Experiences of Followers in the Development of the

Leader-Follower Relationship in Long-Term Health Care:

A Phenomenological Study

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving wife Barbara and my wonderful daughter Kristin. Without them, none of this is possible.

ABSTRACT

This descriptive phenomenological study explored the perceptions and experiences of followers in the development of the leader-follower relationship, within a long-term health care environment. This study is also framed within the disciplinary context of human resource development (HRD).

This study addressed the research question, "During your first year of employment, what has the experience of getting to know your supervisor been like?" This broad question was intended to allow participants to engage their own mental models of who they relate to as their supervisor and what the process of getting to know them has been like.

The methodology of the study utilized one-to-one in-depth phenomenological interviews for data collection. The participants were 13 Certified Nursing Assistants from six different long-term health care facilities employed with Golden Living organization between six months and one year.

The study utilized an approach to data collection and analysis developed by Giorgi (1997) that employed five basic qualitative steps: 1) collecting verbal data, 2) reading the data, 3) breaking the data in to parts, 4) organizing and expressing the data from a disciplinary perspective, and 5) synthesizing and summarizing the data. The data analysis revealed five significant themes of meaning: (1) Direct contact and assistance are important; (2) Supervisors treat us differently based on certain follower behaviors; (3) Personal conversation is important: (4) Follower competence affects relationships; and (5) ED/DNS leader-follower relationships are primarily transactional and often intimidating for CNAs. The interrelationships among these meanings are then presented

as an integrated description of the essential structure of the meaning of this experience for CNAs.

Because this study is framed within a disciplinary context of human resource development, there is an implied theory-to-practice stance. The HRD disciplinary context of this study proposes a framework for sharing and synthesizing this information to leaders so they may appropriate the findings in a personal way as part of their own developmental process. Transformational learning theory in the cognitive-rational model, as developed by Mezirow (1978, 1990, 1991) is considered as useful for synthesizing the transformational development process and phenomenological findings from a study of this nature.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Most organizations are concerned about leadership inadequacies of their

employees and also recognize that effective leadership can be one of the most significant

capabilities for sustainable competitive advantage that they can possess. Effective

leadership is commonly viewed as central to organizational success, and more importance

is currently being placed on leadership development than ever before (Hernez-Broome &

Hughes, 2004). Collins, Gillber, Carter, and Goldsmith (2000) forecasted that annual

budgets for leadership development programs will continue to grow throughout the next

decade as organizations make significant commitments to education, training, and

development of leaders in order to expand their skills, perspectives, and competencies.

Increasingly, leadership development is focusing on developing the quality of the

interactions between leaders and followers rather than focusing only on the skill set

competencies of the leaders. However, leadership development practices based on this

paradigm are more difficult to design and implement than those that have been popular

for the last several decades (Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004). In this environment, there

is a growing awareness of the limitations of traditional approaches to teaching leadership

(Doyle & Smith, 1999; Kouzes & Posner, 1995. While traditional approaches might be

useful in transmitting knowledge about leadership, they stop short of developing

leadership within a learner-centered paradigm of personal transformation. An approach

that views personal transformation as a critical component of leadership development

also adopts an epistemological stance toward leadership development that has roots in

constructivism, social constructivism, emphasizes co-creation, interpretation, and a

critical self perspective. Within this transformative paradigm, rather than learning about leadership as it is known by others, learners make sense of their own experiences, discover and nurture leadership in themselves and in each other, not in isolation but in community (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2004).

The focus of this study is on the development component of leader-follower relationships. Nadler (1989) identified the construct of development as a long-term process intended to broaden individuals through experience and to give them new insights about themselves and their organizations. Additionally, as noted by Day (2000), effective leadership development requires an understanding of building and using interpersonal competence in social systems to build commitment among members of a community of practice. This approach views leadership development as a complex interaction between leaders and social and organizational environments. Using this approach, both individual and relational lenses are important to the process of leadership development (Uhl-Bien, 2003).

Leadership Development Using a Phenomenological Lens

As organizations continue to face challenges and demands from external environments, effective work relationships will no longer be optional but, rather, critical sources of competitive advantage (Bouty, 2000). This implies that leadership positions are also less likely to draw power from the position but, rather, from the leader's ability to develop and maintain relationships. Relationships are generators of social capital that take human capital and transform it into a competitive advantage (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Despite this, we do not know how to facilitate systematically the growth of work relationships in organizations (Day, 2000).

Programs for developing leaders are far ranging. Some organizational leadership development is expected to take place in settings other than the work organization as companies rely on colleges and universities to produce emerging leaders who can easily step into leadership roles in their organizations (Murphy & Riggio, 2003). Along these same lines, there is an emerging expectation by organizations that ongoing leadership education and development take place outside the work environment--thus the popularity of personal leadership development books, companies, and programs potentially to build leadership skills.

However, one element that various organizational leadership development programs have in common is that many of them start with an assessment of business needs, followed by a mapped set of leadership competencies (Conger & Benjamin, 1999). Consequently, a great deal of energy, as well as substantial research effort, goes into creating and evaluating specific leadership development techniques, such as 360-degree feedback, mentoring, goal setting, and the like. Problems arise, however, in the implementation of these programs, leading to a decrease in their potential effectiveness: failures to match training needs to programs; failures to transfer training from the classroom to the workplace; failures to integrate new leadership behaviors into the workplace; and even too great a focus on the leader (Pearce & Conger, 2003). This practice environment poses the question, "How can we go about developing more effective leaders?"

Since the 1990's, the study of leadership has evolved to an understanding of the importance of credibility, soul, reflexivity, emotions, openness to experience, and values (Bolman & Deal, 1995; Ferris, 1998) and toward exploring what McDermott (1994)

called "leadership from within" (p. 132). This notion of leadership development presents a shift toward the paradigm of personal transformation within the leader. This transformation paradigm has roots in constructivism, social constructivism, and identity theory and emphasizes co-creation, interpretation, discovery, experimentation, and a critical perspective (Story, 2004).

It appears that learning to adopt multiple perspectives (e.g., those of followers) rather than being self-focused in one's own perspective, and vision is an important aspect of leadership development. This would further imply that critically reviewing how one thinks about leadership and learning, from multiple perspectives, is an essential principle of leadership development. A phenomenological view of leadership development would draw particular attention to the importance of discourse and a broader understanding of how leadership relationships develop.

Research from this perspective could provide new ideas for building a more effective framework for leadership development. Moreover, as called for by Uhl-Bien (2006), such research could provide insights better to address a critical question within the process of leader-follower relationship building that is central for LMX theorists and researchers: "What causes some relationships to develop better than others?" (p.144).

This study will utilize hermeneutic phenomenology methodology to explore critical social interactions and social constructions of leadership from the perspective of followers. This approach will provide insight into understanding how and why leader-follower relationships that support relational constructs of the leadership development process form. Researching lived experiences becomes the central focus of phenomenological enquiry. The lived experiences of individuals as they are lived in the

world and the meanings derived from the lived experiences are the essence of the phenomenon. The focus of intent of this phenomenological method then is to explore, describe, and interpret how a given phenomenon immediately presents itself to human consciousness and what it means for the people and their life world.

This study presents three specific contributions that a phenomenological approach can bring to the leadership development process: (1) phenomenology can provide a deeper understanding of what certain kinds of experiences are like from the perspective of the follower; (2) a phenomenological approach can provide a different lens to help make sense, in human terms, of some of some of the findings of traditional research, which are typically presented in statistical language (Halling, 2002); and (3) an organization's socialization processes and policies can be informed by this type of research.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) as the Theoretical Foundations of the Study

Since the late 1970's, leader-member exchange (LMX) (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen, 1976; Graen & Cashman, 1975) theory has been the focus of significant research and development. The theoretical foundations of this theory serve to opearationalize the research question of this study. According to Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), the central concept of LMX theory is that leadership occurs when leaders and followers are able to develop effective relationships that directly result in the leader's ability to influence the follower's behavior. Within this well-researched theory, leadership is first, and most importantly, a relationship model (Uhl-Bien, 2003).

The theoretical foundations of LMX theory are found in the premise that leader-follower relationships can be divided into two basic categories: a high quality or in-group

LMX relationship, and a low quality or out-group LMX relationship. In the high-quality relationships, the followers perform work roles above the norm of a given workplace (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987a; 1987b). In return for these behaviors, a leader gives in-group members greater job autonomy, flexibility, rewards, more frequent leader and follower communications, and a greater exchange of work-related information that leads to development of increasingly similar perceptions of the work environment. Conversely, in the low-quality LMX relationship, leader and follower typically conform to minimum output levels that are shaped by their interactions and operate within the realm of the basic work contract (Graen & Scandura, 1987a; Waldron, 1991).

In a comprehensive review of LMX theory, Uhl-Bien and Graen (1995) called for leadership development to focus on the development of the high quality effective in-group relationships with their followers and to focus research that uncovers this process. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) further suggested that the process of leadership making within the LMX relationship actually advances along a continuum from stranger (low LMX) to acquaintance (medium LMX) to partnership (high LMX). This conceptualization of leadership making is a prescriptive approach to leadership that helps the leader focus on developing high-quality exchanges with all of his or her subordinates rather than just a few. However, in developing high quality LMX relationships, leaders will most likely have the greatest difficulty in changing longstanding habits, and, as a result, leaders will need to have a deeper understanding of the socially constructed meanings of their behaviors (Graen & Uhl-Bein, 1995).

Another essential aspect of LMX theory that is relevant to this study focuses on the formation stage of the LMX process that is often also the organizational entry point for a new worker. Evidence indicates that at this stage of leadership development the focus should include improving leader communication of his or her desire for extra role work behaviors to new members (Mayfield & Mayfield, 1998). More importantly, the leader must understand the significance of providing extra-role rewards when workers do begin to perform extra work duties (Mayfield, 1993; McLane, 1991a, 1991b; Robins, 1995). This type of active leadership role implies an ability of leaders to understand the significance and dynamics of providing extra-role assignments and rewards, as well as the readiness of followers to accept such roles. The quality of this interaction is an essential component of the leader-follower relationship within LMX theory, and studies have linked this phenomenon to transformational leadership development. That is, as the LMX relationship becomes more mature, it moves from a transactional to a transformational relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Transactional leadership occurs when the leader rewards or disciplines a follower based on the follower's performance. In this manner transactional leadership depends on contingent reinforcement and management by exception. In contrast to transactional leadership, transformational leaders do more with colleagues than set up basic exchange agreements. They employ one or more of the four components of transformational leadership; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Researching lived experiences is the central focus of phenomenological enquiry. The lived experiences of individuals as they are lived in the world, and the meaning

derived from the lived experiences is the essence of the phenomenon. The focus of intent of this phenomenological method, then, is to explore, describe, and interpret how a given phenomenon immediately presents itself to human consciousness and what it means for the people and their life world.

<div align="center">Problem for the Study</div>

The empirical data collection method of LMX generally utilizes a version of the LMX-7 Scale for data collection of leader and follower perceptions. For feedback, leaders are commonly provided with summary statistics based on the number of dyads measured, mean scores, and standard deviations. The scale solicits feedback on a 5-point continuum from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree to gather feedback related to the relationship. As such, the utility of the LMX lies within a statistical, descriptive presentation.

Therefore, in general, LMX theory tells us that how leaders relate to each subordinate is a critical component of leadership and performance outcomes at the group, unit, or organization level and that the dyadic leader-follower relationships are linked to constructs such as mutual trust, positive support, informal interdependencies, open communication, autonomy, job satisfaction, and shared loyalty (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Dienesch & Linden, 1986; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Although the data may tell us what behaviors a leader should change, the data does not tell us how these perceptions formed, how specific leader behaviors are interpreted, or what systemic events may influence these perceptions in a way that can help leaders engage in a deeper learning process necessary to change frames of reference, become critically reflective of

their assumptions, and develop an awareness of context and consequences of taken for granted beliefs to accomplish behavior changes.

Although current research within LMX offers evidence to support the value of relational approaches to leadership, many questions related to the leadership development process still remain. Focused investigations addressing how leadership relationships form and evolve will help generate a clearer framework for relationship development that would enhance the contribution LMX can make to leadership development (Day, 2000). Part of the lack of clarity regarding the exact meaning of LMX itself may be due to the fact that most research on the model has concentrated on the results of the social exchange process, that is, an effective or ineffective working relationship between the leader and member (Gerstner & Day, 1997). However, much less attention has been devoted to examining the nature and content of the exchange process itself, that is, leadership behavior and differential treatment by the leader–in other words, the way effective or ineffective working relationships develop (van Breukelen, Schyns, & Le Blanc, 2006).

Therefore, to add further understanding of the socially constructed meanings of critical leadership events, incidents, and actions, from the perspective of the follower, which may contribute to the leadership development process, I will pursue the following question: During your first year of employment, what was the experience of getting to know your supervisor like?

This question and methodology will explore the lived experiences of followers in the development of the leader-follower relationship in order to add further understanding of the phenomenon. The findings of this study could contribute to leadership

development practices in a transformative learning model, as well as informing new employee orientation, communications, and organization policies and practices.

<div align="center">Researcher's History and Perspective</div>

Hermeneutic phenomenological research requires the researcher to reflect on his or her experiences and interests regarding the phenomenon of study. This approach enables the researcher to develop a clear sense of the phenomenon of interest within the context of the research environment and question. It also helps to clarify the researcher's pre-understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, a brief discussion of the experiences and interests bringing me to this research question is essential to this study.

After graduation from high school, I enlisted in the United States Air Force and served nearly four years as a Communications Intercept Operator for the military intelligence gathering arm of the National Security Agency (NSA). In this role, I held a top secret code-word security clearance. The decision to leave home and enter the military after graduation deeply affected my personal development for many years to come. Going out on my own at age 18 was exciting and yet, at the same time, fearful. The fear, however, was always suppressed, held inside, and known only by me. At that time, in that environment, showing any fear would surely have led to criticism and rejection within my military unit. I know, because I saw it happen to others. Any new members who expressed signs of fear or homesickness were quickly targeted as weak by the apparently fearless group members and became targets for taunting and teasing, as well as being isolated from the group. On reflection, it is clear that I made a choice, a choice to become a member of the fearless group, and, as such, I often participated in, and even led, the humiliation and taunting of those who showed their emotions. As I have thought

about this behavior, I have discovered a sense of embarrassment and shame and have begun to wonder, "How could I have done that?" Why did I do that?" Reliving this experience, I have also wondered, "What ever happened to the members of the unit who endured this treatment, such as Billy", the kid from Ohio who we relentlessly teased? The last I saw of him was the day he was removed from our flight unit and sent back because he could not make it. What part did I play in this? I can not help but realize how arrogant and self-serving my attitude toward others was at that time.

At that point in time, in regard to leadership, my adult world experiences were limited to surviving basic military training and becoming one of the leaders among my group by means of my fearless behavior. These experiences represented the totality of what I understood about leadership. Unfortunately, these initial experiences profoundly impacted my personal development for the next couple of decades. At that point in my life, in my life world, the concept of being an effective leader was associated with being highly extroverted and aggressively exercising command and control–being in charge.

Following basic military training I then transferred to other bases within the U.S. for my technical school training as an Intercept Operator. I worked very hard in this program and graduated first in my class. This achievement earned me several other quasi-leadership status roles within the group and at my next assignment. As one could expect, the highly technical environment associated with intelligence gathering operations was extremely professional, procedural, and rule-oriented in nature.

Additionally, the leader-follower military rank environment was based on a hierarchical culture of command and control. That is, the culture, regulations, and separation of ranks constrained the development of personal relationships with superiors.

In this environment, it was considered inappropriate for officers or senior enlisted personnel to become too friendly with lower ranking personnel. At that time, this seemed perfectly logical to me and fit my life world schema for leader-follower relationships. I began to see that, indeed, rank had it privileges; if you had rank, you had power and authority and those were the tools of leadership. Clearly, this environment further reinforced and rewarded my behaviors that were aggressive and achievement oriented, with no exceptions or excuses tolerated.

This reflection has caused me to question what I could have or should have done differently in a number of situations at that point in my career, particularly situations that involved self-promotion or achievement at the expense of others. If I am going to be truly honest with myself, I can only describe my personality and style at that time as most closely aligned with the Machiavellian typology. Personal achievement had become my goal, without particular regard for others. Social learning had taught me that this was the way to be successful; I really had no other experiences to draw from.

I believe I would not have left the military if I had not experienced a serious line of duty injury to my right arm. As a result of this injury, I was hospitalized and in physical therapy on and off for approximately one year. After enduring three surgeries and many hours of physical therapy, I was medically discharged with a 30% disability rating. However, during this time, I was also overseas, alone, and without any family as I suffered through the surgical procedures and therapy treatments. However, at that time, I felt it was OK and saw the situation was merely another test of how tough and fearless I could be. I also believe this experience most certainly reinforced my survivor take–care-of-number-one perception of the world.

The work environment for Communications Intercept Operators also supported and rewarded my orientation toward a style of individualized achievement as my definition of success. Each intercept operator had his or her own work console, and all of our activity was tracked on a large, 16 foot high, floor-to-ceiling electronic screen with a world map, similar to a NASA control center. The entire floor operation was under direct and constant observation by operations leadership from an elevated command office. Within this work area, senior enlisted personnel served as floor supervisors who were available for technical support and guidance, with virtually all of their time spent interacting in a technical or problem solving capacity. These same supervisors were the primary sources of our performance ratings and promotion assessment documentation.

The performance rating system for promotion was also structured to encourage a contingent reward leader-follower environment. Individuals were selected for promotion based on a numerical rating that consisted of points from their general performance rating, time in service, time in grade, and completion of required training levels. This environment reinforced a persistent awareness of performance based contingent reward. This created a highly competitive environment in which I tended to thrive. The highly individualized nature of this type of performance measurement was very attractive to me. I was very successful when competing with others. In fact, it now seems odd to reflect that we were co-workers, yet I was so focused on beating them at the performance game. I also became skilled at developing relationships with people with power, the floor supervisors, those who could influence my ratings. I recall consciously seeking out areas of a supervisor's personal interests, such as cars, sports, movies, and so on, and leveraging these topics into our conversations. I realize now that I was learning another

step in the darker side of organizational politics of self-promotion. I now recognize that I was very comfortable in this environment; it seemed to suit me well--the complexity, the highly individualized performance structure, and the opportunities for recognition. As a result of my knowledge base and behaviors, I was promoted quickly and designated a shift leader. Needless to say, my leadership style at that time was still command and control, strongly anchored in coercive and position power. However, in this environment, I had become an in-group member through these behaviors. I felt a sense of accomplishment that led me to believe that I had figured out how to lead and how to be successful. Given my success in the military I believe I would have made this my career if I had not experienced the injury to my right arm.

.Following my medical discharge from the military, I enrolled in college to pursue a degree in management. Based on my successful progression in the military, I had little difficulty deciding that management was what I wanted to do. However, I found college to be a very difficult transition, not intellectually, but emotionally. I can recall my sense of frustration at times with the casual attitudes of many of the students, their lack of focus or what I saw as their lack of military bearing. I found a level of immaturity that, at times, was frustrating and caused me to disconnect from the student body. I had very few acquaintances and would simply go to class, mind my own business, and leave the campus.

I found the professors very pleasant and helpful, but, once again, I was a bit puzzled at the degree of patience they displayed for non-performance. I recall wondering how they could be so tolerant and deal with so many variations in performance. This was my first disorienting experience in regard to leadership that was not overt command and

control and caused me to begin to think differently about leadership and influence. Upon reflection, although I was living in the civilian world, I clearly had not really left the military, particularly in regard to my expectations regarding task performance and leader-follower relationships. I recall feeling frustrated due to not being in control and sensing a loss of power and starting over, trying to understand this new world I was encountering.

However, my first employment experience upon discharge from the military also significantly impacted my leadership development. While I was attending college, I obtained a part-time job as a bartender at the Officer's Club on the Duluth Air Force Base. My return to the military environment is not surprising; I was returning to the environment I was most familiar with in the most feasible way at that time, as a civilian working in the military environment. I adapted well and quickly rose to the position of Head Bartender, and, after two years, I was promoted to be the civilian night manager of the club. Needless to say, returning to this environment, albeit as a civilian, further reinforced my leadership style that, by then, was well established as highly transactional and power based. However, I believe that, at this time, because of my academic experiences, I also began to question my assumptions about leadership. That is, I was beginning to recognize a certain degree of dissonance in my behaviors and leadership style.

After three years, I left college, without a degree and worked for several years in the public sector for the State of Minnesota in a variety of human resource related roles, such as Employment and Training Specialist, Veterans Program Specialist, and Senior Personnel Officer. In reflection, what is really surprising to me is the realization that I never left the bureaucratic models of the military or state government for almost twenty

years. Although my personal development at this time may have moderated my Machiavellian tendencies, nonetheless, I clearly remained anchored in a bureaucratic/ administrative mental model of leadership. In this environment, rewards, recognition, and promotions were largely standardized and pre-designated based on criteria such as longevity, and on simply meeting expectations. Together, these factors provided little incentive for me to develop high quality leader-follower relationships.

However, my personal dissonance was growing as I became more educated and also had more experiences and associations with successful leaders who demonstrated qualities different from power and access to information and rewards as their tools. Although I remained highly achievement oriented, I became acutely aware of the limitations for personal growth, career advancement, and leadership creativity within a bureaucratic structure such as the state government system.

So, after 15 years of employment with the State of Minnesota, I made the decision to accept a position in the private sector. This was not an easy decision because I had significant job security and tenure. However, I had returned to evening school and had completed my undergraduate degree, was at the top of the pay scale for my job classification, and did not see any near opportunities for advancement. I had concluded that opportunities for advancement were limited within this structure due to the seniority system and narrowly defined job classifications. It seemed as if the very characteristics of the system in which I had thrived were now my constraints. I believe now that I was experiencing personal emancipation through my education and life experiences bringing me to this point and giving me the courage to leave a 15 year career with the state government to pursue my evolving vision for my own professional development.

My first job in the private sector was in the health care industry as Manager of Employee and Labor Relations at a local hospital. Consistent with my renewed focus toward personal development, at the same time I began this job, I enrolled in a Master of Arts program seeking a degree in management. I found this new position and the private sector environment significantly more challenging than that of the public sector. That is, the focus on team work, creativity, and leadership as a basis of personal advancement was immediately evident.

My experience with my first leader in this new environment was probably the most memorable personal experience with leader-follower relationships. In the role of Manager of Labor and Employee Relations, I reported directly to the Director of Human Resources but retained a significant degree of discretion in my daily work. Because I was an advanced practice HR professional, with many years of experience, our leader-follower relationship was based primarily on the Director's referent, reward, and position power rather than primarily expert or coercive power. What I found so different was that we were both equally accomplished in the technical and knowledge based aspects of our roles. That is, most of our significant professional discussions were thoughtful, collaborative, and supportive rather than directive in nature. During these encounters, I began to understand leadership as the ability to influence anchored in constructs of trust and respect. I believe it was also at this point in my personal development that I began truly to observe leadership vs. management. I recall how differently I felt in this relationship, my sense of respect and feeling that the Director would support me and even protect me in the political issues that arise in organizations. I recall observing her engage senior leaders, as well as subordinates, with tact and persuasion rather than relying on

power and facts. I began to realize that there is more to leadership than being right and controlling the processes. These experiences were a learning laboratory for me, while at the same time I was advancing my academic inquiry. I consider myself very fortunate to have had this experience and, in reflection, believe that the development of this leader-follower relationship was truly the beginning of my personal transition and interest in leadership development as a transformative process.

After three years as the Manager of Labor and Employee Relations, the incumbent Director of Human Resources left the organization and I was promoted to assume her position at the hospital. By that time, I had also completed an M.A. degree in Management, begun teaching evening and weekend courses at a local four-year college, and enrolled in a Ph.D. program.

I do not believe I would have been promoted to the Director position had I not taken to heart the mentoring provided by my director. Only through this process of mentoring and relationship building did I begin to change my own perceptions and values regarding how to be an ethical, relationship-centered leader. Before this experience, I had thought that effective leadership was simply a matter of command and control drawing from formal bases of power.

