and models (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Blake, Mouton, Barnes, & Greiner, 1964; Blanchard, 2007; Fiedler, 1972; Reddin, 1967). The study of behaviors in transformational leadership has been just as important (Avolio & Bass; Burns, 2003; Yukl, 1989). Yukl contended the use of transformational behaviors might be unnecessary and in the worst case detrimental to the organization. Therefore, the use of transformational behaviors is situation dependent.

Yukl (1989) defined the behavior approach to leadership as the emphasis of work conducted by leaders and managers and as the relationship between behavior and managerial effectiveness. The categories of behaviors, although not consistently integrated, are equal to the task-oriented and relations-oriented behaviors as defined by Fiedler's (1972) leadership and contingency theory and Reddin's (1967) 3-D management style theory. Behaviors are also highlighted in Blake and Mouton's managerial grid theory (Blake, 1964) and Blanchard and Hersey's theory of life cycle leadership, as well as in Blanchard's present form of situational leadership (Blanchard, 2007).

The body of leadership behavior research has always been fragmented in that terms describing behaviors have been inconsistent or have been given different meanings based on different styles of research. Therefore, Yukl et al. (2002) developed a leadership behavior taxonomy in which they integrated over 50 years of behavior research into three main meta-categories and 12 specified leadership behaviors. The meta-categories they identified were task behavior, relations behavior, and change behavior (Yukl et al.). Table 1 depicts these meta-categories and the associated behaviors.

Each of the meta-categories can be equated to transactional, situational, or transformational behaviors based on the nature of the tasks that are conducted within each behavior. For example in the task behavior meta-category, developing schedules, providing performance expectations, and appraising performance are clearly transactional tasks (Bass, 1990). Within the relations behavior meta-category, supporting, coaching, and delegating follow Blanchard's (2007) theory of situational leadership. The change behavior meta-category equates to transformational leadership because of the visioning process, innovative thinking, and the taking of personal risk to ensure organizational success as well as subordinate success (Bass, 1990). The following discussion presents transformational leadership and leadership difficulties in the educational environment.

### **Educational Leadership**

The current educational system in the United States consists of organizations from the local school district, the respective state legislatures, and the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, DC. Many educational researchers agree the roots for current leadership lie within the previously discussed theories, in particular the works of Burns (1978) and Bass (1990) regarding transformational leadership (Beatty & Brew, 2004; Currie, Boyett, & Suhomlinova, 2005; Eyal & Kark, 2004; Friedman, 2004; Giles, 2006).

Beatty and Brew (2004) purported that leadership was the “most important factor in creating school culture, directly affecting teacher efficacy, job satisfaction, and leader-teacher and teacher-teacher relationships” (p. 330). Educational leaders “positively influence” their respective schools’ culture by “buffering intrusions, developing professional relationships, and by providing professional support” (Beatty & Brew, p. 330). Successful educational leaders have mastered emotional and relational skills in their daily contact with the school’s faculty, the students, and the parents of the students. Through the mastery of emotional and relational skills, educational leaders mitigate, or reduce, the ongoing tradition of teacher-leader antagonism, thus avoiding the exacerbation of resistance and low morale as the leaders attempt to implement changes (Betty & Brew).

Currie et al. (2005) raised two concerns in the implementation of transformational leadership in the educational setting. The first concern was the focus of leadership was excessively at the top of the organization, in that a dominant leader was detrimental and threatening to the collegiality, democratic governance, and traditionalism present within the culture. The second concern was the under-emphasis of a leader’s understanding and consideration of organizational context in the educational setting. Currie et al. contended that the important context in the educational environment included “educational and pedagogic values, social and professional relations within the school, constructs of educational community and collegiality, and commitments to greater social equity and inclusiveness” (p. 269).

Eyal and Kark (2004) asserted that the education system operates primarily in a transactional environment and relies on public funds for financing, causing schools to become “slow-changing organizations” (p. 218). However, the researchers also asserted that current ongoing changes in societies, increases in diverse student needs, and changes in technology create uncertainties for educational leaders, threatening the schools’ relevancy in their communities. In maintaining this relevancy, educational leaders decentralize various processes allowing leaders at the school principal level to meet the needs of the local community (Eyal & Kark). The dichotomy in this empowerment of principals is that these leaders are required to meet the needs of the stakeholders while operating within the established policies and standards of the existing educational system, maintaining their lawful legitimacy (Eyal & Kark). Educational leaders can effect positive first-order changes within the school, meeting the needs of the stakeholders, by using transformational leadership behaviors—in particular proactive and moderate innovative behaviors. Yet the constraints of the system or framework within which educational leaders must operate hinder their ability to achieve successful second-order changes.

The previous discussion provided a brief review of transformational leadership, a discussion of leadership behaviors within the task, relations, and change meta-categories, and a brief discussion of implementing transformational leadership within the educational environment. The meta-categories form the foundation for answering the research questions in studying transformational leadership in the educational environment. The following section will provide the methodology used to gather and analyze the data.

Table 1  
*Hierarchical Leadership Behavior Taxonomy*

Meta-category	Leadership behavior	Behavior definition
	Short-term planning	Develop schedules, determine resources, and determine methods of coordination to complete tasks.
Task behavior (Transactional)	Clarifying responsibilities and performance objectives	Provide clear duty descriptions, objectives, and performance expectations.
	Monitoring operations and performance	Supervise the progress and quality. Evaluate individual and unit performance.
Relations behavior (Situational)	Supporting	Provide encouragement and be considerate, sympathetic, and supportive.
	Developing	Provide assistance, advice and coaching, and opportunities for personal development.
	Recognizing	Provide praise and recognition for effective performance, achievements, contributions, and performance improvements.
	Consulting	Include stakeholders, and their ideas, in decision-making process; encourage participation.
	Empowering	Provide responsibility and authority with task delegation. Instill trust in subordinates to make decisions.
Change behavior (Transformational)	External monitoring	Conduct continuous environment strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats analyses.
	Envisioning change	Present descriptions of desirable outcomes that can be achieved. Describe proposed changes with enthusiasm.
	Encouraging innovative thinking	Challenge people to question their assumptions about the work and consider better methods of performance.
	Taking personal risks to implement change	Take personal risks and make sacrifices to encourage and promote desirable change in the organization.