However, my promotion to Director of Human Resources would bring with it the most significant leadership development step of my career to date. That is, I became part of a leadership team with organization-wide scope of implications and responsibilities. I recall my immediate sense of pressure about the need to be acutely aware of the broad impact of my behaviors, decisions, and each interaction I had with constituents. I find it hard to describe the sense of awareness that actually stepping into the role created. I was

not afraid, I was not intimidated, I was simply aware at a new level; it was like opening a door and seeing what is really there. I believe the timing was right. Had I been placed in this role five years earlier, without the mentoring experience, I most certainly would have failed--not because of a lack of knowledge or technical skill, but because I would not have been capable of leading and interacting at the organizational level. I had come to understand that my old style and paradigms were no longer effective, and, at this level, effective leaders needed to draw heavily from personal power bases. .

In the Director role, I reported directly to the CEO of the hospital. Although I had worked for the organization for several years, and had many interactions with the CEO, this new direct report relationship initiated a distinctly new experience within the leader-follower development process. In addition to our regular formalized role interactions, I had a standing one-hour individual meeting each week with my leader. During these meetings, the CEO and I would drift in and out of discussions specifically focused on business and related topics, sometimes to topics totally unrelated to business–it was a process of getting to know one another. That is, a process of developing a relationship beyond transactional–a relationship of trust, commitment, and communication.

During our weekly meetings we had many discussions about leadership and what leadership meant in the organization. On reflection, I also realize how I was once again being mentored during these discussions and led through a process of self discovery. I often recall the snippets of knowledge and advice my leader would casually pass on, such as, "learn the power of the question," and a consistent engagement with inspirational motivation through questions such as "how does this affect our patients and our

employees?" I also recall how he tactfully did not tell me what to do, but, rather, would lead me to the answer.

One particularly powerful moment comes to mind. After a lengthy discussion of options we could pursue regarding a very significant labor relations issue that held significant implications for the organization, I posed the question "So, how do you want me to proceed at the bargaining table next week?" After a brief moment of thought, his response was "You make the decision based on the situation. I trust your judgment." I recall the sense of responsibility, empowerment, and trust as I left that meeting. This encounter was a profound moment in my own leadership development and, I believe, was a pivotal incident in my personal development that allowed me to bury my previous power-based assumptions of leadership and truly pursue a new paradigm as a leader–a relationship based paradigm.

My personal experiences have led me through what I would consider a transformative journey of personal development. I was fortunate to have had leader-follower relationships with leaders who, at critical points in my journey, truly understood and took the time to focus on relationships and development. Although the process of personal and professional development is never complete, these personal experiences have significantly influenced my keen interest in pursuing a deeper understanding of leadership development as a transformative process. I am hopeful that this study will not only provide new insights for leaders in long-term health care, as well as the HRD and academic communities, but also provide me with new insights as another way of knowing and another step for advancing my own leadership development journey.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions will apply in carrying out this study.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hermeneutic phenomenology is the explication of a phenomenon as it presents itself to the consciousness. Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experience, by asking, "What is this or that experience like?" (van Manen, 1997, p. 9). Phenomenology attempts to gain insightful descriptions of the way we experience the world.

Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

According to Scandura et al. (1986), "LMX is (1) a system of components and their relationships (2) involving both members of a dyad (3) involving interdependent patterns of behavior and (4) sharing mutual outcome instrumentalities and (5) producing conceptions of environments, cause maps, and value" (p. 580).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership occurs when the leader rewards or disciplines a follower depending on the adequacy of the follower's performance. Transactional leadership depends on contingent reinforcement, either positive contingent reward or active or passive forms of management-by-exception (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leaders do more with colleagues than set up basic exchanges or agreements. They behave in ways that achieve superior results by employing one or more of the four components of transformational leadership; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Summary

My intention for this study is to expand the current understanding of leadership development as a socially constructed phenomenon by drawing from the lived experiences of followers within the leader-member relationship. As such, I have presented an epistemological stance that recognizes the importance of multiple perspectives (e.g., those of followers) as essential to support the personal transformation of leaders within the leadership development process.

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory provides the theoretical foundation of this study. The leader-member exchange model suggests that leaders develop different relationships with different members in the same work group. These relationships develop in stages and result in either high-quality (in-group) or low-quality (out-group) relationships. The positive correlation between high-quality LMX and performance has been repeatedly demonstrated in previous empirical studies (Cashman, Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987a; 1987b). High-quality LMX relationships have also been linked to transformational leadership development. That is, as the LMX relationship becomes more mature, it moves from a transactional to a transformational relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Graen and Uhl-Bein (1995) also contended that, in developing high quality LMX relationships, leaders will most likely have the greatest difficulty in changing longstanding habits, and, as a result, leaders will need to have a deeper understanding of the socially constructed meanings of their behaviors. Therefore, within this theoretical foundation, this study will focus on understanding the formation stage of the LMX process from the perspective of the follower by researching their lived experiences.

Researching lived experience is the central focus of the phenomenological method and, therefore, serves as the methodology of this study. In this manner, the phenomenological method of this study will seek to understand how a given phenomenon immediately presents itself to human consciousness and what it means for the people and their life world. It is proposed that this methodological approach will draw particular attention to the importance of discourse and a broader understanding of how leadership relationships develop within the constructs of LMX theory. In this manner, hermeneutic phenomenology will explore critical social interactions and social constructions of leadership from the perspective of followers. Therefore, the research question of this study is: During your first year of employment, what was the experience of getting to know your supervisor like?

This study is also framed within the disciplinary context of human resource development (HRD). Within this context, this study presents three specific potential contributions to the leadership development process: (1) phenomenology can provide a deeper understanding of what certain kinds of experiences are like from the perspective of the follower; (2) a phenomenological approach can provide a different lens to help make sense, in human terms, of some of the findings of traditional research, which are typically presented in statistical language (Halling, 2002); and (3) an organization's socialization processes and policies can be informed by this type of research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines the significance of relationships in the context of leadership development and the underlying constructs of leader-member exchange and transformational leadership as relationship based models. The review also explores, from the perspective of the follower, how revealing these perspectives as experiences might contribute to individual transformational leadership development (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Additionally, a review of transformative learning theory is presented as a compatible learning model to bridge the theory-to-practice HRD paradigm and a phenomenological study of this nature.

Overview of the Study

Although interpersonal relationships have long held importance within organizational literature and studies, relational perspectives in leadership research have recently experienced renewed interest (Brass & Krackhardt, 1999; Day, 2000; Graen & Scandura, 2000; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998; Uhl-Bien 2000, 2003). Applied to leadership, a relational orientation does not focus on identifying attributes of individuals involved in leadership behaviors or exchanges but, rather, on the social construction processes by which certain understandings of leadership come about (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Bass (1990) believed that the legitimacy of a leader depends on acceptance by his/her subordinates. Additionally, Yukl (1989) pointed out that leadership is very often defined in ways that include followers' perceptions. This perspective adopts an approach to leadership development in which learners make sense of their own experiences, discover and nurture leadership in themselves and in each other, not in isolation but in community

(Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2004). Within this stance, the focus of this study is to explore the lived experiences of followers in the development of the leader-member relationship (Sadala & Adorno, 2001).

Because this study is also framed within a disciplinary context of human resource development (HRD), the constructs of the leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship model explored in this study are extended toward leadership development (Swanson & Holton, 2001). Leader-member exchange concentrates on the perceived quality of the dyadic relationship between a subordinate and his or her supervisor (Graen & Scandura, 1986). Although Yukl (1989) attempted to address LMX as purely transactional leadership because of LMX's reliance on exchange of rewards, subsequent examination of the development process in LMX by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991) led to their reframing LMX as a transactional and a transformational leadership process. That is, LMX evolves in stages in which trust, loyalty, and respect develop. In the first stage, LMX is transactional; however, if the last stage is reached, it becomes transformational.

 In this context, because traditional leadership development programs have been studied for reasons other than examining the changes that occur through self-reflection, the literature regarding transformative learning is also included in this review. After a critical review of adult learning theories, the researcher found that Mezirow's (1978) theory on transformational learning may provide the best model to support this study.

Relationships in the Context of Leadership

During the past several decades, leadership has been studied from many different perspectives, leading to the emergence of a wide range of both practical and theoretical approaches. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) argued that leadership involves three domains:

leaders, followers, and the relationship between them. The leadership theory most notably associated with relationships is leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, originally proposed by Dansereau and colleagues (Dansereau, Cashman & Graen, 1973; Dansereau, Graen & Haga, 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975). The central characteristic of this theory is its focus on the working relationship between a leader and a particular member (dyad) as the basic unit of analysis. LMX Theory makes several contributions to our understanding of the leadership process. According to Northouse (1997), there are four specific strengths to the leader-member exchange theory:

> First, it is a strong descriptive theory. Intuitively it makes sense to describe work units in terms of those who contribute more and those who contribute less or the bare minimums to the organization. Second, LMX theory is unique because it is the only leadership approach that makes the concept of the dyadic relationship the centerpiece of the leadership process. Third, LMX theory is noteworthy because it directs our attention to the importance of communication in leadership. Fourth, there is a large body of research that substantiates how the practice of LMX theory is related to positive organizational outcomes. (p. 116)

Research exploring the LMX model has suggested that leaders develop different relationships with different members of the same work unit (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Cashman, 1975). In this manner, leaders and followers can progress through stages of relationship development: stranger, acquaintance, and maturity. In the stranger phase, interactions are formal and contractual; there is no influence and, therefore, no leadership. The acquaintance phase can be characterized as a phase where there is increasing social exchange and sharing of information and resources, but

influence is still limited. The final stage, maturity, is characterized by mutual respect, trust, and commitment, as well as a high degree of influence from the leader. These differentiated relationships create a schema that can be characterized as either a high-quality exchange between superior and subordinates, or in-group relationships; a moderate-quality exchange group between superior and subordinates, or middle-group relationships; or a low-quality exchange group between superior and subordinates, or out-group relationships (Meyers, 2006).

Researchers have drawn several conclusions about the differences between in-group and out-group relationships. From the leader perspective, in-group subordinates are consistently viewed as more productive (Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994) and are rated higher in job performance by their supervisors (Linden & Graen, 1980). From the member perspective, in-group members are more satisfied with their work, their position, their superiors, their coworkers, and their pay (Dansereau et al., 1975; Green, Anderson, & Shiver, 1996; Sherony & Green, 2002; Vecchio & Gobel, 1984). Additionally, in-group subordinates receive preferential treatment from their superiors in that they are mentored (Thibodeaux & Lowe, 1996), provided with leadership support (Dansereau et al., 1975), participate in joint decision making (Scandura, Graen, & Novak, 1986), and report feelings of empowerment (Gomez & Rosen, 2001).

As originally proposed, LMX has evolved from a descriptive approach to leadership that emphasized the differential dyadic relationships within work groups to a prescriptive approach to effective leadership that focuses on the process of developing mature partnerships between leaders and followers. Evidence supports that high-quality relationships have been consistently linked to positive outcomes for members, such as

satisfaction, commitment, and performance (Ahearn & Mackenzie, 1997; Bolino, 1995; Bycio et al., 1995; 1995; Duchon, Green, & Taber, 1986; Gestner & Day, 1997).

LMX theory conceptualizes leadership as a process that is centered in the interaction between leaders and followers. According to Yukl (1998), LMX describes how a leader and an individual subordinate develop a relationship as they influence each other and negotiate the subordinate's role in the organization. Once formed, these relationships provide a context for behavior–they establish norms and expectations that serve as guidelines for future behavior (Uhl-Bien et al., 2000). Although there is much theorizing about how leadership relationships develop (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991; Hogg, 2001; Linden et al., 2006; Uhl-Bien et al., 2000), we still know very little about these processes. Within this framework, the focus of this study is on how leader-follower relationships form, from the perspective of the follower, and how revealing these perspectives as experiences might contribute to individual transformational leadership development (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

<center>Transformational/Transactional Leadership</center>

Transformational leadership is defined in this study as leaders who do more with colleagues than set up basic exchanges or agreements. They behave in ways that achieve superior results by employing one or more of the four components of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

Transactional leadership occurs when the leader rewards or disciplines a follower depending on the adequacy of the follower's performance. Transactional leadership

depends on contingent reinforcement, either positive contingent reward or active or passive forms of management-by-exception (Avolio & Bass, 2002).

The framework of transformational/transactional leadership was first conceptualized by Burns (1978) and later developed by Bass (1985) as a formal theory with a model and measurement of its factors of leadership behavior. Within this model, Bass and Avolio (Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1993, 1994) developed a schema for classification of leadership behaviors that incorporates seven factors into three primary domains of transformational, transactional, or non-leadership/non-transactional (laissez-faire). These seven factors make up the Full Range of Leadership Model (Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1993, 1994) and provide the factors for analysis and feedback commonly utilized within quantitative methodology associated with transformational leadership research and development (see Table 1).

Table 1

Full Range of Leadership Behaviors

Transformational	Transactional	Non-leadership
Charisma or Idealized Influence	Contingent Reward	Laissez-Faire
Inspirational Motivation	Management-by-Exception	
Intellectual Stimulation		
Individualized Consideration		

(Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1993, 1994)

Components of Transformational Leadership

Within this model, charisma or idealized influence refers to leader behaviors that make leaders role models for their followers. Such leaders are admired, respected, and trusted and demonstrate high standards of ethical and moral conduct. Inspirational

motivation refers to behaviors that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers. Enthusiasm and optimism are displayed, and the leader clearly communicates expectations that followers want to meet and demonstrates commitment to goals and a shared vision. Intellectual stimulation is characterized as leader behavior that stimulates follower efforts to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. Creativity is encouraged, and there is no public criticism of individual members' mistakes. Individualized consideration refers to leader behaviors that pay special attention to each individual's needs for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor. Individual differences in terms of needs and desires are recognized.

Components of Transactional Leadership

Transformational leadership adds to the effectiveness of transactional leadership; transformational leadership does not substitute for transactional leadership (Bass, 1999). That is, the best leaders are both transformational and transactional (Waldman, Bass, & Yammarion, 1990). Transactional leadership is characterized by leader behaviors that reward or discipline a follower depending on the adequacy of the follower's performance. Thus, transactional leadership depends on contingent reinforcement, either positive contingent reward or negative active or passive forms of management-by-exception.

The transaction of contingent reward has been found to be reasonably effective, although not as effective as any of the transformational components, in motivating others to achieve higher levels of development and performance (Bass, 1990). In contingent reward behaviors, the leader assigns or gets agreement on what needs to be done and

rewards followers in exchange for satisfactorily performing the task. In this way, followers understand what they should do to be rewarded (Bass, 1999).

Management-by-exception is a corrective transaction that has been found to be less effective than proactive contingent reward. According to meta-analyses (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996), this behavior ranges in different situations from being only slightly effective to slightly ineffective. Several researchers have found it factorially valid to split management-by-exception further into an active factor and a passive factor. Generally, active managing-by exception is more effective than passive managing–by-exception (Bass, 1990). When active, the leader actively monitors deviances from standards, mistakes, and errors in follower assignments and takes corrective action as necessary. When passive, the leader waits for deviances, mistakes, and errors to occur and then takes corrective action. Laissez-faire leadership behavior is the avoidance or absence of leadership and by definition is the most inactive form of leadership. According to most research, this type of behavior is also the least effective, and under this style nothing is transacted that can be characterized as leadership behavior. This type of leadership behavior has been strongly associated with subordinate dissatisfaction, conflict, and ineffectiveness (Bass, 1990).

Bass and colleagues have argued that transactional and transformational leadership styles are complementary, and both can be effective depending on the particular situation (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Therefore, Bass and Avolio (1993) viewed transformational and transactional leadership as conceptually distinct but positively related behaviors. However, transformational leadership behaviors have been found consistently to augment the effects of transactional leadership in achieving higher levels

of performance (Hater & Bass, 1988; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Waldman, Bass, & Yammarino, 1990). Bass (1999) further identified a need for more explanation about the workings of transformational leadership and how followers are moved from compliance to identification to internalization of values and beliefs.

LMX/Transformational Linkage

Deluga (1992) conducted one of the earliest studies to link transformational leadership and LMX theory. As a result, he argued that a transformational leader catalyzes conventional social exchanges stimulating subordinates to surpass initial performance goals and self-interests. His study provided empirical data supporting a positive outcome associated with transformational leadership resulting from the individualized dyadic relationship between a given subordinate and leader. Deluga (1992) noted that "Transformational leaders may foster the formation of high quality relationships and a sense of a common fate with individual subordinates; while in a social-exchange process, subordinates strengthen and encourage the leader" (p. 245).

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) also proposed that low-quality LMX, characterized by downward influence, economic exchange, and formal role defined relationships, is analogous to transactional leadership as defined by Bass (1985) in which leaders make requests of followers based on their organizational position, and followers comply because of their reporting relationship to the leader and the leader's ability to control rewards. Conversely, high-quality leader-follower relationships, defined by mutual trust, respect, internalization of shared goals, and the willingness of followers to exert extra effort, are aligned with transformational leadership, in which leaders inspire followers to transcend their own self-interests for the broader collective purpose. In this manner,

transformational leaders are said to appeal to higher ideals and moral values of followers, heighten their expectations, and spur them to greater effort and performance on behalf of the organization. Subsequently, in the transformational process, followers feel included and supported, and gain higher self-confidence.

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1997) also concluded that, although LMX is the leadership theory that deals most explicitly with relationships, transformational leadership also shares a similar focus on the quality of leader-member exchange relationships as the link between these relationships and important organizational outcomes.

A large-scale study by Howell and Hall-Merenda (1999) also demonstrated the linkages between LMX and transformational leadership model of leadership. The study demonstrated that LMX and active management-by-exception each directly and positively predict follower performance over time and that LMX and transformational and contingent reward leadership are positively related. The researchers contended that this study provided further support for Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1995) assertion that high-quality leader-follower relationships are positively associated with transformational leadership behaviors.

A recent cross-cultural study conducted by Wang, Law, Hackett, Wang, and Chen (2005) focused on the conceptual and empirical links between transformational leadership and leader-member exchange. The researchers contended that the findings are consistent with four notions regarding the relationship between transformational leadership and LMX:

(1) transformational leadership behaviors are social currency, nourishing high-quality LMX; (2) transformational leadership is associated positively with task

performance and OCB; (3) transformational leaders enhance follower receptivity to role-expanding offers and extra role behaviors, through processes of persona and/or social identification; and (4) LMX makes transformational leadership more personally meaningful. (p.8)

Although the findings of Wang et al. (2005) were based on samples drawn form mainland China, the researchers contended that they had no reason to expect different results if the same study were conducted in the west, based on a growing body of literature that shows that the basic relationships between leadership and performance established in the west hold up in China (Chen & Farh, 1999; Hackett et al., 2003; Hui, Law, & Chen, 1999).

LMX and Transformational Leadership in a Development Context

In a comprehensive meta-analytic review of LMX correlates and constructs, Gerstner and Day (1997) concluded that aspects of transformational leadership should be formally integrated into LMX so that a comprehensive model of dyadic leadership may be developed. Gerstner and Day (1997) also noted that focusing on the development of high-quality dyadic relationships may be valuable, both as an addition to current models of leadership training and as an alternative to these models. Additionally, given that high-quality exchanges are consistently related to favorable individual outcomes, it may prove beneficial to devote greater attention to developing and evaluating LMX training models. They also proposed that the constructs of LMX should be incorporated into leadership training programs.

Bass (1998) presented significant empirical evidence to support the position that transformational leadership can be taught and learned. This position is based on data from

a comprehensive training program developed by Bass (1998) that involved more than 500

leaders in not-for-profit organizations and 1,000 or more for-profit firms. This training

involves multiple approaches that include one-to-one counseling, training, education for

transformational leadership, the Full Range of Leadership Model, and the Multifactor

Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) instrument.

As a starting point, Bass (1998) prescribed a process of individual feedback

utilizing the leaders' MLQ profile. During this feedback, the data are interpreted by

counselors, and comparisons are drawn regarding how the leaders' scores compare to the

general norms for other leaders, how the leaders' self-ratings compare with ratings by

subordinates or coworkers and/or superiors, and how the leaders' MLQ scores compare

to other leaders in their own organization. Overall, this process is intended to move the

leaders to target desired changes in their leadership behaviors. Although this is essential

empirically based feedback, for people to change their behavior, perceptions, and

attitudes, they must be aware of the specifics that require changes and they must have the

motivation to make such changes. As noted by Bass (1998), because each item in the

MLQ does not necessarily identify all of the actions or behaviors that resulted in the

rating, the leaders also need to give some thought to identifying events, incidents, or

actions that can aid in their interpretation of the ratings.

Therefore, in practice, measurement and feedback of these transformational

leadership factors provides leaders with empirical data to help them develop a leadership

environment that empowers followers, nurtures them in change, and contributes to a

high-quality LMX. However, in order to create and lead change of this nature,

transformational leaders must become social architects who are out front interpreting and

shaping the shared meanings that exist within organizations (Northhouse, 2001). This approach to leadership development focuses on developing relationships with individuals in order effectively to enhance cooperation and resource exchange through an interpersonal lens that is grounded in a relational model of leadership (Drath & Palus, 1994).

<div align="center">The Long-term health care Environment</div>

Over one and a half million U.S. Americans live in long-term nursing facilities, and the number of persons over the age of 65 who require institutional care is expected to double by 2030 (Feder, Komisar, & Neifeld, 2000). The direct care of these residents is largely in the hands of certified nursing assistants (CNAs) (Dawson & Surpin, 2001). Projections of a substantial workforce imbalance and a myriad of unresolved systemic issues have motivated policymakers, providers, and others to seek solutions to stabilizing the long-term health care workforce (Squillace, Remsburg, Harris-Kojetin, Bercovitz, Rosenoff, & Han, 2009). Current demographic, economic, and policy trends suggest that, without significant intervention, the shortage of CNAs could worsen in the coming decade (American Health Care Association, 2003; Health Resources and Services Administration, 2004).

The central role of CNAs in providing hands-on care is a key factor in the quality of long-term health care. However, CNAs in nursing homes are difficult to recruit and retain Nationally, turnover rates for CNA's averaged 71% in 2005 (Castle & Engberg, 2006). Many policy initiatives have been proposed to address the problem of turnover by CNAs in nursing homes, and these strategies can be grouped primarily into four primary categories: improving wages and benefits, upgrading training programs, improving

organizational culture, and improving recruitment strategies (Institute of Medicine, 2001). Absent from these approaches is a focus on improving the leader-follower relationship environment as a means of supporting retention and performance.

A recent study by Bishop et al. (2008) found that, after accounting for satisfaction with wages, benefits, and advancement opportunities, good supervision was the most important factor affecting CNAs intent to stay in their jobs. Job enhancements were not significantly related to intent to stay. They also found that a key factor in greater job commitment by CNAs was associated with better quality of leader-follower relationships. Additionally, their study concluded that "culture change transformation that increases CNA autonomy, knowledge input, and teamwork may not increase workers' commitment to jobs without improvements in basic supervision" (p.1).

The significance of advancing our understanding of the development process of leader-follower relationships in long-term health care is also evidenced in several other studies. Eaton (1997) interviewed direct care workers in depth as part of her research on the link between quality of jobs and quality of care in nursing facilities. She found that workers in low-quality nursing facilities consistently identified lack of recognition and respect from leaders as one of the most significant problems. Another study conducted by the Nursing Home Community Coalition of New York State (2003) used a combination of focus groups and questionnaires to ask direct care workers in nursing facilities what factors contributed to poor working conditions. The workers' most frequent responses included not being treated with respect and not having trusting relationships with supervisors. In a more recent study, Kemper, Brannon, Barry, Stott, and Heier, (2008) conducted a survey with 3,414 direct care workers in 122 nursing facilities. The study

summarized direct care workers' recommendations for improving their jobs. One of the categories was "improved work relationships" (Kemper et al., 2008, p. 9). Narrative comments in this category included several supervisory behaviors that are fundamental to quality LMX, such as "treat everyone the same," "listen to us," and "help me with direction" (p. 9).