*Note.* Adapted From “A hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behavior: Integrating a half century of behavior research,” by G. Yukl, A. Gordon, and T. Taber, 2002, *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 9(1), p. 25. Copyright 2007 by Gerald R. Simmons, Sr.

## Method

This study was conducted by using self-reported characteristics, behaviors, and leadership styles. The data was collected using an instrument that was based on the hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behavior developed as depicted in Table 1.

### Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect the required data through a web-based survey instrument. The study required a specifically designed survey instrument to ensure the collection of the information needed to answer the research questions. The survey instrument was developed after the creation of the survey codebook. Each research question was entered into the codebook with its associated scoring method. Research Question 1 was formatted into an open-ended survey question and scored through content analysis. Research Questions 2 and 3 provided the variables from which the closed-ended Likert-type survey questions were developed. The five-point scale ranged from “1” (Disagree) to “5” (Agree). The meta-categories, which were the variables task behavior, relations, behavior, and change behavior, from Research Questions 2 and 3, were then entered into the codebook. The leadership behaviors associated with each meta-category were then entered, followed by their definitions. Finally, the closed-ended Likert-type survey questions were developed based on each leadership behavior and were assigned an administrative number to allow for question tracking and analysis throughout the data collection and analysis effort. Four survey questions per research question were developed to capture the degree of agreement of a respondent for each leadership behavior. Two of the four questions were used for each pilot-survey instrument. Once the instrument was developed, the instrument underwent content validity testing. After finalizing the survey instrument, it was then converted to a web page so the survey could be completed online by all respondents.

### Population

The use of practitioner leaders within the Killeen Independent School District provided a sample of leaders who had attained a leadership knowledge and experience level. Therefore, the sample was selected randomly from a population of 150 district leaders. Twenty leaders were used to conduct the pilot survey. The target and desired respondents were the superintendent, assistant superintendent, chief of staff, staff directors, principals, and assistant principals.

### Content Validity

Content validity was analyzed to ensure each survey question was representative and clear, was matched with a particular leadership behavior, and was retainable for the main survey. Selected leadership and research specialists assessed the content validity of the survey questions based on the representativeness and clarity of each question. Table 2 shows the inter-rater agreement (IRA), content validity index (CVI), and the factorial validity index (FVI) calculated using the methods defined by Rubio, Berg-Weger, Tebb, Lee, and Rauch (2003). The IRA was based on a four-point scale (1-4) for both the representative and clarity categories. The index was

calculated by averaging the scores of each item as rated by each expert. The final IRA was calculated by averaging the overall scores of each item. The CVI was also based on the four-point scale in the representative category; however, the score for each item was calculated by counting each score that equaled three or four and then dividing by the number of experts. The final CVI was calculated by averaging the overall scores for each item. The FVI was based on the assignment of a number value to each meta-category. The numbers that corresponded to the particular meta-category were then counted and then divided by the number of experts. The final index was then calculated by averaging the scores of each item. Table 2 also shows the survey questions were valid for their representativeness, clarity, and association to the research variables and ultimately the research questions. An index of .80 was the minimum required level to show the validity of the survey questions (Rubio et al., 2003).

*Table 2*  
IRA, CVI, and FVI for the Leadership Survey

	IRA		CVI	FVI
	Representative	Clarity		
Transformational leader				
Task behavior	.92	1.00	.90	.88
Relations behavior	.85	1.00	.95	.92
Change behavior	.88	1.00	.86	.88
Self-assessment				
Task behavior	1.00	1.00	.92	.92
Relations behavior	.95	1.00	.96	.96
Change behavior	1.00	1.00	.94	.91

### Reliability

Reliability of the instrument was tested during the pilot survey. The pilot sample was selected, using the simple random method. For this method, the list of all potential respondents was inserted into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet; each potential respondent was assigned a random number using the random number function. The list was then sorted in ascending order and the required number of potential respondents (20) was selected, starting from the beginning of the sorted list. The pilot survey was conducted using the split-halves method of testing for reliability (Litwin, 2003). In the split-halves method, the pilot sample was split in half and each sample half was provided with a different but equivalent survey. The results were then analyzed by calculating the correlation coefficients using Spearman's rank correlation (Black, 2006). Internal consistency was then analyzed by calculating Cronbach's coefficient (Gliem & Gliem, 2003).

Spearman's rank correlation was calculated to be  $r_s = .89$ . After determining the reliability of the two survey instruments, the internal consistency was then calculated using Cronbach's coefficient alpha for each survey. Survey A had a higher internal consistency (.80) than Survey B (.66); therefore, Survey A was subsequently chosen for use as the main survey

instrument. After the successful completion of the pilot survey, the survey website was reset with the primary survey instrument.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis began with the content analysis of the first research question. Content analysis was required because the survey question that provided data for the first research question was open-ended and required the respondents to type their answer. The content analysis software VBPro was used to assist in developing coded in-context lists from which themes were derived. The survey questions that provided information for Research Questions 2 and 3 used a Likert-type scale, which was ordinal level data (Black, 2006; Neuman, 2006); therefore, nonparametric statistical analysis was used to analyze the data. Nonparametric statistics also were used to analyze the variability of the behaviors identified with the demographics of the respondents to see if correlations existed within the population based on gender, age, education, and current position.