The study previously cited by Bishop et al. (2008) also provided empirical support for the significance of quality leader-follower relationships in finding that a shift from low to high on their index for satisfaction with supervisors increased CNAs intent to stay by 12.8%, from 50.9% to 63.7%. Although research of this nature in long-term health care has identified concerns and changes that workers say would improve their jobs, it has not provided insight about the actual events and day-to-day interactions that are critical to the development of the leader-follower relationship central to many of these concerns. Given the importance of work relationships to direct care workers in long-term health care, the research methodology of this study can make a significant contribution toward better understanding and improving the development of high quality leader-follower

relationships in long-term health care.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

Leadership research is increasingly focused on the relationship between leaders' and followers' mutually desirable goals and the leaders' ability to create motivating environments to help followers achieve those goals. There is strong empirical evidence to support the constructs of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory as a useful way to understand the dynamic interaction between a leader and his or her subordinates.

Employees in high-quality LMX relationships are considered more likely to behave in ways that enhance the social and psychological context that supports high levels of performance (Organ, 1998). Therefore, understanding the process paths by which high-quality LMX relationships develop is critical to advancing leadership theory and practice (Hackett, 2004).

There is also significant evidence to indicate that focusing on the development of high-quality dyadic relationships may be valuable, both as an addition to current models of leadership training and as an alternative to these models (Gerstner & Day, 1997). However, most empirical research focused on leader-follower relationships pays only marginal attention to what leaders actually do to develop a relationship with followers.

This literature review also revealed key studies that have linked, or called for more investigation to support a link to, LMX constructs and transformational leadership behaviors (Deluga, 1992; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, 1997; Howell & Hall-Merenda, 1999). Bass (1998) also observed a need for leaders to discover ways to understand the empirical data feedback of the MLQ instrumentation commonly utilized in transformational leadership development programs. In this regard, Bass noted that the MLQ does not necessarily identify all of the actions or behaviors that resulted in the rating and leaders also need to give some thought to identify events, incidents, or actions that can aid in their interpretation of the ratings.

Within the long-term health care environment, this review provided evidence of a critical need to reduce turnover and improve job satisfaction for certified nursing assistants. Additionally, several studies have illuminated the significance of leader-

follower relationships as an essential factor in these outcomes (Bishop, et al., 2008; Kemper, et. al., 2008; Eaton, 1997).

This review found that the growing body of theory, research, and documented practical experience related to transformative learning supports its importance to HRD practitioners (Brooks, 2004). Additionally, transformational learning theory in the cognitive-rational model, as developed by Mezirow (1978, 1990, 1991), presents a compatible learning model to bridge the theory-to-practice paradigm of HRD and a phenomenological study of this nature.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter presents the descriptive phenomenological methodology of this study and the methods for carrying it out. Reasons for the use of Husserlian phenomenology are presented, along with why this approach to phenomenology is best suited to the phenomenon to be investigated. This is followed by a description of the research environment for this study, the method used to identify participants, and the methods of data collection and analysis. An overview of Giorgi's method of data analysis and discussion of its appropriateness for this study is also provided. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the steps taken to ensure ethical considerations.

Conceptual Framework

Methodology links a particular philosophy to the appropriate research methods and bridges philosophical notions to practical and applicable research strategies (Byrne, 2001). The focus of this study is on the development component of leader-follower relationships from the perspective of followers. This approach adopts an epistemological stance toward leadership development that has roots in constructivism and social constructivism and emphasizes co-creation, interpretation, and a critical self-perspective. Within this transformative paradigm, rather than learning about leadership as it is known by others, learners make sense of their own experiences, discover and nurture their own leadership and others', not in isolation but in community (Antonacopoulou & Bento, 2004). With the focus on meaning making in such a qualitative research stance, Merriam (1998b) provided the following perspective:

The key philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research is based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. (p. 6)

This is a study of the experiences of followers in the development of the leader-follower relationship as another way of understanding the complexities of the leader-follower paradigm. Therefore, this approach seeks to understand, from the followers' perspectives, how the intrinsic and interconnected processes of leadership take place in organizational settings. As noted by Moustakas (1994), the reality of the world of organizational dynamics is subjectively created through the perceptions of each individual. As a result, "perception is regarded as the primary source of knowledge" (p. 52). Similarly, leaders' perceptions of organizational dynamics become central to their construction of meaning, and every perception takes on new meanings (Gilstrap, 2007). This constructivist view of leadership focuses on how human beings in part inherit and in part create the meaning of the leader-follower relationship phenomena as they live it.

The epistemological assumptions of phenomenology include a belief that reality is socially constructed, that multiple realities exist, that knowledge is value and context bound, and that cultural and historical contexts are also important (Giorgi, 1997). From the lens of phenomenology, a description of the meaning of lived experience can be accomplished only through an inquiry of the life world as experienced by each individual (Van der Zalm, 2000). Life world means designating the world as we live it--as the lived experience of each person. Therefore, the phenomenological concept of life world does

not include the physical world, theorized world, or conceptual world–it is the world as an individual lives it. The life world experiences of individuals, then, are constituted through consciousness that contributes to the varying meaning of objects by their various modes, styles, and forms (Giorgi, 1997).

Husserl (1970b) referred to this process of constitution as the relationship between consciousness and the world as we experience it. According to Husserl (1970b), one cannot simply experience something by perceiving it. Even the basic experience of a common material thing requires the synthesis of many different experiences in order to constitute the particular experience. This active role of consciousness to unify experiences is further referred to by Husserl (1970b) as transcendental consciousness. According to Husserl (1970b), the transcendental role of consciousness creates the conditions necessary to transform our impressions, values, and feelings (intuition) into experiences or presences that reflect an individual's index of reality.

The role of the phenomenological researcher is not a neutral, objective stance, as in the traditions of quantitative research. Rather, within a phenomenological stance the researcher is actively embedded in the world he or she researches. As stated by Dahlberg et al. (2001):

Phenomenology makes clear that we as researching embodied consciousnesses are participating in the relationship between ourselves and the world that we experience. Our residency in the life world places us in the position of creative contributors to the meaning of the world. (p. 95)

The Phenomenological Method

Although there is no one theory or approach that is subscribed to by all

phenomenologists, there are two primary fields of phenomenology: Heideggarian

hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology and Husserlian transcendental (descriptive)

phenomenology. The methodology utilized in each of these fields differs. The primary

difference between the two are that Husserl's approach focuses on epistemology (the

theory and validity of knowledge), whereas Heidegger's philosophy is focused on

ontology (the nature of being). According to Koch (1995), the researcher should appraise

the philosophical underpinnings of both methodologies when determining the appropriate

research methodology. As recommended by Koch (1995), the following discussion

provides a brief appraisal of Heideggarian hermeneutic (interpretive) and Husserlian

transcendental (descriptive) phenomenology.

Husserlian Phenomenology

Spielberg (1982) identified several constants within Husserl's philosophy. Husserl

believed that phenomenology would enable objective researchers to clarify and critique

their fundamental concepts and assumptions. Additionally, Husserl's philosophical stance

held a central belief that human experience contains a meaningful structure. His

epistemology involved the study of essential (a priori) structures. Within this stance, his

descriptive phenomenology sought universal essences, their structure and relations, based

on descriptive reduction. In this manner, Husserl's phenomenology of essences seeks

insight into what is experienced.

Husserl believed that phenomenological reduction based on reflection of existing

beliefs would allow a researcher to obtain unadulterated understanding of phenomena

that is otherwise unobtainable. His phenomenological method "uncovered and described the fundamental structure of our life world" (Cohen & Omery, 1994, p. 139). In this manner, his phenomenology emphasized the description of a person's lived experience. Husserl saw himself as broadly laying out a method meant to be applied by those who sought to understand how we meaningfully constitute various aspects of our world.

Heideggerian Phenomenology

Heidegger brought together thoughts from metaphysics (ontology and epistemology) and hermeneutics. Heidegger defined philosophy as the universal phenomenological ontology based on the hermeneutics of human being (Spielberg, 1982). His ontological phenomenology holds that truth is to be found in the world interpreted hermeneutically. A unique feature of Heidegger's approach is that the task of phenomenology is looking past the everyday normal meanings of life to see the larger meaning. In this view, Heidegger believed that phenomenology is an approach that allows the researcher to see what is otherwise concealed (Cohen & Omery, 1994).

Heidegger was also critical of Husserl's phenomenology that emphasized description of a person's lived experience. Heidegger believed that phenomenology is a methodological approach that should go beyond description of the lived experience of the person. In order to accomplish this, Heidegger's phenomenology requires explicit ontological self-interpretation. In this approach, hermeneutics is a research method that is a way of dealing with these interpretations. Heidegger's approach to phenomenology is fundamentally an ontological search for the meaning of being-in-the world rather than Husserl's belief that human reality is consciousness of the natural world (Kearney, 1986).

Methodological Choice

Based on this understanding of the two methodologies and the descriptive, rather than interpretive, purpose of this study, the methodology of Husserl is most appropriate. In this manner, descriptive (Husserlian) phenomenology aims to identify the structure of experiences as described by the research participants.

Heideggerian (interpretive) phenomenology would take the process further by analyzing what the participants' descriptions of their lived experiences really mean. Given the theory-to-practice HRD context of this study, I would, however, note that an extension of this study anticipates subsequent leader self-interpretation of meanings as described by followers. In this manner, leaders may subsequently go beyond the Husserlian description of the lived experience of followers toward a self-interpretation similar to the Heideggerian method that "makes us see what is otherwise concealed, of taking the hidden out of its hiding…and detecting it as the truth" (Cohen & Omery, 1994, p. 141). This self-interpretation by leaders is postulated as occurring within the HRD context of a transformative learning model.

Descriptive Phenomenology Method of This Study

Within the descriptive phenomenological method, it is essential to engage in inquiry that seeks to uncover the experience from a pre-reflective or natural attitude of the subject. The method of seeking data from subjects in a pre-reflective or natural attitude represents a fundamental departure of phenomenology from the scientific attitude common in quantitative research instruments such as the Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). That is, in phenomenological research it is precisely the natural attitude that provides the foundation for a pre-reflective description of the lived

experience that is central to the data collection and discovery of the essence of the experience.

The essence of experience is a central concept of the descriptive phenomenological method for this study. The essence of the experience is a description of the nature of a phenomenon--that is, what makes the phenomenon what it is? In this manner, phenomenology studies experiences and seeks to understand, not explain (van Manen, 1997). As such, a descriptive phenomenological inquiry can bring forward another way of understanding the phenomenon--what the experience is like--as a way for leaders to develop new ways of knowing and understanding follower experiences.

Within the HRD context of this study, a phenomenological approach to leadership development suggests that relevant knowledge is action knowledge pertinent to the situation in which one is involved. In the phenomenological sense, knowledge does not inform practice; rather, reflection on practice (life-world experiences) results in knowledge (understanding) that, in turn, enlightens practice (van Manen, 1997a). Phenomenology, therefore, presents the opportunity for leaders to find meaning and understanding in everyday situations with followers and, subsequently, act on the basis of that understanding. In this manner, a phenomenological description of a lived experience may be artful, evocative, and expressive and strike a cord within the individual, and thus contribute to aesthetic and personal knowing (Van der Zalm, 2000). This recognition of the meaningful aspects of the text may lead to transformative experiences that alter action. In this sense, knowledge resulting from phenomenological inquiry becomes practically relevant in its possibilities of changing the manner in which a leader

communicates with and acts towards another individual in the next leadership situation he/she may encounter (Van der Zalm, 2000).

The Research Question within Phenomenological Inquiry

The research question guides the methodology, leading, in this case, to phenomenological methods in that this methodology provides the foundation for the inquiry of the lived experience. Therefore, if one asks a quantitative research question, which relates either to frequencies or magnitude, then a quantitative method should be used. However, if one asks a qualitative question, which relates to a question such as what it is like to experience a particular phenomenon, a qualitative method, such as descriptive phenomenology, is appropriate (Giorgi, 2001).

As a result, the research question within phenomenological inquiry must be formulated in a manner that will elucidate the meaning of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). A research question in the phenomenological methodology is just that, a question –there is no postulation or hypothesis. The introduction of postulations and presuppositions, such as those fundamental to quantitative methodology, immediately departs from the rigor of the phenomenological method.

A phenomenological stance requires a rigorous approach to inquiry that seeks to understand, "What is the experience like?" from the life world reality of the subject of investigation. This approach is clearly reflected in the research question proposed in this study: "During your first year of employment, what has the experience of getting to know your supervisor been like?"

In this manner, the researcher engages in the phenomenological inquiry not only as a way of seeing but also as a way of listening with a conscious and deliberate intention

of opening ourselves to phenomena as phenomena in their own right with their own textures and meanings (Moustakas, 1994).

Research Environment

The research environment for this study is within the long-term health care industry. The sponsor organization of this study is Golden Living, Inc., the third largest long-term health care provider in the United States (LaPorte, 2007). Golden Living employs over 30,000 workers in 29 states providing skilled care, assisted living, and rehabilitation services.

Long-term health care is an increasingly important and rapidly changing part of the U.S. health care system. The need for long-term health care services is expected to increase dramatically as the population ages, life expectancy is extended, and other issues reduce the ability of family members to care for elderly relatives. Although long-term health care facilities are currently seeing a chronic and severe labor shortage, with extremely high turnover rates, the Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts that employment demands in nursing homes is expected to continue to grow by more than 550,000 new jobs by the year 2012, and home health care by more than 670,000 jobs in this same period.

However, even in the face of this continuing labor demand, a nation-wide study conducted by the American Health Care Association (AHCA) in 2003 indicated that the national turnover rate for certified nursing assistants exceeded 60%. Additionally, such turnover rates among direct-care staff are generally typical across all long-term health care settings and serve as strong indicators that many frontline workers may be dissatisfied with their jobs. ACHA has also conducted several studies on turnover that

have singled out the relationship between direct-care workers and their supervisor as a

significant factor in job retention (Wallis, 2004).

Within the long-term health care environment, CNAs are the backbone of the

formal care delivery system, providing the majority of the direct care assistance to

residents. The environment of long-term health care is also very dynamic in regard to

leader-follower interactions. The delivery of direct care services by CNAs necessitates a

physical closeness and level of complexity that my not be found in other work settings.

That is, the dynamic of caring for people within the highly regulated long-term health

care environment heightens both the frequency and impact of leader-follower

relationships. Recognizing that LMX is distinguished from other leadership theories by

its focus on the dyadic relationship between a leader and a member (Gerstner & Day,

1997), this research environment offers a unique opportunity to study the development of

leader-follower relationships.

Participants

Participants were selected according to the needs of the study (Glaser & Strauss,

1967; Morse, 1991). In this manner, the researcher selected participants who had

undergone the experience under investigation. This protocol provided participants who

could give a richness of information that was suitable for detailed research (Patton,

1980).

For purposes of participant selection in this study, it was critical to consider that

LMX theory describes the leader-follower relationship as being created through stages of

relationship building (Graen, 1976; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995;

Uhl-Bien et al., 2000). As such, individuals begin at a stranger stage, and the relationship

develops to either in-group or out-group status. In most cases, roles have formed within the first six months of an employee-supervisor dyad and sometimes in the first month (Day & Crain, 1992; Dockery & Steiner, 1990; Duarte, Goodson, & Klich, 1991, 1994).

Studies have also shown that on average out-group members turn over after approximately 12 months (Graen, & Scandura, 1987b; Liden, & Graen, 1979; Wakabayashi, & Graen, 1984; Wakabayashi, Graen, Graen, & Graen, 1988).

Because the focus of this study is the experience of followers within the development process of the leader-follower relationship, this study focused on selecting certified nursing assistants who had been employed between six months and one year. The study utilized a total of 13 participants from 9 different facilities within the Golden Living organization. The issue of quantity that is so important in quantitative methodologies is not a primary concern in phenomenological research. Rather, participants are selected based on qualities and experiences that permit an understanding of the phenomenon in question (Milles & Huberman, 1994). The focus is on the potential of each individual participant to provide rich insight into the phenomenon, rather than the kind of quantitative information that sheer numbers yields (Patton, 2001). Purposefully selecting people, or settings, for a study acknowledges the complexity that characterizes human and social phenomena. One of the most prominent and useful strategies for achieving this objective in qualitative sampling is maximum variation sampling, where the researcher attempts to understand the phenomenon by seeking out persons and settings that represent the greatest differences in that phenomenon (Maykut & Morehouse,1994). Maximum variation sampling provides the qualitative researcher with a method by which the variability characteristic of random selection can be addressed,

while recognizing that the goal of a qualitative study is not generalizability. Therefore, it was not my goal to build a random sample, but rather to select persons that I think represent the range of experiences of the phenomenon, based on my working knowledge of the contexts of the individuals and settings associated with the study. The method of utilizing multiple facilities and purposeful participant selection provides maximum variation in order to access the most essential meaning of the experience within the HRD context of this study. The selection of facilities for the study was within the three state area of Nebraska, South Dakota, and Minnesota and precluded any facilities within my responsibility domain.

Participation in the study was voluntary. Letters of introduction and solicitation for participants in the study were distributed directly to certified nursing assistants who meet the criteria of the study. The letter of introduction included a brief description of the purpose of the study, the duration and procedure of the study, a statement of anonymity for participants, and a brief explanation of my professional background and why I am interested in the phenomenon being investigated (see Appendix A: Letter of Introduction).

Participants indicated their interest either by email or by phoning me directly. An initial mailing consisted of 83 letters to facilities in the states of Nebraska and South Dakota. Two weeks after this mailing, I had received only four responses. I spoke with two directors of nursing in the area to inquire why they thought CNAs might not be interested in participating. Both indicated that many of the invited participants drive 20-30 miles each way for work and that the $25 stipend I was offering may not have seemed worthwhile for an extra trip. The DNS's also indicated that giving potential participants a

specific date might be necessary for them to be able to work within their schedules. I also received two calls from potential participants inquiring whether the study required them to travel to Minnesota. Reconsidering these potential barriers to participation, I sent out a second mailing to the same group. The second letter contained specific dates that I planned to be in their area for interviews and offered an increased stipend of $35 (see appendix B: Second Letter Inviting Participation). Within a week of the second mailing I received five more responses to participate. At this point, I expanded the participant solicitation process to include facilities in Minnesota that were not under my responsibility. The Minnesota mailing consisted of 56 of the second Letter of Introduction (Appendix B). Over the next two weeks, I received six responses from Minnesota participants. I then screened the potential applicant pool in a manner consistent with the objectives of maximum variation previously described. This screening process resulted in a participant pool with the characteristics identified in Table 2:

Table 2

Participant Characteristics Summary Table

Facilities	Age	Gender	Length of Service	Race
Nebraska = 3	18-22 = 3	F = 11	6 months = 3	W = 7
South Dakota = 3	23-27 = 3	M = 2	7 months = 1	B = 5
Minnesota = 3	28-32 = 1		8 months = 1	H = 1
	33-37 = 1		10 months = 5	
	38-42 = 3		11 months = 3	
	43-47 = 1			
	54 + = 1			

I engaged each potential participant in an initial phone screening to provide them with an opportunity to learn more about the study, alleviate any concerns they might have, clarify and confirm their expectations, and allow them to make a provisional decision regarding participation. At the conclusion of the initial phone screening, every

respondent agreed to meet and participate in the study. The original design of the study called for utilizing 12 participants; however, 15 responses were eventually received as a result of the mailings. The study ultimately utilized 13 participants based on locations and availability for scheduling. The respondents not selected for the study were notified in writing of their status (see Appendix D: Respondent Letter for Those Not Selected).

<div align="center">Giorgi Method of Data Collection and Analysis</div>

Within descriptive phenomenology, there are multiple variations and approaches that can be applied to data collection and analysis. This study utilized one particular approach developed by Giorgi (1997). For Giorgi, the operative word in phenomenological research was described. Giorgi established criteria and standards that are now quite commonly applied among phenomenologists in many areas of research. This approach employs five basic qualitative steps: 1) collecting verbal data, 2) reading the data, 3) breaking the data into parts, 4) organizing and expressing the data from a disciplinary perspective, and 5) synthesizing and summarizing the data. The following discussion provides a brief summary of each step.

Collecting Verbal Data

This step involves one-to-one in-depth phenomenological interviews. This type of interview focuses on the expressed meaning of a life world experience of the person being interviewed. This method allows the researcher to gain access to the life world experience of another, as stated by van Manen (1990): "The aim being to transform lived experience into a textual expression of its essence in such away that the effect is at once a reflexive re-living and a reflective appropriation of something meaningful" (p. 36). This type of interview process and data gathering seeks to capture the experiences of

individuals as they are lived in the world and the meaning derived from the lived experiences as the essence of the phenomenon.

Interviews were held in neutral and quiet locations, such as local public libraries, State Work Force Centers, and educational institutions. Locations were arranged prior to the interview in collaboration with each participant. Utilizing off-site interview locations is an important characteristic of the study given that on-site interviews would most likely compromise the confidentiality of the participant and could impact the quality of the interview. Although descriptions of participants may include data such as job classification, length of service, and work location, in order to maintain anonymity, a number was used to code the audiotapes and transcripts. However, prior to beginning an interview, I needed to adopt a methodological approach known as phenomenological reduction. A primary aspect of phenomenological reduction is bracketing. Bracketing required me to identify and make explicit my understandings, beliefs, and assumptions about this phenomenon. Only when I had clearly identified them could I then disengage from them during the interview and be "free to deviate from their prescriptions" (Giorgi, 1994, p. 214). So I spent time before each interview identifying and reflecting extensively on my pre-understandings about the development of leader-follower relationships in a long-term health care environment. I found that these pre-understandings stemmed primarily from (a) professional training and experience, (b) personal encounters and observations, (c) cultural and gender beliefs, (d) expectations, and (e) educational and psychological theories. Similarly, I identified and made explicit my pre-understandings about interviews, the types of questions that were appropriate, and the role of the interviewer.

At the beginning of the meetings, I tried to establish rapport with the participants by giving them a bottle of water and reviewing the expectations of the interview and the informed consent process. I specifically avoided any small talk related to their job or the facility where they worked in order to reinforce the separation of my role as a researcher from that of a human resource manager.

It is important during an interview for the researcher to do whatever is possible to reduce any power differential that may exist in the interview environment. This is essential to increase the likelihood that the person being interviewed will feel free to speak more openly about his or her experiences. This was managed through casual dress, a calm and casual approach to conversation, and allowing the participant time to get comfortable with the process. As previously mentioned, each interview also began by going over the informed consent document. The informed consent process is described later in this chapter.

All interviews were tape recorded with the subjects' consent. The interview process (data collection) began with the primary research question, "During your first year of employment, what has the experience of getting to know your supervisor been like?" The data were collected via in-depth interviews with the aim of obtaining a description of the research participants' lived experience of getting to know their supervisor. During this process, the interviewee was allowed to talk freely about whatever came to mind, and the researcher used probing, inquiry-based questions only when necessary, to keep the interviewee focused on the lived experiences in order to explore deeper meaning. For example, such probing questions took forms such as, "What was that like?" "How did you feel about that?" or "Could you tell me more about

that?"As the interview progressed, I also used a variety of strategies to bring the interviewee back to a topic to gain more concrete descriptions associated with a particular situation. For example, I occasionally used a series of questions like: "You have mentioned that your supervisor doesn't really treat everyone fairly. Let's go back to that for a moment. Can you give me some examples of not treating everyone fairly? What does your supervisor do? Or say?" I also used questions to further explicate meaning, such as, "Why do you think this happens?" Or "What should they have done differently?"

In addition to listening to the responses, I also closely observed the nonverbal and contextual aspects of their responses. For example, I paid attention to voice tone, speech patterns, hesitations, emotional overtones, and contradictions between verbal and non-verbal communications.

Once the interviewee had no further examples or experiences to share, the in-person interview was concluded. Immediately following each interview, I wrote out field notes to help me reflect on the process and note the key characteristics of each particular interview. I personally transcribed three of the thirteen audio-tapes into verbatim text. After completing the transcription of three interviews, I contracted a professional service to complete the remaining. The remaining 10 audio tapes were contracted out due to the physical demands and intensive long-term typing activity required. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, I incurred a significant military service-related injury to my right arm (rated at 30% disability). As a result of this injury, typing for prolonged periods causes me significant pain. After typing one transcript (with several breaks), I found that not only did it take 3-4 days to complete one transcript, but I also needed to wait 3-4 days until I

could resume typing again. After great effort and discomfort, I completed 3 of the 13 transcripts; however, at that point, I contracted out the remaining 10 transcripts. .