### **Sampling Frame**

Each leader solicited was from a sample of 130 leaders out of the original 150 leaders, and was requested to assist in the study. The sample size was determined using a sample-size-estimation formula for a finite population (Kiemele, Schmidt, & Berdine, 2000). The confidence levels for this study ranged from 90% to 99%, each of which allowed for making inferences about the population during analysis (Black, 2006). The researcher intended to collect at the 95% confidence level because the larger the sample of a homogeneous population, the more accurate the inferences to the population (Neuman, 2006). At the 95% confidence level, the sample size should have been 99 leaders.

### **Results and Findings**

A sample of 130 practitioner leaders (which did not include the pilot-survey leaders) from the Killeen Independent School District was solicited to participate in the online survey. The number of actual respondents was 75, with a response rate of 58%, with an actual completion rate of 50%. The confidence level obtained for analyzing the surveys was 92%.

The sample population was divided and analyzed in three groups. The groups were district leaders, principals, and assistant principals. For the purpose of conducting effective statistical analyses, all of the leadership at the district level (superintendent, assistant superintendent, chief of staff, directors, and coordinators) were grouped together as district leaders because of the lower numbers of the district leaders. The demographic information obtained from the leaders was age, education category, gender, and position. The mean age for the sample was 48.8 years, 71% of the sample was female, and 74% of the sample possessed a master's degree. Table 3 provides a summary of the demographic information.



Table 3  
*Sample Demographics*

	Demographic	Number of respondents	Percentage
Age	30-39	12	18%
	40-49	16	25%
	50-59	24	37%
	60-69	8	12%
	No response	5	8%
Education	Doctorate	7	11%
	Professional	3	5%
	Master's	48	74%
	Bachelor's	5	8%
	Associate's	1	2%
	Some college	1	2%
Gender	Female	46	71%
	Male	19	29%
Position	District level	12	18%
	Principal	21	32%
	Assistant principal	32	49%

### Data Analysis Procedures

The responses for the first research question required a content analysis. Once the content analysis was complete, the data were coded at the nominal or categorical level and were then statistically analyzed. The closed-ended survey questions were developed based on the variables contained within the second and third research questions. From the responses for the second and third research questions, the percentage of responses that were in agreement with the survey questions was calculated, as was the average percentage of respondents that were in agreement within each meta-category. Chi-square analysis was used to identify differences in the data and then the binomial analysis was used to confirm the differences and to identify which specific categories were the sources of the differences. The binomial distribution was used to calculate the upper and lower control limits as well as the 95% confidence levels for use in the P-charts, which are nonparametric control charts used with proportions (Henderson, 2006). The 95% confidence levels from the binomial analysis were used as the upper and lower control limits in the p-charts rather than the three standard deviations normally used in statistical process control charts so that data remained consistent with the 95% confidence levels calculated with the chi-square analyses. P-charts were used to analyze the data by position, gender, age, and meta-category.

Results

Research Question 1

The first research question asked how the educational leaders in the Killeen Independent School District define transformational leadership. The number of responses to the corresponding survey question totaled 58 for a response rate of 89%. The number of responses that contained search terms from the thematic dictionary was 53, or 91%. Two major themes were developed during the analysis: leader and change agent. The responses to the definition of a transformational leader identified key terms that specifically related to a leader and were grouped in the leader theme. Figure 1 shows the most frequent term used in describing a leader was vision or visionary, followed by encouraging, supporting, inspirational, and leads.

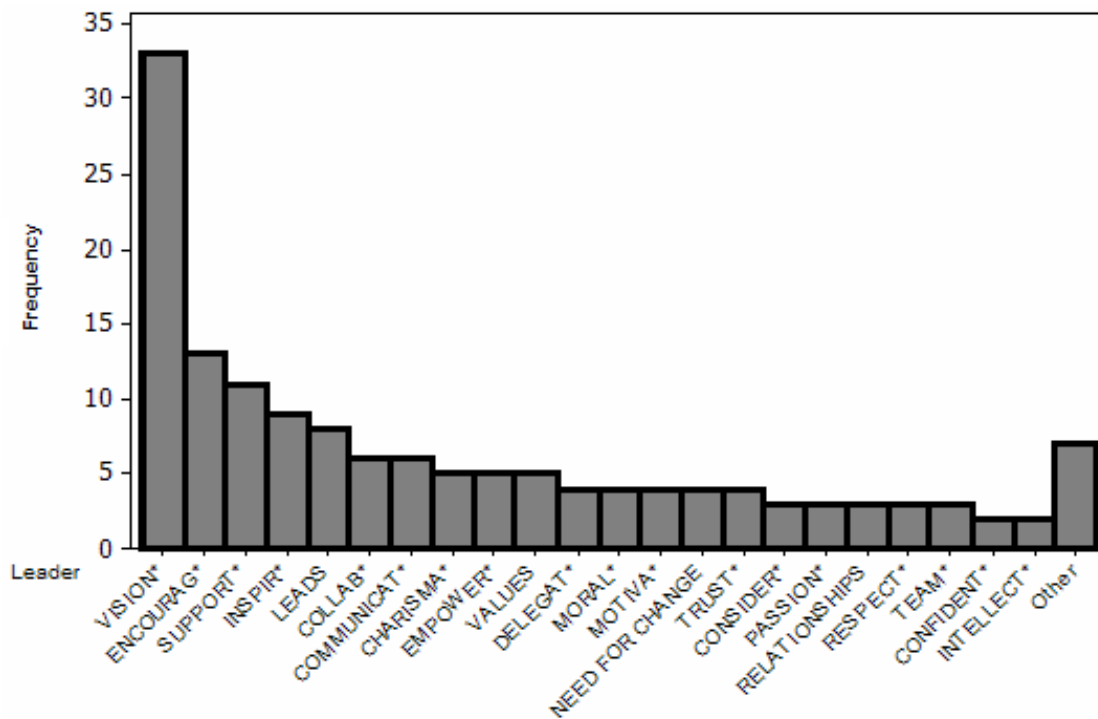


Figure 1. Leader theme: Frequency of use versus thematic term.