Reading the Data

The entire transcribed interview of each participant was read several times prior to beginning any analysis. Although this is fairly time consuming, it is a necessary process in descriptive phenomenology in order to obtain a holistic or global view of the text. Special consideration was taken to remain in the phenomenological method during these initial readings in order to obtain a global sense of the data and a comfort level with the flow and structure of the text prior to beginning an analysis. Reading the transcripts for a sense of the whole was my first opportunity to engage fully in Girogi's method.

Before reading the transcripts, I took specific steps to enter the phenomenological attitude and bracketed my originally identified pre-understandings as well as any revisions of these pre-understandings that may have occurred during the interviews so that I could approach the data with the ability to see it freshly. I read the transcripts for each participant several times in order to develop an overall sense of the lived experience. Through this process I developed a more holistic sense of the phenomenon that later allowed me to better understand the parts.

As I read and re-read the transcripts I found it necessary to continually monitor my own thought processes to remain in the phenomenological attitude. For example, one aspect that I found to require repeated monitoring was that of my own pre-conceptions or judgments of workplace behaviors. Although I understood the demand to remain in the phenomenological attitude, it was difficult to do at first. In order to continually return to and/or maintain this focus, I developed the habit of stopping my reading and purposefully

re-engaging in the phenomenological attitude as needed. This process guided my reading in two different ways. First, it enabled me to keep setting aside any premature anticipated meanings and to restrain my impulses to hurry the process of discovery. Second, my re-engagement in the phenomenological attitude allowed me to remain focused on understanding the experiences described to me by the participants without being tempted to interpret or explain these experiences. As noted by Becker, (1992) "we must listen to people rather than assume that we know what they are telling us" (p.23).

Dividing the Data into Meaning Units

This step of the analysis requires an approach to the text from a specific disciplinary stance. That is, I must use guiding criteria that are consistent with the discipline I am using (Giorgi, 1997). This approach is unique to phenomenology in that it allows the researcher to seek the meaning from the text (data) that is relevant to the particular discipline. In this regard, the text from any specific qualitative interview may yield different meaning units for different research disciplines. In this particular analysis, I approached the text from the context of the leader-member relationship within the disciplinary stance of human resource development (HRD). This stance provides an intuitive foundation for inquiry and still remains open to discovery of whatever meanings may emerge.

The process of dividing the text into meaning units requires additional, more careful readings of the text. The procedure consists of creating a break in the page each time there is a transition of meaning in the description. During this process, all transitions in meaning are identified without regard to duplication of previous similar meanings in the text. A principle guiding this step is that the parts must be determined by criteria that

are consistent with the scientific discipline – HRD criteria for HRD analyses and so on. For example, one could contend that a "meaning unit" may consist of each sentence, but a sentence is a unit of grammar and may or may not be sensitive to the HRD aspects of the description. That is why an attitude that is sensitive to the discipline is important, as well as an attitude that is sensitive to the phenomenon being researched (Giorgi, 1997). In this case, the discipline of HRD and the phenomenon of the experiences of followers in the development of the leader-follower relationship. Within this stance, each time the researcher experiences a transition in meaning while reading the transcript a page break is inserted.

When developing his methodology, Giorgi discovered that the identification of meaning units was a perceptual or experiential process rather than an intellectual one (Giorgi, A., 1970, 1985b, 1990). Consequently, he stresses repeatedly the importance of the researcher responding spontaneously, which he defines as without effort or premeditation. This spontaneous approach helps keep the researcher within the phenomenological attitude and is meant to take place fairly rapidly without stopping until a transcript has been entirely marked. This process yields multiple sections, or groups, of meaning units for the next step, which is transformation of text (data).

Although this phase is the least complex of Giorgi's analysis steps and the quickest to implement, nonetheless, it plays no less of a central role in uncovering the meaning of the phenomenon than other phases. In this manner, breaking the transcript into meaning units provides a starting point for more in-depth analysis of meaning by allowing the researcher to break the data into manageable parts.

When reading the transcripts for a sense of the whole, the task had been to get a sense of the phenomenon without being drawn into any parts or details. As such, the task was one of essentially "listening" to the participant's experiences until I had an internalized sense of the overall experiences; whereas, in this second phase of the analysis, the identification of meaning units marked the beginning of becoming selective and discriminating with the data. In this phase I also assumed the phenomenological stance that once again led me to bracketing my preconceptions and remaining open to whatever meaning units I would find.

Organizing and Expressing Data in Disciplinary Language

This step requires a reconfiguring of the text into a format consisting of three columns. The first column is titled Text, the second column, Transformation, and the third, Structure. The first column contains the original text meaning units only and is absent the researcher's questions. The meaning units in this column are separated by double spaces and sequentially numbered. The second column, titled Transformation, is utilized to enter a description of the everyday language of the subject in each meaning unit into terms relevant to the research discipline (HRD). As stated by Giorgi (1997), "The key point here is that in this step the statements of the subjects are transformed by the researcher to be in accord with the researcher's disciplinary intuition which becomes stabilized after the process of free imaginative variation" (p. 247).

Giorgi further explains the rationale for this phase of analysis in the following way:

Phenomenologically, there is no doubt that it is the meaning for the participant that must be captured, but it is equally certain that the meaning must be taken up

and be re-expressed in the language of the researcher's discipline (sociology,

psychology, etc.). In other words, it is the meaning-for-the-participant insofar as it

is relevant to and revelatory of the research question that matters. (Giorgi, 1994,

pp. 208-209)

I must stress that this transformation into HRD disciplinary language does not

change or alter the presence contained in the meaning unit. The researcher takes the

presence described by a participant precisely as it is described and begins to make

explicit the disciplinary meanings that are usually only implicit in the participant's

descriptions. These transformations "help organize what would otherwise be a seemingly

hopeless array of aspects" of a lived experience (Carson, 1990, p.147).

In this manner, I attempted to re-express each meaning unit in the best possible

way; however, I was also aware that in many cases it would require several efforts in

order to adequately capture what had been expressed. In some cases, I rewrote the

transformed meaning unit multiple times in one sitting. In other cases, I wrote what I

perceived at that moment, knowing that I would come back to it for further refinement. It

was not unusual that a transformation I wrote for a meaning unit further down in the

transcript would inform me in a way that would require me to go back and complete

some of the unfinished meaning unit transformations. This phase was my first encounter

with a new demand for expressing meaning in my own language to re-articulate the

participant's verbal descriptions. While engaging in this process I was mindful of

remaining oriented as a responder to the meaning in the descriptions, and as a follower of

the meaning I focused resisting impulses to superimpose my own biases or projections

onto the participant's descriptions.

Synthesizing and Summarizing the Data

After identifying meaning units and completing the transformation into disciplinary language, each transformation was analyzed to determine which units are essential for the phenomenon and which are not. This process was accomplished through the application of imaginative variation in order to test the essentiality of each transformation. "The task of imaginative variation is to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, employing polarities and reversals, and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions" (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 97-98). A person describing experience in a pre-reflective attitude usually communicates a great deal of implicit as well as explicit information, and the phenomenological researcher is able to use imaginative variation to "go through" (Carson, 1990, p. 149) the concrete expressions in the meaning unit and identify the essential, or invariant meanings implicit in the description. These invariants answer the question, "What meaning remains constant through all possible variations of experience of this particular phenomenon?" It is this level of invariants that constitute the essential structures, and there are certainly fewer of these invariants than individual meaning units. These invariants are also referred to in phenomenological literature as constituents, and together they form the summary statement of the essence of the experience.

Although I made no fundamental changes to Giorgi's data analysis phases, I found that I needed to add an additional step in my process. Giorgi (1994) reminded us that his methodology is designed to clarify the meaning of a phenomenon as experienced by a participant, and, if a researcher's implementation of this methodology is not

achieving this illumination of meaning, Giorgi urged the researcher to modify it or use a different approach that will achieve that goal more effectively for a given researcher. For Giorgi, this phase incorporates the tasks of transforming the participant's descriptions of experience into disciplinary language and identifying those aspects of meaning that are unchanging in all instances of the experience. His method then moves directly to the final phase of describing the essence of the experience. Given the large volume of interview text, I found it to be an overwhelming task to synthesize the structures of invariant meanings from 13 participants directly into a summary statement of the essence of the experience.

Therefore, in this phase, I added a step that consisted of a second analysis of each essential structural description in column three of the text analysis format. This allowed me to organize the structural descriptions from all 13 interviews into groups of invariant themes of meaning. This step consisted of grouping the structural descriptions of experience into thematic invariant constituents representative of the experience of all followers. These thematic invariant constituents may appear to be independent entities, but they exist within an essential interrelationship that is experienced by all followers as part of the coherent unity of experience. I was then able to synthesize these thematic invariant constituents of meaning described by all followers into a summary statement of the essence of the experience.

As with all steps of analysis, I used the phenomenological reduction to maintain the appropriate attitude and to facilitate the implementation of this process within the disciplinary stance of the study to identify the invariant constituent present in each structure. The application of the imaginative variation process was essential in order to

reduce the description to these essential elements. The variations applied included time, space, bodily concerns, materiality, causality, and relation to self (Moustakas, 1994). Only those themes that remained throughout the variations were retained as essential to the experience being evaluated. Although the process of imaginative variation is meant to free one's thinking from boundaries that can be limiting, it nonetheless must be employed within a disciplinary context that does hold some limits. Giorgi (1990) noted that these limits may be whatever connotations, analogous experiences, psychological values, and language choices effectively represent "intuitable givens or necessities that obviously belong to the situation" (p. 72).

The final step in the phenomenological reduction process is the synthesis of the structural descriptions into a summary statement of the essence of the experience. The objective of this step is not to achieve a universal expression of essence of the experience but, rather, the most invariant meaning of the experience. In this sense, the invariant meaning seeks to discover those parts, or components, that do not vary from context to context through imaginative variation. However, it is also essential to note that phenomenology recognizes that the essence of any experience is never totally exhausted.

The next chapter will identify each of the thematic invariant constituents of experience and provide a narrative description utilizing key text and structural descriptions of followers' experiences, followed by a summary description of the essence of the experience. Chapter 5 will then present further discussion and explication of the constituents of meaning by focusing on the specific ways these manifested themselves in the lived experiences of the followers, within the HRD disciplinary context of this study.

Ethical Considerations

Formal approval of this study was obtained from the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board. The purpose of the study was explained to participants, and they were encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification. Participants were advised of the voluntary nature of their participation and that they can withdraw from the study at any time without any implications. Participants were also advised that at any time during the interview they can decline to answer any question, request that the tape recorder be turned off, or terminate the interview. Written consent was obtained from each participant to tape the interview. None of the selected participants declined to be interviewed or requested to turn off the recorder.

Each interview began with an informed consent process. The informed consent process involves more than just signing a consent form. The process began with an explanation and discussion of the purpose and any potential risks and benefits of participation in the study. Following this discussion, each participant was presented with the consent form with a further explanation of the form. Time was provided for each participant to read the form and ask questions.

The consent form includes: a description of the purpose, duration, and procedures of the study, a list of potential benefits and risks, an account of how anonymity will be assured, information as to whom to contact with questions, and an indication that the participation was voluntary (see Appendix E: Consent Form). Each participant was provided a copy of the consent form. Participants were also provided with a full explanation of how the results of the study will be disseminated. At the conclusion of each interview, each participant was also asked to sign an additional consent for the use

of his or her interview text in publications (see Appendix F: Participant Release Agreement).

I also explained to each participant that, to ensure anonymity, I will be the only person able to link names with interviews and that the tapes will be kept in a separate locked filing cabinet and destroyed two years after completion of the study. Participants were also informed that the interview transcripts will be kept in a separate locked file cabinet in my home. Participants were informed that, although quotes from the interviews will be included in the final manuscript, participants will not be identifiable because the researcher will ensure that participants' names or any other identifying information will not be contained in the manuscript. Any participant identifying details will be disguised and will be destroyed two years after the completion of the study.

I am aware of the possibility that participants may describe experiences that are at odds with human resource or company standards of practice, and that it is necessary and appropriate to remain non-judgmental, and my body language should not convey any signs of this during the interviews.

After participants completed the in-person interview, they were asked for permission to be contacted for a follow-up debriefing telephone call. During the debriefing call, I engaged the participant to validate the accuracy of their transcript and check for and correct any misconceptions and manage any concerns or possible harm that may have occurred during the interview process (Eyde, 2000). This was accomplished through a review of the process and allowing participants an opportunity to reflect on their interview in order to affirm their comfort with accuracy and completeness of our meeting. During these discussions, I reviewed the structural descriptions that I had

synthesized from their transcribed interview as the basis for confirmation. The overall goal of this process is to provide findings that are authentic and original (Barbour, 2001). All participants were comfortable with the interview process in which they had participated and confirmed the structural descriptions as accurate. Although the process of contacting each participant again was a rather time consuming process, I found that this step gave me significant confidence and clarity as I moved forward in the process of constructing a summary description of the essence of the experience.

Summary

This chapter differentiated two approaches within hermeneutic phenomenology, interpretive and descriptive, and provided the rationale for the selection of a Husserilian descriptive approach in this study. The appropriateness of this methodology is further shown to be well suited within the epistemological stance of this study that seeks to understand the lived experiences of followers within the theoretical constructs of LMX theory and the disciplinary context of human resource development (HRD). The chapter also presents the approach of Giorgi (1997) as an appropriate and practical framework for the process of 1) collecting verbal data, 2) reading the data, 3) breaking the data into parts, 4) organizing and expressing the data from a disciplinary perspective, and 5) synthesizing and summarizing the data.

The research environment and participant selection described in this chapter present an opportunity to utilize phenomenological methodology to explore the experiences of followers in the leader-follower relationship within a specific industry context. In this manner, the methodology of this study may provide unique insights toward advancing the HRD theory-to-practice paradigm for understanding the LMX

relationship and leadership development of 13 certified nursing assistants employed between six months to one year in a specific long-term health care environment.

Ethical considerations will include review by the University of Minnesota IRB, participant informed consent, and careful attention to protection of transcripts and tapes.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS, THEME ONE:

DIRECT CONTACT AND ASSISTANCE ARE IMPORTANT

Research participants were interviewed to gain information regarding one overriding research question: What was the experience of getting to know your supervisor like? Throughout this dissertation, it has been emphasized that phenomenological research is focused on meaning. Accordingly, the findings presented in this chapter are descriptions of the meanings CNAs gave to getting to know their supervisor, as revealed by the participants' descriptions of their lived experiences.

Themes of Meaning

The data analysis revealed five significant themes of meaning. This chapter and the following chapters focus on an explication of these essential themes of meaning of the experiences of CNAs getting to know their supervisors. The interrelationships among these meanings are then presented as an integrated description of the essential structure of the meaning of this experience for CNAs.

Industry standard abbreviations are used for job titles: Executive Director (ED), Director of Nursing Services (DNS), Director of Nursing (DON), Assistant Director of Nursing Services (ADNS), Registered Nurse (RN), and Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN).

The themes I identified are: (1) Direct contact and assistance are important; (2) Supervisors treat us differently based on certain follower behaviors; (3) Personal conversation is important: (4) Follower competence affects relationships; and (5) ED/DNS leader-follower relationships are primarily transactional and often intimidating for CNAs.

Theme #1: Direct Contact and Assistance Are Important

The interviews revealed the importance that CNAs placed on the direct contact and assistance they receive from their leaders. Although participants described the impact of contact and assistance within a continuum based on frequency and quality, they universally described this leader behavior as fundamental to the formation and quality of their relationship with their leader. The significance of this theme of experience also appeared at several levels of leader-follower relationships: CNA/Charge Nurse, CNA/Program Manager, CNA/ADNS, CNA/DNS, and CNA/ED. Although the expectations of followers regarding frequency and quality varied with the level of leader-follower relationship, nonetheless, expectations of direct contact and assistance were present at multiple levels as an essential component of the relationship formation. Additionally, followers described their experience as having either a positive or a negative outcome.

Participants who had an experience of frequent contact and significant assistance most often described this aspect of their relationship as a positive component of getting to know their leader, whereas participants who had minimal or low-quality leader-follower experiences of direct contact and assistance described this experience as a negative aspect of getting to know their leader.

The following are selected descriptions of high quality experiences of direct contact and assistance with leaders identified as ED, DNS, RN, or LPN Charge Nurses:

> P4: Hmmm. They really work closely with you. They are on the floor so you
> really get to know them better than you would someone sitting behind the desk,

because they come out and help and talk with you, so it makes it easier for you to get along with them and know what they expect from you as well.

Other participants also described a high degree of satisfaction from direct contact and assistance, as follows:

P3: Well, it is pretty good because we actually feel like they want us to do a good job. They are not just in the office but also do things on the floor which makes us feel real close, too. We can go to them whenever we have any problems, like, if we don't feel comfortable doing certain stuff, we can go to the office.

P9: Well, my supervisor over there is a lot different from the one at the other place where I worked. I mean, she is willing to come out and actually get to know you one on one. She is willing to be out on the floor if we need her, and she is willing to help. She is not just going to sit in her office and do her work. If you're short, she is going to come out and help you. That's really different from most other places I have worked; she's really good.

These experiences are described as meaningful to followers and as contributing to a quality relationship forming event. The positive feelings described from the experiences are stated as "actually feel like they want us to do a good job" and "actually get to know you one on one." Additionally, participant #9 concluded her description of this quality interaction with her leader by describing a feeling of "she's really good." Another example of the positive experience of direct contact and assistance with a DNS is described by participant #10, as follows:

P10: One night we didn't have a night nurse, and she filled in as a night nurse, and, you know, at least at night she knows what we go through…Everyone

thought it was nice to have her work with us. We really got a chance to talk to her

a lot that night. It was very nice, you know; everybody got along. It was a very

nice night to work with her; it really was. We helped each other and everything

else. You know, it was a very nice night.

Participant #4 described positive feelings toward leaders based on his experiences

of direct contact and assistance:

P4: They talk with you. I would just say they talk with you in every day

conversation, because, like I said, they aren't behind a desk all the time, so they

get to talk to you, and they get to know who you are. So they get to know your

work ethic, and you get to know what they expect out of you, as well, and it

makes it easier to work as a team that way. We have a new one [ED] who comes

out and is really kind of…anything he can help with, he stays with you. If you say

something to him, he will try to work on getting it done. He seems to be out there

with everybody. He is really in the mix to see what is going on. Anything you tell

him, he tries to jump on it right away. So he gets right in there, boom, go to town.

I mean, he works with you. He will come out in the hall, and he will push people

into their rooms, feed, or whatever; he just comes out of his office. He is one of

those who don't sit behind a desk. I think that is good business, because, if you

get to know your employees, and you work with them, then you also don't look

like you feel you are better than everybody. You know, they come out with you

for a while if you need help, and just basically to see what is going on and make

sure things are running smoothly, I guess. It makes you feel like they care and that

they aren't above us. They really want to take care of the residents, you know. I think it helps everyone feel ok to talk to them.

Participant #5 also described a high-quality experience of direct contact with her Director of Nursing:

P5: I work with the Director of Nursing because she is always there, you know (laughs). It's like, I don't know, their office is right there, you know, where we work for them. Every morning we have meetings and stuff like that. We have a meeting every morning at 9:00. We go in and she is always there. She tells me, good job, or, we need more here, or, we need more there. She seems more real and more approachable to me. That is why I think she will approach you with, how's it going with you? She'll start fair, you know, so she is always asking questions. It's like she always seems concerned about us.

Participant #5 then went on to contrast this leader's behavior with a previous Director of Nursing:

P5: You know, he was more mysterious to me. He was kind of withdrawn, whereas this supervisor, she is there, and she asks some question. Like, I'm here, you know, so what's going on? You know, if you have a question, come and talk to me. He was more like always in his office on the computer, or whatever.

Participant #11 described positive experiences of direct contact and assistance related to supervisors helping with call lights:

P11: Well, like I said, when he first started, he always greeted us by asking "What's your name?" until he officially got it. If call lights are on, he will go into the room and see how things are going. If he can't do the job, then he will find

somebody else and ask, "Can you do this?" That's really different for a supervisor to do that. I mean, he is always getting involved so he can help us, so he also knows what's going on then, too. He's cool that way. I think that's really good, because it shows that he doesn't just want people to be left alone and not be able to get their job done.

As previously noted, although the significance of this theme is common to all participants, the experience is described by participants from two perspectives--a positive or a negative experience. The following selected text descriptions present lived experiences of this theme describing a low-quality experience:

P1: I've never really had a direct conversation with them, except when I was being interviewed or had a question. You don't really get to know them; you don't really know much about them because they're in their office all the time. I don't know what they're really doing in that office all the time. It's none of my business, but I think, when they're out on the floor and the other people actually see them doing stuff besides sitting on the floor or sitting at the desk, when you see them actually out on the floor, it makes you realize they can do stuff if they really want to. I mean, people talk about it all the time at work. No one really sees much of her [DNS]. She doesn't come in on the weekends, ever, and I don't really know her that well, I guess. She never worked the floors as long as I've been working. She's just in her office.

Participant #1 went on to describe types of direct contact or assistance from leaders she values:

P1: Well, you can't really depend on them [ED & DNS] if you need something. Even if they know you're going to be short a person, they won't come in a couple hours extra, or work the floor for a little bit. It's like, even if they would just come out for an hour when you're short a person, during the busy times.

Participant #9 described a negative experience:

P9: After the first month or two, you didn't see her [DNS]. She didn't come out and have as much interaction as she did when someone first started. Well, I felt it was very little--a need to know basis and that's about it. It is now kind of intimidating to talk to her. Well, she helps out, but it's just different from when I first started. I mean, she would ask me things, and show me things, and kind of check with me to see how everything was going, but now it is just different. It's almost like I knew her better when I first started. There really isn't a personal relationship. I mean, it's more of just a work relationship.

Participant #10 also described this theme of experience and expressed a desire to have more direct contact with the ED and DNS:

P10: I didn't really get to see her [ED] very much because, like I said, I work the night shift so we don't really see much of anybody except for, you know, if they show up early or something in the morning. Otherwise, they never really come out. I wish, you know, we could just see her more at night.

Participant #12 also described a desire for more direct contact with her ED:

P12: I first met him [ED] in orientation, and he seemed like a really pleasant guy. He comes out, he walks around, I think, every day. He'll walk through the unit and check on things, and he says hi, but he doesn't call us by name because I'm

sure he doesn't know our names. You can tell that his mind is elsewhere, too.

He's not rude in any way, shape, or form. He's just very about the business. Some

time I would like to have a warmer relationship. I haven't pursued that because I

know he's a really, really, really busy person. I feel like, if there is an issue, and

he knows me a little bit better, and I know him a little bit better, I think it's easier

to approach that person and to make sure that it's in a productive manner, and it's

not going to, you know, cause any further problems. He comes around and says

hi, but he's going over his checklist of what's still broken, or what needs to be

fixed now, stuff like that. He doesn't stop and chat about anything. It's just hi,

how are you? It's a very superficial hello. He's a busy person.

Participant #10 described her experiences regarding a lack of direct contact and

assistance from supervisors:

P10: I wish we had a lot more teamwork, you know, from the upper head. You

know, if there is a call light on or something going on. I wish they'd answer it just

like any of us can answer it because we just installed a new call system, and they

said that they could time our answering the call light. So that is like a threat that

we need to get the lights quicker. So we need some help with that, too. I mean,

during the day they could answer lights just as well as anybody else can, instead

of walking right on by. I think that, just because you're a supervisor, or the

bosses, you need to help out, too, because we're all here to get the job done, and I

think taking care of the call lights is everybody's job, you know.

Participant #13 described the positive effect of direct contact and assistance with a

charge nurse and then contrasted this with her experiences with her ED and DNS:

P13: There's one charge nurse who is very hands on, which I personally appreciate because she is willing to help you. She's not just going to tell you to do something. She'll actually physically help you do it, just a lot of movement of residents and things like that. I just feel closer to her, probably. She's one of the supervisors whom I feel the closest to because she does come to help, and it's given me a chance to get to know residents more and to increase my relationship with her, as well. It's those times when we actually do things together that she gets to see how I work, and we can get to know each other, and I think build some respect. When we work more closely together, it's given us a chance to talk more, and to get to know each other on a more personal level, which I kind of like. I feel it's easier to understand where people are coming from if you know more about them. So, that's been a good thing I think, for both of us.

In contrast, participant #13 went on to describe the disconnectedness she felt based on her lack of direct contact or assistance with the ED and DNS:

P13: I don't even know who the executive director is (laughs). I don't know; I have no idea. I just don't see them at all. Like I said, I work p.m., and they are never around. To be honest, I think I have seen them a couple of times walking around the floor, but they just kind of talk to the supervisors, and I wouldn't know how to approach them. I don't even know how that would be viewed. It's kind of like they are not really one of us. They don't really relate to us. I don't think they understand what we really do. I mean, how could they, if they are never around and aren't talking to us, and working with us? I know they are one of us for being

part of the company, but I don't think they are one of us for understanding the work we do –how could they be?

The theme of direct contact and assistance is fully constituted through the structures of meaning from all participants. Appendix G presents a table of selected structural descriptions of text analysis associated with this theme from each participant in the study. Presentation of the data in this manner is helpful to authenticate the invariant nature of this theme as an essential structure of the lived experience. The numbers preceding the descriptions represent meaning units identified in the original text descriptions provided by the participants.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented selected text descriptions of followers' experiences of direct contact and assistance with their leaders. These thematic descriptions present one of five themes that emerged in this study. Followers described their experiences as having either a positive or a negative outcome. The positive outcomes associated with this theme were presented first, followed by descriptions of negative experiences. Presentation of the findings in this format is intended to illuminate the significance of direct contact and assistance as an essential structure of the experience of getting to know their supervisor.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, THEME TWO:

SUPERVISORS TREAT US DIFFERENTLY BASED ON CERTAIN

FOLLOWER BEHAVIORS

Participants described experiences constituting awareness that leaders provide differentiated status and treatment to followers. Additionally, many followers described specific follower behaviors, and leader expectations, that could lead to, or support, more or less favorable treatment behaviors from leaders. That is, certain follower behaviors are viewed as a critical currency of exchange. The following excerpts of participant descriptions illuminate this norm of exchange.

Participant #3 described an awareness of specific behaviors that lead to more favorable interactions and communication with supervisors:

P3: He talks to me more than others because I always do a lot of extra stuff. You know, I'm always walking around and seeing what I can help with …I think they like that. The supervisors, the Executive Director, and the DNS always seem to like the people who try to help out the most. They talk to us more and are just friendlier and always ask us to help out. It just works out that way. The ones who always help out just get along better with the supervisors. Oh, yeah, they also like the people who pick up extra shifts. That's a big deal when you help out with extra shifts.

As a follow up question, when asked to tell me more about being treated differently, participant #5 described specific follower contributions that lead to differentiated treatment from leaders:

P5: Oh, I guess picking up shifts is one of the reasons. We always need people to work extra shifts. If you do that, I think he likes that. It just helps out, and he will talk to you more and be nicer to you, you know.

Participant #6 also described specific follower behaviors that can support or lead to differentiated treatment from her supervisor:

P6: I think when you help out, even when it's not your area or resident, but you are just always helping out, that's what the supervisors really appreciate. I think if you stay over and pick up shifts, too, that's a big deal, because the supervisors are kind of stuck to make sure that staff are there. So they really appreciate people who do that. Well, if they don't, then they are just not seen as a good worker, and I think they are going to have problems. Well, not problems, but I mean they are not going to get in good with the supervisors, and that kind of affects everything, but I don't think some of them really care.

When asked to tell me more about the different treatment, participant #5 described some specific events as meaningful:

P5: Like if they take a little extra time for a break, or come in a little late, or if they want time off, I think the supervisors know that, and they just seem to have a harder time with that stuff. So, why not just be a good worker and then not have to deal with that stuff? I don't know; that's just the way I see it. But they [other CNAs] say stuff about this all the time. You know stuff like, "I'm not one of the favorites," or, "Why should I work extra–they don't care." You know, that kind of stuff.

Participant #13 described her relationship status with supervisors as a result of specific behaviors:

P13: Well, I feel, because I am willing to do a little bit extra, I feel like the supervisors do come to me for problems sometimes. That's the feeling that I've started to get, but I don't know if that is actually accurate. I think they do talk to me more, and let me know what's going on, but I think that just happens when you are willing to work more with them and help them out. It's not a big deal to help out like that; I mean, I don't really understand why some others don't do that when they are asked. I think the supervisors just stop asking them after a while because they know it is always a hassle to get them to do something.

Participant #13 went on to describe further hard work as one of the ways of gaining favorable treatment:

P13: Well, I think that employees who work really hard and are willing to help out, they just have a more friendly relationship because the nurses…I feel like the nurses talk with them more, rather than just directing them to do things, whereas other employees are just more or less being guided or instructed to do different tasks.

Several participants described the specific behavior of picking up extra shifts or hours as foundational to receiving favorable relationships with supervisors. Several participants expressed this behavior as a type of performance norm within the CNA group.

P3: It's all about picking up shifts. If you do that, you're OK–if you don't, you're kind of on the out, you know; you're just not the same, and that's the way it is for her.

P4: You know, if you go by the book, and mostly if you pick up shifts and stay late if they need you, that seems to really make a difference. If you're a favorite or not–you know, they just kind of treat you different.

P5: I don't know, I guess picking up shifts is one of the reasons. We always need people to work extra shifts, and, if you do that, I think he likes that, and it just helps out, and he will talk to you more and be nicer to you.

P8: You know, make yourself available to pick up the shifts, that kind of thing. They'll like you because you're always there to help them out when they're short on p.m. shift.

P11: I mean, if she knows she can count on you and stuff like that – so if you don't call in and you always pick up extra shifts, I think that makes you a favorite.

Participant #2 described a perception of differentiated treatment of co-workers based on a social relationship with the supervisor:

P2: I was really upset because I know this person is one of her favorites. You know, one of the people she talks to all the time, so I didn't expect her to really do anything about it. It gets really frustrating, and I think that's where I felt it was more favoritism, because I feel that they seem to see that certain people do no wrong, but they are really the ones a lot of times who really aren't doing as good a job. But, because they have this social thing with the Director, they get special treatment. Just something about them, I guess, and the Director should be the one

not to let that happen. I mean, she is the one who could just talk to everyone the same. I think that causes a lot of problems as to how people see each other at work. It's like they have a special status just because they talk a lot and like each other, and I don't think that's right. She has her favorites, and they talk to her about all kinds of social stuff. I'm just saying what I would do. But I'm not one of them, and so I don't think it would feel right for me to talk to her about that kind of stuff, you know.

Participant #3 also described her experience of a leader's different treatment of followers based on common interests:

P3: She had some favorites. She just liked them and would talk differently to us. I think one of them had a son who went to school with her daughter, and so they were always talking about that, but not really work. She just talked to them a lot, and they would laugh about stuff like what they did, and they would always get away with what they wanted to. They would pick up shifts for her, and she would always let them pick first. But that's not fair if they get first chance, because then she thinks they are the only ones to do that–they are just the favorites.

Participant #10 described her own status as influenced by a personal relationship with the supervisor:

P10: You know, a lot of us, we're kind of young, and we all went to school or something together, so we know each other from previous years. We joke and have fun. Well, some people give us the dirty looks or something, you know, because they don't think you're supposed to have fun in a workplace or with your supervisor, but, oh well.

Participant #11 also described her relationship as differentiated by a common personal background with the supervisor:

P11: She has a son in the Navy, and my uncle is in the Navy, so we always keep up with each other that way. Well, I guess she does treat me a little different, but that's because we have some stuff in common, you know, like my uncle in the Navy. Well, I guess she talks to some of the other aides more just for work stuff, and so they don't get to know her as well, and I think that probably affects how they think of her. They don't feel as close to her and think of her more like just a supervisor for work, whereas I think she is good to work with, and I like her as a person, too. Well, to be honest, I think she does talk to me more and, yes, probably tells me more stuff about what's going on and everything–you know, just kind of lets me know about things, and then I pass that on to other aides–so I guess that makes me kind of different.

Participant #12 described social exchanges with supervisors as leading to favorable treatment:

P12: You'll know when an RN favors a CNA because she'll be overly excited to see that person, and they get like a hero's welcome, you know, when coming to work or leaving. They'll get a big hug, and that's not to say that the RNs don't hug. I mean, the RNs hug all the residents. I mean, everyone, you know, shows that love to them, but as far as the CNAs go, there is definitely favoritism for a couple of the CNAs that are there. They'll hang out and chat. You know, I think they talk outside of work, also. I think it affects the way they do their job–the way that the CNAs do their job. It's just the way it is. They do a lot more stuff

together, and that kind of makes them friendlier, too, so it just keeps going like

that. It's just weird like that, but that's the way it works.

Participant #13 described her work behaviors as leading to more favorable

treatment from supervisors:

P13: Well, I would hope that working hard would make me a more desirable

employee (laughs). And, I think I can relate better to the supervisors for asking for

time off and that kind of stuff, as well as just asking questions. I know they will

tell me what's going on, like they trust me, you know. But, I think it all works

together.

This theme is fully constituted through the structures of meaning from all

participants. Appendix H presents a table of selected structural descriptions of text

analysis from each participant. Presentation of the data in this manner is helpful to

authenticate the invariant nature of this theme as an essential structure of the lived

experience. The numbers preceding the descriptions represent meaning units identified in

the original text descriptions provided by the participants.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

In this chapter, I presented findings associated with the second theme that

emerged in this study: Followers are aware that supervisors treat us differently based on

certain follower behaviors. The selected text descriptions of experience illuminated key

behaviors that followers are aware of as leading to preferential treatment from

supervisors. Participants identified that picking up extra shift, sharing common interests

with supervisors, and working hard are the most significant behaviors leading to in-group

or out-group status.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS, THEME THREE:

PERSONAL CONVERSATION IS IMPORTANT

The participants invariantly provided descriptions of lived experiences regarding the significance of having (or not having) personal conversations with their supervisors. Personal conversations are conveyed in their descriptions as high-quality experiences and having specific characteristics that differentiate these conversations from transactional low-quality conversations. Two primary characteristics emerged as the differentiating factors; a one-on-one dyadic context and personalized content.

Participant #1 described the personal nature of conversation with her leader as important:

> P1: Conversations are not always related to work. It can be, if you can tell that someone is having a bad day and they're working slower, or you can tell they're taking that extra 10 minutes, even if you're behind, go check and see if you can help them in any way. It's more on a personal level as well as work, which is important, too, but I think, if you lack one of those, it's hard to become a good leader.

In regard to one-on-one communication with the Executive Director, participant #1 went on to provide a lengthy, but informative, description of her feelings and expectations for personal communication as an essential component of the leader-follower relationship:

> P1: Well, when you want to know the people you're working with, you need to have a conversation, whether he spends ten minutes having a conversation, or just

making everything a lot smoother. If there are problems that come up, you'd feel

a lot more comfortable going and talking to them [ED/DNS]. It doesn't have to be

like you're on a first name basis, a long phone call or on a texting basis. Just the

fact that walking in is ok …I don't know if he even knows everyone's name. But

just being able to walk in and say, "Oh, hey, how was your day?" …I'm not

expecting him to know I was born on this day… just getting to know a little bit

about every person. It doesn't always have to relate to work …It's something that

is brought up a lot, and when you hear something that's brought up that much,

you have to know that there's a problem. I mean it's not just two or three people

talking about it–it's the CNA's the CMA's, the LPN's, the RN's. Everyone is

talking about it. I think, if it got fixed, it would just be better. I think everyone

would give them a lot more respect [ED/DNS]. Right now, people don't really

know them--they're just their boss. Maybe you're not supposed to know your

boss, but I think that would be something that would benefit them in gaining more

respect from everyone, as well as helping us. Just like getting to know people and

not having that awkwardness when you have to go and ask the person to sign this,

or because you forgot to clock in, or you're asking for this weekend off because

you have a funeral, or whatever the case may be--to be able to go in and, you

know, strike up a conversation, talk for a minute.

Participant #3 contrasted experiences regarding the nature of personal

conversation with the current Director of Nursing, as compared with the previous

director:

P3: The new DNS is open to everybody. She smiles, she comes in, "Oh, how're

you doing? How was work last night? How did you guys spend the night over

here? Did anything go wrong? Oh, the weather is nice so you can go out and

have some fun." That makes us feel comfortable at [facility name]. The other one

was more of just forgetting about you. That is the way it was with the last DNS,

just not much conversation directly with us. I don't know how much she even

cared.

Participant #4 described an experience of one-on-one communication with both

his ED and DNS. His description of this experience indicates that he feels that this casual

conversation has been foundational to getting to know each other. He also appears to self-

identify as being an in-group member with the DNS and uses his personal conversations

as a benchmark for this relationship:

P4: They talk with you. I would just say that they talk with you, every day

conversation, because, like I said, they aren't behind a desk all the time, so they

get to talk to you, and they get to know who you are. So they get to know your

work ethic, and then you get to know what they expect out of you as well, and it

makes it easier to work as a team that way. We might talk about anything general.

It could be the weather, or something we did over the weekend, but nothing really

serious because we are working. We just pass some light conversation. You

know, we got to know each other, and so she kind of knows what I think. Like I

said, we talk together in a friendlier way than the other people do with her. She

just thinks I'm ok.

Participant #8 described her feelings toward her leader based on experiences of personal communication. She indicates that the leader's caring and responsive communications are critical components of their relationship:

P8: She is very sweet, so we just get along, and she is always caring. You know, whenever something is going on, I just write her a little note about a patient or something, or whatever I need, and I drop it in her box, and she is very nice. She cares, she'll talk to you personally. I mean, when I had that incident with the supervisor, I didn't think she was going to call me back because of the way I was treated, and I even said it to her. Well, I left it as a message. I said, "Well, you probably won't do anything about it, probably can't do anything about it." I was surprised that she called me back. That's the kind of thing. I just trust her to tell it straight and treat me with respect. I felt really good that she did that. I felt like she really cared.

Participant #10 described the belief that she was being listened to individually, and that was an important characteristic associated with personal conversations with her Executive Director:

P10: She tries, you know; she listens, and she just asks us about certain nursing homes that we have worked in, or just different ideas. And she jots them down, and then she talks it over with the director of nursing and her bosses above her. So, she tries and listens, and that encourages people to go to her, so I think she is trying to make changes that everyone wants to see.

Participant #11 described a significantly positive experience from personal conversation with her charge nurse. She clearly values the non-work related personal conversation as an appropriate and important component to their relationship;

P11: I mean, communication is wonderful between us, and somehow or another, if they don't have an answer, they will get it. And they don't just always have the work sense to them. They also bring family and friendship to it, also. I've always enjoyed that. Well, like if somebody has an issue with their son going off to the military, or something, or needs advice on a situation in some way or another. It's always better communication that way. We always, you know, talk to them, because, one way or another, everybody is kind of grouped together. We'll chat about what's been going on over the weekend, or anything new coming up for events in our personal life.

In regard to communication with her new DNS, participant #11 described the significance of the DNS taking time to learn her name and calling her by her name as a personalized act of respect from the leader. She went on to ascribe this same positive approach with her first line supervisor, the Unit Manager, as a result of using personal greetings and her name when communicating:

P11: Well, whenever she walks down the halls, she'll re-ask you your name, even though you've said it the day before, that type of thing (laughs). So, I mean, she has that sense, but I don't quite know her character yet, because she just got hired this month. But I like the fact that she asks your name if she doesn't know it because that's like she respects you. She wants to learn your name so she can call you by your name, and I think that is more important than just saying, Hi, when

you see someone and not really meaning it. I think that's great. I know even my boss [Unit Manager], he's the same way. He always greets everybody by name and asks how we're doing. So, just to keep asking our name, and wanting to remember it, that shows more effort, and I think it's cool that, although he has all this stuff to do that, he has to remember that he still knows my name when he sees me. It makes me think that it's OK to talk to him, too, so that's good. Well, like I said, when he first started, he always greeted us by asking, "What's your name?" until he officially got it. I think he is great with talking to everybody, and he's really good about the names now that he has gotten to know everybody.

Participant #12 described high-quality communications with the charge nurses and contrasted the high quality of these communications with lower quality communications with the DNS. She expressed a belief that the higher-quality communications are a key component of better relationships with the charge nurses than with the DNS:

> P12: They (RN Charge Nurses) are, I would say, a lot more approachable. They are a lot more willing to stop what they are doing and totally focus on what you are saying to them. They come across as warm in their demeanor. They're really professional, very sweet, caring. I really enjoy the RNs and the LPNs they have there. So, the relationships that people have with them, I think, are better than with the director. She just doesn't treat us like that; it's more just business.

Participant #13 described sharing her personal history and experiences with her charge nurses as critical in forming high-quality leader-follower relationships:

P13: Just from working with them, I've been able to get to know them as people. When we're working, we'll side chatter. It helps with relations, and I like that–it makes me feel better about the job. I actually want to be a nurse, so I've gotten a lot of information about how to go about that and people's experiences with their nursing school and stuff. Most of the leadership I have gotten has been teaching me how to be better at what I do, and sharing their experiences with how they have gotten to where they are. Well, I have a hard time when I come into a new job making friends, because I don't feel like there are that many people who are my age, so getting to know things about people whom I work with makes coming to work more enjoyable, and it also gives you something to talk about. So I think getting to know the supervisor just makes me feel better about the job overall.

Followers described lived experiences related to personalized conversation as an important constituent of getting to know their supervisor. This theme is fully constituted through the structures of meaning from all participants. Appendix I presents a table of selected structural descriptions of text analysis from each participant in the study. Presentation of the data in this manner is intended to authenticate the invariant nature of this constituent as an essential structure of the lived experience. The numbers preceding the descriptions represent meaning units identified in the original text descriptions provided by the participants.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented selected text descriptions from participants in order to illuminate personal conversation as an essential theme of the primary research question of this study: What is the experience of getting to know your supervisor like? The method,

frequency, and quality of personal conversation emerged as having significant influence in the development process of the leader-follower relationship. Most significantly, several participants provided vivid descriptions of the type and quality of communication that constitutes personal conversation, from the follower perspective.

CHAPTER 7

FINDINGS, THEME FOUR:

COMPETENCE AFECTS RELATIONSHIPS

All participants described experiences related to their own or co-workers' competence as a critical determinant of the quality of the leader-follower relationship. Participants described a process of proving themselves to the leaders as sometimes welcomed and sometimes seen as unnecessary. CNAs with less experience felt they needed to prove themselves, whereas more experienced CNAs expressed less need for this exchange. Participant #1, a new CNA, clearly expressed her belief in the benefits of proving herself:

> P1: I guess a lot of my habits, like being there on time, coming in early when they need me, or staying late, put me on her better side and make her respect me. When you're the new person, you have to prove yourself to gain respect from others, so my habits just help with that, I think. I feel like my willingness to help others is probably beneficial to me, as well as to the facility as a whole.

Although she is willing to meet or exceed performance expectations, she also expressed an implicit expectation of positive reciprocal status with her leader based on her contributions:

> P1: I think it does make our relationship better. And the more I can help, the more it puts me in a position to be seen as a good worker. I feel that will help me to be viewed as a more dedicated worker, like I'm willing to do what some may consider a little bit extra.

Participant #13, also in her first employment experience as a CNA, described a very open and appreciative feeling regarding the follow-up and performance feedback she received from her leader. She viewed these experiences as key components of her relationship building process and also as adding to her overall job satisfaction:

P13: When I'm working a shift with an RN or an LPN, I feel pretty good about relations with them. They tell me what they want done, and I make sure that I get it done in a timely manner. They've been very helpful in helping me complete tasks with which I need additional assistance. They always check back with me to see if things get done, and, when they see that the tasks are done, they are always appreciative and thank me. I think we get along really well.

When asked to tell me how she feels about receiving this feedback and monitoring from her leader, she provided a more specific description of her appreciation and openness to this experience:

P13: It's probably good to get feedback, especially at a new job, because you don't really know if you're in line with what all the other employees are doing. So, I think it's helpful. Most of them, I think all of them, have actually told me that I was doing an okay job, which helps me understand what's expected of me, which is very good. (laughs)

These descriptions revealed a level of openness or even naiveté regarding expectations regarding the amount and type of feedback and monitoring a leader provides within the leader-follower relationship. That is, first-time-employed CNAs expressed an openness and expectation for guidance and critique of their competence from their leader. Participant #13 further described this experience in another role episode:

P13: I think each relationship is individual and has a lot to do with how people view each other, including personalities, work ethic, and appreciation. So, I think the relationship is related to how well someone works. I mean, if you don't put the effort into the work, then I don't think you are going to have a good relationship with the supervisor. And if you do, you will have a better one.

Although competence is seen as fundamental to the quality of relationships, there is a degree of acceptance of this exchange or proving process that may not be the same for more experienced CNAs. In this sense, more experienced aides described a different expectation. Participant #5, an experienced CNA, described an expectation from the leader arising from her experience:

P5: I think she seems to expect more from me; she is always asking me to do extra stuff, things like helping with the hard stuff and sometimes the things that the newer aides don't know. But that's OK, I like that. She talks directly to me about this stuff, and I guess she does talk to me more probably because I always help her out, and she knows I can get it done.

Participant #6 described her experience and competence as a valued exchange within her leader-follower relationship:

P6: Well, you know, she treats me very nicely, I think because I always do a good job for her, so she really likes it when I make it easy for her, too. When I work, she doesn't even need to check on me. I have been doing this so long that I know what to do, and I always do a good job. She just talks differently to me, a lot more than to others, and she is usually more friendly.

Participant #7 described a low level of tolerance regarding a supervisor on a different shift having her go through a competency proving exchange when she views herself as experienced. Although she is ultimately accepting of the process, she described a negative feeling from the exchange.

P7: She would ask me to do something, and then once she saw how I did it, she was OK with it, but then she would have me do something else. It was kind of a step-by-step thing. That's not cool because I'm not an inexperienced person. But I worked it through with her, so now we are okay.

Participant #8 described an expectation that her experience and competence are the basis for her credibility and status within her leader-follower relationship:

P8: I'm just here to do my work. And once I'm a good worker it doesn't matter what you say, if you like me or not, because if you check my work, I'm good at what I do, and I do it to the best of my ability. So, I don't need you to like me or not, or put in a good word for me. I don't need that, because my character and work will speak for themselves.

She is clearly more confident in her ability to perform the work than the less experienced CNAs, and, based on her sense of personal competence, she does not appear to value feedback or reinforcement of her work, whereas less experienced CNA #1 appeared to rely significantly on feedback to self-monitor her performance and her status:

P1: It's probably good to get feedback, especially at a new job, because you don't really know if you're in line with what all the other employees are doing. I think it's helpful, and most of them, I think all of them, have actually told me that I was

doing an OK job, which helps me understand what's expected of me, which is very good. (laughs)

Another more experienced CNA, participant #10, also described a level of confidence, regarding her competence that is in contrast to the less experienced CNAs. Her self-confidence is expressed in phrases such as, "I am good at my job," and "I do my work on time and take care of things":

> P10: Like I said, other people might have, but I've never had a bad night or a bad day with the supervisor. Because I am good at my job, and I do my work on time and take care of things, and I think the supervisors really appreciate that. That is what makes us get along so well; it's all about doing your job.

Similarly, participant #11 described her competence as affecting the quality of the leader-follower relationship.

> P11: Well, I guess she knows that I do a good job and have a lot of experience, so she turns to me to be the expert on some of this stuff. That's cool because I don't mind doing extra stuff; it's OK with me. It just helps us get along better.

Followers described lived experiences related to competence as an important constituent of getting to know their supervisor. This theme is fully constituted through the structures of meaning from all participants. Appendix J presents a table of selected structural descriptions of text analysis from each participant in the study. Presentation of the data in this manner is intended to authenticate the invariant nature of this constituent as an essential structure of the lived experience. The numbers preceding the descriptions represent meaning units identified in the original text descriptions provided by the participants.