The responses to the definition of a transformational leader identified key terms that specifically related to a change agent within an organization, and these were grouped in the change agent theme. Figure 2 shows the most frequent term used in describing a change agent was change, whether in seeing requirements for change or actually conducting change within an organization. The other terms included continuous, as in continuous change, risk, as in the leader takes risks to invoke change, and innovative or innovation.

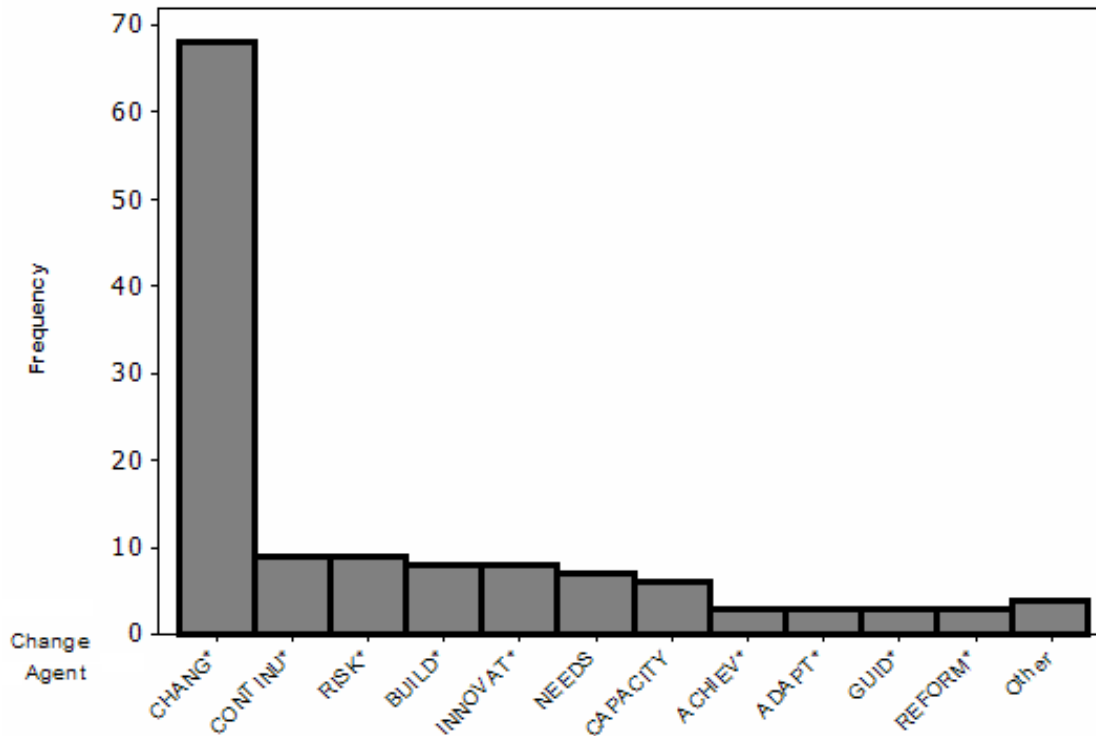


Figure 2. Change agent theme: Frequency of use versus thematic term.

### Research Questions 2 and 3

The second research question asked what behaviors educational leaders in the Killeen Independent School District believed were those of a transformational leader as defined by task, relations, and change behaviors. The third research question asked which leadership behaviors educational leaders in the Killeen Independent School District believed they adopted for their own leadership style, as defined by task, relations, and change behaviors. The analysis of the data included the percentages of the answers that were in agreement by meta-category (task behavior, relations behavior, change behavior) and both transformational leadership and personal behaviors. The analysis also included the percentages of the answers that were in agreement by meta-category and survey questions. Analysis was then conducted to determine if there were differences in responses by each demographic category (age, education, gender, and position). All data were analyzed at the 95% confidence level,  $\alpha = .05$ .

**Overall agreement.** In Figure 3, the data show the percentage of agreement about how the respondents viewed a transformational leader and the percentage of agreement about their personally adopted leadership behaviors, both for each meta-category (task, relations, change). The respondents agreed that transformational leaders displayed fewer task behaviors (44% agreement) in the performance of their duties in the task meta-category, but more relations behaviors (75%) and change behaviors (76%) in the relations and change meta-categories.

The respondents' personally adopted behaviors were lower (35% agreement) than the transformational leader in the task meta-category, and slightly higher (79% agreement) than the transformational leader in the relations meta-category. The personally adopted change behaviors were lower (60% agreement) than the believed transformational leader behaviors in the change meta-category.

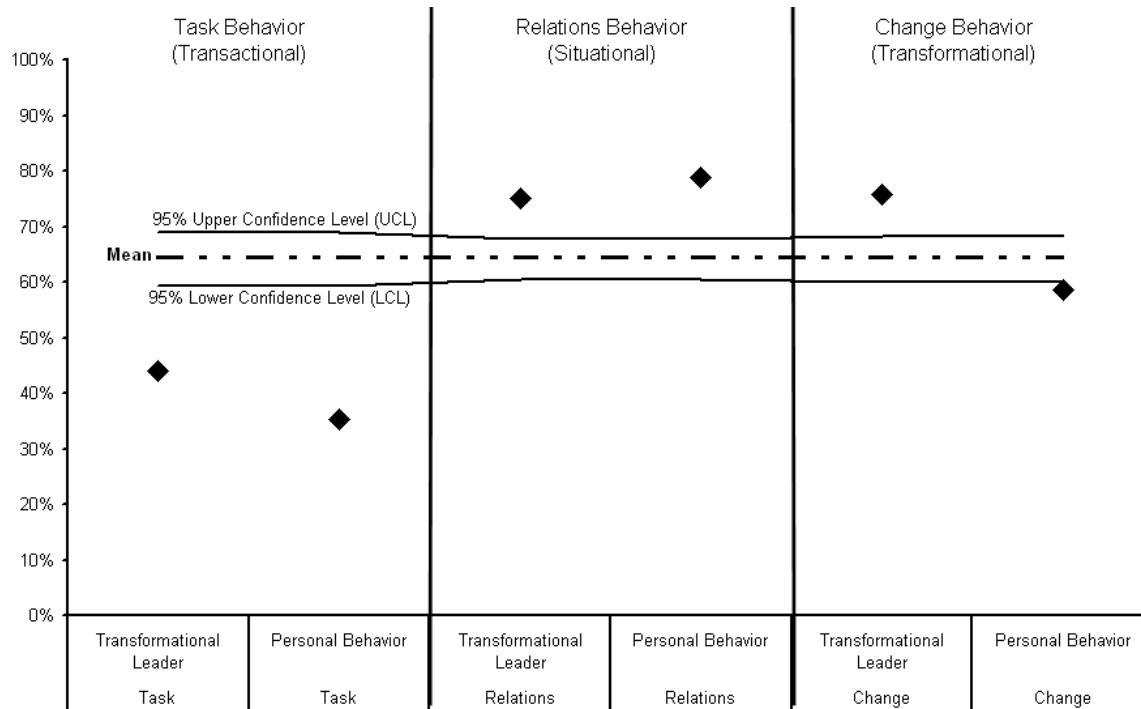


Figure 3. Percent of agreement of transformational leadership behaviors and personal behaviors for each meta-category.

The data shown in Figure 4 represents the percentage of responses in agreement for each survey question within each meta-category. The circled Questions 9, 37, and 51 had low percentages as compared to the other questions within each question's meta-category. Questions 9 and 37 were 3.1% agreement and Question 51 was 0% agreement. Survey Question 9 asked if a transformational leadership required leaders to ensure their employees clearly understood the leaders' expectations for job performance, and survey Question 51 asked if a transformational leadership required leaders to inform internal and external stakeholders of major organizational decisions. Survey Question 37 asked if the respondent personally provided advice and coaching to ensure subordinates continued to perform tasks to set standards. The remaining responses showed lower agreement that a transformational leader used task behaviors, but higher agreement that a respondent adopted task behaviors. The responses also showed higher agreement that a transformational leader used, or the respondent adopted, both relations and change behaviors.

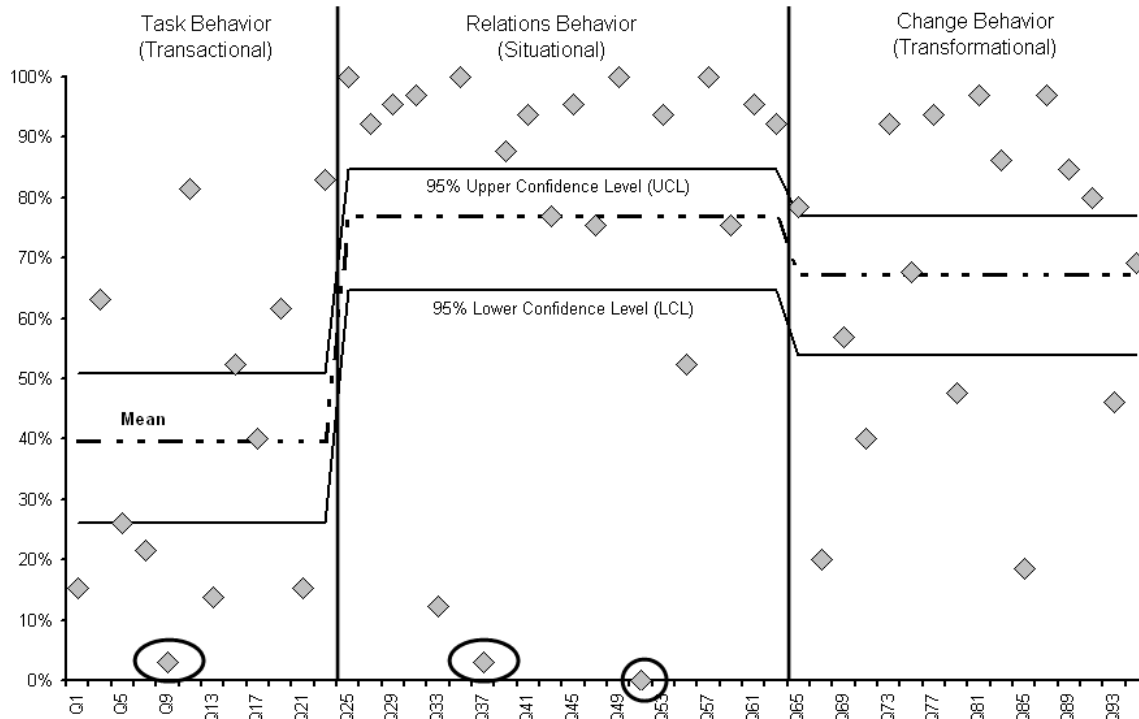


Figure 4. Percent of agreement of behaviors for each survey question for each meta-category.

**Age group analysis.** The data were analyzed to see if there were differences in agreement by age group. The study sample was divided into four age groups by choosing the groups with relatively equal numbers of responses. Significant differences were found in the adopted personal behaviors in the task, relations, and change behaviors meta-categories, where  $\chi^2(12, N = 65) = 28.85, p = .004$ ,  $\chi^2(12, N = 65) = 23.33, p = .025$ ,  $\chi^2(12, N = 65) = 24.09, p = .020$ , respectively. The differences in agreement by age are shown in Figure 5, where the circled groups were the significant differences. The data in Figure 5 shows that by age group, the respondents believed that a transformational leader displayed fewer task behaviors (44% mean agreement,) in the task meta-category but more relations behaviors (72% mean agreement) in the relations meta-category. In change meta-category, the respondents believed that a transformational leader displayed the most change behaviors (76% mean agreement). The significance is the respondents' personally adopted behaviors were lower (35% mean agreement) than the believed transformational leader behaviors in the task meta-category, higher (80% mean agreement) in the relations meta-category, and lower (60% mean agreement) in the change meta-category.