Summary

In this chapter I presented selected text descriptions from participants in order to illuminate follower competence as an essential theme of the primary research question of this study: What is the experience of getting to know your supervisor like? CNAs self perceptions of their competence emerged as a factor significantly impacting their expectations of leader behavior. More experienced CNAs held expectations of empowerment and respect from leaders. Experienced CNAs were also more confident in their status and less dependent on day-to-day leader-follower interactions, monitoring, and feedback, whereas less experienced CNAs were more open to frequent and direct supervision. Less experienced CNAs viewed direct feedback and supervision as an important component of the leader-follower relationship development process.

CHAPTER 8

FINDINGS, THEME FIVE:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/DIRECTOR OF NURSING SERVICES LEADER-

FOLLOWER INTERACTIONS ARE PRIMARILY TRANSACTIONAL AND OFTEN

INTIMIDATING FOR CERTIFIED NURSING ASSISTANTS

Participants in the study described low level exchange satisfaction experiences or no exchange experiences at all with leaders at the Executive Director or Director of Nursing levels of leadership. Participant #1 described her experiences of interactions and her feeling of the relationship she has with her DNS leader:

P1: Well, when I'm around her [DNS] I'm a lot more nervous. She has a higher position in the chain of command so it's always important to make sure you have your "A" game on, or whatever you want to call it--to making sure everything's done, you know, exactly right to her standards. You're just a lot more on your toes. It's more, "Yes, I know you," but also it's more of just work terms, whereas, with the other leaders, nurses or co-workers, whatever you want to call them, it's more of, "Hey, how's your weekend," more of a first name basis type thing–-we interact more openly.

Participant #2 expressed a similar feeling of nervousness in describing her relationship with her DNS. She also contrasted this nervousness with the more comfortable feeling she has with the Charge Nurse as a leader.

P2: Well, I feel it's easier to talk to my charge nurse than it is to the Director of Nursing. I don't know, I just get really nervous when I get around her, but my charge nurse, it's like talking to somebody that you can relate to. If there's

something wrong, then I'll go to her and I'll talk to her. You know, she'll sit down with me and we'll talk about it and I'm fine.

When asked to tell me more about relating to her charge nurse, she expressed a feeling of being comfortable:

P2: Well, it's because…I mean, my charge nurse…well, there are three of them, but I work with one particular one, and I'm just really comfortable with her. I'm not at the point where I'm comfortable with the Director yet, or her boss. I guess just because she's - because her and the boss are the head of the company, it's just…I feel…I don't know…I don't know how to explain it, it's just weird.

When describing her sense of not being comfortable with the ED and DNS, participant #2 described the interaction in a hierarchical context and also associated going to the office without forewarning as an intimidating experience, whereas having forewarning appeared substantially to mediate her feelings of anxiety or intimidation.

P2: If I need to go higher, I get kind of nervous. I don't know why. It's just--It's because--I don't know, I'm just the type of person that, if I have to go talk to the boss, I get really nervous, and it's just that I don't know what to expect. If I know what's going on before I go in there, then I'm fine, but if they[ED/DNS] just happen to call me to the office, just out of the blue, then I get really nervous, like, "Ph my God, what'd I do wrong?" You know, it's nerve racking.

Participant #2 also described a very distant relationship with the ED, and revealed a sense that conversations with her are very limited and are associated with negative transactional events:

P2: I don't see her much. None of the aides really have much to do with her as far as work, so I don't think she has much to do with us that way. I just don't see her talk to the CNAs much. I know if someone gets fired she talks to them but that's about all.

When asked to tell me about her experiences of getting to know the Executive Director, Participant #6 described a very constrained relationship and appeared to know the person only visually. She expressed a clear feeling of hierarchal status toward the person and her limited access as "I don't get to talk to him at all":

P6: Is that the same as the administrator? Well, I really don't know him at all. I mean, I know who he is, but I don't get to talk to him at all. He is mostly in the office, or maybe sometimes we see him if there are other people with him for some reason. I guess once in a while he walks around, but that's about it. He says hi and how are you, and stuff like that, but I think he has to say that; it's just part of his job. I mean, I don't think anyone is going to start talking to him about other stuff, I mean, not like work stuff.

Participant #6 also indicated very little intention or ability to initiate new communications with the ED and has no expectation that any such interactions would be favorably received or returned. However, when asked if she would like to get to know him better, she described an interest and also linked the concept of knowing someone to improved communications and understanding:

P6: Well, that would be good, I think, because, if you know someone, it just makes everything better, you know, easier to work with and get things done. But I

don't know if he really wants to get to know us, the aides and nurses. I don't think he thinks that's important.

Participant #11 described a perception of the ED and DNS as being administration and did not expect them to be involved in problem solving, or influencing her performance or job satisfaction:

P11: The DNS doesn't have anything to do with me because I never see her. I think they are administration--it just depends, because they're always busy and always in the offices, so I only see them if something comes up or we have an all work meeting, employee meeting, then everybody has to be there. So I don't quite have any knowledge of them. They might think they're the boss, but they're really not, in that they don't tell us what to do every day or help us out when we need help, or even just talk to us one-on-one about what's going on. So I don't really think of them as the boss. They're just the administration, you know, no one really knows them.

Participant #11 then described other events and characteristics that she viewed as affecting her perception of the DNS as her leader:

P11: When I was hired was the only time I really saw her (DNS). We were just introduced, you know, not really anything pertaining to work, that sort of thing. She was nice and everything, but that is her job. She doesn't know my name now or anything like that. If we have an employee meeting and they have something to say, she would just get up in front and talk to us about stuff, like give us news, and tell us what is going on, and things like that.

When asked how she feels about getting to know her DNS better, she expressed an interest and identified personal conversations and direct contact as contributing to this process:

> P11: If you get to know the supervisor better as you work together, then that just kind of happens, and, you know, that's how you get to know them, by talking about stuff other than work.

Participant #12 described experiences of observing authoritative behavior by her DNS and the effect that behavior had in creating an intimidating environment. She specifically focused on the lack of positive feedback, recognition, or social greetings as a negative and intimidating component of the leader's behavior. She also indicated a strong desire to engage in a positive social exchange, if one were offered by the leader:

> . P12: She had a way of coming in each morning, and it wasn't ever "Hello" or "Good morning"; it was always she's checking off what's not right with the situation and walking down the hall, closing this door, flipping this thing down. You know, stuff like that. It was negativity almost immediately in the morning, and I don't really do well with that. I'm the kind of person who always says good morning to everyone. I try to start the day off well, and even when it's going badly, I still try to make sure it is good. I think everybody felt kind of the same way–like they couldn't talk to her.

In regard to her experiences of relationship building with the ED, participant #12 described a formalized structure. Within this description of getting to know the ED she specifically noted the fact that he does not know her name as having meaning for her.

P12: I first met him (ED) in orientation, and he seemed like a really pleasant guy. He walks around I think every day. He'll walk through the unit and check things and check on things, and he says, Hi." But he doesn't call us by name, because I'm sure he doesn't know our names. You can tell that his mind is elsewhere. He's not rude in any way, shape, or form. He's just very much about the business. Sometimes I would like to have a warmer relationship. I haven't pursued that because I know he's a really, really, really busy person. I feel that, if there is an issue, and he knows me a little bit better, and I know him a little bit better, I think it's easier to approach that person, and to make sure that it's in a productive manner, and it is not going to, you know, cause any further problems.

When asked to tell me more about her experiences of getting to know the ED, she again focused on the highly transactional nature of his communication and behavior. She believed his actions are due to the overwhelming nature of his job duties, and, therefore, knowing names and having social interactions are not a priority for him. Based on this sense of urgency displayed by the ED, she also expressed a feeling that initiating any conversation or social interaction beyond the casual greeting would be inappropriate on her part.

P12: He comes around and says, "Hi," but you know, he's going over his checklist of what's still broke or what needs to be fixed now, stuff like that. He doesn't stop and chat about anything; It's just hi, how are you; It's a very superficial hello. He's a busy person. I've never, like I said, tried to pursue it because I know, I just put myself in his position in that regard. I think the Executive Director of this facility has a lot on his plate.

Participant #13 described grapevine stories from co-workers about intimidating interactions with the DNS. These stories are anchored in disciplinary interactions and add to her sense of being afraid and intimidated. Going in the office also invokes a meaning for the CNA in this relationship.

> P13: I know that other people have to talk to her about being late and things like that. I've never had to deal with that, but I've heard other coworkers say that's why they had to go in, and they are pretty much just afraid of her and get really nervous if they have to go and talk to her. Things like that.

In regard to the relationship process of getting to know the ED, Participant #13 indicated virtually no social contact or sense of a relationship with the ED at either of the facilities she has worked.

> P13: I don't even know who the Executive Director is. So I certainly don't have much interaction with them. I'm not sure who the Executive Director is at either of the facilities. Do they work at one facility, or do they do a couple of facilities? How does that work? I have no idea. (laughs) I just don't see them at all. Like I said, I work p.m., and they are never around. To be honest, I think I have seen them a couple of times walking around the floor, but they just talk to the supervisors. I wouldn't know how to approach them. I don't even know how that would be seen. It's kind of like they are not really one of us. You know, they don't really relate to us. I don't think they understand what we really do. I mean, how could they if they are never around, and aren't talking to us and working with us? I know they are one of us, for being part of the company, but I don't think they are one of us for understanding the work we do; how could they?

Followers described lived experiences related to infrequent and intimidating interactions with EDs and DNSs as important constituents of getting to know their supervisor. This theme is fully constituted through the structures of meaning from all participants. Appendix K presents a table of selected structural descriptions of text analysis from each participant in the study. Presentation of the data in this manner is intended to authenticate the invariant nature of this constituent as an essential structure of the lived experience. The numbers preceding the descriptions represent meaning units identified in the original text descriptions provided by the participants.

Summary

In this chapter, I presented selected text descriptions from participants in order to illuminate experiences that constituted the essential theme: ED/DNS leader-follower interactions are primarily transactional and often intimidating for CNAs. The transactional experiences emerged as feelings that most leader-follower interactions with the ED or DNS are primarily disciplinary related or negative conversations. Participants also expressed feelings of fear associated with being asked to come into the office of either the ED or DNS. The lack of leader initiated contact or social conversation also emerged as significantly contributing toward a feeling of hierarchical separation that is a barrier of intimidation for CNAs.

CHAPTER 9

POST-ANALYSIS REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND DISCUSSION

The experiences of followers in the development of the leader-follower

relationship can never be completely exhausted through a phenomenological study such

as this. However, this study has revealed themes of meaning that present relevant topics

for post-analysis review and discussion. Therefore, this analysis and discussion focus on

the most relevant topics associated with the five themes of meaning that emerged within

the HRD disciplinary context of this study: Direct contact and assistance is important;

Followers believe supervisors treat followers differently based on certain follower

behaviors; Personal conversation is important; Competence builds relationships; and the

ED/DNS hierarchy has primarily transactional interaction and a feeling of intimidation

for CNAs.

Direct Contact and Assistance Are Important

The importance of direct contact and assistance is the most prominent theme in

the study. Intuitively, it makes sense that, without direct contact and assistance,

relationships cannot form. However, direct contact and assistance is not an all or nothing

proposition. This theme emerged as having significant meaning associated with

characteristics such as the context of the contact and assistance, frequency, and quality.

LMX literature informs us that leaders have higher quality relationships with

some subordinates and lower quality relationships with others (Dansereau, Graen, &

Haga, 1975; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). In this process, leaders make the offer of

a high-quality relationship to all, and then, through a testing process, different quality

relationships result (Uhl-Bien, Graen, & Scandura, 2000). However, many of the

participants in the study described very limited or virtually no experiences of direct

communication or interaction with their most senior leaders, such as the ED or DNS. In

some cases, this lack of engagement by these leaders is interpreted by followers as a

breach of the leader's duty, or a lack of concern for the CNAs. This absence of contact

and assistance also contributes to a sense of disconnectedness from the leader or the

organization.

The potential significance associated with followers' direct contact with senior

leaders has previously been explored by Pelz (1952). Pelz found that supportive behavior

of leaders with high upward influence is related to significantly greater subordinate

satisfaction than supportive behavior of leaders with low upward influence. This

moderating effect of the leader's hierarchical influence on members' attitudes and

behaviors is called the Pelz Effect (Mueller & Lee, 2002). Further research has also found

support for the Pelz Effect construct (Anderson & Tolson, 1991; Anderson, Tolson,

Fields, & Thacker, 1990; Jablin, 1980a, 1980b; Lee 1997). The study by Anderson et al.

(1990) found that the degree of leaders' upward influence significantly moderated

followers' satisfaction through their sense of control within the work place. This study

also found that the Pelz Effect remained significant even when the personality traits of

personal control and interpersonal control were extracted from the regressions used in the

study. Additionally, a model developed by Greenberger and Strasser (1986) showed that

high levels of perceived control by followers will produce more functional behaviors,

such as increases in performance effectiveness, greater attempts at self-management, and

greater overall job satisfaction. The Pelz Effect appears to be an important construct for

senior leaders to consider and presents an opportunity within the development process of

the LMX for senior leaders to leverage the position power component of their leader-follower relationship.

As noted by Uhl-Bien et al. (2000), the LMX relationship most often begins when leaders make the offer of a high-quality relationship to all, and then, through a testing process, different quality relationships result. This notion that followers hold expectations that leaders will initiate the offer frequently emerged in the descriptions of experiences provided in this study, most particularly in regard to ED/DNS leader-follower relationships.

Another dimension of this theme is related to the type of assistance provided by leaders during direct contact with CNAs. The type and frequency of assistance provided by leaders consistently emerged as an index used by CNAs to determine the quality and meaningfulness of the interaction. This index of value ascribed by followers is consistent with social exchange theory as a theoretical foundation for explaining why leaders and members try to initiate and continue the LMX relationship (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997). Social exchange theory suggests that people in an organizational context exchange not only physical materials, but also psychological and emotional support and favors in their relationship (Yukl, 1989). Based on social exchange theory, LMX theory suggests that "each party must offer something the other party sees as valuable and each party must see the exchange as reasonably equitable or fair" (Graen & Scandura, 1987, p. 182). Within this exchange process, something being exchanged between a leader and a follower can vary from specific material resources and information to emotional support. The greater the perceived value of the tangible and intangible commodities exchanged, the higher the quality of the LMX relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). As found in this study, these

exchange relationships with supervisors are of great significance to employees and are central to social exchange theory within the development of LMX (Jawahar & Carr, 2006).

The participants of this study provided valuable insights to aid leaders in understanding what exchanges are perceived as important by CNA followers. Participants consistently described a feeling of value anchored in leaders having a presence and assisting with incidental tasks during critically busy times. Many CNAs saw actions, such as answering call lights, transporting residents, or assisting at meal times, as valuable and significantly favorable behavior by leaders, and, most specifically, by senior leaders, such as the ED or DNS. Therefore, the more leaders understand expectations of followers and act on them as a "self-other relational structure" (Berger, Wagner & Zelditch, 1985, p. 32), the more these actions may offer significant opportunities for building high quality LMX relationships.

Supervisors Treat Us Differently Based on Certain Follower Behaviors

This theme illuminated a fundamental construct of LMX theory--the quality of the exchange relationship usually differs from one subordinate to another (Graen & Cashman, 1975). Initially, LMX theory held that having different exchange relationships with followers was viewed as typical and actually beneficial for the leader. However, Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) later proposed that a leader should attempt to develop high-quality exchange relationships with as many followers as possible (Yukl, O'Donnell, & Taber, 2008). Additionally, in an often cited meta-analysis, Gerstner and Day (1997) found that LMX quality correlated positively with subordinate performance, satisfaction with supervision, overall job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and role clarity. A

more recent meta-analysis by Erdogen and Liden (2002) found additional positive

outcomes associated with high-quality LMX, such as more innovation, less job stress,

and greater workplace safety. This theme reveals that CNA followers are aware of

differentiated leader-follower treatment when it occurs among group members. More

significantly, when followers engage in certain behaviors, these behaviors appear to

manifest expectations for more favorable treatment from leaders.

In a recent study Yukl, ODonell, and Taber (2008) found that LMX was predicted

independently by three leader behaviors that are not transformational but relations-

oriented, namely, recognizing, consulting, and delegating. In their study, Yukl et al.

concluded that survey studies are unable to determine causality for relationships found

between leader behavior and LMX. The need to understand better causality for

relationships found between leader behavior and LMX is further illuminated in this

current phenomenological study. This study explored critical social interactions and

social constructions of leadership from the perspective of followers. This approach

provided insight into understanding how and why leader-follower relationships support

relational constructs of the leadership development process form.

The descriptions of followers' expectations and outcomes of generally receiving

favorable treatment based on certain behaviors also suggest the operation of implicit

leadership theories by followers and implicit performance theories by supervisors.

According to Lord and Maher (1991), leaders develop mental models of effective

performers and then compare subordinates to this model. The result of this comparison

process is the classification of being either effective or ineffective. Subordinates who are

aware of and engage in these behaviors then form an expectation of favorable treatment

from that leader. However, one potential concern with the reasoning associated with implicit leadership and performance theories is that they may or may not be held or used in the same manner by everyone in an organization. Therefore, it is important to assess the extent to which a particular schema operates and is used by the perceivers (Engle & Lord, 1997).

<div align="center">Personal Conversation Is Important</div>

Morrison (1993a) noted that feelings of social integration are critical to successful socialization. Additionally, Fischer (1986) suggested that managers are the key agents of newcomer socialization and also set the tone of the work group. These observations are particularly salient to this study, which sought to understand experiences of followers in the development of leader-follower relationships. Findings in leader-member exchange literature consistently indicate that higher quality exchanges have been a strong predictor of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Graen & Cashman, 1975; Linden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997; Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995). LMX theory also postulates that superiors are largely responsible for the development of their superior-subordinate exchange relationships (Mueller & Lee, 2002).

This postulation was also reflected in the lived experiences of followers in this study. Although personal conversation was expressed as important, the responsibility for initiating this type of conversation is invariantly constituted as belonging to the supervisor. Followers frequently expressed a sense of discomfort with initiating any conversation with leaders that is other than a purely transactional employment exchange. The importance of leader initiated personal conversation described by followers in this study also supports the linkage between high-quality LMX relationships and

transformational leadership behaviors conceptualized in the pre-study literature review (see Chapter 2, pp. 9-13).

The framework of transformational/transactional leadership was first conceptualized by Burns (1978) and later developed by Bass (1985) as a formal theory with a model and instrumentation to measure the associated factors of leadership behavior. Within this model, the component of individual consideration refers to leader behaviors that pay special attention to each individual's needs for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor. That is, individual differences in terms of needs and desires are recognized. It is reasonable to conceptualize that this component of transformational leadership behaviors can not be operationalized without a significant degree of personal conversation. The followers in this study provided insight in understanding what constitutes a personal conversation within the context of the leader-follower relationship. The descriptions presented one-on-one conversations that may include non-work related conversations that serve as a meaningful bridge in defining the leader-follower relationship beyond transactional.

Deluga (1992) conducted one of the earliest studies to link transformational leadership and LMX theory. His study provided empirical data supporting a positive outcome associated with transformational leadership resulting from the individual dyadic relationship between a given subordinate and leader. Deluga added to this finding in noting that "Transformational leaders may foster the formation of high quality relationships and a sense of a common fate with individual subordinates; while in a social-exchange process, subordinates strengthen and encourage the leader" (p. 245).

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1997) also concluded that, although LMX is the leadership theory that deals most explicitly with relationships, transformational leadership also shares a similar focus on the quality of leader-member exchange relationships as the link between these relationships and important organizational outcomes.

Follower descriptions of personal conversations with leaders revealed a sense of meaning making based on the degree of authentic engagement projected by the leader. Descriptions of experiences included a sense of authenticity based on actions such as leaders using their name, making eye contact, and simply stopping to talk without a sense of urgency.

These follower expectations for leader behaviors are also consistent with components of authentic leadership development found in the literature. Luthans and Avolio (2003) developed a model of authentic leadership that focuses on leader engagement and relational transparency. Within this model, relational transparency means that the leader displays high levels of openness, self-disclosure, and trust in relationships, and, over time, the interactions of the leader and the follower constitute the authentic relationship (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005).

It appears that the lived experiences of followers regarding this theme of personal conversation reveal meaningful insights related to the development of high-quality LMX relationships, as well as transformational and authentic leadership development. The perceptions and expectations of authenticity, in conjunction with expectations that leaders, initiate this level of personal conversation and may provide valuable insights for improving the quality of LMX relationships in a long-term health care environment.

Follower Competence Affects Relationships

Because this study drew on the experiences of followers within the leader-follower relationship, the construct of competence in this study was anchored in the context of the self-perceptions of followers and the implications and expectations they associate with these self perceptions. The distinction between follower self-perception and leader perception of follower competence is important to understand within this study. Although LMX is clearly a dyadic process, the conceptualization of self-other ratings within the LMX model has important implications for investigating the LMX balance and the reciprocal process. It is well established that the LMX relationship derives in part from follower competence and dependability–factors of work performance (Duchon, Green, & Taber, 1986; Graen & Scandura, 1987).

Followers' self-perceptions of competence appear to influence their expectations of leader behavior and treatment and, therefore, are critical in affecting LMX congruence. A recent study by Cogliser, Schriesheim, Scandura, & Gardner (2009) demonstrated the significance of congruence and that differential ratings of LMX quality by leaders and followers are related to follower performance and attitudes in meaningful ways. For example, a leader may avoid interactions with a follower, providing limited supervision and direction based on their perception of follower competence. However, depending on the follower's self-perception of his or her own competence, expectations of leader behavior may or may not be congruent with the leader's actual behavior. In this study the expectations for both the frequency and quality of the interaction vary in relation to the follower's self-perception of their competence. That is, followers with a lower level of self-perception of competence tended to welcome, and have expectations of, close leader

observation, communication, and direction, whereas more experienced followers see these same leader behaviors as intrusive and over-controlling.

These lived experiences reflect the findings of a study by Bauer and Green (1998) that explored implications of leader behavior and newcomer socialization. This study found evidence that experienced newcomers seek different types and frequency of information, as well as differentiated interactions with supervisors, than less experienced newcomers. As a result of their findings, Bauer and Green called for more studies to explore the influence of experience on socialization in order to compare the behavior, adjustment, and outcomes of the leader-follower relationship–the forming process.

This theme also revealed interesting insights associated with previous empirical findings related to the effects of transactional and transformational leadership behaviors. Howell and Hall-Merenda (1999) found that, because contingent reward leaders openly share expectations about their own job, the followers' job, and their working relationship (Gerstner & Day, 1997), they may contribute positively to the quality of leader-member relationship, albeit in a different way from transformational leaders. Although LMX research has consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between LMX and follower performance (Graen, Novak, & Sommerkamp, 1982; Linden & Graen, 1980; Linden, Wayne, & Stillwell, 1993; Scandura & Schriesheim, 1994; Wayne, Shore, & Linden, 1997), the lived experiences described by followers in this theme appear to present a more refined focus of this phenomenon, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10.

The notion that LMX relationships matter the most for employees who felt little empowerment is consistent with empirical findings by Harris, Wheeler, and Kacmar

(2009). That is, more experienced CNAs hold a stronger expectation and sense of empowerment and, therefore, rely less on the quality of the LMX relationship for job satisfaction. These descriptions of lived experience within this theme also support a notion that, in some cases, the manager's LMX assessment doesn't matter for the subordinate; only the subordinate's personal LMX assessment is what matters (Cogliser et al, 2009).

ED/DNS Leader-Follower Relationships Are Primarily Transactional
and Often Intimidating for Nursing Assistants

LMX theory focuses on the development of a work relationship between the leader and the follower within a role-making model that describes the LMX process as being comprised of three phases: role-taking, role-making, and role-routinization (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Within this process, the first phase, role-taking, is dependent on the leader making an offer or initiating engagement with the follower. Role-making is then the continuation of the developmental process where the nature of the leader-follower relationship becomes more defined. Within the third stage, role-routinization, the leader and follower develop a common understanding and establish clear, mutual expectations. This role-making model has traditionally formed the basis of most LMX research.