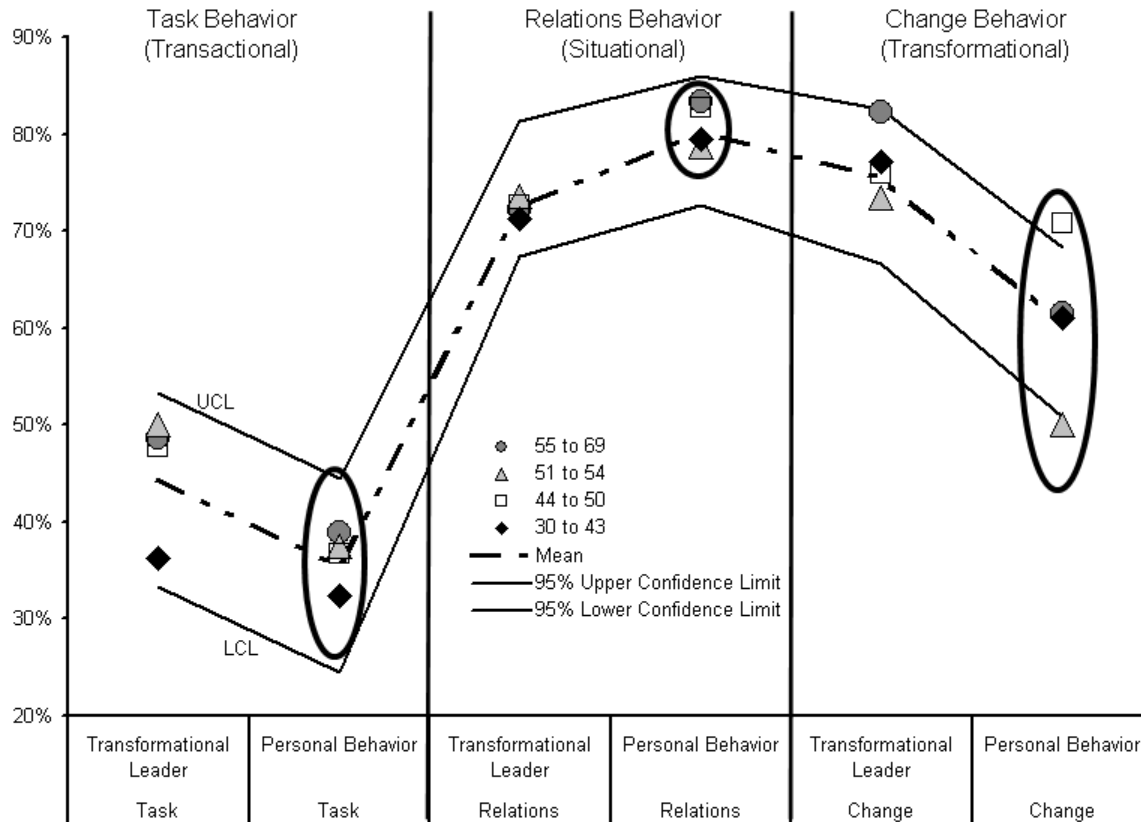


Figure 5. Percent of agreement of behaviors by age group for each meta-category.

**Education category analysis.** The data were also analyzed to see if there were differences in agreement by education category. The study sample was divided into three education categories based on the amounts of responses at each educational category. Significant differences were found in the adopted personal behaviors in the task and relations meta-categories, where  $\chi^2(8, N = 65) = 24.18, p = .002$ ,  $\chi^2(8, N = 65) = 23.56, p = .003$ , respectively. A significant difference was also found in the agreement of a transformational leader in the task behaviors meta-category, where  $\chi^2(8, N = 65) = 16.96, p = .031$ . The differences in agreement by education are shown in Figure 6, where the circled groups were the significant differences. The data in Figure 6 shows that by education level, the respondents believed that a transformational leader displayed fewer task behaviors (44% mean agreement) in the task meta-category, but more relations behaviors (75% mean agreement) in the relations meta-category. In change meta-category, the respondents believed that a transformational leader displayed more change behaviors (76% mean agreement). The significance is the respondents' personally adopted behaviors were lower (35% mean agreement,) than the believed transformational leader behaviors in the task meta-category, higher (79% mean agreement) in the relations meta-category, and lower (59% mean agreement) in the change meta-category.

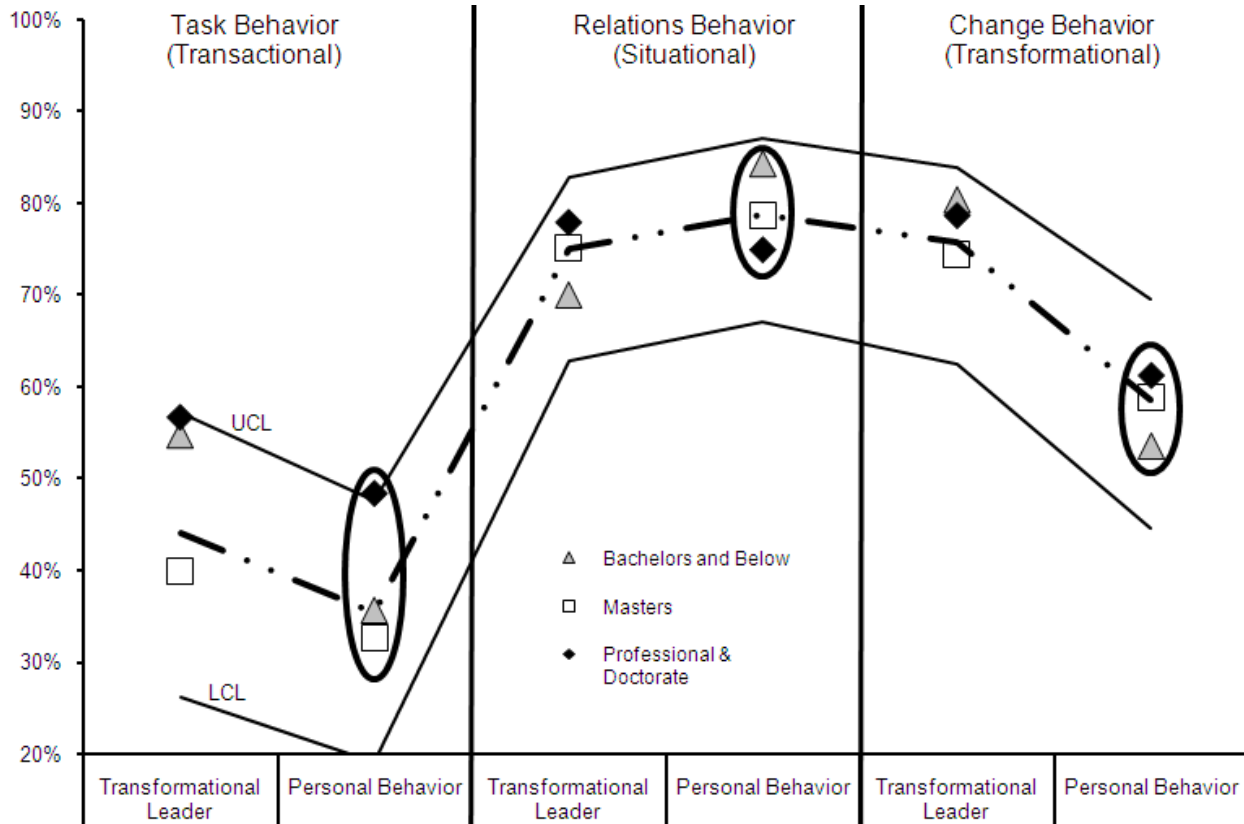


Figure 6. Percent of agreement of behaviors by education category for each meta-category.

**Gender analysis.** The data were also analyzed to see if there were differences in agreement by gender. Significant differences were found in the adopted personal behaviors in the task meta-category, where  $\chi^2(4, N = 65) = 11.32, p = .023$ . The differences in agreement by gender are shown in Figure 7, where the circled group held the significant differences. The data in Figure 7 shows that by gender, the respondents believed that a transformational leader displayed fewer task behaviors (44% mean agreement) in the task meta-category but more relations behaviors (75% mean agreement) in the relations meta-category. In change meta-category, the respondents believed that a transformational leader displayed more change behaviors (76% mean agreement). The respondents' personally adopted behaviors were lower, (35% mean agreement) than the believed transformational leader behaviors in the task meta-category, higher (79% mean agreement) in the relations meta-category, and lower (59% mean agreement) in the change meta-category.

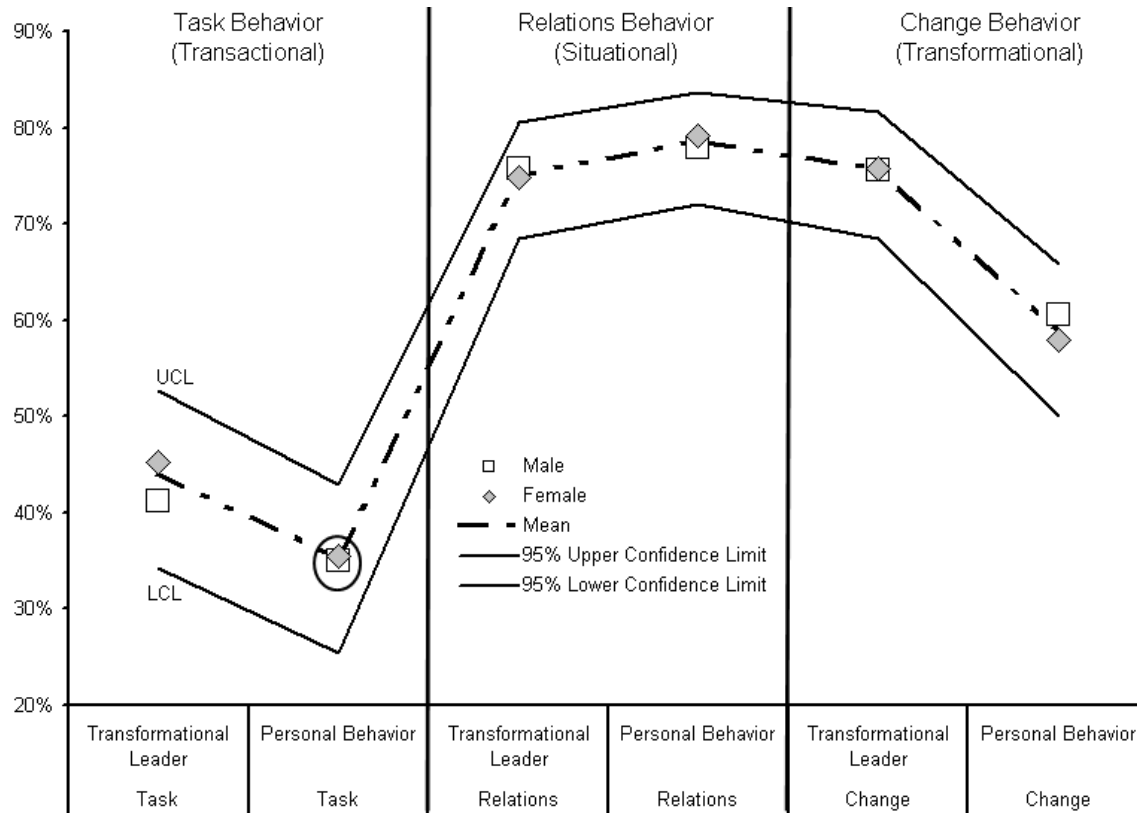


Figure 7. Percent of agreement of behaviors by gender for each meta-category.