However, more recent work has proposed a leadership-making model (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Within this model, the LMX relationship moves through three stages of development: stranger, acquaintance, and mature. At the stranger stage, the leader and the follower interact on a formal basis that is characterized as a cash-and-carry economic exchange because of the absence of caring or commitment (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2009). In the acquaintance stage, the leader and follower begin to share information that may

include a level of personal exchange. In the mature stage, exchanges are personal and

members count on each other for support and share high levels of trust and obligation. At

the mature stage, followers rely on their leaders for support and encouragement.

The leadership-making model conceptualized by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995)

provides a more descriptive vision of the leader-follower construct as a relationship based

phenomenon. A review of the development stages of this model, within the context of

this theme--follower interactions with ED and DNS are infrequent and intimidating--

presents meaningful insight for leadership at the ED and DNS levels. For example,

research on feedback and information seeking by subordinates has generally categorized

sources as either personal or impersonal (Larkey & Sproull, 1984). Personal sources are

comprised of individuals in hierarchical role relationships, such as subordinates,

supervisors, mangers, and so on (Buzzanell, 1987). Buzzanell summarized the essence of

this process as follows:

> First, information gathering through others operates in a system of mutual
>
> learning and feedback. When data are perceived as ambiguous, incomplete, or
>
> inconsistent with previously acquired information by an employee, the employee
>
> can exchange impressions, question information, and develop interpretations. The
>
> opportunity to discuss issues or apply multiple cycles of information processing to
>
> arrive at data interpretations is simply unavailable with nonhuman sources. (p. 38)

In regard to meaning for organizational members, this analysis by Buzazanell

(1987) speaks directly to the theoretical foundations of LMX and the leadership-making

model developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). That is, the first stage of LMX

development is information sharing at the acquaintance stage. At this stage, superiors

strongly impact the kinds of communication experiences that subordinates will have and are primarily responsible for subordinates' affective responses. Nonetheless, this study revealed a theme of meaning associated with infrequent contact and a sense of intimidation experienced by CNAs, primarily in their relationships with the ED or DNS.

Within this level of leader-follower relationship, it appears that previously cited literature regarding the Pelz Effect (Anderson, Tolson, Fields, & Thacker, 1990) also holds significant opportunities for these senior leaders. Pelz (1951) provided an instrumental explanation for the effect of a leader's organizational influence. He concluded that a leader's supportive communication and behavior toward group members would raise group members' satisfaction only when the leader had enough influence to deliver benefits for employees. When this perception is operating, group members realize that there will be strong organizational support behind their leader's offer of help and guidance, and this understanding enhances members' satisfaction (Anderson, Tolson, Fields, & Thacker, 1990).

Summary

This post-analysis literature review I focused on the five themes of meaning that emerged in this study. For the first theme, Direct Contact and Assistance Are Important, the literature supports the dyadic nature of the LMX relationship. Followers described experiences contributing to high-quality or low-quality relationships consistent with the development of in-group and out-group status. The significant opportunities for senior leaders in ED and DNS roles were also supported in this review.

In regard to the theme, Supervisors Treat Us Differently Based on Certain Follower Behaviors, the literature provided substantial support for the in-group/out-group

phenomenon. Most significantly, follower's identified specific behaviors that are perceived as leading to in-group or out-group status with leaders. The most significant behavior perceived as defining this status is working extra shifts.

The theme, Personal Conversation Is Important, is supported by studies associated with LMX theory, transformational/transactional leadership, and authentic leadership theory. I reviewed several key studies within these domains that provided significant insights linking the experiences described by followers in this study.

The theme, Follower Competence Affects Relationships, was reviewed within the context of LMX self-other perceptions of competence. I discussed the literature regarding implications for congruence of LMX self-other perceptions as related to follower descriptions of expectations for leader behavior and treatment.

The next theme was ED/DNS Leader-Follower Relationships Are Primarily Transactional and Often Intimidating. The review focused on literature associated with the LMX role-making process and more recent research associated with the leadership-making model. The leadership-making model provided a more descriptive vision of the leader-follower construct as a relationship based phenomenon.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, ESSENTIAL DESCRIPTION OF THE

EXPERIENCE, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The experiences of followers in the development of leader-follower (LMX)

relationships can never be completely exhausted through a phenomenological study such

as this. However, the descriptions of experiences provided in Chapters 4-8 are a

foundation for beginning to understand the meaning of CNA (Certified Nursing

Assistant) experiences within the LMX process in long-term health care. There is never a

final answer to a phenomenological question; as stated by van Manen (1990), the

findings of this study "will need to be appropriated, in a personal way, by anyone who

hopes to benefit from such insight" (p. 23). The HRD disciplinary context of this study

proposes a framework for sharing and synthesizing this information to leaders so they

may appropriate the findings in a personal way as part of their own developmental

process.

The intent of this chapter is to help readers synthesize an understanding of the

research, not to provide a final conclusion. To accomplish this, I will provide a brief

summary of the research process and explore possible implications, present the final

essential description of the experiences shared by participants, and make

recommendations for practice and further research.

Study Summary

A descriptive analysis of the lived experiences of 13 CNAs employed at their

current facility for between six months and one year provided deep insights into the

nature of their LMX process in a long-term health care environment. This study was also

framed within the disciplinary context of human resource development (HRD). Within

this HRD context, it is important to recognize that LMX theory presents a dyadic

relationship between leader and follower as an ongoing value-added process aimed at

improving the performance of individuals and organizations (Green et al., 1996). Within

this context, questions of meaning can be better or more deeply understood, so that, on

the basis of this understanding, one may be able to act more thoughtfully and more

tactfully in certain situations (Van Manen, 1990).

In undertaking this research, I hoped that bringing forward the lived experiences

of followers would provide others, most particularly, long-term health care leaders, with

insights that would contribute to their personal development toward becoming more

effective in their leader-follower relationships and creating more satisfying work

environments. I also hoped that learning about these experiences would help me as a

human resource practitioner to engage leaders in more thoughtful dialogue and personal

reflection regarding their personal development and relationships with followers.

Additionally, I believe an organization's socialization processes and policies can be

informed by this type of research.

Research Question

This study addressed the research question, "During your first year of

employment, what has the experience of getting to know your supervisor been like?" This

broad question was intended to allow participants to engage their own mental models of

who they relate to as their supervisor and what the process of getting to know them has

been like. Following this initial question, I used several probing and exploratory

questions in order to seek to understand, while as a researcher remaining within the phenomenological reduction.

Methods

Interviews were held in neutral and quiet locations, such as local public libraries, state workforce centers, or local colleges. Locations were arranged prior to the interviews in collaboration with each participant. Utilizing off-site interview locations is an important characteristic of the study because on-site interviews would possibly have compromised the confidentiality of the participants and could have impacted the quality of the interviews. Although a description of participants in this study included data, such as job classification, length of service, and work location, in order to maintain anonymity, a number was used to code the audiotapes and transcripts. The study used certified nursing assistants who had been employed between six months and one year at their current facility.

The selection of facilities for the study was within a three state area of Minnesota, Nebraska, and South Dakota, and precluded any facilities within my responsibility domain. Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were compensated with a stipend of $35. This stipend was provided to compensate for the time and inconvenience involved in participation, as well as travel costs.

Formal approval of this study was obtained from the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board. Written consent to tape the interview was obtained from each participant. Each interview began with an informed consent process.

After obtaining informed consent, I interviewed each participant one on one. At the conclusion of the interview each participant was asked for permission to contact them

by telephone for a follow-up debriefing to validate the accuracy of their transcript and to check for and correct any misconceptions. Each interview was transcribed verbatim for analysis. Following initial data analysis, a member checking process was employed to verify the accuracy and completeness of the descriptions of experience derived from the analysis.

Findings

The data analysis revealed five themes of meaning that were invariant. That is, these themes were expressed by all participants in their descriptions of their experiences. The themes have been identified within the HRD disciplinary context of this study as: (1) direct contact and assistance are important; (2) supervisors treat us differently based on certain follower behaviors; (3) personal conversation is important; (4) follower competence affects relationships; and, (5) ED/DNS leader-follower relationships are primarily transactional and often intimidating.

The interrelationships among these themes of meaning were then integrated into a description of the essential structure of this experience for CNAs.

Discussion

Through the phenomenological lens of followers, this study offered new insights for leaders in long-term health care. The themes of meaning that emerged in the study were presented within an HRD framework for leadership development. This framework seeks to aide leaders in reflecting and thinking differently about their leadership roles in long-term health care. Mezirow (1991) originally proposed that the most significant learning is learning that incorporates an ability to critically reflect on our premises about

ourselves. From this stance, by understanding the experiences of CNA followers, leaders

may be able to affect their own leadership development process.

LMX and Transformational Leadership in a Development Context

Leader-follower relationships in long-term health care are a critical component

affecting quality, turnover, job-satisfaction, and productivity (Karsh, Booske, & Sainfort,

2005). The findings of this study hold possible implications for future leadership

development practices within the long-term health care environment. A

phenomenological study of this nature may provide leaders with valuable new insights

and alternative ways of knowing to facilitate the process of transformational leadership

development. From this perspective, knowing is a process of relating; relating is a

constructive, ongoing process of meaning making--an actively relational process of

creating common understandings (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

In a comprehensive meta-analytic review of LMX correlates and constructs,

Gerstner and Day (1997) concluded that aspects of transformational leadership should be

formally integrated into LMX so that a comprehensive model of dyadic leadership may

be developed. Gerstner and Day (1997) also noted that focusing on the development of

high-quality dyadic relationships may be valuable, both as an addition to current models

of leadership training and as an alternative to these models. Additionally, given that high-

quality exchanges are consistently related to favorable individual outcomes, it may prove

beneficial to devote greater attention to developing and evaluating LMX training models.

Bass (1998) presented significant empirical evidence to support the position that

transformational leadership can be taught and learned. This position is based on data from

a comprehensive training program developed by Bass (1998) that involved more than 500

leaders in not-for-profit organizations and 1,000 or more in for-profit firms. However, as noted by Bass (1998), because each item in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire does not necessarily identify all of the actions or behaviors that result in individual ratings; the leaders also need to give some thought to identifying events, incidents, or actions that can aid in their interpretation of the ratings. This approach to leadership development focuses on developing relationships with individuals in order effectively to enhance cooperation and resource exchange through an interpersonal lens that is grounded in a relational model of leadership (Drath & Palus, 1994).

There is also significant evidence to indicate that focusing on the development of high-quality dyadic relationships may be valuable, both as an addition to current models of leadership training and as an alternative to these models (Gerstner & Day, 1997).

Leadership Development as a Transformative Process

Because this study is framed within a disciplinary context of human resource development, there is an implied theory-to-practice stance. Therefore, within this recommendation, it is also appropriate to consider learning theories that may be useful for synthesizing the transformational development process and phenomenological method in a study of this nature. As previously stated, this study presents three specific potential contributions to the leadership development process: (1) phenomenology can provide a deeper understanding of what certain kinds of experiences are like from the perspective of the follower; (2) a phenomenological approach can provide a different lens to help make sense, in human terms, of some of some of the findings of traditional research, which is typically presented in statistical language (Halling, 2002); and (3) an

organization's socialization processes and policies can be informed by this type of research.

From a relational perspective, the primary emphasis in leadership development is on building and using interpersonal competence. Gardner (1993) defined interpersonal competence in terms of the ability to understand people--a basic concern in building trust, respect, and ultimately commitment. This approach focuses on the idea that effective development best occurs in an interpersonal (i.e., social) context. Therefore, when speaking of leadership development, and more specifically, transformational leadership development, there is an implicit process of transformational learning. Although transformational learning theory has been conceptualized in several ways, the cognitive-rational approach advanced by Mezirow (1991; 2000) appears to be most appropriate to integrate the findings of this study with leadership development. A primary theoretical underpinning of Mezirow's approach is that knowledge is not out there to be discovered but is created from interpretations and reinterpretations in light of new experiences (Mezirow, 1996). The revised meaning results in what Mezirow called a "perspective transformation" that is characterized by a "more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative perspective" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 14).

One of the central tenants of Mezirow's (1978) cognitive-rational approach to transformative learning focuses on one's frame of reference or meaning perspective through which we filter sense impressions that involve cognitive, affective, and connotative dimensions. According to Mezirow (2000), a frame of reference is composed of two dimensions--a habit of mind and resulting points of view. A habit of mind is a set

of assumptions–broad, generalized predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience (Mezirow, 2000). As observed by Mezirow (2000):

> Transformations in habit of mind may be epochal, a sudden, dramatic reorienting insight, or incremental, involving a progressive series of transformations in related points of view that culminate in a transformation in habit of mind. (p. 21)

Subsequently, a habit of mind becomes expressed as a point of view, and, in this manner, a point of view comprises clusters of meaning schemes that are sets of immediate, specific expectations, beliefs, feelings, attitudes, and judgments. These meaning schemes also tacitly direct and shape a specific interpretation and determine how we judge, typify objects, and attribute causality (Mezirow, 2000).

Within Mezirow's (1978, 1997) transformative learning theory, transformation is then accomplished through two primary processes--critical reflection and rational/ reflective discourse (Mezirow, 1996). Critical reflection on personal meaning perspectives and their underlying assumptions are involved in problem solving, problem posing, and transformation of meaning schemes and perspectives. In this process, we may reflect on the content of a problem, the process of our problem solving, or the premise upon which the problem is predicated. Through content and process reflection, we can change our meaning schemes; through premise reflection, we can transform our meaning perspectives. Thus, transformative learning pertains to both the transformation of meaning schemes through content and process reflection and the transformation of meaning perspectives through premise reflection (Mezirow, 1991).

Rational discourse, the other key component of Mezirow's theory, is a process whereby one's new meanings are discussed and evaluated (Merriam, 2004). According to Mezirow (2000), rational or reflective discourse is described as:

That specialized use of dialogue devoted to searching for a common understanding and assessment of the justification of an interpretation or belief. This involves assessing reasons advanced by weighing the supporting evidence and arguments and by examining alternative perspectives. Reflective discourse involves a critical assessment of assumptions that leads toward a clearer understanding by tapping collective experience to arrive at a tentative best judgment. (pp.10-11)

Therefore, Mezirow's transformational learning theory holds that perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world. Transformative learning then requires changing these structures of habitual expectation to make possible a more inclusive, discriminating, and integrating perspective, and making choices or otherwise acting upon these new understandings. Transformative learning theory further posits that, for learners to change their meaning structures--that is, beliefs, attitudes, and emotional reactions--they must engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which, in turn, leads to a transformation of perspective.

The theoretical constructs of critical reflection, reflective/rational discourse, and perspective transformation of Mezirow's transformational learning theory suggest a useful framework for synthesizing the experiences of followers in order to help leaders interpret and transform their personal perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. This process

of transformational learning can facilitate Bass's notion that leaders also need to give thought to identify events, incidents, or actions that can aid in their interpretation of the ratings in order to formulate plans of action.

A rigorous disciplinary analysis of the thematic descriptions of experience has yielded a description of essential meaning. This essential description presents a narrative description of the phenomena that represent the synthesis of the themes expressed by the participants throughout the interviews. Integration of this essential description of the phenomena into the transformative learning practice of critical reflection and reflective discourse, as an approach to leadership development appears to offer a theory-to-practice link within the context of HRD. This approach allows for a developmental process to synthesize the essential descriptions of the phenomenological inquiry at both an individual level (critical reflection) and group level (rational/reflective discourse).

<center>Conclusions</center>

This study has provided me with new insights and meaning as a result of this research journey. I have learned a number of things about people in general and, most specifically, gained new insight into the lived experiences of CNA caregivers. I was deeply moved by the passion and dedication that the participants revealed during the study. Their willingness to share their stories and lives has been most astonishing. As I read the transcriptions, I often find myself drifting back to the actual discussion and, in my mind, I see their faces and their body language and hear their passion as they share their stories. I truly believe that the process has also created a new awareness in me as an HR practitioner--a deeper understanding of the role, impact, and responsibility that leadership holds in affecting the quality of followers' lives. As such, this research also

causes me to question my own actions as an HR leader and to ask how I could become a more effective HR practitioner in order to help facilitate the development of leaders in long-term health care. Perhaps the phenomenological based insight provided in this study is one such step or tool to help leaders in long-term health care along their personal developmental journey.

<div align="center">Essential Description of Experience</div>

As intended, the essential structures of CNAs experiences of getting to know their supervisor emerged in themes of meaning. The interrelationships among these invariant aspects of meaning can now be presented as an integrated description of the unified structure of the meaning of this experience for CNAs. Although the essential description of experience is constituted by the invariant aspects of meaning, a description of the structure of meaning does not merely repeat them or add them together. Rather, this description integrates them in a manner that weaves them into a brief expression of the whole that reflects the interrelationships of meanings. In accomplishing this illumination of the whole experience, this essential description of experience may incorporate the individual themes of meaning, either explicitly or implicitly. The essential description of CNA experiences getting to know their supervisor follows.

CNAs found themselves in a very demanding work environment with multiple leader relationships. The most valued experiences they had with leaders at any level were interactions of communication and assistance. Communication was seen as the gateway to relationships, and the type and frequency of the communication served as an index of reality for several other constructs, such as defining the intentions, commitments, and

expectations of leaders; personal job satisfaction; and their own status in the work group and organization.

CNAs defined their work environment as the nursing floor, and meaning was assigned for leaders either being "out here" (on the floor) or "in there" (in their offices). In this context, CNAs did not see leaders as helping them unless their leader was actively within their world of experience, i.e., on the floor. This unwritten index of meaning for leader engagement with CNAs was understood and communicated among them simply as the degree to which a leader was "out here" or "in there." Small acts of engagement and conversation, such as answering a call light or helping with transportation or dining activities, were seen as significant when coming from senior leaders such as the ED (Executive Director) and DNS (Director of Nursing Services).

The experience of relationship building with charge nurses was much different from those with the ED or DNS. The quality and equal distribution of assistance and communication was most important within their charge nurse relationship. CNAs observed and compared their personal experiences of this process with those of relevant others and assigned meaning in order to create an index regarding their own status. CNAs held a self-perception of their competence that dictated their expectations regarding the quality and frequency of communication, as well as the level of direction and engagement from charge nurses. Very experienced CNAs had an expectation that trust and empowerment were more quickly recognized and provided to them than to less experienced CNAs.

CNAs observed certain behaviors as the gateway to more favorable treatment from leaders. These behaviors were seen as requisite to achieving a favorable status and

can even override competency as a means to status within the group. Working extra shifts or hours was the most dominant behavior seen as leading to either more or less favorable treatment by supervisors. When leaders provided employees with special status based on picking up shifts, CNAs choosing not to pick up extra shifts observed this practice and experienced a sense of unfairness leading to anger toward the leader. Conversely, CNAs who engaged in this behavior held expectations of a higher quality relationship with their leader and even some special dispensation regarding marginal performance behaviors. This is an expectation much like psychological contracting, and, when the leader dud not meet the expectations of the follower in this quid pro quo process, followers experienced confusion and a sense of being manipulated by the leader.

Personal communication was valued by CNAs as part of their relationship with leaders. There was a shared meaning among CNAs of what was considered personal communications from leaders. Personal communications were characterized by the qualities of being one on one, sharing of common interests, personal consideration, or recognition. There was a strong expectation that leaders were the initiators of these conversations. Knowing and using follower names in conversations or greetings also conveyed a sense of caring and personal respect from the leader and encouraged more open communications from the CNA toward the leader. The more these conversations occurred, the more followers described a sense of respect, trust, and job satisfaction. When these personal conversation characteristics were not present, CNAs expressed a feeling that the leader is purely an administrator or figurehead--a status of boss rather than leader.

The ED and DNS roles were seen by CNAs as power-based hierarchical positions that were transactional. The status of having an office, and the time one spends in that office, significantly moderated CNA perceptions of the ED/DNS positions as a power-based role. The office served as a symbolic separation for the sense of being "out here" or "in there." CNAs were acutely aware of the "in there/out here" ratio of time commitment by the ED and DNS, and the degree to which the leader stayed "in there" significantly defined the orientation followers established toward him or her. Having very limited contact and personal conversation with the ED or DNS leaders was the basis for a sense of nervousness and intimidation when there was an occasion to speak with them. CNAs felt that many of their encounters or conversations with EDs or DNSs were ceremonial and lacked sincerity. The sense of ceremonial interaction was derived from leader behaviors, such as lack of eye contact, the quick tempo of the greeting, not addressing them by name, and the impersonal nature of the conversation. CNAs were open to more engagement at the ED/DNS leadership level but held a strong expectation that the leader was responsible for initiating and developing the relationship.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

A growing body of theory, research, and documented practical experience related to transformative learning supports its importance to HRD practitioners (Brooks, 2004). This section includes recommendations for practice and for future research.

Practice

Transformational learning theory in the cognitive-rational model, as developed by Mezirow (1978, 1990, 1991), presents an intriguing model to bridge the theory-to-practice paradigm of HRD and a phenomenological study of this nature. The process of

critical reflection and reflective/rational discourse could be used in a learning model that involves leaders engaging in personal reflection and small group discussions of the essential structure of meaning in thoughtful action to assess consciously what we know about taking the next step in a series of actions in personal development. In this process, individuals interpret personal experiences by examining, questioning, validating and revising their perceptions. Using this type of transformative learning framework as a part of leadership development challenges individuals through reason and reflection to greater levels of self-awareness and consciousness of their role as a leader.

In this structure, leaders could utilize the essential description of experience from the phenomenological inquiry to provide new insights toward the process of personal development--a long-term process intended to broaden individuals through experience and to give them new insights about themselves and their organizations (Nadler, 1989). As noted by Day (2000), effective leadership development requires an understanding of building and using interpersonal competence in social systems to build commitment among members of a community of practice. This approach views leadership development as a complex interaction between leaders and social and organizational environments. Using this approach, both individual and relational lenses are important to the process of leadership development. Therefore, the learning outcomes are predominantly focused toward changes in individual leader frames of reference as a result of transformative learning. It can be expected that different leaders will take away different meanings and courses of action.

Additionally, the findings of this study should hold useful insight for senior leaders and corporate policy makers in long-term health care. That is, these findings and

invariant themes can provide insight toward developing leader role expectations as a broad-based cultural component of the organization. Orientation programs for new long-term health care leaders might also embrace these findings within the on-boarding process. As informed by the leader-follower relationship formation process of LMX theory, the insights of lived experiences from this study offer opportunities for leaders to improve the quality and equity of these relationships.

The practical implication of this study is also to help leaders, through the lived experiences of followers, identify specific types of relationship-oriented behaviors that they can use (or change) to improve their LMX with subordinates. The relationship-oriented behaviors can be used in combination with transformational behaviors that influence job performance (Yukl, O'Donnell, & Taber, 2008).

Clearly, one of the most prominent leader behaviors illuminated in this study is regarding the significance of the physical presence of leaders. Followers consistently provided vivid descriptions of their experiences and feelings related the presence or lack of presence by leaders. CNAs often characterized direct contact with their leader as one of their most valued experiences. Communication with their leader was seen as the gateway to relationships, and the type and frequency of the communication served as an index of reality for several other constructs, such as defining the intentions, commitments, and expectations of leaders; personal job satisfaction; and their own status in the work group and organization. Additionally, CNAs defined their work environment as the nursing floor, and meaning was assigned for leaders either being "out here" (on the floor) or "in there" (in their offices). In this context, CNAs did not see leaders as helping them unless their leader was present within their world of experience, i.e., on the floor.

These findings provide meaningful insight for leaders in regard to the significance of their physical presence and direct contact with CNAs within their leadership practice.

This integrated approach provides a practical application of phenomenological research within the HRD practice paradigm, as stated by Swanson and Holton (1997): "Theory, research, development, and practice together compose a vital cycle that allows ideas to be progressively refined as they evolve from concepts to practices and from practices to concepts" (p. 13). In this context, the findings of this study hold the potential to advance phenomenological research within the practice realm of transformational leadership development.