**Position analysis.** The data were also analyzed for differences in agreement by position. Significant differences were found in the agreement of a transformational leader in the task behaviors meta-category, where  $\chi^2(8, N = 65) = 20.01, p = .010$ . The differences in agreement by position are shown in Figure 8, where the circled group held the significant differences. The data in Figure 8 shows that by position, the respondents believed that a transformational leader displayed fewer task behaviors (44% mean agreement) in the task meta-category but more relations behaviors (72% mean agreement) in the relations meta-category. In the change meta-category, the respondents believed that a transformational leader displayed more change behaviors (76% mean agreement). The respondents' personally adopted behaviors were lower (35%, mean agreement) than the believed transformational leader behaviors in the task meta-category, higher (79% mean agreement) in the relations meta-category, and lower (59% mean agreement) in the change meta-category.



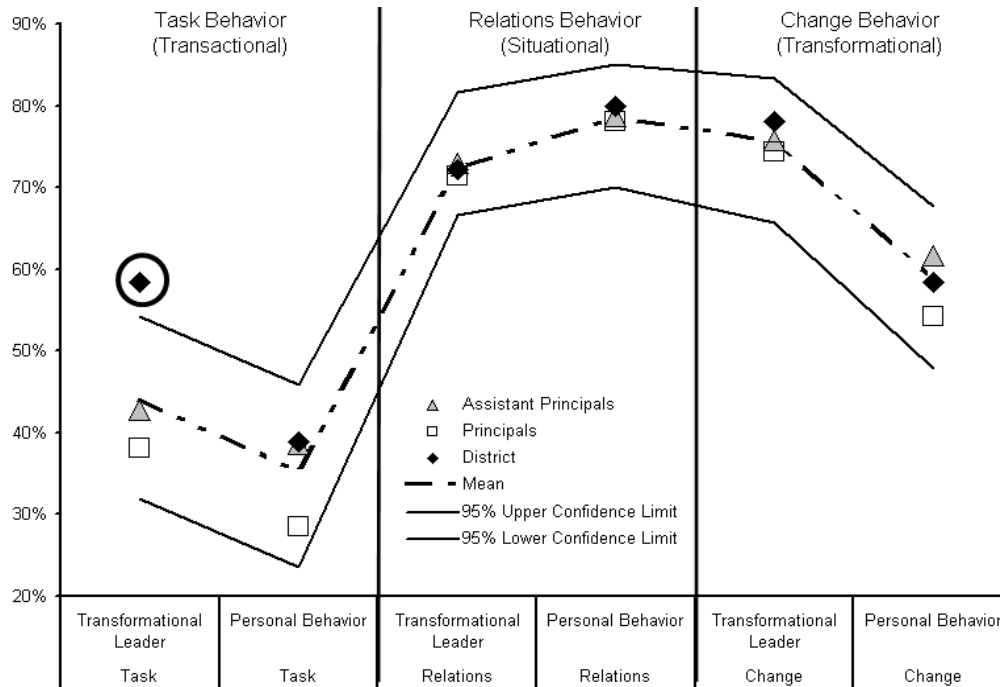


Figure 8. Percent of agreement of behaviors by position for each meta-category.

### Conclusions

This study was based on the premise that transformational leadership is a pattern of behavior that expects leaders to use the method or style of leadership that best fits given situations. The specific problem was the current body of transformational leadership knowledge has led leaders to equate transformational leadership with other widely researched leadership models, and that leaders at all levels need to understand that becoming a transformational leader is not a sequential process. The purpose was to determine how leaders construe an ideal transformational leader and how these leaders view themselves with respect to the ideal transformational leader, using Killeen Independent School District (KISD) leaders. This study was conducted by comparing self-reported characteristics, behaviors, and leadership styles using an online survey instrument that was based on the hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behavior developed by Yukl et al. (2002). The results indicated the educational leaders of KISD had a high degree of understanding of transformational leadership. Additionally, the data showed the educational leaders in the KISD purportedly used behaviors that were transactional, situational, and transformational. Implications are that the leaders believed they were more situational (relations behaviors) than transformational (change behaviors) or transactional (task behaviors), and that the leaders used each of the behaviors as required.

This information was consistent with the assertion of Eyal and Kark (2004) that education systems work within a transactional environment, which, because of regulatory requirements, restricts the educational leaders' ability to effect change when the need is

recognized. This apparent inability to improve or transform the entities within KISD could potentially affect the district's long-term growth. The high percentages within the relations meta-category imply that the leaders know and understand their internal and external stakeholders and the need to master both emotional and relational skills as described by Beatty and Brew (2004). The low percentages in the task meta-category imply the leaders are not as involved in the daily or short-term transactions within their organizations.

Inferences of this study cannot be made to other similar organizations because of the selected population. However, this study shows obstacles exist that restrict the use of transformational behaviors within the system. Further study is required to isolate and overcome these obstacles so full use of the behaviors within each meta-category can be used.

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### About the Author

Dr. Gerald Simmons received his doctorate in business administration (DBA) from the University of Phoenix. He is a trained Lean Six Sigma Black Belt and has worked as a continuous process improvement specialist for the United States Army at Fort Hood, Texas. Previously, Dr. Simmons served 24 years in the United States Army as a weapons of mass destruction specialist where he deployed to Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait), Operation Joint Guardian (Kosovo), and Operation Iraqi Freedom II (Baghdad, Iraq). Dr. Simmons is currently an assistant professor in the Division of Business at Texas A&M University – Central Texas and is a senior member of the American Society for Quality and a member of the American Statistical Association.

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