However, if phenomenology is to be advanced within the field of HRD, there are also significant implications related to skill enhancement for the HRD researcher and practitioner. In this regard, phenomenological research may not be a common skill set within the HRD community of practice. Nonetheless, this conceptualization offers intriguing opportunities for HRD researchers and practitioners to advance their value within an organization and broaden their tools of practice, as well as adopt an alternative epistemological stance.

Research

Complex problems, such as effective leadership development, are not likely to be addressed or fully captured within a positivistic research framework. Social and human questions and problems are rarely technical in nature, but require hermeneutic and transformational approaches aimed at understanding and balancing interests, values, and individual meaning perspectives to accomplish transformational change (Kuchinke, 2004).

The literature review of this study revealed a limited number of studies that have utilized phenomenological methodology to focus on the development process of leader-member exchange. However, the findings of this study support many of the theoretical propositions of current LMX leadership theory, and the proposition that qualitative relationship-based methods should be a prominent area of interest for future leadership researchers. For this reason, future leadership research should seek to address the interaction of leader-follower relationships by more deeply considering perspectives of followers.

With this stance in mind, future leadership research designs should consider integrating the qualitative framework demonstrated in this study as part of mixed methods approaches. Including a qualitative component within a study may help shed light on individuals' perceptions about factors and events related to the relationship development within the leader-follower development process (Uhl-Bien, 2007).

The aim of phenomenological research is to provide us with a deeper and fuller understanding of human experience, ourselves, and others (Valle, King & Halling, 1989). However, the themes of experience that emerged in this study are derived from, and best understood, within the context of the Golden Living organization. That is, all participants in the current study are employees of Golden Living. Further research that extends the methodology and research question of this study to other long-term health care organizations could add richness to the essential description of experience, and also add to our understanding of the LMX process within the broader long-term health care environment.

Finally, a significant contribution of this study is providing a clear framework for advancing phenomenological methodology for future research of the leader-follower development process, from the perspective of followers. Future research could use this phenomenological framework in a mixed methods longitudinal study design to focus on the leadership development process. As stated by Bass and Avolio (1993, p75), "We have only scratched the surface in terms of connecting the model of transformational leadership to other leadership models."

I have proposed a leadership development approach drawing from transformational learning theory in the cognitive-rational model, as developed by Mezirow (1978, 1990, 1991), to bridge the theory-to-practice paradigm within HRD and a phenomenological study of this nature. A qualitative longitudinal study, as part of a leadership development model of this nature, could add to our understanding of the effectiveness of leadership development interventions and further illuminate linkages between LMX and transformational leadership development.

The findings of this study support the stance that relationship-based research should continue to be a prominent area of interest for future leadership researchers. As such, future research is needed to explore the effectiveness of the theory-to-practice application of the findings of this study.

<div align="center">Final Thoughts</div>

As empirical evidence continues to suggest that transformational leadership is positively associated with work attitudes, behaviors, and motivation (Dumdum, Lowe, & Avolio, 2002; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993), it becomes clear that, in the future, effective leadership, particularly in learning

organizations, will need to be more transformational than transactional (Bass, 2000).

With this objective in mind, the findings presented in this study provide a framework that

can advance current thought regarding a theory-to-practice model for advancing

phenomenological research methodology as a significant resource within leadership

development practice. In such a context, a phenomenological lens of inquiry can provide

critical insight as an alternative way of understanding the experiential dimensions of

phenomena within leadership theory and development.

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Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Letter

[Date]

Dear [Name],

My name is David Lucia, and I am a graduate student at the University of Minnesota doing my doctoral dissertation on the development of leader and subordinate workplace experiences. I am also employed by Golden Living as a Division Manager of Human Resources for facilities other than yours.

My specific research question is, "During your first year of employment, what has the experience of getting to know your supervisor been like?" I am interested in interviewing certified nursing assistants who have been employed with Golden Living between six months and one year. Should you agree to participate, the confidential interview will be arranged to take place off-site from your facility, at either the local library or an educational institution, during your non-working hours. The interview will last about an hour, and I will provide you with a $25 stipend payment for your participation and travel costs. Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary, exclusively related to this research project, and in no manner considered time worked.

If you are interested in participating, or would like further information, please contact me directly by phone at 218-341-6088 or email at luci0011@umn.edu. Prior to proceeding with the interview, I will provide you with complete information as to how I will protect your anonymity and allow you to make a fully informed consent decision. If more people from your site volunteer than I can use in the project, participants will be selected randomly.

Please consider this opportunity to participate in this very important research.

Thanks!

David Lucia
218-341-6088
luci0011@umn.edu

Appendix B: Second Participant Recruitment Letter

[DATE]

Dear [NAME],

My name is David Lucia, and I am employed by Golden Living as a Division Manager of Human Resources for facilities other than yours. I recently sent you and several other Golden Living employees a letter seeking your participation in my Ph.D. dissertation project regarding the development of leader and subordinate workplace experiences. Since that time, I have received some questions regarding the participation process and I would like to clarify those questions. Please take a moment to review the following information.

I am interested in interviewing certified nursing assistants who have been employed with Golden Living between six months and one year. Should you agree to participate, the confidential interview will be arranged to take place off-site from your facility, at a location in your local area that is convenient for you. **I will travel to your area to conduct the interview; you do not need to travel outside of your local area in order to participate.** If you indicate your interest to participate, I will then arrange the use of a facility such as your local library, workforce center, or an educational institution in your immediate area. The interview will take place during your non-working hours and I will work around your schedule (the interview can also be arranged to simply take place immediately before or after one of your work shifts). The interview will last about an hour, and I will provide you with a $35.00 stipend payment for your time to participate. Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary, exclusively related to this research project, and in no manner considered time worked.

If you are interested in participating, or would like further information, please contact me directly by phone at 218-341-6088 or email at luci0011@umn.edu, or david.lucia@goldenliving.com. Prior to proceeding with the interview, I will provide you with complete information as to how I will protect your anonymity and allow you to make a fully informed consent decision. If more people from your site volunteer than I can use in the project, participants will be selected randomly.

Please consider this opportunity to participate in this very important research.

Thanks!

David Lucia

218-341-6088
3411 Blackman Avenue
Duluth, MN 55811

Appendix C: Respondent Letter - Selected

[Date]

Dear [Name],

Thank you for your interest in participating in my doctoral dissertation study on the development of leader and subordinate workplace experiences. As we discussed, I have arranged for the interview to be held at _____ on_____. I anticipate that the process will take approximately one hour, and I will provide you with complete information regarding the process and answer any other questions you may have prior to beginning the interview in order to allow you to make a fully informed consent decision.

If you need to contact me prior to the interview, I can be reached at 218-341-6088 or email at luci0011@umn.edu. I look forward to meeting you on _____.

Sincerely,

David Lucia

218-341-6088
luci0011@umn.edu

Appendix D: Respondent Letter - Not Selected

[Date]

Dear [Name],

Thank you for your interest in participating in my doctoral dissertation study on the development of leader and subordinate workplace experiences. The design of this study allowed for a limited number of participants from each facility and used a random drawing process in circumstances where there were more volunteers than openings. I did receive more volunteers than openings, and, unfortunately, your name was not selected. However, your name has been placed on an alternate list in case any of the randomly selected volunteers subsequently declines to participate.

Once again, thank you for your interest, and if other openings occur for this study I will contact you directly to discuss your continued interest. At the conclusion of the interview process for this study, all records of your contact and initial expression of interest will be destroyed.

If you have any additional questions in this regard, please feel free to contact me directly at 218-341-6088 or email at luci0011@umn.edu.

Sincerely,

David Lucia
218-341-6088
luci0011@umn.edu

Appendix E: Consent Form

Experiences of Followers in the Development of the Leader-Follower Relationship

Introduction:
You are invited to participate in a research study investigating the experiences of certified nursing assistants in the development of the leader-follower relationship during their first year of employment. You were selected because you responded to an initial notice sent to a number of certified nursing assistants who have been employed with Golden Living between six months and one year. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of subordinates in the process of forming a leader-follower relationship during their first year of employment. A total of 12 certified nursing assistants from four different Golden Living facilities are anticipated to participate in this study.

Procedures:
If you decide to participate, I will interview you for approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interview will be recorded, with your permission, and a written transcript will be made of the interview. The written transcript will not contain names or any other information that can be traced back to you. The recording and transcript will be identified by a numerical code. Portions of the transcript will be used in the summary of this research along with portions of the transcripts from other participants, but this will be done in such a way as to insure your anonymity.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
A potential risk of this study is that you will be asked about your interactions and experiences with your leader and they may not have all been pleasant experiences. This risk will be minimized by the interview process in which you may disclose as much or as little as you like about your experiences. Confidentiality will also be maintained at all times; no information will be included in the research report that could identify you, your colleagues, or your supervisor.

The benefits to participation are that the interview may provide an opportunity for reflection and greater self-awareness, which may lead to personal growth and development. Ultimately, I hope information from this study will help improve leadership development, orientation processes, and human resource policy and practice within Golden Living and potentially the long-term health care industry.

Confidentiality:
The published report of this study will have no information that would identify you as a participant. The audio recordings will be heard only by me and the professional transcription service. The recordings will be erased as soon as the written report and this study is completed and published. The transcripts will have no identifying information on

them that will link them back to you. Research records will be kept in a locked file in my home; only my advisor will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future relations with me, Golden Living, or the University of Minnesota. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships. The stipend of $25 provided to you is strictly to compensate for your time and inconvenience, as well as travel costs incurred in participation. Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary, exclusively related to this research project, and in no manner considered time worked.

Contacts and Questions:
This study is being done by David Lucia, doctoral student at the University of Minnesota. You may ask questions you have now or at anytime during the study. If you have questions later, please contact me at 218-341-6088 or luci0011@umn.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor at any time with questions or concerns. His name is Dr. Gary McLean and can be reached at work_____, mclea002@umn.edu . If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to contact someone other than the researcher or his advisor, please contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware Street S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; telephone (612) 625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:
Once you have read the above information, have asked questions, received answers, and decided to participate, please sign the form below.

Signature_____

Date_____

Signature of Researcher_____ Date_____

Appendix F

Participant Release Agreement

Experiences of Followers in the Development of the Leader-Follower Relationship

I understand that the audiotape of my interview will be transcribed by the researcher and a hired transcriptionist. You will be identified on the tapes and transcripts by a number. The transcribed interview text will be analyzed by the researcher with the hope of gaining deeper understanding of the essence of the experiences of followers in the development of the leader-follower relationship. Direct quotes form your interview transcript may be used in my dissertation and other future publications. **All identifying information will be removed in any publications.**

Statement of Consent:

I grant permission for the interview transcript to be used in the process of completing a Ph.D. degree, including a dissertation and any other future publications. I understand that all identifying information will be removed in any publications.

Signature:_____

Date:_____

Signature of Researcher:_____

Date:_____

Appendix G

Direct Contact and Assistance Are Important

P1	1-5: Seeing and being with the supervisor is important. 18-22: Dissatisfaction with the amount of time that the DNS is in her office as opposed to being on the floor and accessible is a common perception by the entire CNA group. 22: Expresses a desire to have supervisors help more with hands on tasks, particularly when there is a shortage of aides.
P2	47-49: Working directly with the DNS is important as a means to engage in more casual conversation and also to understand her role as DNS. Without direct interaction she feels only an employer-employee relationship. She feels very little personal commitment or relationship with her DNS. In contrast to other supervisors, she works directly with charge nurses, and this act of working directly together and sharing the work experience is an important component of that relationship.
P3	77-78: Contact with the ED and DNS is necessary and critical to building communications and a relationship of caring, understanding, and trust. 84: Direct and frequent communication with the DNS is essential for building trust and job satisfaction. Direct access and interaction by senior leaders with the aides during their work on the floor are critical to building relationships and fostering job satisfaction and a friendly environment.
P4	108-109: Direct engagement with the leaders on the floor is important to building a positive relationship and fosters the environment of more social conversations. 122-124: Equal treatment and direct engagement with the aides are seen as positive leadership behaviors. This behavior is related to caring and commitment by the leader.
P5	157: Accessibility and regular exchange of information are important to foster more frequent interactions.
P6	198: Direct contact and working with the supervisor on the floor build trust and respect.
P7	213-214: Frequent communication and interaction on the floor are important, and this is the

	leader's responsibility. 234: Needs multiple engagements with a supervisor before forming an identifiable LMX status.
P8	247: Listening and responding to questions and messages are important behaviors in order for a leader to build trust and respect.
P9	288: Direct contact by working with leaders is important for building professional respect. The DNS is responsible for initiating these behaviors. 292: Direct engagement on the floor and assistance from the leader are important to the follower.
P10	301-303: The shift one works has an impact on ability to establish relationships with DNS. Grapevine information regarding how others are treated is seen as relevant to her perception of the ED's leadership qualities and communication style. 304-306: Direct engagement and assistance on the floor from leaders are positive characteristics for building respect between the leader and follower, as well as improving social exchange.
P11	334: The amount of help by supervisors directly affects the motivation of the work group. 346-347: Direct personal contact, assistance, and engagement on the floor are essential to building professional respect.
P12	374-375: Leaders primarily assist during the orientation period and are not helpful or provide direct contact after the initial on-boarding. 389: The quality of her relationship with her supervisor as important to her overall job satisfaction.
P13	403-404: Impressions of leaders are formed through experiences of personal contact with the leader and grapevine information. Shift work impacts opportunities for these occurrences. Helping and direct engagement by the supervisor are critical to developing a relationship. Direct engagement and working with supervisors are critical for demonstrating competence and establishing a personal level of relationship.

Appendix H

Followers Are Aware that Supervisors Treat Us Differently Based on Certain Follower
Behaviors

P1	6-7: Working extra hours is important and leads to more flexible treatment by supervisors.
P2	56-57: Feels certain employees are treated more favorably based on common interests they share with leaders. 58-60: By giving some employees special status, leaders create an environment that is seen as unfair, which leads to anger toward the leader by those perceiving the treatment as unfair.
P3	83: Doing extra work is a key behavior for better treatment by the supervisors, and picking up extra shifts is a key factor leading to better relationships. 92: Picking up extra shifts is seen a behavior that affects equitable treatment. 104: Level of personal interaction and type of conversation with the DNS determines how well you know her and affects distribution of additional opportunities in an unfair manner.
P4	117: Picking up shifts and staying late is seen as a favorable behavior by the supervisors. 130-131: Participant had an expectation that by initiating a social conversation with the leader he would have special consideration in his performance standards.
P5	155: A significant age difference affects how she feels about interacting with the leader.167-169: Believes that followers picking up extra shifts establish favorable relationships with leaders, and, as a result of this behavior, are given more favorable treatment, specifically in attendance management. Followers are aware of

	group status awarded by leaders.
P6	193-195: Willingness to help in multiple areas and tasks is a significant factor for status with supervisors. Group members can distinguish between aides who are "in good" with supervisors and those who are not. Attributes status to these work attitudes and ethics.
P7	219: Picking up extra shifts is seen as desirable behavior by supervisors. 231: Participant finds it hard to understand the leaders change from reprimanding to asking him soon after to pick up shifts - as a favor. Experiences this as manipulative.
P8	254: Willingness to work extra is affected by how the supervisor interacts with the aides. 259: Participant found that the quality of work is a distinguishing factor for status within the group. 270: CNAs with in-group status receive preference for hours distribution. 271: In-group friendship exchanges with supervisors are often self-serving for the purpose of gaining the benefits of in-group status. 274-276: Picking up extra shifts and being very agreeable and friendly with supervisors is essential to being one of their favorites.
P9	290-291: Participant states she has not seen differential treatment, but then does describe a difference related to nurses helping aides who are their favorites and not helping those who are not favorites (in-group/out-group).
P10	307: Common age and interests contribute to better relationships with supervisors. 320: Participant says that there is not always equal treatment of followers by leaders. 322: Followers can identify in-group and out-group treatment.
P11	329-331: Common personal backgrounds and interests with her leader help

	participant to have a higher quality relationship than some other aides. 338-339: Supervisors do have in-groups and out-groups that are influenced by in-group behaviors such as picking up shifts. 340: More frequent communication from the leader is a result of being part of an in-group.
P12	392-393: Participant is aware of in-group out-group structure of differentiated communication and information exchange based on common personal interests.
P13	411-413: Refusal to help out is seen as non-cooperative and leads to less communication and involvement from the supervisors. 420-423: Participant understands what behaviors are seen as positive by leaders and has an expectation that those who engage in these behaviors will have better relationships with leaders. 425-428: Knows what in-group behaviors are and sees them as based on competency and work ethic.

Appendix I

Personal Conversation is Important

P1	23-27: Participant expressed that time spent in direct contact with the supervisor and in personal conversation as important. 34-36: More frequent personal communications is important to improving the work climate and commitment to the work.
P2	44-45: Participant is willing to engage supervisors in conversation but expects a quality collaborative response. A negative response leads to a sense of not being understood, whereas a positive response encourages further engagement with the supervisor and also leads to respect for that supervisor as a problem solver. Positive engagements with the supervisor lead to motivation for more interaction.
P3	79: Knowing names, speaking directly to individuals, and encouraging open communication is important. 86-89: Access to direct communication and the quality of the communication significantly affects the quality of the leader-follower relationship. Social or non-work related communication is important in getting to know the person and building respect, trust, and job satisfaction.
P4	127-128: Participant feels that one-on-one social exchange is important in enabling leaders and followers to build mutual respect and commitment. 144-147: Episodes of initiating social conversation and gauging the receptiveness of the leader allow participant to determine further behaviors. However, participant feels the supervisor, not the follower, should lead in this transaction.
P5	159: The intent of a conversation with the supervisor is gauged by the follower based on trust. 160-161: Leaders initiating conversation is important. 172:

	Participant expresses that she does not know the DNS well enough to trust her.
P6	189: Positive feedback and encouragement from a nurse supervisor is extremely meaningful to participant.
P7	220: The lack of positive feedback from leaders is a topic of discussion among the aides. 236-237: Personal conversations with the leader are meaningful in building a positive relationship. Highly transactional conversations do not build positive relationships. 239-241: Social exchanges and sincere personal greetings, when combined with respectful and constructive feedback are important and noticed by all group members.
P8	256: Low-quality communication episodes lead to loss of trust and respect, and reduce commitment. 260: Past negative experiences in conversations influence the type and method of future communications with supervisors. 261-262: An ability to relate to the work of the aides, along with personal interaction, have built trust and respect that leads to even greater acceptance of constructive feedback and direction. 283: Empathetic leaders impart a sense of motivation, obligation, and job satisfaction. Communicating a sense of caring is seen as essential to being responsive to followers needs. 286: Listening and considering participant's input increases her motivation to communicate and commitment.
P9	295-296: Participant's initial contact with the DNS was positive, but deterioration in the level of interaction is confusing and feels unfriendly. The quality of the communication is the basis for evaluating the relationship.
P10	311-312: Direct communication from the ED and sharing background information one-on-one is meaningful to the participant. 313: Listening is a key leader

	characteristic that she values. 317: Following up directly one-on-one, as promised, with answers to issues and questions is important.
P11	327: Some level of personal conversation with supervisors is desirable. 332: Leadership style affects participant's motivation to communicate and interact with the leader. A very directive style reduces follower communication. Leaders learning names is important to her and indicates a commitment and respect from the leader which encourages further communication from the follower. 355: Taking the time for personal conversation and knowing followers' names builds respect.
P12	376: Absence of personal communication leads to a negative perception of the leader. Participant believes that the other aides have the same feeling. 380-381: One-on-one discussion restores to some extent a feeling of ability to communicate more freely with the leader. 391: Listening and caring are important leader characteristics related to professionalism and encourage follower feedback. 402: Personal greetings and conversation from supervisors are important to set the tone of the environment.
P13	406: Personal conversations with her leader are seen by participant as a positive stage of the relationship, and sharing common interests improves her job satisfaction. 418: Personal conversation with the supervisor is important for job satisfaction.

Appendix J

Competence Affects Relationships

P1	41-43: Participant determined her status primarily by establishing her work ethic and competency with supervisors. 56-57: More responsibility based on proven competence supports job satisfaction and a positive relationship with the leader.
P2	63: Participant sees positive feedback, including verbal recognition, based on her competency as significant sources of job satisfaction and critical to building positive feelings toward leaders.
P3	90-91: Job performance determines how employees will be disciplined and monitored by supervisors. Job satisfaction is related to how equitably supervisors treat all aides.
P4	113: Participant feels that his years of experience as a CNA provide him with the status and comfort level to give constructive feedback to the DNS. 121: Identifies competence and work ethic as favorable behaviors that lead to more direct contact with leaders.
P5	151: If an Aide is competent the supervisor interacts with a higher level trust and less supervision.
P6	185-187: Good performance and competence are the qualities that lead supervisors to recognize and communicate with her. She notices that poorer performers do not have this same relationship with the supervisors.
P7	228-229: Respect for follower competence is important and affects participant's relationship with the leader.
P8	245: Participant believes she was able to distinguish herself to the supervisor based

	on her work performance.
P9	293: Participant perceives performance as a factor leading to more favorable treatment from supervisors.
P10	326: Competence and work ethic significantly influence the quality of leader interactions with followers.
P11	341-343: Employees determine their status primarily by establishing their work ethic and competence with the supervisor. 356-357: More responsibility based on proven competence supports her job satisfaction and a positive relationship with her leader.
P12	378a: Participant feels her competence is not recognized and that this affects how the leader treats her.
P13	405: Role episodes that demonstrate competence improved her relationship with leaders. 414-415: Picking up extra shifts is a positive behavior but not as important as an attitude of helpfulness and general competence. 439-441: The quality of relationships with supervisors is based on work ethic and competency, but also depends on an equilibrium of follower input and response from the leader. The quality levels of leader-follower engagements are observed by followers in the workplace.

Appendix K

ED/DNS Leader-Follower Interactions are Primarily Transactional and Often

Intimidating for CNAs

P1	30: Participant has a very transactional (reward/punishment) relationship with the DNS and ED that leads to nervousness when speaking with them. Participant attributes this to not knowing anything personal about them. She does not communicate freely with the DNS and feels intimidated.
P2	42-43: Participant experiences nervous discomfort when needing to speak with the ED or DNS. Views ED/DNS as powerful and removed from the actual hands-on work of the aids and nurses. Sees them as running the company. Believes most employees fear interactions and experiences only corrective or punitive reasons as the basis for discussions with these leaders.
P3	85: Feels the DNS status can be intimidating for most aides.
P4	112: DNS is very inflexible and authoritarian.
P5	174: Rumors regarding specific incidents and unfair treatment negatively impact participant's trust in the DNS.
P6	196: Participant has no relationship with the DNS and attributes this as the result of never working directly with her.196-197: She has no relationship with the ED and sees this as a result of no work contact – any contact appears to her to be only ceremonial. Questions leader's interest and sincerity in getting to know the aides, which fosters distrust.
P7	202: Participant described how brief, impersonal, highly transactional communications from supervisors affect her perception of them as a good leader –

	they appear to be under stress and not in control. 204: Participant views the leaders as poor in building relationships, i.e. understanding and listening. Does not feel the supervisors are meeting the role expectations of the aides. 206-207: Feels it takes time to develop relationships with supervisors and that longevity in leadership is important to this process. Feels confused with the frequent changes in leaders taking place.
P8	252: Strong use of authority in one incident did not resolve participant's concern and led to a significant loss of respect for the leader.
P9	297: Since meeting the DNS at the interview and orientation their relationship has changed, and the participant now feels intimidated by the DNS.
P10	314: Participant has had only transactional communications with the ED via staff meetings, memos, and payroll stuffers. 316: Conversations with the DNS have been transactional and primarily based on the initial employment interview.
P11	351-353: Due to lack of direct contact with the ED and DNS, the participant sees them only as administrators, not as leaders.
P12	377-379: Leader interactions with participant changed from open and supportive during the on-boarding process to very cold and direct. These changes are confusing and intimidating. This change has led to low job satisfaction. 396-397: Participant sees the ED as very formal in his relationship with aides and notes, as a measure of the distance between them, that he does not know their names.
P13	438: Lack of direct contact or conversation with the ED leads to a feeling of intimidation and that the ED does not understand the roles of the CNAs.